



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

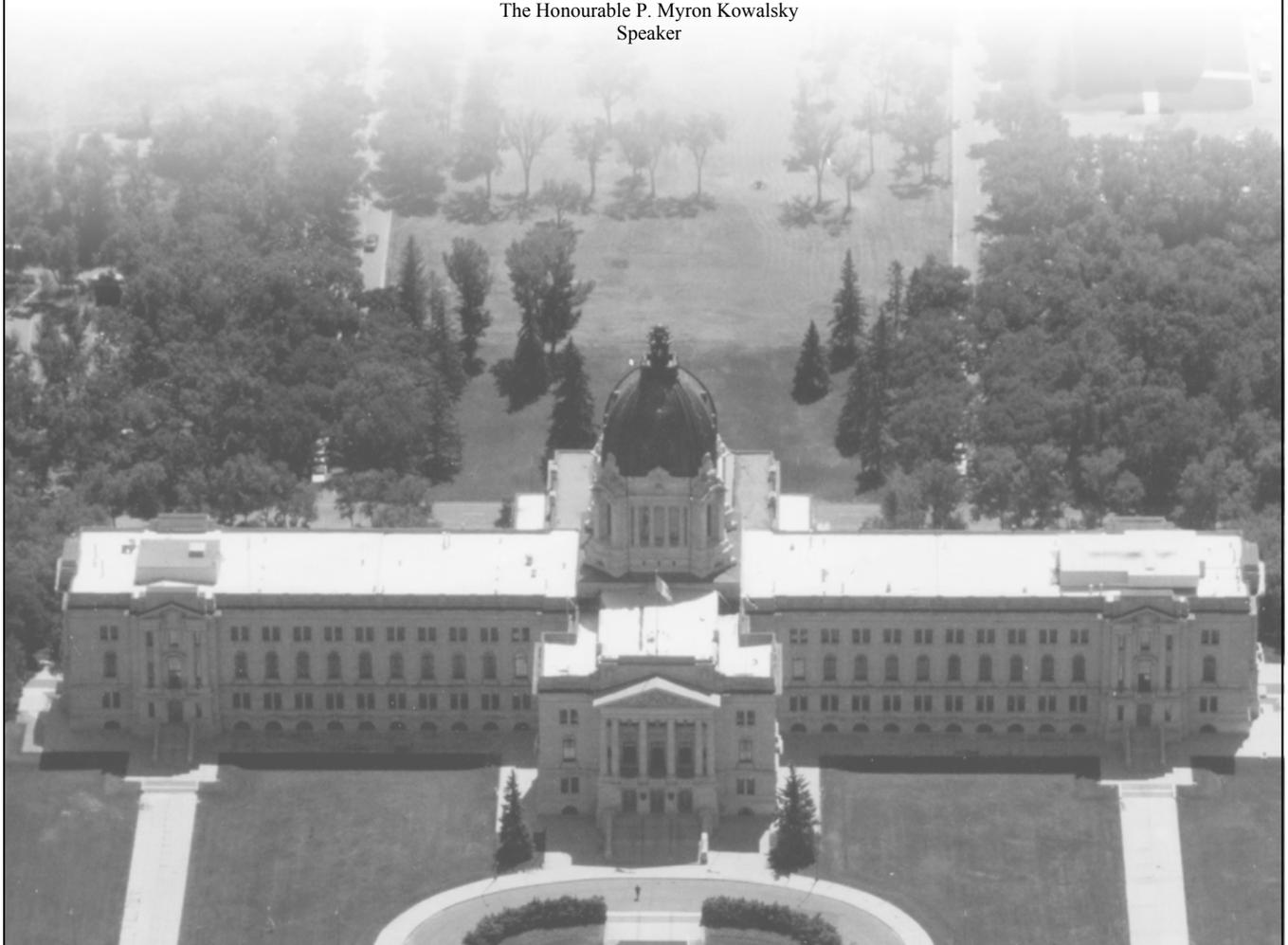
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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]

The Speaker: — Before we go into routine proceedings, I wanted to welcome all members back for the resumption of the first session of the twenty-fifth legislature, this being day no. 72.

And I want to bring to members' attention the new sound that they're hearing in this legislature due to the refurbished sound system.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Introduction of Pages

The Speaker: — It's my pleasure also at this time before routine proceedings, to introduce the Pages for the spring session. I would ask them to rise as they are introduced. First, we have Glenna Coleman, Isla Dowling, Jonathan Moscoso, Pamela Scheidl, Shanna Schulhauser, and Arielle Zerr. Welcome to your new Pages for this session.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It might seem redundant today, but I have a number of petitions to present concerning school amalgamation. The prayer 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.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these three pages of petitions are signed by constituents from the community of Gull Lake. I so present.

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition on the same topic. And the prayer 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, the signators to this petition come from the communities of Invermay, Rama, and Margo. I so present.

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, over the coming weeks I'll be presenting a number of petitions from people from my constituency of Swift Current on the issue of residential home care and support for those with lifelong disabilities. The prayer of the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to provide the funding required for additional residential spaces for Swift Current residents with lifelong disabilities.

All of the petitioners today are from the great city of Swift Current, save one from Abbey. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to present. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the 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.

The signators come from the community of Spy Hill, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the forced amalgamation of school divisions. And the prayer reads:

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 petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Moose Jaw and Drinkwater. I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition here dealing with the forced amalgamation of school divisions.

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.

Signed by the good citizens from Kenaston, Davidson, and Craik. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a number of petitions to present concerning 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 in Saskatoon and area. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14(7) are hereby read and received as addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 203, 637, 638, 640, 647, 666, and 670.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 77 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Environment: what cities, towns, and/or villages have been charged under subsection 33, article 3 of The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2002; subsection 33, article 2 of The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2002; subsection 30, article 5 of The Water Regulations, 2002; section 74, article 1, subsection (a) of The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2002; and/or any other legislation or regulations pertaining to the operation of waterworks for the purpose of supplying water for human consumption. Thank you.

And, Mr. Speaker, I also have two other questions that I'll table at this time.

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

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 77 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for Liquor and Gaming: what are the communities where VLT machines are operating, what is the number of VLT machines in each community, and what is the total revenue generated from VLT machines in each of these communities?

I so present.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Wascana Plains.

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's for me a privilege and a pleasure to be able to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, but maybe not necessary to some members of the Assembly, because they've been working closely with our legislative interns. And they're with us this afternoon. I think they're sensing a bit of excitement on their first day back into session.

I'd like to introduce Kevin Chernoff, who has been shadowing the member from Kindersley; Kyle Toffan, who is with the member from Moose Jaw North — that's mini Mr. Centennial — Alyssa Peel, who is with the member from Saskatoon Northwest; and Rhiannon Stromberg, who has been following me closely and keeping me in check.

Mr. Speaker, these legislative interns add to our work an enthusiasm and energy, a youthful point of view, and I might add, an informed source of valued opinion to members of the Assembly. They would know that in following us they can attest to the fact that this is not our first day back to work or their first day back to work either, but it is our first chance to publicly profile many, many months of work.

In thanking the legislative interns and greeting them on behalf of all members, please join me in giving them a warm welcome to our first day in the Assembly for this session.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with pleasure and on behalf of the official opposition to welcome the interns here and I'd like to mirror what the member from Wascana said. Many times they do know that we have been working and have seen many things that we do and many things that we shouldn't do.

And with that being said, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to say on behalf of the opposition, welcome, and I hope you enjoy your time. We're very much enjoying having you here.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member from Martensville.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all it's good to be back here but I'd like to take this opportunity . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce to you and through you to all members of this legislature a very good friend of mine who in the past month or two has had to pick up a lot of extra responsibilities around the home and in our businesses and in our lives as well. I'd like for you join me in welcoming my best friend, Arlene.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Coronation Park.

Acknowledgment of Protective Service Workers

Mr. Trew: — Thank you. The news of the tragic deaths of four Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers who were killed in the line of duty on March 3 was received across Saskatchewan and indeed Canada with shock and profound sadness. It is entirely appropriate that in a short time the Premier will be asking for a minute of silence to honour the fallen officers and offer the condolences in this Assembly on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan to their families, their friends, and their colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is sometimes easy for us to take for granted the level of safety and security that most of us enjoy. This tragedy is an awful reminder to us all that there are men and women who put themselves in harm's way in order to secure our comfort, freedom, and safety, and, as in this instance, who sometimes make the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf.

In the wake of this terrible event, it is time for all of us to remember and express our gratitude to all those who are willing to put themselves in risk in order to ensure the safety, security, and protection of Saskatchewan people, families, and communities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members in the Assembly to join me in acknowledging the women and men of our police forces, of our armed forces, of our fire departments, of our emergency response teams, and all the agencies and organizations we depend on for safety and security. We want to thank them for their commitment and their courage. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Acknowledgement of Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the tragic loss of four RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] officers reminds us of the

very important role played by the RCMP and its proud tradition as a national police force. The RCMP is a unique policing body. In addition to its role as a national police force, it provides policing services to the provinces and towns and cities across the country. It is also active on the world stage in international policing efforts.

First called the North West Mounted Police, the RCMP were created through an Act of parliament in 1873. Since then they have served our country proudly with a commitment to preserving the peace, upholding the law, and providing quality service in partnership with our communities.

Regina is proud to be home to the RCMP training academy which trains approximately 500 cadets each year. The RCMP training academy is recognized worldwide for its tradition of excellence and the quality of the men and women, its graduates. These brave men and women who leave Regina and assume policing duties in cities and towns across the country put their lives on the line every day so that we may live securely and safely in our homes and walk on our streets in safety.

In the wake of this national tragedy, which constitutes the largest loss of life of RCMP officers since the Duck Lake massacre of 1885, we recognize the vital role of the RCMP and its ongoing contribution to the lives of Canadian citizens. Mr. Speaker, today we would like join with the members opposite and remember not just the RCMP officers but all members of other police forces, other emergency measures organizations, fire departments, emergency technicians that provide safety and security to Saskatchewan residents and to Canadians. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Lakeview.

Regina Team Wins World Curling Championship

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, a short time ago the Kyle George team, curling out of the Callie Club in my constituency of Regina Lakeview, won the Canadian Junior Men's Curling Championship and the right to represent Canada at the World Junior Curling Championship in Pinerolo, Italy.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to share with the House today that this team of young men is arriving back in Regina today and bringing home the gold medal.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, this accomplishment is the latest in a long tradition of Saskatchewan curling excellence. This is the second time since 2003 that a rink from Saskatchewan has won the world junior men's title. In 2003, Steve Laycock and Marliese Miller won the Canadian and world junior men's and women's championships. The Kyle George rink joins them, the Sandra Schmirler rink, and the Ernie Richardson rink as Saskatchewan curlers who have also won world championships.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan can be very proud of these fine young curlers. It takes great talent and dedication to compete successfully at such a high level. I ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating Kyle George, Justin Mihalicz, D.J. Kidby, Chris Hebert, Dustin Kidby, and coach, Dwayne Mihalicz for their outstanding performance.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Moosomin.

Junior Men's Provincial Curling Championship

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. January 14 through 17 was a very memorable weekend for the Whitewood and area curling club. On January 14, eight junior men's curling rinks arrived in Whitewood to participate in the Target Junior Men's Provincial Curling Championship.

The Whitewood Curling Club along with all their volunteers did themselves proud in hosting such a superb provincial curling event. The final game saw two rinks curling out of the Regina Callie Club battle it out for junior men's supremacy in 2005. Mr. Speaker, the Kyle George rink defeated Brent Goeres's rink to win the Target Junior Men's Curling Championship.

It must be noted that this Assembly was represented at this year's junior men's curling by Mr. John Lang, son of Iris Lang, a Clerk in our Assembly.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, we now know the rest of the story. Kyle George and his foursome moved on to represent Saskatchewan in the Canadian Junior Men's Curling Championship held in Fredericton, New Brunswick February 5 to 13, where they became Canadian champions. This past weekend at the worlds in Italy, they capped off a superb curling season by becoming the world junior men's curling champions for 2005.

Mr. Speaker, congratulations to the Kyle George foursome on the many achievements they accomplished this year. We wish them well in future endeavours.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Eastview.

International Women's Day

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, though March 8 is specifically designated as International Women's Day, here in Saskatchewan we have come to celebrate women and their achievements throughout the entire month of March.

The roots of International Women's Day can be traced back to the struggles of women workers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As time passes, it is easy to forget that many of the things we now take for granted on the job were once radical ideas. Change has come slowly and has had to be fought for

every step of the way.

On International Women's Day, we pay tribute to women's efforts over the years to attain justice for themselves and their children. Today more women have their own independent sources of income. More women are entering jobs that were once denied to them. More women are attaining higher levels of education. These are positive gains, yet many women still face barriers to achieving success.

Mr. Speaker, the Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women released in the fall of 2003 states that this government will support International Women's Day events. Many of these events have been made possible through a grant program sponsored by Saskatchewan Labour's Status of Women office.

The response to this program has been overwhelmingly positive. This year the program is assisting over 100 groups to host events throughout the province, promoting key women's issues, recognizing the contributions and achievements of women in their communities, and profiling their accomplishments.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the legislature to join me in recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of women in the workplace, in our communities, and in all of society every day.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Swift Current.

Welcome Back to Two Members of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with a great deal of pride that I welcome back two of our members to the Legislative Assembly today — the member from Cypress Hills and the member for Martensville.

As many will know, the member from Cypress Hills suffered a heart attack at the end of the fall session, and the member from Martensville publicly announced in January that he had been diagnosed with prostate cancer and was about to start radiation treatment.

Mr. Speaker, we ask a lot of MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly]. We ask a lot of these individuals and others. I ask a lot of them. And sometimes it's easy to forget that they face the same personal challenges, sometimes health related, that everyone else does in the province of Saskatchewan. It doesn't make them special, Mr. Speaker, but there is a difference. When they face a health-related challenge, they have to face it in a very public way. When something happens to an MLA, everybody knows about it and they can see and measure how those MLAs, how those people deal with that challenge. The whole province knows that the member from Cypress Hills had a heart attack. The whole province knows that my friend from Martensville has prostate cancer. And across the way, the whole province knew that the Deputy Premier was battling cancer as well last year.

Sometimes I think that makes these challenges maybe a little bit more difficult. I would just like all members to join with me in welcoming these two back to the Assembly today.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Meeting with Prime Minister

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, according to today's Saskatoon *Star Phoenix*, the Prime Minister is going to be in Saskatoon and Regina here this week. What an excellent opportunity for Saskatchewan to make its case with respect to a better deal for equalization. The question to the Premier is, has he arranged for a meeting with the Prime Minister?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — The answer, Mr. Speaker, is yes.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Swift Current.

Mr. Wall: — Well that's very positive news, Mr. Speaker. I would say this, though. I would say this: when was the Premier going to inform us of that?

A couple of weeks ago the Premier was asking all the politicians in the province to come together, federal and provincial, to work with him on the equalization issue. And we're prepared to do that. We were then and we're prepared to do it today because it's the right thing to do. But then you would think, Mr. Speaker, in the course of arranging for a meeting or planning any kind of strategy going forward, that we could take him at his word from that meeting where he said we would do that together.

Was he planning on inviting any help from the opposition or the provincial Liberal leader? Was he planning on inviting any help from federal members or any other political leaders in the province? We are prepared to be there if he asks for our help, but why wouldn't he let us in on this meeting and what other strategies he might have to make Saskatchewan's case?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, my conversations with the Prime Minister happened over the course of the weekend. I am very pleased to be announcing today that there will be an opportunity to meet face to face with the Prime Minister when he is in the province.

Not to announce on behalf of the Prime Minister, but I am told by the Prime Minister and his office that his schedule in Saskatchewan is relatively brief, that he will spend some time in

Saskatoon, some time here in Regina, and then be leaving the province.

The intention that I have in meeting with the Prime Minister on Wednesday of this week, is to ascertain from him exactly the go forward process — how we will meet, how we will meet formally to deal with the issue that is of uppermost importance to the people and the province of Saskatchewan. I will be talking to the Prime Minister about the role of the Leader of the Opposition, about the role of the Liberal leader in our province, who if I may say, have played and will, I hope, play a positive role in the future.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the official opposition, the Saskatchewan Party, continues to stand with this government in terms of its request for an energy accord similar to the deal that Newfoundland and Nova Scotia received. We would ask the Premier only for common decency and respect. If he wants our help, that he would mean that, that he would invite us to help and that he might, where it's possible, and certainly there would have been occasion to do that this morning, to give us a heads up on these sorts of things so we don't have to ask about them and find out about it in question period.

New question for the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today the official opposition presented a document called 100 new ideas for Saskatchewan's next 100 years. Last fall we presented our own economic vision statement for the province of Saskatchewan.

This is the centennial year, Mr. Speaker; it's a time to look back, but it's also a time to look forward. Now more than ever we need leadership of vision and of competence. People are waiting for the Premier's plan. Question's simple this morning on the first day of the spring sitting. Does he have a plan, Mr. Speaker, and if he does, when will he let the province in on his plan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I have a copy of the little flyer that the Leader of the Opposition put out this morning. But unlike the Saskatchewan Party, who have a new flyer, a new plan, a new vision about every three months, it seems to me, we take the point of view that you go to the people in an election, you offer a platform, and you spend four years of your term delivering on that platform, Mr. Speaker.

When we went to the people of Saskatchewan, we laid out a platform, we laid out a policy, a vision for Saskatchewan that was much focused, Mr. Speaker, on a green and prosperous economy, building a green and prosperous economy. Mr. Speaker, we're taking that vision, we're taking that vision and turning it into reality. And nowhere, Mr. Speaker, is that better illustrated than in the job numbers we've received just a few days ago.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, in the month of December, in the month of December, 7,800 new jobs in Saskatchewan. In the month of January, 10,800 new jobs and in the month of February, 11,400. Mr. Speaker, that is taking a vision and turning it into a reality.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier wants to talk about jobs. I'd be happy to do that. In the five years since he took over, in fact in the first five years of this century, Saskatchewan under his leadership, under NDP [New Democratic Party] leadership has posted the worst job creation record in Canada at a time of unprecedented commodity prices, Mr. Speaker, at a time when everyone else in the province understands that we should be on the cusp of something great but for a lack of leadership and of vision.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier talks about a green and prosperous economy and, true, they campaigned on that and shortly after the campaign we saw the imaginary ethanol plant disappear, we saw the wind electrical deal fall apart. They had to scramble around that one. We've seen them break promises, increase taxes, Mr. Speaker. If it's more of the same, the province says we can't stand any more of the same from this government. The question's simple. When will we hear of this Premier's vision for the province's future and his plans to meet the immediate needs of Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should reference the Leader of the Opposition, if he's forgotten, the Throne Speech that has been the lead of this session of the legislature. In that Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, we talked about a green and prosperous economy and we talked about how energy would play a significant role in building that green and prosperous economy. We laid that plan, that vision, out in the Throne Speech. Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is the Leader of the Opposition doesn't want to admit it but the soil is being turned in Saskatchewan today for the world's largest wheat-based ethanol plant. We're building ethanol in this province, Mr. Speaker.

The Leader of the Opposition doesn't want to admit it, the Leader doesn't want to admit it but we've taken Saskatchewan from a situation where we had zero, Mr. Speaker, zero in terms of wind generated electricity — electrons being generated by the wind. We're now the third largest in Canada and we're building, Mr. Speaker.

We are putting the building blocks in place for an energy strategy that will colour the future of this province for decades, Mr. Speaker. We've reinvigorated, we've reinvigorated oil and gas exploration in our province. We've established the research capacity, Mr. Speaker, and he should just hold on to his hat to see what's next.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member from Melfort.

Negotiations with Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Learning minister gets a chance to read and respond to a letter from his own constituent. Tracy Shaw makes some very good points. She says the Learning minister's comments are an absolute insult to the teaching profession and children. Ms. Shaw says for the minister to state that it is the wage demands of teachers that are causing education to cost more is, in her words, absolutely ludicrous. Mr. Speaker, we couldn't agree more. Will the Learning minister apologize to Ms. Shaw and every other teacher in Saskatchewan? Will he withdraw his comments and commit to letting the collective bargaining process work?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I would certainly urge the member opposite to be cautious in terms of the comments that he attributes to me. I have been very clear in this approach to say today that the situation we have is we have two parties in the negotiations that are very far apart. We have a situation where we have a growing pressure on the education budget. Certainly we understand that there are pressures in the classroom. What we are trying to find is a way to bring the two agendas together to get a contract that is not only acceptable to teachers but is affordable for taxpayers. This is a difficult, challenging, vexing issue. It's one that I think all of us need to reflect on.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, this is indeed a challenging issue for the people of Saskatchewan and the educational community. But that minister's inflammatory words are not helpful to make this situation any better.

Murray Wall is the president of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. He says that the minister's comments are disrespectful to teachers and disrespectful to the work that they do. Mr. Wall went on to say that his members are phoning, expressing frustration and anger at this minister and disappointed with his decision to link teacher salaries with the issue of property tax.

Mr. Speaker, if this minister wants to lead the negotiations with teachers, will he stand up today and apologize for his outrageous remarks?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I have to say to the members opposite that I find it unfortunate that people have taken offence at the comments that I made. Clearly that was not the intention of them, and frankly they weren't even intended to be that provocative.

Over the last 10 years, over the last 10 years, Mr. Speaker, we have shown our commitment to education by increasing the budget for education by 40 per cent — a 40 per cent increase in our education spending. Mr. Speaker, today we are in a position where we are able to maintain schools throughout this province despite the fact we have 25,000 fewer students.

And yet the members opposite make the point, and certainly have as I hear from ratepayers around the province, that they want lower taxes. Lower taxes, higher salaries, keeping schools open, the infrastructure pressure — this is a difficult set of issues for us to deal with. People shouldn't be offended that we are trying to find a way to not only reduce taxes but be able to make sure that salaries are affordable. If the members opposite have a different suggestion, I would more than welcome to hear that.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantfoer: — The official opposition certainly does have a suggestion for this minister: choose your words more carefully when you're talking about the contractual obligations of teachers. Choose your words more carefully when you're off-loading more and more work onto the teaching community. Choose your words carefully when you blame local taxpayers and teachers for the increased costs of education instead of this government's failed policies.

Mr. Speaker, if there's some advice that this minister certainly needs, is choose your words carefully so you don't make a situation that you've created already — that is unacceptable — make it worse by your inflammatory language.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, in the last 10 years this government has increased its funding to education by 40 per cent, that is twice the rate of inflation. A 40 per cent increase in the transfers from the provincial treasury to support education. Yes, ratepayers have also seen a 40 per cent increase in the amount that they contribute. That's why today we are paying \$355 million more into K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] education despite the fact there are 25,000 fewer students.

What we need to find is a way forward to get a cost-affordable contract with teachers. That's the situation we're in. And what the member opposite may wish to be the case in terms of causing an even greater rift . . . I have to tell you, we are trying to find an agreement. But it is very difficult when the parties are more than \$100 million apart on a three-year contract. And the member opposite should know that.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Tax Relief for Low-Income Earners

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, under this NDP government, Saskatchewan low-income earners face the highest provincial tax rates in Canada. One of the Saskatchewan Party's 100 ideas, the first one in fact, is to lower provincial tax rates for low-income taxpayers, the working poor. Under the Saskatchewan Party plan, anyone with less than \$15,000 in income will pay no tax. And anyone with less than \$35,000 in income will pay less tax. Mr. Speaker, this is a targeted tax cut that only applies to people who earn less than \$35,000 a year.

Mr. Speaker, to the finance minister, will we see a targeted tax cut for low-income earners in next week's provincial budget?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as the member can appreciate, I'm not in a position to speak about what is in the budget, at least in terms of revenue measures, Mr. Speaker; let's leave that for the budget day itself.

I would draw to the member's attention and the attention of the people of Saskatchewan that a few years ago Saskatchewan undertook a comprehensive review and restructuring of the personal income tax system in our province to make that system more competitive. At that time we increased the basic personal tax exemptions for individuals and for spouses and also for dependants to put us in a more competitive position with other provinces. That act alone reduced the number of taxpayers in Saskatchewan by some 60,000 low-income taxpayers, Mr. Speaker, and I think we've made considerable progress on that file.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, the Finance minister says we're more competitive, more competitive except for that we have the highest tax rate for people making \$29,000 or less in Canada. I do not call that competitive, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we can judge a society by how it treats its most vulnerable members. The NDP like to say they speak for low income earners, but as usual their actions don't match their words. Thanks to the NDP, low-income earners in Saskatchewan face the highest tax rates in Canada.

The Saskatchewan Party plan would take 70,000 low-income earners off the tax rolls altogether and provide a much needed tax break for another 215,000 people who earn less than \$35,000 a year. Mr. Speaker, this is not an across the board tax cut. It does not directly benefit those who make more than

\$35,000 a year. It is a targeted tax cut. The people it helps most are those who earn the least, the working poor.

The Speaker: — Would the member go directly to the question please?

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP government against giving a tax break to low income earners in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that the basic personal tax exemption amount for the current year is \$8,404. If people can refer to their tax forms, they will note that this is \$265 higher than the federal amount, and it's now the third highest in Canada. There's also a spousal tax exemption, Mr. Speaker, of the same amount, and that's a full \$1,485 higher than the comparable federal amount. And Saskatchewan also provides an additional tax exemption amounts to both seniors and families with children under the age of 18, Mr. Speaker.

And when the complete picture is told, Saskatchewan personal income tax levels on Saskatchewan families earning modest incomes is very competitive with other jurisdictions. Mr. Speaker, might I also add that we're still waiting for the information from the opposition as to how they cost out this promise that they're making, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Finance wants to say that this was his idea, we could arrange for that. Take all 100 of them; there will be 100 more than you have now. Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. I'd just remind the member to make all remarks through the Chair, please.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker I'm happy to provide the Finance Minister with the information that he requests. The cost of the Sask Party plan when fully implemented is about \$90 million a year. We realize the government probably can't bring in this all in one year, but they could start in this year's budget. This could be brought in over four years. It would cost less than \$25 million a year. Less than they blew on SPUDCO, [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company], Mr. Speaker, less than they blew on Retx and less than they blew on Navigata.

Mr. Speaker the Saskatchewan Party plan will take 70,000 low-income earners off the tax rolls altogether and reduce taxes for another 215,000 people who earn less than \$35,000 a year. What could be a better centennial project for low-income people in Saskatchewan? Mr. Speaker why is this NDP government defending high taxes for low-income earners in this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I now note that the member is saying that contrary to an earlier figure which was published in the media, that the cost of this promise is coming down. Mr. Speaker, I can't understand where it is that this figure comes from. Every year, every year we provide, as a government we provide to the opposition, we provide the details of the income tax system, what it would cost if you make certain changes in that income tax system. I don't see how any one can conclude based on that information, that the promise that the member is making would cost anything less than \$300 million a year, Mr. Speaker, anything less.

Now if they have some different methodology that's not, you know, understood by this side of the House, perhaps the member will immediately after question period, make that methodology available to the public, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, might I add that in these 100 ideas there's not one idea with respect to balancing the budget. You thought from that group we might have heard about that, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Farm Income Crisis

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Ag minister.

Mr. Speaker this may be one of the worst years financially for farmers, ranchers, and farm families all over this province. We're still seeing the effects of the BSE [bovine spongiform encephalopathy] and the borders may not open any time soon, we've got low grain prices, we've got low quality grain, and I guess my question for the Ag minister and the Premier is today: what plans do they have to help farm families in Saskatchewan this spring?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have been working with the agriculture industry to make sure that we have plans in place to deal with each of the issues that come forward. We have put significant dollars into trying to deal with the BSE crisis. We have made cash advances available for farmers to help them with their cash flow. I have clearly been leading and pushing the nation in terms of getting rid of the CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization] deposit, which we could see no rationale for.

Mr. Speaker, we have pushed hard enough to get a push back date in that and also to have the amount limited at one-third. We have also been working very diligently to make sure that we have a meat strategy in place to also help move our processing ahead.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think on a number of fronts we can look at

this province and we can say proudly that we put more than three times per capita any other province into supporting the agriculture industry. We'll continue to be there for our farmers.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I notice what the minister neglected to talk about was crop insurance. And let's review his record on crop insurance a little bit.

This year we have an increase of 9 per cent to premiums at the same time coverage is dropping for farmers. But that's not the worst of it. Last year it went up 13 per cent and the year before it went up 52 per cent. At the same time coverage keeps dropping. How does that minister, Mr. Speaker, and that government say that that's helping farmers in a crunch time when there's no cash in the province of Saskatchewan? Mr. Speaker, will that minister rethink what he's doing and cut back on the increased premiums and increase the coverage for crop insurance to Saskatchewan farmers?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the member opposite does understand the nature of crop insurance. I think he should have the history clearly in mind about the significant amount of money that crop insurance has paid out over these past years because of drought, for several years huge drought. And, Mr. Speaker, in terms of this past year, the huge frost is going to demand significant payout — has already and will demand further payout.

The crop insurance program is meant to be actuarially sound. Over a 15-year period it must pay for itself, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, the program is sound and it is providing the kind of coverage that is needed. We are working always to try and improve that coverage. And I think the package that we have available will help producers this year as well, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't understand how that Ag minister can say that they're going to help farmers by increasing the premiums and lowering the coverage. It's an impossibility, Mr. Speaker. And he talks about it being sound over 15 years. Well I have the book here and we know over the years there's ups and downs. There's payouts and then there's years where there's less payouts.

[14:15]

If we would look on a long-term basis, we would find out that

the worst time to increase premiums is when farmers have no money, no cash to put this crop in, and now what this NDP government is doing is raising their input costs. Fuel costs are going up. Fertilizer costs are going up. All their input costs are going up. And what does that minister do to assist farmers? He puts their input costs up more by raising crop insurance premiums.

Mr. Speaker, will that minister and that Premier do something finally after 12 or 14 years of downloading onto farmers in Saskatchewan, will they finally do something to assist farmers and quit helping to put them under?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think in terms of the crop insurance, what is so essential is that we have a program that will survive, that is sound. And when you're looking at debts of \$550 million, Mr. Speaker, that must be paid off in that time period, you have to set the premiums accordingly.

The payouts, Mr. Speaker, as the member should know, are set by the actual price of the crops. And, Mr. Speaker, this program has worked effectively over the years. We've added new components to look at weather-based issues. New crops are being covered.

Mr. Speaker, we are doing what we can within the parameters of this program to try and make sure that it meets the needs of Saskatchewan farmers effectively. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Government's Planning for Future Economic Development

Mr. Wall: — Well if you listen closely to the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Speaker, that is the problem. That is the problem with a complete lack of vision and lack of a plan for this government, because he's more interested in the survival of the program than he is of farm families in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And if you heard throughout all of question period today, you will see from this government no leadership when it comes to relief for low-income earners in the province of Saskatchewan. You will find a government that's not prepared to allow collective bargaining to proceed without the Minister of Learning insulting teachers, Mr. Speaker. You'll find no plan for crop insurance. You'll find no plan for the economy except the Premier's position that, well we'll always be in and out of equalization and we ought not to have the goal of being a permanent member of the have-province club.

And at the top of question period we heard from this Premier, who said he wanted a bipartisan approach to equalization, admit that he didn't have the time, he didn't have the courtesy frankly,

to call the opposition and let them know about this meeting.

The question at the end of question period is the same as it was at the beginning: when will this Premier show some vision? When will he highlight his plan for the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And, Mr. Speaker, let me just return to the beginning of this question period where I observed that, unlike the Saskatchewan Party, this is not a government that comes up with a new flyer, a new plan, a new vision every three months.

Mr. Speaker, we had *The Way Up*, and then we had something called Grow Saskatchewan, and then we had something called Enterprise Saskatchewan. And now we get a flyer delivered this morning, it's the 100 bright new ideas, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we know what's going on here. This party has had its philosophies and its plan rejected by the people of Saskatchewan. So what do they do, Mr. Speaker? Well the Leader of the Opposition gets his caucus office here to write up something that looks a little more palatable to the people of Saskatchewan, he forces it on his party, and then he announces it as a new vision. Mr. Speaker, that's not vision and that's not planning.

I'll tell you what vision is. Vision is setting goals; vision is looking to the future with optimism, Mr. Speaker; and, Mr. Speaker, government is taking your vision and making it into reality. And that's what we're doing, Mr. Speaker, with record job numbers, AA credit rating, record levels of capital investment, record economic growth. And, Mr. Speaker, it's translating to the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier. Why is the Premier on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, with leave to introduce guests.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, we have been joined in your gallery by two very significant guests to our legislature today; I would ask them to stand. They are Inspector Brenda Lucki and Corporal Ted Sisk of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the members of the opposition would like to join with the Premier and the members of the government in welcoming the members to their legislature. And we welcome them and wish them luck in their difficult time.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — And why is the Premier on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Again with leave, Mr. Speaker, to make a statement concerning the tragic loss of four members of the force.

The Speaker: — The Premier has requested leave. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. I recognize the Premier of Saskatchewan.

STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

Tribute to Royal Canadian Mounted Police Officers

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before we proceed today to orders of the day, I know that every member of this Assembly would want the opportunity to — in this historic Chamber — to extend this Chamber's, our condolences and therefore the condolences of the people of Saskatchewan to the families of the four RCMP officers who gave their lives in the line of duty on March 3. Last Thursday, the member from Saskatoon Meewasin and the member from Rosetown-Elrose joined Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, in attending the memorial service for the officers in Edmonton to bring condolences on behalf of this province and its people.

Because, Mr. Speaker, we are home to the RCMP, each and every of those officers and each and every of those four were trained in our midst. Because of that, Mr. Speaker, this province shares a special sense of kinship, I believe, to the force and to all of its members.

But as has been pointed out earlier in this House today, this tragic loss of life reminds all of us of the debt of gratitude we owe to the men and women who protect the safety and security of our families and communities, sometimes being called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice. It is therefore right that we would pay tribute to all of those who give their lives in protective services, all of those who serve in uniforms, many who serve at home and some who serve abroad, and especially to the four young men that our nation mourns this day.

Their names for the historic record of the province of Saskatchewan are Constable Anthony Gordon, Constable Leo Johnston, Constable Brock Myrol, and Constable Peter Schiemann. Our thoughts and our prayers are with the families, the friends, and the colleagues of these four brave officers and with the community that they served.

Mr. Speaker, following a few remarks by the Leader of the Opposition, I would then ask members to stand and observe a moment of silence in remembrance of these men and their service to our country.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I rise today in the Assembly to join with the Premier and colleagues opposite in extending our deepest sympathy and condolences to the family, friends, and the colleagues of the four young RCMP officers who were murdered outside of Mayerthorpe, Alberta on March 3.

I know I speak for everyone here today when I say how difficult it is to make sense of a tragedy like this. The senseless violence and horror of that crime that was perpetrated on that fateful day is difficult to fathom and only serves to increase our appreciation for the courageous actions of the police officers who protect our safety and who preserve the peace.

The RCMP, as the Premier has highlighted, occupies a special place in the hearts of Canadians and especially for Canadians in our province here in Saskatchewan. Every year we are fortunate to welcome young men and women who arrive in our province to begin their training at Depot. They come to Saskatchewan with enthusiasm and a desire to make this country a better place and they leave with skills and knowledge and passion to fulfill their dreams.

Constable Peter Schiemann was 25 years old and had graduated from Depot in November 2000.

Constable Leo Johnston was 32, a month away from his fourth anniversary with the force, and had been married to his wife, Kelly, for three and a half months.

Constable Anthony Gordon was 28. He leaves behind a son who will be three at the end of this month, and his wife, Kim, who is expecting their second child.

Constable Brock Myrol who is 29, the valedictorian of his class at Depot, and was recently engaged this past Christmas.

Four officers whose lives were ended in an act of hate but whose memories will live on in the thoughts of their families and in the spirit of a nation. Today as we continue to mourn the tragic loss of life, let us extend our thoughts and prayers for the peace that passes understanding to these families, to their friends and fellow officers, for these four brave young men. Their lives and contribution to this country will never be forgotten.

The Speaker: — Pursuant to a request of the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, would we all rise for a moment of silence.

[The Assembly observed a moment of silence.]

The Speaker: — Thank you very much. Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I requested to make brief remarks upon the tragic death of the four officers and the memorial service that was held last week.

The Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Meewasin has requested leave to make a statement. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I rise as Minister of Justice for the province of Saskatchewan and the minister responsible for policing our province to make brief remarks about both the tragic incident and the memorial service that was held March 10, 2005, in Edmonton, Alberta.

I had the honour of representing the Government of Saskatchewan on the occasion of that memorial service, representation that included the Lieutenant Governor and the member from Rosetown-Elrose. I was impressed by the outpouring of grief and condolences by the people of Canada to the families of the four deceased officers. I was inspired by the support of the people of Canada for our police services.

We have learned some of the circumstances that led to this tragic event and no doubt in the days and weeks to come we will learn more. But whatever final judgments are reached, there is no doubt that at the core of this tragedy is an irrational hate and anger that perhaps was not foreign, entirely foreign, to any human heart. None of us can be absolutely assured that we will not be touched by such hatred and anger or that those that we love will not be so touched.

But it was brought home to us and brought home to the people of Canada, I believe, last week upon the broadcast of the memorial service that those who put on a police uniform are always at risk of being destroyed by that irrational hate and anger. And it is fitting today that we honour the memory of those four young officers whose great potential, great and lost potential, we learned of last week. But it is also fitting today that we honour the courage of all those who protect and serve us.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed an honour for me to also rise and acknowledge that I was able to attend the RCMP memorial service in Edmonton on March 10 as part of the Saskatchewan delegation led by Her Honour, Dr. Lynda Haverstock, the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, along with the Minister of Justice and Vice-chief Lawrence Joseph of FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] and former chief of the Lucky Man First Nation, Rod King, as well as the RCMP officer responsible for traffic safety in the province of Saskatchewan, Brenda Lucki, who is sitting in the gallery today.

[14:30]

We were part of a crowd of 14,000 strong, including police officers from all across North America, who joined with Canada's Governor General, Prime Minister Martin, Premier Klein, RCMP Chief Commissioner Zaccardelli, and others to remember and to pay tribute to four young, dedicated police officers who tragically fell in the line of duty on March 3. This was the largest memorial service of its kind ever held in Canada and millions more Canadians showed their respect by watching on television or attending other memorial services.

At the memorial service in Edmonton, personal and touching eulogies were given by family and friends of Constable Peter Schiemann, aged 25, Constable Leo Johnston, aged 32, Constable Anthony Gordon, aged 28, and Constable Brock Myrol, aged 29. All four, as has been mentioned, were graduates of Depot here in Regina and we want to add our condolences to the many others that were given to their families.

Constable Brock Myrol was born in Outlook, Saskatchewan and friends and family still reside there. Brock wrote a song that was printed in the memorial service program and I would like to share the words of the song with you. It's entitled:

And I will Make You Proud.

We all have dreams
We all want glory
We all have hopes and fears
Each and everyone of us.

The memories will last
Forever inside our hearts
Although we say good-bye today
The bond will never fade away.

So don't shed a tear
For the past
Just look to the future
You know that I'm right
When I tell you to fight
I know that you can
For now it's my time
You followed me through life
You've opened up the doors
And showed the world to me
Now let me go free
To spread out my wings
And I will make you proud.

We all have dreams
And we all want glory
We all have hopes and fears
Each and everyone of us.

For now it's my time
You've followed me through life
You've opened up the doors
And shown the world to me
Now let me go free
To spread out my wings
And I will make you proud.

Colleagues and, I know, the people of Saskatchewan would agree that Constable Brock Myrol and his three colleagues indeed have made us very proud of them because they have served their country and served it well. And we want to add our condolences and best wishes to the families who are finding this a very difficult time. And we know that all we can do is say thank you, but it is a very sincere and heartfelt thank you.

MESSAGE FROM HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly, before orders of the day, I wish to advise members that today is Commonwealth Day, this being Monday, March 14. And as is the custom, Her Majesty has sent us a message with respect to education and creating opportunity and realizing potential. I would ask that all members would rise for the message from Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth.

The message from Her Majesty, the Queen, Head of the Commonwealth:

Of the nearly two billion citizens of the Commonwealth, more than half are under the age of twenty-five. That provides our association with a strong foundation for the future. Of course, we all face significant challenges. Some people live in conditions of conflict or insecurity. Others have suffered the impact of natural disasters, such as flooding or hurricanes, which can cause great damage to their communities and countries. Quite how destructive this can be became apparent with the hurricane in the Caribbean last . . . [summer] and of course the devastating Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami.

Well that should have been last September.

Overcoming these global challenges, whether as individuals or nations, depends on human ingenuity and commitment. It involves young people in particular having the chance to develop their talents and their abilities — without being held back by inequality. In my lifetime, I have often seen that when people are encouraged to develop their skills of writing and reasoning, they are well placed to contribute their ideas and energies towards building a better future.

The key to unlocking human potential, and creating opportunity, is education.

Education is sometimes described as the golden thread that binds the Commonwealth. Our shared use of a common, world language — English — has underpinned a long and rich tradition of educational co-operation. With our shared practices and similar systems, an extensive network of scholarships, and many examples of excellence, much has been achieved.

That work continues as the Commonwealth responds to today's new challenges. In our association, where around 75 million children lack access to basic education, one clear objective is the UN Millennium Development Goal of achieving universal primary education by [the year] 2015. Another is mitigating the effects of HIV and AIDS,

two-thirds of whose sufferers around the world are Commonwealth citizens, and which in some member countries each year causes the death of more teachers than can be met by newly qualified replacements. A third objective is to expand distance education, through bodies such as the Commonwealth of Learning — based in Canada — which encourages Commonwealth countries to pool their expertise. Knowledge-based economies are the key to future prosperity and overcoming technological and other inequalities will be much in the minds of Commonwealth Heads of Government when they meet in Malta in November.

For all of us, knowledge is a life-long journey. Education is a precious gift which should be available to everyone, young and old. Not only does it equip us with the skills and . . . intellect to overcome the problems we face; it also increases our understanding of — and respect for — other people, whatever our differences may be. Perhaps Nelson Mandela put it best when he said, “education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

To everyone throughout the Commonwealth who is working towards this worthy goal, I extend my heartfelt thanks.

[Signed] Elizabeth R.

14 March 2005

Thank you.

Why is the Premier on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I ask leave of the Assembly to move a motion under rule 49 of the *Rules and Procedures* of this Assembly.

The Speaker: — The Premier of Saskatchewan has requested leave to move a motion under rule 49. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. I recognize the Premier.

MOTION UNDER RULE 49

Fair Treatment Under Equalization Program

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the conclusion of my remarks I will make the former motion. It is being seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Swift Current.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to lead off this debate on Saskatchewan’s position regarding Canada’s equalization program. The positions that we put forward and the energy with which we pursue those positions will affect our province for generations. Therefore it is imperative that we pursue this issue with energy, with clarity, and with resolve.

Canada’s equalization program is famously complex and that has undermined the program’s transparency. You could say that

the complexity of the program has been evolving at the same rate that its transparency has been diminishing. And that is why it took the independent work of Dr. Thomas Courchene to bring national attention to the legitimacy of Saskatchewan’s longstanding grievance with equalization as he did last year.

Mr. Speaker, well prior the recent Atlantic Accord signed between the national government and the governments of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador, well prior to even discussion about this accord, letters from our Minister of Finance, letters from myself to Minister Goodale and to the Prime Minister from May and June of last year clearly indicated that fair and equitable treatment has always been at the heart of what we seek from the national government for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some good work has already been done, Mr. Speaker, by the federal government, and we applaud Finance Minister Ralph Goodale for providing necessary, and if I may say, overdue compensation for years of past inequity. And I’m also pleased to say that in Saskatchewan we have formed a united and a non-partisan front. Members of every political party and every level of government have joined this fight for the future of Saskatchewan and for the future of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, taxpayers in Saskatchewan and in every province and territory of the Confederation pay for equalization and these taxpayers expect the program to deliver on its guarantee of comparable standards of services for comparable tax rates nationwide. Canadians insist on fairness and equity in this fundamental program. These are not just principles intrinsic to the goals of an equalization program, these are principles and values intrinsically Canadian.

Saskatchewan remains a firm believer in the principles that are at the heart of equalization — the principles of adequacy, effectiveness, responsiveness, transparency, and stability. And the present problems with equalization are not about principle. They are about, rather, the consequences that arise from the current program design, chief among them being the inequitable treatment of Saskatchewan’s natural resources, not only in the oil and gas sector, but also in the mining sector.

The current equalization program has simply not allowed Saskatchewan to fully realize the benefits of our natural resources. At times, Mr. Speaker, this program has even punished Saskatchewan for our efforts to develop our oil and gas industries. And, Mr. Speaker, there is a better way.

Under the recent Atlantic Accord, Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia are now permitted to keep 100 per cent of their energy revenues. Under the existing equalization program, Saskatchewan has kept about 10 per cent, Mr. Speaker. The differential here is at the heart of the inequity. And that is why, Mr. Speaker, we seek a Saskatchewan energy accord that recognizes provincial ownership of natural resources and allows our province to retain 100 per cent of energy revenues after the claw-back effects under equalization.

Mr. Speaker, I and we have welcomed the recent Atlantic accords. They obviously represent good news for Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia, but they also represent good news in my view for Canada, good news for the

people of Saskatchewan. We welcome the Atlantic accords because they demonstrate that the federal government has now recognized the special nature of non-renewable resources, particularly oil and gas, and because these accords highlight the fact that not all oil and gas deposits are created equal in terms of the ease by which they are developed.

These resources, these oil and gas resources, have been a factor in Saskatchewan's remarkable climb into the ranks of the have provinces. The oil and gas industry has worked hard to develop and sustain this resource in Saskatchewan through past innovations, including the innovations of horizontal drilling, including the innovations of carbon dioxide sequestration where these new, exciting technologies are prolonging the life of our oilfields, expanding their productivity, and at the same time recapturing greenhouse gas and burying it in the earth, with benefit not only to Saskatchewan, not only to the nation, but with benefit to the world.

Exemption of our oil and gas revenues, the same kind of exemption now enjoyed by Atlantic Canada, will allow Saskatchewan to build greater fiscal capacity, to pursue with even greater vigour the development of our oil and gas sector, and to build a future that allows Saskatchewan to contribute even more to the Canadian federation. And, Mr. Speaker, this is where we intend to go.

Mr. Speaker, if Saskatchewan had enjoyed fair treatment of our oil and gas revenues, if the federal government had recognized and responded to our challenges in this sector as they have now responded in Atlantic Canada, over the last 10 years, Mr. Speaker, our province would have benefited by an additional \$4 billion in equalization payments.

Mr. Speaker, we are set to become economic leaders in this country in our second century. We are poised today, this year, to lead all provinces in capital investment growth. In fact we intend, we expect to double the national average in capital investment growth. We are a favourite jurisdiction of the mining industry worldwide, as recently described by the Fraser Institute. We are already world leaders in new technologies, in climate change and enhanced oil recovery. The CO₂ injection project at Weyburn, of which I've spoken, is now being joined by an Apache project benefiting our natural environment and benefiting our economy and benefiting our people. And, Mr. Speaker, as you well know, we have been prime movers in Canada's evolving social conscience for decades.

[14:45]

We are now prepared to be economic leaders and will lend this economic strength to the nation as well. And this is what we want — we want to lend strength to the Canadian federation. A Saskatchewan energy accord would be far from unprecedented and would allow just that, a more robust economy in Saskatchewan that lends its economic strength to every region of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, it's clearly in the interests of the national government to assist us in this endeavour. And this is what members on both sides of this House seek. This is what all Saskatchewan political party leaders and, if I may say, community leaders seek together. And, Mr. Speaker, this is

what the Saskatchewan members of Parliament and Saskatchewan senators are also seeking — a Saskatchewan energy accord built on the principle of fairness and equity that strengthens all of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we worked hard in Saskatchewan to get to where we are, a have province, a province with its fiscal house in order, a province embarking on a new century of hope and opportunity.

Our people, Mr. Speaker, have been bold. They have been bold, they have been innovative, and they have made sacrifice. And, Mr. Speaker, we are simply not content to allow this kind of hard work and sacrifice to be punished by confiscatory equalization. And we are not content in Saskatchewan with anything short of an equalization program that allows us to achieve our goal of strengthening all of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, last week, the Finance minister brought a historical perspective to his presentation to the Canadian Senate that highlighted and detailed the negative effects for Saskatchewan of changes to equalization over the course of many years.

We are currently preparing a submission and presentation for the House of Commons subcommittee on finance that will be in the province March 21, here in Regina. And with the committee of finance from the House of Commons, as the Minister of Finance was with the Senate committee, as we have been in all of our correspondence and communication, as I have been on platforms around the country, we will be very frank with the federal government. We will be very emphatic, and we will make our voices very, very clearly heard.

As I indicated earlier, I will have opportunity this week to meet for a short period of time with the Prime Minister of Canada when he is in the city of Regina. That, I understand, will be a very brief meeting. My goal from that meeting is to establish the process, to establish the next steps forward that we from Saskatchewan with a united voice may advance our case to him and the national government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, it is both reasonable and necessary to overhaul equalization. Once, Mr. Speaker, the federal government has met its obligation to the people of Saskatchewan through a Saskatchewan energy accord, I believe it must proceed with a fair and impartial review of the whole program.

We believe, Mr. Speaker, that an excellent opportunity exists here to achieve an equalization program that is adequate, that is responsive and fair to all Canadians, and we in fact look forward to that work being undertaken. But before that work, Mr. Speaker, what is crucial from the point of view of the people of Saskatchewan is that a Saskatchewan energy accord is first established, an accord that protects the value and the revenues and the potential of the natural resources, particularly those natural resources which can only be withdrawn once; that ensures the protection and value of those natural resources are

in the hands of the people who own those resources — the people of Saskatchewan.

We seek without reservation a Saskatchewan energy accord. When that is achieved, Mr. Speaker, we look forward, we look forward to working with the federal government, with the provinces and territories of Canada in building a fair and impartial and equitable equalization program for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this work, as I said at the beginning, is crucial, crucial to the province of Saskatchewan, crucial to our future. It's work that needs to be done to benefit Saskatchewan people. It needs to be done to benefit the children and their children of Saskatchewan today. This work will guarantee Saskatchewan's ability to continue making lasting and significant contributions to the nation and the people of Canada.

And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Swift Current:

That this Assembly urge the Prime Minister and the federal Minister of Finance to respect the principle of equity and the treatment of provincial energy revenues and immediately begin negotiations with the Government of Saskatchewan on the achievement of a Saskatchewan energy accord that guarantees 100 per cent protection from equalization clawbacks on its energy revenues beginning in the 2005-06 fiscal year. And further, that this Assembly urge the Prime Minister and the federal Minister of Finance to introduce reforms to the manner in which equalization entitlements are determined, to recognize that natural resources are non-renewable, and that the financial benefits from the depletion of these resources should remain with the province that owns them, and that any program reforms include the return to a national determination of provincial fiscal disparities.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Saskatoon Riversdale, the Premier of Saskatchewan, seconded by the member for Swift Current, the Leader of the Opposition:

That this Assembly urge the Prime Minister and the federal Minister of Finance to respect the principle of equity in the treatment of provincial energy revenues and immediately begin negotiations with the Government of Saskatchewan on the achievement of a Saskatchewan energy accord that guarantees 100 per cent protection from equalization clawbacks on its energy revenues beginning in the 2005-06 fiscal year. And further, that this Assembly urge the Prime Minister and the federal Minister of Finance to introduce reforms to the manner in which equalization entitlements are determined, to recognize that natural resources are non-renewable, and that the financial benefits from the depletion of these resources should remain with the province that owns them, and that any program reforms include the return to a national determination of provincial fiscal disparities.

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to enter this very important debate and speak in full support of the motion as the first order of business of the 2005 spring sitting of the Legislative Assembly. As you will know, Mr. Speaker, I'd asked our House Leader, the member for Melfort, to ensure that an emergency debate on equalization be the very, very first thing that we would deal with when the legislature returned for the spring.

And so I'm pleased and grateful that the Premier has agreed with the Saskatchewan Party's request to move this debate from where the government had originally placed it on the agenda after a number of days of debating the centennial.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of equalization is very complex. Most Canadians don't know much about how the federal government goes about calculating the payments to provinces on a program that will total almost \$11 billion this year and is moving upwards. And I'd venture a guess that most Canadians don't have much interest in knowing what the details are of the formula that seems to require a graduate degree in mathematics to figure out, Mr. Speaker.

But there is one thing that all Canadians do agree on when it comes to the equalization program — they believe it should be fair. They believe it should be fair to all regions of Saskatchewan and all parts of the country.

But the issue in this debate is not whether the federal equalization program treats Saskatchewan fairly, because it clearly does not. It clearly does not treat Saskatchewan fairly. Equalization doesn't treat Saskatchewan fairly when it comes to oil and gas revenues, unless by fair you mean the federal government taking more than 100 per cent of the benefit of oil and gas industry, leaving Saskatchewan families with nothing but regulatory bills to pay.

Equalization doesn't treat Saskatchewan's mining industry fairly either, unless it is somehow fair for the federal government to grossly overestimate the size and value of Saskatchewan's mining production and then reduce equalization entitlements to compensate for these imaginary provincial mining revenues.

And equalization doesn't treat Saskatchewan fairly in the calculation of our fiscal capacity relative to the other nine provinces in Canada because it only uses five of them to do the math. Oil-rich Alberta and four Atlantic provinces are removed from the equalization calculation before the calculator even gets turned on, and that really hurts Saskatchewan.

So the obvious question then is, why? Why is this the case? Why do we face this unfairness? Well it's good . . . It's a matter of will frankly, Mr. Speaker. We're going to need a federal government that agrees that this is absolutely unfair to our province and is prepared to act on that unfairness and do something about it.

There should be reason for hope. They took some positive steps to redress previous concerns, previous clawbacks in the fall. There should be hope that, based on the fact that they were

prepared to sign an Atlantic Accord with two provinces in Eastern Canada, so there should be hope and reasonable expectation that the federal government will do the same thing with respect to this case that Saskatchewan is making.

And I think all sides in the legislature can agree at least on one thing today, that this formula that currently faces Saskatchewan simply doesn't treat us fairly. So I would submit that the real question that we are debating here today is this: does the federal government, does the Prime Minister, the federal Finance minister, are they motivated to deal with this situation, Mr. Speaker? Do they want to address . . . Is there a willingness to address this situation?

Again based on what happened this fall with respect to past grievances, there should be hope for us in Saskatchewan. Based on what we've heard lately from the federal government, even from the federal Finance minister when asked in question period by opposition members of parliament from Saskatchewan, it doesn't look like the government is on the cusp of making a decision that will be positive for Saskatchewan. So we may need to ramp up our case a little bit. We may need to make a case for the current unfairness of the equalization formula with a loud voice that can't be ignored, frankly, by the federal government, by the member for Regina Wascana, the Finance minister, or by the Prime Minister.

We have to understand that the Prime Minister agreed with Newfoundland and Nova Scotia that the equalization formula was not working for those provinces when it comes to offshore oil and gas. And less than a month ago, Mr. Martin's federal Liberal government signed that new deal that we all are familiar with, with Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. He signed a deal saying that this was a much fairer treatment of the resource revenue of those two provinces. It was a deal that essentially removed oil and gas revenues from the calculation of equalization entitlements until 2012 and possibly until 2020.

Last week in Ottawa, Saskatchewan's Finance minister, together with the member . . . the Finance critic for the opposition, the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs, told the Senate committee on national finance that Saskatchewan can support that kind of offshore energy agreement, the energy accord for those two provinces. It was the right thing to do. And although it is clearly a short-term solution to some fundamental structural problems with the equalization program, it's a good first step.

But, Mr. Speaker, those same fundamental problems with equalization that were creating problems for Newfoundland and Nova Scotia are also having a devastating financial impact here in Saskatchewan. So I think it's an appropriate question to ask of the Prime Minister — maybe the Premier will be able to ask it this week — what about Saskatchewan, Mr. Martin? What about our province? The case that we would make mirrors the case that was made by those other two provinces, by Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. It's so very similar.

So the question will be to the Liberal party and to its leader, what about Saskatchewan? Is it fair that the Liberal government has confiscated more than \$4 billion in oil and gas revenue, as the Premier has already highlighted, over just the past decade?

We know that the Premier has written to Mr. Martin asking for the same deal as Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, for a Saskatchewan energy accord, and on that request the Premier has the full support of the official opposition. A few weeks ago the Saskatchewan Party's Finance critic, the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs, also wrote to the federal Finance minister, Ralph Goodale, in support of Saskatchewan's position for changes to the equalization formula. And not too long ago, at the Premier's invitation, many of us gathered here in this Legislative Assembly — members on all sides of the House, and federal members of parliament, as well as a senator, and the provincial Leader of the Third Party, who doesn't have a seat in the House — to discuss the equalization issue, Mr. Speaker, and to make sure that we were presenting a united front.

Now I'll take the Premier at his word that that's how he wants to proceed. But given what we've even found out today, that the Premier has arranged for a meeting with the Prime Minister with not so much as a phone call to the opposition either from the House Leader or the Minister of Finance or his staff to our staff to let us know that on this, the most important issue facing Saskatchewan, not so much as a phone call, it is my hope, it is our hope, Mr. Speaker, that this unity that the Premier seeks, which we will offer and continue to offer, isn't just about photo opportunities.

[15:00]

We hope that that's the case, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier is sincere in wanting to work together and not simply interested in photo opportunities because we want to play a constructive role on this issue. And you know, throughout the debate we may disagree, frankly, on tactics. We may suggest some things in terms of ramping up the message from Saskatchewan that the Premier might not agree with. And you know, that's reasonable; that's part of discourse and debate. But on the substantive issue of what we're looking for in terms of changes for treatment to mining revenue, treatment of oil and gas revenues, I want it to be very clear that the Saskatchewan Party, our position is to stand with Saskatchewan, obviously, with the interests of this province. We will stand for and fight for a fair deal for the province of Saskatchewan. It is our hope that a unified front is not simply about politics for the Premier, but that it is about getting the job done, getting a more effective deal.

Because I think we are on the cusp of something pretty exciting in the province of Saskatchewan. I'm not sure we have the leadership and vision that will capitalize on some of the economic momentum that could be there. In fact I'd suggest that we're not quite there yet, Mr. Speaker; we might need to change that leadership and that vision. But solving this equalization situation, getting a fair deal for the province will go such a very long way towards this province taking its rightful place in the country as a leader: economically, socially, from a health care perspective. A better equalization deal for Saskatchewan is going to help ensure that we do take advantage of the momentum that is there right now. It, along with a change in leadership and vision in Saskatchewan, are crucial to getting that job done.

We want to make it clear on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, on this particular issue, we'll stand with the government, we'll stand with the province of Saskatchewan,

and we will work towards a better deal for equalization.

We have some specific ideas. We released a 10-point plan for our ideas in terms of getting this message out and providing a more effective case. And we offer that to the government for their consideration. We haven't heard back yet; we hope to soon. And we will continue to offer ideas and suggestions on how we can effectively make this case, both through my office, Mr. Speaker, as well as from individual members and the Finance critic for the opposition, the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

So with those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I can tell this House it's a pleasure to second the motion and indicate that the Saskatchewan Party will be fully supporting the motion before the Assembly today.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — On the rule 49 motion with respect to equalization, moved by the member for Saskatoon Riversdale, the Premier of Saskatchewan, seconded by the member for Swift Current, the member for . . . the Leader of the Opposition . . . And why is the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs on his feet?

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — To enter into debate, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, I rise in this Assembly today for the first time as Finance critic of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — I'd like to begin by paying tribute to my predecessor, the member for Canora-Pelly. For the better part of a decade he defined the role of opposition Finance critic. He did so with such vigour and passion, not to mention credibility, that it will be a hard act to follow. However, Mr. Speaker, I will do my best to fulfill my duties in my own way, to take on this challenging yet very rewarding position.

I would also like to thank my leader, the Leader of the Opposition, and all members of the opposition caucus, for the trust and confidence they have shown in me. I am very proud, Mr. Speaker, to be part of this team.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank members of the government who sent their personal notes of encouragement and congratulations. Although always somewhat qualified by, do a good job but not too good, I appreciate their sentiments nonetheless.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to accomplish something not often pursued by the opposition. I rise to join with the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party in support of the position taken by the Premier and the Minister of Finance.

One week ago I had the opportunity to join the Finance minister in Ottawa, to put forward a united Saskatchewan front before the Senate committee on national finance. The significance of our joint efforts was very well received by the honourable senators, with many commenting that they would like to see more of this type of approach, where politicians put aside their partisan differences so Ottawa can hear one united voice representing each and every area of our great province.

Mr. Speaker, for too long the people of Saskatchewan have been treated unfairly by a federal equalization program that was supposed to strengthen our country. Instead it has torn at our country and left provinces bickering over a complex, bureaucratic formula that almost nobody in Canada understands. Instead of helping to build our province, the federal equalization program has robbed Saskatchewan families and individuals of much of the benefit of our rich oil and gas revenues, and to a lesser extent the benefit of our growing mining sector as well.

When John A. Macdonald envisioned a new nation stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific and touching on the waters of the Arctic Ocean, I am sure he wasn't thinking of a country defined by a dysfunctional welfare program that doesn't appear to be serving the best interests of anyone. Mr. Speaker, as you have heard the Leader of the Opposition say today, it's time for Saskatchewan to stand and be heard in Ottawa. The equalization program is broken. It's time to put away the duct tape and give the equalization program a permanent overhaul.

Mr. Speaker, equalization has always been on the national agenda in Canada. Addressing the unique interests of Canada's regions was part of the Confederation debates of the 1860s and it has dominated the national political discourse ever since. A formal program of equalization was established by the federal government in 1957. Since 1982, equalization has been a constitutional requirement of federal government policy. Section 36(2) of the Constitution Act commits the federal government to make equalization payments to ensure that provincial governments have sufficient revenues to provide reasonably comparable levels of public services at reasonably comparable levels of taxation.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is a little more than ironic that since the changes to the equalization formula that were implemented in 1982, the program has become not much more than a welfare trap from which Saskatchewan has not been able to escape. Saskatchewan's economic position in Canada is a shadow of what it should be or what it could be, Mr. Speaker.

Of course the primary cause of Saskatchewan's economic decline over the past decade is not the equalization formula. We cannot lay all the blame for the NDP government's job creation record — the worst in Canada over the past five years, Mr. Speaker — on a dysfunctional equalization formula. We cannot lay all the blame for the NDP government's population record, the second worst in Canada over the past decade. No, the primary reason for Saskatchewan's dismal economic performance compared to other provinces is an NDP government that lacks vision, lacks creativity, and lacks a strategy for growth, Mr. Speaker. But there can be no doubt that the federal government's equalization formula has played a role in keeping Saskatchewan from achieving all we are capable of

achieving.

It is interesting that one of the most powerful arguments for making fundamental changes to the equalization formula is that, while Saskatchewan has become poorer relative to other provinces, including its neighbour Manitoba over the past decade, Manitoba's equalization payments have been going up while Saskatchewan's equalization payments have been going down. How is it that Manitoba, with a faster growing population, a stronger job creation record, and a higher per capita income than Saskatchewan has experienced increasing equalization payments while Saskatchewan's equalization payments have shrunk?

Now to be fair, the problems with equalization and the formula predate the current NDP government. To find the source of the equalization mess Saskatchewan has been saddled with today, we must go back to 1982 and the passage of the Constitution Act. In 1982 the concept of equalization, again that provide provincial governments sufficient revenues to provide reasonably comparable levels of public services at reasonably comparable levels of taxation, was enshrined into the Constitution, Mr. Speaker.

An equalization is a good idea. And it should have been a good thing for Saskatchewan. But it didn't turn out that way, for at least a couple of reasons that go back to 1982. First, the federal government moved from a 10-province standard to a 5-province standard for the measurement of each province's relative or average fiscal capacity. One of the provinces removed from the standard was resource-rich Alberta. Second, the federal government decided to include 100 per cent of non-renewable resource revenues from the five provinces left in the standard, including Saskatchewan, in the calculation of equalization payments.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan families and Saskatchewan residents have paid a massive price for these two decisions. Since 1982, Ottawa has been calculating Saskatchewan's fiscal capacity relative to other provinces including our significant oil and gas revenues. At the same time, Alberta's vast oil and gas resource revenues have been cut out of the calculation.

At the risk of simplifying a very complex program, the net result has been that the equalization formula overstates Saskatchewan's relative fiscal capacity and then claws back virtually all of our oil and gas resource revenues for distribution to other recipient provinces. In some years, as was demonstrated by Thomas Courchene and also the Conference Board of Canada and the C.D. Howe Institute, and supported by many others, Saskatchewan has experienced oil-and-gas-related clawbacks in equalization payments that were greater than — greater than, Mr. Speaker — the oil and gas revenues actually collected by this province. In effect the federal government has confiscated most if not all the benefit of our non-renewable oil and gas revenues, and then sent those revenues to other provinces. Saskatchewan's Department of Finance has estimated that if oil and gas revenues were not counted in the calculation of equalization payments, Saskatchewan would have received another \$4.2 billion from the program over the last 10 years.

Clearly any formula, equalization or otherwise, that allows the

federal government to confiscate virtually all of the oil and gas revenue that rightfully belongs to the people of Saskatchewan is fundamentally flawed and needs to be fixed.

The federal government must also recognize that non-renewable resource revenues like oil and gas revenues should not be treated as a permanent source of provincial income. The development of non-renewable resources is by definition a short-term proposition. Once the resource has been recovered, sold, and consumed, the province receives no further value from it. As many have argued, the exploitation of non-renewable resources should be accounted in the same way as the sale of an asset. In this context, non-renewable resource revenue in general, and oil and gas revenues in particular, should be removed completely from the calculation of equalization payments.

So the first step in changing and fixing the equalization program is to return to the 10-province standard for calculating equalization payments, and then exclude non-renewable resource revenues from the calculation.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is not sufficient to simply make the argument that the equalization program must be fundamentally changed so that Saskatchewan gets more money. Not that there's anything wrong with more money for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, but the equalization program needs to do more than redistribute wealth between provinces. The structure of the equalization program must facilitate sustainable economic growth as a major policy goal, and the program must be structured so that it does not thwart a province's efforts to escape the status of have-nots.

But the current equalization formula achieves neither of these things in Saskatchewan. It has robbed Saskatchewan of its resource revenue and hindered our ability to maintain public services at levels comparable to other provinces. And the equalization formula, Mr. Speaker, has created a significant barrier to economic growth and prosperity in Saskatchewan.

I want to very briefly touch on the recent agreements finalized between the federal government and the provinces of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. These two agreements, while certainly no more than a short-term fix for the fundamental weaknesses in the equalization formula, are a positive step for the two Atlantic provinces. They are also positive news for Saskatchewan, or at least, Mr. Speaker, it might be positive news for Saskatchewan. The Atlantic agreements essentially compensate Newfoundland and Nova Scotia for 100 per cent of the equalization clawback of their offshore oil and gas revenues through 2012 with an option for another eight years after that.

[15:15]

These important agreements recognize the serious flaws in the equalization program. They recognize the economic challenges faced by Newfoundland and Nova Scotia and they provide a fair deal that will give both provinces the opportunity to build economic capacity and improve the quality of life for their citizens. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan families deserve no less than the same deal.

Mr. Speaker, as the Finance critic for the official opposition

there will be many times when I disagree with this Premier, this NDP government, and this Finance minister. For the benefit of those in the press I may even peel my tires a bit. But on the issue of equalization, on the need to get a fair deal for Saskatchewan, and on the specific recommendations for fundamental change in the federal government's approach to equalization calculations, the Saskatchewan Party stands in support of the position taken by the Premier and the Minister of Finance. We speak today with one voice — a strong and united voice — in support of a fair deal for Saskatchewan families and Saskatchewan residents.

I call on the federal Minister of Finance, the Member of Parliament for Wascana, and Saskatchewan's sole representative in the federal Liberal government to hear our call and to take immediate action to support Saskatchewan's position. I know Mr. Goodale to be a reasonable man with Saskatchewan's interests at heart. What he needs to do now is clearly articulate Saskatchewan's position to the Prime Minister and to his colleagues around the federal Cabinet table. In the short term, Mr. Goodale, Saskatchewan needs you to support our call for an energy accord that guarantees retention by the province of 100 per cent of Saskatchewan's non-renewable resource revenues beginning in the 2005-2006 fiscal year.

And while I have not commented on it yet today, the Saskatchewan Party supports the provincial government's call for a return to the use of four separate mining tax bases beginning in '05-06 instead of the current proxy system that artificially inflates the fiscal capacity of Saskatchewan's mining sector and therefore reduces equalization entitlements. The official opposition also supports a long-term change to the equalization program that would see a return to the ten province standard and the complete removal of non-renewable resource revenues in the calculation of equalization entitlements no later than 2009-2010.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the debate that we are having today is an important one for the province of Saskatchewan. It is an important step in convincing the federal government that Saskatchewan deserves fair treatment — the same treatment afforded Newfoundland and Nova Scotia when it comes to our oil and gas revenues.

I hope Prime Minister Paul Martin and federal Finance Minister Ralph Goodale are listening. But I think it's fair to say they have not yet turned their attention to securing a short-term and a long-term solution to Saskatchewan's predicament. And so I believe it's important that we talk about other steps that can be taken to ensure that Saskatchewan gets a fair equalization deal from Ottawa beginning this year.

As has been concluded by most of Canada's foremost experts on equalization, the equalization formula is not fair for Saskatchewan. Changes to the equalization program are necessary, both immediately and in the long term. Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, it's time to ramp up the pressure because what has been done so far isn't working. We don't even seem to be on the federal government's radar screen at the present time.

Consider the extreme measures to which the Premier of Newfoundland resorted to just to get the Liberal government to honour a commitment made by the Prime Minister during last

year's federal election. Now nobody on this side of the House is advocating tearing down flags, but we agree with the advice of several senators that they had for us last week in Ottawa. For example, Senator Terry Stratton made some very telling remarks from the viewpoint of a non-Saskatchewan resident, Mr. Speaker. I would like to quote Senator Stratton from the Senate Finance Committee hearings Monday, March 7, and I quote:

I am from Manitoba where we have always reaped the benefits of equalization to a greater degree than Saskatchewan, and I have always wondered why that occurred. Now I have read your document and I know why. Why are you being so polite? According to this document, you have been getting the short end of the stick for a long time. You are still being polite. Are you getting anywhere with the negotiation? Surely to goodness with the evidence that you have put forward, you have a substantial case for a substantial correction.

Later on in a personal discussion with me, Senator Stratton said that if it were his province, people wouldn't have to read a 30-page document to understand Saskatchewan's plight. Making the argument in a concise, forceful manner on the national stage is up to the political leadership of the province, Mr. Speaker, and I couldn't agree more.

Saskatchewan families and Saskatchewan residents are not being treated fairly in the equalization program. The program is holding Saskatchewan back, and it's time to ramp up the pressure on the Prime Minister and Mr. Goodale. When the Finance minister and I visited Ottawa last week, we very much appreciated the support and encouragement of every Saskatchewan Member of Parliament and every senator from Saskatchewan. They have done their homework. They know the issues well and they are tremendous allies to have.

It's time to build support for Saskatchewan's position with the opposition caucuses in Ottawa — the Bloc, the NDP, and the Conservatives. The Premier and the Leader of the Opposition should meet with representatives of each federal opposition caucus and representatives of each political party to secure support for Saskatchewan's position, both immediately in the House of Commons, and also in their platforms in the next federal election.

The Premier and the Leader of the Opposition should also be asking for a special meeting of the Council of the Federation to build a united front of provincial governments for permanent changes to the equalization formula and to garner support for a Saskatchewan energy accord.

And finally, the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition should be meeting with the Prime Minister and with Saskatchewan's only representative in the Liberal government, Finance minister Ralph Goodale. Mr. Speaker, I understand that that meeting may be taking place very soon, on Wednesday. And I do hope the Leader of the Opposition is included in that meeting.

Saskatchewan families have a right to know, Mr. Speaker, how Mr. Goodale will support Saskatchewan's call for a fair deal from Ottawa on equalization, the conclusion of a Saskatchewan

energy accord, and permanent, long-term changes to the equalization programs. What actions will Mr. Goodale take going forward? Saskatchewan residents need to know and the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition need to ask the question.

Saskatchewan families and Saskatchewan residents have the right to fair and equitable treatment, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan has a right to move towards prominence on the national stage. Mr. Speaker, now is not the time to be timid. Now is the time for bold and capable leadership. We need the country to understand what we in this province know — a stronger Saskatchewan makes a stronger Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a great pleasure to address the legislature today on this important issue and the impact that it has on the future of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in the debate on this motion and to provide some comments with respect to equalization.

If I might just turn to history first. Canada's equalization program has taken many twists and turns since its inception in 1957. It began with simple rules, considering only three provincial revenue sources and basing program eligibility on just two provinces. However equalization has become more complicated with each successive five-year renewal resulting in the current program — a complex maze of formulas, calculations, assumptions, proxies, and adjustments that is fully understood by only a small number of bureaucrats and academics.

The equalization program lacks transparency, with the result that public confidence is low in a \$10.9 billion federal program. The current program does not improve stability in provincial finances as it is advertised to do, and it is not responsive to changing provincial fiscal circumstances. As time has elapsed, layer upon layer of adjustments have been introduced, each causing a shift in the manner in which the equalization program attempts to achieve the fundamental principle underlying the program that comparable levels of public services can be provided by provinces applying comparable levels of taxation.

As I presented to the Senate finance committee, it's like an old car that has seen better days, and no amount of repair or maintenance is going to make it look and run like new again. We also have a program that attempts to balance federal political and fiscal necessities. This has diminished the current program's ability to effectively measure interprovincial fiscal disparities in Canada.

This reality was reflected, Mr. Speaker, in a major change in the equalization program that occurred in 1982 when the federal government decided to fully include non-renewable resource revenues in the formula and moved to a five-province standard that excluded Alberta, Canada's largest energy producer. These changes were primarily introduced to control the federal costs of equalization and to ensure that Ontario would never be

eligible to receive program benefits.

However these changes also cause significant collateral damage to Saskatchewan as we experience a significant decline in our net gain from energy developments after the negative effects of equalization are factored in. In some years this equalization effect, referred to as the claw-back effect, is larger than Saskatchewan's energy royalties, resulting in a net revenue loss for our province from these developments.

To illustrate, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's claw-back rate for its energy revenues in 1981-82 was 30 per cent, which left our province with 70 per cent of our energy revenues for reinvestment. In 2001-02, the claw-back rate was 103 per cent, which meant that Saskatchewan saw a negative financial return from a non-renewable energy development for that year.

A second major change to equalization, introduced in the 1999 renewal, was to collapse four mining tax bases into a single tax base in the interest of simplicity and to introduce the concept of economic rent into this revenue category. This change was pushed through in spite of provincial concerns over data quality and a general uneasiness over the introduction of the economic rent concept that would effectively ignore actual mining royalties collected by provinces.

The result of this change has been very negative for Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan's mining sector represents about 15 per cent of all mining activity in Canada, but the new federal mining equalization calculation determines that Saskatchewan has about, not 15 per cent, Mr. Speaker, but has about 40 per cent of Canada's mining tax base. Other provinces that have large mining sectors are reported as having very little or no mining tax base. This produces confusing and unfair treatment for Saskatchewan.

In 1985 and 1986 respectively, the federal government granted Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia offshore energy accords to assist these provinces in developing their energy resources. The federal government further assisted these provinces by establishing separate revenue categories for offshore energy revenues under equalization ensuring that they would retain a minimum of 30 per cent of their energy revenues after clawbacks under equalization and generally much more.

Saskatchewan has long argued that high claw-back rates on Saskatchewan's energy revenue are unfair. However it wasn't until Professor Tom Courchene addressed this issue in a recently published article entitled "Confiscatory Equalization: The Intriguing Case of Saskatchewan's Vanishing Energy Revenues" that the federal government began to respond to Saskatchewan's concerns.

To his credit, the federal Finance minister has provided Saskatchewan some compensation for excessive claw-back rates. However Saskatchewan's receipt of one time funding to address high claw-back rates in the past pales in comparison to what our Atlantic friends have received under their special arrangement for offshore energy developments. A recent federal analysis identified that Newfoundland and Labrador retained over 100 per cent of its offshore energy revenues over the period 1999-2000 through 2003-04. During that period Saskatchewan retained less than 10 per cent. To put it another

way, had we retained 100 per cent of our energy revenues over the past 10 years when eligible for equalization, over \$4 billion in additional federal transfers would have been received by Saskatchewan.

[15:30]

We now learn of new off-shore energy agreements that will guarantee 100 per cent retention of off-shore energy revenues for Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia, and provide an estimated \$2.6 billion and \$1.1 billion respectively over the next eight years. These payments are in addition to the substantial financial benefits that will continue under the old off-shore energy accords. These new agreements can also be extended for a further eight years which would further add to the benefits being provided to these provinces.

As I told the Senate, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is not being critical of these agreements, instead I . . . [inaudible] . . . them as they recognize that non-renewable resource revenues are one-time in nature and should be retained by the rightful provincial owners of those resources to strengthen their economy. Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia now have a wonderful opportunity in which to reinvest these one-time sources of revenue to achieve a level of self-sufficiency that could not otherwise be attained through the existing equalization program. Our government is asking for this same opportunity.

Since 1982 we have seen most of the financial rewards from the extraction of non-renewal resources flow out of our province through equalization, while we continue to face the high cost of managing and regulating this sector of our economy. We must also ensure that our royalty and taxation regimes are competitive to encourage new exploration and development in the province. This is no small challenge when one looks west at our chief competitor who is unaffected by equalization clawbacks. I refer back to the 103 per cent claw-back rate Saskatchewan experienced in 2001-02 and I ask, how is Saskatchewan expected to manage its energy sector and compete with resource-rich Alberta?

Our request is the same as Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia. Let us retain the revenues from energy development for reinvestment in our province. Don't treat them as just another revenue source, as there is a fundamental difference between non-renewal resources whose value is permanently depleted once extracted from the ground and other sources of government revenues that are ongoing. This is the principle we see in the new offshore energy accords, and it should be applied fairly to all regions of our country.

Saskatchewan believes in the importance of equalization to address fiscal disparities between provinces. However Saskatchewan looks upon the existing program as being ineffective in achieving the federal constitutional commitment of ensuring that all provinces can deliver reasonably comparable levels of public services at reasonably comparable levels of taxation. The program should be reviewed or reformed in two steps.

First, Saskatchewan should receive the same opportunity to fully retain our non-renewable resource revenues as Atlantic

Canada, through the immediate negotiation of a Saskatchewan energy accord. We see absolutely no reason for different treatment of energy revenue between provinces.

Second, there should be a comprehensive review of both the existing equalization program and alternative ways of addressing interprovincial fiscal disparities in Canada. The high claw-back rate on energy is just one of many issues our government has with the representative tax system approach that has been in place for almost 50 years.

I believe that the expert panel provides an excellent opportunity accomplishing effective reform of equalization if its membership is prepared to challenge the status quo. We will be appearing before this panel, and it is my intention to push for comprehensive change that will improve the program's effectiveness, fairness, and transparency.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — This change must include a fair deal for Saskatchewan's natural resources that acknowledges its non-renewable nature and the return to a 10-province standard to adequately address fiscal disparities between provinces. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to support the motion.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — With respect to the motion under rule 49 dealing with equalization, moved by the member for Saskatoon Riversdale, seconded by the member for Swift Current, will the members take it as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Those who favour the motion say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Speaker: — Those opposed to the motion say nay. I hear none. The motion is therefore carried unanimously.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, with leave I should like to move a motion that the transcripts of the motion be conveyed by yourself, if I could have leave to do so?

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

That the transcripts of the motion just passed be forwarded to the Prime Minister of Canada and the federal Minister of Finance by Mr. Speaker.

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

That the transcripts of the motion just passed be forwarded to the Prime Minister of Canada and the federal Minister of Finance by Mr. Speaker.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, again I would ask for leave to move a motion with respect to the transcripts of the tribute that we engaged in earlier today.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

MOTION

Tribute to RCMP Officers to be Forwarded to Families

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — I move, seconded by the member for Melfort:

That the transcripts of the tribute in remembrance of the four RCMP officers killed in action be forwarded to their families and loved ones, as well as officers at the RCMP Depot in Regina by Mr. Speaker.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

That the transcripts of the tribute in remembrance of the four RCMP officers killed in action be forwarded to their families and loved ones, as well as all officers at the RCMP Depot in Regina by Mr. Speaker.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried. 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 do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:39.]

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