



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

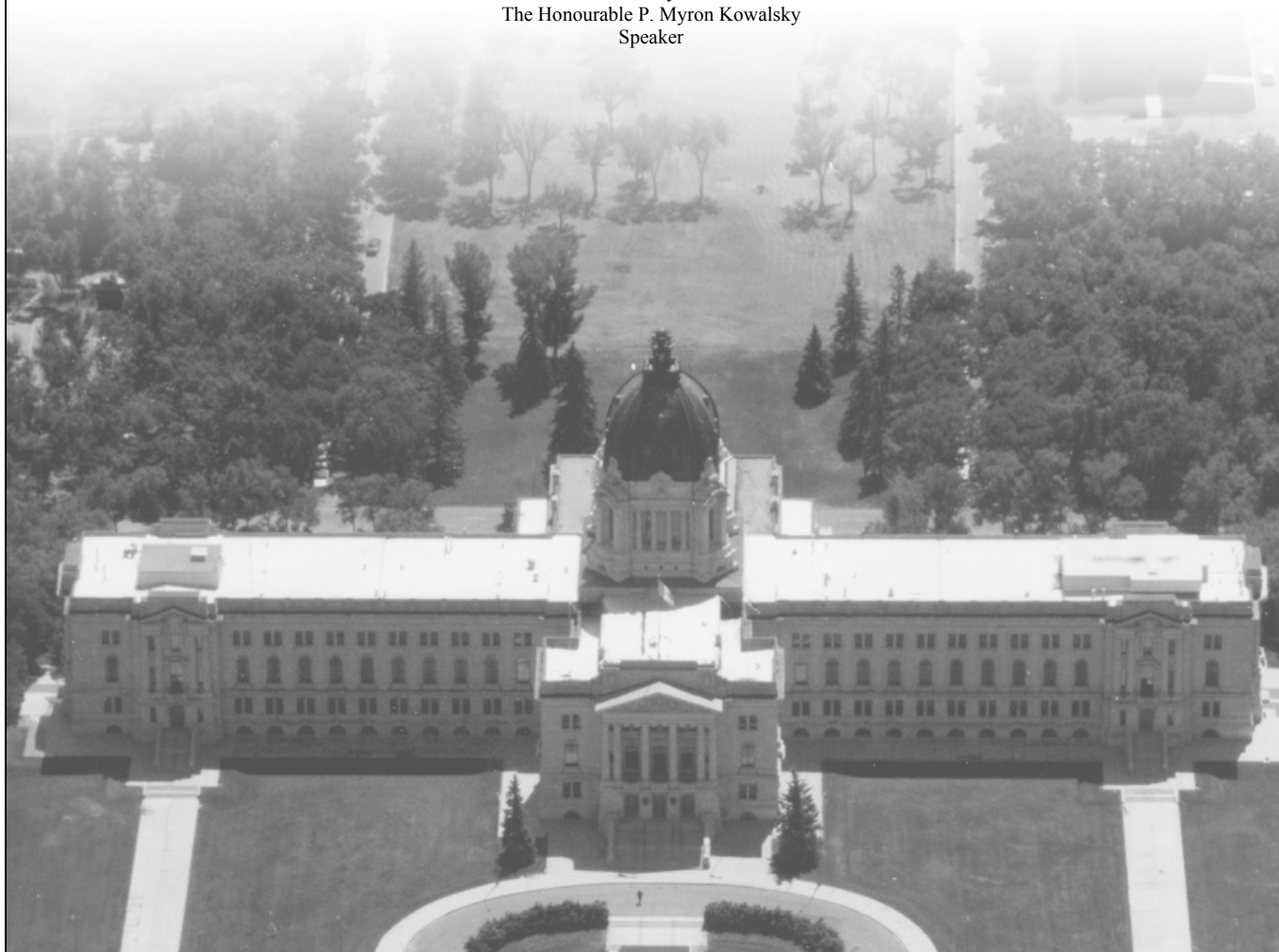
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, forced amalgamation of school districts is an issue of burning concern in the Southwest and I'm presenting a petition today on behalf of constituents from Cypress Hills, located in the communities of Piapot, Tompkins, Lancer, and Sceptre. 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.

I'm pleased to present this petition on behalf of the good citizens of Cypress Hills.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to present today. 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 the reorganization of school divisions on a strictly voluntary basis.

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

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from the great little southwest town, with the great western name of Frontier. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I rise on behalf of constituents who are concerned about the deficiency in residential support offered to people with long-term disabilities in my hometown of Swift Current. Their prayer reads as follows:

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

Mr. Speaker, all of the petitioners today are from the city of Swift Current. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Mr. Hermanson: — Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition signed by people who are concerned that the proposed changes to amalgamate 59 school divisions by January, 2006 will not prove to be cost effective. The prayer of the petition 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.

And the signatures on this petition are from the community of Dinsmore, and I'm pleased to present it on their behalf.

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

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise as well 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 all from the community of Craik. I so present.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Good morning, Mr. Speaker. This is a good Friday. A new shipment has come in and never more important on the centennial year as we look at the heritage of our province regarding . . . This petition would be regarding the Claybank Brick Plant:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again today I rise to present a petition on behalf of constituents of mine who are very concerned about the forced amalgamation of school divisions. 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.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by residents of Oungre, Torquay, Tribune, Estevan, Bienfait, and Frobisher. I so present. Thank you.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions of citizens in the Humboldt area concerned about how long they've had to wait for confirmed funding for the Humboldt hospital. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fulfill their commitment to the people of Humboldt and area and provide the necessary funding for a new hospital in Humboldt.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from Englefeld, Humboldt, LeRoy, Fulda, and Carmel. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, Mr. Speaker, I rise with a petition from concerned citizens who wish to halt the forced amalgamation of school divisions. And the petition reads as follows:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by the good citizens of Wymark and Pambrun. I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition with citizens that don't want 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 strictly a voluntary basis.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

All signed by all the good citizens of Govan. I so present.

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

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

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

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

Signed by the good citizens of Saskatoon, Dalmeny, and Vonda. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise on behalf of residents of Saskatchewan who are concerned with the effects that the TransGas Asquith natural gas storage project will have on the quality and the quantity of their water supply, Mr. Speaker. And the prayer reads as follows:

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 in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, signed by the citizens of Saskatoon and Riceton.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to present a petition on behalf of citizens who are concerned with the negative effects of the TransGas Asquith gas storage project, the negative effects that it's having on rural water supplies. The prayer reads as follows:

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 environmental 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.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the community of Delisle. 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. 637, 638, 640, and 715.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I give notice I shall on day no. 81 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Environment: what amount of revenue was raised in 2004 through the scrap tire fee?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Mr. Borgerson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you some very special guests in the west gallery. Perhaps as I introduce them they could give a little bit of a wave. I'd like to introduce to all members: Jensen Borgerson, age 7; Hayley Borgerson, age 9; Kirkland Borgerson, age 5; and Keenan Borgerson, age 8 months, who has actually already introduced himself vocally to the members in this Assembly.

They have been kind enough to bring their parents with them, Denice Borgerson and my brother Wayne Borgerson. The family is from Rockglen and they're on their way to Canora. This is their first visit to the legislature. Mr. Speaker, I think my parents would love the idea of six Borgersons looking over the shoulders of the opposition, as they are today.

I ask all members to welcome them to the legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you

and through you to all members of this Assembly I'd like to introduce someone that is very special in my life. Seated in your gallery is my husband, Vic. And he is joining us today and I hope enjoys the proceedings.

But he's just been in the process of finalizing his seeding plans for the spring. And it looks like it's a long way off when you look outside today. But it isn't that far off, Mr. Speaker. And he, along with every other producer in this province, will be out there to again produce the world's cheapest food, despite the high cost of chemicals, fertilizers, fuel, and soaring crop insurance rates. I ask all members to join me in welcoming Vic here today. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sitting in your gallery are two constituents from the Rosetown-Elrose constituency: Valarie and Lorne Sheppard from the Lucky Lake area. Lorne and Valarie have been very involved in the Lucky Lake community over the years. And I think Lorne is the most notorious for trying to improve the Riverhurst ferry crossing. It's good to see them in the gallery today. We welcome you to the legislature and hope you enjoy the proceedings. Welcome here.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Induction into Prince Albert Women's Hall of Fame

Mr. Borgerson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in celebration of women's contributions to society, the Prince Albert Council of Women held its second annual dinner on March 8 and inducted Dr. Lalita Malhotra into the Prince Albert Women's Hall of Fame.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Malhotra is an obstetrician and family physician who came to Prince Albert 30 years ago. Since then she has made a significant difference in many people's lives. Every year she delivers approximately 300 babies — more than anyone else in the province — and has assisted in establishing the Women's Wellness Centre.

Mr. Speaker, when Dr. Malhotra first came to Saskatchewan, she was restricted from practising in the same clinic as her husband. But she persevered and soon after she established her own office, becoming the first female obstetrician to practise in Prince Albert.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Malhotra has been a strong advocate for women's educational advancements and has experienced first-hand the progress that women have made throughout the years. Thanks to the efforts of people like Dr. Malhotra, women's access to education has improved dramatically in this province. In the last year women accounted for 60 per cent of

people enrolled at the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in recognizing Dr. Malhotra's determination, passion, and commitment to caring for the people of this province and increasing opportunities for women. Congratulations on her well-deserved award.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:15]

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

Saskatoon Receives AAA Rating

Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today's "Report on Business" section in *The Globe and Mail* is letting the rest of the country know something the people of Saskatoon have known for a long time. In spite of an NDP [New Democratic Party] government that continues to do its best to chase entrepreneurs and investment out of the province, the city of Saskatoon is a great place to live and work. And readers of *The Globe and Mail* across Canada this morning are finding out one of the reasons why. According to Standard & Poors, one of North America's most respected bond rating agencies, Saskatoon is one of the best run municipalities in North America.

Every year Standard & Poors rates the financial health and management of thousands of North American cities. This year just 11 cities received Standard & Poors' highest AAA rating including the city of Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, in spite of years of downloading, in spite of years of broken promises and weak leadership from this NDP government, and in spite of ineffective representation from a group of NDP MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] with no vision and even less energy, in spite of all that, Mr. Speaker, the city of Saskatoon continues to outperform virtually every other city in Canada. In fact Saskatoon's AAA performance puts the city in some pretty ... [inaudible] ... company including Melbourne, Australia; London, England; and Paris, France.

Congratulations to Mayor Don Atchison, all members of city council, and all the talented people at city hall who work so hard every day to make Saskatoon the Paris of the Prairies.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Newly Elected President for Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I rise today to congratulate a long-time resident of North Battleford and long-time wildlife supporter, Brad Pattinson, on his recent election to the presidency of the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation. I have known Brad for

many years and served with him on the North Battleford city council for 3 of his 11 years in that position, and I know that his commitment to the wildlife of this province is 100 per cent. It was inevitable that he would one day serve the Wildlife Federation in this position.

Brad Pattinson has previously served the federation for six years on the provincial board for region 2. He was at one time the provincial habitat Chair and fish and wildlife development fund Chair. He also served on the Jackfish Lake Watershed Association for 10 years and was Chair for six years. In addition to his 11 years of municipal service in North Battleford, Brad also served a full term as the mayor of the resort village of Cochin.

In a recent article in the federation's magazine, the *Outdoor Edge*, Brad Pattinson said his biggest challenge was to bring the people of Saskatchewan together to collectively ask and receive the answer to the question put to him by his late father, Dennis, many years ago. The question: what's in it for wildlife?

I ask all members to join me in congratulating the new president of the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, Brad Pattinson, and wishing him well during his term of office.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Local Labour-Sponsored Venture Capital Fund Wins Award

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to recognize the achievements of my constituent and good friend, Grant Kook, CEO [chief executive officer] and chairman of the Golden Opportunities Fund.

On December 3 last year, Golden Opportunities Fund was chosen as the 2004 Canadian labour-sponsored venture capital fund of the year. Grant Kook accepted this prestigious award at the Canadian Investment Awards in Toronto. The black-tie event, formerly known as the Canadian Mutual Fund Awards, was attended by the financial industry's top performers and analysts.

2004 was the first year that there was a specific category for labour-sponsored funds. The finalists and winner for each of the awards were based on stringent sets of criteria, including the fund's past performance, job creation record, clarity of reporting, and marketing initiatives. The award selection committee said that Golden Opportunities Fund was the first choice because of its consistent performance and its role in raising private venture capital in its province.

At the time of the honour, Golden Opportunities Fund had raised \$45 million in share capital from approximately 8,000 shareholders. The fund raised an additional \$16 million this year. Golden Opportunities has completed 50 investment transactions in 35 Saskatchewan growth companies.

Grant Kook accepted this award, and I quote:

... on behalf of the thousands of shareholders who believed that investing in Saskatchewan works ... [receiving this] inaugural award is [a] truly ... perfect ending to a tremendous year ... [a] confirmation that Golden Opportunities is making an impact.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and all of my colleagues in the Assembly to join me in congratulating Grant Kook and his Golden Opportunities Fund team on this significant honour.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Regional Economic Development Authority Week

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is REDA [regional economic development authority] week in Saskatchewan, a time to celebrate and commend the accomplishments of organizations committed to local economic development in our province.

Mr. Speaker, there are 28 regional economic development authorities in Saskatchewan that promote the growth and economic development in their regions. REDAs have an excellent track record of supporting local communities and contributing significantly to the ongoing strength of Saskatchewan's economy.

Mr. Speaker, REDAs' accomplishments are an example of the good things that can happen when local governments, business, co-operatives, and First Nations work together. REDAs are one of the reasons for the province's record-setting pace in job creation. Statistics Canada shows 11,400 more people working in the province than last February, Mr. Speaker. These numbers represent 11 consecutive months of employment growth and are the highest figures ever recorded for Saskatchewan in February.

Mr. Speaker, it is especially pleasing to see that youth employment was up in February by 6,400 jobs compared to the same month last year. This means more young people working in the province and raising their families right here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure all my colleagues on both sides of the House will join me in acknowledging the achievements of all the REDAs in Saskatchewan and for their support to local communities across the province and their contributions to the health and strength of our growing economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

Kamsack's and Manitoulin Island's Secondary Students Exchange

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on February 22 host students and parents of the Kamsack Comprehensive Institute greeted their guests from Manitoulin Island, a community located in the Lake Huron district southwest of Sudbury, Ontario. This exchange is a part of a

program called SEVEC, the Society for Educational Visits and Exchanges in Canada.

Apparently there were a few problems with the long trip from northern Ontario to Kamsack. Thirty students and three teacher supervisors began their trip in the early morning hours on a bus that broke down, and then they nearly missed their air flight. They arrived in Kamsack that evening, a little exhausted but ready for a good old Saskatchewan buffet.

In the SEVEC program, sponsored by Heritage Canada, students are twinned with others from a different school. The students are encouraged to make contact via email or telephone well in advance of their first meeting.

In Kamsack the visiting students were billeted with their host families for a week full of activities. During their week in Kamsack, the Manitoulin Island students were treated to cultural exchange sessions, tours of various Kamsack sites, and trips to Yorkton and Regina, and it's my understanding that everyone had a really good time. The Kamsack students will make their trip to Manitoulin Island on May 20 of this year.

Congratulations to teachers Gary Alzomal, Glenda Tulloch, and Brenda Eisner, and all the students at KCI [Kamsack Comprehensive Institute] for initiating this worthwhile and rewarding experience in this our centennial year. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Humboldt and District Chamber of Commerce Mark of Excellence Awards

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the sixth annual Humboldt and District Chamber of Commerce Mark of Excellence Awards were held in Humboldt last month.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, Humboldt and district is a vibrant, healthy, and forward-looking community that believes in taking positive steps to ensure it remains a strong and healthy community. Almost 200 people attended this event to honour the success, initiative, and contributions of individuals and businesses from the area.

Winners of this year's Mark of Excellence Awards were Jennifer Avison, a grade 12 student at Humboldt Collegiate Institute who received the Youth Volunteer of the Year Award; Darlene Cash who received the Humboldt Citizen of the Year Award; Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award went to Alison Berk, the owner of Imagin Photography and Framing Gallery.

The award for business of the year with less than 10 employees was won by Paul and Diana Kneeshaw, the owners of Misty Gardens. And the Mark of Excellence Award for Business of the Year, with more than 10 employees, went to Florian Possberg, owner of Big Sky Farms.

During the course of the evening, Stone Effects Moulded Monuments of Humboldt was also recognized for their recent nomination for a Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce ABEX

[Achievement in Business Excellence] award in the new Saskatchewan product category.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating all the nominees and winners in the 2005 Mark of Excellence Awards. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Response to Children's Advocate Report

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier this morning. In her 10th annual report, the province's Children's Advocate has a message for this government. The message is simple. She says the government has lost its way, has lost its vision for the protection and service of children in our province. Mr. Speaker, in that report, the Children's Advocate says the government has a disconnected patchwork of policies to protect children.

In the Saskatchewan Party's 100 ideas for Saskatchewan's future, idea no. 35 talks about establishing a one-stop agency to facilitate the delivery of services for children and for families, for people in need. There's also, Mr. Speaker, idea no. 3, on the food allowance; 94, 82, there are a number of ideas there. The question to the Premier though this morning is: what will be his response to the Children's Advocate's report and her comments, Mr. Speaker, that the government has no vision for protecting children in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Community Resources and Employment.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all I want to begin by reaffirming our vision for Saskatchewan children that we established in 1993 with the children's action plan. And that's that all Saskatchewan children enjoy a good start in life and are nurtured and supported by caring families and communities. And I can affirm today, Mr. Speaker, that in every bit of work we're doing, that continues to be the values and principles that drive our policy development.

Now in contrast, Mr. Speaker, on the opposite side we have a group of people whose only two contributions to policy in this area has been boot camps and food stamps.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — And then in fact when this Children's Advocate, who I applaud for her passion and caring for children, was up for reappointment, the last five-year term, they in fact balked at her reappointment and complained about the amount of money we were spending. So we're very committed to the work with the Children's Advocate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister, in response to the Children's Advocate, said there was a . . . she didn't agree with what the Children's Advocate was saying. She said it was just a communications problem. That's what she said. She hadn't been able to communicate with the Children's Advocate about exactly what the government had done with respect to protecting children. Obviously the Children's Advocate doesn't agree with the minister, and today she says she commends her on her report.

The question to the minister is simple: does she really take this report seriously? Because if she takes it seriously, she wouldn't simply stand up and say that it's a communications problem; she would outline a timetable to deal with the 200 recommendations that the Children's Advocate has given this government.

That's the question for her then this morning. What is her timetable to deal with these 200 recommendations for children in the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Community Resources and Employment.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Speaker, it doesn't surprise me that a woman with the commitment of Dr. Parker-Loewen would have made a strong statement as she prepares to leave this post. But at the same hand, she also indicated that overall there has been positive change, especially to policy, and the advocate believes this has addressed some of the complex issues identified in the review.

And I'll just mention some of those specifically so people understand. We now have, as a result of our working together a children's services manual, a family-centred case management plan, child protection workers are required to have a B.S.W. [Bachelor of Social Work], there's court training for supervisors, 120-day file audits with reporting back to the central office of any breaches in practice, the First Nations child and family service agencies — there's 18 now; 10 years ago there was no child and family service agencies on reserves — and we think this is a huge step in the right direction.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Waiting Times for Surgery

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the start of 2004 the NDP launched targeted time frames for surgeries. Now this was a plan to ensure that all patients in Saskatchewan would receive surgery within the targeted time frame that this NDP government set out. My question for the minister is: is Sask Health meeting the targeted time frames that

his government has set out for all surgeries in this province?

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, when we set out the targeted time frames for surgery in Saskatchewan — we are leaders in the country; no other place has done this yet — and we are continuing to work around how we can comply with that. We are meeting the targets in some of the areas, we're not meeting them in others, and we're continuing to work on them.

Mr. Speaker, we knew and we said at the time that we did this in March 2004 that we had a backlog of surgeries that we are going to tackle. We set out more money in last year's budget, which those members across voted against. We're going to set out more money in this year's budget to deal specifically with those. We see it as a two- to three-year project to deal with the backlog. But, Mr. Speaker, we're on the way to meeting those targeted time frames. And we're also leading the country in setting out how we can set the standards and how we can meet them.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:30]

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That was quite an interesting answer — we're kind of getting there but not really getting there; we're leading, yes, we're leading on the longest waiting list in this country, Mr. Speaker, that this targeted time frames were supposed to address.

According to *The Medical Post* in September 2003, there are 26,000 people waiting for surgery in this province. According to the Saskatchewan Surgical Care Network, last year, a year later, there were 31,914 people waiting for surgery, Mr. Speaker. That's an increase of 6,000 people within the last year.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I may be wrong, but I thought the whole point of targeted time lines were to reduce the wait for surgery, Mr. Speaker, reduce the number of people on the waiting list. But that hasn't happened. We've seen an increase of over 6,000 people in the last year. What is the minister really doing to decrease the surgical wait times in this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, right now we know that half of the non-emergent patients receive their procedure within eight weeks. We know that 80 per cent of the people receive it within six months, and 90 per cent are completed within a year.

We have that tail of 10 per cent at the end that we're working at to come forward with our goal of making sure that all of the non-urgent surgeries are done in a very clear and appropriate time frame for Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that is being dealt with on a

national basis. I would say that our plans and how we're doing this are being adopted by the Ontario government to go forward and deal with the issues that are being dealt with there. We will continue to make sure that we go and provide the care for people as they need it, and we'll deal with the non-urgent cases as quickly as possible.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, one of the goals of the announcement last year was to deal with some of the people that were waiting the longest in this province. And they set out a goal that all surgeries would be completed within 18 months. But, Mr. Speaker, the statistics do not prove that out. In fact, according to SCN [Saskatchewan Communications Network], the number of people waiting 18 months or longer for surgery continues to increase. In September 2004 approximately 1,300 people had been waiting 18 months or more for surgery. Now you would think that would decrease with the initiatives this government has taken, but it hasn't. In fact it's increased. As of December, three months later, that number had ballooned to 1,650 people waiting longer than 18 months for surgery in this province.

Mr. Speaker, why are people waiting 18 months or longer when this government had supposedly set a focus out to address that very issue?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, we are dedicating our funds, we're dedicating our resources, we're dedicating all of the best minds in our province, as well as those from Canada and from other parts of the world, in how we address this particular issue around non-urgent surgeries, and making sure that we do meet our targeted time frames.

When we announced that in March 2004, we said that this was our goal and that we wouldn't be able to get there within the next two or three years because it has this huge challenge of the numbers of people that are waiting for some of the non-urgent surgeries. But, Mr. Speaker, those surgeries which are required immediately or in a very short order, or required for cancer, are being done in very appropriate times.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to do that and work with the professionals, and we ask the members opposite to vote for the budget next week because that will provide further resources for this particular problem.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the goal is a laudable goal. And he said they were going to reach it over two or three years. Most times when you're reaching a goal, when you're

moving towards a goal, for example the reduction of waiting lists, you would decrease it each year by year by year, instead of what we see from this government as an increase of people on the waiting lists, an increase of people waiting 18 months or longer for surgery.

Mr. Speaker, these are not just numbers. These are people that aren't getting surgery, that are having trouble supporting their families, Mr. Speaker. These are people that are seniors, that have lived in this province and worked in this province all their lives, and now they access a health care system that isn't there for them, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the people of this province expect timely health care. Every person that is in the health care industry knows that timeliness of care is of the utmost, and waiting 18 months or longer is nowhere close to meeting those needs, Mr. Speaker. When will the government address the real problem of the health care shortage of personnel so that it can address the long waiting lists in this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, we are working and addressing this problem by providing resources — which the members opposite vote against — by working with the professionals throughout the system, to making sure that they're all working together. And, Mr. Speaker, we are working hard on that.

In this province we do approximately 94,000 surgeries a year. And that number is a very large number and many, many people are being served with that. We are continuing to work with all of the people who are waiting for some of the non-urgent surgeries to make sure that they're flowing in an appropriate fashion. I ask the members opposite to work together with us around making sure that our budget goes forward next week and that it can provide the care for all the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, it'd be . . . it's interesting to have the minister stand and talk about members voting against certain issues. That member stood in the House yesterday and voted against a child, children's hospital in this province, no. 9. He voted against no. 2, no. 5, no. 18, and no. 27, Mr. Speaker — all issues that would have addressed the issues of health care in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the government last year focused on cancer surgeries. The goal was that 95 per cent of cancer surgeries would be done within three weeks, Mr. Speaker. On March 26, 2004, the minister told the Assembly, and I quote:

The optimum treatment time . . . would . . . be less than three weeks . . . I am led to understand that we are very close to meeting . . . [those goals, Mr. Speaker.]

Well I'll submit to you that that minister was misled or misleading, Mr. Speaker, because we are nowhere close. What we have found is that 95 per cent of men who are waiting for prostate cancer, prostate cancer surgery, are waiting more than three weeks — some as much as a year to a year and a half.

Can the minister tell us what he is doing to address the issue of prostate cancer treatment in this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, we are looking at all of the types of surgery that are there and making sure that we get the resources to have this go forward. We're providing resources. We made a number of announcements over the last couple of months around specific equipment as it relates to surgery, also as it relates to making sure that we can recruit people that we need to provide these services. We also have to make sure that we have the post-operative care and that we have all of these things working together.

Mr. Speaker, this is clearly a challenging file but I know that we have a clear plan of how we're moving this forward and we are going to be keeping working at that. Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have consistently voted against the kinds of resources that we have need to be provided, and every single time they are going sideways or some other direction. Mr. Speaker, we're working diligently at this problem to make sure we provide the best care for Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, on May 17 this minister told the Assembly, and I quote:

. . . our goal . . . with our wait list project is to make sure that we have public information about how all of this works so that we can explain to people and have them understand when some of the times that are in the system are appropriate or not.

Mr. Speaker, I'm interested if he stands by those words because you know that on the Surgical Care Network website, there's not a word about cancer surgery, Mr. Speaker. How is the public supposed to know and understand cancer wait times when they don't even have that information on their own network? When will this information be put on the network so people can follow the cancer surgery wait times?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the issue around cancer surgery relates to the fact that this insidious disease affects every single part of the body and that there are hundreds of varieties of cancer that attack people. Mr. Speaker, what we do on the surgical website is make sure that we have a clear record

of the procedures that are done and we know that cancer surgery relates to a specific number of these and we're able to identify that.

But it's extremely difficult, Mr. Speaker, based on the information we have from the surgeons and others who are organizing this specific registry to say, this surgery is related to cancer or not. Many times it's suspected cancer and it's discovered that it's not. Other times it is cancer and then it can be registered that way.

We will continue to work with the professionals to make sure that we're providing good care for Saskatchewan people. I ask the members opposite to be part of the solution rather than the big problem.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Privacy Guidelines and the Automobile Injury Appeal Commission

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Justice made the strange statement to the media that he did not believe the Automobile Injury Appeal Commission was subject to the rulings of the Privacy Commissioner. Presumably he used last evening to give himself a quick tutorial and has read the regulations and will now be able to confirm to the House that the privacy legislation does apply to the automobile insurance commission or the accident insurance commission.

Will he now confirm that he was wrong yesterday and will he direct the appeal commission to comply with the regulations and with the rulings?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I note that the Chair of the appeals commission, who also happens to have the misfortune of being a lawyer along with myself and the member from Saskatoon Southeast, has said that in her view the recommendations have not been followed because the commission is exempt from the two Acts. I trust that she has reviewed . . . I think she probably has provided that opinion in her response to the Privacy Commissioner, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it appears that the minister did not use last evening to give himself that quick tutorial, and I'd like to urge him to use the weekend to do exactly that. If he looks at the regulations, it's abundantly clear in the appendix. It's only two or three words that he need look at to discover that that's the case.

Mr. Speaker, the Justice minister is the highest ranking justice

official in this province. He should know what the regulations . . . He is clearly confused about his role. Whether it's ensuring that the Legal Aid Commission complies with The Labour Standards Act, whether it's that this commission complies with the privacy regulations, has nothing to do with interfering with their autonomy or their discretion or their professional mandate. He has a duty to ensure that every private entity and every public entity complies with the legislation and the laws of this province. Will he stand up today and direct that commission to comply with the rulings of the privacy commission?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I will not stand here today and direct the Privacy Commissioner what to say. I will not stand here and direct the Human Rights Commission what to do. I will not stand here and direct the Legal Aid Commission what to do. And I will not stand here and direct an appeals commission that deals with the appeals of people's injuries, appeals from a Crown corporation, Mr. Speaker, and tell that commission what to do. No, I will not, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Government Relationship with Corporate Sector

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the government very quietly slid out a press release about the Centennial Summit that was held in January. In that report the Premier said, and I quote, "It is my hope that we would challenge some of the negative attitudes that continue to exist within our province and beyond our borders."

And who is the author though, Mr. Speaker, of those negative attitudes, especially as regards business and the corporate sector? Mr. Speaker, who is that? Well it's the same Premier, Mr. Speaker, that's who it is. That same Premier sent out a fundraising letter on October 23, 2003 during the provincial election. And you know what he had to say about the business sector, about the corporate sector? Do you know what his positive words were for the business sector? He said, and I quote, "Big corporations see a successful provincial economy and want to take over the most profitable parts of it." That's what this Premier said about corporations, about the private and the co-operative sector in this province.

He wonders who is the source of the negative attitude. It is him and his NDP government. Will he take this time to apologize to corporations within and outside our province who create jobs here for Saskatchewan families?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:45]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the

Leader of the Opposition would want to raise in this House this morning the subject of the centennial economic summit, where gathered for the first time in the history of this province were all of the major players in Saskatchewan's economy — working people, large investors, small-business people, community representatives. For the first time, we came together to look to building a future for the people of Saskatchewan. And where was the Leader of the Opposition and where was his caucus? They boycotted that opportunity. They boycotted the opportunity to speak positively and build for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I remind members of this House of the Throne Speech by which we opened this session. In that Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, for instance, we talked about a vision for the future of Saskatchewan. Let me just quote the Throne Speech: "Our government believes that Saskatchewan has a bright future with energy." Mr. Speaker, that is the fundamental vision of this government, a fundamental vision on which we are building. And I invite members of the opposition to stand by for later today.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I assume that the Premier is talking about the motion of his government with respect to the energy sector. Mr. Speaker, how will anybody in the energy sector, how will any of the corporations — resident either in the province of Saskatchewan or outside who can create jobs here — how or why would they take him seriously? Why would they take him seriously that he truly wants to work with them and grow the province when this is what he said to them during an election campaign?

During an election campaign he said, "Big corporations see a successful provincial economy and want to take over the most profitable parts of it." Who was he referring to, Mr. Speaker? Nexon, an oil and gas company? Was he referring to EnCana? Was he referring to Cameco, located right here in the province? Why in the world should anyone in the corporate sector trust him or his government when this is what he has to say during an election campaign?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I have laid out a vision for the development of our oil and gas, tremendous oil and gas potential, Mr. Speaker, in this province. You know, Mr. Speaker, there are 35 billion barrels of oil already discovered in Saskatchewan; 30 billion of them we can't get at yet because we haven't built the technology. And we've laid out a plan and a vision to do just that, to take that trillion dollars worth of resource that's buried under Saskatchewan's soil and make it work for Saskatchewan people, make it work to provide jobs, make it work to provide return for investment, and make it work to provide health care and education and infrastructure for the people of Saskatchewan.

And I've laid out a five-point plan to do it, Mr. Speaker; a plan

that includes research, a plan that includes a fiscal regime to encourage that resource, a plan that includes infrastructure, a plan that includes training our young people for the jobs, and a plan that includes getting a Saskatchewan energy accord.

Mr. Speaker, mark my words. The Leader of the Opposition should stay tuned to see more of that plan unfolding this afternoon.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, if the NDP government was truly interested in growing Saskatchewan's economy, they'd adopt, they'd adopt idea no. 10 from the Saskatchewan Party's 100 new ideas for Saskatchewan future and they would create Enterprise Saskatchewan together with business and labour and local government, First Nations, and post-secondary institutions. That's what they'd do to build our economy.

But that's not going to happen because the NDP is working still on NDP idea number one from 1933 which, of course, is the *Regina Manifesto* that calls for the eradication of capitalism that's still on their website today, Mr. Speaker — it's still on their website. And unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, that appears to be a commitment that the NDP is keeping — the eradication of capitalism. They've been working on it for 60 years and this latest letter, this fundraising letter, is another example of it.

I'm going to give the Premier a chance to apologize to the corporations, the private sector, the co-operative sector for accusing them of wanting to take over the profitable parts of our economy when it is those companies that will create jobs in our province for young people and for Saskatchewan families.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, later this day some very significant players in the energy industry are going to be here in Regina to work with us to build the tremendous oil resource that exists for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we have a long tradition of working with industry, of working with the working people and the tradespeople and the skilled young people in these industries. We have a view that you build economy through partnership and working together. And that's what we're going to do. That's what we're going to do, Mr. Speaker, to build this tremendous energy foundation for the future of Saskatchewan.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, the proof is not in the rhetoric; the proof is in the pudding. The proof was in the pudding when in this year, in the month of February, 11,000-plus more jobs in the province of Saskatchewan. The proof was in the pudding.

The very, the very credit rating agency which the members opposite this morning quoted now say that Saskatchewan has a AA credit rating. That's the view of Standard & Poor's.

I'll tell you, we're leading economic growth in this country. And when it comes to capital investment, capital investment in this province, this year will be twice the national average.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Ministerial statements. Order, please. Order, please. Ministerial statements. I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, it is not for a ministerial statement. I would like to ask leave to introduce guests, please.

The Speaker: — The member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley has requested leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege today to be able to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly four of Saskatchewan's nearly three hundred volunteer crop reporters. These four crop reporters are being recognized today by Saskatchewan Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization for their commitment and long service to Saskatchewan's agriculture industry.

For 25 years, each of these crop reporters has volunteered their personal time during the crop season to collect information about crop development and precipitation in his rural municipality. And every Sunday afternoon or evening, for at least 30 weeks of those 25 years, each reporter submitted his information to the department to meet the weekly crop reporting deadline. The purpose of this endeavour has been to provide a timely, accurate report about the development of Saskatchewan crops to all farmers and RMs [rural municipality] in the province and to the general public.

Mr. Speaker, we're honoured to recognize these individuals for their dedication to the crop reporting service. I would ask the crop reporters and their spouses to stand as I announce their names. I would like to note that Bernard Cey of Landis and Larry Kuntz of Battleford were not able to be here today. But today we have with us Lorne Sheppard of Lucky Lake in the RM of Canaan No. 225 and his wife, Valarie — would you please stand?

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — David Thompson of Kelliher in the RM of Kellross No. 247, and his wife, Carol.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Wilmer Sawatzky of Aberdeen in the RM of Aberdeen No. 373.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — And Bill Walter of Codette in the RM of Nipawin No. 487, and his wife, Evelyn.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — And I would ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to again join me in again recognizing these crop reporters for the tremendous work they do, volunteer work, on behalf of the province and the farmers of this province. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition I'd like to join with the Agriculture minister in welcoming the crop reporters here today and thanking them for the fine work they do. Would everyone join us in thanking them once again.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Why is the member for Melfort on his feet?

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With leave to introduce some motions of substitutions on committees.

The Speaker: — The member for Melfort has requested leave to make several motions with respect to substitutions on committees. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — It has been granted. I recognize the member for Melfort.

MOTIONS

Substitutions on Committees

Mr. Gantefoer: — I move:

That the name of Ken Cheveldayoff be substituted for the name of Glen Hart on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Melfort, seconded by the member for Humboldt:

That the name of Ken Cheveldayoff be substituted for the name of Glen Hart on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the name of Allan Kerpan and Doreen Eagles be substituted for the names of Wayne Elhard and Randy Weekes on the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Melfort, seconded by the member for Humboldt:

That the names of Allan Kerpan and Doreen Eagles be substituted for the names of Wayne Elhard and Randy Weekes on the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the name of Randy Weekes, Brenda Bakken, and Delbert Kirsch be substituted for the names of Lyle Stewart, Michael Chisholm, and Yogi Huyghebaert on the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Melfort, seconded by the member for Humboldt:

That the names of Randy Weekes, Brenda Bakken, and Delbert Kirsch be substituted for the names of Lyle Stewart, Michael Chisholm, and Yogi Huyghebaert on the Standing Committee on the Economy.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Mr. Gantefoer: — I move:

That the name of Donna Harpauer and Greg Brkich be substituted for the names of June Draude and Don McMorris on the Standing Committee of House Services.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Melfort, seconded by the member for Humboldt:

That the names of Donna Harpauer and Greg Brkich be substituted for the names of June Draude and Don McMorris on the Standing Committee on House Services.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the names of Michael Chisholm, Ted Merriman, and Don Toth be substituted for the names of Ken Cheveldayoff, Brenda Bakken, and Don Morgan on the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Melfort, seconded by the member for Humboldt:

That the names of Michael Chisholm, Ted Merriman, and Don Toth be substituted for the names of Ken Cheveldayoff, Brenda Bakken, and Don Morgan on the Standing Committee on Human Services.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. The Chair recognizes the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the name of Yogi Huyghebaert be substituted for the name of Bob Bjornerud on the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Melfort, seconded by the member for Humboldt:

That the name of Yogi Huyghebaert be substituted for the name of Bob Bjornerud on the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. The Chair recognizes the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the name Glen Hart, Don Morgan, and Lyle Stewart be substituted for the names of Allan Kerpan, Greg Brkich, and Doreen Eagles on the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Melfort, seconded by the member for Humboldt:

That the names of Glen Hart, Don Morgan, and Lyle Stewart be substituted for the names of Allan Kerpan, Greg Brkich, and Doreen Eagles on the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. The Chair recognizes the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, finally I move:

That the names of Lyle Stewart, Wayne Elhard, and Bob Bjornerud be substituted for the names of Don Toth, Jason Dearborn, and Milt Wakefield on the Standing Committee on Privileges.

[11:00]

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Melfort, seconded by the member for Humboldt:

That the names of Lyle Stewart, Wayne Elhard and Bob Bjornerud be substituted for the names of Don Toth, Jason Dearborn, and Milt Wakefield on the Standing Committee on Privileges.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. Why is the member from Saskatoon Nutana on her feet?

Leaves of Absence

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Before orders of the day, by leave of the Assembly, I would move, seconded by the member from Melfort:

That leave of absence be granted to the member for Kelvington-Wadena for Monday, March 14, 2005, to Friday, March 18, 2005, to attend the 54th parliamentary seminar in Westminster on behalf of this Assembly.

The Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Nutana has requested leave to move a motion. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Saskatoon Nutana, seconded by the member for Melfort by leave of the Assembly:

That leave of absence be granted for the member for Kelvington-Wadena for Monday, March 14, 2005, to Friday, March 18, 2005, to attend the 54th parliamentary seminar in Westminster on behalf of this Assembly.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — With leave of the Assembly I would move, seconded by the member from Melfort:

That leave of absence be granted to the members for Arm River-Watrous, Regina Wascana Plains, and Biggar from Monday, March 20, 2005, to Thursday, March 24, 2005, inclusive, to attend the Midwestern Legislative Conference exchange in Des Moines, Iowa, and Lincoln, Nebraska, on behalf of this Assembly.

The Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Nutana has requested leave to move a motion. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Saskatoon Nutana, seconded by the member from Melfort:

That leave of absence be granted to the members . . .

Order, please. Order, please.

It has been moved by the member for Saskatoon Nutana, seconded by the member for Melfort . . .

Order, please. Just find it a little difficult. Thank you, members.

It has been moved by the member for Saskatoon Nutana, seconded by the member for Melfort:

That leave of absence be granted to the members for Arm River-Watrous, Regina Wascana Plains, and Biggar for Monday, March 20, 2005, to Thursday, March 24, 2005, inclusive, to attend the Midwestern Legislative Conference exchange in Des Moines, Iowa, and Lincoln, Nebraska on behalf of this Assembly.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Prince Albert Northcote.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan's Energy Sector

Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to begin by saying that I am very pleased to enter this debate today, and that at the end of my remarks I intend to move a motion, seconded by the Minister of Justice for the province of Saskatchewan:

That this Assembly endorse the Premier's vision for an expanded energy sector in Saskatchewan.

And why I move this motion today, Mr. Speaker, is that just a few short days ago I had the opportunity to attend to the Premier's business dinner, an overflowing crowd here in Regina, in which he delivered a speech that was focused primarily on the resource sector. And that evening he outlined a five-plank platform to work with industry to deliver enhanced oil recovery opportunities here in Saskatchewan. I think a very visionary speech it was.

I have to say that I sat with the industry players that evening,

and I want to report to this legislature that they were very impressed with the tone the Premier took. They were very impressed with the comments that he made because it really did speak to some of the issues that they had been bringing forward to this government over the past months and over the past weeks.

I want to say as well, Mr. Speaker, I was able to visit with some industry players in Calgary, just a short while ago, with the Premier. It was a very productive meeting. I think it's fair to say that our Premier has the attention of the industry; he certainly has their respect. And I would want to say that in spite of what the Leader of the Opposition may say in his comments today . . . or may have said in his comments today, that industry very much understands the opportunities here in Saskatchewan. They understand the positive relationship that has been built with this government.

And that's why, Mr. Speaker, we're seeing record investment. We're seeing record investment. And I want to tell you that the investment opportunities are so positive that even two of their members today in private members' statements couldn't ignore the fact that Golden Opportunities, the labour-sponsored venture capital company, had a record year, recognized across this country, for investing here in Saskatchewan businesses and that the city of Saskatoon is a leader in this country in terms of a place to do business, a place to invest, and a place to live, Mr. Speaker.

Even, Mr. Speaker, in spite of their negativity, the Conservative Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker, hasn't changed. They haven't changed from two years ago — from their inception to this day. The new leader of the Saskatchewan Conservative Party is attempting to hide their right wing, Mr. Speaker. He's attempting to hide their right-wing members and their right-wing history. But, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan know better. They understand these people for who they are. They understand who funds them. They understand, Mr. Speaker, who is leading them in the back rooms — and they are none other than the former Progressive Conservative people. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, they'll fool no one.

So, Mr. Speaker, if we put some of the politics aside and if we speak to leadership in this province, in a positive leadership, I want to say that I very much have learned to respect the Premier of Saskatchewan. He's got a social conscience. He's a social democrat. But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, he also understands the need for building and growing this economy, and that's why our GDP [gross domestic product] growth is leading this nation, Mr. Speaker, because of that positive leadership.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — Now, Mr. Speaker, in this place I understand that we do politics. And I understand that it's the role of the opposition to stand up and bark and to whine and to be negative and that nothing good is good and that everything the government does is not positive. Mr. Speaker, I challenge them this afternoon, after the Premier makes his announcement on enhanced oil recovery opportunities and his vision for the oil and the gas sector in this province, to come clean and support a good, positive program.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to outline the five planks that the Premier spoke of in his business dinner. And I want to say what will be very telling about this Saskatchewan Conservative Party is what they will do in this legislature this afternoon. And I would be willing to bet the family farm that they'll make an amendment to destroy what is a very positive motion speaking to an industry that creates 8 per cent of our GDP and wealth here in this province, creates some 24,000 jobs in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, I will be waiting to see . . . I guarantee you the amendment's going to come because they can't do anything positive. They don't know how to do anything positive, Mr. Speaker, because they were built on negativity. They come from negativity, and they remain negative, Mr. Speaker. And that's no way to lead a province; I'll tell you that.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, on March 9 the Premier said we have in the piggy bank about a trillion and a half dollars based on \$50 oil that we can't recover. And what we need to do is we need to find out how we bring that oil to the surface and how we put it into the network and how we send it to the markets. There's been a lot of work done already, and — I hear the member from Weyburn chirping, in her backyard — we've got one of the biggest investments by private sector ever in the history of this province, Mr. Speaker.

The CO₂ enhanced oil recovery project in Weyburn, in her backyard, has ensured jobs in her community, ensured jobs for farm families to work in the oil patch for years to come. And I'll tell you why, Mr. Speaker. It was because of vision of this government. It had nothing to do with the negativity of the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Swift Current. It had all to do with vision. It had all to do with the belief that our resource can be developed, should be developed, and that it will be developed, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, there's another project that's taking place right in her backyard. Apache resources, who they were referring to today, is investing tens of millions of dollars in this province to bring that resource to the surface, Mr. Speaker. They're going to put technology to work to enhance the amount of oil that we are able to bring to the surface.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to talk about our heavy oil for a few minutes. In this province we've got about 35 billion barrels of oil in place. And that's oil that we know is there. And, Mr. Speaker, our technical abilities only allow us to bring 8 and 10 per cent to the surface.

And so what do we need to do, Mr. Speaker? I've listened to people across this province who believe the stories that the Saskatchewan Conservatives will tell them, that we've got tar sands here in this province that would be developed if only there was a Saskatchewan Conservative Party government and that is wrong, wrong, and wrong, Mr. Speaker . . . Because our oil resource is hundreds of metres below the ground. The viscosity is heavy. It is hard to get up; it's like glue. And we've developed technology through horizontal drilling and water flood and steam injection and CO₂ injection now, where we've

been learning how to bring more of that to the surface, Mr. Speaker.

Our oil isn't like the tar sands in Alberta where you can scrape off the top level and it's sitting there, and then you put it into a process or you put it on line. We aren't that fortunate, Mr. Speaker, because the geology as you go further to the east, the oil resource is deeper and deeper. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the industry has been very innovative, very creative in terms of working with establishments like the Saskatchewan Petroleum Research Centre here in Regina that was established by this administration, Mr. Speaker, to find better ways to bring that oil to the surface.

And, Mr. Speaker, the plan that the Premier outlines this afternoon, here in Regina, will give that resource the opportunity to do what it can for this province to create jobs and create wealth so that we can deliver a high quality of education and a high quality of health care.

Mr. Speaker, it's not 100 points of dribble. What this will be is a platform and a base to move forward with, Mr. Speaker. This opposition puts out a new platform every second week. And there will be a new one here in the next few months, and we know that. We know that, Mr. Speaker, and no one will ever say that some of their ideas aren't good ideas because some of them are. And some of them we're already doing, Mr. Speaker. And that's fine because I think it's a role of everyone to have a positive input in terms of delivering a good, prosperous province.

But, Mr. Speaker, these guys on the opposition side will change at the blink of a hat. The Leader of the Opposition knows that the position they took going into the last provincial election is not acceptable to the people of Saskatchewan. It's right wing. They're afraid of them, Mr. Speaker. So what he is doing now, he's muzzling his right-wing people, and he's attempting to put a picture of a moderate, middle-of-the-road politician.

Mr. Speaker, he will fool no one because people knew who he was when he was the leader of the young Progressive Conservatives in Canada. They knew who he was when he was a ministerial assistant for federal Conservative politicians. They know who he was when he was a chief of staff and a chief advisor to former Devine Progressive Conservative cabinet ministers, Mr. Speaker. He has a history that he would like to avoid, but he cannot get away from it, Mr. Speaker. It will follow him his whole political career. I guarantee you that and the people of Saskatchewan know who he is.

Mr. Speaker, I said that I wanted to outline the five planks that our Premier announced as it relates to his vision for the oil and gas industry here in Saskatchewan. And I have a limited time, so I'm going to attempt to do that, Mr. Speaker. So here's the 10-year plan, a plan from this government to ensure resource wealth.

One, with respect to research and development to enhance oil recovery, this government will support that initiative, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue to support the Petroleum Research Centre here in Regina. We're going to continue to work with the federal government to fund that institution.

[11:15]

And secondly, this platform will provide a royalty regime, a taxation regime that provides a fair return for our resource, but equally encourages investment in production.

And thirdly, Mr. Speaker, infrastructure investment in carbon dioxide capture, storage and distribution, and in heavy oil upgrading capacity. Mr. Speaker, I think that is a visionary statement if there is one. If we want to value-add this resource, what we need to do is work towards expanding our ability to upgrade that heavy oil that I spoke of earlier.

And fifth, Mr. Speaker, training and employment and education of our youth to meet the demands of what is a very rapidly growing industry here in Saskatchewan.

And sixth, Mr. Speaker, what the Premier has been successful on, and I know will succeed in, in the future, is to complete the Saskatchewan energy accord with Ottawa that ensures the benefits of this resource will remain with the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — Now, Mr. Speaker, that's the kind of vision the people of Saskatchewan are looking for. Mr. Speaker, this is honest, straightforward approach to getting this job done and to getting our young people employed. That's what this is. And this is a vision that's based on the desire to make the quality of life better for all Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, including those who are on social assistance, including those who have no ability to enter the work force for challenges whatever they might be, Mr. Speaker. And the way this will happen is to create the environment that these six ideas speak to, these five ideas speak to, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to say that in my time in this legislature I've had the opportunity to work with many politicians. But I want to say that, Mr. Speaker, this particular administration and what is happening in terms of ensuring that our province is competitive as it relates to potash and to uranium and to oil and gas and to forestry surpasses anything that I've seen in my first years here.

And so I say, Mr. Speaker, I applaud this Premier. I ask the people of Saskatchewan to recognize what he is doing to ensure that opportunities for our young people happen here in Saskatchewan. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice:

That this Assembly endorse the Premier's vision for an expanded energy sector in Saskatchewan.

I so move.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Prince Albert Northcote, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Meewasin:

That this Assembly endorse the Premier's vision for an expanded energy sector in Saskatchewan.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

I recognize the member for Saskatoon Meewasin.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to rise today as a member of this legislature, but also as the Minister Responsible for SaskPower, to speak on the issue of energy and the vision for energy outlined by our Premier for the future of our province, for the future benefit of young people in our province, and a vision of the future that is centred on prosperity and centred on environmental sustainability, Mr. Speaker.

I have come to realize since I have taken these responsibilities, in particular responsibility for the Crown corporation responsible for electrical generation in our province, of the importance of geography in public policy, the importance of geography in shaping the economy. And the hon. member from Prince Albert Northcote referred to the fundamental importance of geography and geology specifically in shaping how you develop an energy industry.

And what works in one place in the country — a very diverse country, diverse in many ways, but certainly diverse geographically as well — what works in one part of the country doesn't work so well in another part of the country. And challenges are posed by those differences in geography, Mr. Speaker, and opportunities are created by those differences in geography.

And I hope the members of the legislature will excuse me if I do speak for a few moments about the generation of electricity in this province, about the role of SaskPower which has celebrated its 75th birthday and is as good a electrical company as you can find on this continent, providing environmentally sustainable, environmentally responsible, affordable, and reliable and safe power to the people of Saskatchewan.

The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to developing new electrical sources, new generation until the year 2010, entirely from environmentally friendly sources whose operation do not add to greenhouse gas emissions. And in that commitment, as in all the commitments of this government, we are proceeding to fulfill that commitment.

Specifically, in the case of wind power, SaskPower has moved ahead quickly with wind power. SaskPower, through SaskPower International, is on target to be operational at Rushlake Creek site this winter, Mr. Speaker. We will provide 150 megawatts of wind generation to Saskatchewan, about the same amount of electricity used by 64,000 homes annually.

As the Premier has referred to previously this week, we will soon be, or are and probably will be, exceeding the third largest generator of electricity through wind power in the country. As well the SunBridge wind facility provides 11 megawatts of power from 17 turbines, and the Cypress wind facility was developed and is now operational, of course, Mr. Speaker — nine turbines with a capacity of 5.9 megawatts, officially commissioned in August 2003; an additional seven turbines expanded the capacity at 10.5 megawatts in December 2003.

The environmental, the preferred power initiative of

SaskPower, continues to advance also in fulfilling the same commitment in respect to greenhouse gases and in respect to the environment, Mr. Speaker, as the wind power. This initiative, and we have been talking about partnerships today, this initiative purchases power generated by private sector producers that use low environmental impact technologies to utilize by-products such as waste heat, flare gas, biomass, or biogas as a fuel source, while they produce no new emissions like wind, low-impact hydro, or solar energy. SaskPower's goal is to ultimately reach a purchase of 45 megawatts per year of environmentally progressive electrical generation to assist in meeting future load requirements.

It is my pleasure that today announce that SaskPower has today signed a power purchase agreement with Alliance Pipeline for projects selected in the first phase of the environmentally preferred power program. The agreement will result in SaskPower purchasing approximately 5 megawatts of electricity from a heat recovery project to be built by Alliance Pipeline at their compressor station in Kerrobert. It is a commitment of this government to build a green and prosperous economy through our GreenPower portfolio.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Now that the purchase power agreement has been signed, Alliance Pipeline will purchase state-of-the-art equipment needed to build a heat recovery system. Construction of the project is tentatively scheduled for the summer and fall of 2006. The four-month construction process will employ approximately 30 skilled Saskatchewan tradespeople, and will contribute about \$1 million to the region's economy, mostly through local contracts, Mr. Speaker.

SaskPower has selected three EPP [environmentally preferred power] projects in this first selection, Mr. Speaker. Two wind power projects and this one heat recovery project have been selected to provide up to 15 megawatts of power per year, once the power purchase agreements are successfully concluded, as has been the case with the Alliance Pipeline project that I have just announced, Mr. Speaker.

Interest was keen, keen in its first solicitation, with industry feedback encouraging SaskPower to consider larger producers. SaskPower's second solicitation in February 2005 increased the maximum criteria of 25 megawatts, and announcements will be made later this year regarding successful project applicants.

Mr. Speaker, approximately a half, a half of our electricity is generated by the burning of coal. I earlier announced this year a major upgrade to unit 2 at the Poplar River station, Mr. Speaker. By investing in this major upgrade, we'll be improving the efficiency and reliability and expanding the lifespan of the unit, Mr. Speaker. It gives us additional time to evaluate emerging technologies that will burn coal more cleanly and more efficiently. And, Mr. Speaker, we are on the verge of a new future with coal.

The Canadian Clean Power Coalition, of which SaskPower is a founding member, continues its research towards the first Canadian pilot project. SaskPower supports the University of Regina's International Centre for Carbon Dioxide Capture with a demonstration project in progress at the Boundary dam power

station in Estevan. SaskPower also participates in the Lignite Energy Council with North Dakota utilities to investigate coal gasification technologies suitable for lignite coals.

There are a number of other projects in which SaskPower is involved in developing cleaner coal. Carbon dioxide recovered from a gasification plant in North Dakota is injected into the ground for enhanced oil recovery. You heard the mover of the motion speak on this matter of the importance of developing new technologies in Saskatchewan so that we can draw on our trillion-dollar bank — our trillion-dollar bank in oil, Mr. Speaker.

The demand for electricity in Saskatchewan continues to grow. It grows primarily on two fronts, Mr. Speaker. One is an increasing demand in our manufacturing sector as manufacturing grows in this province. The other demand is in the oil industry, Mr. Speaker. As the oil industry has been expanding over the last few years under the leadership of this government, electrical demand by the oil industry is one of the growing reasons for the requirement for new generation of electricity in Saskatchewan.

SaskPower will eventually serve this growing oil industry in two ways, Mr. Speaker. On the one hand it will be providing the needed electricity for the expansion of this industry. It will continue to expand and provide that generation in increasingly more environmentally sustainable ways as we work on reducing mercury emissions, as we work on cleaner coal technologies, as we partner with researchers on how we are going to provide more electricity but with a less impact on the environment, Mr. Speaker.

The other way that SaskPower will contribute to the growing oil industry in Saskatchewan is in the research and the development and the implementation of the technologies around injecting the CO₂, not into the atmosphere, Mr. Speaker, where it contributes to global warming or climate change but into the ground where it helps us lift that heavy oil up, where it helps us make that withdrawal from the oil bank.

As the mover of the motion said, our strategy is multi-faceted in respect to oil. We are assisting with the research, we are assisting with taxation and incentives, and we are assisting with infrastructure.

I began, Mr. Speaker, by referring to geography and the challenges and the opportunities it provides. There are three blessings that this country has and this province has. One is land. One is people. And one is vision. This province benefits from all three. And the blessings will continue to flow, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to enter this debate today about the future of energy in Saskatchewan. I appreciate, Mr. Speaker, the awakening that has happened on the opposite side of the House as to the energy potential that exists within the province of Saskatchewan. At the end of my

remarks, Mr. Speaker, I will be moving an amendment to the motion that has been forwarded by the member from P.A. [Prince Albert].

Mr. Speaker, I'm also flattered by the obvious fact that the Premier has been reading the Saskatchewan Party's recently released policy document and paying close attention to one of our resolutions that were in that package that speaks about making Saskatchewan the energy capital of North America.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — The Premier confirmed his support when he introduced his policy at his recent leader's dinner in Regina.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to quote the Saskatchewan Party's policy, which is also no. 86 in our *100 Ideas to Get Saskatchewan Ready for the Next 100 Years*. And it reads:

Make Saskatchewan the energy heart of North America by assessing the potential for further development of power generation from wind, clean coal, natural gas, nuclear, biomass, coal bed methane, ethanol, solar, oil sands, cogeneration, and hydrogen fuel cell technology.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would now like to quote from the Premier's remarks at his dinner in Regina on March 9, one month later after our leader had made his announcement and our policy was confirmed. And I quote:

... I believe that Saskatchewan has all the potential to become that jurisdiction in North America where energy is at the heart of our future. I believe we have the potential to be the home of the most diversified energy economy on the continent ...

[11:30]

Mr. Speaker, I wonder where the Premier got those ideas. It's almost word for word from the Saskatchewan Party's policy. And, Mr. Speaker, the Premier I believe is using the Saskatchewan Party's ideas because this government is void of new ideas. They have no vision and they have no leadership.

Mr. Speaker, it's understandable that the public in this province would doubt the Premier's commitment to oil and gas. The NDP have had over 60 years to support the development of our natural resources and they have done everything possible to stop the growth and the prosperity from happening in Saskatchewan. Because of the NDP's lack of vision over the years, we have lost all of our head offices for oil and gas to Calgary. We lost some of our best and brightest entrepreneurs who left Saskatchewan, not because they wanted to, but because of a lack of opportunity in our province.

Mr. Speaker, we have watched our expert and experienced workers from the oil patch in my home constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy and other oil-rich areas across Saskatchewan pick up and have to move to Alberta and British Columbia. They have gone there for years and it continues today even though we have the highest price of oil per barrel that we have ever had.

There is something seriously wrong when this occurs, Mr. Speaker. The oil patch in this province should be booming because of the price of oil but the investors of oil companies are not coming to Saskatchewan because they have no confidence in this NDP government, the government of the NDP who drove oil companies out of Saskatchewan. It is the NDP who taxed the ones who stayed. In the 1970s the NDP under Allan Blakeney increased oil royalties to the point where they were paying upwards of 50 per cent of oil royalties in this province. Mr. Speaker, it's the NDP who tried to nationalize the oil industry in Saskatchewan. And so no matter what the NDP and the Premier of this province say today, their actions speak louder than words.

Mr. Speaker, the people in the oil industry and investors that would like to come into Saskatchewan have long memories, and they are not coming back to this province until there is a government in place, the Saskatchewan Party government, that they can trust and that believes in industry. Mr. Speaker, a government that values entrepreneurship, a government that understands the importance of investment, that understands you need to invest to create jobs and economic prosperity and to grow the population. A government that does not believe profit is a dirty word. A party that understands you need a growing, prosperous economy to have the dollars needed to support strong social programs. Mr. Speaker, the NDP have never understood this. And if we go back to when the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) — now the NDP — was formed and they adopted the *Regina Manifesto* in 1933 under Tommy Douglas, the last line of the *Regina Manifesto* says and I quote: "... [The] CCF government will rest content until it has ..."

No C.C.F. Government will rest content until it has eradicated capitalism and put into operation the full programme of socialized planning which will lead to the establishment in Canada of ... [a] Cooperative Commonwealth.

They also go on to say in the *Manifesto*, and I quote:

Public utilities must be operated for the public benefit and, not for the private profit of a small group of owners or financial manipulators. Our natural resources must be developed by the same methods.

Mr. Speaker, this was 70 years ago and yet today the NDP still believe and promote this failed logic, as it is still on their website. But even more disturbing, as our leader indicated this morning when he read the letter that the Premier sent out in the last election campaign where he said, and I quote:

Big corporations see a successful provincial economy and want to take over the most profitable parts of it. To acquire the profitable parts, they have to first get hold of the levers of power. So they finance a political party, in this case, the Saskatchewan Party, to get ... them.

Mr. Speaker, this is what the NDP and the Premier really think of business and investors. This is how much they care about creating jobs so that we can keep our kids in Saskatchewan. They say one thing, as in the Premier's vision and in his announcement today. But it is only that. It is mere words.

Mr. Speaker, we have in this House NDP cabinet ministers who have pointed their finger at the oil industry and said, we would look to change the oil royalty structure to pay for other priorities. When members of this government talk about the oil patch as a predator to be targeted, it did not instill a great deal of confidence in this industry. Mr. Speaker, it's also this government, the minister responsible for Corrections and Public Safety, who was against the uranium development in this province, and because of that we have driven the economic benefits and the jobs out of Saskatchewan and to Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, we also have a government that has failed in their attempt to help create an ethanol ... make Saskatchewan a leader in ethanol production. But again the NDP government was not prepared to put up the fundamentals to make it happen here. No, they decided that they wanted to own part of the industry, and by doing this they discouraged private investments; investors who were not prepared to compete against the government.

It was this NDP government who also tried to nationalize the potash industry in this province. The stories of how the NDP and the CCF in the last 70 years have failed the people of this province and have robbed them of the opportunities are endless.

You go to my constituency and to Estevan and different areas where there is the oil industry and you'd hear about how this NDP government has destroyed the oil industry and the opportunities that could have been in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party rejects the thinking of the NDP and believes that we have unlimited opportunity in Saskatchewan and the key to this opportunity is the development of our natural resources. The Saskatchewan Party will be impatient. We will be relentless and we will be aggressive in promoting and getting the fundamentals right to create a climate for growth and prosperity whether it is through capital taxes, through new growth incentives, regulations, supporting innovation and research.

Mr. Speaker, there is a map that shows the difference between the development in Saskatchewan and in Alberta. And it is a very disturbing map when you look at it, because in Alberta it's almost fully coloured in with the development of oil and gas, and in Saskatchewan we have very little. But, Mr. Speaker, I look at this map, not as a negative but as a positive, because it is the opportunity that we still have in Saskatchewan. It shows a future full of promise.

The Saskatchewan Party is committed to working with investors, with industry, with researchers, geologists, engineers, and all those who want to stay in Saskatchewan to see the oil industry grow. And to all those ex-saskies who have left who want to come home because they believe in this province and they know the potential but they are not coming here under this government.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to now read the amendment to the motion, moved by myself, seconded by Wayne Elhard from Cypress Hills, I move ... moved by the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy, seconded by the member from Cypress Hills, I move:

That the words “the Premier’s vision for” be removed and replaced with the Saskatchewan Party’s idea number 86 from the document, *100 Ideas to Get Saskatchewan Ready for the Next 100 Years*.

And after “expanded energy sector in Saskatchewan” the addition of the following:

To make Saskatchewan the energy heart of North America by assessing the potential for further development of power generation from wind, clean coal, natural gas, nuclear biomass, coal bed methane, ethanol, solar, oil sands, cogeneration and hydrogen fuel cell technology.

I so move.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy and seconded by the member for Cypress Hills:

That the words “the Premier’s vision for” be removed and replaced with the Saskatchewan Party’s idea no. 86 from the document, *100 Ideas to Get Saskatchewan Ready for the Next 100 Years*.

And after “expanded energy sector in Saskatchewan” the addition of the following:

To make Saskatchewan the energy heart of North America by assessing the potential for further development of power generation from wind, clean coal, natural gas, nuclear, biomass, coal bed methane, ethanol, solar, oil sands, cogeneration and the hydrogen fuel cell technology.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I’d ask you for a ruling as to whether the amendment changes the intent of the original motion.

The Speaker: — I would just, I will take a minute under advisement, but I would just like to proceed with the debate in the interim. I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s a privilege today to rejoin debate in this House. I have looked forward to an opportunity to contribute at some level and this is the first time I’ve had to actually speak in this particular session. So this motion, in particular, is one that appeals to me to a considerable extent.

Mr. Speaker, I guess I’d like to start my remarks or qualify my remarks by saying that the motion up for debate today proves that not all acts of contortionism are reserved for the circus. Mr. Speaker, this government and the members of this government must have tied themselves in absolute knots arriving at this particular position.

Mr. Speaker, this position, this so-called vision that the government is putting forward at this point, is so unusual, such

an aberration for this government, that it must have cost them a great deal of personal effort to achieve this. And you know, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that this party on the opposition side of the House has been advocating is a vision for this province. We have been talking about the need for vision and leadership in this province.

This province is crying out for leadership, Mr. Speaker. And if this government has suddenly arrived at a vision, I would congratulate them for the effort at least. It’s more than they’ve achieved and brought to the public domain in the past four or five years.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I would say this government has had no vision whatsoever since it fulfilled its last vision, and that was under the Romanow administration balancing the budget. This particular government has not shown any leadership or vision in the interim. And if they’re finally arriving at a point where they might have some, I would congratulate them for the effort at least.

Mr. Speaker, I’m going to pose, as part of our discussion today, I’m going to pose a rhetorical, biblical question. The question I would like to pose as a part of the ongoing discussion today, Mr. Speaker, is: can a leopard change its spots? My contention, Mr. Speaker, is that no, it cannot.

I won’t have to recite much of the history that has already been presented for this discussion by my colleague and member from Weyburn, but she indicated that the antecedents of this particular government, the NDP, go back to the ’30s and ’40s in this province when the government of the day went under the title CCF. But one of the foundational documents of that political entity back in the early ’40s and the late ’30s was the *Regina Manifesto*. The member from Weyburn read extensively from it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if that particular document is not the document that informs the thinking of this government, then they should remove it from their website. As long as the *Regina Manifesto* remains on their website, it can be construed as nothing but the foundational philosophical document of this government, and that document talked about the eradication of capitalism.

Now fortunately somewhere along the process, this government saw that that probably wasn’t going to happen, certainly wasn’t going to be completely practical, but that hasn’t stopped the NDP and their predecessors, the CCF, from trying that particular move at every opportunity.

So we have, we have the formation of the spots on the leopard right there in that document, in the *Regina Manifesto*. And then we moved on to the Tommy Douglas government. And, Mr. Speaker, that’s a government that had a lot of influence in this particular province, some of it reasonably well accepted, some of it disastrous for the long-term economy and the benefit of the people of this province.

I’d like to refer, Mr. Speaker, to this particular publication. It’s entitled *Prairie capitalism*, and chapter 6 is titled “The CCF in Saskatchewan lowering expectations.” I’d like to quote from this document if I could, Mr. Speaker, because it again informs

the debate here today. The resolution that was passed by the CCF convention in 1946 read as follows:

Whereas the existence of natural gas and oil in commercial quantities in the province of Saskatchewan has been proven conclusively, and whereas the CCF as a socialist party believes in and advocates the public ownership of natural resources of this province for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan, and whereas a resolution was passed at the 1945 provincial convention urging the Government of Saskatchewan to undertake the development and distribution of natural gas and oil in this province, and whereas natural gas and oil in the province of Saskatchewan continues to be extensively exploited by private persons and concerns,

therefore be it resolved that the Government of Saskatchewan be called upon to show cause why the exploitation of these resources has been allowed to fall into private hands; and be it further resolved that the Government of Saskatchewan be immediately called upon to place these resources under social ownership, control, and operation, for the immense benefit of the people of Saskatchewan.

[11:45]

This resolution was adopted in 1946. I challenge the government to show where that resolution has ever been rescinded.

Mr. Speaker, a few minutes ago the member from Prince Albert Northcote was up on his feet talking and he was complaining about the fact that the official opposition could be flexible enough to change its views, could move a little bit one way or the other to show flexibility and creativity and to reflect the will of the people.

Mr. Speaker, he was worried about the fact that we were ready to change as the official opposition. The danger, Mr. Speaker, is that the NDP is unable and unwilling to change, and that's a bigger threat to the people of this province than a party that represents the flexibility that the Saskatchewan Party has shown.

Mr. Speaker, Tommy Douglas, in his wisdom at the time, undertook to challenge the oil and gas industry. They challenged it and threatened the industry to the extent that most of the development opportunities were lost in this province. And we all know the story of how the drilling rig that discovered Leduc no. 1 in Alberta in about 1948 was going to drill here, but was chased out of the province by the Tommy Douglas regime.

Mr. Speaker, we've had the experience of this government and its antecedents nationalizing the potash industry. And we've seen, moving a little closer to the current time, we've seen, taxes and regulations chase most of the oil development and service businesses out of this province. The communities of Swift Current, the communities of Kindersley, the community of Richmond, all used to be home to service industries in this province that are no longer here because of the tax and regulation regime imposed on them by this government.

We've had the experience of SunBridge, a company out of Alberta, a joint venture that came here to do wind power. And because they were successful, the government insisted that they not produce any more power, that they not expand their operations in Saskatchewan, that all wind power activity be undertaken by SaskPower.

And the people of this province are now saddled with a \$250 million project in the Rush Lake area because ATCO, another private venture partner, was prevented from proceeding with a wind power project here in the province.

What about ethanol, Mr. Speaker? You know, this is another interesting area of discussion. And this government came forward with an ethanol program that they promoted with great fanfare and they had a little bit of a project going out there at Belle Plaine. I think . . . well it turned out to be a little bit of a project. It was expected to be a very large project and Broe industries was going to be the partner. This was the brainchild of the member from Prince Albert Northcote. It was actually just a new version of the SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] model that had worked so successfully in this province.

Nevertheless, we were supposed to have an ethanol industry thriving in this province by now. We've met no deadlines in terms of the contribution of ethanol to the province. We've seen deadlines come and go. We don't have an industry in this province yet that is developed as a result of this government's initiative. And we're not likely to, Mr. Speaker, anytime soon.

So these are some of the things that are brought to this discussion today that would suggest to me, Mr. Speaker, that given this government's track record, the question, can a leopard change its spots, provokes the natural answer no.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have heard from the Premier that there is abundant oil and gas reserves. We've known that in this province for 40 years, as indicated by the resolution they passed at their own convention in 1946. Why has this government steadfastly refused to allow the development of that industry? Why is it with all the reserves they're talking about now, the trillion dollar benefit of natural gas and oil that exists in this province, why are they just now realizing its potential?

This government has been in power 13 years. Many of its predecessors were in power before that. We have squandered these opportunities through the negligence of this government for the last 40 or more years. And, Mr. Speaker, if they continue to behave in the future as they have in the past — and the evidence of their willingness to squander these opportunities is very clear — Mr. Speaker, I submit to you today that this province will be neither green nor prosperous.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. I wonder if we could just stop the clock for a moment. I would like to deal with the point of order raised by the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

I've examined the content of the motion and the content of the amendment. The intent of the motion is to present a position with respect to energy development in Saskatchewan. The

amendment argues an alternate position with respect to energy development in Saskatchewan. Therefore I find the amendment in order and I would like to point out that it follows several precedents that we have in this Assembly with respect to private members' day. And that is that we allow broad interpretation of motions in order to allow full debate. Start clock.

I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to enter the debate today in recognizing and endorsing the Premier's vision for an expanded energy sector in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And before I begin my comments and the whole connection as to why a northern and especially northwestern MLA should speak to the whole notion of an expanded energy sector, Mr. Speaker, that energy is felt all throughout the province. And northern Saskatchewan certainly shares the view and northern Saskatchewan certainly wants to embrace the notion that an expanded energy sector throughout the province is something that we think would be of benefit for many, many years to come.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the member from P.A. Northcote, and a lot of folks out there in the opposition cry doom and gloom and the world's ending tomorrow and so on and so forth. Mr. Speaker, I would point out that the member from P.A. Northcote, who served as a minister of Economic Development for a number of years, done more for this province in his little pinky finger than the entire benches across the way will ever hope to accomplish, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — And you go ahead and spread your doom and gloom. But when it comes to the energy sector, Mr. Speaker, we have a proud, rich history on this side of the Assembly to ensure that folks like the former minister of Economic Development, the member, the current member from Prince Albert Northcote, work very closely with the mining sector. And, Mr. Speaker, he has created more jobs and created more opportunity in Saskatchewan than that Tory opposition will ever hope to accomplish in their entire political lives, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — And I think it's important, I think it's important that we recognize that. And, Mr. Speaker, things got even better. Mr. Speaker, things got even better in recognizing the Premier's vision. And the point being, the member from Saskatoon Massey Place to carry on some of that work and to build on some of that work and to bring new energy and new ideas, Mr. Speaker, all the while fulfilling the Premier's vision, Mr. Speaker.

And I can point out that our current Minister of Industry and Resources is doing a remarkable job bringing this province to the point where now we say to folks out there, we are a have province, Mr. Speaker. We are a have-province. Why aren't you celebrating that? But oh no, no, the Saskatchewan Party says no, no, no, there's a lot of problems, there's a lot of problems.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I've always maintained that a good salesman is an ugly guy with a pretty wife and I'm one. I'm one ugly guy. But I tell you one of the points that I want to raise is that we have a beautiful province. We have a beautiful province. And yes, there are challenges. Yes, there are challenges but it's important that we sell the value of our province worldwide. But always, even those guys, those guys across the way, it's doom and gloom. Oh no, no, no — oh no, no, no, let's talk about something else.

Mr. Speaker, the current member from Saskatoon Massey Place again has carried on that fine tradition of building the economy. And one of the most important things, Mr. Speaker, that often is recorded in the history of Saskatchewan is, why is it we have record numbers of jobs? Why is it we have a have-province status? Why is it our economy is moving only when, only when this particular party that's in power now is in power, Mr. Speaker? Every time it went backwards was when that Tory opposition was in power, Mr. Speaker, and the facts speak for themselves.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of some of the members, as a result of some of . . . Our current Minister of Industry and Resources, every time he gets up it's a good news story. And what happens? There's a bunch of frowns; there's a bunch of frowns over there — a bunch of frowns — oh, this is not good news for us because the province is doing great. Well the moment you have good news, everybody across the way is unhappy. Well what kind of Saskatchewan, what kind of Saskatchewan Party is that, Mr. Speaker?

They should be embracing the Premier's vision and saying yes, that's what we want; yes, that's what Saskatchewan wants; and yes, we are now a have province. Let us celebrate, Mr. Speaker — let us celebrate. We're a have province. Enjoy it, Saskatchewan, because there's going to be a lot more coming down the pipe.

Mr. Speaker, in my particular area in the Northwest, we are very close to Fort McMurray. We're about maybe 50, 60 miles as the crow flies and next to the oil sands target. Of course we have the communities of La Loche, we have the communities of Buffalo Narrows, of Ile-a-la-Crosse — communities that want to take advantage of that oil and gas sector and re-energize our region, Mr. Speaker.

And what is this government doing, Mr. Speaker? We have the northern neighbours project where we are actually connecting people to jobs in Fort McMurray, that commute back and forth, Mr. Speaker. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, there's been talking of a major road to connect Fort McMurray to La Loche to make sure we have access to those jobs, Mr. Speaker. And secondly, is we're also encouraging the oil and gas companies to come on north, further northwest, to come and invest in Saskatchewan to make sure that the jobs and the opportunity are there all throughout the province.

And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, today, today as an MLA for Athabasca, that we embrace the Premier's vision for an expanded energy sector and we want to see oil and gas development throughout the Northwest. And the only thing that is stopping us, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that on the Saskatchewan side it's a bit more expensive to drill because we have a higher

overburden. And 50 miles, 50 miles makes a significant difference.

And I challenge the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker, today, to come clean. Because we have a policy that encourages oil and gas in the Southwest, why wouldn't we have a policy to encourage gas in the Northwest? All the rumours and all the innuendo that they're spreading is false, Mr. Speaker — it is totally false. Once again, they're conservative with the truth.

Mr. Speaker, as the MLA for Athabasca, I send a message to the oil and gas companies. The Northwest is eager to embrace the Premier's vision for a really expanded and revitalized energy sector, Mr. Speaker. We want to see that happen. And, Mr. Speaker, one of the things we often tell the oil and gas companies, and the uranium companies and all the companies that want to do business in Saskatchewan: yes, you are welcome and yes, we want to see that happen.

But one of the important messages, Mr. Speaker, that we often say, is always respect the local land users. That's one of the most important things that's all throughout Saskatchewan. As you would respect the farm community, as you respect the RMs, we want you to respect the northern land users as well. We insist on that to make sure that there's fairness out there, Mr. Speaker. And that's why today I want to publicly apologize to Leon McCallum, who is a trapper in Buffalo Narrows, as I was supposed to meet with him last week and talk about some of these issues. And I couldn't make it last weekend but I'm going to go this weekend to make sure we hear what he has to say.

And I think Mr. McCallum would say on behalf of trappers, and the fishermen, the people that use the forest for traditional resource purposes, is respect our industry; respect us. We want to see, we want to see that balance between environmental . . . that environmental demand. We also want to see a usable effort in energy and gas. But we also want to respect the trappers. That's something that's very important, Mr. Speaker.

And this is what we advise a lot of folks that want to come on board. Make sure you come to the area with the full knowledge that the local land user, the trappers, the commercial fishermen, the wildlife growers, that you embrace them and explain to them what exactly the impact is going to have on their particular area. And I think if you respect the traditional resource user, you get many more . . . much more mileage in terms of moving forward the energy and gas sector.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate that once again the government on this side, through some of the efforts by the member from P.A. Northcote, some of the most current efforts, the current minister from Saskatoon Massey Place, geez, can anything get better than this, Mr. Speaker? Well hold on because there's more coming from the Premier. And I say to the opposition, shame on you guys for being so negative, and all the doom and all the gloom. It's a centennial year. Let's celebrate it and say right on, Saskatchewan. We are now a have province, we got oil and gas moving, the uranium moving, potash moving, we're looking at the environment. The list goes on, Mr. Speaker. The list goes on.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — So I point out, I point out, Mr. Speaker, when I was asked . . . I asked the Whip, can I have a small file on energy gas, a small file. Well this is our small file, Mr. Speaker, seven or eight initiatives. This is a small file.

And then across the way, this notion of 100 ideas, like where does that come from, you guys? Where does that come from? I suspect you probably took one page out of all the things that the government is doing and said, well let's create 100 ideas out of this. That's got to be the most lamebrain strategy that I ever seen in this Assembly in the last 10 years that I sat here, Mr. Speaker — 100 ideas. What is it? Idea no. 6, idea no. 49, what are you hoping to hit? A lottery with the political support out there?

[12:00]

Mr. Speaker, I would say this. The energy sector is vital to the Saskatchewan . . . The Northwest welcomes oil and gas development; the Northwest wants to see jobs, and so on and so forth. And my final comment to the Sask Party, to the doom and gloom party, is exactly what Mr. Hirsch said, Mr. Speaker. He said . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . the Conservatives. He said at the summit, you have no right to think small. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to participate in this debate. And I don't normally agree with the member from Athabasca when he is in debate, Mr. Speaker, but in one area I will agree with him. And that was his last statement that we should not think small.

So on that context I would like to address a response or a point brought forward by the Premier about Saskatchewan that this . . . that we are only a have province temporarily. Mr. Speaker, that's thinking small. When he is referring to Saskatchewan as a wee province, Mr. Speaker, the Premier and the Government of Saskatchewan, the NDP, are thinking small. And that is not for any of our benefit, Mr. Speaker.

And the speaker previously, the member from Athabasca, should sit down with the Premier, his Premier, to get that Premier to think bigger, Mr. Speaker, because a temporary have situation is not acceptable. We need to grow this province, Mr. Speaker, and the members opposite do not believe in growing this province.

The member from Saskatchewan Rivers in the last spring session stood in his place and asked, grow? Grow? Why do you guys keep talking about growing? We don't need to grow. That was his statement, Mr. Speaker. That is the attitude of the NDP in this province.

The member from P.A. Northcote sat in his place heckling, Mr. Speaker. Population growth? Why do we want to grow the population? The more that leave, the more there is left for the rest of us. That's the NDP attitude. They don't want to see everybody benefit, Mr. Speaker; they only want to see

themselves get more of a shrinking pie. That is totally unacceptable. But that, Mr. Speaker, has been the vision of the NDP and the CCF since their formation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let's go back and look at the vision that this party has provided for Saskatchewan in the development of energy in this province. We had a growing, fledgling oil industry in the 1940s in this province. We were the centre of the oil industry in Canada, and Tommy Douglas went out of his way to destroy that industry. He did everything he could to drive the oil industry out of Saskatchewan, and he almost succeeded. They packed up in Saskatchewan at the end of the 1940s and moved to Alberta, Mr. Speaker, because of the attitudes of the CCF which later became the NDP. They drove the oil industry out of this province.

Now you say, well that's 50 years ago. Yes. Well I started working in the oil patch in 1970 in this province, Mr. Speaker, and in 1971 Allan Blakeney under the same NDP went out of his way again to try and destroy an industry that was getting back on its feet, Mr. Speaker, after some time when there were non-NDP governments, the Liberal government under Ross Thatcher, Mr. Speaker. In 1971 and '72, the oil patch in this province was down to less than 30 per cent of its possible production because of the rules and regulations put in by the NDP under Allan Blakeney, again almost destroying the oil industry in Saskatchewan.

We have today \$57 oil, \$57 oil in this province, Mr. Speaker, and you look around this province, and we don't have anywheres near enough oil rigs drilling oil and gas in this province. Why? Because of the continued imposition on that industry by this NDP government. They don't encourage people to come.

And one of the rules that holds people back from coming to this province is the rules put in place by Allan Blakeney in the 1970s that allows the government to confiscate oil properties at a whim, Mr. Speaker, and that's unacceptable. Yes, Mr. Speaker, Bill 42 under Allan Blakeney and the NDP went a long way to slowing up the oil industry in this province and that attitude hasn't changed.

I was in discussion one day with one of the NDP MLAs, and he stated to me that it's better to keep the oil and gas in the ground than allow a private company to make a profit. That is their attitude, Mr. Speaker. And the fundraising letter, and the fundraising letter just put out by the Premier before the last election clearly says that all over again: that any — any — business in this province or wanting to come in this province . . . it's bad if they make a profit, Mr. Speaker.

That's a totally unacceptable attitude. But that is their vision. That is the vision of the NDP, that you cannot have anyone come into this province and make a profit. It doesn't matter what kind of the energy sector it is — whether it's oil and gas, whether it's power, whether it's nuclear, whether it's ethanol.

Ethanol, we have a government who stood up before the last election and said we have a plan for ethanol development in this province. We have a company that's ready to come in and partner with the government, with the NDP, to develop the ethanol industry. And the Premier goes out and he's got the kids

and the tents and the balloons and, as soon as the election is over, there is no ethanol plant. All there is is stubble sitting in that same place with a sign fallen down, Mr. Speaker. That is the entire energy vision of this government — bare fields and ruined dreams, Mr. Speaker.

This government under the NDP, under this Premier, has no vision for the future of this province. We're entering into a new century, a new century for Saskatchewan and this government's vision is their 1930-something *Regina Manifesto* for the destruction of capitalism. That is their vision.

Mr. Speaker, the dinosaurs did not line up on the Alberta-Saskatchewan border and die to the west. The only dinosaurs left are writing speeches for the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The 65-minute debate has ended. We now open for 10 minutes question and comment period. I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — My question is for the member from Prince Albert Northcote. He talked a bit about, he talked a bit about history. So I want to ask him, on their NDP website, which he's a member of and his government is, they have the *Regina Manifesto*. Does he believe in that manifesto, or does he believe that may hinder our energy development, private companies coming in? And if he does, will he go and ask them to remove that from their website?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Here's what I believe in, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I believe in a political movement in this province with a history and with a proud history. And I believe that politicians shouldn't have to hide their political affiliation, and I believe they shouldn't have to bury their political parties and change their name from Progressive Conservative to Saskatchewan Party. That's what I believe, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Justice, the representative or the chairman, not chairman but the member of the SaskPower board. CO₂ recovery in this province should have been taking place for a number of years. SaskPower has lagged behind in that even though we have a good number of coal-fired plants that are spewing CO₂ out into the atmosphere. Under the Kyoto agreement, we need to start recovering that. Why has this government not proceeded in the 14 years that it has been government to start that recovery so that we can be on the road to meeting our Kyoto agreement obligations, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Clean Power Coalition, of which SaskPower is a founding member, continues its research in Canada. SaskPower supports the University of Regina's International Centre for Carbon Dioxide Capture with a demonstration project at SaskPower's Boundary dam power station in Estevan. SaskPower also participates in the Lignite Energy Council with North Dakota utilities to investigate coal gasification technologies suitable for the coal we have in Saskatchewan — lignite coal. And in Poplar River power station we are working on a mercury capture pilot project that's been under way since last fall.

And not enough attention is given to the problem of mercury in coal power plants, Mr. Speaker. It is a very dangerous, toxic substance and SaskPower is a leader on the continent in investigating how to remove it from emissions, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to ask the member from Cypress Hills if he disagrees with the Premier's vision of opening up and enhancing our oil field development in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I appreciate the question because what it does is it brings into question the idea of vision and whose idea this particular vision represents.

Now the fact of the matter is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we haven't heard much about vision from this Premier, especially in this particular area. As a matter of fact, it wasn't until the Saskatchewan Party put forward its policy, released to the public in the middle of January, that we actually heard anything from this government about driving energy development in this province. So while I think that the development of our energy potential in this province is very important, I wouldn't for a moment ascribe that to the Premier.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I just wanted to ask the question of the member from Cannington. The whole notion of the effort by our Premier is we are obviously telling the oil and gas companies, bring it on, when these things happen. And I wanted to ask . . . The question is, why is that that particular party . . . that is all doom and gloom. They always used the proud name of Saskatchewan in their particular affiliation as a political movement, and yet they're always calling down Saskatchewan. So my question is, would he consider either changing their attitude or changing their name to the wailing, negative party, as opposed to dragging the good name of Saskatchewan through the political

process that they're trying to take advantage of, Mr. Speaker?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Since that question had nothing to do with the debate, I think it's irrelevant, but I will answer other questions.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member's from northwestern Saskatchewan, an area that needs economic development and has the potential for huge energy developments. And there are customers right across the border that will need — that will pay for and need — that power not only just to supply to Saskatchewan but to supply other jurisdictions. And those government members have done everything they can to stymie that kind of development, Mr. Speaker, development such as the uranium industry which is mainly in the North. The production of uranium is in the North, but the attitude of that government is we should dig it out of the ground. We should be hewers of wood and drawers of water, but heaven forbid we should ever do anything with it after that point.

It's time to enhance that development, Mr. Speaker, and extract the jobs and the economic returns that we can have from that kind of development. And that government fails to do that.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, my question is for the member from Prince Albert Northcote. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a map that illustrates oil and gas production in Saskatchewan and Alberta; oil is shown in green and gas in red on that map. Alberta is almost solid red and green. But the colour cuts off abruptly when you approach the Saskatchewan border.

[12:15]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if this NDP government, having been in power for the vast majority of the last 60 years, hasn't been able to attract the energy sector to the province in all that time, what are the people of Saskatchewan supposed to believe has suddenly changed today?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to say to the member that I've been well aware of the map that he and others have been trotting around. The lawyer that they had running against me for the Conservative Saskatchewan Party trotted that map around for 28 days in Prince Albert Northcote, an election in which he didn't win one poll. I won every one.

So what are the people of Saskatchewan to believe? People of Saskatchewan understand that there's a difference in the resource in Alberta versus Saskatchewan. They understand the difficulty in extracting the heavy oil here in our province. They

understand that Alberta's industry was based on light sweet crude and the majority of it is natural gas, which we have not near the amount of.

So quite clearly the activity has been different between Alberta and Saskatchewan. But I think the people of Saskatchewan also understand the fact that there are 24,000 people working in that industry as the result of the positive initiatives that this administration has put in place, and that's why there's so many wells being drilled here in the province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My question is for the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy. I would like to ask her if she is in favour of the continued and enhanced development within her own constituency that is the result of the vision of this Premier?

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

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, I'd be happy to answer the question, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The industry in the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy has been developed by private enterprise — not anything to do but in spite of the NDP government who has done everything, since the 1930s when Tommy Douglas was in power in this province, to deter the advancement and the growth of the oil industry in Weyburn-Big Muddy and in all of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the member from Saskatoon Meewasin. He talked extensively about SaskPower in his speech and expanding the energy there.

I have a constituent who wants to put three-phase power in, who has the power line running right beside his farm. He wants to open a business there, and it's going to cost him \$14,000 to bring power less than a quarter mile.

Now is his government going to do anything to help small businesses on farms with power taking to the farm? Are they going to bring some initiative coming down or are they still going to be charging outrageous rates to bring power to these farms that want to start businesses?

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I've spoken in the debate about the importance of geography. And it's the facts of our physical geography and our human geography that Saskatchewan has more power lines per capita than any place in Canada, than any place on the continent. SaskPower is committed to delivering electricity to everyone in this province

and has a proud 75-year history of doing that, Mr. Speaker.

Somebody in this building was asking me how to get a red lily, Mr. Speaker, and I said, go to the member from Wood River and tell him it's a red lily and he'll surrender it, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — Private members' debate has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

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

Motion No. 6 — Lack of Confidence in Government

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well I'm very pleased today to bring forward a motion that I will move at the end of my comments. But to start out my comments I would like to say that there is a complete lack of confidence in this NDP socialist government. There is no vision. There is no plan. They come up with a dog-and-pony show about one quick item and try and run with it. The vision is zero. Their ideas are zero. And I would like to read a statement that was made and I will speak to it after. But I want to quote from the statement, and it says:

... we have a crisis of confidence in the province of Saskatchewan, that we have a government that has been stripped of its credibility, a government that has no longer the confidence of the people, a government that no longer seems to have a vision or a clear direction; in short, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe, a government that has lost the capacity to govern.

And in an democracy — I repeat — in any democracy or in any nation, in any nation when a government has lost the confidence of its people, when a government is stripped of its credibility, when a government has no vision, then it is time to defeat that government and give another group of men and women the opportunity to govern.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm sure glad the current Premier wrote this for me because this government has clearly demonstrated that it's a tired, worn-out government, bankrupt of new ideas, completely lacks the vision and competence to lead this province into the next number of years. They have no new ideas of their own and all they can do is oppose the ideas that are put forth to them. The member from Athabasca talks doom and gloom, and yet where does the doom and gloom start? It starts right there. Because I think they are still government. I think they are. They don't realize that they are, so where does the doom and gloom come from in this province? Saskatchewan people deserve better.

And I know my colleagues have commented on this already, but I think it's worthwhile to bring into this debate just exactly what some of the problems are with this government. And I'm going back to the *Regina Manifesto*. We get the member from P.A.

Northcote, gets up and wants to call this side of the House Conservatives; the other member gets up and wants to call Conservatives; and yet, Mr. Speaker, by ruling in this House I can't call them what they really are. So the only thing I can call them is they have the policies and the attitude of their Cuban cousins.

And this is one of the things in their manifesto, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They want to replace the present capitalist system, with its inherent . . . [inaudible] . . . and inhumanity, replace the capital system. Is this a government that we could have any confidence in, that wants to replace capital system? Is it a dirty word to have somebody work for profit?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's a whole pile in this manifesto that just really reeks, really reeks when it comes to enhancing business in this province. This government wants the principal means of production and distribution that are owned by the government, production and distribution owned by the government. How can you entice and attract investment if production and distribution is owned by the government?

And here is the catch-all, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This government . . . No socialist government will rest content until it has eradicated capitalism and put into operation the full program of socialized planning. Now in any socialist government how can you attract investment, how can you attract business, how can we — as people of this province — have confidence in somebody that is fully behind the *Regina Manifesto*?

And I've heard members opposite say, well that manifesto was actually produced many, many years ago. And I would like to point out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this was reproduced under the new Premier on February 15, 2001. So it's an old document adopted by the current administration. So they believe in this. They believe in socialism to the ultimate extent in this province. Even, even as we heard earlier, but I want to read it into the record again. And this is the Premier's letter of just two years ago or a year and a half ago:

Big corporations see a successful provincial [provincial, whatever it is and want to take over] economy and want to take over the most profitable parts of it . . .

And this comes from an NDP photocopy machine. And this, Mr. Speaker, what kind of, what kind of confidence, what kind of confidence does it give to companies that want to come into this province when we have a Premier going out and saying stuff like that?

Well the government, the socialist government, the NDP government, they wish, they wish to be involved in business. They wish to be the champions of business. Well let's have a little look at some of their records being the champion of business. And we'll just, I'll go over a little list of you and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this amounts to losses, losses that reach \$200 million. And I repeat, \$200 million.

And I'm going to go through them very quickly but Channel Lake was only 15 million; Guyana was 2 million; NST [Network Services of Chicago] was 16 million; Persona, 9.4 million; Retx, yes, Retx is getting up near SPUDCO, 26 million; *tappedinto*, 2.4 million; Clickabid, 1.9 million.

Navigata, still pouring money into it, \$37 million; Craig Wireless, 10 million; Coachman, 16 million; AgDealer, 8.9. SPUDCO, and I really want to talk a little bit more about SPUDCO.

This is the whole, this is the whole problem that we have with the socialist system. Here we have the minister that was in charge of SPUDCO deceiving the people of the province, holding it away from the people of the province and he's proud of it. He is proud of it. Lost \$35 million and he's proud of it.

And the member from Meadow Lake will stand up in this House and he will say, he will say that, well it was good for the industry. Well losing \$35 million, how does anybody expect that that is good for the industry? Just think what that industry would have been, had of the government not had its fingers in it.

Also, also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we understand, we understand what SPUDCO did. A partnership. The member from P.A. Northcote says that we had a partnership. Well we know that that was false. It was an untruth. It was a limited information estimation. So now we have, we're unsure whether to believe anything these people say whether it's truthful or limited information estimation.

In fact, we have what happened in SPUDCO. I'm afraid that that was what was happening with Broe and our ethanol. If the minister, if the minister was giving the same deal to Broe industries as he gave to the partners in SPUDCO, look where we'd be today. It wouldn't be \$35 million loss; it could be another \$100 million loss. When it's not their money, they don't care.

And I'd like to just make a point on that one. It's not their money; it's very easy to spend it. And Arnold Schwarzenegger was at a panel with a bunch of Democrats recently, and he made a very valid point. He said — when they were asked questions — he said, I'm the only individual on this panel that signs wage cheques on the front. That meant he was dealing with his own money. In a socialist society, you're dealing with taxpayers' money, and you don't care. They just don't care how they blow the money.

Mega bingo; here's another interesting one. That was only \$8 million loss. ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan], ISC, we're up to \$105 million. Mind's Eye, Mind's Eye Entertainment . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Mr. Speaker, the member, member, the member is reminding me of the little snake that tried to make an asp of himself.

Mr. Speaker, Mind's Eye Entertainment, 7 million, \$7 million. And now we put money into a film on Tommy Douglas. Now I never met Tommy Douglas but I understand that he had quite a sense of humour. So I'm wondering now if they're going to call the Tommy Douglas movie, Tommy the comic.

Future Wide Open campaign, another \$12 million. Pangaea, 3.5. How about even money on an Internet scam? Internet's only \$3,000, but it's the idea of it. Equalization newspaper ads, another \$75,000.

The point being here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is these champions

of industry, these champions of business that sit opposite, they cannot handle the money when it comes to investment. They cannot handle it.

Mr. Speaker, I have a letter from a constituent that kind of explains it the same way. And I quote on this. It says:

By the way, I find this business of the government taking it upon themselves to invest other people's money, which they have arbitrarily taken from them, highly arrogant, as if they "know better" than we know how to invest our money. It's obvious they don't.

[12:30]

It couldn't be said better, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now we have the empty promises. We hear continuing empty promises from the NDP. Now I want to give you a little idea of some of the empty promises and what this government has done or has not done. And I want to go back to keeping young people in the province, keeping young people in the province. And here is what was said four years ago: "We plan a bright future for our children and ourselves." How are we making out?

Three years ago, "... connecting to young people means connecting to the future [and] young people are the future of this province." Lots of words, no action. How can you have confidence in a government that actually stands up and says something and does absolutely nothing about it?

Two years ago, "It is a vision where all children will have the opportunity ... to build successful families and careers here at home." Does anybody see a pattern here? What was done? Absolutely nothing was done. We continue to have an out-migration of young people.

Last year, "Saskatchewan will become more youth friendly and the first choice in opportunity for all ... our youth." There's four years in a row that this government has said basically the same thing and has done absolutely nothing about it. They must be very, very proud of themselves over there for being able to stand up and talk hollow, empty nothingness.

Health care, let's look at health care. We'll go back four years ago in health care: "This province introduced medicare and will continue to provide health care that is a model for the rest of Canada." Now let me think. Is it a model for the rest of Canada to have the longest waiting lists? Should we be in competition for the longest waiting lists? Is that the model that that government wants to impose on the rest of Canada as their model? That was four years ago.

Three years ago:

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

Well how's that working? How is that working? Again we throw money at it. They throw money at it, but it's not helping the problem. And even some of them know that, some of them,

not all.

And then, "A surgical registry is being implemented to manage waiting lists province-wide." Well a Dr. Phil question: how's that working so far? We just heard today the waiting lists are longer. Is this a government that we can have confidence in when they've said for three years they're going to do something and they absolutely do nothing about it?

Then last year, "We will do more to reduce waiting times for surgery and diagnostic imaging ...". Again there's four years that the same thing has been said, and what's been done? Can anybody over there stand up and say what really has been done? We've spent more money, but has it helped? No.

How about the economy? How about the economy? Here we have, four years ago, "... the Saskatchewan economy is strong and it's growing." Who. Three years ago, "Saskatchewan is quickly becoming Canada's province of opportunity." What does that mean? Has anything really happened? Have they done anything to help the economy?

The ultimate goal of our ... [province] is to build an economic foundation in Saskatchewan ... [and] achieve the status of a 'have' province within the Canadian confederation.

Well they didn't do anything to do that. Oil prices rocketed. Some windfall from oil prices, and that's what they've done. They haven't done anything themselves.

"New industries in tourism, culture, and information technology will continue to diversify and expand our economy." Well look at the results. Since 1999 Saskatchewan has posted the worst job-creation record and the worst economic ... [inaudible] ... in Canada.

Four years, four years of rhetoric. Four years of doing absolutely nothing to help the economy.

Well let's just continue on the economy. I want to talk a little bit about the rural economy because we've had a Rural Revitalization minister. I don't know if there's a file open on that because it no longer exists, and now it's going to be passed to another Rural Development minister. I don't think it's going to take very much to transfer the records from one to the other because I don't think there was anything done by the Rural Revitalization minister except open an office and give somebody a good job, another government job.

But I can tell you what has happened, talking about rural revitalization. I'll take a town in my constituency that they've moved out government offices. Now I'm not opposed to reducing the size of government, but moving them from a rural location into Regina, I don't think that's really rural revitalization. And one of the Economic Development individuals in this town had done a little bit of an assessment on the impact that the people moving out of the town had, and he equated it to 1,800 job losses in Regina on a per capita basis. Can you imagine the outcry if 1,800 jobs were lost in Regina? And yet that's the same effect it had on this town. Is that rural revitalization? That's rural destruction. And they are the champions at rural destruction.

Let me read you some of the attack on rural Saskatchewan in the past year. The closure of 22 of the province's 31 rural service centres — can you be confident in a government that's going to go in that direction? The closure of nine Saskatchewan environment offices, and yet the two members from the North who affected their constituencies substantially, they voted for it. They voted for the closures in their area.

How about the health facilities that were closed in conversions? And this is another fabrication within the platform of the NDP during the last election. We will not close facilities or convert them, and that in fact happened, so that is another limited information estimation. Reduction in the number of long-term care beds — now we have the member from Saskatoon Eastview that has a cure for that by people dying quicker. I guess that's why you don't need as many long-term care beds if we use her theory that we'll have people dying quicker. How can you have confidence in a government that has that way of thinking?

Elimination of the farm fuel tax rebate on gasoline and propane bought at retail outlets — that's sure revitalizing rural Saskatchewan, isn't it. That really is bolstering rural Saskatchewan. A 20 per cent reduction on the rebate on farm fuel bulk purchases, cancellation of livestock and horticultural facilities incentive program, cancellation of Farm Families Opportunity Initiative and conservation cover program, boy, that's really driving that rural economy upwards, isn't it? Cancelling these program is just enhancing rural Saskatchewan like you wouldn't believe.

And if we get the emphasis like the member from Athabasca, this is really helping, this is really working for rural Saskatchewan, isn't it? Well I think not. Seven hundred thousand reduction to funding for Prairie Diagnostic Services lab, and interesting that's responsible for chronic wasting disease. Take away that money from diagnostic services for chronic wasting disease. How about elimination of short-term hog loan program and livestock drought program? That really enhances rural Saskatchewan.

And then we get to one of the great ones — increased park fees, fishing licence fees, and the new campfire fee. I just can't wait until this budget comes out and the Minister of Environment has to put on a weenie tax to make back some money that they lost from closing the parks last year.

Increase in water testing fees — that is exactly how this NDP government is helping rural Saskatchewan. Now we have again in rural Saskatchewan . . . And how can you have confidence in a Minister of Agriculture that stands up and just displays rhetoric day after day? Increase crop insurance, decrease coverage, talks about what he's doing to help farmers.

Well I just received a fax today from a constituent of mine, talking about the CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization] program. And the CAIS program was not funded for 2003 until the NDP won the lottery. And when they funded the CAIS program for 2003, the payouts are starting, and this individual received — after many phone calls — he received some of his payment. But in December, December 2004, the Saskatchewan government announced that they would be mailing cheques on January 15 for the balance of the CAIS

payout for 2003. As of March 15, 2005, CAIS owes this individual approximately \$30,000. After talking with CAIS people and getting no firm date on when he could expect the money, he's asking, if you had to wait over a year for your paycheque would you be happy? Here's an individual that's getting ready for spring seeding, and the money's not there. Can anybody over there say why? Would anybody in this province have confidence in a government that ignores that? I think not. I think not.

Let's look at some of the other failures in this NDP government. Failure to grow our population — Saskatchewan's population has been stuck around 1 million people for 80 years, and other jurisdictions are growing. In fact, we're below 1 million people now. It helps the member from P.A. Northcote who says, get rid of all the people; there's more left for those of us that are here. But I don't abide by that.

Between 1992 and 2003, Saskatchewan lost 60,000 people to net out-migration — 40,000 of those who left Saskatchewan during that period between age of 15 and 29 years. Can you have any confidence in a government that agrees that out-migration is good? Why are we sending our young people, 40,000 between the age of 15 and 29, out of this province? And members over there laugh. They're laughing because we're losing people out of this province. Fifty-eight per cent of the people who leave Saskatchewan are actually moving to Alberta. What draws them to Alberta? Jobs. Jobs. How can we have confidence in a government that stands up and boasts, we've created five new jobs? Actual fact is, our job creation is the worst of any province in this country.

We have the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow chirping from her seat. How can anybody have confidence in a minister that introduces government-forced hours of work legislation? How many businesses in this province would have confidence in the minister who introduced that back legislation? That is a job killer. That is a business killer, and now she's smiling about it. She's happy. She's happy that she brought that legislation back in. We're still waiting to see it be scrubbed.

Now we hear, we hear about the economy. We hear about the economy. Saskatchewan's job creation rate was just over 2 per cent between 1998 and 2003 — 2 per cent. Promised 30,000 new jobs — not there. Only Newfoundland had a worse job creation record than Saskatchewan between 1991 and 2003.

And this is very interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to grow the number of businesses. We know, we know on this side of the House that four out of five jobs are created by small businesses. And this is a good one for the record. There were 1,900 fewer businesses in this province in 2003 than there were in 1991. And I repeat, 1,900 fewer businesses. Now is there any member on that side that can say that's a good idea? And then we introduce stuff like the job-killing, monster legislation that would make it worse. How can you have confidence in a government that is driving, that is driving businesses out of business?

Failure to grow personal disposable income per capita. Taxes up, wages flat, less disposable income.

Now, now the food bank. Failure to tackle it. We have a

government that talks about, that talks about how they are the champions of the poor, the needy, and yet they voted against, they voted against our proposal to have more food for the needy. Almost 2,000 more children needed food banks in 2004. A 24 per cent increase in 2003. And yet, and yet listen to them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they're actually laughing about it. They're laughing about it.

[12:45]

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I haven't even touched on health yet, and we look at the health record. Longest surgical waiting lists. How can you have confidence in a minister or a government that has the longest surgical waiting list, longest diagnostic waiting list — two years for an MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] — mass exit of nurses and other health care professionals, College of Medicine going on probation. How can anyone support a government that likes this happening. People dying on waiting lists. Well I finally got where they're not laughing at that one because that's pretty serious — people dying on waiting lists.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have pages of health care files that we've brought up, and it is very serious, where people have died on waiting lists. And yet we have a government that will stand up in all of their audacity and say, we have the best health care system in the country. And yet they say it so often that I think some of them actually believe it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know my colleagues want to get in on this debate, so at this time I would like to move a motion. Moved by myself, member from Wood River, seconded by the member from Moosomin, and I move:

That due to the lack of its competence and vision, this government no longer enjoys the confidence of the Legislative Assembly.

I so move.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been . . . Order, order. It has been moved by the member for Wood River, seconded by the member for Moosomin:

That due to the lack of its competence and vision, this government no longer enjoys the confidence of the Legislative Assembly.

I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a pleasure and an honour to be able to stand in this Assembly today to speak to this motion, in view of the fact that what we're hearing across the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the fact that many more people are beginning to question exactly where this province is going. Many people are questioning exactly what direction this province is taking, and especially when we look at the fact that just the other day we had a motion in this Assembly that bragged about Saskatchewan, talked about Saskatchewan's past.

We had a motion that dealt with Saskatchewan's centennial and the fact that in this year, 2005, we are now celebrating 100

years as a province in this great Dominion of Canada. One hundred years of vision and building in the province of Saskatchewan. One hundred years of looking back over . . . and looking at what our forefathers, the vision they had and the views they had as they began to hew out of the soil around them places of residences, Mr. Deputy Speaker, employment opportunities, building businesses, and communities, Mr. Deputy Speaker; looking forward with a vision for a province that would have so much to offer its population.

And in fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the men and women who came to this province better than 100 years ago came realizing that they were just few in number but believing that over the years and over the decades that this province would continue to grow and that this province would be a province that would be a place where we'd have masses of people contributing, a place of wealth and opportunity, that people would look to Saskatchewan as a place to invest and a place to come to and be a part of and to help develop.

And unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we have seen, especially since 1930, we look back to the '30s and what we see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we see a province that had a population of roughly 1 million people. Some 60 years later or 70 years later, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what do we have as we celebrate our centenary? A province of roughly 1 million people.

Back in the '30s, late '30s, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this province actually had more population than the province to the west of us, the province of Alberta. Today that province is now enjoying a population base of, I believe it's around the two and a half million people and growing.

And in fact my wife and I just spent a few days visiting family in Alberta, just prior to session opening. And it was interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just going, driving through the province of Alberta, driving through some of the communities that I remember, not even that long ago, five years ago, and looking at the expanded housing rate in those communities. And what we also found, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is in many of these communities . . . are expecting over the next decade that they are going to double their population. But one has to ask, exactly what is Saskatchewan going to do in the next decade let alone the next century? And that's why this motion comes forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker, addressing the issue of competence, because of the lack of vision that is coming from this Premier and this government at this point in time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I think about the motion and I think about the concerns we have raised, whether it's in agriculture, whether it's in our small communities, whether it's in education, even in our large centres, we look at investment opportunities. And we look at trying to attract investment dollars to this province.

I think right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . And I would like to take a couple of moments to speak to this issue. Representing a rural constituency, representing a constituency that is made up of a large rural component and specifically agriculture, and every business in my constituency, every member of my constituency, whether they're teachers, whether they're businessmen or small-business men, understand the

ramifications of a struggling agricultural community. And it's imperative, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we begin to develop a real vision for this province, recognizing the struggles that the agricultural community has.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are we suggesting that we go back to a period in time when agriculture was the biggest economic engine in this province? I don't think we necessarily are because we realize there are so many other large opportunities, whether they're in mining, whether they're in forestry, whether they're in the oil sector. We all realize those play a vital role in developing and enhancing the future of the province.

But I would suggest to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that agriculture still does play and impacts a fairly large sector, in fact one of the largest economic sectors in the province of Saskatchewan, because there isn't a small business in all of Saskatchewan that isn't impacted some way in this province as a result of the struggles in the agricultural community.

And part of that struggle today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is — and certainly looking across the eastern side of the province — is the fact that last year many, many farmers had one of the best crops that they've ever grown in all the years they've been farming, except for the significant frost and the impact of that frost in early July of last year. And what it's done to farmers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is it's put them behind the eight ball because many producers were looking at that crop and what they saw in that crop, they not only saw bounty in the amount of yield, which at the end of the day many producers still had — they still harvested a significant amount of volume — they saw a quality product that was going to bring them a premium when they marketed their grain. And, Mr. Speaker, they saw, at the end of the day, the ability to go back and begin to recoup some of the losses they had incurred from previous years and basically put themselves on a good foot to look forward to the future.

Unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the frost took away that vision, took away that opportunity and created a lack, in some cases a real sense of despair because in the eastern side of the province, we not only have a significant grain factor, we also have a lot of producers that are into the agricultural sector, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So when I talk about grain . . . And I know a lot of producers really would like to be able to set their feet on the ground, go out and plant their crops and look at the yield, look at what they can put in the bin, look at the premiums they're going to have and the dollars at the bottom of the day, pay their bills, and realize that as they're paying their bills, they're able to pay taxes and contribute to this province. But if they don't have that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they can't pay those bills, how do they continue to function? And that's where crop insurance comes in.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the things that we've seen Saskatchewan producers, the factors they have to contend with this year, is that this government has reduced the level of coverage — which I would suggest, last year was too low. And when you look at the frost damage and you look at what producers qualify for under crop insurance, the amount of monies they received and the fact that those revenue sources did

not even come close to addressing the costs that they had incurred in trying to grow that crop, and then to find out within a few short days they're going to have to sit down — the end of March, March 31 — and decide, am I going to continue carrying crop insurance? Is it worth my time to carry crop insurance when I see a reduced coverage? And on top of a reduced coverage, I see that it's going to cost me more money. And then I look at how well crop insurance met my financial needs last year.

And I know many producers, they are really shaking their heads and really asking themselves, what do we do? And you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's not agriculture producers as well. There are many businesses across this province understand the impact of that frost that hit rural Saskatchewan last year and the lack of the economic resources allowing producers to pay off the bills that they had incurred last year.

So I would suggest to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we look at agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan, we certainly need to, we certainly need to take a close look at crop insurance and how crop insurance meets the needs of agriculture producers.

And that's why the Saskatchewan Party has as no. 64 in their vision for the province, reviewing the Saskatchewan crop insurance program with a view to expanding coverage and reducing risk. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, most farmers would just as soon operate without the crop insurance but they realize that in order to protect themselves they need to carry some insurance.

In fact there isn't a person in the province of Saskatchewan that doesn't recognize the need to carry insurance — whether it's accident insurance, whether it's house insurance or building insurance, Mr. Speaker, we all carry some form of insurance. But this is the only insurance program that I have seen that reduces coverage and increases the cost. And, Mr. Speaker, we need to address that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we also need to look at ways in which we can enhance economic development in the agricultural community, and certainly with the concerns that have been raised by the BSE [bovine spongiform encephalopathy] question. And that's why as we look at a vision for the province and the vision that was brought forward by the member of Swift Current, vision no. 8, support a sustainable livestock industry by instituting the provincial capital tax exemption and providing a PST [provincial sales tax] rebate on all capital costs associated with new or expanded beef processing capacity in Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the impact of that vision statement I think has become very clear, especially with the decision made in Montana on March 7 that again limited the border opening to agricultural producers or to the livestock producers in the province of Saskatchewan.

On the other hand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I note in the area that I represent, in the Moosomin constituency — and we think especially of the Wolesey and Grenfell areas with the Natural Valley Farms and their move to develop and build a processing plant and a slaughter facility to address the backlog of the need

for slaughter capacity in this province — that a vision of this nature, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would certainly go a long way in assisting individuals who have a vision not only for themselves, but also a vision for their community. Because by enhancing slaughter capacity, by building these types of facilities, we are not only supporting the agriculture community, we are also supporting local communities through economic activity through job creation and economic growth in those areas.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are so many other areas that we certainly can debate and I'd like to get into the debate on health care. And I'd like to, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to just quickly mention the community of Moosomin, looking at their integrated facility, and the fact that this government has dragged its feet for so long that the costs of that facility continue to grow. And those are reasons, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this motion has been brought forward.

The Deputy Speaker: — Thank you, members. It now being past 1 p.m., this House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

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Hon. B. Belanger
Minister of Northern Affairs

Hon. E. Cline
Minister of Industry and Resources

Hon. J. Crofford
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