



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

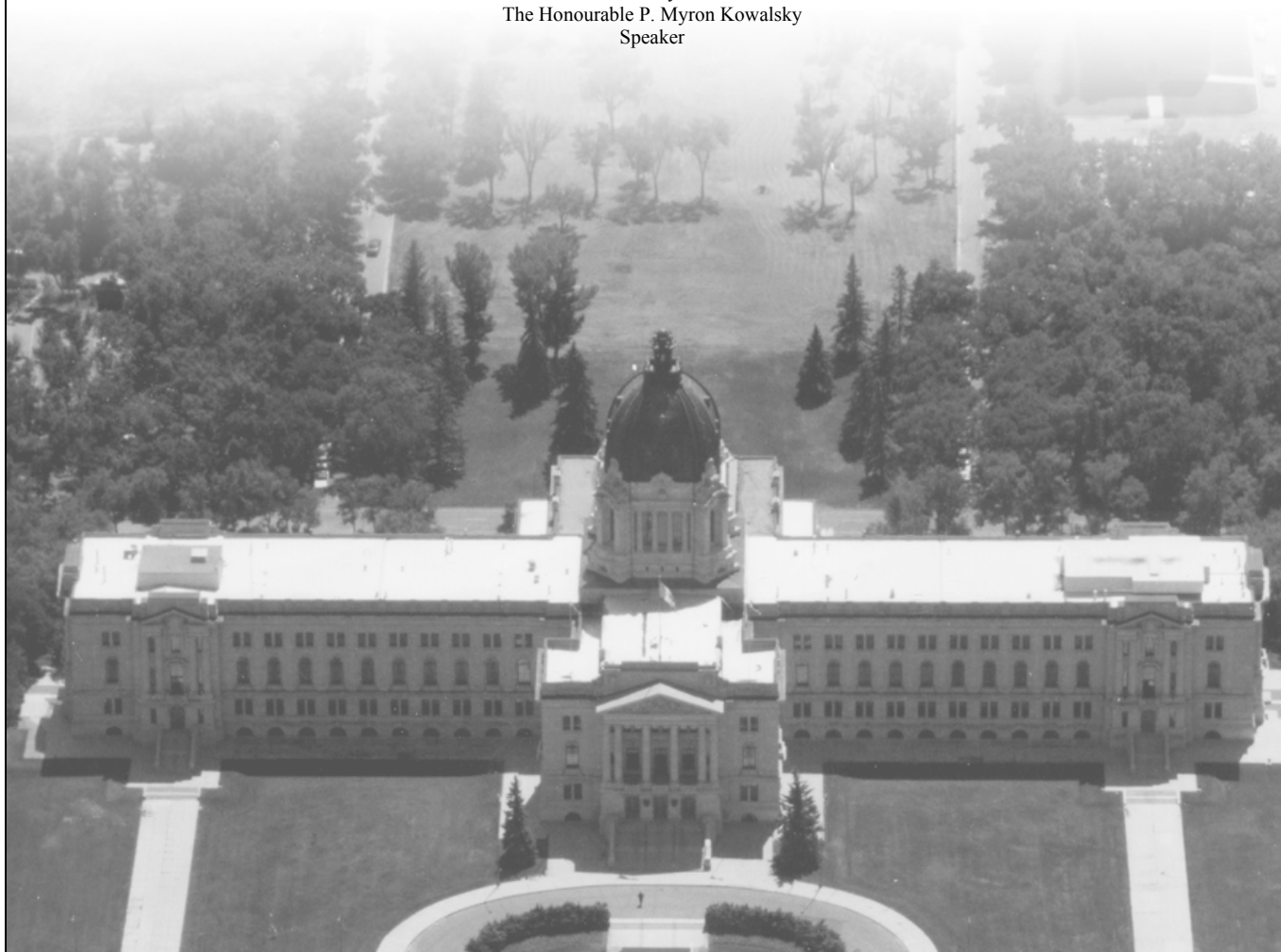
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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 Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this morning to present a petition regarding forced amalgamation of school divisions. And I read the prayer:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the petition I have in my hand and present to the Assembly this morning is signed by individuals from the communities of Montmartre, Glenavon, Kendal, Kelliher, Wishart, and Leslie. I so present.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have petitions today. The prayer reads:

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

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

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from the good people of Cabri and Abbey. I so present.

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again on behalf of constituents concerned about the deficiency in residential support for citizens of my hometown who have lifelong disabilities. And the prayer of their petition reads as follows:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today hail from the communities of Wymark, Rosenhof, Swift Current, and Schoenfeld. I so present.

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today on behalf of people who are concerned about the plague that's sweeping our province. That plague is 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, its education, prevention, enforcement, and treatment.

The people that have signed this petition are all from the town of Wadena.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have a petition signed by people who are concerned that recent changes to the crop insurance program result in large premium increases for insured farmers, while overall coverage is reduced. Mr. Speaker, the prayer of the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take all necessary actions to reverse the increase in crop insurance premiums and the reduction in coverage.

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

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

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition to present on behalf of the citizens of the province 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 a decision to reduce funding to the Claybank Brick Plant.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on these two pages of petitions are from Moose Jaw, Rocanville, Calgary, Regina, Lethbridge, and Avonlea. I so present.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to stand again on behalf of constituents of mine who are opposed to the forced amalgamation of school divisions. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by citizens of Midale. I so present. Thank you.

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

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too am presenting a petition on behalf of constituents who are very concerned about 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 the school divisions on a strictly voluntary basis.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Oungre, Tribune, Torquay, and Bromhead. I so present.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to rise today to present a petition on behalf of concerned parents in my constituency of Saskatoon Silver Springs regarding the much needed elementary school in the Arbor Creek area. The prayer for the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement the allocation of financial resources to build an elementary school in Arbor Creek.

The petitioners today live in Buckwold Cove, Sears Cove, Peters Cove in northeast Saskatoon. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here with citizens that are against forced amalgamation of 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 reorganization of school divisions on a strictly voluntary basis.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Hanley, Hawarden, and Kenaston. I so present.

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

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

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

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

Signed by the good citizens of Delisle and district. I so present.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of citizens in the western part of the province who have concerns with regard to Highway No. 32. I'd like to read from the prayer, Mr. Speaker.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and make necessary repairs to Highway 32 in order to address safety and economic concerns.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Cabri and Pennant. And, Mr. Speaker, I so present.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to present a number of petitions on behalf of citizens that are very concerned with this government's plan to force the amalgamation of school divisions. The prayer reads as follows:

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

Signatures to these petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from a number of communities including Melville, Esterhazy, Langenburg, Goodeve, Qu'Appelle, Edgeley, Vibank, White City, and Edenwold. 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:

A petition concerning a dialysis unit for Broadview Union Hospital; sessional paper no. 727.

And addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 72, 83, 637, 638, 640, 715, and 720.

Clerk Assistant: — According to order the following petitions for private Bills are read and received:

Of the Concentra Financial Services Association in the province of Saskatchewan, praying for an Act to appoint Concentra Trust a successor trustee to Concentra Financial Services Association;

Of the Saskatoon Foundation in the province of Saskatchewan, praying for an Act to change its name, to receive and distribute funds for environmental purposes in Saskatoon and area, and to distribute non-endowed funds to other charitable organizations; and

Of the Soeurs de la Charité de Saint-Louis in the province of Saskatchewan, praying for an Act to repeal its Act of Incorporation and to transfer all rights, assets, and liabilities to the Sisters of Charity of St. Louis of Calgary, Alberta.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice I shall on day no. 89 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: please provide a detailed breakdown of how funding for the gambling addictions programs and services is spent.

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

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to give notice that I shall on day no. 89 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskTel: please provide a copy of the SaskTel business plan entitled SaskTel growth committee option review.

Mr. Speaker, I have similar questions for the same minister to

table plans for a modified Navigata, for the Navigata stand-alone plan, for the identified third party SaskTel Navigata strategic overview, for the Mergeco plan, for the NewCo communications, a strategic option for SaskTel and Navigata, for financial model for Mergeco, for initial assessment after 25 days, for financial model follow-up, for *Quo Vadis*, stage 2, charting Navigata strategy update, and finally, for the rapid turnaround strategy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 89 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Highways and Transportation: of the 57 kilometres of road improvements to be done under the forestry commitments, what is the cost per kilometre? What is and are the locations of these kilometres of highway improvement? How often are these road transportation agreements under forestry commitment agreements renegotiated? And what is the length of time that these agreements will exist?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — Members, it's very much a pleasure for me today to introduce to you two individuals who are seated in the Speaker's gallery and they are from the CSG Midwest — the Council of State Governments. Welcome to Ohio State Senator Kevin Coughlin and Ms. Cindy Andrews. They're in Regina today helping us to prepare for the 60th annual meeting of the Midwestern Legislative Conference. This conference will be held in Regina from July 31 to August 3. We will be welcoming all the elected representatives and senators from the Midwestern states as well as provincial parliamentarians from Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario. It's also open to industrial sponsors and the media.

Saskatchewan is pleased to be the first affiliate to hold the annual meeting for the MLC [Midwestern Legislative Conference]. It's usually held in the US [United States]. It's a very fitting time for our province's centennial being this year that we will open our doors and welcome our neighbours from the Midwestern states. It's an opportunity for us to build a foundation of long-lasting relationships that will help us move forward together in accomplishing our goals.

It's a conference that truly no one should miss so I would ask members . . . and if Cindy could give a wave. Cindy is the assistant director in charge of marketing and administration of the CSG . . . pardon me, Midwest office in Chicago.

And Senator Coughlin is the Ohio state senator from Cuyahoga Falls. One of his interests is to sponsor legislation to promote healthy lifestyles and curriculum in elementary schools. He is also the Chair of the 60th annual meeting of the MLC. He is seated with Linda Spence of the Speaker's office and the protocol office and Debbie Saum, who is the conference coordinator from the protocol office.

Welcome to Senator Coughlin and Cindy Andrews.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all the members of the House a group of Scouts sitting up in your gallery. The eight Scouts are from the Glencairn 79th Scouts group here in Regina. And they're accompanied today with their leader, Jordan Kreuger and George Emery.

And I understand that the Scouts are going to take in part of the proceedings of the House. Then they're going to tour the legislature, and then we'll have the opportunity to get together later on for some refreshments. And, Mr. Speaker, because some of the Scouts are actually from Regina Dewdney constituency, I'll be asking the member from Regina Dewdney to join us for the refreshments, and he can pay for them at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all the members to offer our Scouts a very warm welcome to their Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:15]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would want to have all members this morning welcome to this House a former member of the legislature who is seated behind the bar on the government side. I want to welcome Judy Bradley back to the legislature this morning.

Judy served in this House as the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy. She served in our caucus as caucus Chair. She served the people of Saskatchewan as minister of Highways and Transportation and through Judy's stewardship in that portfolio many of the area transportation committees that are at work today were established. A great deal of work was done around establishing the short-line rails, producer carloading, and she has played a significant role in the very good news that has recently been announced by the federal government that producers of Western Canada will have opportunity to work with the grain cars.

So I want to welcome Judy back to the legislature, and I'm sure all members will want to do the same.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join with the Premier in welcoming Judy Bradley back to the Assembly. I remember as a constituent of mine . . . She lives in Milestone now and is the principal of the high school there and does great work there.

I do want to remember back a couple of weeks ago when Mr. Ron Osika was in the House and I had welcomed him here and was thanking him for the fact that he was going to put a lawn sign up for me in the next provincial election. I was talking to Mrs. Bradley, and she had said the same thing. Mind you, it is April 1. Welcome to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Royal Canadian Air Force Celebrates 81 Years

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased and honoured last night to attend the 81st anniversary dinner of the Royal Canadian Air Force. It was hosted at 15 Wing Moose Jaw by Colonel Boyer, and the special guest of honour was Major General (Ret.) Richard Rohmer, who happens to be Canada's most decorated citizen.

Mr. Speaker, the RCAF [Royal Canadian Air Force] was founded on April 1, 1923, when King George V promulgated the prefix royal to then the Canadian Air Force. It had some pretty meagre beginnings, Mr. Speaker. The original establishment of the air force was 68 officers and 307 airmen. During the next decade and a half, the RCAF was unique because most of its work was in non-military roles. However during the Second World War, the RCAF expanded into the fourth largest air power of the Allied forces. In Canada a vast training organization was formed to put over 80 operational squadrons in the field on coastal defence, shipping, and overseas duties.

Although there have been many changes to the 80 years, the mission of Canada's Air Force remains the same as it was on April 1, 1924 — to generate and maintain combat-capable, multi-purpose air forces to meet Canada's defence objectives. I would like to congratulate the RCAF on its 81st birthday today.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Community Living's Spring Fling Fundraiser

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow evening I, along with a number of other government members, will be attending the Regina and District Association for Community Living Spring Fling.

This event is a fundraiser for the association's ongoing programs that provide support to and advocacy on behalf of people living with intellectual challenges, and their families. Some of the programs that will benefit from the Spring Fling include a Regina respite registry that gives access to qualified respite care providers and best buddies program, a program that fosters friendships between student volunteers and people with an intellectual disability.

Mr. Speaker, every one of us deserves to be treated with dignity and respect and to have equal access to services. The Regina Association for Community Living makes it their mandate to ensure that individuals with disabilities can participate fully as valued citizens of our community.

As always, Spring Fling 2005 promises to be a spectacular event. Following dinner there will be a silent auction in the evening and entertainment provided by Wascana Jazz.

I ask all my colleagues to join me in recognizing the commitment and dedication of the board of directors and staff at the Regina and District Association for Community Living as well as organizers Peter and Voula Danakas. And I encourage everyone to take the opportunity to attend this Spring Fling. It's a fun event and a very worthy cause. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

High School Basketball in Saskatchewan

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the member for Meadow Lake in members' statements congratulated the Meadow Lake senior girls high school basketball team for winning gold at Hoopla.

Mr. Speaker, I too would like to echo those congratulations. I'm very familiar with the long and strong tradition in Meadow Lake in high school basketball — both in boys and girls. And in fact, and in fact, Mr. Speaker, the person who is the instigator behind starting basketball in Meadow Lake was Mr. Ron Dossdall, many, many years ago. I'm very familiar with him. And it's also of note that he was the candidate for the Saskatchewan Party in the last election. So again, congratulations.

But, Mr. Speaker, there's another team that I want to congratulate for their success at Hoopla and that's the Kenaston senior girls high school team. Mr. Speaker, they didn't win the gold medal. They got silver, and that's silver twice in a row, Mr. Speaker.

But the point I'm trying to make here today is that I want to congratulate all the teams and all the coaches and all the officials and the organizers for making high school sports truly what it is.

I have a close connection with the Kenaston girls' team. I've got three girls on that team, Mr. Speaker, two that play and one that coaches. So in our house from about November until the end of March we talk not about politics but mostly about basketball, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to congratulate everybody who goes to Hoopla because it is a very few people who ever get to play at that high level, and I'm very proud of everybody who has done so well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Golden Opportunities Fund Wins Award

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, back in 1999, Grant Kook, a Saskatchewan booster who grew up in Outlook and who clearly believes that this province has a lot to offer, launched Golden Opportunities, the province's first labour-sponsored investment fund.

The idea was to provide Saskatchewan investors with an investment vehicle where they could invest their money here at home to maximize shareholder returns and to provide venture capital for Saskatchewan's small and medium-sized businesses to grow and expand, and so create new job opportunities here at home.

Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Kook and the Golden Opportunities Fund have been enormously successful. To date, one in every seventy-five Saskatchewan taxpayers is a Golden Opportunities Fund shareholder. Companies the fund have invested in generate more than \$50 million in economic activity annually in Saskatchewan and supported some 1,500 jobs in urban and rural communities. And it is the top performing fund of its type in Canada, based on both three- and five-year returns.

Mr. Speaker, in recognition of this stellar performance, Golden Opportunities Fund was chosen as the Labour Sponsored Investment Fund of the Year at 2004 Canadian Investment Awards.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating Mr. Grant Kook, the CEO [chief executive officer] and chairman of Golden Fund Opportunities; the fund's Saskatchewan investors; and board of directors. This is one more way that their faith in Saskatchewan has been rewarded. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Wynyard Student Wins Heritage Poster Award

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with pride in the student's achievements that I rise in the House today to honour Lisa Smith of Wynyard Composite High School. On February 21, Lisa Smith received the 2005 Youth Heritage Poster Award, as presented by the Lieutenant Governor and the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation.

The Youth Heritage Poster Contest is a province-wide competition open to all students of all ages. The contest seeks to engage our youth with the history and heritage of Saskatchewan. Lisa's art teacher, Cindy Horvath, immediately urged Lisa to enter the contest.

"She is very talented and I knew she could do it. She's a wonderful student, creative, talented and very innovative," commented Lisa's teacher.

There were over 300 posters submitted, and Lisa beat out many

entries in her category. Lisa's painting of the family farm vividly portrays the beauty of a Saskatchewan farm set against the wide prairie backdrop. Lisa's very proud of her family's history and put all of her considerable artistic talent into her painting. I would like to ask all the members to join me today in personally congratulating Lisa Smith of Wynyard.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Saskatchewan's 2005-2006 Budget

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan budget for 2005 and 2006 is a budget to build Saskatchewan for the next century, Mr. Speaker.

An intercity comparison of taxes and household charges shows Saskatchewan is already one of the most affordable places in Canada to live. Based on a strong economy that is setting job records in Saskatchewan, the centennial budget reflects significant actions to ensure Saskatchewan continues to be an affordable place to live and raise a family, Mr. Speaker.

This includes \$85 million in revenue sharing continued for municipalities. It includes over \$110 million in the next two years for education property tax relief. There's an almost \$2 million increase for social and human service community-based organizations, Mr. Speaker. We have committed to 600 new affordable housing units for 2005, with a goal of 2000 new units by 2008. Affordable, quality housing is a priority for families and this government, Mr. Speaker.

We are investing in Saskatchewan children by developing a new provincial plan for early learning and child care. This will build on the Child Care Saskatchewan initiative that creates 250 new child care spaces this year and a total of 1,200 by 2007. We are investing \$6 million to provide further resources for low-income families and individuals to improve their ability to work and become independent.

Mr. Speaker, this is the second year of a four-year budget plan — a plan that continues on a path of sound and responsible financial management, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Students' Centennial Quilt Project

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The first centennial project was recently completed at Lord Asquith School. The grade 9B home economics class designed and sewed a beautiful school quilt wall hanging, the students all participating in a design contest. There was a very specific criteria set up, and the design had to include detailed instructions for making the wall hanging. All of the students presented the designs to the class, and each class member evaluated each presentation. Megan Dagg was the official winner.

That is when the real work began, as they all had to work to

make the wall hanging. The design called for a handprint for each grade and colourful borders for each quilt square. The quilt was made from jeans donated to the school. They used fabric paint, fabric markers, and embroidery to make the wall hanging look terrific. A large thanks goes out to Janice Brotzel from Express It. Megan did the embroidery using her mom's equipment.

The students were asked to include a motto for their design. The motto on the finishing wall hanging is, "We cannot hold a torch to light another path without brightening our own way." The students are very proud of their work which is now hanging up in the front entrance of the school. Please join me in congratulating Lord Asquith School.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Saskatchewan Economy

Mr. Wall: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, the Minister of Industry and Resources almost dislocated his shoulder patting himself on the back, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, Saskatchewan business owners don't share his view of the job that the NDP [New Democratic Party] is doing with respect to the economy.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has just released its national survey on business confidence. Where does Saskatchewan rank, do you think, Mr. Speaker? Dead last. Dead last in the country, Mr. Speaker, and way beyond any other province in Western Canada. Saskatchewan businessmen and women have the least amount of confidence for the future of all of their counterparts from across Canada.

The question to the Premier is simple: how can he justify, how can he explain this in terms of his economic policies when businesses in this province, the men and women who create jobs for Saskatchewan families, have the least amount of confidence of any of their counterparts in Canada?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, that question is obviously an April Fool's joke because, you know, how you measure investors' confidence, Mr. Speaker, you measure investors' confidence by the indication of what investors are actually going to do and invest in your province.

And according to Statistics Canada, Mr. Speaker, contrary to what that member says, the private investment, capital investment in Saskatchewan is expected to grow from \$7.5 billion last year, Mr. Speaker, to \$8.5 billion this year.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:30]

Hon. Mr. Cline: — A 13 per cent increase, Mr. Speaker. The national average increase is 6 per cent. We are going to grow in investment in this province at twice the national average.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister ought to be careful or he's going to dislocate something else.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to the minister, I would say this, the Chamber of Commerce of this province has indicated and measured the amount of investment in our economy and they find, unfortunately, that the only investment that's growing is public sector investment.

The minister asks about how do we measure confidence. Well I would say actually asking businessmen and women in the province of Saskatchewan as to whether they are confident is a pretty good measure of how confident they are. And the results are in. The results are in.

Saskatchewan businessmen and women feel the least confident of all their counterparts in the country, and it's hard not to fault them. They have a government, they see a government that would impose ridiculous measures like government-directed hours. They see a government that imposes on them the highest business taxes in all of the country. Mr. Speaker, no wonder they lack confidence in that minister and that Premier.

Won't he stand up and give the businesses of this province a reason to have some confidence in a bold future for Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the results are in. The results are higher investment in Saskatchewan. The results are right now, over last year, 11,400 more jobs. Those are the results. But it doesn't matter what the results are, Mr. Speaker, because the wailing wall of Conservatives over there, Mr. Speaker, wants to paint their picture of doom and gloom.

But, Mr. Speaker, people who actually invest in the economy and create jobs aren't buying it because the people of this province, the business community, the working people, and all the people that create jobs, Mr. Speaker, are going to continue to build notwithstanding the negativity and doom and gloom we hear from the wailing wall of Conservatives over there, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the results are in. The results are in. Despite record commodity prices in the province of Saskatchewan, despite all of the amazing potential of this province — home to a third of the world's supply of potash and a third of the world's supply of uranium, Canada's second largest producer of oil and third largest producer of gas — despite all of that, the results are in. This government's posted the worst job creation record in the country over the last four years. Its population record is second worst in all of the country, exceeded only by Newfoundland. Manitoba grows at 100 times faster than our province.

The results are in. They are an indictment of this government's policies, of a lack of vision for the future by this Premier. Why won't he stand up and explain to Saskatchewan businesses why they should have any confidence in his government or his policies?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well you know, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to watch what the Leader of the Opposition does because when it suits his purpose, as in yesterday, he goes back three months to look at population figures and says it's gone down, even though in the last year the population had gone up. When it suits his purpose to use a four-year period to say jobs haven't gone up, he does that, Mr. Speaker, because the reality is, he will manipulate the figures to say what he wants them to say, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to tell the Leader of the Opposition this, Mr. Speaker. Canada is the world's leader in only two areas of mineral production. They are potash and uranium. The only areas where Canada leads the world, and they're both located right here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. So when that member and that wailing wall of Conservatives . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, please. Order, please. I would like to bring to the member's attention that I believe that he is using a figure of speech in an indirect way to do something he should not do. And that is to indicate a name of a member in the Assembly, and I ask him to refrain from that.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Funding for Additional Police Officers

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, in the 1999 election campaign, the NDP promised to create 200 brand new additional police officer positions in this province. In a press release last week, the Justice minister stated that since 1999 his government has increased provincial funding for police officers, including 169 additional policing positions. Can the Justice minister tell this Assembly how many of these positions are brand new police officers and how many are simply backfilling for retirees, Mr. Speaker?

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — One hundred fifty-one new police officers since 1999 and no backfilling for retired officers, and I take with some amusement being requested questions on math by the opposition, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we would like to question them on some of their math. We've got math questions for them today, Mr. Speaker.

Last week our office contacted the Saskatchewan Federation of Police Officers. According to that organization, Mr. Speaker, since 1999 the NDP has only provided funding for 81 brand new additional police officers. In last week's budget the minister announced 18 new positions. Are these brand new positions? Will that take us up to 98? Or are they simply more backfilling retiree positions? Which is it, Mr. Speaker?

When will this minister start providing this Assembly with accurate figures? And I'd encourage him to do some math.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, the member from Saskatoon Southeast rose yesterday and in his speech in response to the budget, requested that we provide new funding to this project in Saskatoon, and new funding to this project in Saskatoon, and new funding to this project in Saskatoon. And I was shouting across the way, Mr. Speaker, how much, how much? And I wonder if the member opposite would like to say how much he wants to add to the billion dollars that the Finance critic has spent in about five minutes on the radio the other day.

There are 18 new police officers in this, in this budget, Mr. Speaker. The officers that the federation doesn't want to count are RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] officers, Mr. Speaker. The RCMP counts them, Mr. Speaker. We count them, 151 officers, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it now appears that the NDP are not keeping their promise. The answer that I heard the minister give was 18.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen crime continue to grow in this province. We have an enormous problem with violent crime, with property crime, youth gangs, break and enters, home invasion, and a variety of other crimes. If we want to turn the tide on the epidemic of crime in this province we must ensure that we put more front line police officers on the street.

Mr. Speaker, when will the NDP government finally live up to this six-year-old promise? When can we expect them to deliver on their promise of 200 new police officers? Eighteen is not an acceptable answer, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, 18 new police officers takes the number from 151 to 169. Included in the 18 police officers are two new police officers, two new investigators for the safer communities and neighbourhoods initiative. That is an initiative that has shut down gang houses in Regina. It has shut down gang houses in Saskatoon. It is cutting into drug dealing and drug manufacturing in both these cities. In response to a question from the member opposite, last week I referred to a 13 per cent decrease in break and enters in Saskatoon. We are working at this problem in partnership with the police. We are having an effect, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Contract for Printing New Saskatchewan Health Cards

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister responsible for Property Management Corporation. It appears ISM [Information Systems Management Corporation] Canada is on the verge of getting the contract to print the new Saskatchewan health cards from June of this year to the spring of 2010. Mr. Speaker, to the minister: how was this contract awarded and how much is it worth?

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a contract that relates to the issuance of new health cards. The process normally goes ahead through notifying people when a single provider has been selected. What's happened here is that that information has been put up on the SPMC [Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation] website according to proper procedure. The deadline for other companies to put in their suggestions about how they might do this was 2 o'clock yesterday afternoon. Another company has put a suggestion in and so now they're reviewing the strength of both of these proposals and the normal procedures that are used for tendering will be followed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the past there was some security concerns with ISM. The NDP government vowed to re-evaluate their relationship with ISM. Mr. Speaker, what has this government done in the last two years to re-evaluate that relationship to ensure that the security concerns have been addressed to the government's satisfaction such that this NDP government is ready to accept

the full responsibility for the privacy concerns?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister Responsible for Information Technology.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to advise the Assembly that, as a result of the theft of the hard drive that had happened some time ago at ISM, there was in fact a security review undertaken by Deloitte Touche on what was going on at ISM. They have provided us with a report. We are satisfied that the security measures that were stepped-up at ISM as a result of that provide for a secure environment and allow them to conduct business in a world-class environment. I would also indicate that that report found that the primary reason that there was an issue at ISM was a result of a criminal act by a particular employee.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, since the minister says that he has received a report from ISM on those security concerns, is he prepared to table that document in the Assembly such that everyone can feel secure that their private information is indeed going to be secure, and that the minister assures the people of Saskatchewan that that will indeed be the case, that their privacy information is secure?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister Responsible for Information Technology.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly prepared to provide to the Assembly the details of what we expect from third party groups in terms of security provisions. That's provided within the report that we had, I think made public some months ago, about the need for government to change its security parameters. I can certainly re-table that in this Assembly and I am prepared to do so.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Revenue-Sharing Agreements with Municipalities

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, the chickens have come home to roost. There's no new revenue sharing for municipalities in the provincial budget. The cities said they needed it or property taxes were going up. Well guess what, Mr. Speaker? Taxes in Saskatoon are going up by almost 5 per cent because of this NDP government's refusal to enter into a meaningful revenue-sharing formula with the municipalities. Mr. Speaker, I'll be very direct and to the point as I can. To the Minister of Government Relations, can he explain himself to the ratepayers of Saskatoon?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the ratepayers of Saskatoon, as other ratepayers in other municipalities know, that this is the time of year when municipal councils sit down and review their costs, their revenues, their expenses, the services that they provide to their communities.

Mr. Speaker, I think members know that I sat on a municipal council for three years, I did municipal budget planning, just as I've sat on this side of the House doing provincial budget planning. We evaluate our needs against our ability to raise revenues, Mr. Speaker. And the municipalities right now are undertaking that. The proposal in Saskatoon at the end of the review period for municipalities could very well be within the . . . meet the needs of the city of Saskatoon.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's not just Saskatoon. It's Regina as well. The cities of this province are begging for an end to the downloading. Regina says property taxes will be going up as well. Mr. Speaker, it's very plain. This government has failed to do enough . . . to negotiate meaningful change to the revenue-sharing formula. The NDP gets richer so it can blow money on silly investments like we heard yesterday — about \$72 million. The property tax payers of Saskatchewan are the ones that are footing the bill.

Mr. Speaker, when is this minister going to enter into serious discussions over meaningful reform of the revenue-sharing formula? When?

[10:45]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The direct answer to the question is of course we've already begun that. That process of serious review with the municipalities began at the municipal forum about three and a half weeks ago, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things that we have to keep in mind in all of this, Mr. Speaker — and the members of the opposition should be very much aware of this — is that the municipalities, particularly the city of Regina, wants us to go back to the revenue-sharing formula that was put in place in 1980, Mr. Speaker. After two years of Conservative government in this province, they had to change the revenue formula because it was so unsustainable that it was unworkable, Mr. Speaker. As a result of that, as a result of that, Mr. Speaker, this government has over the last . . . over the last three years, Mr. Speaker, started to increase revenue sharing back to the provinces. And this year we now see \$90 million more than was in the budget four years ago.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's pretty obvious that the minister doesn't understand much about the date times because he said 1980. And guess who was government of this province in 1980? It was his own NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, how this government operates . . . they asked for and received a report last year, and it called for an increase to the PST [provincial sales tax] for meaningful property tax reduction. The NDP's very good at taxing so we get the dirty end of the stick as taxpayers of this province. But still, no meaningful tax reform.

Mr. Speaker, when will this minister stop letting down the property tax payers of this province and get on with the job that needs to be done?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome the member's appointment as the new critic for Municipal Affairs and I can't wait for the day when he actually catches up to what's going on within the department and within municipalities across this province.

Mr. Speaker, on property tax relief, on the education side, this government has already committed \$110 million; property tax payers this year will see an 8 per cent reduction on their property tax on the education side when that Bill is issued.

And secondly, Mr. Speaker, through the municipal forum in consultation with the urban-rural governments, school boards, Government Relations, and the Dept. of Learning we've put in place a working group, Mr. Speaker, that's going to take a look at the long-term sustainability of education property tax, Mr. Speaker. When we've got our equalization issues worked out and the working group reports, we'll have a long-term answer, sustainable answer, for the member opposite.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Investments in Navigata

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister for SaskTel said that the RBC [Royal Bank of Canada] report on Navigata said that they were . . . took it in a positive light and that they could break even or make a profit if they refocused.

Mr. Speaker, I read the report. I did not see that in this report. In fact what it says, and I quote that:

Navigata needs to be stabilized to a cash flow break even level in the very near term before . . . [building] for future internal growth . . .

It also goes on to say:

It is also recognized that . . . [it] will require additional

operating capital until cash flow break even is achieved . . .

How much more, Mr. Speaker? My question to the minister is, will he table all 13 business plans for this House in the very near future so that the taxpayers of Saskatchewan can see exactly what is in those business plans?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister Responsible for SaskTel.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, he identified, I think correctly, obviously read the report as well, but the report that RBC . . . the point I should say that RBC makes is that indeed in the investments, whether it's this company, Mr. Speaker, or whether it's any other telecommunications company, voice over Internet protocol, as I indicated outside of the legislature as well, is indeed there is some risk in it. And there is still some risk in this company. We've said that all along. But every telecommunications company is making these investments in voice over Internet protocol, Mr. Speaker.

And with respect to the additional investment, how much more have we invested? Well that was the basis for which we had our RBC do the independent third party analysis. The answer is 12 million. That's what we have put in. The amount is 60 million; there is an additional 12 million that has been allocated for potential investment and that's what SaskTel is now analyzing, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, 13 business plans in five months — \$72 million pumped down a deep hole.

Mr. Speaker, let me put that into perspective — \$72 million is about two SPUDCOs [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] and throw in a Clickabid. That's about what it comes to.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is, exactly how much more money is the government prepared to put into Navigata in the short term and in the long term until this company makes a turnaround or in fact goes under, which is the long tradition of this socialist government in business?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister Responsible for SaskTel.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, let me ask this question. Let me ask this question. When every other telecommunications company in North America is making this investment just think what the opposition would ask. Just think what the opposition would ask if SaskTel were not to do this. In three or four or five years when the rest of the world is using voice-over Internet, and SaskTel would have taken the advice of

the Saskatchewan Party — those Conservatives — and not made this investment, what would they say? They would say that SaskTel was as narrow in their vision, had no vision. But, Mr. Speaker, no, they'd rather criticize SaskTel, they'd rather criticize them. Why don't they criticize the private sector who knows that this is the way to go into the future, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Support for Budget

Mr. Wall: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been almost a week — it's been over a week — since the Finance Minister rose and delivered the budget in this Assembly and I think there's a consensus in Saskatchewan that the budget was a disaster for the province.

They had \$1 billion in extra revenues, Mr. Speaker, and they blew it. They didn't cut taxes for Saskatchewan families, they didn't index the food allowance, they did nothing to attract new investment to the province. They didn't keep the promise on police officers, Mr. Speaker, they did nothing to attract more health care workers. They didn't abandon the 0, 1, and 1 wage mandate. They didn't address the concerns of municipalities like Saskatoon.

But you know what, Mr. Speaker, it's Friday, we're in a good mood, it's April Fool's Day. We're prepared to give the NDP a mulligan because they need a do over. Will the minister simply rise in his place today and say that this has just been an April Fool's week and he's prepared to start over on a provincial budget that will work for the province of Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — Before I . . . before . . . Order, please. Once again I see what has been used on one side is also being used on the other and that is an indirect way of naming a member. I would ask members to just take it easy on this, and I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not about to name any member across the way. As I repeat again, there seems to be some real confusion in the province whether it's April Fool's or not about who is the leader over there, and we'll let them sort that out. It is peculiar, Mr. Speaker, I note that the finance critic is not asking the questions about the budget. In fact I haven't heard a question from the finance critic all week.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition members have a weekend to think it over because on Monday we're coming to vote on a budget in this House. They have a weekend to think it over and I'm going to ask each and every one of those members to think these questions over this weekend.

Are they going to come into this House on Monday and vote against, and vote against, an increase in the basic allowance for social services? Are they going to do that? Are they going to come into this House and vote against a \$192 million increase for the Department of Health? Are they going to come in and vote against \$55 million in property tax relief? Are they going to come in and vote against the budget that brings more

resources to the education of Saskatchewan young people, more resources to the building of Saskatchewan's future, or are they going to vote for that budget, Mr. Speaker? The credibility of that party and those members is on the line. They've got the weekend to think about it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

SaskTel Wireless High-Speed Internet Service

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize, I was unable to hear. First of all, thank you, it gives me great pleasure to announce today that SaskTel has launched SaskTel wireless high-speed Internet service in the first six communities in Saskatchewan to receive wireless high-speed through our government's CommunityNet, through our government's CommunityNet II initiative, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — As of today, rural residents in areas around Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Hague, Rosthern, and Aberdeen — residents who live within approximately 30 kilometres of the Internet provision tower in these locations — will be able to receive SaskTel's wireless high-speed Internet service.

Thanks to CommunityNet II at least 71 communities in the province will enjoy access to a very valuable educational, communications, and entertainment service sooner than many urban centres in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

SaskTel wireless high-speed Internet service will provide great benefits to farmers, business people, school students, seniors, and others. SaskTel wireless high-speed Internet service will greatly improve economic, social opportunities to people in vast areas of rural Saskatchewan.

This initiative, Mr. Speaker, follows on the heels of the award winning CommunityNet initiative which has already provided high-speed Internet across all the province. SaskTel and CommunityNet is currently providing high-speed Internet service, Mr. Speaker, to public institutions in 366 communities, linking 834 educational facilities, 310 health care facilities, 86 First Nation schools, 256 government offices, and 162 libraries across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Upon completion of the \$34 million CommunityNet II program, more than 86 per cent of Saskatchewan's population will have access to high-speed Internet service. And upon completion of the second phase of our CommunityNet program, rural Saskatchewan will be the most connected rural area in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — SaskTel, Mr. Speaker, will have invested \$173 million to bring a high-quality, priced competitive, high-speed Internet service to Saskatchewan residents and businesses. Initiatives like CommunityNet II demonstrate that Saskatchewan is a technology leader. SaskTel is extremely pleased and proud to be delivering this latest technology to rural Saskatchewan residents and building a better life for Saskatchewan citizens. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today and respond to the minister's statement. Obviously the minister and myself, our paths have crossed on a number of times in the last 24 to 36 hours in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to congratulate the fine folks at SaskTel for the good job that they do providing these kinds of services and core services to the people of Saskatchewan, right here in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this is another example, another example of the fine level of technology that the good folks over at SaskTel have been responsible for over the last number of years.

It's interesting to note as well, Mr. Speaker, that in the minister's statement he talked about having invested \$173 million to bring this high-quality, price competitive, high-speed service to Saskatchewan. Of course he is correct. He is correct . . . He is not completely correct, Mr. Speaker, in his assessment of the Internet service that is available to rural customers in Saskatchewan. I do believe that there is much more that can be done in this area.

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to briefly draw a quick comparison to that \$173 million that the minister talked about. And I'm wondering in my mind how much more could have been done quicker to provide not only Internet service but cell service, cellular service, to rural parts of Saskatchewan had we been better managers of out-of-province investments, Mr. Speaker.

[11:00]

But at the end of the day, after having read and heard this statement, again I want to congratulate those people at SaskTel because they do, do an excellent job providing that front-line core services to Saskatchewan in spite of — in spite of, Mr. Speaker — what the government across the way and their management practices have forced SaskTel to do over the last number of years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We look forward to more announcements like this and more good things for the people of Saskatchewan right here in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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, and the proposed amendment thereto moved by Mr. Cheveldayoff.]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Northern Affairs, the member for Athabasca.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, again it's nice to see that the Conservative Party across the way muzzle their Finance critic, and this is only — what? — less than a week past the budget. This is supposed to be all about the budget week, Mr. Speaker, and the Conservatives muzzled the billion dollar Finance critic. Because why? Because the message got back to them is, hey guys stop spending money. Stop spending money because the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs, I think, he's been spending money all over the place, Mr. Speaker.

So I would point out, it's good to see that the message we've been telling people time and time again on this budget is, stop spending. Stop spending like the way you've been spending because had you kept on spending, we would've been déjà vu back to 1982 when the Conservatives . . . which you are a member of, when you're a member of, when you ran of course to . . . trying to impress people throughout the province of how you can spend all this money, yet lower taxes, yet balance the budget.

Mr. Speaker, one of the popular programs on TV, one of the popular programs on TV in the home garden television, is the *Holmes on Homes*, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And this is where this fellow by the name of Holmes goes in there and looks at all these different houses. And he says, oh my goodness what shoddy work in this house. And what he does, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is he prepares to dismantle this house or dismantle this addition or this renovation and show what went wrong with the project. And that's what I kind of think happens over there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think we should bring Mr. Holmes from HGTV [Home & Garden Television] and tell him, look, there's some structural problems over there.

The Conservatives are trying to hide what they are. So what they do, they took a couple two-by-fours. They took a couple Styrofoam panels. They put a little bit of wiring here. They put a light over there, put a little bit of paint, put a bunch of wallpaper all over it. And yet the wallpaper's kind of thin, and then you put some more wallpaper over this. And then people say, well what's wrong with this? This looks okay. No, no, no. Let's take the wallpaper off, let's take that two-by-four and see what's structurally wrong there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this budget talked about a balanced approach as opposed to what the opposition is offering, which is the Conservative style of managing à la 1982, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I want to point out, you can get Mr. Holmes here. And I want to ask him, can you dismantle that Saskatchewan Party, the so-called Saskatchewan Party, and see what's really underneath and behind that wallpaper?

Oh they got some position on the Crowns. Oh we'd better not take that because Saskatchewan people love their Crowns. Let's put some wallpaper over that issue. Oh they don't want to see . . . they want to see less business in the province. Oh no, no, no. Let's be business friendly; that's supposed to be our mantra because that's the Conservative way. Let's put some wallpaper over that.

Oh let's see. Now let's try and be more friendly to the people. Oh no, no. They don't want a hard approach like the former leader did where he said, \$50 million cut for social services. That was done last year, what the leader of the Saskatchewan Conservative Party said. And he said, \$50 million cut to the social services budget.

And you know what? The difficult part that we have on this side, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . and this minister, the current Minister of Community Resources and Employment have nailed that point down time and time again is . . . you say, well first of all, we're trying to help the low-income people. So if we help them out, then you say, well we don't like that. So how about if we train them? Well they don't like that too. Well you can't just simply cut the people off at low income and say you're not getting any more; we're taking \$50 million. You have to have the road to independence.

As the Minister of the Community Resources and Employment Department often speaks about, you got to show people and help people, give them the helping hand up as opposed to the backhand that that former leader of the Saskatchewan Party was proposing several years ago in his plan to deal with social services, Mr. Speaker. We want to see the whole notion of fairness, equality, and respect for all the people that are out there.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's only year two of our four-year mandate. We're going to fight every inch of the way. We're going to fight every inch of the way. We're going to show people out there that when they come knocking on your door, you say, no, the NDP haven't delivered as much as we would like, but we're going to be patient with them. You tell them that. We don't like your 1982 style of managing. You spend that \$1 billion 10 different ways to Sunday already. We're not going back there. And besides all the things that you guys have been promising, we don't trust you. We don't trust you because we don't know who you guys are.

We're staying the course with a proud government, a rich history of course of what we've been doing in terms of managing and building this province over the last 100 years. And we're going to stay with the government that is fiscally responsible, socially aware, and economically striving for that strong economy throughout the province. And that's what you tell them.

My final point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is I would say . . . I told the folks yesterday at home I'd give them a list of where the \$1 billion went — promise made, promise kept.

Mr. Speaker, where's the new money being spent? Well take your pen and paper: \$110 million on property tax relief, and that's 30 per cent of the \$367 million federal transfer that we got; \$54 million on utility rebates to meet this government's

commitment to provide the lowest utility bundle in Canada; \$40 million BSE [bovine spongiform encephalopathy] top-up; \$66 million in new health funding for a number of initiatives — including expansion to the MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] and CT scan [computerized tomography] services, replacements of some of the diagnostic imaging equipment, and purchase of a new linear accelerator for the Saskatoon Cancer Centre, and efforts to retain health care providers; approximately \$80 million to address third party capital and infrastructure commitments — notably outstanding municipal infrastructure commitments as well as post-secondary education capital; approximately \$110 million for government-owned capital acquisitions, including a new provincial lab, replacing the Regina jail, the renewal of the forest firefighting air fleet; \$179 million to be used to permanently reduce the government debt, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And of course that brings us up to 714 million, the balance of which is \$890 million surplus we had last year, not what they've been saying. That has been used for allocation of ongoing operating spending such as the province's share of cleaning up the northern uranium mines, IT [information technology] technology, and the list kind of goes on. So, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that that's where our money went. It was 890 million, not one and a half billion as they proposed.

And I would say that as a member of northern Saskatchewan and a member of this government, we stand in proud support of this budget and reject their notion of how they would managed the future of this province and of this legislature. And to point out my final argument is that I tell the people back home, look at what they've done in the past; they are doomed to repeat it. Mr. Speaker, I stand in proud support of this budget and will continue doing so. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I've had a relatively busy day on my feet here this morning. Mr. Speaker, I'm actually pretty glad that I have the opportunity to speak on the budget on this particular day, it being April Fool's. In fact I am quite glad that I get the opportunity to speak prior to 12 noon because traditionally most people think that it's okay to play an April Fool's joke up until that time of the day on April Fool's Day.

Mr. Speaker, I was thinking about what I was going to say here today. The thought ran through my mind to stand in my place over on this side of the House and talk about all the good merits of the budget and go on at length about how well, how good a job the government has done at managing the province's business. But after I thought about it a bit, I thought I could not bring myself to do it, to do that. And of course my colleagues on this side of the House would have had to leave to get physically sick if I were to speak that way. So I didn't.

I changed my mind and I decided, I decided to go back to my original line of thinking and talk about the budget for what it really is, which is a non-item. And that is a non-item.

I've listened a bit to some of the other members' speeches from both sides of the House about this budget. And what I'm, what I'm hearing more than anything else is it's almost like a desperate attempt from the NDP side of the House to try to convince people out in Saskatchewan . . . Maybe they're trying to convince themselves. Maybe they're trying to convince themselves that this budget has something worthwhile in it. The Government Whip, for instance, the last two days has stood up in member's statements and talked about what he thinks are the merits of this budget, and it doesn't sound like they're convincing anybody. In fact, I don't even think they're convincing themselves, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, in fact, the member for Regina Coronation Park — and other members by the way, but I want to single him out because I heard him say it in his speech on the budget — he talked about being 11 and oh, I think were his words as far as balanced budgets go. He said 11 in a row; 11 balanced budgets in a row. He said, Mr. Speaker, he said we're 11 and oh; we've balanced 11 in a row. Mr. Speaker, I'm shocked. I'm shocked. I can't imagine, I can't believe, I can't understand how members from that side can stand up and make that statement. Because they're the only ones in the province that maybe could believe it.

Saying that this government is 11 and oh in balanced budgets is sort of like saying, it's sort of like saying that the Saskatchewan Roughriders have won 11 straight Grey Cups. It's a great idea, it's a nice thought, it's a wonderful goal, but there isn't anybody in the province that believes that — especially Henry Burris now that he's decided to go to Calgary.

So nobody can honestly believe that this could be reality. In fact when you look at the government and they talk about using funds from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, they talk about using funds from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund in order to balance the budget.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask somebody from that side of the House to stand up and tell me, where is that account? What's the number of that account and what financial institution is it in? So that I could . . . some of us, or the taxpayers, or the people that have their money in the fiscal stabilization account could actually go down to the bank — maybe it's the credit union, Mr. Speaker. Could be. That's all right; that's good by me. Tell me which credit union it is and what's the bank account number so we can all go down and check that balance. Because in fact as a taxpayer of the province, we should have the right to know exactly how much money is in that particular fiscal stabilization account. And if the government, if one person, if just one person from that side could tell me that information, I'll stand corrected. But I doubt that there's one that could tell me that.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Athabasca who spoke just before me in his remarks yesterday and then he finished his remarks just today, talked about when he goes home he tells his people — his constituents — he tells them, he said, don't believe the Saskatchewan Party, don't. They're going to make promises and they can't keep them, and he says don't believe them because they can't deliver on their promises.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we just recently came out with 100 ideas for

the future of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, you know — and I'll be honest with you — that maybe, maybe if we were the government of the day, we couldn't do all those 100 right away. What it is, it's a plan; it's a big plan. It's a big picture plan for the future of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I want to get into exactly how we think, how we think we could pay and how the province could do a better job of managing so that those ideas or maybe others could, could actually be done in this province.

[11:15]

And I want to talk about something that's in my critic area that's pretty important to me. I want to talk about the waste and the mismanagement of taxpayers' dollars outside the province of Saskatchewan. That is not going to cover everything that we would want to do. It wouldn't cover everything that the government would like to do if they had a wish list, but let's just have a look at some of those.

Mr. Speaker, over the last few recent years this, this government has lost . . . I'm not talking about invested; I'm talking about lost. Those are funds that you threw away, that are gone. They no longer exist. We can't have them in the fiscal stabilization account because they don't exist. We spent them. They're gone, they're history — of about \$200 million, Mr. Speaker — \$200 million.

Let's just look at some of them. SaskTel's bad investments, \$113.8 million. SaskWater, \$35 million, and that's the SPUDCO obviously. SaskPower's investments — and they go back, it goes back a couple of years — it's \$17 million. SGI's [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] is 16.1, and others, which include the mega bingo, Pangaea — which is just a recent one, Mr. Speaker. And then we can also talk about the imaginary Belle Plaine ethanol deal that cost the taxpayers of the province \$750,000. That's about \$194.2 million. Mr. Speaker. That doesn't even count the 100, the roughly \$100 million that we blew on the ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan] fiasco. I didn't even count that. So if you counted some of that because not all of it is a total loss of course, but let's cover 50 million. That's about \$250 million, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, that goes a long way. You take that \$250 million and you manage it wisely and you spend it wisely and you invest it right here at home in the people, in the people of Saskatchewan, that is a tremendous step forward to paying for some of those kinds of things that we've talked about. In fact it would be a great step forward in doing some of the things that even the NDP government talks about.

They say, oh we haven't got any money for farm programs. We don't have any money. We don't have any extra money to settle with teachers and nurses in Saskatchewan. We don't have any money to help out other jurisdictions — municipal jurisdictions — so consequently the city of Saskatoon has just increased its tax rate because they had to. Other cities, other communities, other RMs [rural municipality] in the province will have to do the same thing because they'll be forced to. The government says, well, we don't have any more money for that. They say we don't have any more money for hospitals, a children's

hospital in Saskatoon, and they say we're tapped out. We're committed. Everything is earmarked and we just don't have any more money.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to you that if we had a government, if we had a government that was adept at all at management, there would be \$250 million — \$250 million, extra — to put into those kinds of programs. Would it fix all the programs in Saskatchewan? No, it wouldn't fix everything. Of course not. But \$250 million in my mind would be far better spent right here at home in Saskatchewan on the people of Saskatchewan rather than blowing them on haphazard deals like a Ag Dealer for \$8.9 million, like a Clickabid, Mr. Speaker, for \$1.9 million. \$1.9 million on Clickabid. That's a similar type of a company to eBay. Everybody knows what eBay is.

And it's interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that after the Government of Saskatchewan, the NDP, the socialist government, got a hold of Clickabid, there was not one sale made. Not one sale was made on Clickabid — not one — 1.9.

Mr. Speaker, and I've always said this and I had somebody else tell me this the other day, somebody in my constituency said that this government couldn't manage a good trip to the outhouse. And you know what? They're right, Mr. Speaker. They have the ability, the great ability, to put the kiss of death on probably some very good businesses.

And of course we talked about Navigata in the last couple days in question period. We talked about . . . In fact, just this week SaskTel bought a telephone book company in Alberta that I understand is doing pretty well. They have done well and they, at first blush, looked like they could be, should be a good investment for the people of Saskatchewan. But, Mr. Speaker, I would say to you that I would suggest and I would submit to you that with the government's long, inglorious track record in investments outside the province of Saskatchewan, I would expect to see that particular company go into financial difficulties very, very quickly.

Mr. Speaker, this week a news release was sent out from the NDP caucus office to Missinipi Broadcasting company, which does a lot of very good and excellent work in northern Saskatchewan. And in that particular news release they talked about the member for Carrot River Valley, which of course is me. And they wondered why I wouldn't vote in favour of the budget; why I would not vote in favour of the budget when there was 42 million extra dollars earmarked in this budget for firefighting aircraft by the province of Saskatchewan. Now, Mr. Speaker, the \$42 million wasn't necessarily the issue there as far as I was concerned. What was the issue, was how we would best look after firefighting in northern Saskatchewan in the forest areas.

And I know our critic for Environment has looked into that issue closely in the last while. And he's done some studying in Manitoba, for instance — which by the way is another NDP government — have done a pretty new way of approaching the firefighting equipment that they use in their province. They actually have on retainer, they have on retainer, private carriers. And when there is a fire — and of course there are years when there are more fires than others — they then pay that firefighting equipment on a case-by-case basis, which makes a

lot of sense to me, Mr. Speaker.

You take that \$42 million that the government earmarked for aircraft and use it, invest it in having these private carriers on retainer perhaps. Might make a lot of sense. But of course that's not the way that the socialist government thinks. They think that well, we have to own our own, and we're going to maintain. And \$42 million, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you is not going to buy many firefighting aircraft. And that's the bottom line. So if we're going to continue to have a firefighting fleet, it's going to cost far more than \$42 million.

Mr. Speaker, when I was on the phone doing an interview with Missinipi Broadcasting last evening, the reporter asked me, she said well, she said you're obviously not going to vote for the budget. And I said, no, I won't be voting for the budget. I said that there were just . . . it was a non-item. It was a non-event. There was nothing in the budget that was good.

I said in my years of being in politics, both federal and provincial, almost every budget, almost every budget that comes down the pike, there might be something that you could say, okay it's good; I like that. You might not vote for the budget, but you still could say, well that was a good step. It might have been, didn't go as far as we would have liked to have gone, but at least it was a step. And I told the reporter last night, I said that there was not one thing in this particular budget that I could say was a good, solid step for the future and for the second 100 years of Saskatchewan. And so how could one even consider voting for it?

She then asked me, she said, well what would your party do? What would your party do for people in northern Saskatchewan? If you were the government of the province, if the Saskatchewan Party was the government of the province, what would you do in your budget to make things better for the people of northern Saskatchewan?

Well I said to her, okay, I said, there's two or three items off the top of my head that work. Obviously the first one is tax breaks. And tax breaks for individuals, but also tax breaks for business. And that's an issue that works good for wherever you live in the province, but obviously that includes the people of northern Saskatchewan. We talked about lowering the education portion of taxes on land that's owned. Mr. Speaker, I talked about things like a children's hospital that's in our plan. And I think it's idea no. 9, if I'm . . .

An Hon. Member: — It's no. 9.

Mr. Kerpan: — Is it no. 9? My colleague from Saskatoon Silver Springs agrees that it's item no. 9 in those 100 ideas for the next 100 years of Saskatchewan.

And I said, it's a children's hospital. I said, you know what? I said, I know that where you live it's a long ways from Saskatoon. But I said, think about this and think about the good things it would do for the children of northern Saskatchewan, the children of everywhere in Saskatchewan — everywhere.

And she said, well how are you going to pay for that? And I said, I told her exactly what I just told this Chamber. I won't go into that again, about the \$250 million that we should have for

projects like the children's hospital. So I said to her, I said, that has to be a priority for everyone. That's good for your children. It's good for those people that live in La Ronge or Estevan. It doesn't really matter; it works for everybody.

Then I also said, there's lots of other items that, you know, when we talk about what we could do to help northern Saskatchewan. There's roads, of course.

There's power. We are short of electricity, hydroelectricity in the northern part of the province. That's a given. Everybody knows that. In fact some of the lumber mills and other projects up there have to run at night in the wintertime because the load is not nearly so great on the electrical system. We need more of those kinds of things.

One of the members in the House the other day talked about this new ethanol plant, new technology ethanol plant that the people of Nipawin are undertaking. It's a great idea, Mr. Speaker. It's a wonderful idea, not only for the people of Nipawin but for all of northern Saskatchewan, because we're going to be able to use forest waste to produce an energy that you can use to burn in your car or to produce electricity. Either way, it's a win-win for northern Saskatchewan and for the entire province.

So I said to her, I said, those are the kinds of things that we could and would do had we the opportunity to do that. But it doesn't start with, it doesn't start with saying, well we're going to make 100 promises to you because that's what those folks over there did. They promised the world to everybody and they can't produce. They couldn't produce. They never have. But the minister . . . the member for Athabasca, just in his remarks just before I got up, talked about . . . he said what he tells his people when he's at home. He said, look at the Sask Party and their long record; look at their long record of failure.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to turn the tables and I'd like to say to the people of Saskatchewan, look at the record of these people. That's the record that needs to be scrutinized. It's the government of the province, it's the government of the province that would say publicly, have the nerve, the audacity, to stand in their place and say, we're 11 and oh on balanced budgets. We're 11 and oh, 11 in a row. The fiscal stabilization plan, the account is in place. And that's, I don't know what . . . as I said, I don't know which financial institution. I'd like to know the account number. But they got the audacity, they've got more nerve than Dick Tracy, Mr. Speaker. It's amazing that the people — anybody — could stand in their place in any Legislative Assembly or place of government in this country — or in North America or in the free world — and make those kinds of statements. It's unbelievable.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to finish up by saying that this kind of budget and the budgets that have preceded this one really ought not to be scrutinized by the opposition and ought not to be scrutinized perhaps even by the media. What it ought to be scrutinized by are the people of this province. Because at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, the people of this province are the people that have ownership, and they are the real stakeholders in this province. They've been the stakeholders for 100 years. They were the people that built this province and they have the right to know where our money is spent, why it's spent. And

when we make mistakes and when we have those kinds of losses like I have just talked about here today, they have the right and they have the responsibility to know why and where and who's responsible. And, Mr. Speaker, to this point I have not heard those kinds of answers from the government opposite.

So, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion obviously . . . I mean I guess there's no guesswork around the fact that I will be voting against the budget when that comes to a vote before this Assembly — next week, I believe. I'm actually looking forward to voting against it. And I'm encouraging, encouraging that everyone out there who pays attention to politics in Saskatchewan and who pays taxes — which is everybody, of course — will have a good, hard look and scrutinize this government for what they didn't do, what they had the opportunity to do last week in the budget.

[11:30]

Mr. Speaker, they had — I stand corrected if I'm wrong — but somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$1 billion. Mr. Speaker, we had, we had one of the best revenue years that we've had in a long time, maybe ever, as far as additional revenue goes. It didn't come from all sectors of our province. We all know the agriculture sector is suffering, but the oil industry's done extremely well, the energy sector's done extremely well. And that's great; that's a wonderful thing.

We had \$1 billion that we could have said to the province, to our province, to the people, the 1 million people that live here, here's the plan for . . . We're going to put this province on the road to the second century. So here's the plan. We're not going to get them all done in the first year, we might not get them in five years, or even ten years, but here's the long-term plan.

We did that, Mr. Speaker, when we came out with our 100 ideas. We said we have some ideas. Will they all work? Mr. Speaker, I'd like to think they would, but maybe they won't. And could they all be afforded? Maybe they could, maybe they couldn't. But at least there's a plan there. There's a basis for hope, a basis to move on to the next 100 years.

The socialists on the other side had the opportunity to take that \$1 billion and to do something with it, to say here's our present, here's our birthday . . . our 100th birthday present to the province of Saskatchewan. Here's the future. I'm giving you the future. That's what they could have said. Mr. Speaker, they failed. They failed . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And my colleague, the critic for Finance, the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs, just said it right now — and I heard him say in his speech, in his response to the budget — and it's really the key words to this budget. He said never, never has a government done so little with so much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to enter into this budget debate. And I want to begin, Mr. Speaker, by responding to some of the remarks of the member opposite, the member for Carrot River

Valley. Let's review what he's just said, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, he's arguing that we ought to have taken the \$1 billion in one-time revenue that this government has received through hard negotiations with Ottawa, recouping clawbacks, Mr. Speaker, excess clawbacks on oil and gas revenue over the last 15 years. And he's arguing, Mr. Speaker, that we should spend all that money this year, Mr. Speaker. Well that's just part of the folly, Mr. Speaker, that the Conservative government entered into in the 1980s when I sat in this legislature — and that the Sask Party, the Conservative Sask Party, would do all over again if they ever got the reins of government, Mr. Speaker.

Well I tell you, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan want nothing to do with that kind of plan. And, Mr. Speaker, that is why this government has received four consecutive mandates from the people of Saskatchewan. The member opposite suggests, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Saskatchewan don't support our budgeting process. Well maybe he'd like to explain, Mr. Speaker, why it is that the people of Saskatchewan have re-elected this government on three consecutive occasions after our first election in 1991, Mr. Speaker.

I tell you why it is, Mr. Speaker: because they have confidence in our budget plan, and they reject the big spending plan of the members opposite, Mr. Speaker — the big spending plan that leads to big debt, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I just want to, I want to review the record of the Conservatives when they were in office with respect to debt, because I heard the member from Silver Springs take five minutes on the radio to spend \$1 billion. Well, Mr. Speaker he reminded me of the Finance minister for the Conservatives in 1986 in this House, Mr. Gary Lane, who ran up \$1 billion budget, Mr. Speaker, who ran up \$1 billion deficit — \$1 billion deficit — and hid it from the people of Saskatchewan until after the 1986 election, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that many members of the province listening today will recall that event, Mr. Speaker.

And then what did that Conservative Party go on to do, Mr. Speaker? They ran up a deficit every single year of more than \$1 billion, Mr. Speaker. In 1987, 1988, 1999 . . . by 1990, Mr. Speaker, it was exceeding a billion and a half dollars, Mr. Speaker. They left us, Mr. Speaker, \$14 billion in debt.

You know what, Mr. Speaker? The interest rates when they had finished running up that debt, the Conservative Party's debt, Mr. Speaker, the interest on it — I want to tell the member for Silver Springs — was \$890 million each and every year, Mr. Speaker. The kind of money, Mr. Speaker, that he'd dare to spend in five minutes on the radio.

Well I tell you, Mr. Speaker, we reject that kind of budgeting plan that the Conservative Party — now they call themselves the Saskatchewan Party, the Saskatchewan Conservative Party — we reject that kind of budgeting, Mr. Speaker. We'll have none of it, I tell you — none of it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — So, Mr. Speaker, in contrast to their

plan, Mr. Speaker, what does our plan call for? Well first of all, Mr. Speaker, the member for Silver Springs is yelling across the House, Mr. Speaker, but I tell you, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to hear his comments after I'm finished. I welcome him to get up, Mr. Speaker, I welcome him to get up at any time and illuminate us on counteracting what I'm saying now, Mr. Speaker.

In contrast, Mr. Speaker, our plan is to take that \$1 billion, Mr. Speaker, and we've taken 179 million of it, Mr. Speaker, and we've written down debt. So we've got \$179 million less of debt, Mr. Speaker, that we now have to pay interest on. And, Mr. Speaker, that's going to reduce our annual interest payments to an all-time low, Mr. Speaker. This year, Mr. Speaker, instead of spending \$890 million a year in interest on debt we're only going to need to spend \$588 million of interest on debt, Mr. Speaker. So we're finally getting the interest down, Mr. Speaker.

But you know what, Mr. Speaker? It's taken 14 years to get the interest payments down, Mr. Speaker, by almost \$300 million a year. It's taken 14 years of hard work, Mr. Speaker, to do that. We've still got a long way to go, Mr. Speaker, but our plan is to get rid of all this debt eventually, Mr. Speaker. That's our plan, Mr. Speaker. They'd have none of it of course, Mr. Speaker. All they want to do is rack it up, Mr. Speaker. We're intent on continuing to drive it down.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — And I tell you why we want to keep driving it down, Mr. Speaker, because we don't want to spend taxpayers' money paying interest on debt. We want to spend taxpayers', hard-earned taxpayers' money, investing in this province, Mr. Speaker. We want to spend hard-earned taxpayers' money in social programs, in health care, in education, in social housing, Mr. Speaker, in protecting our environment. That's where we want to spend that money, Mr. Speaker. We don't want to spend it on interest, Mr. Speaker.

And what does that require? What does that kind of an initiative require, Mr. Speaker? Well it requires good long-term planning. Not throwing all our money that we get in one year, Mr. Speaker, at a problem, Mr. Speaker, but saving some of it to invest in the future.

Well, Mr. Speaker, here's what we've done. Of the \$1 billion . . . And the member for Silver Spring continues to yell across the floor, Mr. Speaker. Well I want to say to him, we've taken 353 million of the \$1 billion and we've set it aside in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund for future spending over the next three or four years. So instead of spending it all in one year, Mr. Speaker, we're going to spend it over three or four . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. Members, I'm having more difficulty hearing this person who has the floor, so I'd ask people . . . Order. I'd ask people to please pay attention. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Greystone.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that makes good sense. So of the \$1 billion, I want to inform the member for Silver Springs, 353 million is for spending in the future on health, on education, on property tax relief, on keeping our commitments to the lowest utility bundle for residential rates in

all of Canada, Mr. Speaker. That's what some of the money is for. And 179 million of it is for debt reduction.

So in other words, Mr. Speaker, we've taken that \$1 billion and we set aside a third of it for future spending, and we have set aside about 18 per cent of it, Mr. Speaker, for debt reduction. And I think, Mr. Speaker, that is fiscally prudent, that is fiscally responsible, Mr. Speaker, and I'm proud to be part of a government that thinks long term instead of short term, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the other thing I heard the member for Carrot River Valley just say is that he doesn't like our Crown investment policy. And he read off, Mr. Speaker, some of the losses.

But I tell you what he didn't do, Mr. Speaker. He didn't acknowledge that this government has hundreds and hundreds of investments that make money, Mr. Speaker. He didn't acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, that every year now our Crown corporations return to the people of Saskatchewan a dividend of at least \$200 million a year — \$200 million a year, Mr. Speaker — that's now available to invest in health and in education and in social initiatives, Mr. Speaker. And I'm proud to be a part of a government that does that, Mr. Speaker. I'm very proud to be part of a government that does that.

So dividend payments to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, in the form of a utility rebate, dividend payments to the people of Saskatchewan in the form of dollars that are available to invest in health and education, that's the legacy of the Crown corporations under our government, Mr. Speaker, under our management.

Well what did we see when the Conservatives were in office, Mr. Speaker? I tell you what we saw. We saw massive losses in the Crowns under their management, Mr. Speaker.

I recall in 1989 when I sat in this Assembly and the Potash Corporation was sold . . . The member for Silver Springs just said, well what about potash. Let's talk about potash. Let's talk about it, since he raises it, Mr. Speaker. Yelling across the floor, he raises it. So, Mr. Speaker, I want to remind him the losses on the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan when they sold it off; \$441 million, that's what they lost, Mr. Speaker. They racked up, the Conservative Party, Mr. Speaker, and the member for Silver Springs, Mr. Speaker, of course was a Conservative.

I recall when he ran for Brian Mulroney, Mr. Speaker. I recall when he ran for Brian Mulroney, Mr. Speaker, and I just want to remind all members in this Assembly and all those listening, Mr. Speaker, that Brian Mulroney racked up the biggest deficits and the biggest debt for Canadians in all of history, Mr. Speaker. What did we have in the 1980s, Mr. Speaker? We had a federal government under Brian Mulroney that was racking up massive debt, which the member for Silver Spring wanted to be a member of, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, we had a provincial government at the same time that was massively racking up debt under Grant Devine, Mr. Speaker. And who was working for that government, Mr.

Speaker? Who was learning from Mr. Devine? Well it was the member, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, who was learning under Grant Devine, who's now sitting in the seat as Leader of the Opposition, the member for Swift Current, Mr. Speaker.

We're going to ensure with, Mr. Speaker, with the policies that they are promoting that they stay in opposition for a very long time in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to the question of the Crowns because it's fundamental, Mr. Speaker. We now, Mr. Speaker, this government has written down Crown debt by more than \$2 billion.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, we have taken the debts that they have racked up and after 14 years of hard work and careful management and making a profit on the vast bulk of our investments, Mr. Speaker, not all of them — we've lost on some of them — but we have made money on a lot of them, Mr. Speaker. And the net effect is very positive for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And therefore, Mr. Speaker, we have brought that \$2 billion of debt down again, Mr. Speaker, and I'm pleased to say that our Crowns are now in very good fiscal order, Mr. Speaker. And that, Mr. Speaker, provides a very solid basis for investment in the future. And they laugh, Mr. Speaker. They laugh, but I tell you, Mr. Speaker, this provides a very solid basis for future investment.

So what do we see in this budget, Mr. Speaker. We see our Crowns investing in wind power, Mr. Speaker. We're going to be building, we're going to be building wind turbines, Mr. Speaker, not only at Gull Lake, where we now have 22 megawatts of wind power, but we're going to be investing in wind power with 150 megawatts of wind power development, more than 100 turbines, Mr. Speaker, south of Swift Current.

[11:45]

Our Crowns in this budget, Mr. Speaker, are going to be investing in Internet for people in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And I'm proud to say, Mr. Speaker, that in this budget we are setting out on a path that will deliver high-speed Internet services to 86 per cent of our population, Mr. Speaker, and I'm pleased to see that. And that's the kind of thing we're able to do, Mr. Speaker, when we have good, solid fiscal management of our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, something that members opposite have demonstrated that when they're in government they're incapable of.

Well Mr. Speaker, I want to say that the performance of our Crowns is one of the reasons why we're have province today, Mr. Speaker. That's an important element in building a have province, Mr. Speaker. And you know when we were last a have province, Mr. Speaker, is in 1980 and 1981 and 1982 under Allan Blakeney's leadership, when the New Democratic Party governed the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — And now, Mr. Speaker, after 14 years of hard work, of paying down debt, building up our Crowns, investing strategically, being fiscally prudent, Mr. Speaker, we are a have province again, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on one other point that the member for Carrot River Valley made. And that is, Mr. Speaker, he said — and I think it's fair to say I'm coming very close to quoting him — he said, Mr. Speaker, that this budget was a non-event and that there was virtually nothing good in the budget, Mr. Speaker. And so, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell him about some of the good things in this budget, Mr. Speaker. I can't believe that the Conservative party opposite says that there's nothing good about the budget, Mr. Speaker. I just can't believe it, because that's not what my constituents are telling me. That's not what the people of Saskatchewan are telling this government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of people like this budget. They like the fact that it's balanced, Mr. Speaker. They like the fact that there's no tax increases, Mr. Speaker. They like the fact that health spending, Mr. Speaker, is up \$192 million and that we're investing another \$74 million in our education system in this province, Mr. Speaker. They like the fact, Mr. Speaker, that we have managed our debt to the point where instead of being 69 per cent of our gross domestic product of all spending in this province, Mr. Speaker . . . back in 1991 debt was 69 per cent of total economic spending in this province, Mr. Speaker. Now our debt is only 28 per cent of everything that is spent in this province on goods and services, Mr. Speaker. And that is progress, Mr. Speaker. That is progress. And there's a long way still to go, Mr. Speaker, but it's a very positive step.

Mr. Speaker, I think members opposite have complained, Mr. Speaker, about property taxes and municipal revenue sharing. But they never acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, that three years ago we increased revenue sharing by 10 million. Then, Mr. Speaker, two years ago we increased it by yet another 10 million, Mr. Speaker. Last year we increased it by 10 million more. In other words, \$30 million more than it was three years ago, Mr. Speaker. Do they ever acknowledge that on the Conservative side of the House? They never do, Mr. Speaker. So there's been a significant investment in additional revenue sharing.

Do they acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, that there's \$55 million for school property tax relief in this budget, Mr. Speaker? Well no, they don't. And that's another positive tax reduction initiative that this government has taken, Mr. Speaker, on top of the personal income tax reductions that we've seen over the last three years; on top, Mr. Speaker, of the utility rebate when every Saskatchewan resident in December received on their telephone bill, Mr. Speaker, \$137 in the form of a rebate. So those are some of the tax break initiatives that we've put in place, Mr. Speaker, and I'm proud of them.

Mr. Speaker, we have also made very positive social investments and I want to review some of the key ones. I am very pleased, Mr. Speaker, that we are building 600 new affordable housing units in the province of Saskatchewan this year, Mr. Speaker. And you know, Mr. Speaker, during the difficult years of the 1990s, Mr. Speaker, under the Liberal government of the day, we saw social housing in Canada virtually disappear. And this government in Saskatchewan and

the Quebec government were the only two governments in Canada that still invested in social housing, Mr. Speaker. And those investments continue today.

Finally the federal government is getting back into the social housing field, Mr. Speaker. But this government has made investments in social housing each and every year, Mr. Speaker. And over a four-year period our plan is to build 2,000 new social housing units in the province to add to the 35,000 social housing units that are already in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That's a very positive investment.

Mr. Speaker, we see in this budget some badly needed investment in supporting low-income families in our province, Mr. Speaker. In this budget, Mr. Speaker, there's an increase in social assistance rates, Mr. Speaker, for every single person on social assistance in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And for many families, for a family of five for instance, Mr. Speaker, this will mean a \$50 increase every month. There is also, Mr. Speaker, an important investment in housing for families on social assistance and for low-income working families, Mr. Speaker, who will receive, in this budget there'll be 10,000 families who'll receive on average an extra \$65 a month in a housing supplement, Mr. Speaker. And for those on social assistance, that will be in addition to the increase in the basic allowance, Mr. Speaker. So that's also very positive.

And there will be, Mr. Speaker, for those with disabilities who are supporting families, there'll be an extra housing supplement of up to \$151 a month, Mr. Speaker. And that's going to make a difference in the lives of another 3,000 people in the province of Saskatchewan.

In this budget, Mr. Speaker, there is more money to support daycare and child care. And there'll be an additional 250 child care spaces that'll be supported financially in the coming year, Mr. Speaker. I'm also hoping that we will see an increase in the child care subsidy as the year goes on, Mr. Speaker.

And there's an important investment in a lot of the programs that are being delivered in our communities and in our schools. Some of our school feeding programs are very important in low-income neighbourhoods, Mr. Speaker. They're going to be getting another \$500,000 invested in them in this budget, Mr. Speaker.

So the member for Carrot River Valley says there's nothing good about this budget, Mr. Speaker. These are just 15 or 20 examples of good things about this budget, Mr. Speaker. And I'm not done yet, Mr. Speaker, talking about the good things. Because, Mr. Speaker, there's dozens and dozens more positive things to talk about.

In this budget, Mr. Speaker, we're investing in public safety. My colleague, the Minister of Justice, Mr. Speaker, talked earlier in this House about the fact that we have 18 more additional positions for police officers in this budget, bringing our commitment, Mr. Speaker, that we would hit 200 police officers. Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the Assembly that we are now 85 per cent of the way there, Mr. Speaker.

Let me just wrap up, Mr. Speaker, by talking about some of our investments, some of our investments in health care, Mr.

Speaker, and in post-secondary education. Because in this budget, Mr. Speaker, there is extra money, \$4 million of additional spending, on bringing down our waiting lists for those waiting for elective surgery in our province, Mr. Speaker. There is almost \$5 million of additional money to make it possible to expand diagnostic testing for MRIs, for bone scan density, for CAT [computerized axial tomography] scans in our province, Mr. Speaker. There's an investment of \$3.9 million, Mr. Speaker, in this budget to expand the child vaccine program in this province, Mr. Speaker, with some very important additional vaccinations becoming available for children, Mr. Speaker.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, on the post-secondary education front there is money for 1,000 new training spaces, Mr. Speaker, in the province of Saskatchewan to bring our training spaces from 26,000 to 27,000. And finally, Mr. Speaker, a commitment that is very important to students in my constituency. Mr. Speaker, there is money here, Mr. Speaker, in the budget, \$6.7 million, Mr. Speaker, for an investment in operating grants in our universities that will be ongoing, that will be there not just this year but next year as well, Mr. Speaker.

And the result, Mr. Speaker, is that we're able to hold the line on tuition by way of a mutual agreement between this government, Mr. Speaker, and the University of Saskatchewan, and the University of Regina. They'll be no tuition increase for any of our university programs this year as a result of that investment, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, record investment, I might say, in terms of capital in our universities.

So, Mr. Speaker, the member for Carrot River Valley says there's nothing good about this budget. Mr. Speaker, I think that's just an example of how the Conservatives opposite, the Saskatchewan Party, have misrepresented this budget, Mr. Speaker.

I'm proud to stand up and support it, Mr. Speaker. I'll be voting for this budget. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this budget is about priorities, and in this budget agriculture was not a priority. Agriculture is responsible for the birth of this province. Agriculture was the reason this province got here. It's the reason that people came here, it's the reason that people stayed here. Agriculture is the reason we had 1 million people — and I say had 1 million people — in this province. Everything that happened in Saskatchewan is tied to agriculture.

We've all heard the stories about the pioneers, the early settlers, their hardships, the pains, the suffering they went through. Mr. Speaker, their heritage is owed. Now the NDP say we can't afford agriculture. Mr. Speaker, priorities, priorities.

There's a program in Manitoba called SEAT, means single engine air tankers. If used, the existing planes in Saskatchewan for the crop sprayers association would be doing our firefighting. The planes are there; the ability is there. But instead, what are we doing? We're putting in \$19 million to get

our own fleet of planes. Mr. Speaker, don't reinvent the wheel. There's a system there. NDP Manitoba is using it. Why can't Saskatchewan use the same program? Priorities, Mr. Speaker, priorities.

I've just found \$19 million now. It's a miracle. You can now fund CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization] and crop insurance.

Oh yes, crop insurance. One of my constituents came to me and said, using the crop insurance formula, your \$100,000 house, the premium for the year would be \$20,000. Now then we would hear an outcry. But this is what's being tagged on agriculture.

Agriculture is in its darkest, darkest hour. They are at the brink of disaster. They've had drought, frost, wet, and of course, NDP government, and BSE. Where are they to go? The situation is as bad as in the dirty thirties, but nobody will acknowledge it.

In the dirty thirties they could survive with bartering system. Today everything is cash. I have people call my office and say we don't have the money and they want to shut down our telephone, shut down our whatever, because they've got nothing to deal with any more.

One of my constituents called. His wife has been supporting the farm for years with an off-farm job. She's been doing very well and they've been able to just barely survive. The other day she came home and said the company is shutting the office. She doesn't have a job any more. He phoned and he said, I know you can't help, but what are we to do? What can we do to survive? He says, I'm afraid we'll have to have a sale.

We hear sad stories like this every day in our office and in the coffee shops in the rural areas of Saskatchewan. Even the federal government has enough vision to see that there's a problem. They have committed \$1 billion. And the NDP says, we can't afford to save the farm.

[12:00]

Mr. Speaker, heaven help us if we have a tsunami because the NDP couldn't afford it. Priorities, Mr. Speaker, priorities.

Mr. Speaker, we're on a roll; let's see what other money we can find. Oh, here's one. Navigata, total investments so far 75 million I'm told. Now we could handle a tsunami. At the present rate it's going to make SPUDCO look like a bag of potato chips. Seventy-five million, think of what we could do with that — cut taxes, both business and personal. The possibilities are endless.

Now we can pull out the Sask Party *100 Ideas* booklet. I could run through all 100, but the member from Canora-Pelly did a wonderful job of doing that. I'd just like to highlight a few of my favourite ones.

No. 90, review the student loan program. Mr. Speaker, I can talk personally on this because I've got three children in university all at once. We need a review on student loan.

No. 79, provincial tax credit to assist parents. I'm a firm

believer in daycare, but I'm also a more firmer believer in one of the parents staying home. Let's look at that kind of a program. The best education a child could get is with his parents.

No. 53, expand Saskatchewan's irrigation capacity and potential. I'm told our irrigation potential is at 3 per cent — 3 per cent of the water we could be using. We've got a long way to go.

No. 44, expand Saskatchewan's uranium industry. Mr. Speaker, we have the uranium. We mine the uranium, and we let the rest of world have the uranium. But we say it's too dirty, we can't touch it. That's a little hypocritical. If it's too dirty for the rest of the world, it shouldn't be too dirty for us.

No. 31, U of S [University of Saskatchewan] centre for health excellence. Mr. Speaker, my daughter's a doctor and she says the University of Saskatchewan is very much in danger of losing its medical accreditation that we may teach doctors here in Saskatchewan. Will we achieve it though? Should have been looked after years ago.

No. 14, crystal meth addiction treatment centres. A very, very serious issue. We're just, they say, getting into it now. It's going to get much worse. And are we ready for it? The Saskatchewan Party has pushed long and hard now trying to get the opposition to look at the crystal meth situation.

Fetal alcohol syndrome. Mr. Speaker, I've had contact with these children. They have a terrific amount to overcome. They need help. They need special education, special training.

No. 12, forgive students a portion of their debt load. Mr. Speaker, this is a program that's been introduced by the Sask Party and we want to initiate it, and we wouldn't mind if the other side copies it because the students sure need it.

No. 16, a percent of the liquor and gaming should be used on gambling addiction. Saskatchewan is taking in a large amount of money due to the gaming and we are not putting enough of it back into the addiction programs.

Increase the training seats in the medical profession. Right now we're training them for exports. Let's hope that we can just get this all going and bring in enough and train them so that the thing can grow in this province.

And we do need a children's hospital in Saskatoon. I think we're the only Western province that doesn't have one. It's time; it's long overdue.

And no. 8, one of my favourites, supporting the livestock industry. Mr. Speaker, I've been a livestock person all my life. This is a disaster on mega proportion we need to support. The money would have been much better spent there than on Navigata. Priorities, Mr. Speaker, priorities.

Another item I would also look at is the balanced budget. Mr. Speaker, balanced means balanced. I took bookkeeping in grade 9 and they always said, when your income is on the wrong side you're in trouble. And somehow they're using the new math — or is it creative math? — but they're saying with the income not

as big as the spending, they're still balanced. Somehow this doesn't fit, it doesn't balance. It must be ... [inaudible interjection] ... It's a new kind of math. Priorities, Mr. Speaker, priorities.

This budget has missed the priorities and therefore I cannot support this budget, but I will support the amendment.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I want to also get some remarks on the record regarding the budget, following on the great speech from the member from Saskatoon Greystone.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I am pleased to be able to put into the record is why it is important to support the measures in this budget, and to put into record some of the reasons that it's important that the members opposite never be allowed to get their hands on the purse strings of this province. I want to put on the record why the people who live in my constituency not support the agenda of the members opposite, and why the people of Saskatoon Fairview understand that Lorne Calvert's NDP government will keep their lives more stable ...

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Just to remind members that we're not to name members by their personal name but rather by the position or their constituency. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I was saying, and that is why the people of Saskatoon Fairview understand why this government will keep their lives more stable and safer than, Mr. Deputy Speaker, than the bizarre, what I would say ideological agenda of the Conservatives we have sitting in opposition.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to put on the record which of the measures in this budget really hit home with me, and which measures will hit home with the people of my constituency. I want to put on the record how this budget reflects the kinds of priorities my constituents have and the manner in which my constituents would appreciate those priorities being implemented.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatoon Fairview understand that we have to pay our bills. The people of Saskatoon Fairview understand that they need to keep their monthly payments less than their income. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatoon Fairview is a pay-as-you-go kind of place. When people get a swack of overtime they don't go out and get a loan to buy a new car, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They fix up their existing car. They put the money in the bank and they use it to fix up their houses over a period of time. They wait for sales at the home reno places and they buy when they can get the most bang for their buck. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they might even throw a few bucks in the bank in case they get laid off.

They don't go wild with spending; these are prudent people. These are people who understand what happens when

somebody goes wild with credit cards, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They look at the Sask Party. They look at the Sask Party's latest in a long line of platforms that'll pave the streets with gold. They see a document from a new leader, and the new document is a kinder and gentler set of policies. And then they remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the last bunch of promises that weren't so nice and so caring. And they see the same people sitting across the way and they wonder how this Sask Party leopard is trying to change its spots. They don't trust that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm going to quote a member from Cypress Hills who just a couple of weeks ago in this House, on March 18, said this — remember, this is what the member from Cypress Hills said:

... I'm going to pose, as part of our discussion today, I'm going to pose a rhetorical, biblical question. The question I would like to pose as a part of the ongoing discussion today, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, is: can a leopard change its spots? My contention, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, is that ... it cannot.

The people of Saskatoon Fairview look at how the Sask Party claims every new platform and new ideas document and plan to get rich is the one true answer. My constituents, Mr. Speaker, remember when the Sask Party told them the last get-rich-quick scheme for the province was the one true answer. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they don't trust that.

They look at the fact that the Sask Party used to be called the Conservative Party and now they have changed their name, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And they don't trust that. They look at the fact, they look at the fact that the Sask Party has no history, or at least one that they won't admit to. They know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Sask Party are Devine Conservatives, and, Mr. Speaker, my constituents remember how bad their lives were under that regime. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they don't trust that.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they understand at a gut level that you can't increase spending and reduce taxes without having a deficit. They know it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because any time they've tried it personally they're the ones that had to pay it off. They remember the Sask Party when it was the Conservative Party guise, and they remember that they are still paying off that bunch of bills. So when the Sask Party comes peddling their latest snake oil, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they don't trust that either, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

No matter how nice the Sask Party pretends to be, no matter which of their ideas in their new 100 points of light pamphlet might be palatable to people of Saskatoon Fairview, the people remember that the Sask Party used to have different policies.

And they watch their TVs, as they are no doubt watching today, and every time a Sask Party member gets up, they see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the intemperate and angry and ideological extremism, Mr. Deputy Speaker, even with the slick new leader and a new list of promises. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they don't trust that.

And many people in my constituency, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have been without a job. Many people have been laid off at one

time or another. If they haven't, perhaps they know a close friend who maybe has. The people in Saskatoon Fairview understand what it means to have a job and what it means to be without one. They understand that wishful thinking doesn't pay the bills and that sometimes pie-in-the-sky dream needs to be set aside for the real world, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the real world is where we live, breathe, work, and play.

This budget speaks to the realities of the lives of the people who live in Saskatoon Fairview. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this budget is the 12th consecutive balanced budget for Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Iwanchuk: — NDP balanced budgets, Mr. Deputy Speaker, after the people on the other side of the House almost bankrupt this province. This province was three days away from bankruptcy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Those people, when they called themselves Devine Conservatives, almost bankrupt the province.

And you know what they say about that. And I quote the member from Arm River-Watrous when he said, "You look at the Devine government. It did a lot of good things." Really, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was said, and not during any ancient history period either. He said it last year. If you want to check, look in *Hansard*, March 26, 2004. That member said:

You look at the Devine government. It did a lot of good things, but [Mr. Deputy Speaker] when you mention [the Devine government] ... debt always seems to be associated with the particular government.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder why its name is always associated with debt — the same reason that if members opposite get into government that their name will be associated, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with disaster. We've been down that road before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it isn't pretty. Those people over there will ruin our province if they ever achieve power.

[12:15]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, members opposite every day scream to spend more and tax less, and that way they prove they are incapable of managing our province. Each day that they scream to spend more and tax less, they show us all that they would be as bad or worse than their last incarnation of the Devine Conservatives. The people of Saskatoon Fairview are frightened of members opposite, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The people of the province of Saskatchewan are frightened of the members opposite. That's why they won't make them government.

Every year I look at the budget and I see the debt-interest item. This year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I called the Finance department and asked them how much interest we've paid on government debt since 1991. Not Crown debt, but government debt. And they told me over \$10 billion. And this year alone we spend \$588 million on interest and \$179 million on paying down principal. All that money could have been spent helping people, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The opposition has been harping on SPUDCO since 1996, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They spent that 10 million over and over and

over again in things they would have done different. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said before, \$10 billion of that group's debt could have been spent better — 179 plus 588 is \$767 million this year alone, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this year alone.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition tried to run for the Devine Conservative nomination in 1991. The whole province, the whole province thought Grant Devine's government was a disaster, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the member from Swift Current ran for a nomination. He volunteered, he volunteered, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to suit up for Grant Devine. He volunteered to defend the Devine government. He volunteered to defend the spending and the debt and the mismanagement and the waste, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've heard he now tries to pass this off as youthful exuberance. He said it was like his hairstyle, his hairstyle, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The party that tries to dredge the *Regina Manifesto* off the 1930s history pages of our website and pulls out CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] resolutions from 1946, then tries to pass their own Devine Conservative heritage off as a bad hairstyle and something everyone should just ignore — they want us to ignore the promised social services cuts, the education and health freezes, the promised wage rollbacks, the privatization, boot camps, and racial divisiveness, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the constituents in Saskatoon Fairview nor I ignore it, nor can the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want everyone to think about what we could have done with \$10 billion — \$10 billion, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to talk about what we actually have done to help people. And some of the things we have done that we would be really excited about as opposed to the members opposite.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our NDP government is providing education property relief of \$110 million over two years. We are funding 600 new affordable housing units committed for 2005, with a goal of 2,000 by 2008.

We are investing in Saskatchewan children by developing a new provincial plan for early learning and child care which builds, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on Child Care Saskatchewan and will create 250 spaces this year for a total of 1,200 new child care spaces by 2007.

There is funding for 18 new police officers for a total of 169 officers hired since 1999 and that will help keep our communities and families safe. We are providing an investment of 6 million for further resources for low-income families and individuals to improve their ability to get work and become independent. This includes an increase to the Saskatchewan assistance plan's adult basic allowance which benefits over 24,000 individuals on social assistance.

There is also funding to help low-income families to cope with higher rent levels and a boost to the child nutrition and development program. There's a 7.7 million increase support for low-income families in Saskatchewan through affordable and quality housing.

The Saskatchewan rental housing supplement includes new family housing supplement providing support for up to 10,000 low-income families and the new disability housing supplement providing up to \$151 per month for as many as 3,000 households for people with disabilities.

There are energy conservation grants, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for families acquiring homes through neighbourhood home ownership program.

We have purchased new MRI and CT scanners to increase MRI and other diagnostic testing volumes. We're expanding cancer treatment capacity. We're training and recruiting health professionals so that we have more doctors and nurses. We're funding new childhood vaccines, and there are funds for new alcohol and drug strategies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are building the future here for young people through a 6.8 per cent increase in education fund spending, which includes significant capital improvements, funding for more than 27,000 training spaces, and a 6.8 per cent increase for universities and federated and affiliated colleges. There is also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a 6.8 per cent increase for SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology]. And there's more, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's a \$6.5 million more in new money for youth initiatives, including an increase in training opportunities of 1,000 additional seats.

The budget has an estimated \$7.9 million for First Nations policing in 65 First Nation communities and to support community police management boards in 32 of those communities.

The budget provides 3.3 million in direct and indirect funding for initiatives, events, and organizations that provide sport, culture, and recreation opportunities to Aboriginal and northern children, youth, and adults. There is 2.2 million for the Indian and Métis educational development program and the Aboriginal elders and outreach program. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the budget includes 1.9 million for the Aboriginal participation initiative, increase of 468,000 to increase participation in sports and cultural activities.

The budget has 1.3 million in support of the Aboriginal family violence strategy and Aboriginal resource officers to assist with the provision of victim services.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the number of people on social assistance declined by 41 per cent since the introduction of the Building Independence program in 1998. Remember, social assistance caseload is now the lowest it has been since 1991. I'm also proud to say this budget includes an additional 6 million for our Building Independence strategy to help low-income families improve their ability to find work and achieve independence.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in closing, I would like to share some knowledge with members on the opposite side of the House.

An Hon. Member: — That won't take long.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — The member says it won't take long. Probably not. What everyone on this side of the House knows, and what many of the people of Saskatchewan know, is that that

group on the other side of the House are nothing but Progressive Conservative Party under the witness protection program. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the constituents of Saskatoon Fairview don't trust that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am proud of this budget, and I will be voting for this budget, and I thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Mr. Chisholm: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to the 2005-2006 budget; pleased for the opportunity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not pleased with this budget.

I would like to think that I am an optimist. I believe in change that will lead to progress. We all have dreams of where we as a province could go, what we could be. But we realize it is by small steps — one day, one week, one month, one year at a time — that we move towards these goals.

One of these steps that we take is the annual budget process. We would hope that this document that is presented to the province of Saskatchewan would reflect the plan and the means that will lead to this progress, take us to where we could be. Unfortunately this budget comes up short. The vision to lead us to where we could be is clouded at best. Madam Deputy Deputy Speaker, when expenditures exceed revenue, you do not have a balanced budget. So to tell the people that this is a balanced budget is simply untrue.

So that's where we start with this budget. The government says it's balanced, but it isn't. Our future as a province depends not on increasing the size of government but on increasing the size of the economy. This budget has it wrong. It increases the size of government and does not address the economic realities that must be addressed if this economy is to grow.

My constituency is an agricultural area where there is also considerable oil and gas activity. So how does this budget affect and treat these drivers of the economy?

Let's look firstly at agriculture. The past three years have been particularly hard on the agricultural sector: 2002-2003, we suffered drought; 2004, severe frost. In that same period of time we had the BSE situation and low commodity prices.

So what does this budget offer to agriculture? Firstly, firstly we note that this government does not provide for the full funding of the 2004 CAIS program. This program, CAIS, is far from perfect but it does provide a level of assurance of some relief in your revenue, in the event of a disaster. Unfortunately the level in Saskatchewan is a lot lower than the level in the rest of this country.

Our level is lower because this government refuses to live up to the terms of the agreement that it itself took such pride in participating in the drafting of. The amount of dollars required to fully fund the 2004 CAIS program could have been estimated and provided for in this budget, but they have not been.

From a practical point of view how does the failure to fully fund the CAIS program affect our producers? When the CAIS program was designed and sold to the producers, one of the main features of the program was that it would be bankable. The producer was to be assured that based on the coverages that were provided, that in the event of a decrease in income, be it as a result of a disaster or lower commodity prices, that the producer's income would be brought up to a predetermined level. This predetermined level was to be bankable, but bankable only if the program was fully funded.

So now in Saskatchewan our program is not bankable. Banks and credit unions are not prepared to lend money based on the program as a result of their experience from last year. As you will recall in the 2003, this government would not commit to fully funding the program until the end of 2004. And it was not until early 2005 that this government actually lived up to its promise for the 2003 program year. This performance, Madam Speaker, is simply not acceptable to the lending institutions, let alone the producers.

Where in other provinces the program is fully funded, a producer can arrange financing based on the program. Not in Saskatchewan. The banks and the credit unions have no faith regarding the program, no more faith regarding the program than the producers because of the uncertainty that this government has created and its failure to honour its agreements.

[12:30]

The agricultural sector has also been dealt a double whammy as a result of the changes in crop insurance. Rates are up, coverage levels are down. Mr. Speaker, both of the programs mentioned, the CAIS program and the crop insurance program, are based on historical averages to provide the levels of coverage. With relatively low commodity prices and yield and quality problems over the past three years, the coverage that is available to producers has been drastically reduced based on the design of the programs alone. Add to that increased premiums, decreased coverage, and inadequate and uncertain funding, then really what is this government doing to help our agricultural sector?

Last year with great fanfare it was announced that the education portion on property tax would be reduced or rebated at the rate of approximately 8 per cent. Well this year will be the test. This government's lack of any increased funding for municipal governments and school divisions will, it would appear, require property tax increases in excess of the rebated amount.

That is how this government addresses the inequities in the funding of education. The Boughen Commission made specific recommendations regarding these inequities. This government chose to pick and choose from these recommendations. They chose to increase the PST. They chose to force the amalgamation of school divisions. But the basic inequity is still very much in place. So that's how agriculture has fared in this budget.

As I mentioned, oil and gas production in my constituency is very prominent. So how did this budget address the needs of this industry? This was said to be a budget of no tax increases. Well the corporate capital tax, probably the most crippling impediment to long-term growth in this province, the tax the

corporations pay over and over even if they don't make any money, now is being assessed on resource trusts.

In my area, close to the Alberta border, where would you base your resource business? Where there is corporate capital tax or where there is not.

For the oil patch and business in general, this budget did not provide any needed tax relief. What we have instead is a study. The study is going to tell us the obvious. Firstly, that corporate capital tax should be phased out to zero as soon as possible. Secondly, that our corporate income tax rates need to be lowered as soon as possible. Thirdly, that the small business threshold should increase to \$400,000 as soon as possible. And fourthly, that the PST should be decreased as much and as soon as possible.

I am concerned that the recently announced incentives for the oil industry, balanced against the unfavourable tax regime, will result, in our area, in the majority of the activity continuing to be west of the fourth meridian.

I do commend the government on its inclusion in this budget of the addition to the Maidstone health care facility. We have a progressive community and will continue to contribute to this province. This project has been in the planning for over 10 years and the community has supported it and looks forward to the beginning of construction.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will not be supporting the motion to adopt this budget.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to speak in the budget debate this year.

Mr. Speaker, many of my colleagues have talked about the different budgetary figures but a few things that have to be pointed. It's a \$7.1 billion budget which is the highest in history for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker — 145 million came from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, again, money that is not in a bank account. It's borrowing against . . . it's borrowing to pay off a deficit. So in reality, Mr. Speaker, this is another deficit budget, a string of deficit budgets. And the accountants of Canada have said the Fiscal Stabilization Fund is really a false accounting procedure that should not be used by provinces, and most provinces are not using it. And again this NDP government is really hiding a \$145 million budgetary deficit this year.

And, Mr. Speaker, the whole concern that my constituents have is in very key fundamental areas, and I'd like to speak to some of the local issues that are problems province wide.

But take health care for instance, Mr. Speaker. We always hear many stories about people waiting for 6 months, 12 months, 18 months in waiting lists for some very serious problems — heart problems, knee and hip replacements. And it's very discouraging, Mr. Speaker, to have those people phone my constituency office with those problems.

But I'd just like to tell a little bit . . . a story about, in Biggar in particular, but in the Heartland Regional Health District. Heartland Regional Health District is short four doctors right now; in Biggar we're short one doctor. We had three doctors in Biggar. One has moved on to Saskatoon, so there's two doctors left.

And the human tragedy really and the fundamental problems in Biggar is that these two doctors are on call all the time. There's no chance of a day off. And just as an example, the other day one doctor tried to take some time off, but there was a patient that had to be delivered to Saskatoon by ambulance, so the doctor on call had to go with the patient. There was nobody left in Biggar, so that doctor was brought back to the office and had to work on a day that he thought he was going to have off.

The doctors are working very hard to bring in new doctors and I'm helping them in that endeavour. But it's a very serious concern. And really they don't see, the doctors in Biggar and Heartland don't see the government trying to help them recruit doctors. They have many plans, we've heard all their plans, but at the end of the day there's problems retaining doctors and recruiting new doctors. And it's a very disturbing situation in Biggar.

Also in Spiritwood. Spiritwood used to have four doctors and now they're down to one. And this is a very, very serious problem. It's not only a serious problem to the stress on the existing doctors and the patients of course, but it's a matter of economic development as well. How do you attract new businesses to communities if you're losing doctors? And of course if the doctors leave, you have the potential of losing the hospital. And so health care issues are an economic development issue. Businesses that come into a community like Biggar or Vanscoy or Wilkie are looking at infrastructure, roads, highways, but also health care and schools. And it is a very disturbing situation that these communities are having.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have to make a few comments about agriculture. Naturally the constituency of Biggar is basically a rural agriculture constituency. And the NDP not fully funding CAIS through '04 is really a problem. I know last year the government held out and held out and tried to negotiate something with the federal government to the last minute and in the end fully funded CAIS for '03.

But the producers of my constituency in Saskatchewan are really at the end of their rope. You know, I mean the borders are still closed, the commodity prices are very low, crop insurance rates have gone up, coverage has gone down, no relief on property tax. There's a limit to how long the producers and the family farms in my constituency of Biggar and the people of Saskatchewan can go here.

And having the government say they're not going to fully fund the CAIS again in '04 is very disturbing. These are things that are taken to the bank. People are looking for operating loans to seed their land to get through another spring and a summer without the border opening. So these are very, very personal issues that people have to deal with because of the lack of the NDP government's initiative in these areas. And this is . . . considering that the NDP government also has record resources, record revenue from resources as well, and a record budget —

7.1 billion. And to be told that they're not going to be fully funded for CAIS, the producers are very upset about this.

And of course we just heard another announcement from the federal government concerning \$1 billion across Canada, and again the provincial NDP government is not fully funding their share of that program. And this is causing a lot of concern in the banking industry that have many clients that are farmers.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, that's not the only issue. Right now the government is negotiating contracts with a number of unions. And the teachers' union is also ... contract is up for negotiation.

And I'd just like to read into a record a letter from Clare Friesen, who is a teacher in St. Gabriel School in Biggar, the head of the local union. And I'd like to put it on record. The letter is made out to myself. It goes on:

We need your help and the help of everyone in your party who is willing to speak on behalf of the teachers and the students of this province. The party in power is not listening and we are reaching a point of crisis that is frightening. Not only have negotiations broke down between the teacher and the government bargaining team, but also conciliation has proven to be a fruitless endeavour in spite of the conciliator's report admonishing the government for not bringing anything to the table with which to bargain in good faith.

We now have lost faith. Since the we's refer to over 12,000 teachers, that's a lot of lost faith. We need your help in restoring positive negotiations through your voice and the voice of the Saskatchewan Party. In regard to the need for greater consideration of our contract proposals, it is important to recognize the vast number of personal monetary and time commitments that the government has imposed on teachers through the last major initiatives. As school divisions are being forced to amalgamate, teachers are left holding a significant part of the responsibility for ironing out issues relevant to contracts, supervision, teaching assignments, compatible policies, and transfers, all on their own time and personal payment of travel costs. As school divisions are asked to work with School^{PLUS} the details of how other organizations will impact the school environment is once again left to the teacher on a day-to-day basis of working within the school.

All of these extra responsibilities require extra personal time, personal expense, and personal stress, all without compensation. It seems that the government has dumped the responsibility and now, when it's possible to settle a contract in a way that can give some value and worth to the teachers, the government has refused to entertain any creative ways of settling the provincial contract.

I am greatly concerned about the possible near-future consequences if the government does not significantly change their attitude and offers at the negotiating table, and request once again your assistance.

Thank you in advance for your efforts on our behalf and we appreciate feedback and any progress.

Sincerely, Clare Friesen [from] St. Gabriel School [in] Biggar.

Well I met with those teachers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and they are very concerned as you hear from the letter that I have just put on the record. They have real, serious concerns and these are not concerns that just developed in the last year. These are concerns that have been built up for many, many years. And quite frankly, the teachers are once again very upset for the way they've been treated by the government and the lack of negotiation in their contracts, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And for the lack of concern for agriculture from this NDP government, the lack of concern for property tax relief from this NDP government, the way the NDP government is treating the teachers of this province, Mr. Speaker, there is no way that I can support this budget.

And, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment that was brought down by the Saskatchewan Party when we vote on it. So, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved that debate be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried. This House stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday. Have a pleasant weekend.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:45.]

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