



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

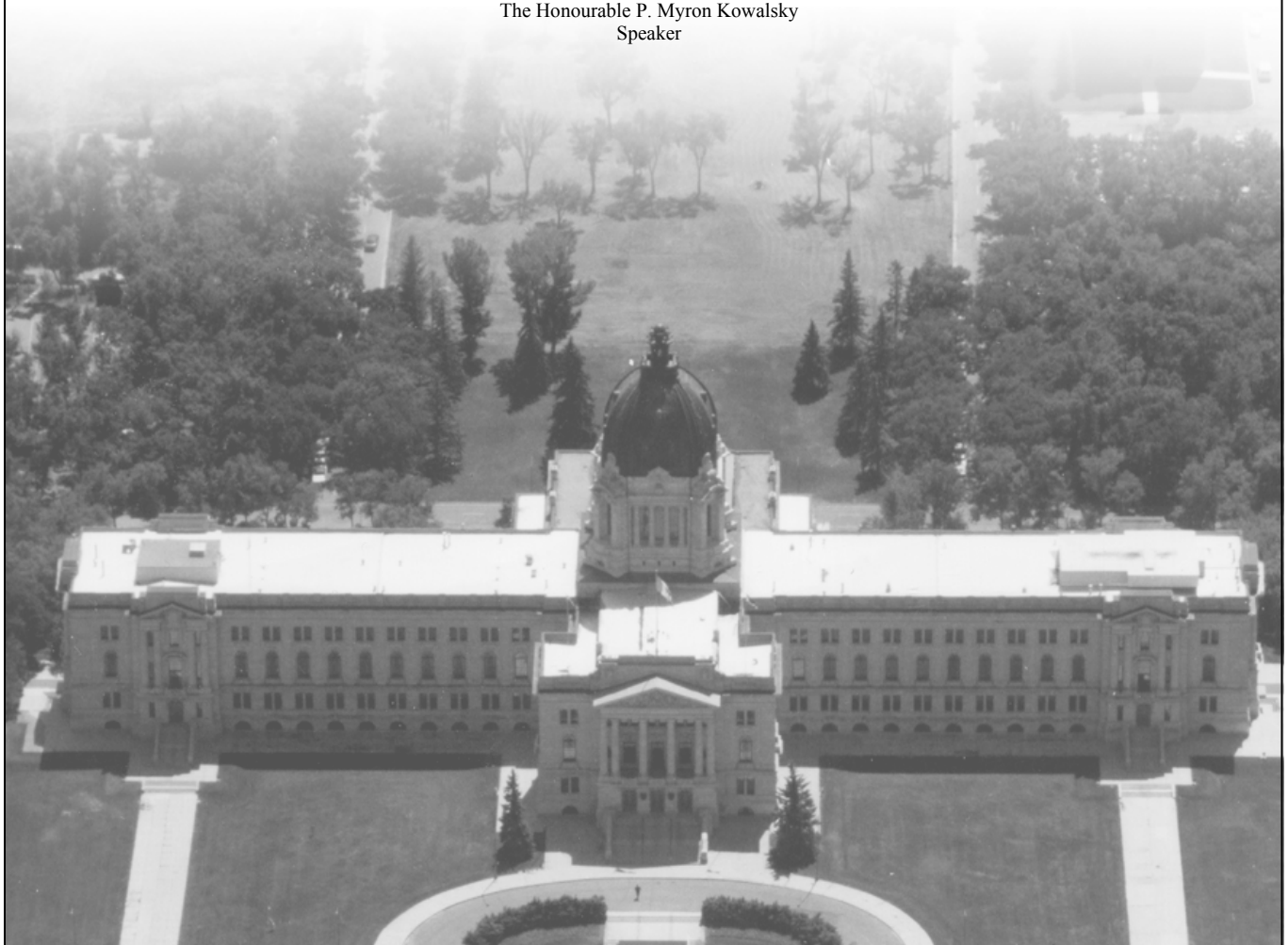
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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: — The Chair recognizes the member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, I present a petition again today on behalf of the constituents of Cypress Hills concerned about the consequences of forced amalgamation for school divisions. 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 to reorganize school divisions on a strictly voluntary basis.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by constituents from the communities of Frontier and Climax.

I so present.

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour for me again to rise on behalf of constituents who are concerned about the deficiency in the residential support offered to people with long-term disabilities in my hometown of Swift Current. The prayer of their petition reads:

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 facing lifelong disabilities.

All the petitioners today, Mr. Speaker, are from the city of Swift Current.

I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise again today on behalf of people who are concerned about the growing concern over crystal meth:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this government to take the necessary action to implement a strategy that will deal with crystal methamphetamine, the education, prevention, enforcement, and treatment.

The people that have signed this petition are all from Porcupine Plain, Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've yet another petition from people in Saskatchewan who are concerned about the fact that the Boughen Commission, which recommended sweeping changes to the education system, will not be endorsed entirely, but the report will be picked at by the government. 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.

Mr. Speaker, all of the signatures on this petition are from the fine community of Kyle, and I'm pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition dealing with forced amalgamation. 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 strictly a voluntary basis.

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

The signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from the city of Moose Jaw.

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: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again I have petitions to present regarding the Claybank Brick Plant. The prayer reads as follows:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people from Wynyard, Moose Jaw, Regina, Saskatoon, Gravelbourg, and Calgary. I so present.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today with a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan who would like to see the halt of 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.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by the good citizens of Assiniboia and Limerick. 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. 180, 637, 640, 715, 716, 718, and 720.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 85 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for SLGA: how much did SLGA pay for veterinary services at Marquis Downs racetrack in Saskatoon in 2003, and to whom? Please provide the details of all veterinary services provided at Marquis Downs racetrack during 2003.

And, Mr. Speaker, I also have the same question for the year 2004. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for

Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 85 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Learning: is there a minimal standard of professional training that is required of any person employed within the K to 12 school system in the capacity of a counsellor?

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I have a question:

To the Minister of Learning: in view that personal counselling could be considered a mental health treatment, are policies in place by the department that determines (a) the minimum age for which a child can receive counselling without parental permission or awareness; and (b) a minimum number of sessions for which a child may consult with a counsellor before parental consent and/or awareness is required?

In addition, Mr. Speaker:

To the Minister of Learning: if it has been determined by a professional worker within the K to 12 system that a child may harm him or herself or another student, what protocol does the department have in place for that professional to follow (a) to inform the parents of the child; and (b) to seek professional help for the child?

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Better Business Bureau 2005 Torch Awards

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night the Minister of Industry and Resources and myself, along with several of our colleagues from the opposition, attended the first annual Torch Awards, sponsored by the Better Business Bureau of Saskatchewan. These awards are to recognize businesses that consistently conduct their business practices in an ethical fashion. The 2005 Torch Awards honoured businesses of various sizes whose efforts have ensured that the marketplace remains fair and honourable.

Mr. Speaker, the keynote address was given by the Lieutenant Governor, Dr. Lynda Haverstock. She spoke about our centennial being a chance to celebrate what a great place Saskatchewan is, how great our people are, and what a significant contribution we have made to the world. Her remarks were inspiring and garnered a standing ovation.

Mr. Speaker, the winners in the six categories were: for finance, insurance, real estate, Meyers Norris Penny of Prince Albert; for food and personal services, Northgate Optical-New Vision Centre of Regina; for industrial products and services, JNE Welding of Saskatoon; for professional services, Hillsdale Shell of Regina; for retail wholesale, Re-Appliable Parts Inc. of Regina; and finally the winner for trades and contractor, Polar Refrigeration Services Ltd. of Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, it was refreshing to hear the winners speak about how much they like doing business in Saskatchewan.

I want to congratulate all of the nominees and the winners in the 2005 Torch Awards and commend the Better Business Bureau for this new initiative which raises the profile of business ethics in our province. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the members opposite in congratulating the Better Business Bureau on their Torch Awards. I too had the privilege of attending the awards. I thoroughly enjoyed the evening. I know that these were the first awards given, and that the purpose of the awards was to promote business excellence and ethical conduct.

Mr. Speaker, I was somewhat troubled to note that among the nominees and winners there was not any lawyers among the bunch, which perhaps says something about the profession that some of us engage in. But it was a thoroughly enjoyable evening, and I would like to join with the members opposite in congratulating not just the nominees and the winners but also the Better Business Bureau for the hard work that they do, and the position that they play in ensuring that consumers receive value for their money and good services when they deal with businesses in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Easter Greetings

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, one of the most sacred times of the year for two of the world's religions, Christianity and Judaism, comes with spring during the celebration of Easter and Passover. For Christians, the desolation of death leading to the promise of rebirth and rejuvenation reminds us that no defeat is final and that hope springs eternal.

Mr. Speaker, while many people will be spending the holiday with their family and loved ones, whether it be in a religious or secular manner, Easter provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon a number of themes that are relevant to all people.

Suffering, wisdom, sorrow, joy, death, and rejuvenation are part of every person's life, and no matter what one's faith might be, we can all take comfort in the lessons of Easter.

Out of death comes life. Out of anguish and suffering comes wisdom. Out of sorrow springs joy. But the essential message, Mr. Speaker, is one of hope.

It is on this note that I wish all the members of this Assembly, the staff of the legislature, and all citizens of Saskatchewan a very relaxing weekend. But above all, Mr. Speaker, let us take this opportunity to consider how fortunate we are to live in such a plentiful and peaceful province where we are free to enjoy a

holiday with our loved ones in relative safety and security.

Mr. Speaker, Happy Easter to you and to all members of this Assembly. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

New Store Opening in Batoche Constituency

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Monday evening I attended the grand opening of Saskatchewan's newest Flaman store. The store is located in the Batoche constituency on the edge of the city of Prince Albert.

Flaman stores has a very large selection of merchandise that is farm related, and with the weakness of the farm economy at this time it's a very brave move for the company to set up a brand new store and building.

Flaman is spread out across the province of Saskatchewan and now even spread out across Western Canada, and the original store is still open and operating on the edge of the town of Southey.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate Flaman on their efforts on expanding their business.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

2005-2006 Budget

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan budget for 2005 and 2006 that was tabled in this Assembly yesterday is a budget to build Saskatchewan for the next century.

Based on a strong economy that is setting job records in Saskatchewan, the centennial budget has record levels of funding to health and education, Mr. Speaker. It includes a centennial university tuition grant that will allow our two universities to hold the line on university tuition in this, our centennial year.

Mr. Speaker, coming in at just over \$7 billion, this is the largest budget in Saskatchewan's history, yet it is prudent and fiscally responsible, Mr. Speaker. It is a balanced budget and has no tax increases.

It expands the key social programs of health and education and provides support to low-income people and to people with disabilities. It establishes an independent business tax review committee to help make Saskatchewan an even better place to do business and create even more jobs in the future, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, with a significant capital budget of almost \$327 million, we're literally building for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, this budget marks year two of our four-year plan — a plan that continues on the path of sound and responsible fiscal management that makes Saskatchewan an even better place to live, work, invest, and raise your family, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:15]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Rose Valley Dance Competition

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, the Rose Valley School of Dance once again put on a top-quality dance competition on the weekend of March 18 to 20. Rose Valley's dance competition started 25 years ago. It presently has 47 dancers, aged 3 to 18 years old.

Dance Mania 2005 entertained over 1,000 people from northeast and central Saskatchewan. There were 425 dancers from 18 dance studios showing their skills in ballet, jazz, and tap.

Crystal Anderson has been the artistic director of Rose Valley School of Dance for 12 years. Her students excel at exams and competitions. Dance competition rarely makes the kind of headlines as do sports activities. But for the students, the parents, and friends the excitement of this competition rivals any other event.

Students are not just learning dance steps. They are learning to express themselves and to show the world they are unique. They are learning to hold themselves with grace and to appreciate how others interpret each piece of music.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate parents and volunteers who puts in hundreds of hours to ensure students in rural Saskatchewan are afforded the same opportunities as those in larger centres. There's nothing small about our small towns in Saskatchewan, specifically Rose Valley, when it comes to providing cultural activities for the children. I'd like to congratulate Rose Valley School of Dance for another successful dance competition event.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Outstanding Principal from North Battleford

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate an outstanding elementary school administrator from the Battlefords who was chosen from nation-wide nominations as one of Canada's outstanding principals.

Mr. Glen Leask is the principal of Lawrence Elementary School in North Battleford where I was once a student. Under the direction of Mr. Leask, Lawrence School has become a leader in developing and implementing the concept of a behavioural

classroom, a model now used in three division schools.

Twenty-eight principals from across Canada were honoured in February for their exemplary contributions to education at The Learning Partnership's first annual Canada's Outstanding Principals Awards in Toronto.

The Learning Partnership is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to bringing together business, education, government, labour, policy makers, and the community to develop partnerships that strengthen education in Canada.

The nomination and consequential national award presented to Mr. Leask is a testament to both his work and the respect he has garnered from those who work with him. The nominators for Mr. Leask said, and I quote:

Everyone in our organization who saw the materials about Outstanding Principals had the same spontaneous one word response, 'Leask'. It's very difficult to sum up the respect everyone has for his work.

I ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to join with me in congratulating Mr. Glen Leask for being nominated as one of Canada's Outstanding Principals.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Easter Greetings

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Later today the House will rise and members will leave for their constituencies to celebrate the Easter weekend. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, Easter is the most important celebration of the Christian faith, a time when Christians remember and celebrate the death and burial and resurrection of the Son of God.

It's also a time when we think about new life here in the province of Saskatchewan. Our province, more than many parts of the world, comes out of the deep-freeze and we see the ground thaw, we see the lakes reappear with water, we see the green come out and new life, both in wildlife and in livestock and the plant life of the province.

It's a time of excitement and rejuvenation for the province of Saskatchewan, and therefore on behalf of the official opposition I want to wish all members of this Legislative Assembly, the staff that work here, you, Mr. Speaker, a very blessed and happy Easter weekend. May it be a time of getting together with family and enjoying a well-deserved break and time with the people that we love so much.

Happy Easter, everyone.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Budget Commitments

Mr. Wall: — Now we know why the member for P.A. [Prince Albert] Northcote has sold his home and why he's looking for another job. He did see the budget before it was released, Mr. Speaker.

This budget, just quite simply, this budget lets down Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. There was nothing in this budget to give back any of the \$140 million that that Premier took from Saskatchewan families last year after campaigning on lower taxes. There is nothing in this budget for rural Saskatchewan, for farm families when they need it the most, Mr. Speaker. There is nothing in this budget for municipal governments who want to try to keep property taxes low, Mr. Speaker. And worst of all, there is no long-term vision for the province of Saskatchewan.

This was a centennial budget, a chance for the Premier and the Minister of Finance to highlight a long-term and bold vision for Saskatchewan. It failed to do it, Mr. Speaker. After \$1 billion more in revenue than they budgeted last year, 400 million more this year, how could the Premier blow it so badly?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, in the budget delivered by the Minister of Finance in this House yesterday, this budget took a grip on the future of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — This budget, Mr. Speaker, takes the momentum of the economy that is available today and pushes that momentum. And, Mr. Speaker, this budget, like none other in the history of the province, invests in the true future of Saskatchewan by investing in the young people of Saskatchewan in an unprecedented way, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what this budget does not do is put us on the track of deficit and debt that would come from a party like that in office. Now, Mr. Speaker, I happened to be in the car for a few blocks. While I was in the car for those few blocks, I listened to the Finance critic over there, who wants to be the leader. I listened to the Finance critic over there. In a matter of three blocks, that man spent — I would estimate — over four years, \$1 billion. I'm glad, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad we got to the hotel where I could shut the car off because the province was going bankrupt.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how the Tommy Douglas movie is going to turn out . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please, members. Order, please, members. Order. Order, please. Thank you. The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — I don't know how the Tommy Douglas movie is going to turn out, Mr. Speaker, but the sequel is getting pretty bad reviews, Mr. Speaker. The sequel is getting terrible reviews.

Pat Fiacco, mayor of Regina, says the NDP [New Democratic Party] has ignored the city of Regina. SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] says the NDP budget shortchanges future prosperity. SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] says the budget has nothing for rural Saskatchewan. The teachers' federation call it a non-event. School board associations say the budget will lead to service cuts and property tax increases. The CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business] says the NDP is stalling on tax cuts. APAS [Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan] says agriculture is not a priority for this government. The SFL [Saskatchewan Federation of Labour] calls the NDP budget underwhelming. And the member from P.A. Northcote is leaving the province, Mr. Speaker.

The question to the Premier is simple. The question is simple. If he is so strongly encouraged by this budget, why doesn't he give his members a free vote? Why doesn't he give his members a free vote? And then we can find out if the member for Saskatchewan Rivers will vote for farmers or for this budget, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to challenge, therefore, the Leader of the Opposition to let his caucus have a free vote in this House.

Will members in that caucus stand in this House and vote for a budget that increases the basic allowance for citizens on social assistance? Will they vote for that, or will they vote against it? Will members of that caucus stand in this House and vote for \$192 million in additional funding to the Department of Health for the health care of Saskatchewan people? Will they stand up and vote for that?

Will they stand up and support the young people of Saskatchewan as this budget does? Will they vote for the young people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, or will they, for their partisan political endeavours, vote against this budget? Will they stand up and vote for what they have called for, or will they sit on their hands or vote negatively against the very things that they've called for.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you what this Saskatchewan Party, this official opposition will not be voting for — a budget that betrays farm families in the province of Saskatchewan. We won't be voting for a budget, Mr. Speaker, that betrays municipalities trying to keep property taxes low. We will not be voting for a budget or a government or a Premier that has absolutely no vision for the future of this province. He can have

blessed assurance of that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, last year they raised the PST [provincial sales tax] you'll know by . . . [inaudible] . . . \$140 million. They're putting \$55 million towards education tax; that's still a tax increase of \$85 million. They've froze urban revenue sharing. They've froze foundation grants to school boards. It's going to result in more tax hikes. How can the Premier justify that? He campaigned on the promise of lower taxes, and he's raising them for Saskatchewan families. How will he justify that to the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition ought to consult with his Finance critic who this morning on CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] Radio said that a Sask Party in government would start by doing these things . . . I tell you, they're going to cut the sales taxes; that's the first thing they're going to do. They're going to cut all the sales taxes. Then they're going to cut the income taxes. And then they're going to increase the funding to the universities — get this, Mr. Speaker — by 5 per cent per year. Then they're going to increase all of the wage settlements. Then they're going to reduce the small business taxes.

Mr. Speaker, this is a prescription for disaster, financial disaster. I tell you, Mr. Speaker, it's taken this province, it's taken this province years to re-establish our GDP [gross domestic product] ratio to debt to be an acceptable level. It's taken us years, Mr. Speaker, to get back our credit rating. We are not going to take the sequel to that leader and that party; we don't want that sequel. That's a nightmare, as the Minister of Health described it a few days ago.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — You know, Mr. Speaker, the NDP froze funding for education and froze funding for municipalities. They're giving nothing to farm families. But you know what, Mr. Speaker, they had a 50 per cent increase for that Premier's communications budget, Mr. Speaker. And you know what, if this is all he has to offer the province of Saskatchewan, he might . . . I don't think even a 50 per cent increase in his spin budget will help this Premier, Mr. Speaker.

On the issue of vision, Mr. Speaker, here is what the people of the province are saying today, Mr. Speaker. A public policy analyst from the U of R [University of Regina] summed it up pretty well in . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Members that . . . getting very difficult to be able to pick out the words and I want to be able to hear what's going on in the Assembly, so I ask members to just tone it down a bit, please. And I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — The U of R professor summed it out pretty

clearly. He said this government lacks imagination. It lacks vision. He said, and I quote:

. . . [this] government has been at it for 12 years now and they may be running out of ideas.

Mr. Speaker, they are running out of ideas. This Premier has no long-term vision for the province — rural, urban, or Northern Saskatchewan. You know, Mr. Speaker, if he feels strongly about it, will he give his members a free vote? Find out if the member for Sask Rivers will vote for farmers or for this budget. Or the member for Regina Northeast, will he vote for families in his constituency or for this budget? Does he have the courage to do that, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — There is, let me just pause to say, there is a little confusion in Saskatchewan this morning about who exactly is the Leader of the Opposition over there. I'm told that the Finance critic last night volunteered this following quote, "I would be very comfortable as an opposition leader."

I'm not sure, I'm not sure who the leader is over there. What I am sure of, Mr. Speaker, what I am sure of . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — So there is confusion this morning in the legislature and across the province about who the leader is over there, but there's no confusion in my mind about this government caucus. To a one, Mr. Speaker, this government caucus has made the decisions of this budget because they are the right decisions for the people of Saskatchewan.

They are fiscally responsible choices. They are choices that build to the vision of a green and prosperous economy, a future for Saskatchewan young people here. There is no confusion on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, and every member will stand and vote for this budget.

Again, I challenge the Leader of the Opposition. Will that Leader of the Opposition in this budget debate stand and support an increase to the basic allowance for social services? Will he stand and support \$192 million in new health care funding? Will he stand and support the students of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:30]

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

Taxation Policy

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — One thing, there's one leader in this Assembly and it's the member from Swift Current. He's the leader and the next premier of this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, the NDP lacks imagination. It lacks vision. It lacks new ideas.

The Speaker: — Order please, members. Order, order, order. Member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, this budget lacks imagination. It lacks vision, and it lacks new ideas. And that's sad, Mr. Speaker, because there are a lot of good ideas out there. One of those good ideas is the Saskatchewan Party's proposal to raise the personal tax exemption for low-income earners. Everyone earning less than \$15,000 a year would pay no tax. Everyone earning less than \$35,000 a year would pay less tax.

Mr. Speaker, this is a different approach. It's a new approach. It's a progressive tax break because the people who benefit most are those that earn the least.

Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Finance: if the NDP can't afford a PST cut for everyone, why don't they do an income tax cut for those who need it the most?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question. The member speaks of visions. You know this provincial government, the people of Saskatchewan are still in very real ways paying for the visions that are left over from the 1980s. This budget still includes an item of \$588 million, Mr. Speaker, to pay off debts that were incurred in the 1980s when we had the precursors to the members opposite sitting in government and with their visions rolling up the debt of the province. Mr. Speaker, we feel very good about the direction that we're taking in this budget.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Last year this NDP government had \$1.1 billion in extra revenues. This year they have \$400 million in extra revenues. That's \$1.5 billion in two years, while at the same time Saskatchewan's small businesses are paying the highest tax rates in the country — six times that of Alberta, four times that of NDP Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we want to ask the question that people across the province want us to ask. If you can't cut taxes when you have \$1.5 billion in new money, what does this place, what does this province have to look like before you will consider cutting even one tax when . . .

The Speaker: — Just to remind the member to make his remarks through the Chair. I recognize . . .

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, Mr. Speaker, we see here, on the opposition

benches, the reason why they continue to sit in opposition and why it is that the people of Saskatchewan say these members on the opposition benches cannot be trusted to run the government.

And the reason that the people of Saskatchewan take that position is just because what the member has been saying, where you take what are, in a sense, one-time revenues and that you should expend these forever. That is to say, to spend monies that you can't count on in the future but on the basis nevertheless on one-time expenditures, you should ramp up expenditures, you should decrease taxes — exactly the kind of situation that got us into big, big trouble in the 1980s. They want to go back to that. We're not going there. We're sticking with our plan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Operating Grants for School Boards

Mr. Gantfoer: — Mr. Speaker, the NDP likes to run around the province scaring people. And one of their favourite scare tactics is to tell voters that the Saskatchewan Party is going to freeze educational funding. Well let's look at K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] funding in yesterday's budget.

In last year's budget, the schools' operating grant was \$527.9 million. And guess how much it was this year? Exactly the same, \$527.9 million. Zap, you're frozen.

Mr. Speaker, this government increased its own operational spending by nearly 7 per cent in this year's budget. How in the world do they expect school boards to operate with no increase?

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, this budget provides a \$98 per student increase in the grant to school boards. The member should understand that: \$98 per student on the base grant in terms of the change. That is the commitment that we are making to reinvest the money as it becomes available within the system, to reinvest that back to the classroom level. And the member opposite should know that.

This budget does more for students and youth in this province than any budget that this government has introduced in the last 14 years. This is the positive budget. It's recognized by the student leadership as a positive budget. It is recognized by the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] as an acceptable budget. I would encourage the member opposite to support it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Gantfoer: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan School Boards Association says that the NDP does not seem to recognize the increased costs of education. They have to negotiate a contract with teachers. SaskPower rates have gone up. The cost of fuel for buses has gone up. Just about every operating cost has gone up.

So what does the NDP do with the school operating grant? Zap, you're frozen. Not one new dollar to address any of these costs. Mr. Speaker, how in the world can this NDP government expect school boards to do all of these issues in front of them with a zero, frozen budget?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Well I've made it pretty clear to school boards, and they understand that in the calendar year, there is an increase to the grants to school boards. There's a \$98 per pupil increase in the basic rates. There's an additional \$36 for school divisions in Regina and Saskatoon to narrow the differential that's there.

The member opposite, I think, owes all of the members of this Assembly a duty to be truthful and honest in his representation of this budget. He should know better about how education funding works, and he should not attempt to fear monger on this.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Opportunities for Nursing Students

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's amazing. We have the government here saying one thing and every interest group in the province saying something totally opposite to what the government is saying.

Marlene Brown from the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses said yesterday:

We're very concerned. Student nurses are telling us that they're unable to access full-time jobs in this province. We're training nurses for export.

To the Minister of Health: is that his plan, to increase seats for other provinces — train nurses in this province only to export them to other provinces?

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance, the Premier, all of our caucus on this side of the House are very proud of the fact that we've come forward with a budget for health of \$2.9 billion. Of that amount, 1.8 billion goes to the regional health authorities. And of that 1.8 billion or approximately \$1.45 billion goes to the workers in the health system. That includes the nurses. That includes doctors. That includes the OTs [occupational therapists], physios, everybody.

Mr. Speaker, we've done a very good job in this budget of providing stability in the health care system. That means that we can do the transition from people who are retiring, including the nurses, to the new generation of young people. And that's a key part of this budget — train them. Make sure they've got

good opportunities for careers here in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Support for Agriculture

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, Neal Hardy, president of SARM wanted about three things out of yesterday's budget: an increase to municipal funding, an increase to agriculture funding, and far more property education tax relief than was announced. How did APAS think the budget went yesterday? Well I quote: agriculture — and this is coming from APAS — agriculture is not a priority for the NDP government. The Association is extremely concerned:

"This budget does not reflect a commitment to agriculture or the challenges that Saskatchewan producers are facing . . ."

How does the Agriculture minister respond to those farm leaders in Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite and the Conservative Saskatchewan Party speaks about commitment. I want to talk about the commitment that this government has shown, is showing, and will show to agriculture in this province, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have been there completely on every issue, making sure that we have been providing funding. Mr. Speaker, on a per capita basis this province is far above any other province in this country in terms of the commitment, the dollars that we put in.

Let's just talk about a few of those, Mr. Speaker. Let's talk about the money that went in to deal with the BSE [bovine spongiform encephalopathy] crisis. In the last couple of years, \$85 million over budget, Mr. Speaker, special warrant funding gone into supporting farmers on the BSE. Mr. Speaker, on CAIS, we've shown our commitment last year — \$210 million. Mr. Speaker, we've been there.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, that government had over \$1 billion windfall last year. This year they got in excess of \$400 million to spend, and how do they do, how do they deal with rural Saskatchewan? They don't fully fund the CAIS program, come away short there. They freeze rural revenue sharing, come away short there. Foundation grant froze, so we know education tax in rural Saskatchewan is going to increase, for that matter probably all over the province.

How can that Ag minister talk with a straight face to rural

leaders when they're downloading on rural Saskatchewan to the extent that they are?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has an odd view of downloading when you consider the amount of money that we have been uploading into agriculture in these last few years.

Mr. Speaker, I look at the numbers, and I see the money that we have put into agriculture — not only directly through our budget, Mr. Speaker, but through the other budgets that support agriculture and the rural community. The budget for health puts money into the rural community, provides jobs out there in rural community. The money into education provides funding for rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the offsets that have gone in for the education property tax, 8 per cent, that's \$15 million off the agriculture, off every . . . the total of the farmer's budget, Mr. Speaker — \$15 million. This government has been there, is there, and will be there to support our farmers in this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I've got a message for that Ag minister. What he should do is take his own Estimates book, look at what the estimate said for agriculture last year, look what they say for this year, and there is no increase. In fact there's a dramatic cut for agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan.

How on earth does he consider that standing behind farm families in Saskatchewan? Every call we've got today and last night from farmers in Saskatchewan is nothing but utter disappointment.

Mr. Speaker, that Ag minister is a lobbyist for farmers within cabinet. He's the guy that goes to cabinet and tries to get money for farmers. And how's he doing? Mr. Speaker, he's a complete failure when it comes to supporting agriculture. What kind of a job is he doing? He's doing a terrible job.

Easter weekend, Mr. Speaker, let's go out on one bright note. Ask that minister to resign. Ask that minister to make farmers feel better about something out of this budget, and it would be getting rid of that Ag minister.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Well, Mr. Speaker, there wasn't much of a question in that. And I'm afraid I'm not going to thank the member opposite for his comments.

But, Mr. Speaker, what I do want to talk about is the commitment of this government to agriculture in this province, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member obviously wasn't listening. The \$264 million that we are putting in directly through this budget into agriculture is going to be well used to support agriculture. Mr. Speaker, we are also putting money into agriculture in the rural economy in many other ways. About \$250 million coming in through the Department of Finance for fuel tax, for input cost.

And, Mr. Speaker, we are there far more than any other provincial government — Conservative, Liberal, or any other. This NDP government is standing up for farmers, Mr. Speaker. We are committed to making sure that we support them on every front.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if that is standing up for farmers in Saskatchewan, I don't think farmers want to see us have a bad year where they have to cut funding worse than they did already. A billion dollars last year, in excess of 400 million this year, and what do they do for rural Saskatchewan? They cut funding for rural Saskatchewan. They don't fully fund CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization]. They freeze revenue sharing. They freeze the foundation grant. And this is supposed to be helping rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: do the right thing. Look around in your caucus; try and find somebody that will speak on behalf of farmers in Saskatchewan.

[10:45]

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to note how this government and this . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to note that this government and this minister has stood up for farmers, has been out there doing everything we can in dealing with the federal government to try and make sure that we get just and workable programs for this province, Mr. Speaker.

Last year the opposition party said, Mr. Speaker — and I want to know that these guys stand by their word — last year they said, if you fully fund CAIS, we'll be there to work with you to try and make sure that we get a fair and just deal. Where are they, Mr. Speaker? Nowhere to be seen on that front — nowhere. Do they keep their word? I'm not seeing it, Mr. Speaker. I'm not seeing it at all. While we're out there fighting

for farmers, trying to get a fair deal from the federal government, where are they? Back here complaining, not caring. Mr. Speaker, talk is cheap. They're not accountable. They'd spend the world, but they are not accountable. We are and we're doing it right, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order. Order. Order, please. Now just checking back, ministerial statements . . . Order, please. I would ask all members to come to order, please, so we can proceed with the agenda. Order, please.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 94 — The Apiaries Act, 2005

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

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 94, The Apiaries Act, 2005 be now read and introduced . . . introduced and read the first time. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Agriculture . . . Order, please, members. Order. Order.

It has been moved by the Minister of Agriculture that the Bill No. 94, The Apiaries Act, 2005 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Next sitting of this House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 95 — The Ecological Reserves Amendment Act, 2005

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

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 95, The Ecological Reserves Amendment Act, 2005 be now introduced and read for the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Environment . . . Order, please, members. Order.

It has been moved by the Minister of Environment that Bill No. 95, The Ecological Reserves Amendment Act, 2005 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the

Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — The next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Environment.

Bill No. 98 — The Prairie and Forest Fires Amendment Act, 2005

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, I move now that Bill No. 98, The Prairie and Forest Fires Amendment Act, 2005 be now introduced and read for the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of the Environment that Bill No. 98, The Prairie and Forest Fires Amendment Act, 2005 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt that motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion's carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am extremely pleased today to stand on behalf of the government and table responses to written questions nos. 909 through 912 inclusive, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Responses to 909 to 912 have been submitted.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen that the Assembly

approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.]

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday this Assembly was subjected to a budget delivered by the government, completely devoid of any vision for our province. The NDP budget offered no long-term plan to make Saskatchewan more competitive. There's nothing in this budget that'll convince young people to stay in our province. The NDP has promised to monitor surgical waiting lists, but offer no credible plan for shortening the longest waiting lists in the country, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday's NDP budget ignores nurses, teachers, low-income earners, property tax payers, farm families, and small-business owners, while attempting to buy off the support of university students with a one-year tuition hold. Last year the Premier broke his election promise of no new taxes by raising the PST \$140 million, Mr. Speaker. The Premier said times were tight, and then he reached into the pockets of every family and business in Saskatchewan.

Well times have changed, Mr. Speaker. The NDP budget shows the government raked in a whopping \$1.1 billion in unexpected revenue from oil and gas and from equalization last year. And the budget also projects \$400 million in new government revenue this year, Mr. Speaker. That's 1.5 billion more dollars in government revenues than the NDP thought it would collect when the Premier raised the PST by \$140 million last year.

But that hasn't convinced the NDP to roll back the PST tax grab from last year. The Premier says returning the PST to last year's level isn't sustainable. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier and his NDP government wasn't all that concerned about whether \$140 million tax increase was sustainable for Saskatchewan families last year. But now the Premier says his NDP government, swimming in 1.5 billion more dollars than he thought he would have at this time last year, now that same Premier says any kind of tax cut is unsustainable for this NDP government.

And that's the problem with this government, Mr. Speaker. The Premier, this Finance minister, and the rest of his tax-and-spend government has lost sight of the people who actually pay the bills and pay the taxes in this province. And the Premier has also lost track of those in our province who are in the greatest need. The budget reports 1.1 billion in unexpected government revenues this year and another \$400 million in new revenue next year. But the Premier says there just isn't any money to provide tax relief for low-income earners in our province.

Mr. Speaker, there are almost 70,000 people in Saskatchewan who struggle to make ends meet while earning minimum wage in our province. But under this NDP government those low- and middle-income wage earners pay the highest tax rates in the country.

Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago the Saskatchewan Party released 100 ideas to build Saskatchewan for the next 100 years. Idea no. 1, Mr. Speaker, idea no. 1 was a plan to reduce provincial income taxes for 215,000 low-income earners in Saskatchewan and take another 70,000 people off the tax rolls altogether. Mr.

Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party plan would mean that people earning \$15,000 a year or less would pay no provincial income tax at all. The cost of our plan, Mr. Speaker, when fully implemented, would be \$91 million. Mr. Speaker, we did our homework, we costed this out properly, and it's \$91 million.

We offered all 100 ideas to the NDP because it was becoming clear that this Premier and this government had absolutely no ideas of its own and no vision for Saskatchewan, something confirmed by the budget of yesterday. And we called on the Premier and the NDP government to get started by implementing idea no. 1 from our 100 list of ideas, reduce income tax for low-income earners at a total cost of \$90 million — at a time when the NDP government has collected 1.5 billion in unexpected revenue over the past two years.

But yesterday the NDP said no tax relief for the lowest-income earners in the province — those on minimum wage; young people, Mr. Speaker; single moms trying to pay the bills. Is that the vision this NDP government has for the next 100 years? I'm afraid it's so. I'm afraid that's the vision for the next 100 years. Mr. Speaker, never has a government done so little when it has so much.

Well how about property tax payers, Mr. Speaker? How did the NDP treat Saskatchewan property tax payers? School divisions were looking to the government for an increase in the foundation operating grants to cover off the rising costs of education for our children, our most important resource. The response from the NDP — and I can hear them saying it now — is zap, you're frozen. Zap, you're frozen. Listen closely — we can hear the member for Moose Jaw — zap, you're frozen. Not one new dollar for K to 12 foundation grants. Zap, you're frozen. And now school boards across the province are saying they will have little choice except to raise property taxes — raise property taxes, Mr. Speaker.

And what about the teachers? What about the teachers? I said yesterday the Saskatchewan's 12,000 teachers were anxious to hear what the NDP was willing to negotiate. Would it be a fair and competitive contract? No, Mr. Speaker, there was nothing in yesterday's, in the NDP budget yesterday for teachers. Zero, Mr. Speaker; nothing at all. The funds remain the same.

And of course the Learning minister argued there was money in the foundation grant to cover the cost of the first year of a new teachers' contract. And you know, Mr. Speaker, he's right. The NDP put zero new money into K to 12 operating grants and the minister is offering teachers zero in the first year of their new contract. Maybe that's what teachers mean to this government. Maybe that's why 94 per cent, Mr. Speaker, 94 per cent of Saskatchewan teachers voted for strike action this week. If that's something that sits well with this government, I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker. It shouldn't sit well with this government.

Mr. Speaker, Regina Mayor Pat Fiocco may have summed it up best yesterday. On behalf of municipal property tax payers, he said this NDP government just doesn't get it. Mayor Fiocco said this NDP government just doesn't get it. And he was right. And I would venture to guess, Mr. Speaker, that most people in Saskatchewan would agree with Mayor Fiocco.

Saskatchewan families and businesses pay some of the highest

property taxes in Canada. Now that a short-sighted NDP government with no vision and no long-term plan for Saskatchewan . . . municipal taxpayers are going to get hammered again. Why, Mr. Speaker? Well because this NDP government, even though the Premier has raked in \$1.5 billion in new revenue, this government revenue, he thought . . . he has \$1.5 billion more than he thought he would have last year.

Even with all the new money, Mr. Speaker, the NDP has sent, they have sent a chilling message to Saskatchewan cities, towns, villages, and RMs [rural municipality]. A chilling message, Mr. Speaker — zap, you're frozen. The NDP budget contains not one cent in new municipal revenue sharing, not one new cent. And that means municipal property tax is likely to go up in communities and RMs across the province.

[11:00]

The member from Regina is chirping from his seat. The city of Regina is looking at a 4 per cent property tax increase. How does the member, how does the member from Regina feel about a 4 per cent property tax increase for those exact members that he represents in this legislature?

Mr. Speaker, I'll let you know how I feel representing the citizens of Saskatoon. Saskatoon is looking at a 7 per cent increase, 7 per cent increase in property taxes. Mr. Speaker, people in my constituency of Saskatoon Silver Springs pay the highest education property tax, not only in Saskatchewan, but in the country, Mr. Speaker, in the country. A shameful stat — in the country, the highest property tax rates in the country. And the minister from Regina Northeast knows that.

Mr. Speaker, last year when revenues were down the NDP government, this NDP government, they took your money. This year when revenues are up, not only do the NDP not give anything back, the Premier decided it's a good idea to actually drive property taxes up again.

And, Mr. Speaker, perhaps nowhere in the NDP government's lack of vision more obvious than in this Premier's complete and total disregard for rural Saskatchewan. According to the NDP's own projections, net farm income was negative \$268 million in 2003. And the NDP estimates net realized farm income will be negative 238 million for . . . 204, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, the most telling statistic of all: net farm income is projected to be negative \$319 million in 2005.

And how did the NDP respond to that kind of carnage in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? Well the truth is they didn't respond at all. This budget completely ignores rural Saskatchewan. Oh the NDP did one thing — they created a new government department. But there is no, there is no commitment, no commitment to fund, to fully fund the CAIS program this year. There is a commitment . . . there is no commitment to strengthen crop insurance either, Mr. Speaker. There is no plan for addressing the devastation in our livestock industry as a result of the BSE crisis and the closure of the US [United States] border to Canadian live cattle. There is no funding for municipal revenue sharing or K to 12 operating costs, so property taxes are going up again. And there is no sign in this budget that the Premier or his NDP government either understands nor cares about the challenges facing rural

Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, there's no recognition in this budget for the hard work and dedication of nurses in Saskatchewan. There's no commitment from this NDP government to fund a fair and competitive wage settlement with nurses. That, combined with the fact that this budget contains no plan for retaining and recruiting nurses, and no specific long-term plan to reduce waiting lists, this means the NDP will continue to drive nurses out of the province. Waiting lists will continue to grow and health care services will continue to deteriorate in this, Mr. Speaker, the home of medicare. Mr. Speaker, that's enough to even make Tommy Douglas look for an out-of-province referral.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP budget ignores the priorities of Saskatchewan people. It turns its back on Saskatchewan people; it turns its back on Saskatchewan communities. It's a budget that disrespects teachers; it's a budget that disrespects nurses. It's a budget that ignores low-income earners and drives property taxes up.

There is little in this budget, Mr. Speaker, to make Saskatchewan more competitive. There's nothing in this budget, Mr. Speaker, to give young people cause to stay in Saskatchewan, to give them the confidence that they need to stay in this province. It's not there in this budget, Mr. Speaker.

It's a budget with no innovation; it's a budget with no leadership; and most sadly of all, Mr. Speaker, it's a budget with no vision from an NDP government that's devoid, that's devoid of all three.

This NDP government is not . . . the NDP government yes, but this NDP budget is not supported by most Saskatchewan people, and, Mr. Speaker, it will not get the support of the Saskatchewan Party either.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move the following motion, seconded by the member for Canora-Pelly:

That the words after "That this Assembly" be deleted and the following be added:

disagrees with the general budgetary policy of the government because the Premier and the cabinet have betrayed low and modest income earners by not increasing the basic personal exemption for people who earn less than \$35,000 a year; have not included indexation to the food allowance for people living on social assistance; have predetermined the outcome of collective bargaining for teachers and nurses; have frozen funding for K to 12 education; have not committed to fully fund the province's share of the Canadian agriculture income stabilization program; have not addressed revenue sharing with municipalities; and have not laid out a long-term vision for the province for the next 100 years — therefore this provincial government does not enjoy the confidence of this Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. It has moved by

the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs, seconded by the member for Canora-Pelly:

That all the words after “That the Assembly” be deleted and the following be added:

disagrees with the general budgetary policy of the government because the Premier and cabinet have betrayed low and modest income earners by not increasing the basic personal exemption for people who earn less than \$35,000 a year; have not included indexation to the food allowance for people living on social assistance; have predetermined the outcome of collective bargaining for teachers and nurses; have frozen funding for K-12 education; have not committed to fully fund the province’s share of the Canadian agriculture income stabilization program; have not addressed revenue sharing with municipalities; and have not laid out a long-term vision for the province for the next 100 years — therefore this provincial government does not enjoy the confidence of this Assembly.

Is the Assembly ready for the question on the amendment?

I recognize the member for Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it’s a pleasure to take part in the budget debate and to second the amendment put forward by the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs that challenges this government, that challenges this government to the point where they did not actually recognize the possibilities that they had in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I’m going to take my few minutes that have been allotted to me to recognize the components of a budget. Mr. Speaker, it’s very difficult for people to analyze a budget, to look at all the expenditures, to look at all the revenue, and get a full understanding of a budget as large as that of a provincial government.

So, Mr. Speaker, I’m going to start by talking about one word, and that word is deficit, Mr. Speaker. You know, I listened to comments yesterday of individuals and I looked back at comments made in the past. And, you know, the comments of 2002 or 2003 and yesterday are identical.

And I want to mention a comment of John Gormley of CJME radio, made in 2002, Mr. Speaker, in 2002, when he said, usually when governments spend more than they take in, it’s called a deficit.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at yesterday’s budget — and the NDP stand in their seats and say a balanced budget — the most critical thing that people have to recognize is, take a look at it. Take a look at the fact that revenue in this year’s provincial budget is \$7,006,800,000. Take a look at expenditures. Expenditures are \$7,151,731,000. Expenditures exceed revenue.

Mr. Speaker, this is a deficit budget. Let’s make that clear to all the people in the province of Saskatchewan that this is not a balanced budget, this is a deficit budget. Now, Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has been very creative, very creative in disguising how suddenly a deficit budget becomes a balanced

budget. And one of their, one of their funds that they use is a fund that does not contain any money. That’s the first thing.

Mr. Speaker, Provincial Auditor Fred Wendel says the Fiscal Stabilization Fund is not a proper accounting practice. It’s not following generally accepted accounting practices. It allows you to say that you’re not running a deficit.

Mr. Speaker, those are not my words as the Minister of Government Relations chirps from his seat. Those are the words of an independent officer of this Legislative Assembly who says this is basically a shell game. This is a way for the government to disguise a deficit. But he does not understand that, Mr. Speaker. He chirps from his seat criticizing the comments of a Provincial Auditor who says that if you use a Fiscal Stabilization Fund that does not contain any money, in fact it’s a disguise.

Mr. Speaker, if the member doesn’t accept the Provincial Auditor’s comments, maybe he’ll accept the comments of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, for instance. Nola Joorisity, the CEO [Chief Executive Officer] of that firm says the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, FSF, simply confuses the public. And this is her direct quote:

“The use of the fund, although probably within the rules, makes it difficult for a lot of people to understand what’s going on.”

Joorisity added that transferring funds from the FSF to the General Revenue Fund is simply increasing the province’s debt. Quote:

“When you draw down the fiscal stabilization fund, you are, in fact, incurring debt because there’s no actual money in there.”

So, Mr. Speaker, the question that the people of Saskatchewan are going to be asking is, number one, is this a deficit budget? Well clearly expenditures exceed revenue; it’s a deficit budget all right.

The second question then is, so where does this government get its money if it’s going to call it a balanced budget? They borrow it, Mr. Speaker. They borrow it against debt. And that’s what happens. Take a look at the budget. And I know people will be studying this document.

The debt of the province of Saskatchewan in fact is going to go up this year. It’s going to go up after a windfall, revenues that came into this province last year. And in fact, the debt will go up.

Mr. Speaker, let’s take a look at the fiscal year that we currently are still in. We still have another six days of the fiscal year 2004-2005. Mr. Speaker, I want to share with the members in the Legislative Assembly and those watching and especially the Deputy Premier from Yorkton who doesn’t seem to understand what his own documents are saying.

Mr. Speaker, the revenue for the province of Saskatchewan for the year that will end in six days time is \$7.713 billion. Mr. Speaker, that’s \$1.1 billion more than what they estimated just a

short year ago — \$1.1 billion more. Now on the other side, we have to look at expenditures — because I have been one serving in this Legislative Assembly for I guess just about 10 years — where I want to say to the government that expenditures that will end on March 31 are projected to be \$7.071 billion. So therefore, Mr. Speaker, in this example, the current fiscal year, revenues exceed expenditures, not the other way around as has been the case for every year that we've had an NDP government.

Last year was the first year of a balanced budget. It was a balanced budget. And you know, Mr. Speaker, across the nation we were told that we were a have province. For the first time in many, many, many years, Saskatchewan became a have province. But you know, Mr. Speaker, it was pretty short-lived. It was pretty short-lived because now expenditures exceed revenue in the budget for '05-06. And we're now a have-not province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other components that we need to look at is a little bit of, where does this province get its money from? The member for Yorkton . . . I won't say he chirps from his seat but he continues to try to engage in debate. And I know that he'll get his opportunity to talk in this debate. But you know what he has to do? He has to take the document and actually look at it, actually study it and say, okay, as a provincial government, where are we getting our revenues?

[11:15]

You know, Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to listen to the Finance minister, listen to the Premier talk about \$192 million more in health expenditures for this year. Well, Mr. Speaker, let's take a look at transfers from the federal government. There are two line items in the category called transfers from the Government of Canada. One is called the Canada health transfer and the other line item is called health reform transfer — two items. Well let's take a look at what was budgeted last year and what this government anticipates to receive from the federal government.

Well last year the budget for Canada health transfer was \$419 million. This year it's going to be \$552 million, Mr. Speaker. That's a difference of \$133 million. That's what we're getting more from the federal government for health transfer.

Now let's look at the next line, health reform transfer. Well last year health reform transfer for the province of Saskatchewan was estimated to be 46.7 million. This year we are estimating that we will receive \$82 million. Mr. Speaker, that's a difference of about \$36 million. Add those numbers together, Mr. Speaker, and you have nearly \$190 million. This is federal money. So for the Minister of Health to say, look what I'm doing, I'm spending \$192 million more in health, he's receiving it all — almost all of it — from the federal government. That's what has to be made clear, Mr. Speaker.

You know, and the other point that I do want to recognize this government for . . . So I want to talk about some of the announcements in health. For a number of years we've been listening to the members opposite talk about health development. And I've been very pleased to hear the members opposite talk about a potential health care facility improvement

at Preeceville. And you know, Mr. Speaker, I have a newspaper clipping from the *Preeceville Progress* that I've used many times in this House, and it says:

Today's announcement is about moving ahead and building a better future for the people of Preeceville and surrounding area.

It's an announcement by the Health minister; that's the direct quote of the Health minister of this province. You know, Mr. Speaker, you know when that comment was made? That comment was made in the September 25, 2003 edition of this paper.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I also want to direct the people to look at this comment made by the mayor of Preeceville, who says:

The announcement today brings back to the forefront the initiative we started more than five years ago.

Five years ago before the year 2003.

So, Mr. Speaker, when I look at the budget document called the performance plan summary and I turn to page 20, and I see that it says:

Approval to proceed with four additional health care facilities: [which includes the] new integrated health facilities in Preeceville and Maidstone . . .

Approval to proceed. Well, Mr. Speaker, what was this in 2003? Well the mayor and people in the community of Preeceville have been very appreciative of the fact that two years ago this government said yes, it's a project.

Last year in fact, the Deputy Premier agreed with the fact that they were going to provide \$700,000 for the next step. Again, I express my appreciation on behalf of the people of Preeceville and area to say, that's good. Let's move forward. We're going to have a facility.

Now again in the budget it says, approval to proceed. So, Mr. Speaker, when will we see some action? When will those people in Preeceville see a real hospital being constructed and actually earth and masonry and all those things moving.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this doesn't guarantee anything. This says, approval to proceed. A project that is already now nine years in the making — nine years — and we're still at the stage of approval to proceed.

So I want to get it on the record by saying, thank you to the Finance minister for including the Preeceville hospital for the approval to proceed for probably the ninth consecutive time.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health also has indicated, through this budget document, that they're going to address the needs of people in the province of Saskatchewan through reducing waiting lists, to recognizing the needs of people.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to the minister and to the Deputy Premier as well how important this is. I'm sure the Deputy Premier, because he lives in the Canora-Pelly

constituency but represents Yorkton, has indicated many times that there's far better need to increase the use of the dialysis machine in Yorkton. Yorkton's a regional hospital. But you know, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't run at capacity. That machine should be running at least two shifts a day, which would be 16 hours, and maybe it even shouldn't be just running for five days of the week, maybe it should be running for seven days of the week — the term 16/7, 16 hours a day, 7 days a week. But you know, Mr. Speaker, it's not.

And we have people that come right out of the east central area, people in Pelly, people in Arran, that take an STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] bus or they hire somebody to drive them, and they drive them all the way to Regina to get dialysis. And that occurs sometimes twice a week, sometimes three times a week. They drive right by a machine in Yorkton that's not fully utilized.

Mr. Speaker, if the member from Yorkton says that's not true, then let him supply the hours of usage of the dialysis machine in Yorkton. Let him tell us whether or not that machine runs 16 hours a day, 7 days a week. Well let me you, Mr. Speaker, that is not true. That is not true, that that machine runs 16 hours a day, 7 days a week. And if the Premier can supply the hours and in fact the changes that have occurred in the last few days that shows this Assembly that they're in fact operating at maximum capacity, I will be the first one to stand in this House and apologize to the Premier. But that's not going to happen, Mr. Speaker — that's not going to happen.

Mr. Speaker, I think what we really have to look at is, what is the financial health of the province of Saskatchewan? What is happening to people in the province of Saskatchewan as a result of this budget?

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to share a couple of letters with this Assembly. First one is from the RM of St. Philips No. 301, based out of Pelly, Saskatchewan. It says:

Re: [the] Declaration of the Rural Municipality of St. Philips No. 301, a Disaster Area.

Resolution was moved at their council meeting on November 18, 2004, that says:

... due to the frost and the BSE problem, the Rural Municipality of St. Philips No. 301, be declared a disaster area ... [passed] unanimously.

Mr. Speaker, I want to read to you a letter dated December 6 to the Hon. Minister of Ag and Food. And it says ... This one is from the RM of Buchanan No. 304. Resolution passed, and I read the resolution:

That with the abnormal growing season, the lack of heat units, and the untimely frost/s, poor quality grains and oilseeds are not in demand or are bringing very low prices, and Further That with the continued low returns for livestock due to BSE, farmers are facing a most difficult situation, Be It Resolved That The Rural Municipality of Buchanan No. 304 be declared a disaster area ... ”

Mr. Speaker, a third letter from the RM of Preeceville No. 334.

The resolution is moved by councillor Mitchell, and it says:

That as the agricultural producers in this municipality are still being affected by the BSE crisis and as an early frost devastated crops in the municipality, due to their late development because of the cool spring and summer, resulting in severe financial loss to the agricultural producers, who are still responsible to pay high input costs, that the council hereby declares the Rural Municipality of Preeceville No. 334 to be a disaster area ...

Mr. Speaker, from my constituency, three rural municipalities who for the year 2004 have declared themselves a disaster area. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that those councils, those farmers in those three RMs along with all of the other rural municipalities in my constituency were anxiously awaiting yesterday's budget. They were looking forward to a budget that would address the fact that they are declaring themselves disaster areas.

What did we see in yesterday's budget for agriculture? Well, I think you have to turn to the document and see, as my colleague, the member for Melville-Saltcoats said, what's in it. Well when we take a look at assistance to farmers, that falls under the category of farm stability and adaptation. Last year, Mr. Speaker, the government proposed that the expenditure for the CAIS program would be \$98.7 million. This year the estimated cost for that same line item is \$98.7 million, the exact same amount as was forecast in last year's budget.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, after much debate, after much pressure, the Minister of Agriculture finally in the month of December agreed that there should be full funding of CAIS for 2003, and in fact agreed that there should be an additional expenditure.

So, Mr. Speaker, we in the Legislative Assembly — and this is more for the people that are wondering how government spends money — we have something called supplementary estimates for the current year that we're in right now. The supplementary estimates for agriculture will include a vote that we'll be dealing with in this Legislative Assembly for Sask Ag and Food, and it is for 101.2 million additional dollars. For what? To fully fund the CAIS program for 2003.

So Mr. Speaker, while the minister's waited and waited and waited for farmers to be hung out to dry and then finally said in December, well, now we're going to fund it, and we're going to do it through supplementary estimates, which is how we handle things like even forest fire fighting. And the member for Wood River, who's been the former Environment critic, has indicated many times that we never know what our forest fire fighting costs are going to be for a year. But the government puts a number in its budget and says, this is what we think it'll be. But at the end of a year after, you know, a huge amount of ... in terms of the number of fires and the cost of firefighting, then there may be an additional set of supplementary estimates that says the government needs \$65 million for forest fire fighting. So Mr. Speaker, that's a practice that this government has followed.

So what did the government do today? It looked back at the support for farmers, after knowing that there are RMs across

this province who have declared themselves disaster areas and said, how are we going to be helpful to the farmers? Well, we're not going to do anything; we're not going to fully fund CAIS for 2004. The budget is the exact same amount as was forecast in March of last year. It does not include the additional supplementary estimates that this government knows are going to be before it if they decide to fully fund a program that they are a signatory to. Mr. Speaker, that's ridiculous. You signed a program with the federal government. You negotiate with them and we understand that there were changes that were made. And you signed a document that says, well we agree with the CAIS program for 2004 for the province of Saskatchewan but we're not going to fully fund it.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I've received a number of calls from farmers in my constituency who are trying to put in place lines of credit to be able to seed the crop for 2005. They have nothing to take to the bank as a collateral or as an asset. They still owe the businesses in this province for last year's fertilizer, last year's chemical, last year's fuel bills. They have not fully paid off their cash advance programs. And now they don't have the ability to extend that line of credit because this government has said no, we're not fully funding CAIS, even though other provinces are.

[11:30]

So, Mr. Speaker, that is something that has to be addressed as soon as possible because farmers need that ability. They need that ability to go to a financial institution and say, an insurance program that was put in place is there for me and I am eligible for that type of payout. That's cash that a financial institution is willing to loan or to extend a line of credit against.

But they're not going to extend against something that's pie in the sky, that says, well maybe this government might do that. Farmers can't wait that long, Mr. Speaker. Farmers can't wait that long.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues have already indicated that the revenue-sharing grant that the municipalities receive on an ongoing basis has not been increased. Mr. Speaker, I don't think it matters whether you talk about urban communities, whether you talk about rural municipalities, every one of those municipal governments, that level of — third level of government — is doing the best it can. And they were expecting that revenue sharing would be there for them, that there would be an increase.

You know, Mr. Speaker, for the fiscal year that we're in . . . And we look at the revenue that this government is getting. We're still at over \$50 a barrel for oil. At the same time we know that people who are filling up their gas tanks are filling up a litre of gasoline costing, you know, somewhere in the '80s and maybe even in the low 90s. You know, so there is a direct cost to the average person who drives a vehicle, Mr. Speaker, because they're paying 80 or 90 cents.

At the same time, this government is receiving a huge amount of money from the oil and gas development. But are they willing to pass any of that on through revenue sharing directly in municipalities? Not a penny, Mr. Speaker — not a penny. They have froze the amounts of revenue sharing to both urban

and rural.

So I'm sure as municipal councils heard the news yesterday they're probably wondering about their budget. You know municipal councils are on a calendar year. Their budgets began back on January 1 and they were wondering what amount of money is going to come forward.

We've heard from the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs talk about Saskatoon City Council who's looking at a budget and saying, you know we're going to need 7 per cent but we're hopeful, we're hopeful that revenue sharing is going to help mitigate that and in fact we won't have to pass on 7 per cent increase to the taxpayers of the city of Saskatoon.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, that's going on in the town of Preeceville and the town of Kamsack and the town of Canora and all of the communities in my constituency, whether they're urban or rural. They're looking at saying, how do we balance? Well they didn't get anything from the provincial government, not a penny. So they're going to have to ask their own taxpayers to pay again, even at the same time as taxpayers are paying 91 cents a litre for gasoline.

Mr. Speaker, let's take a look at what this government has said about school boards. Let's take a look at what this government has said about school boards. The monies for a school board are quite different than the other priority of people in Saskatchewan, which is health care.

Health care, basically 100 per cent of the money comes directly through the provincial government by way of transfers of funds. School divisions don't work that way. School divisions work on a level of governance that produces revenue from two sources. One is the taxpayer through direct taxation at the local level, and the other is a foundation grant transfer. Mr. Speaker, the foundation grant for the fiscal year that's going to start in a few days, versus the current amount, is exactly the same. It's frozen.

So, Mr. Speaker, let's take a look at boards of education. Boards of education have experienced an increase in power costs. They've experienced an increase in SaskEnergy, natural gas costs. They've — especially rural boards who have rural transportation and the need to provide bus services — they have experienced gasoline at 80-plus cents versus a year ago when the cost of a litre of gasoline was in the low 60s, almost a third increase.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we look at a board of education and how it's going to deal with its costs — and I'm just dealing with the, you know the physical costs, the facilities maintenance costs — there's not one penny provided by this government, not one penny. They're going to have to pass that on directly to the taxpayers because the foundation grant formula isn't changing. The other source is the tax system.

You know, Mr. Speaker, but there is another choice. And it's a choice I think that this government wants them to make. It's to cut program and cut services. Because if you can't balance your budget by increasing taxes, if that's just not on because the people of the province can't afford that, you cut services and you cut programs. Mr. Speaker, that's what rural people in this province are fearing, that because of the lack of support from

this government that they are going to have to reduce programs and reduce services.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the minister stands in his place, the Minister of Learning stands in his place and talks about the fact that they are going to allocate a huge sum of money for amalgamations. Well, Mr. Speaker, forced amalgamation has not been the answer to solving the problems of delivery of service and the governance structure in this province. It never has been and it never will be.

What needs to happen is there needs to be a consultation process, a consultation process that could have been arrived at. Because, Mr. Speaker, there were a lot of school divisions that were moving forward with amalgamation. Was there a need to address some of the anomalies? Of course. But that could have been worked out.

No, the Minister of Learning said, this is the way we will do it and I will force it upon you, and now I'm going to provide a little over 4 million, \$4 million, \$4.5 million to have those 12 new school divisions created. It won't be just those 12 because I understand that there are some separate boards of education that are amalgamating. So what he's done is basically said, well here's a sum of money, it's less than 400,000 per board, and now you must go ahead and proceed with amalgamation.

Mr. Speaker, we had the opportunity as an official opposition caucus to listen to a report out of the province of Manitoba, a province that has undergone this very same type of amalgamation — forced amalgamation. And we were shocked to hear that there were no cost savings, not the kind of cost savings that this minister is talking about. In fact, there was a huge increase in the costs of operating larger and larger school divisions.

That's what's going to happen in this situation, Mr. Speaker. This is not going to be a cost saving. This will be a loss of local autonomy, this will be an additional burden on taxpayers, and in fact in many instances those school divisions that have a lower tax rate today are going to see a huge tax increase. That's going to be the reality.

Mr. Speaker, the other part of this component of operating school divisions is the human resource side — the teachers, the non-professional staff, all of the people that are employed. Mr. Speaker, it's very public. I'm sure every person in Saskatchewan knows that the Teachers' Federation conducted a vote on Monday and Tuesday and almost 94 per cent of the teachers have indicated that some sanctions should be applied. Mr. Speaker, yesterday's budget said very clearly that the direction is zero, zero per cent for this first fiscal year of a contract. That's the value that this government places on teachers.

Now let's take a look at the situation, you know, that teachers are facing in Saskatchewan. We're hearing, we're hearing that in the neighbouring province of Manitoba there are settlements of two, three, two and a half per cent over a period of three years. We know what Alberta teachers are receiving under new contracts. But here in the province of Saskatchewan we're supposed to retain our young people, make sure that we have replacement teachers for those that are going to be retiring

because we know, Mr. Speaker, as I'm sure that you as a former teacher understand, that there will be the baby boomer group that will be moving out. The baby boomer group will be . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I would . . . Order, please. Order, please. The member should not have to raise his or her voice in order to be heard in the Assembly, so I ask members to refrain from the extraneous debate. And I would ask the member from Canora-Pelly not to involve the Speaker in the debate.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I apologize for that. But there are other teachers in the Assembly who I am sure understand that, that the baby boomer group that is currently in the teaching profession will be retiring in the next few years.

Mr. Speaker, how are we going to replace that teaching staff if we're telling teachers, 0, 1, 1 is all you get. Mr. Speaker, 0, 1, 1 is all you get. Well, Mr. Speaker, the member, the members chirp as to what is the number. Well the number should be arrived through free and collective bargaining.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — That's what should happen. Now, Mr. Speaker, the answer to the question of course and it always has been in all collective bargaining is, what is the amount of money that the employer is prepared to spend on a year of contract? That's the question. What is the amount of money that the government is prepared, as a partner — and I might say a majority partner in the bargaining process — who has complete control of that bargaining process? Because they have five members out of a nine-member bargaining team. They should be the one to say, you know, for the first year of a three-year contract, we have X dollars to spend on a contract. And in the second year there's this many dollars, and in a third year there's this many dollars. And then the bargaining team has the ability to sit at a table and negotiate.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, what does a mandate that says zero in a first year and 1 per cent in a second year do to the bargaining process? It destroys it. It's a government dictating and a settlement on wages without negotiations. And I don't know how we're going to achieve an agreement with the nurses in the province of Saskatchewan, with the teachers in the province of Saskatchewan. But you know, Mr. Speaker, you sure create a lot of animosity when you say, your wages for this year are going to be zero, your wages for year two are going to be increased by a maximum of 1 per cent, but go ahead and negotiate. You know, a dreadful process, one that's going to create a situation in Saskatchewan where other provinces are going to be looking at us and saying, wow, what an incredibly weak position to take in putting your province forward in the year that we celebrate a centennial.

Mr. Speaker, there are many more things that I can talk about today but I know that there are other people who would like to get into discussion on this motion.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, I think what's critical in yesterday's budget is the lack of vision, as our amendment suggests. There's no vision to ensure that we will have the ability to not lose people from this province. We will continue

to lose quality people if we look at the fact that a mandated 0, 1, and 1 will be there for every other public sector employee group that is going to have a contract that will expire in this fiscal year. That's going to be the reality.

You know, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has been known worldwide as an exporter of people. And if we're going to grow this province, if we're going to move away from the conditions that we are right now . . . And I had a call last night from a teacher, Mr. Speaker, who indicated he had heard the minister talk about the conditions of the province 100 years ago, the first budget. And he said, you know, I was looking at the conditions of this province in 1929. You know, Mr. Speaker, we almost had 1 million people in 1929. We were a province that was looking forward to growing. In fact, take a look at this building. Built in the early 1900s for a province that was going to become the centre of Western Canada. So he was not very impressed with the fact that the minister was comparing 1900 to today and saying, oh look at how far we've come.

What he was looking at was the fact that in the early 1930s — 75 years ago — this province had nearly the same number of people that it does today. And what do we have to show for it?

You know, Mr. Speaker, one of the articles that I had — and I noticed that the Minister of Finance comments about this — he talks about development of oil and gas. Because the members opposite must understand that the additional dollars that came into the coffers of the General Revenue Fund this current fiscal year and will continue to come into the coffers for next year, a large amount of the money comes from potash, comes from gas, and it comes from oil.

[11:45]

You know, Mr. Speaker, this is an article dated January 26, 2005, and it's available on canada.com news and it talks about drilling, it talks about development, and it's an article about the Petroleum Services Association of Canada, okay, PSAC for short. It says:

PSAC anticipates a record 24,075 wells to be drilled across Canada this year with 18,625 in Alberta and 1,300 in B.C. Last year 22,696 wells were drilled, up four per cent from the . . . [previous year] 2003.

So we're seeing additional wells being drilled in Alberta, in BC [British Columbia], and then we take a look at the document that the Minister of Finance delivered yesterday, and I quote directly from page 40 of his performance plan summary, and it says this:

There were 1,743 new oil wells drilled in 2004 compared to 1,875 new oil wells drilled in 2003. Oil drilling is expected to decrease to 1,700 new wells in . . . ['05] and [to] 1,600 new wells in . . . ['06]”.

Mr. Speaker, now as my colleague from Cannington points out, this is at a time when we have \$57-a-barrel oil. Alberta and British Columbia are, the number of oil wells is, according to the Petroleum Services Association of Canada, are going through the roof. And what are we doing in Saskatchewan? We're going to decline. We're going to have less wells drilled.

Mr. Speaker, you know, the potential for Saskatchewan, the potential for new potash development in Saskatchewan — and we know there are finds that have indicated that there is potash ready to be developed underground — we're not doing any of that. In fact, we're going to decrease the number of oil wells in the province of Saskatchewan.

You know, it's really hard to figure out why we, as a province with so much potential, are not moving forward. And you know there's only one answer to that question, Mr. Speaker, and that answer is the fact that we have an NDP government that is tired, that is out of ideas, that is not moving forward, that does not have a vision. And I'm pleased to stand in my place today and say I will be seconding the amendment of the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Industry and Resources, the member for Saskatoon Massey Place.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I've listened very carefully to what the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs, the opposition Finance critic, had to say. And then I listened to what the member from Canora-Pelly had to say.

And I'm going to demonstrate in my remarks, Mr. Speaker, that what the member from Canora-Pelly just said in his remarks was completely contradictory even to what he said himself. He contradicted himself several times and I'm going to talk about that. And then I'm going to demonstrate, Mr. Speaker, that what the member for Canora-Pelly said contradicts directly what the member from Silver Springs said. And then I'm going to say, Mr. Speaker, that if these two gentlemen even in the course of their own remarks in their own party can't agree with each other, I don't think there's much hope that they can present a coherent plan to the people of the province, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm going to begin by talking about something the member just referred to, Mr. Speaker, which was the number of wells being drilled in Saskatchewan for oil and gas. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that contrary to what that member would suggest, under this NDP government, Mr. Speaker, the production of oil in Saskatchewan — oil and gas — has doubled, Mr. Speaker. That is what has happened.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — And that member can get up and he can spout his doom and gloom as they always do as much as he wants, Mr. Speaker. But here is the reality, Mr. Speaker. If the member had been studying what is happening in oil and gas sector, Mr. Speaker, he would know that the big push in the oil patch in Saskatchewan today is what is known as enhanced oil recovery, Mr. Speaker. And I want to tell the member, if he doesn't know — and if he doesn't know, he should know, Mr. Speaker — that in Saskatchewan the problem with the oil patch is this, Mr. Speaker. It is that using conventional technology, the oil industry can only extract 15 per cent, that's one five per cent, Mr. Speaker, of the oil resource because we tend to have heavy oil which is embedded in sedimentary rock.

And what we have been doing, Mr. Speaker, with, for example EnCana Corporation at Weyburn, is to increase the productivity of the existing wells. And I want that member to know, Mr. Speaker — and many of the public already know this, but I don't think the Saskatchewan Party knows this — that the rate of recovery from the existing wells at Weyburn, Mr. Speaker, has gone from 22 per cent of getting oil out of the ground to about 45 per cent.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — So what we are doing, Mr. Speaker, in addition to seeing large amounts of drilling, is doing what the Saskatchewan people know make sense, which is to say we're going to make the existing wells, Mr. Speaker, more productive than they were before. Because the Saskatchewan Party may be content to leave 85 per cent of the oil in the ground, Mr. Speaker, we are not content to do that.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — And the Premier and I had an announcement in Regina last Friday whereby we said that we are going to work with the oil industry to make production more efficient in Saskatchewan. And we're going to take the wells we have, and we're going to increase productivity and profitability, Mr. Speaker, no thanks to those people over there.

Because all they do as the oil and gas industry grows . . . And by the way, the oil and gas sector, contrary to what that member from Canora-Pelly said, had this to say, Mr. Speaker. They said Saskatchewan is a good place to do oil and gas business, and we like doing business here. That's what they say, Mr. Speaker.

And for once it would be nice if this party, instead of just spouting doom and gloom and saying everything's bad in Saskatchewan, would recognize the progress that is being made in this province. But they never will, so we won't even bother waiting for them to do so, Mr. Speaker.

But I said I was going to demonstrate how unreliable and contradictory everything that comes from that side of the House is and what nonsense it really is, Mr. Speaker. Now we just had the member from Canora-Pelly get up. And the people can look at the *Hansard* which is on the website and which is in writing, and see what he had to say.

He gets up and what's the first thing he says to the people of the province? He says, oh everything's bad. You know the NDP won't tell you this, but he says the budget is a deficit budget. That's what he said. They're spending more money than they're taking in. That's what he said.

Now let's think about this for a minute. He starts out saying it's a deficit budget. They're spending too much money. What does he say at the end of his speech? He says they're not spending enough money. He says they should give more money to the municipalities. They should give more money to the schools. They should give more money to the teachers and the nurses.

Well, Mr. Speaker, my point is . . . not to say it's not important to fund municipalities, schools, nurses, and teachers, because it is, and we do that. My point is he starts out saying to people,

they're spending too much money. He ends his own speech by saying that they should spend more money.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Now how, how can that make sense? Well of course it doesn't make sense, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to say also that when he gets up and he tries to tell the people of the province that there's some kind of terrible deficit situation, oh well, you know we should all be frightened by that, Mr. Speaker. But let me say this. How is it if what he says is correct — and there's still chirping from their seats — there's some great deficit and at the same time they want to spend more money, how is it if there's this big deficit and financial problem, Mr. Speaker, that the province of Saskatchewan has received 11 consecutive credit rating upgrades?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — When these people — and I remind everyone that the Leader of the Opposition from Swift Current and I believe the member from Silver Springs worked in the government of the 1980s — when they left, Mr. Speaker, they left the province with the worst credit rating in the nation. I won't even mention the huge debt and the deficit that they left, but the worst credit rating.

Now we have a AA credit rating, Mr. Speaker, from the bankers and the investment dealers in New York and Toronto; that's what the rest of the world says about Saskatchewan. And we're supposed to believe somebody from that side that gets up and says there's some kind of horrendous financial problem in the Government of Saskatchewan.

Well don't believe it for a minute because if we're asked the question — what does the Saskatchewan Party know that the investment bankers in the world financial community don't know? — and I think the answer is, very, very little, Mr. Speaker, very little. Because this is a group of individuals that despite their claim to business savvy and everything else . . . And we know about some of their forays into business by the way, Mr. Speaker. We know about that. I'm not going to get personal to talk about some of their business experiences, Mr. Speaker, but we know about their real business savvy.

Despite their claims to do that, they will not give the people the straight bill of goods about 11 straight credit upgrades. And I want to say this, Mr. Speaker. When the New Democratic Party came to power in 1991, the amount of interest that we paid on the debt was about 20 cents on the dollar — 20 cents on the dollar. And it amounted to about \$881 million per year, Mr. Speaker. Today as a result of the budget delivered by the Minister of Finance, the amount of interest that will be paid is less than 10 cents on the dollar, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — And it is \$588 million, \$300 million per year less, Mr. Speaker, paid on interest serving the debt, Mr. Speaker. And if the members opposite think that that demonstrates some kind of fiscal problem, that says more about

the way the members opposite think than it does about reality, Mr. Speaker.

So 11 straight credit rating upgrades, Mr. Speaker . . . debt costs less than 10 per cent when they used to be 20 per cent, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, if we look at the size of government debt, which is the lowest in 14 years — something you won't hear from the members over there — the size of government debt relative to the size of our growing economy, Mr. Speaker, is less than 20 per cent for government debt. It used to be higher than 40 per cent, Mr. Speaker. It is half of what is used to be when those individuals over there were through with their management, so called, of the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — So if anybody in the province is prepared to believe the member from Canora-Pelly when he gets up and says that the Minister of Finance has created some kind of deficit budget, well if they can believe that, Mr. Speaker, I've got a bridge in Saskatoon that I'd be prepared to sell to them.

But I don't think, Mr. Speaker, that the people of this province are going to buy the kind of doom and gloom nonsense that we hear from the members over there because we are well aware of their experience, Mr. Speaker, and the experience we suffered with them when they had the opportunity to sit over here on this side of the House, which I don't think will happen for a long time.

So we have the member from Canora-Pelly who gets up and incorrectly says that there's some kind of a deficit budget at the beginning of his speech. But at the end of his speech he's worked himself up into a lather, Mr. Speaker, where he's going to spend more money on health care, education, municipalities, you name it. They never met a spending proposal that they didn't like, Mr. Speaker.

But now I want to talk about what that member says directly contradicts what his colleague, the member from Silver Springs, had to say just before he spoke because that colleague said that, not that there was a deficit budget, Mr. Speaker. No, he didn't say that. He suggested that there was just all kinds of money there that should be spent, which directly contradicts what this member said, that there wasn't enough money there.

[12:00]

Because what does the member from Silver Springs have to say to the people of the province in terms of what we should do? Well the first thing he says, Mr. Speaker, is that we should reduce the sales tax by \$140 million. That's his first observation. He's going to cut everybody's sales tax.

Then in the next breath he says — oh, guess what — he's going to cut everybody's income tax as well. He's going to cut income tax by \$90 million a year. Now we're up to \$230 million a year in tax cuts, Mr. Speaker.

But wait, wait. Oh it doesn't end there, no it doesn't end there. No, no, no, no. Because let's not forget that the opposition says every day. They're going to cut the education property taxes,

Mr. Speaker. Oh yes, oh yes. So we're going to have lower sales taxes, lower income taxes, lower education taxes, Mr. Speaker.

Now, hard to know how we're going to do that — if what the member from Canora-Pelly says and we're operating at a deficit — but nevertheless, the member from Silver Springs says he's going to cut every tax known to mankind, Mr. Speaker. But he's not going to . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, exactly. My colleague says, what about the small business tax? He's not going to stop at cutting the sales tax or the income tax or the education tax. No, no, no, Mr. Speaker. Because he's on the CBC radio this morning, he's on the CBC radio and what does he say? He says he's going to cut the small business tax as well. Now never mind the fact that since 1991 when this government came to power, the small business tax, Mr. Speaker, has been cut in half from 10 per cent to 5 per cent.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — And the amount that it applies to has been raised from 200,000 to 300,000. He doesn't say anything about that, Mr. Speaker. But somehow, somehow he wants to say to the people, we're going to cut all your taxes. But of course, he doesn't stop there. Oh no, no, no. He's going to . . . Like the member from Canora-Pelly who says we're at a deficit but I want to spend more money, the member from Silver Springs says, well we're going to cut all the taxes, whatever anybody wants we'll agree to. Oh, oh, but as we're doing that, we're going to spend more money at the same time. We're going to, he says, spend more on education, spend more on the municipalities. We're going to give all the public sector workers whatever they want in their wage demands because that's the kind of good people and nice people we are in the Saskatchewan Party.

And the problem is, Mr. Speaker, that when you try to be all things to all people, you trip yourself up even within your own speech. And what we have seen this morning, if anybody wants to go back and read the record of what these folks have to say, Mr. Speaker, it just doesn't make any sense because it just doesn't add up.

Because, you know, I was thinking as I was listening to the members over there that perhaps they have made a money printing machine, because the way they're going to cut everybody's taxes and spend money on everything known — every demand that is out there — I thought, well they must have a printing money machine. But then I thought, then I thought, no it's not a money printing machine that they have. I think, Mr. Speaker — and I think the member from Silver Springs should come clean about this — I think he has invented a time travel machine. I really think he has.

Because I think, Mr. Speaker, what the member from Silver Springs must have is a time travel machine whereby he can go ahead a week and see what the winning lottery numbers are.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Because it's the only way that I can make any sense out of what they have to say over there. They cut all the taxes and spend more money at the same time. But the

problem is, when I think about it logically — and even though I get a bit confused when I listen to the members opposite over there, I do try to think logically, Mr. Speaker — I know that the member from Silver Springs probably doesn't have a time travel machine. And so I have to go back, I have to go back to the proposition that I think what they're making just doesn't add . . . what they're saying doesn't add up. Mr. Speaker, it doesn't add up. So, so much for all their promises and ideas.

But I do want to before I sit down, answer this question that the member from Canora-Pelly asked and I know that he'll want to listen attentively because he asked the question. And I believe a question asked deserves an answer, Mr. Speaker. And the member from Canora-Pelly — in his usual recitation of doom and gloom and the suggestion that nothing was going well in the province of Saskatchewan — said, what is the financial health of Saskatchewan, he said.

Well, I'm not going to just give him my opinions, Mr. Speaker. But I want to say this to the doom and gloom people over there, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to talk about what others have to say about the financial health of Saskatchewan.

I look at the *Leader-Post* for March 23, Mr. Speaker; and I know by the way that the member from Canora who's chirping from his seat asked a question, so I'm sure he'll want to know the answer, what is the financial health of Saskatchewan? Well here's what the RBC Financial Group has to say. They say, Mr. Speaker, quote: "Saskatchewan's economy appears to be firing on all cylinders." That's what they say.

And then I look, Mr. Speaker, at what the right wing Fraser Institute has to say, Mr. Speaker — their cousins in Vancouver who like to be critical of the New Democratic Party — this is what the Fraser Institute has to say. They say, quote, Mr. Speaker:

Saskatchewan has vaulted past Alberta to become one of the best places in the world to invest in mining.

That's what they say, Mr. Speaker. So we have the RBC Financial Group, along with the credit rating agencies, we have the Fraser Institute and what they have to say. But we can move on, Mr. Speaker.

We can have a look at what the *Leader-Post* has to say. They say, in their editorial of March 15, "Saskatchewan's economy is performing robustly". That's what they say, Mr. Speaker.

Or we can look at the . . . We'll look at the stock market, Mr. Speaker. That's a pretty good indication of whether people have confidence in an economy. And I see in *The StarPhoenix* of March 12, the headline is, "Sask Stock Index shows strong growth," Mr. Speaker, and then they take the top 25 companies from Saskatchewan and, Mr. Speaker, they have this to say. They say that of the companies in Saskatchewan, the index has gone from 168.99 December 31, '03 to two seventy-one sixty-four December 31, '04 which, by my calculation, Mr. Speaker, and according to this, says return from '04-05, 37.79 per cent growth in the 25 companies and their value on the stock exchange.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's no surprise that when we look at the job

numbers over the last year, the headline is, Sask job numbers jump by 11,400 over the last year.

Now finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to say this to the members opposite. According to Statistics Canada, capital investment is expected to hit \$8.5 billion — that's billion with a "b" — in Saskatchewan this year, an increase of 13 per cent; the highest growth rate among the provinces according to Statistics Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — And I want those members over there who do nothing but preach doom and gloom to know that the average growth rate for investment in Canada in 2005 is going to be — according to Statistics Canada — 6 per cent. The growth rate in investment in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is going to be 13 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

And the member from Canora-Pelly says, well we should do something for the people of the province. And I want to say to the member from Canora-Pelly this. He wants to complain about everything in the budget. I see in the budget health and education funding is at record levels, Mr. Speaker. Is he against that? Is he against that, Mr. Speaker?

I see in the budget, Mr. Speaker, a projection of 3 per cent growth in the economy. Is he against that? I see in the budget debt reduction, Mr. Speaker, and as I said earlier, the lowest debt level in 14 years. Maybe that's what he's against — I don't know. Or is it the fact that the government is providing funding to prevent any increase in tuition fees at our universities. Maybe he's against that, Mr. Speaker — I don't know.

Could it be the \$55 million in education property tax relief in the budget, Mr. Speaker? Is he against that? Is he against the hospital in Preeceville somebody asks. Well he might be, Mr. Speaker. Because the fact of the matter is if he doesn't vote for the budget, which has record health care spending and an increase of \$192 million for health care, he is against the hospital in Preeceville, Mr. Speaker.

Or is he against the capital spending in the budget, Mr. Speaker? I don't know. I haven't heard them ask any questions about highways. We have, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Finance said, a plan to fix the roads in this province. And we're spending \$2.5 billion, with a "b," over 10 years to fix the roads. Maybe he's against that, Mr. Speaker. I don't know.

Or he could be against the 27,000 training opportunities for young people in the budget, Mr. Speaker. Is he against the training opportunities? I don't know. I don't think he mentioned them.

Maybe he's against the graduate tax credit for young people that stay and work in Saskatchewan. He could be opposed to that. I'm not sure.

Or is he against the expansion to the Saskatchewan bursary program which, Mr. Speaker, will increase bursary assistance for up to 10,000 students. Maybe he's against that.

Or he could be against the increased training opportunities for 1,000 additional training spaces. Maybe he's against that. I

don't know.

But I want to say, I want to say this, Mr. Speaker. There is good news in this budget. And there's good news because it does two things that are very significant, Mr. Speaker. It creates opportunities for young people to be educated and to pursue their jobs and careers in this province. And to that extent it looks to the future, Mr. Speaker, not just the complaints of today.

And, Mr. Speaker, it says that we're going to have a look at the business taxes in this province. And I want to say that we had a review starting in 1999 of personal income taxes. And I went back to what those members opposite had to say when that review was announced as part of the 1999 budget. What they said was, well we don't have time for reviews. We just want to see the taxes cut and increased spending at the same time, as they always say. But they were opposed to it, Mr. Speaker.

But there is no one in the province today that would say that the tax review committee, the Vicq committee, did a bad job, or that the government did a bad job reforming income taxes in this province, Mr. Speaker, because we went from the second highest personal income taxes in Canada to the fourth lowest. And even the opposition, Mr. Speaker, has to admit that we've made a lot of progress when it comes to personal income taxes.

Now that the Minister of Finance has announced we're having a similar review of business taxes, they kind of pooh-pooh that idea as well, Mr. Speaker. And their language is very similar to what the then leader of the opposition from Rosetown had to say. The same old, same old story — doom and gloom. But you know, Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding their doom and gloom we're going to continue to move forward. We're moving forward to build this province, and we're going to do it over the wailing wall that comes from over there, Mr. Speaker. We are going to do it over that wailing wall. And we're going to keep moving, Mr. Speaker, because someone once said when you're going in the right direction, what do you do? You just keep going, Mr. Speaker.

[12:15]

And the people of this province, in this centennial year — with a growing economy, growing investment, more jobs, a better taxation system — are going to keep growing, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to do it notwithstanding the unending negativity and doom and gloom that comes from the so-called Saskatchewan Party over there, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say it's a pleasure to rise today to speak to the budget speech, but unfortunately for the people in my constituency this budget was a huge disappointment.

People had high expectations. They know about the price of oil being higher than ever before, Mr. Speaker — \$57-a-barrel oil

— because we live in the middle of the oil patch, Mr. Speaker. We know about the price of potash being near record levels, Mr. Speaker. We know that the price of uranium is up, that the government has huge new resource revenues coming in. And yet the people say, but where has the money gone? Where is the announcements that we were looking for in education, in health, in agriculture, in transportation? And they look in the budget and it's not there, Mr. Speaker.

They look at the budget and see no vision for the future. This is our centennial year, Mr. Speaker, a year when you would think that the legislature and the government of Saskatchewan would want to do something that would be a legacy, a vision, a goal for the next 100 years. And what do we have, Mr. Speaker? Nothing but disappointment.

You look at the resource revenues that have come in, Mr. Speaker, using the Minister of Finance's own numbers. Over and above what he estimated for revenues for last year, Mr. Speaker, the province of Saskatchewan received \$1.113 billion; well over \$1 billion of excess surplus revenues that they had not budgeted for, Mr. Speaker. And the people of Saskatchewan know and understand that that money is there. They may not exactly know what the number is but they know that the royalty revenues are hugely increased, Mr. Speaker. And they expect to see something of benefit to them to be done with that money.

And then in the budget, using again the Minister of Finance's own numbers, he's projecting an increase of an additional \$400 million over last year's estimates, Mr. Speaker, over \$400 million. So over last year and the upcoming year, that's almost \$1.6 billion, Mr. Speaker — almost \$1.6 billion.

And so people say, well you know, our school system should be improving; our health care system should be improving. There should be able to be support for agriculture at a time when, as my colleague pointed out, many rural municipalities, including a number in my own constituency, have declared themselves disaster areas because of the ruined crops, because of the border being closed to cattle, Mr. Speaker — a huge, huge hurt across rural Saskatchewan; north to south, east to west — because of the inclement weather and the adverse political conditions, Mr. Speaker, allowing for the normal course of business to take place.

So they're saying, we expect, we know the money is there. We expect the province to be a part of our pain and suffering, to back us up. That's why we have programs like crop insurance. Theoretically, that was why the CAIS program was there. The federal government, no matter how much we may criticize and vote against the federal Liberal government in this province, they at least put forward a program that would have helped Saskatchewan farmers.

And the Minister of Agriculture waits until the very last minute in 2004 to agree to fund the program for 2003, a year after, Mr. Speaker, the end of the year almost. You know, it's like coming to any one of us and saying, we'll give you your wages but we'll give them to you a year later. We wouldn't find that acceptable as wage earners and it's not acceptable in agriculture, Mr. Speaker. It's not acceptable there either.

And so when you look at additional revenues of almost \$1.6

billion, and you say to agriculture, no we're only going to give you the amount we've promised for 2003 minus any additional monies that the minister finally agreed to give at the end of 2004, we're going to go back to that original amount even though we have a huge disaster because of frozen crops across this province where it degraded yield, it degraded the quality immensely — regardless of that, we're not going to put any additional money into the support programs.

And the fact that the US border remains closed to cattle, to buffalo, to bison, Mr. Speaker, and to elk, and I believe sheep as well — any of the ruminants — Mr. Speaker, regardless of that, the provincial government refuses to put additional money in to meet the commitment they already made. Not a new commitment, not one-time money, but the commitment that the member for Yorkton demanded and negotiated with the federal government, committed the provincial government to — refusing to meet that commitment.

Not only is it a disappointment, Mr. Speaker, to the people across rural Saskatchewan, it's a betrayal of the very promises that this government made. But quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, that doesn't surprise anyone across rural Saskatchewan. They expect nothing more from an NDP government than betrayal.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, I've listened to the Minister of Finance in his address. I listened to the member from Saskatoon Idylwyld in his discussion and talk about the debt. I listened to my own colleague, and indeed, Mr. Speaker, from the Minister of Finance's own documents, the debt has increased. The debt of the province of Saskatchewan in a year when revenues increased by \$1.6 billion over the last year, our debt increased by \$361 million. The people of Saskatchewan, and I'm sure most of the legislatures in this building, fail to understand how you can do that. So that means there has been an additional dollar value available of almost \$2 billion that is being spent, that has gone someplace in this province, and yet people don't see any benefit from it.

The price of gasoline is still 92 cents a litre. Education hasn't got any more money, so property taxes are going to go up. The waiting lists are getting longer in health care, not shorter, Mr. Speaker. For all the Minister of Health brave words about putting together a tracking program, Mr. Speaker, the waiting lists get longer. So for almost \$2 billion, what benefit do we see?

This morning on the radio, there was a couple of university students being interviewed. And they were asked, well what do you think of the freeze in tuitions, Mr. Speaker, the freeze in post-secondary university costs? And they were happy for the freeze, but understood, Mr. Speaker, that next year they're going to get hit with the cost increase that was taking place that they would have normally paid this year, and they're going to get hit with a cost increase over the next year as well. So they're going to get a double whammy on tuition fee increases, Mr. Speaker, unless this government wakes up and recognizes that that is an impediment to keeping youth in our province.

The reporter asked the students, was there anything in this budget that would encourage you to stay in Saskatchewan? And

their response was, there was nothing in this budget to keep us here. Not a thing, Mr. Speaker. The value of their tax credit had such little value to those students that there was no incentive to stay. None, Mr. Speaker. So even on that front that the NDP government is touting as their great salvation in this budget, the students recognize that it's of extremely little value. They're pleased to get the cents this year, the few pennies that the government is tossing out to them. But as a long-term benefit they recognize it was not there, and there was nothing there to keep them in this province.

I listened to the member from Saskatoon Idylwyld talk about the debt from the previous administration and how that burden on government was causing the difficulties in this budget, Mr. Speaker.

Going back to 1991, Mr. Speaker, let's take a look using that member's time machine that he was talking about. And I have a quote, Mr. Speaker, for the member from Idylwyld and this comes from this legislature, Mr. Speaker, on July 30, 1992 from *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to read . . . of a question, a discussion by Mr. Ed Tchorzewski, who was the minister of Finance at that time, Mr. Speaker, talking about the debt of this province. And I quote. I don't have a page number for *Hansard* to quote from but it's from their book, Mr. Speaker. The Hon. Ed Tchorzewski, and I quote:

Because here is what happened. [He . . . talking about the former premier, Grant Devine.] He took this province from a total debt of 3.5 billion . . .

The debt was already there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 1982, according to Ed Tchorzewski. And he was only talking, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about the GRF [General Revenue Fund] debt. There was an additional debt there, Mr. Speaker, as well, of \$3 billion of unfunded pension liabilities, unfunded pension liabilities.

So when the government wants to talk about time machines and looking at debt, let's look at the debt. Six billion dollars from pre-1982 when the interest rates were 20 per cent plus, Mr. Speaker. That goes a long way to explaining how part of the debt in this province grew.

Well, Mr. Speaker, let's take a look at how the debt in this province is growing in 2005 — 2005 the liabilities of the Government of Saskatchewan, the GRF fund, Mr. Speaker, changed from \$8.2 billion of debt to 7.6 billion, a \$700 million decrease. That, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order please, members. I would ask members on both sides of the Assembly to just allow the debates to proceed in an orderly fashion and in a way that debates can be heard. I recognize the member for Cannington.

[12:30]

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, that gave me an opportunity to have a drink.

Mr. Speaker, the debt . . . The GRF fund was reduced, and that is a good thing, but, Mr. Speaker, there's a number of other categories listed under liabilities as well. Debt of other Treasury

Board organizations increased by \$9 million. Debt of Crown Management Board organizations, a Crown corporation, increased by 371 million. Unamortized foreign exchange losses, no real money there, Mr. Speaker, but what you owe decreased because the exchange rate changes by 23 million. That's a good thing.

Pension liabilities, now I would think that every superannuated public servant, every superannuated teacher would be interested in this if they belonged to the pension program pre-1979. Increase in the amount owed to superannuate pensioners by the Government of Saskatchewan increased by \$87 million. That number should be coming down, Mr. Speaker, but it's going up under the NDP.

Other liabilities . . . and this will be an interesting one because I'm not exactly sure what falls under the category of other liabilities, but the debt in that area, Mr. Speaker, increased by \$575 million.

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order. I would ask members if they have other conversations, side conversations, to take them behind the bar, lower their voices. It's becoming very difficult for the debates to proceed in this Assembly. I'm going to have to enforce this a little more stringently because I find members are just making it too difficult for the debate to proceed in an orderly fashion, and it's very important that a member who gets up has the right to speak and to be heard. I recognize the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So overall while the government is bringing in over \$1.6 billion of additional monies over the 2004-2005 estimates, Mr. Speaker, the debt has increased for the province of Saskatchewan by \$361 million. It's like winning a lottery and going deeper in debt, Mr. Speaker. The people of Saskatchewan are extremely disappointed in the fiscal management of this government, of the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier the students found no reason in this budget why they would want to remain in Saskatchewan. And that speaks to the lack of vision, the lack of vision as presented by this Premier, the lack of vision as presented by the Minister of Finance, and in fact the lack of vision by all of the members represented on the government side of the House. There was nothing in this budget, Mr. Speaker, that deals with growing the province.

The other day the Premier and the minister for Energy made an announcement that provided a very small amount of tax relief for resource companies that wanted to enhance production, additional recovery methods in the oil patch such as a CO₂ injection to enhance recoveries. Now that's a good thing, Mr. Speaker. Remove the PST for the capital purchases that were necessary there to encourage additional production.

You heard from my colleague that the government's own projections for increased drilling in this province is a negative increase, in fact a decrease in drilling, year over year over last year, which was a decrease over the year previously. Again at the record levels of oil, we're seeing less drilling.

So the government comes forward with this minute change, Mr.

Speaker, to try and encourage people to step up the drilling. Well on one hand where they give us very small incentive, they turn around in this budget and increase the corporate capital tax on resource industries, Mr. Speaker. They give a pinch of salt with one hand and take back a whole loaf with the other, Mr. Speaker. That is not going to encourage those businesses to look at Saskatchewan when they have capital to invest. That's a disincentive, Mr. Speaker. That works against the growth of this province. That works against creating jobs in this province. That works against keeping our youth in this province.

Mr. Speaker, each and every one of us knows that the number one export we have had in this province for the last 60-some years has been people. Go to Alberta, Mr. Speaker. As an example, go to a Roughrider game in Calgary, and half the stands are Saskatchewan people. You go across the country. You know, the Riders like to brag that they are the best supported team across the country. That's because of the number of people that have out-migrated from this province to other locations in Canada. It's not to our benefit that we have sent so many good people across the country. I'm glad that they're successful, but why could they not be successful in Saskatchewan? The reason is because of the economic regimes put in place by the CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] and the NDP.

And the very moves they have made to try and entice an increase in royalty production in resource production in this province, such as the removal of the PST on enhanced recovery systems, are completely offset when they increase the corporate capital tax, Mr. Speaker. They're working at cross purposes, and they're keeping the people and the vision and the businesses out of this province that we need to grow. When people even in this province develop ideas and items, businesses that would grow this province, they stay here until they get their feet going and then they leave, Mr. Speaker. They take their ideas. They take their businesses out of this province because of the disincentives that are in place.

The member from Saskatoon Idylwyld talked about cutting . . . about what the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs was talking about — cutting taxes. Well there is one thing in this province, Mr. Speaker, that we do need to cut — one thing above all else — and that is to cut out the NDP in government, Mr. Speaker, to eliminate the NDP as the government. That, Mr. Speaker, would go a long ways to changing the attitude towards growth in this province. They are an anchor on our growth. They're driving our youth out of this province, Mr. Speaker.

So even when members like the member from P.A. Northcote speaks . . . he talks about it's a good thing when people leave this province because it leaves more for the rest of us, Mr. Speaker, leaves more for the rest of us. What kind of an attitude is that? That's a dog-in-the-manger attitude, Mr. Speaker, that I believe does nothing to enhance the image, and it does nothing to enhance the vision of growth in this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with that in mind, with the need to change the government, to change the vision for the next 100 years in this province, I will be supporting the amendment as presented by the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs and voting against this non-vision, disappointing budget by the NDP

government. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of all government members, I would move that this House do now adjourn, and I wish everybody a very, very pleasant Easter for a much deserved break.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. Therefore pursuant to an order of this Assembly, this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, March 30 at 1:30 p.m. I wish everybody a Happy Easter.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:40.]

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