



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

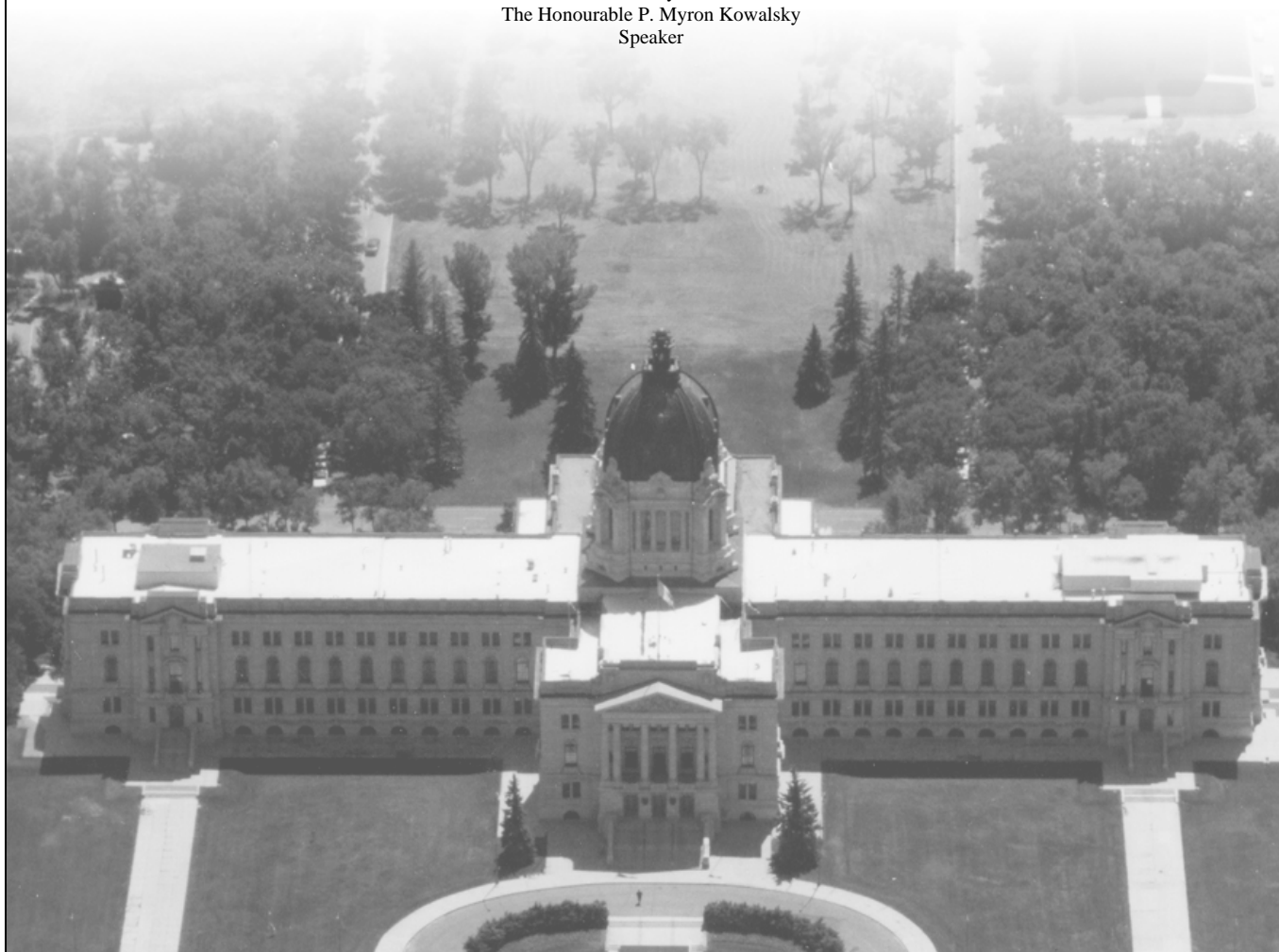
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(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

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
Addley, Hon. Graham	NDP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Hon. Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Bakken Lackey, 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, Hon. 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 resumed at 19:00.]

### EVENING SITTING

**The Speaker:** — Order please. It now being the hour of 7 p.m., we will proceed to resumption of the debate on the Speech from the Throne and the proposed amendment. The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Lakeview, the Minister of Health.

### SPECIAL ORDER

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

### ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Ms. Junor, seconded by Mr. Harper, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Wall.]

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good evening to all the prime-time viewers across Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Just before we adjourned previously, I had been going through a number of different projects across the province that have been part of the Throne Speech, and I included Moosomin and Preeceville and Maidstone, Swift Current, Outlook, Herbert, Humboldt, Ile-a-la-Crosse where we're building a school and a hospital together. And I'm going to continue on that list for a short while.

The next project we have is at the Regina General Hospital. We're doing the mother baby wing, a new obstetrics ward for serving the needs of southern Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, this is a project where once again the community has come together with the health authority, and they have got very good plans for what will be a state-of-the-art facility, and they're proceeding with that very quickly.

I'm also pleased to report that we've almost finished the commissioning of the new long-term care facility in Yorkton, and we look forward to having an official opening there. Just a few weeks ago I was in Assiniboia where we had the opening of the new wing, long-term care wing on that Assiniboia Union facility.

And while I'm mentioning Assiniboia, I would say that everybody should go to Assiniboia to see the art gallery. It's clearly one of the best art galleries in Saskatchewan — located in Assiniboia, Saskatchewan.

In Saskatoon, we're pleased to be able to be working on a number of projects, some at the Royal University Hospital. We're also moving forward with the Hantelman mental health unit, the Oliver Lodge renovation and new facility. And, Mr. Speaker, all of these take involvement of the community as well as strong commitments from the regional health authority and from the provincial government.

In Regina, I'm pleased to have announced the site, and they're

moving ahead with the new provincial lab which will be located out in the Research Park at the university. This will clearly complement the kinds of work that's being done out there now and will add a great facility for the whole province.

One of the exciting options we have in Saskatchewan is our developing of the full complement of pediatric care across the province. And we're pleased to be announcing that we'll develop a children's hospital within a hospital in Saskatoon which will provide a source of expertise for the whole province. And this is one that needs to be planned carefully. And people are working on that right now to make sure that it complements the care that we're providing right across the province.

I'd also like to mention a few programs that are part of announcements in this year and which fit in with this theme of developing a health system in Saskatchewan. We recently brought in a pharmaceutical information program which will improve patient safety. It responds to the concern about people not having full access to all of their medication records, especially their pharmacists and their doctors. And this is a service that can save lives.

This comes out of a public inquiry into a death of one of the citizens of Saskatoon, and I think it's important that we respond by providing this good service. We look forward to next year when the pharmaceutical information program will have in it the ability for electronic ordering of medications.

Also I'd like to remind everybody that the HealthLine in Saskatchewan continues to provide good service right across the province. We've been able to add into that addictions service, and this continues to be a very strong part of our primary health care system.

One interesting sideline that came forward in the centennial year, this year, is our genealogy program through vital statistics. What this means is that we now have information around births of Saskatchewan citizens over 100 years ago available on the Internet, and this is a service that we'll continue to update each year by adding the births from 100 years before.

We're also working at some point to get the marriages and deaths onto that system. We've already received comments from around the world about how important it is for people to get access to this kind of information. And it's a long, slow process to get there, but we're very pleased that we were able to initiate that during the centennial year.

Now there are many, many different, positive things that I can talk about in our Saskatchewan health care system, but I think I want to just tell one little story which highlights the valuable workers that are part of our whole system.

This past summer as many of you know, we had the Canada Games, Jeux du Canada Games in Regina. And one of the sort of groups of unsung heroes around these games were the health care workers from Regina and in fact from southern Saskatchewan — I venture to guess from all over Saskatchewan — who volunteered to be part of the health team or the medical nursing team for the games.

And one of the things that they did was set up effectively an emergency room at the university in the Kinesiology Building. And this ended up providing sort of first-line service for many, many of the athletes and spectators and others that were at the games, which provided a huge service through to the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Authority in that these people weren't all going down to the emergency rooms at the two hospitals in Regina.

But the interesting part of this, we had so many volunteers going to work in the volunteer emergency room that they ended up having a hard time sometimes staffing the emergency rooms in the hospitals. But it shows the willingness of our Saskatchewan people to be very much involved in hosting a national event and proud of the kind of services they can provide.

I think that that says a lot about the 35,000-plus people who work in the health care system in Saskatchewan. They have concerns about their neighbours, their friends, others that they take care of. And we can be very proud of the kind of work that they do.

When I started out this brief speech a little while ago I talked about how important it is to think about the hopes and the dreams that we have for our province and for the people that are here. And I emphasized the fact that there are many times that we have artists and poets and others who talk about our province and tell some of the stories.

And I just want to close off with a few words from Glen Sorestad — who was our poet laureate up until last year — in his recent book which came out last month called *Blood and Bone, Ice and Stone*. And he writes a poem about dreaming his grandfather's dreams. And what he did was, he went back over to the western coast of Norway, where I also have some roots, and he went to the house that he didn't really know existed, but it was the house where his grandfather had grown up. And I'll just read the last paragraph of this poem:

In the house of his childhood  
I dream my grandfather's dreams  
and I am a child as well.  
An ocean removed from home  
in a country I had never seen,  
wrapped in the comforter  
of my history, I dream  
my grandfather's dreams.

I think that to dream our grandfathers' dreams but also our grandchildren's dreams is very much a theme that this Throne Speech speaks to and, Mr. Speaker, I'll be very proud to vote for the Throne Speech and against the amendment. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to stand in this Assembly representing the Moosomin constituency and make a few comments regarding the recent Throne Speech brought forward by this NDP [New Democratic Party] government.

Let me begin tonight first of all by recognizing the veterans of our community. This past weekend I as well as many of my colleagues in this Assembly had the privilege of attending Remembrance Day services across the constituency and across the province. And we all know that 2005 has been declared the Year of the Veteran. 2005 as well is the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II both in Europe and in the Pacific.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I was attending Remembrance Day services . . . And we all know what it's like. When your constituency happens to have a number of communities, and they all have their service at 11 o'clock, it's very difficult to make the rounds to all of the services. So you try and choose and rotate through the constituency so everyone has an opportunity to have a representative — their representative — at Remembrance Day services.

I had the privilege this year of being in Montmartre and attending the service in Montmartre. And one of the things that the Montmartre Legion and veterans have done in their service is they've included a lot of young people who have come, and they've asked them to come and share a poem on remembrance or an essay. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe that really adds to that service, and it actually makes it more meaningful to the young people. At the Montmartre Remembrance Day service as well, we had a gentleman from Carry the Kettle First Nation come and speak on behalf of the First Nations veterans, which I thought was very meaningful.

Mr. Speaker, I say that in view of the fact that while we remember those who, so young in life, obeyed and followed the call of duty and went to war and didn't return — we pause to remember — Mr. Speaker, we also pause to remember those who did come back but are no longer with us because age has taken them. But as well this year we certainly want to be mindful of the fact that it's important we take a moment to also remember those who are still amongst us. As they are aging just as quickly as we all are, but they're even closer than maybe many of us are yet, we want to take a moment to say thank you and let them know how much we appreciate the struggle they've had.

And many of these men and women that . . . and men especially that came back from the war, Mr. Speaker. And as I was chatting with a number of people at the services that I had the privilege of attending and the dinner in the evening, many of these men came back with a lot of memories and a lot of things that they kept cooped up inside of them. They didn't want to talk about the horrors that they faced. They didn't really want to talk about it. They wanted to leave that in the past. And as I was chatting with some of the veterans, they said unfortunately if they would have maybe come forward and had someone they could have conferred in and just spilled some of the things they saw and spoke about then, they would have had a release much sooner.

And so it's important, Mr. Speaker, that we do take the time to remember. And I would like to — just as I've said in the services and in the dinners I've attended — I've asked people to continue to work to uphold this day of remembrance because our veterans are leaving us, and we can't rely on the veterans forever. And it's important that even . . . I believe the Legion has opened its doors now to anyone who would like to become

a Legion member so that we have this body of individuals that will continue to uphold the day of remembrance.

Mr. Speaker, there was one sad note that I was aware of this year and I know it's just the last little while that we've become aware of. And when we talk about our First Nations veterans, a First Nations veteran made a comment when someone asked him why he went to war, and he said, "I was just another soldier, fighting for [my] country." The sad reality is, Mr. Speaker, and we all acknowledge this, for years — actually for decades — we did not give our First Nations veterans the same privileges that all the rest of the veterans enjoyed. And I'm pleased to see that we've finally acknowledged that an error was made and we're addressing that error.

[19:15]

Mr. Speaker, as well this year has been the centennial year for Saskatchewan. And it's been a busy summer and I'm sure that, especially MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] in rural Saskatchewan, when you have so many communities to represent . . . And as I've indicated to centennial committees who are calling my office and asking if I could be at their parade or asking if I could be at some function in their centennial celebration, unfortunately I couldn't attend all the parades. There were weekends when there were three and four celebrations all at the same time. So you try to pick something, an event that you could at least be at in each community to let them know that you were trying, joining with them and doing the best you can to represent them.

But I must say, Mr. Speaker, it didn't matter which community — whether it was Wolseley or Whitewood or my home community of Langbank or the little community of Kennedy or Moosomin — whichever community, every community put on a celebration. This was the centennial. They were proud to be celebrating the centennial celebration. And some communities put on a centennial celebration, but next year, Mr. Speaker, the community of Windthorst for example, it's going to be their 100th year. They're going to put more time and effort in and feeling that because so many other communities were celebrating at the same time, they're going to carry it over into next year and really put on a celebration, which gives me more of an opportunity to give them a little more of my time.

And I would have to say, Mr. Speaker, that many of the committees and many of the people I talked to were so proud of the centennial celebrations they had put on. And you know what they said to me? They said, you know, we did this despite government. When we applied for some centennial money we were turned down. There was very few rural communities got a lot from this government. But you know people did it and they didn't lack anything because, Mr. Speaker, rural communities, rural communities know how to get people together and how to raise the funds needed in their celebrations.

And I think there isn't a community that at the end of the day are not going to be able to put money towards some group or organization — or in many cases putting towards their rinks so that they can continue to function this year — because they were able to draw so many former residents back to the area to help them celebrate.

And I guess that was the other comment that was made, how many people came home to celebrate, to join with these communities. In fact some communities swelled by one and two and three times. You can imagine some of these smaller communities of 100 or so people, and now all of a sudden they got 5 and 600 guests. The larger communities might have 1,500 people coming home to celebrate and their comment was, and then we had to watch as our children left, as they took our grandchildren out of this province, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are resilient. The people of Saskatchewan know how to celebrate. The people of Saskatchewan know how to bring people back and we want to, Mr. Speaker. At the end of the day most people want to have their grandkids and their children coming back to live in this province.

And that brings me to the Throne Speech that was just presented by this NDP government. It began, Mr. Speaker, by going back to 1906 and the first Throne Speech delivered by the Hon. A.E. Forget, and he declared that, in 1906:

. . . an era of general prosperity has been entered upon, the limits of which can hardly be estimated.

Mr. Speaker, I think we would all have to admit that we still have not achieved those limits. The general prosperity that Mr. Forget was talking about in his vision, I do not believe as a province we've really achieved those goals and that prosperity. The government also continued on by talking about:

Our ancestors were a people of vision, courage and optimism. They dreamed of a prosperous land and a progressive society in a province richly blessed by nature's bounty.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think we will all agree this province has some of the richest resources that nature could afford us. We have oil. Mind you, some of it's heavy oil and it takes a little more to refine. We have potash. We have potash all over this province that is generating tremendous wealth to the people of Saskatchewan. And now we're getting into mining of other commodities like diamonds. And yes, Mr. Speaker, we have uranium. We have some of the richest resources to go along with the rich views and the vision that people of Saskatchewan carry.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that this government talked about the people of Saskatchewan having and they said, the only have province in Canada that does not charge its citizens a health care premium. Well maybe that's something to brag about.

But, you know, it's interesting, Mr. Speaker. Most recently a couple left the city of Regina to move to Okotoks, Alberta. The husband worked for one of the Crown corporations. His wife was a nurse in this city. And when his relatives asked him why they're leaving Regina — this place that you've lived in for so long that actually helped pay your wages for so many years; why are you going to Alberta? — and, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't the fact that he had to pay a health care premium. He went to Alberta, Mr. Speaker, because he was going to have more in his pocket at the end of the day even paying the health care

premium that the people in Saskatchewan . . . if he'd have stayed in Saskatchewan. And that says a lot, Mr. Speaker.

So yes, we don't have a health care premium. But if you and I looked at the amount of money we pay in provincial sales tax, at the end of the year we could pay many health care premiums, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm not exactly sure the government can really brag about their Throne Speech. Their Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, reminds me of their recent Action Plan for the Economy, an action plan that contained 81 recommendations and none of them has been noted or action statements. If this is the guiding document of the NDP government, then we should all be afraid. It's not specific enough to grow our economy, enhance social programs, or keep youth in this province. Once again, Mr. Speaker — and I'm talking about the action plan — we see a tired, out-of-date NDP government lumbering along.

This is not what Saskatchewan needs now. With our natural resources prices skyrocketing, we need a plan which allows our grandchildren to benefit from this boom.

Mr. Speaker, and what did the pundits say of that plan at that time? This is about a month and a half ago when the government released its plan. They said, number one, the comment was made, it's not worth the paper it's written on.

Second, another comment, "Evidently numbers just aren't all that important to the NDP government anymore. Neither are goals."

And a third comment that I will quote: "Let's see action, not hear intentions . . . Right now most of the 81 points are pretty limp."

And, Mr. Speaker, as you look at this Throne Speech, a lot of those comments could apply. The government talked about how it was bragging about its new vision as we moved into the new millennium. And yet, Mr. Speaker, even the columnists are saying that this so-called vision is lacking. One of the headlines is, "Big reality gaps in throne speech." And I quote:

The latest throne speech from the Calvert administration is an apt reflection of a government searching for direction.

On the one hand, it's like the NDP's Greatest Hits, given that it revisits a number of past promises that the government has yet to fulfil.

On the other [hand], the speech is chockablock with long-range schemes that will come to fruition so far in the future they amount to little more than idle speculation.

And then, Mr. Speaker, the editorial goes on to read:

. . . to read the government's action plan is to be reminded that it can't take care of immediate business nearly as well as it can package the dreams of tomorrow.

It can't take care of the immediate business in this province as well as it can package the dreams of tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, it's fine to look into the future. It's fine to look down the road 15 or 20 years, like the government's Action Plan for the Economy, or their agroforestry plan. And I guess we'll have to wait and see exactly where the government intends to go with that. Because, Mr. Speaker, it's fine to talk about growing trees and harvesting those trees but it takes a number of years to get there. So what does the farming community do in the meantime until they wait to harvest that crop of trees?

I quote again:

Just two months from the end of the year, the government has announced that it will indeed cover its 2005 obligations under the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization plan.

And, Mr. Speaker, as this opposition has been saying, so is the editorial comment. This has become standard practice since the plan was introduced several years ago. Mr. Speaker, farmers in this province are pleased to see the government finally step up to the plate.

But our question is, why did the government not step up to the plate at the beginning of the year so the farm communities — and not just farm families, Mr. Speaker, but the business community and the lending institutions — in this province would know where they stood if you happened to quality for CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization]? Rather than 60 per cent up top, you'd have had the 100 per cent and now we do the top-up. And we've seen that for too long in the past where the government has waited until the ninth or the eleventh hour to make their announcement.

And we see the same approach as evidenced with regard to an academic health sciences centre for the University of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, is this the first time it was talked about? Mr. Speaker, our party has talked about a health science centre. And this editorial said this was first promised before the last provincial election but only now is the government promising to find the money for it.

Likewise, it first promised to introduce midwifery to Saskatchewan at least 10 years ago, during Louise Simard's tenure as Health minister but has never gotten around to it. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I believe it was 1999 they passed legislation regarding midwifery but to my knowledge it's never been declared. So we've been working at it for some 10 years; the legislation's in place. And now the government is almost as if they're saying, we've come out with a new idea on midwifery in the province of Saskatchewan.

Well we've seen, as the editorialists have seen throughout this province, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are beginning to see as well, that this government is worn out. It is lacking any new initiative and new ideas. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we talk about CAIS and we talk about agriculture, we also know, Mr. Speaker, this year was a very difficult year for agriculture producers in Saskatchewan.

It began in the spring, Mr. Speaker. There was a short period of just ideal weather to plant and then we got into a wet period. And a lot of farmers, there were . . . In some areas where

farmers didn't get to seed all of the acres they planted. And then we had a cool, somewhat damp area through the summer — but a fairly cool summer — and the crops didn't grow and mature properly. And then we got into a late fall. And we have many areas in this province where some farmers have a lot of acres that they haven't harvested. We have a lot of crop that's sitting on the ground that's too tough and that has to be dried down. In fact I would venture to say some of these producers by the time they pay the bill to dry the grain down, at the current commodity prices are not going to be able to pay those bills.

And my colleague from the South, Cypress Hills, mentioned the other day he had a gentleman call him who had sent some grain out, I believe it was three B-trains of barley was sent out and the trucker came back to him and told him he still owed him some money. That's what the return was on that B-train of barley. He didn't get enough for it to cover the expenses, the handling, and what have you. He still owed the trucker a bit more on his trucking. Now that's the initial payment. And hopefully, Mr. Speaker, there will be some increases in those payments that he'll finally see. Maybe he may be able to pay the rest of the expenses, but that didn't cover the expenses.

So, Mr. Speaker, you can see the challenges that farm producers are facing and why everyone was pleased to see that the government actually did take some time to put their money into the CAIS program.

However I would say, Mr. Speaker, I'm not exactly sure that the government's going to really have to worry a lot right now because one of the problems . . . And my colleague from Cut Knife-Lloyd mentioned this I believe it was earlier on today, but the fact that the CAIS program works on margins. And if you continue to find yourself in a position where you're in a claim position, your margin, your average is lowering. So as that average goes down, you get to the point where you don't qualify any more. So the government may, at the end of the day, they've made this commitment to CAIS but it might not cost them what they thought it might have because for a lot of farmers that average is disappearing on them.

Mr. Speaker, there's a few comments that were made in the past that I'd like to speak about for a moment here. And I quote from June 7, 1988. And the speaker at the time says:

Mr. Speaker, this government has set its priorities, and they are obvious to all the people in Saskatchewan. They have priorities that include money for office space, not used. They have money for lots of travel. They have money for conferences that go on on yachts. They have money for patronage. They have money to promote free trade. They have money for their whole family of [Crown corporations] . . . They've got money for a billion dollar project in the Premier's own constituency, but you see, we don't have money, they say, for a mother on welfare and her year and a half old child for a bus pass; we don't have money for a family who would like to see their young people stay at home. We don't have money, they say, even for a woman who so desperately needs care and her family must watch a loved one suffer.

[19:30]

Mr. Speaker, the individual who made that comment or that gave that quote sits in the Premier's chair today. And, Mr. Speaker, have waiting lines gone down at food banks, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker, you can just go down to the food bank here in Regina, and you find time and time again there's not enough food on the shelves here in Regina to meet the needs of the people who are looking for help.

And this NDP government's been here for 14 years. They told us . . . Romanow told us a number of years ago he's going to do away with food banks. Well guess what, Mr. Speaker. The food banks have actually increased. In fact I've got a couple in my constituency now, Mr. Speaker, people who felt it was imperative that they have a food bank because there's a need out there. And that's with an NDP government at power, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we all know how this Premier spoke against the Rafferty-Alameda-Shand project. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, I wonder how much electricity today this government is glad that Shand is on stream and supplying power to the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, and then the Premier — I believe he might have been the minister . . . no, he was the critic for Social Services at the time — but this Premier said at that time as well that a family could not get a pass to use on a . . . use a bus pass. And yes, Mr. Speaker, I would say the only passes that young people are looking for today in this province are a pass that will allow them to go directly past go as they move through Saskatchewan to Alberta, the land of real opportunity and meaningful employment.

Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — I would ask members to just be patient and to wait their turn. And each member, I'm sure, if the time is shared properly, will have the opportunity to speak. Right now the floor goes with the member for Moosomin.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, allow me to enter another quote, and this one I'm sure will also raise the ire of the members opposite because it was also spoken by the current Premier when he was sitting on the opposition benches. He said:

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to the young people of our province. It's been said so often, but it remains true, that they are our future of our province. [Seems to me we heard a little bit about that the other day.] And when we're talking about family life in our province, we are talking about young people, and they are leaving this province in record numbers, Mr. Speaker. They're leaving this province because they see little hope in staying in Saskatchewan. They are fleeing Saskatchewan looking for education and looking for employment elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, that was this current Premier in June 7, 1988, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, what do we see today? Young people in the province of Saskatchewan are still looking elsewhere for employment opportunities because once they've completed their education those opportunities, those doors of opportunity are not here, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, again coming back to the agricultural issue, another quote I've come across.

Mr. Speaker, maybe these members opposite have forgotten, or perhaps they never knew, perhaps they never knew what it's like to farm with old machinery, and just to get from repair to repair to repair [and I'm hearing a lot of that today]. Perhaps they've forgotten, perhaps they've never known what it's like to have to find work off farm, any kind of work, just to hold the farm together.

And the speaker, the current Premier back in 1988 also said:

We to this day do not have a long-term income stability program for the family farms. I mean, it is a shame that here we are, again a month from seeding, and we're still in the process of negotiating some short-term ad hoc program. As desperately as that is needed [today], Mr. Deputy Speaker, as desperately as that program is needed in Saskatchewan today, what we need sincerely to address the problems are long-term, stable programs.

That was this current Premier. Long-term, stable programs. And guess what, Mr. Speaker? The former government, the former federal government came up with a program called GRIP [gross revenue insurance program]. And everyone at the day said GRIP needed some fine tuning, no doubt about it. But guess what? The NDP got elected in 1991, and Mr. Romanow and his NDP government did away with GRIP. And yet the very man who sits in the Premier's chair was calling for a long-time program of stability in agriculture.

And I would suggest to you, and many people across rural Saskatchewan are saying today, had GRIP remained in place, had it been retuned and refined, Mr. Speaker, had it been there when we had some good years through the '90s, GRIP would certainly be working for the agriculture producers of the province of Saskatchewan today.

And how well has this government done on rural education taxes, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker, we continue to hear this government's commitment to addressing the issue of education tax on property. And yet, Mr. Speaker, I can speak from personal experience because I still have an interest in my farm, and my taxes went up this year by 25 per cent. And you know what, Mr. Speaker, 20 per cent of that increase was education tax, education tax just on the few acres our farm. And I've talked to people in the area, and everyone's saying the same thing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder if the rural community has seen that kind of an increase. And this government has said for a long time that they're going to address that. And they make it out as it's something new in this Throne Speech. And, Mr. Speaker, the rural community, SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] and its directors, SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], in rural Saskatchewan, are looking for the government to finally put its words to action.

They want to see this government actually come forward with a plan, that minister of Education to sit down with this Premier and come forward with a long-term plan — now that they've

amalgamated into these larger school divisions — with a long-term plan that actually puts the onus of funding education on the taxpayer through the government, not the property owner, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about these larger school divisions, let me talk about for a minute, remind the government it was this government who asked rural school divisions to voluntarily amalgamate. And there were three school divisions — Scenic Valley, Regina East, and Broadview — that got together and voluntarily amalgamated. And, Mr. Speaker, after they amalgamated, they needed office space. So they found an abandoned restaurant in Grenfell, and they spent — I'm not sure of the exact amount — on this building and built themselves a beautiful office. And they barely opened the doors on that office, and the government changed the rules again and decided no, we don't like what you've done. We're going to put in place 13 larger rural school divisions.

And you know what, guess what? Guess what, Mr. Speaker? That new office, brand new office in Grenfell is going to be sitting empty shortly because the larger area that this school division got amalgamated into is situated and stretches all the way from the Manitoba border to northwest of Regina.

And Grenfell's going to lose its school division office just like it lost its SPC [Saskatchewan Power Corporation] office. And with that comes . . . Mr. Speaker, it means that some families are going to leave the community. Families who were supporting that rural community now are forced to leave because of the policies of this NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, we can look at this Throne Speech, and there's no doubt why the political pundits have really been asking exactly where in the world was the government on when they put this Throne Speech together because they were making promises as if they're new; and they're not new.

Talking about energy, "To capture the energy of the [world] . . ." and I'm quoting from the Throne Speech, "projects already underway will produce 172 megawatts of zero emission power, five per cent of Saskatchewan's electrical generation capacity, or enough for 73,000 homes."

And yet, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, there are other provinces in this country that have put in place an energy program that allows individuals to set up their own wind tower. And if they're generating more than they need in their business or on their farming operation, they can put that into the grid.

And, Mr. Speaker, when I was in PEI [Prince Edward Island] recently on a CPA [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association] conference, I happened to pick up a paper, and it showed a gentleman who was standing outside the barn and watching his meter, and the comment was, trying to assess how much he was actually putting into the grid today or using himself.

The province of Nova Scotia has opened the door for individuals to pump into the grid. I have a project in the Moosomin constituency where they've been asking the Saskatchewan Power Corporation, if they put up a wind turbine, whether or not they'd be able to put power into the grid. As far as I know right now they still haven't received an answer, Mr.



Speaker.

A private company . . . Why does it always have to be the government? If there are individuals who are willing to invest their own money and create job opportunities in this province, why do we always have to have this NDP government feel that they're the only ones that can run a business in the province of Saskatchewan?

Mr. Speaker, I want to address one other issue before I cease speaking tonight, and that's the issue of health care in the province of Saskatchewan. The Minister of Health talked about all the different projects and the commitments in health care, and there is no doubt the people of Moosomin are pleased to see that we finally have work taking place where the new health centre is going to be located.

But one of the big concerns in that area, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that even though this new health facility is going to be going up . . . and we're looking at a fairly large and broad area that a lot of people have actually moved to. And they've moved there, Mr. Speaker, because you've got the educational facilities. You've got health care. A lot of people are looking to retire there. But a problem we have today, which is going to multiply tomorrow, is that in this new health facility there are no more beds today for heavy-care patients than there were yesterday. And what I have on my list, on my desk, Mr. Speaker, are families who have come to me whose parents from Moosomin are either in Whitewood or Grenfell or Wolseley or elsewhere. As my colleague, the member from Lloydminster, was saying, elderly people are now not treated like individuals; they're treated more like a number.

And these families are saying, why can . . . My father, my mother, or my family member helped build this community. Why do they have to leave the community to another health care facility, Mr. Speaker? Or the situation, Mr. Speaker, where a 72-year-old daughter is looking after her 100-year-old mother because the assessor and the health care region has said the lady doesn't qualify.

And yet if you talk to the home care givers, there's a lot — that lady who's dealing with a lot of situations — that would say she should be receiving direct care from them. And the facility's just down the street, and yet she can't get in. What's going on here? What is going on in this province, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of concerns out there, and the people of Saskatchewan are beginning to see through the facade that the government has been bringing forward and what they're leading people to believe.

And one other issue before I sit down, Mr. Speaker, the minister of Education talked about the debt they inherited. You know that's one thing that I found about this NDP government. You know this NDP government is always good at blaming somebody else. They always blame. If they can't blame the former government, which they really work at very hard — I must give them credit at how hard they work at blaming the former government — they blame the federal government as we're discussing today, or they blame municipalities, Mr. Speaker. But they are always pointing the finger at somebody else rather than themselves.

The minister of Education talked about a \$14.6 million deficit in 1991. Well, Mr. Speaker, a *Report of the Provincial Auditor*, 2000 report volume 2. 1991 — we want to get into the gross right now — 1991 the debt was 7.896 million. That was the net debt.

This is this government's own reporting mechanism. 7.896. It went up to nine five seven one. Ten four seven six. Was that Grant Devine? Ten seven five eight. Ten six seven. Those were Romanow's years they were going up, and then they started to get the net down.

But guess what, Mr. Speaker? 2005 the net debt in the province of Saskatchewan is 8.497. I think that's more than 7.896 when they took over government, Mr. Speaker. But somehow or other, somehow or other, no we've got the general revenue pool balance, so therefore we're in good shape.

Well one good thing is we have an auditor in this province who's not prepared to . . . He's willing to let the people of Saskatchewan know exactly where things are at.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to conclude with this one comment. This government . . . I talked a moment ago about blaming somebody else, and always blaming another group for their problems. Mr. Speaker, when you look at the overall debt in the province of Saskatchewan, it's over \$21 billion now — over 21, the overall gross debt.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker? In 1991 the unfunded pension liability had been reduced to \$2.7 billion — 2.7. Guess what? In the last 14 years it's up to \$4.2 billion. And this government says, well that doesn't matter. We don't have to deal with that today. Somebody down the road's going to have to deal with it.

[19:45]

Well I wonder where the teachers are. They sure were annoyed in the late '80s when the former government reneged one year in trying to address that issue. But this . . . [inaudible] . . . for some reason, unfunded pension liability, that's a non-issue. Well you know it's easy to balance the books when you . . . 2.7, 4.2, that's a fair bit of chunk of change that you can work with when you're not honouring your obligations.

Mr. Speaker, there's so much in this Throne Speech that we could go through — and I know my colleagues have been addressing a number of the issues, and a number of my colleagues yet want to speak — that the people of Saskatchewan, as I was hearing this weekend, they have been asking and will be asking as time rolls on, when is the next election? Because it's time we actually brought a vision to this province and defeated this NDP government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Meewasin, the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure

to join in the debate on the Throne Speech today. And I want to thank the people of Saskatoon Meewasin who sent me here to represent them in the legislature. It continues to be, every day that I'm here, an honour. I do not only want to thank the people of Meewasin, the citizens of Meewasin who voted for me, sent me to this legislature. I want to commend all the citizens of Saskatoon Meewasin who participated in that last election, election 2005.

I happened to catch, on the second anniversary of this election, a little bit of the weather channel. It shows you the exciting private life I lead. And the commentator who I think was from Toronto was commenting on the weather two years before, the weather on election day, and how miserable a day that was — and we'll probably all as candidates in that campaign remember what a miserable day that was — and then pointed out how high the turnout had been. And he was quite impressed, surprised and impressed. And that just shows the engagement, the public engagement that people in Saskatchewan continue to have. Despite a little bit of cold, a little bit of snow, a little bit of wind, they were still there.

And I want to assure all the citizens of Saskatoon Meewasin, however they voted in the election and where and when, if they voted in the election, Mr. Speaker, that I wish to serve them and represent them all to the best of my abilities and continue to do that here. This is a job, the job of an MLA, that we may win in the weeks leading up to the election date, but that we earn in the term that follows it, Mr. Speaker. I sincerely believe that, and I trust that many of my colleagues do as well. And I hope to continue to earn the right to represent the people of Saskatoon Meewasin.

I secondly want to congratulate the member from Regina Wascana Plains on her election, her acclamation, the choice of her as Deputy Speaker. In my maiden speech in the legislature, the first Throne Speech of this session, I spoke as to the fact that when this province was formed in 1905, neither women or members of First Nations could even vote. And now today as democracy progresses, both women and members of First Nations serve in this legislature, serve in this government. And the election of the Deputy Speaker is another indication of that progress.

And the fact that democracy is a living thing and each generation has to renew it, and we can never be complacent about what it means. We have to develop and broaden democracy whenever we can.

And the vibrancy of our democracy in Saskatchewan I think has something to do with how this province was formed. The people came from so many lands and spoke so many languages, the people that came here and joined the First Nations people in the building of our province. And a member has already spoken that this province, the province of Saskatchewan, is unique in this sense that the people of English and French descent combined have never formed a majority here. This is a province that was formed of people who spoke many languages, came from many countries in Europe, came from China and the Indian subcontinent to build the railway and stayed.

And so as well as the challenges that are posed by the geography and weather and the climate of the province of

Saskatchewan, there was the challenge of the diversity of people, and a group of diverse people, many diverse people who had to learn about each other, learn how to work together and build communities together. And not only did the people who form this province overcome the challenges of the geography; they overcame the challenges of coming from so many diverse places. And they found wealth, and they found opportunity both in the geography and in their diversity.

And in our history, Mr. Speaker, there have been people who sought to exploit and gain from the differences among Saskatchewan people, but Saskatchewan people have always risen above that. And this is important to remember because we honour tradition in this place. We honour tradition in this Chamber.

It's important to remember what tradition is. Our tradition was democracy. Our tradition was not the exclusion of women and First Nations. It is important to remember what the traditions are. It is important to remember that you do not perpetuate an injustice because it is a tradition because the tradition of Saskatchewan is justice. You do not perpetuate inequities — because well we've had them in the past; we've always had them — because the tradition of Saskatchewan is equity. And you do not continue with unfairness — because well this was an unfairness; these are the practices of our fathers and mothers — because the tradition of Saskatchewan is fairness, Mr. Speaker.

Now it's also been the practice and I think in the last few days since the Speech from the Throne to thank the people who support us while we are here and rightly so, Mr. Speaker. And I would like to take this occasion to again thank my wife, Cheryl, not only for her support but for her inspiration of community service, her advice. And I can't think of a time in the last 25 years when I have failed to take her advice and not come sooner or later to regret that, and I'd also like to thank her for her patience.

And as I did in my maiden speech, Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge my three children. Before my maiden speech was an interesting time for the Minister of Justice and the name Quennell I think received a lot of public scrutiny, and we had not had a lot of time to prepare our children for that. And as I said then, our three children handled that time and the time since then with a grace and dignity that one would not expect from teenagers.

And I want to say today again — I don't expect any of them are watching this; I expect they have better things to do — that we have been blessed, Cheryl and I, with three very unique individuals as children. And I want to comment specifically on the maturity and responsibility of all three of these children who are still teenagers, and say that the decisions they have made and the judgments they have made compared to the decisions and judgments I made at those ages, Mr. Speaker, is very flattering to them and not very flattering to me. And I just am amazed by them and want to acknowledge them and thank them for their support as well.

Mr. Speaker, this was a Throne Speech for a centennial. This was a Throne Speech that drew upon the true traditions of the province of Saskatchewan; spoke to the advantages of our land and the skills and expertise and wisdom, creativity, compassion,

and ability to co-operate of our people; drew upon our past; spoke to our present circumstances; and had a vision for our future.

And much of the Throne Speech was about energy — energy in the literal sense, Mr. Speaker, energy that's under the ground, energy that's in the wind, energy that's in the flowing of the water. And it spoke to, more metaphorically, I think, the energy and dynamism of Saskatchewan people.

And if I may, just talk a little bit about one aspect of the energy component of the vision of this government and speak about electricity. I think I could be forgiven for that, Mr. Speaker, being the Minister Responsible for SaskPower. And SaskPower perhaps is one of those institutions that shows both the history, our heritage, our present wealth, and a vision for the future.

Tommy Douglas has been quoted as saying, cited as saying that in his view:

The greatest achievement of the CCF government may not have been hospitalization. It may not have been medicare. It may have been rural electrification.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — And it was the CCF government that literally lifted rural Saskatchewan and northern Saskatchewan out of literal dark ages, Mr. Speaker. And Saskatchewan has more electrical wire per capita than any place in Canada, more electrical wire, period, than any other jurisdiction except Ontario because of the commitment to rural electrification, to the commitment of providing sustainable, affordable electricity to every citizen in the province of Saskatchewan — a commitment that remains to this day.

Mr. Speaker, SaskPower is a patron of the Festival of Words. It is also a patron of Saskatchewan Book Awards. And I spoke last year in the beautiful city of Moose Jaw at the beautiful Cultural Centre there, at the Festival of Words, at a banquet sponsored by SaskPower. And I did think . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Two beautiful MLAs, Mr. Speaker, in Moose Jaw. Mr. Speaker, I did wander for a moment.

SaskPower supports a lot of cultural activities, a lot of activities within the province of Saskatchewan, as it should. Mr. Speaker, I wondered for a little while the connection between electricity and literary awards, but the connection's very clear, Mr. Speaker. As Prometheus brought fire to man, rural electricity brings enlightenment to man. In the long working days, in the long, cold winter nights, there's no room for literacy. There's no room for it, the education or the recreation that literacy can bring, because you have no time to read when there's light. Without electricity there would not be mass literacy, Mr. Speaker.

Electricity is not only fundamental to the economy of the province of Saskatchewan. It is as many things we take for granted — and the members of the opposition mock — but many things that we take for granted make fundamental changes, fundamental changes in our quality of life. And SaskPower was at the core, the core of that change of life in the province of Saskatchewan when rural electrification took place.

Mr. Speaker, SaskPower remains at the forefront of innovation. In this centennial year there will be completed in southwestern Saskatchewan the centennial wind power project. And the centennial wind power project will bring Saskatchewan at the forefront of creating electricity by wind power. We will at the end of this year, at the end of the centennial year, be creating enough electricity by wind to power 73,000 homes, as is said in the Speech from the Throne. Saskatchewan will produce more electricity, more of its electricity from wind — close to 5 per cent — than any other province in the country.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — This completes two commitments of this government. One is to increase the amount of electricity produced by wind tenfold; the second, to generate new electricity from non-greenhouse-emitting sources. Both these commitments are addressed to the centennial wind power project.

In 2005, Mr. Speaker, in 2005, 25 per cent of our electricity was produced by renewable sources. By 2011 with projects such as the centennial wind power project, that will be 30 per cent.

This corporation, SaskPower, with its history — over 75 years in Saskatchewan — its history of rural electrification, its history of seeking out new, innovative sources of energy, this corporation built by the people of Saskatchewan for the use of the people of Saskatchewan ties together our heritage, our current needs, and a vision and innovative vision for the future, Mr. Speaker.

[20:00]

These wind power turbines are an icon of the creativity and the co-operation, a monument to the creativity and the co-operation of the people of Saskatchewan.

Now there was some concern expressed by the member from Cannington, the Conservative member from Cannington opposite, about the capacity of these wind turbines. Now this has got to be taken with a grain of salt, Mr. Speaker, because the member from Cannington was very concerned that the natural legacy of the Churchill River mentioned in the Speech from the Throne was actually a secret dam being built on the Churchill River. And I want to assure the member from Cannington that there is no secret dam being built on the Churchill River — not by stealth, not by dead of night. But the member from Cannington would seem very concerned about this in his response to the Speech from the Throne, that the natural legacy of the Churchill River actually meant a secret dam being built on the river.

I want to assure the member from Cannington of the value and the contribution that are being made by these wind turbine icons built on the prairie, built in Saskatchewan by Saskatchewan people. And if you might imagine, Mr. Speaker, a summer night in 2006 when we are away from the heated rhetoric of this House. It's evening. The province isn't at sleep but it's at rest. Our demand for electricity has dropped. Many of us are on our decks, balconies, in our provincial parks, relying on the evening breeze for air conditioning. But the wind is blowing. The wind is blowing across the Cypress Hills, and these giant turbines are

turning their face to the wind and producing, not 5 per cent, but 10 per cent of our electrical demand on nights like that, Mr. Speaker.

**An Hon. Member:** — I want to live in a province like that.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — And you do. The member wants to live in a province like that, and he does.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Now there's an economic component to this vision, and I've touched on just one aspect of it around electricity, Mr. Speaker. But we should know in this House, because I know the members opposite are very concerned about the economy, that for 2003-2004 one province led the country in combined gross domestic product. One province led the country with 8 per cent growth in the gross domestic product in 2003-2004, and that province was Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And that's part of the vision, encouraging that economic growth. And that's partly done, Mr. Speaker, by providing affordable, sustainable, environmentally responsible electricity.

But I want to move on to the second part of the vision, Mr. Speaker. I want to move on to the vision around what we call the unbreakable social fabric, Mr. Speaker. And specifically, Mr. Speaker, I want to speak about the challenges around public safety and crime because, as well as being the Minister Responsible for SaskPower, I am the Minister Responsible for Justice.

And we have in Saskatchewan, we have in this government, Mr. Speaker, a government that is both tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that in the first year after this government was re-elected, the first full year after this government was re-elected, the year of 2004, crime decreased in the province of Saskatchewan. It was one of the three provinces in Canada where crime did decrease. There are a number of initiatives of this province, of this provincial government, around this issue. And one of them was referred to by the member from Saskatoon Southeast on November 10, and that's the crime reduction strategies, Mr. Speaker.

And these are the strategies where the provincial government, particularly the Department of Justice, particularly the Department of Corrections and Public Safety, works with local police, works with local community organizations on a targeted crime strategy. And we've been successful in cutting auto theft in Regina practically in half during the term of the strategy. And in Saskatoon the strategy has been around for a shorter period of time. It has been around since 2004.

And, Mr. Speaker, the member from Saskatoon Southeast had this to say about the Saskatoon crime reduction strategy. November 10 *Hansard*, November 10, 2005, the member from Saskatoon Southeast, quote:

In Saskatoon a similar experience — the police chief and mayor in that city chose to target break and enters on property. They've made a dramatic reduction where they've chosen to target break and enters in dwellings and in businesses, and they've been very successful at that. Unfortunately the downside, Madam Deputy Speaker, is

that violent crime and other crimes have shot up . . .

Well wrong three times, Mr. Speaker — “that violent crime and other crimes have shot up” — wrong three times.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't a strategy of the police chief in Saskatoon. As I have said the Saskatoon crime reduction strategy, like the others, led by the provincial government involving prosecutors from Justice, probation officers from Corrections and Public Safety, and the local police and other groups worked together on a crime strategy. And the role of the prosecutors and the role of probation officers in these strategies can not be underestimated, Mr. Speaker, or can be underestimated by the member from Saskatoon Southeast and I'd be glad to explain to him when we have some more time, just he and I, how these strategies work. But they are a partnership, Mr. Speaker, and they involve the provincial government in a very integral way.

Secondly it was at my suggestion that the Saskatoon crime strategy committee decided to focus first on break and enters. Now not my directive, but it was my suggestion. I'm flattered they took my suggestion. In fact in less than a year, in less than a year, the strategies resulted in a 27 per cent decrease in break and enters in Saskatoon. So wrong on whose strategy it is; wrong on whose target it was; and again on crime going up, other crime going up in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, wrong a third time.

While crime break and enters were being reduced 27 per cent in some inner city neighbourhoods, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatoon 47 per cent, while that was happening, violent crime was down 11 per cent in Saskatoon. Auto theft declined by 18 per cent in Saskatoon. Theft under \$5,000 was down 20 per cent, and overall crime was down by over 9 per cent.

Now the member from Saskatoon Southeast had a speech on crime, had a speech on policing, and it is riddled with inaccuracies. They examined one paragraph. I don't have time to go through it paragraph by paragraph. But he goes on to call, to mock The Seizure of Criminal Property Act and the suppression of criminal enterprise Act, tools that we have given to the police to suppress crime in this province as — in the same remarks — strange, odd, and bizarre. Now the only thing that's strange, odd, and bizarre is the member from Saskatoon Southeast, the opposition Justice critic's attack on this legislation. And some of his strange, odd, and bizarre attacks on this legislation are contained in *Hansard* last spring when the legislation was before committee, and he was asking why we would trust police with these tools.

I think, Mr. Speaker, it may explain why we have not heard too much from the Chair of the Leader of the Opposition's talkfest on crime when you look at the record of what he has had to say about these initiatives of the provincial government, of which I want to speak just briefly, Mr. Speaker.

This government has introduced since the last election campaign, The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act. This initiative has allowed empowered citizens in our province to shut down houses in which people were dealing drugs. It has enabled people in Saskatchewan to shut down houses of prostitution. It is our early warning system against the

production of crystal meth in our province.

Mr. Speaker, as many people know, most of the crystal meth in Saskatchewan is imported from Alberta. This is the initiative that will prevent labs from being set up in our communities. It empowers citizens to bring these activities to the attention of investigators in the safer communities and neighbourhoods unit, and these buildings are being shut down.

This government brought in The Pawned Property (Recording) Act, which has owners of pawnshops informing police in real time of what goods are being pawned and the identity of the person who is pawning these goods. And this is an initiative that is aimed at cutting down on the fencing of stolen goods. One of the initiatives that's going to reduce crime in this province is having an effect on crime in this province.

Among the Acts mocked by the member from Saskatoon Southeast, the Justice critic, The Seizure of Criminal Property Act allows the police chief to apply to the court to have the proceeds of a crime or property used in a crime seized. People are involved in organized crime, Mr. Speaker, for profit, and this government is working to take the profit out of organized crime.

Another Act with that purpose, another Act called strange, odd and bizarre by the Justice critic, by the member from Saskatoon Southeast, by the Conservative member opposite, is The Criminal Enterprise Suppression Act. And this is the Act that allows a police chief to apply to the court to have a business operated by organized crime shut down, Mr. Speaker.

We are empowering the people of Saskatchewan to take back their neighbourhoods and to take back their streets. And the police . . . a member opposite asks how the police think it's going. The police love these initiatives, Mr. Speaker. Each one of these initiatives is praised by police leadership.

Mr. Speaker, when I announced, with the deputy chief of the Regina Police Service, The Criminal Enterprise Suppression Act proclamation, the deputy chief spoke not only to the Act and the value of the Act and thanking the provincial government for that initiative and these other initiatives which we've discussed. The deputy police chief thanked the provincial government for the funding of the proof-of-concept on gang suppression, Mr. Speaker, because this government has funded police services to explore ways of suppressing gangs in Saskatchewan.

He thanked us for that, and, Mr. Speaker, in the Throne Speech with the announcement of the initiative to extend what we learned in that proof-of-concept in that project, to extend that concept across the province, deepen that concept to provide the resources, Mr. Speaker, to suppress gangs in this province.

The other initiative mentioned, Mr. Speaker, the other initiative mentioned in the Throne Speech is the initiative around missing persons, Mr. Speaker. And this government is committed to the principle that no person who perpetrates injustice against a Saskatchewan citizen, perpetrates a violence against a Saskatchewan citizen, will escape justice merely because of the passage of time and that no person who has gone missing without an explanation will cease to be looked for. And we will

provide the resources necessary and are bringing forward the plan and the strategy to ensure that no citizen is forgotten and no injustice goes unpunished.

Now over the years since 1999, the provincial government has increased provincial funding for police services by more than \$31 million. This has funded 169 additional police officers. We added this fall two more safer communities and neighbourhoods investigators, bringing us to 171. And the members of the Assembly can stay tuned, Mr. Speaker. We will be adding more resources, more police officers on the street. And we'll be doing that as quickly as they can be trained, employed, and deployed, Mr. Speaker.

But indeed, Mr. Speaker, if I had to say what was the most important initiative to reduce crime in the province of Saskatchewan, I wouldn't pick the crime reduction strategies, safer communities and neighbourhoods, The Pawned Property (Recording) Act, seizure of criminal property Act, criminal enterprise suppression Act, or even necessarily the resources that we have added to serious habitual offenders policing or serious crimes policing.

[20:15]

Our most important strategy is around reducing crime in this province and creating safer, healthier communities — our KidsFirst, Mr. Speaker. They are the pre-kindergarten program discussed in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. I don't think I've ever heard a member of the opposition speak in favour of KidsFirst, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if they understand what it is, but I think it's only a matter of time before I think they claim they've invented it, Mr. Speaker.

And HomeFirst, Mr. Speaker, that's going to put home ownership within the reach of thousands of people.

These, these are the values of this government, Mr. Speaker. Early important intervention in the lives of children, Mr. Speaker, providing for attachment to schools, providing for attachment to neighbourhoods, Mr. Speaker — these are the programs. These are the initiatives of this government mentioned in the Speech from the Throne that will be developed, that will be extended, that will be broadened. These are the initiatives that make a difference. And these are the initiatives that reflect the traditions of Saskatchewan people. These are the initiatives that reflect the values of Saskatchewan people.

I am pleased, Mr. Speaker — and I know I've spoken at length — pleased, Mr. Speaker to stand here in support of the Speech from the Throne, in support of a Speech from the Throne that reflects the traditions and the history of the province of Saskatchewan, 100 years of heart. To speak for the motion, against the amendment, Mr. Speaker, I am so proud.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to the people of Saskatoon Meewasin for allowing me this opportunity to be part of this legislature and part of this government.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for

Estevan.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before I make my comments regarding the Throne Speech, I would just like to say how much I appreciated the Remembrance Day service that was held just prior to routine proceedings last Thursday and also the recognition that was paid to the veterans during our proceedings that same day.

I thought the tributes paid by the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Regina Elphinstone, and the member from Kelvington-Wadena were very touching. And when I hear of the personal experiences that some of these families faced, I am so thankful that I never had to experience the loss of a loved one in that sense. But I think that we should all remember to honour our veterans and our senior citizens beyond November 11 by providing adequate health care services and the services they need, Mr. Speaker. Honour them by having it so that they don't have to fight for their health care and struggle to pay for medication, personal needs, and podiatry, and other things of that sort.

The member from Saskatoon Eastview, during her member's statement, Mr. Speaker, she spoke to a different group of people that day. And you will remember, Mr. Speaker, that that member's statement was about war brides and the young children they brought to Canada.

And this had special meaning to me as my father-in-law is a veteran. He was one of the young Canadian soldiers that went overseas and fought for our country. And while he was over there he married a young English girl. And when the war was over, he returned to Canada. And shortly after, this young English war bride left her family and her country to come to Canada. But, Mr. Speaker, she did not have to travel alone because by this time they had a son who of course came along. Time went by, and I married that son so, you know, it really did have special meaning to me.

And my mother-in-law often speaks of the hardships she faced leaving a home with electricity, indoor plumbing and telephone, and coming over here to a farm that didn't have electricity, didn't have plumbing and a very temperamental telephone. But she'll add that the worst thing she suffered was homesickness. But my parents-in-law still live on their farm, but of course the aging process is starting to catch up to them, Mr. Speaker. So those are some of my thoughts on that, and I thank you for allowing me to share them.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to stand today on behalf of the people of the Estevan constituency to respond to the Speech from the Throne. And I am very proud to represent these people, and I thank them for their continued support.

But I would also like to thank my husband, Vic, who has been so supportive of me and continues to be supportive of me, and also my kids and my grandkids. They've always been there for me, Mr. Speaker, and for the sacrifices they have made that allow me to do my job.

And I would also like to thank my CA [constituency assistant], Leanne Fox, for her dedication to her job. And she too goes way beyond the call of duty, and I'm very grateful to her.

Mr. Speaker, the Estevan constituency consists of vast stretches of very productive farm land. It is also home to many oil and natural gas wells that have and continue to contribute very generously to provincial coffers. Unfortunately the Estevan constituency has the distinction of having the worst highway, Highway 47. Highway 47 south of Estevan is a major link to the United States. And, Mr. Speaker, just about 10 days ago, my husband and I went and had a look at that highway, and you would not believe the difference between the Saskatchewan side and the North Dakota side. The invisible line separating our two countries becomes quite visible at that border crossing, and you can really feel the difference.

We also have Highway 18 going to the west part of my constituency, and this highway is not only rough but full of potholes and extremely dangerous.

And then there's Highway 35, and the Oungre Memorial Regional Park is located just off Highway 35. And unfortunately that park is seriously considering shutting down. That park has a wonderful facility open all year round. It's the hub of the community. It hosts many events, fowl suppers and fundraisers. And in fact you can stop there any day and have a very nice lunch. High energy costs and poor highway conditions have crippled their bottom line. Tourists will not put their fifth wheel trailers on that highway. In fact regular vehicles avoid it at all costs.

The people of this community have tried to stay afloat, and in fact, Mr. Speaker, they have paid a levy on their taxes that is directed towards the park, and they need more money. But the RM [rural municipality] knows it cannot ask for an increase because these property owners are already facing many hardships because this NDP government didn't keep its word regarding the education portion of property tax.

And here's a quote, Mr. Speaker:

If they want . . . to encourage tourists in our province, then restore the roads so that driving in Saskatchewan is a pleasure again and not a challenge.

And these are the words of our present Premier spoken June 23, 1987.

The Throne Speech was very repetitious of past throne speeches. Promises were made in previous speeches regarding everything from property tax relief to shorter surgical waiting times, to construction of the Humboldt hospital and — we have heard that quite a few times as well, Mr. Speaker — to opening the door for immigrants. We've seen more than 14,000 people leave this province in the last three years. Mr. Speaker, we need to attract more people in this province and give our young people reason to stay.

Like my colleagues I too enjoyed the many celebrations in my constituency this summer. People came home, and it was just very interesting to go around and look at all the different licence plates on the vehicles just to see where the people that were originally from this province went to. But it was wonderful to see family and friends united, and this is a vision of what it could be like in this province. We need those people here, not packing up and going back home after a weekend of

celebration. Next time that they make the trip, let's make it a one-way trip, Mr. Speaker — a trip home, home to Saskatchewan and home to stay.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Ms. Eagles:** — Again, Mr. Speaker, the words from our present Premier when he sat in opposition, quote:

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to the young people of our province. It's been said so often, but it remains true, that they are the future of our province. And when we're talking about family life in our province, we're talking about young people, and they are leaving this province in record numbers, Mr. Speaker. They're leaving this province because they see little hope in staying in Saskatchewan. They are fleeing Saskatchewan looking for education and employment elsewhere.

And of course these words too were spoken by the now Premier on June 7, 1988.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture, an industry that is so important was barely worthy of a mention beyond the commitment to CAIS for the year 2005. And that really should've been a given as the government did sign on to the deal.

I remind the government as we're heading closer to the year 2006, people are still waiting to have their 2003 CAIS accounts settled. Some who have received money are scared to cash the cheque for fear that they'll have to send the money back. For the public who think that farmers are getting a handout with CAIS, please realize that a farmer's income must drop substantially below a five-year average, with the best and worst year taken out to even qualify.

The Minister of Agriculture — or as some in my constituency are calling him, the minister responsible for farm bankruptcies — stood in this House last week bragging how some farmers are getting between 4,000 and \$10,000 from CAIS. And while I'm sure they appreciate every cent they can get their hands on, Mr. Speaker, the minister speaks like they've just won a huge lottery. \$10,000 is enough to put diesel in your tractor or combine for two or three weeks, assuming you just run a normal day. It costs between 550 to just over \$700 a day for fuel only— no repairs, no tires, no other maintenance. Fuel only. And how long can they keep that up, Mr. Speaker? The minister says that we are seeing changes in agriculture and we certainly are, but they are not for the better.

The agriculture industry is in desperation. People are calling me. They are so desperate; they don't know which way to turn. They don't know how they're going to pay their bills. They're giving rented land back. Many are leaving land idle. Some families have suffered tragically because of the desperation. They are producing the most important commodity on earth — food — and they themselves are starving. Farmers are told to cut back, to tighten their belts. But, Mr. Speaker, for many the belt is on its last notch.

The Minister of Agriculture says farmers are making business decisions. They do not make business decisions about their inputs. Under this dictatorship, they are forced to use herbicides

and pesticides, reapplying or they are penalized by crop insurance. This government redesigned crop insurance making it a program that costs too much. Premiums have increased while the coverage has decreased. But if you don't carry crop insurance, then CAIS penalizes you. So it's a heads they win, tails you lose situation with this government.

Mr. Speaker, my husband and I are grain farmers. And we're not large farmers, but you know we've always made a reasonable living doing it, and we appreciate the lifestyle. But on our farm, every cent that is taken off that farm is returned to it. We don't know how long we can last. We don't know if we'll be around next year. Perhaps 2005 was our last year to seed a crop. And many other people have also said that 2005 is their last year; they're pulling the pin.

I recently talked to an auctioneer, and he had 19 farm auctions booked for spring with 15 more pending. And how long can that go on? We're just running out of farmers.

And I realize, Mr. Speaker, that I am putting a lot of emphasis on agriculture, but I do represent a rural area. And most of the local businesses in that area, their businesses depend on agriculture and the spinoffs to keep their doors open.

The government also encourages organic farming. Many farmers who have contacted me have no other choice as their '05, and in some cases their '04, inputs haven't been paid. That certainly isn't positive for one's credit rating. Fertilizer and fuel prices are soaring. Even with organic farming there is a transition period. How do they survive that? The government surely realizes that weed control in organic farming is achieved through summerfallowing. So how does that tie in with their support for Kyoto and the carbon sinks that are credited for zero till? Seems one socialist left hand doesn't know what the other socialist left hand is doing.

These same socialists promised property tax relief. During the election campaign there were no strings attached. Of course they broke that promise. One thing with that group of people over there, Mr. Speaker, is that when it comes to their promises they're consistent. They break them all.

Later they promised that when the government had revenues and the school board amalgamations were finished they'd act. Nothing has been done. I quote:

And I say, Mr. Speaker, is there any wonder . . . [there is] a tax revolt is brewing in this province? People are being taxed to death and they're saying, we can't take any more.

And those are the words of the Premier on September 22, 1987.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that last Wednesday the actions of this government, those actions were the peak of arrogance and a slap in the face of every person in rural Saskatchewan. When this socialist government refused to grant leave when an emergency motion to debate the agriculture crisis was put forth by the member from Melville-Saltcoats, this NDP government refused to debate the issue in the people's legislature. I hope their decision weighs on their conscience, if they have one, every time they sit down for breakfast . . .

[20:30]

**The Speaker:** — Order please. Member for Estevan.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I guess the member from North Battleford doesn't like what I have to say. And I hope that he and the rest of his colleagues . . . this decision of theirs to not to proceed with the emergency debate last week, I hope it weighs on their conscience, if they have one, every time they sit down for breakfast, dinner, or supper. Remember who produced that food and your complete disregard and ignorance for them.

And as I stated before, Mr. Speaker, this affects more than the producer. It affects the local machine dealer, fuel supplier, auto dealership, grocery store, clothing store, and many more. And if they over there don't support agriculture, I have two words for them — don't eat.

And, Mr. Speaker, I received a letter from a farmer in the Arcola area, and I would just like to read you some of the comments that he had to say. And he starts out:

. . . here are some of my thoughts on agriculture.

When you look at the level of debt on farms now it is far higher than it was years ago. The cost of inputs is very high while commodity prices are utterly ridiculous. It's no wonder farm debt is so high.

Last week I wrote the Editor of the National Post. I don't know if my letter was published.

The main point I tried to make to government was this.

How much value do you put on food and those who produce it? Compared to many countries, our food is cheap.

I rented my four quarters out years ago. I was not able to keep going, losing money every year.

Of course there shouldn't be subsidies but they're a fact. We need more support by far than we've had.

Remember those farmers, burdened with debt, struggling to keep going. Where would you be without them?

And, Mr. Speaker, that same gentleman, when I spoke to him, he has a son that would love to farm, but he also wants to be able to make a living at it and it's just not possible. So his advice, not unlike the advice many others received, is you know you just can't make a living at it. And that's very unfortunate and very sad, but very true.

And just this morning, Mr. Speaker, I spoke to a gentleman who is a businessman in my constituency, and his business is very dependent on agriculture. And he shared many thoughts with me regarding the ag crisis. And he, like the rest of us, is very happy that the borders are open after the BSE [bovine spongiform encephalopathy] issue but quickly pointed out that

we still need processing plants here in Saskatchewan and, you know, the government shouldn't just think everything's fine and dandy now that the borders are open because who knows what will happen in the future.

And he certainly didn't limit the processing plants just to the beef industry. He went on to say how farmers can't make a living by growing their commodity for food so perhaps we should be growing our commodities for fuel. And he wanted to know why bio-diesel wasn't being explored as northern Saskatchewan is full of feed wheat. Let's use it for ethanol. And he was really disappointed that this government is reactive instead of being proactive.

And he also expressed the plight of our farmers in relation to his business. He said that farmers are good payers, but this year the money just wasn't there. Farmers are in a dire situation, and they themselves don't know how long they'll be there. And this business told me he doesn't know how long he'll be able to survive if farmers don't get some relief, and he also assured me that he was not in this alone. All of the other people who are in the same business as he is are in the same boat.

But, Mr. Speaker, farmers are proud people. They pay their bills when they have the ability to pay them. They support their community, but they don't have one ounce of faith in this NDP government, and of course they are not alone in that either.

Mr. Speaker, the government also likes to claim ownership of the social issues. And Estevan Diversified Services announced closure of their group home because of this government's lack of commitment. The most vulnerable of our citizens are literally being booted out of the only home they have ever known. Staff turnaround is over 80 per cent. People who used to hold the positions as caregivers were required to have certain qualifications. This past year they almost had to hire anyone who was available. All they had to do was pass a police check and have a valid driver's licence.

In one instance last year, level one training, which is the basic training for staff, was provided. But by the time the certificates were handed out, everyone was gone. They left for similar types of jobs that pay a much higher wage.

The government announced in the Throne Speech that over three years \$30 million would be directed to community-based organizations. But, Mr. Speaker, \$30 million over three years for around 600 CBOs [community-based organizations], how much does that work out to? Perhaps \$15,000 a year for each one. Wilf Tisdale, Cathy Morrell and Carol Cundall and the others at EDS [Estevan Diversified Services] do their very best, but it's time for this government to get its priorities straight and to step up to the plate.

Mr. Speaker, waiting lists are another issue. I receive many calls from my constituents regarding the length of time they have had to wait for surgery, whether it's knee or hip replacements or heart surgeries. I have had one gentleman that has been waiting since . . . well 2000, ever since then for a knee replacement. This gentleman heard the Minister of Health speak on a radio program the other day, saying that the waiting lists have been reduced to seven months. And to say that he was thoroughly disgusted, Mr. Speaker, is to put it mildly.



And he did send me his situation, and I'm going to share that with you now.

My knee problems go back many years, possibly since I pitched softball until I was 65 and had to quit as they started to hurt on me. Anyway, for years I wore different types of braces and injections, none of which did anything for it.

About the year 2000 I had my doctor put me on the list for a specialist. I had so much pain he doubled my Vioxx pills and that resulted in stomach problems. After a week in the hospital I went home and found I could no longer do the yard work in my acreage. About that time they phoned me, late summer 2004, that I could have a knee replacement. My wife had died, and I was anxious to sell my place and buy a bungalow in Estevan, so I was extremely busy and had to cancel. The doctor put me back on the list, and I went to the bottom of it.

I went to pre-op for the second time and talked to the specialist this summer in Estevan. He said he had no control of the list but would talk to his secretary. I phoned the help line, and they said there was a two-year waiting list for this specialist. I asked what that meant, and she said . . . I am on the list October 25, '04 and inquiring how long before. She said she was not privy to that information, and it meant another 14 months wait. In the meantime I went to emergency three times for shots for pain. My doctor gave me Toradol which helped for the night and then prescribed pills for 10 days, two a day. My pharmacist said to try and keep it to one pill a day and get off them as soon as possible.

As a crib note to all this, in July 1997 I had a heart attack while out summerfallowing. I got to my cellphone and had an ambulance take me to the hospital. I stayed there for a week and then had a stress test and an appointment in Regina with a specialist. He said my test was very good, and I had another one in late October, after taking Atenolol [or something the drug is, Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry; I don't know how to pronounce it].

My daughter and her husband took me to Minot, North Dakota for a . . . [inaudible] . . . I didn't get in the building. I went down. Ambulance took me to the hospital, and a doctor gave me an angiogram and said I had to have surgery immediately, and he recommended a doctor in St. Regis at Bismarck.

I was operated on, a five bypass, next morning. I had . . . [inaudible] . . . Blue Cross Sask medical card. And they went ahead, and I went home in a week.

They phoned and said the Government of Saskatchewan wouldn't pay. I got in touch with the Government of Saskatchewan and said I would pay the difference in the money if that was the problem since I was on their waiting list anyway. They refused.

And I started cashing in my RSPs. Within a year I had it all paid, \$79,000 Canadian. I asked for a second look by the Government of Saskatchewan, and they did a second

look. And they sent me back a cheque for \$7 — a dollar for each day I was in the hospital.

And then he goes on to say about this all showed . . . the RSPs he had to withdraw showed up on his income tax the next year, and he suffered the impact of this. But I think that's a very sad day.

And I will also remind the public of what the Premier had to say when he was in opposition:

Tonight she's in a motel room in Calgary, away from her community, away from her friends, away from many of her family, away from the support of her church. She lies in a motel room in Calgary, Alberta, Mr. Speaker, because health care for her was not available in Saskatchewan.

I . . . think it's a sad day in Saskatchewan, it's a sad day for a Saskatchewan family when a loved one must flee this province to find the care she needs. It's a sad day, Mr. Speaker.

And that was a sad day for that family, Mr. Speaker, and for this province. But has it improved? Frankly it's gotten worse.

This Premier and this government have had over 14 years in power. They are simply old, tired, and out of ideas. They are living in the past under the *Regina Manifesto* and Tommy.

Wake up. Quit dreaming. Do a reality check. People in other parts of the world are tearing down the walls, getting rid of socialism. This government is building barriers.

I could go on and on about this, Mr. Speaker, but there are others who do want to pass on their comments regarding the Throne Speech and their disappointment in it in many cases. So, I guess, as you have already assumed, Mr. Speaker, I will not support the Throne Speech, but I will be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Borgerson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to welcome you back to your role as the best listener in this Assembly and to welcome and congratulate the member from Regina Wascana Plains for her election and selection — her historic election and selection — as Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in support of the Speech from the Throne as presented by my government. But since the hour is late and people are in a relaxed mood, let me start by telling you a short story.

In this year 2005 as we have celebrated our 100th birthday, another centenary was celebrated in another part of Canada. It was a celebration of an incredible canoe trip in 1905 by a woman, Mina Hubbard and her four Métis and First Nations guides — George Elson, Job Chappies, Joe Iserhoff, and Gilbert Blake — across Labrador to George River Post and Ungava Bay, 1,000 kilometres in all.

The journey has attracted a lot of interest over the years from historians, geographers, women's studies departments, and those who simply appreciate a great story.

You see for Mina Hubbard this canoe trip was in honour of her husband who had died attempting it just two years before. His expedition ran out of time, out of food, out of energy. And as winter set in, he died alone in a small tent while his two companions made a desperate attempt to find help.

Two years later in 1905, Mina Hubbard completed his journey up the Nascapsee River and down the George River to Ungava. But the real hero of her story was George Elson, her Métis guide, the same man who had brought her husband's body out of the wilderness two years before. He led Mina Hubbard's canoe quest up the incredible rapids of the Nascapsee River, over long gruelling portages, across huge windswept lakes, and down wild stretches of the George River — tortured at times by black flies, mosquitoes, or miserable weather, but at the same time falling in love with the beauty of this wilderness, an appreciation of the Inuit people who had travelled through this country off and on through the centuries.

Mr. Speaker, I tell you all of this because there's one moment from that journey that I want to share with you. At one point late in the journey, Mina Hubbard finds George Elson standing at a high point, looking thoughtfully out over the valley of the Nascapsee River, and she asks him what he's thinking. Elson pauses and says, I was just thinking how proud I am of this river.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in spite of the hardships and difficulties of the journey, this Métis man kept his perspective. For him nothing could overcome his appreciation and his respect for the beauty of the country through which he was travelling.

And so as we celebrate our province's centenary, as we stand on this height of land bridging two centuries, we too are mindful of the hardships and difficulties we've experienced in this province, but we keep our perspective. For us as well, nothing can overcome our appreciation and respect for the beauty of the country through which we travel and the good life we have been given here.

[20:45]

I believe this is especially true in my constituency. I've said before that Saskatchewan Rivers is a microcosm of the province with prairie and forest, lakes and rivers, regional, provincial and national parks, and work that includes just about every sector of the provincial economy — farming, ranching, forestry, tourism, numerous businesses and service industries, oil and gas exploration, and of course, diamonds, which I hope will soon be Sask Rivers' best friend.

With such a diverse constituency I believe I have one of the busiest constituency offices in the province, and I thank Barbara Terfloth and Caroline Bendig for being so thorough in their work, so supportive of their MLA, and so responsive to our constituents.

At the midpoint of my first term as an MLA, at this height of

land looking back at the first two years of this journey and forward to the years to come, in spite of the rapids and inclement weather of our journey in Saskatchewan Rivers, in spite of the difficulties we face in the forest sector and the hardships on the farm, I am proud of my constituency, of its natural beauty and of its people. Saskatchewan Rivers has a rich diversity of people, young and old, from numerous cultural backgrounds including many Métis constituents and both Cree and Dakota First Nations. I want to acknowledge those I knew when I was elected, and the many, many I have met since then.

The member from Regina Rosemont expressed my feelings well the other day when she said, when I'm out in the community, I love my job. I too love my constituency work most, and it's because of the people I meet over the phone and in their communities. It is an honour to serve them. And on that note I want to especially acknowledge Leo King of Paddockwood who I visited on Remembrance Day. In just one week on the 21st, Leo will turn 99 years old. When I visited with Leo and his wife, Eva, at their home, Leo talked about a letter he wanted to send to the Premier. He said, I can't write very well — and then he pointed to his head — but this is still working.

And so when I read the Speech from the Throne of course I can't help but think first of my constituents. What does it mean for them? And I'll say here, Madam Deputy Speaker, what others have said, that the speech provides the right balance, a vision of our future as a province as we move into our second century as well as specific initiatives, specific beginnings.

For all of those constituents who need health care, the Throne Speech reaffirms our commitment to publicly funded, universal health care.

Wait lists, which have become less of a problem in my constituency, will continue to decline. Access to MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging] will continue to improve. Through Project Hope those with addictions will have more help which will include a 15-bed treatment facility in Prince Albert.

As someone whose great-grandmother, Augusta Borgerson, was a midwife who I am told delivered somewhere around 200 babies and whose sister, Theolina, was also a midwife, I am proud to see our government's commitment to include midwifery in hospital and community settings. Mr. Speaker, one of the joys of my work as an MLA are the little surprises, the unexpected connections I find as I meet new people. I can remember meeting an elderly person Harold Field — who's 90 years old now — in Weldon a few years ago, and as we talked about our families and found connections, he suddenly looked at me and said, your great-grandmother delivered me. So I'm glad to see the tradition of midwifery acknowledged in our Throne Speech.

For the families in my constituency, we will establish a pre-K program for four-year-olds, and I can't help but think of the single parents that I knew at SUNTEP [Saskatchewan urban native teacher education program] and what this program will mean for them and for their children.

For the First Nations women of my constituency, we will

address cases of missing persons and this will include the issue of missing women raised by the Stolen Sisters report as well as violence against women in general. On behalf of close friends who have raised this issue with me, on behalf of a close friend who was recently a victim of such violence, I look forward to this work by this government.

For many people who work in the service industry our increases to the minimum wage will make a difference, and we have signalled that the day will come when all workers will have full access to health care and pension benefits. In a country as privileged as ours, there is no excuse for poverty, no one should be left behind.

For those who provide community-based services there will be additional funding for wages, recruitment and retention. For the many artists who reside in my constituency, the Speech from the Throne designates the year 2007 as a year of artistic celebration. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, the year after that, 2008 will mark the 60th anniversary of the Saskatchewan Arts Board, the first board of its kind in North America created by a CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] government in 1948.

For those of my residents who use natural gas, propane and fuel oil, the Energy Share program provides some relief over the winter months as well as some simple, effective conservation initiatives. Opposition members who suggested the plan is complicated have not done their homework. We are matching the federal EnerGuide program which avoids duplication and which, by the way, is as simple as this. You get your house rated as is, as it could be, then you look up those two numbers on a grid to see what grant you will receive. What's so complicated about that?

For those constituents from Sask Rivers who travel to Saskatoon for business or recreation and for the many tourists who come to Emma Lake, Anglin Lake, Candle Lake and Waskesiu, this government will proceed with twinning No. 11 Highway. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, as someone who has lived in the North and spends part of every summer there, as someone who heard the concerns of northerners during the Premier's tour this spring, I applaud our government's commitment to northern roads in this Throne Speech.

For the rural communities along Highway 55, the Throne Speech promises to pursue the potential of the Fort-a-la-Corne site, the largest diamond-bearing kimberlite clusters in the world. If a mine becomes feasible, it will revitalize communities like Choiceland, Smeaton, White Fox, and Meath Park.

For the rural residents of my constituency — be they farm, lake land, or rural residents — the Speech from the Throne promises:

... a long-term solution to education property tax relief that is in the best interests of both students and taxpayers.

For the farmers who live in my constituency, we have announced that we will fully fund the CAIS program as we did for 2004 and 2003. CAIS needs fixing, and the 60/40 split is unfair. We all know that, but it has made a real difference for

some of the farmers in my constituency.

I want to acknowledge here, Madam Deputy Speaker, the pressures faced by farmers in my constituency with two years of drought followed by last year's frost, followed by this year's rains. This fall was like a monsoon season in Sask Rivers, and there are still crops out, especially in the northeast. Last Thursday night as I drove home from Regina I could see combines running once again. The crop is still coming off but it's not worth much, not only because of the poor quality but because of low prices in general.

Madam Deputy Speaker, farmers know that even if the weather were to co-operate, even if we had a good crop in quantity and quality, the root problems would still be there — high input costs and low market prices, a cost-price squeeze that's getting worse and worse. And while farmers are experiencing negative net farm incomes, the big multinationals are making buckets of money from agriculture from the seed to the shelf.

Why is it that the opposition doesn't want to talk about this? You'll notice that the member from Rosetown-Elrose made no mention of it today, nor did the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford. The member from Estevan approached the topic but didn't talk about the causes. They'll go after CAIS. They'll go after crop insurance. They'll go after education tax, but they say almost nothing about the high cost of inputs that farmers face.

Well I think I know why. The Saskatchewan Party avoids talking about the cost-price squeeze that farmers are experiencing because they think it will jeopardize our business climate. Instead they will continue to criticize farm support programs and urge government to do more, but not at the expense of our business climate. After all this party, the Saskatchewan Party are the devotees, the groupies of big business.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to have a good business climate, but if this is the sum total of your economic thinking, you're in trouble. The Speech from the Throne has a much broader vision than that, a vision that includes a prosperous business climate, but also a climate of fairness and equity. It promises a diverse business environment that includes private, co-operative, and public enterprise. It promises to include more youth and Aboriginal people in the labour market and business sector, and that we will work with First Nations and Métis people, quote, "... to ensure they become full participants, as employees, and as business partners, in the economic mainstream."

It promises climate change and energy initiatives that will contribute to our economy. Twenty years from now one-third of our energy needs will be met by renewable energy sources. We have begun that project with our centennial wind power project, which will result in 73,000 homes being powered by the wind.

Madam Deputy Speaker, wind power is the second fastest growing energy source in the world, second to solar thermal. With wind turbines hooked to the grid and wind turbines for individual homes, more and more countries are looking to the wind for clean energy. Denmark, Germany, Spain are in front but we are on the way.

I read last week, Madam Deputy Speaker, that Colorado is now producing electricity from wind that is cheaper than conventional sources. Madam Deputy Speaker, when our grandparents settled here they looked to the wind for power, for pumping water and, before rural electrification, for lighting homes. Perhaps sometime in our second century there will be as many wind turbines across our prairie as there once were windmills.

You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, this past summer, the centennial summer, we did ourselves proud. As we celebrated our 100th birthday, we held a wave of celebrations across this province — 3,500 in all. And in Saskatchewan Rivers we partied hard. We had homecomings, powwows, reunions, galas, sports events, dedications, awards ceremonies, arts events, sports days. We had pancake breakfasts, parades, and picnics. We served up incredible centennial cakes, or in the case of Anglin Lake . . . [inaudible] . . . 100 candlelit cupcakes. On one day alone in July in my constituency there was the unveiling of a plaque commemorating the Montreal Lake trail, a 50th reunion celebration and centennial celebration in Christopher Lake, a centennial celebration at Sturgeon Lake Regional Park, a centennial powwow at Little Red River, as well as an art show. And all of this thanks to volunteers and organizers extraordinaire.

Saskatchewan is known for its community spirit and volunteerism, and that spirit was even more awesome than the fireworks displays that filled the skies of our centennial summer. Madam Deputy Speaker, we sang our centennial songs, enjoyed our centennial play. We followed the progress of the Centennial Canoe Quest, 30 voyageur canoes racing down the Churchill River from La Loche to Sturgeon Landing down incredible rapids like Drum and Otter, over gruelling portages like Great Devil, across huge wind-swept lakes like Lac La Loche and Peter Pond, and down the wild stretches of the Sturgeon-Weir River, tortured at times by mosquitoes or inclement weather, but at the same time falling in love with the beauty of this wilderness and appreciation of the Cree and Dene people who have travelled the Churchill River through the centuries. In spite of the hardships and difficulties of that journey, I know that nothing could overcome their appreciation and respect for the beauty of the country through which they were travelling.

[21:00]

I'm sure they share the same perspective of that Métis canoeist 100 years ago when he said, I'm proud of this river.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as someone who has lived and travelled on the Churchill River, I am proud to see in the Speech from the Throne that our government will consult with northerners toward the recognition of the Churchill as one of our natural legacies.

As the member from Regina South has explained the canoe quest ended with the last four canoes linking up, joining hands and paddles as they crossed the finish line together so that no canoe would be left behind. And I'd like to end with that image, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is the image that will stay with everyone who participated in the canoe quest — the organizers and volunteers, the people who live in the 13 host communities

along the Churchill and Sturgeon-Weir rivers, the spectators who watched the canoes set off and arrive each day, the hundreds who filled the bridge at Otter Rapids, and of course the canoeists themselves.

It is the image of those final canoes, the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], Lakeland College and chiman canoes being assisted by the crew from Stanley Mission, and by each other after dumping in the rapids of the lower Sturgeon-Weir just four kilometres from the finish line, it is the image of those four canoes coming in together so that no one would be left behind, it is that image that captures the spirit of this province. In those four canoes — and four is a symbolic number, Madam Deputy Speaker — in those four canoes men and women, young and old, Aboriginal and non Aboriginal, from the North and South, this is the spirit that captures the essence of this province.

Our throne spirit captures that spirit, Madam Deputy Speaker, the spirit of the Centennial Canoe Quest. It states that, quote, “. . . on the path to future opportunity and prosperity, no one will be left behind.” With that as a vision, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am proud of the Speech from the Throne, and I proudly support it without amendment as presented by our Lieutenant Governor. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Indian Head-Milestone.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. It certainly is a privilege again this year to join in the debate regarding the Throne Speech. I guess it's been about a year and a half since we've had this opportunity to speak of not only what was in the Throne Speech but to talk about a number of other issues that are important — be it our constituencies, be it our family and a number of issues like that. So I am glad to be able to take the opportunity to enter into the debate.

The first thing I would like to talk about is the constituency of Indian Head-Milestone, as many other members have spoke of their constituencies. And I too am very fortunate to represent a constituency full of hard-working people. I would say that I think the citizens of Indian Head-Milestone are some of the best.

When people ask me, what do you like about your job? What is it about being an MLA that you like? And I have to, every time, say that the amount of people that you meet, the number of people that you meet, and certainly, the large majority of those come from the constituency that I represent. I've met some very fine people, and some people over the last six years I've become quite good friends with, Madam Deputy Speaker. And I think it's, for me, the part of the job that I enjoy the most.

I have a story to tell of some of the constituents that I represent and some of the hard-working constituents, the constituents that never say die, that are out there working hard. But this story happened this summer. We as MLAs and everyone in this House have had the opportunity to present Centennial Medals. Centennial Medals go to anyone that is 100 years of age or older in our constituency.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Why is the member on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Madam Speaker. I ask for leave to introduce guests.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to agree? I recognize the member from Athabasca, the Minister for Northern Affairs.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I apologize to the member from Indian Head-Milestone. But it's not often that I have a family member joining us in the Assembly.

I'd like to take a few minutes to ask the Assembly to recognize my daughter, Kellie, who is in the Speaker's gallery. Kellie is the middle child of three wonderful daughters. And I'm happy to say that she, like her other sisters, look like their mother, so the chances of them making it in life is fairly good. So I would ask all the members of the Assembly to welcome my daughter Kellie who is here visiting. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Indian Head-Milestone.

#### SPECIAL ORDER

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Ms. Junor, seconded by Mr. Harper, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Wall.]

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. She only seemed a little embarrassed — just a little embarrassed — to be introduced in the House.

But I did want to talk about the story about giving out Centennial Medals, centenarian medals to anyone that was 100 years of age or older in the constituency, and I had the opportunity of handing out and presenting, I should say, four centenarian medals.

And the one that really stuck in my mind, that really I think epitomized so many of the people in the constituency of Indian Head-Milestone, was when I was in Fort Qu'Appelle handing out the medal at the Echo Valley Lodge, the long-term care home in Fort Qu'Appelle. And I was able to present the medal to a lady who was 103. I thought it was significant this lady had never been married and was 103, and I'll let all of the members put their own one-liners in on that one. I won't go on to that.

But as I presented the medal and I was speaking, just before I got up to speak, one of aides in the long-term care home was telling me that there are two members in that home that are 99

years of age. And so when I was presenting the medal I recognized the two people that were 99 years of age and one old gentlemen who had been on the farm all his life and was in very good shape.

And so as I got down after presenting the medal, this older gentlemen kind of waved me over. And he said, so you're telling me I'm not old enough. Because of course it was only for people that were 100 years of age and older and he was 99. He said, so you're telling me that I'm not old enough and I said, well I'm sorry sir; you know it was only for 100-year members or older. And he goes, well maybe next year. So that's the spirit of the people in Saskatchewan. Although he wasn't eligible this year, I'm sure he'll be there for the presentation, whenever the next presentation would be.

The other thing that I would like to do before I get into other comments regarding the Speech from the Throne is to thank the members of my family, Cindy and our two boys, Mark and Craig. It's not an easy job, and I don't mean it's not an easy job being an MLA. I mean it's not an easy job being a spouse or siblings of a MLA whose life is generally quite busy. We seem to be busy when they have some time off, whether it's on the weekends this year through centennial events or whether it's many evening meetings that we have to go to as MLAs on both sides of the House. So it's not an easy job and that is the job of a spouse or kids of an MLA. So I thank them for the support that they've given me over the last number of years, the last six years.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. McMorris:** — The other person that I need to thank before I get into the Throne Speech is my constituency assistant. And I know a lot of other MLAs have thanked their constituency assistant. I do have to thank mine very much for the six years of service and hopefully many, many more that she will have serving the people of Indian Head-Milestone. But Vonni Widdis does just an absolutely wonderful job.

You know, I guess you can say that my face is the one that's in the newspapers as far as ads concerning the constituency office, but Vonni really is the heart and soul, but more importantly the voice that so many constituents hear when they phone in to our constituency office. She does an absolutely wonderful job, and I can tell you without any doubt that over six years I don't know if I've had one complaint regarding my constituency assistant, but I can tell you I've had an awful lot of compliments. And in this business, compliments don't come real fast and steady. So to have a constituency assistant that represents my interests or myself to the constituencies of Indian Head-Milestone is absolutely exceptional. So I'd like to thank Vonni for that.

The other couple of things that I want to talk about before I get into the gist of the Throne Speech is when you look at the constituency of Indian Head-Milestone again, the constituency really has an agriculture base. I mean whether it's from Rouleau and Avonlea through Milestone, Wilcox, some of the best farmland, Indian Head, some of the best farmland in the province whether it's . . . it's mainly an agriculture-based constituency.

There is one area though on the very northern border of my

constituency . . . is the beautiful Qu'Appelle Valley. And there are a couple of issues that are really significant in that area which are unique to the whole constituency because that area really relies on tourism. It relies pretty much completely . . . whether it's in the summer through the Calling Lakes, whether it's Pasqua, Echo, Mission, or Katepwa or in the wintertime whether it's the ski hill at Mission Ridge who, by the way, is just putting in a chair lift so anybody that's interested in skiing this winter . . . and now we've got the snow for it. I'm sure the conditions will be great. But there is a chair lift in southern Saskatchewan for skiers, and that would be Mission Ridge at Fort Qu'Appelle. So I would ask everybody to check that out.

I do want to talk about a couple of other issues regarding the Fort Qu'Appelle area. And the most important one is the water level. The water level on the two lakes of Qu'Appelle . . . of Pasqua and Echo haven't been an issue this year because an interim agreement has been struck for two years, this year and the next year. But I would ask the Minister of Environment, who I know is listening right now, to make sure that he stays on top of that file.

I will compliment him for the fact that he has been involved in this file which is a 110 per cent improvement from the former minister of Environment who we stood in this House and said you need to be involved with this file. You need to be involved with the federal government and the First Nations to find a solution to the impasse regarding the water structures on the Calling Lakes. And I will compliment the minister for being involved. But what I will ask him is that he continues to be involved and make sure that after this next year when the interim agreement is no longer, that there will be a long-term agreement because tourism is the very heart and soul of that valley, and without a proper water level you'll see businesses drop. They're already going through some changes there.

And that was the other issue I wanted to talk about is the Fort San and what is happening with that property because that was a huge revenue generator for many years when the National Defence had its navy cadets in that building. And all of a sudden that was ripped away and that Fort San property sat absolutely vacant this whole past year, didn't bring \$1 of revenue into that valley. And it is much needed revenue because it's just one more ability for that whole area to promote itself through tourism.

So those are the two issues that kind of pertain to unique situations in the Qu'Appelle Valley. Most everything else is geared around agriculture that I want to discuss in a little bit.

When I was at the Speech from the Throne and listening to the Lieutenant-Governor give the Speech from the Throne, I found it quite interesting because I had invited two guests who sat on the floor of the Assembly. They'd never been here before, two sisters that were here listening to the Speech from the Throne and never having been in the building and never having listened to the Speech from the Throne. So as the Throne Speech was finished and we go through the tea, and as we were standing at the tea actually one of the ladies said to me, she said regarding the Speech from the Throne, she said, I think in a quite a sarcastic voice but you know I mean she was I guess trying to be as polite as possible. She said, boy they're going to have a lot of work cut out for them, aren't they. They sure have a lot of

work cut out for them to accomplish everything that the government tried to say in the Speech from the Throne. And I thought to myself after, I said, I wish I could be so optimistic. Even though it was a little sarcastic, boy they have a lot of work to do.

Because when I was listening to the Throne Speech I didn't get that sense. The sense that I got was it was a government that was really on an island by itself, and the rest of the province was operating around them. They were kind of off by themselves not attached to reality. It just seemed like . . . and exactly what the one newspaper article said right after the Throne Speech, the next day, big reality gaps in the Throne Speech. And I truly believe there were reality gaps. It almost seemed like they were on an island.

In fact, Madam Deputy Speaker, there's a quote here that I wanted to just kind of read into the record that would I think pretty much describe the feeling that I had after listening to the Throne Speech. And the quote goes like this:

Mr. Speaker, maybe it's a disease of old governments that you can grow so completely out of touch with where people are at. Maybe it's a disease of old governments that you become sort of like an island of arrogance here in the marble palace of the legislature so that they sit there in this island of arrogance and they won't listen.

[21:15]

I thought that really kind of encapsulated what I heard from the Throne Speech. The problem was is that was the Premier, May 31, 1991, talking about a former government, a former government that was so out of touch that it was on an island of arrogance here in the marble palace. And I just really thought, isn't that exactly right? His words are so prophetic because that is the exact feeling I got when I listened to this government through the Lieutenant Governor giving a Throne Speech, that it truly was out of touch.

What it talked about, what it was saying was going to happen, what its direction was for the rest of the province is not where people are at. It just isn't where people are at, and it just really seemed to fit the whole theme of what I want to say as I go forward in talking about a number of different issues and where the government is at, where this NDP government is at — on its island of arrogance within the marble palace — and where the rest of the people are at. I mean the former premier said it about the Grant Devine government, and I don't think he . . . maybe he was accurate. But he could stand here today and say those same words about his government, about his very own government?

One of the examples . . . And certainly this summer has been a very busy summer. We all have had many centennial events to go to. I was fortunate to attend many in the constituency of Indian Head-Milestone. I think I was able to ride in and wave and throw out candy in 13 different parades in my constituency. I had to miss four because of overlap, so that would make 17 different parades in a constituency of Indian Head-Milestone. Every community had one. And people were in a great mood, great frame of mind.

And certainly the first community that held a centennial event was in early June. It was the community of Edenwold, which has a population of in the 200, 250. And at the supper served by the community, there was about 1,000 people, fivefold population increase on that sunny day in June.

And I will compliment the minister . . . or not the minister, but the member for Moose Jaw North who attended many, many ceremonies throughout the province. I mean we were . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . the secretary of the centennial. We were all very busy as MLAs, but I don't know if any of us probably had the calendar that that member did as he was at many events. I guess there weren't quite enough in Moose Jaw because I know he was at a number in Indian Head-Milestone and did a good job of the centennial.

But everybody was in a great mood. And that member when he was riding around was waving just like all the rest of us to the, you know, the hundreds of people on the streets . . . But I don't think that member went back to those communities on the Monday following or the Tuesday following. It was like a great party, and I tell you, the day or two after, it didn't feel too good. It was a great party and everybody was having a lot of fun, but two days after, the hangover was something unimaginable in this province. And it shouldn't be like that because there were people home from all over Canada, really.

I represent, as I said, the constituency of Indian Head-Milestone which has Balgonie in it, which is right on the No. 1 Highway as a number of other communities are. But I have one person who farms right . . . his farmyard is right on the No. 1 Highway. And all summer long through seeding, through haying, through harvest — not so much harvest — but through seeding and haying, spraying season, he had to cross the No. 1 Highway. And he said, never in his life, in his 40 years of farming in that same homestead has he had so much trouble getting across that No. 1 Highway because the traffic volumes were really enlarged in the province.

There was a lot of people coming into the province for centennials. But isn't that the problem? Isn't that the problem? There are so many people coming into the province that two days later, the hangover hits because they're going home. And we see it over and over and over again, Mr. Speaker, but nothing, nothing illustrated it better than the centennial events this summer.

And when you look at some of the statistics that we see in the province as far as out-migration, it's not surprising that when you have a homecoming, you're going to have a lot of people travelling because we've had so many people travel out of this province. For example, between 1992 and the year 2003, in 11 years there, Saskatchewan lost 60,000 people to net out-migration. Forty thousand of those people that left were between the ages of 15 and 29, and those are the people that are coming home to our centennials.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we see all the time this out-migration. And the government in its Speech from the Throne really dealt very, very little with it. Fifty-eight per cent of the people who leave Saskatchewan are moving to Alberta. So if the person from Balgonie saw the influx in traffic coming from the east, can you imagine what people around Maple Creek and Swift

Current and those communities saw as so many people are coming from the west from Alberta back into the province to celebrate the centennial.

Mr. Speaker, it really . . . Madam Speaker, it really does . . . I have a hard time with that, and I'm going to try and get onto by the end of session. But if I say Mr. Speaker a few times, that's my mistake.

But certainly when you look at this government and the Throne Speech, it really did look like it's on an island of arrogance in the marble palace. I couldn't have said it better myself, but unfortunately the Premier said it himself — not about his government, but it sure could've been about his government.

It talks in the Throne Speech regarding communities. And I've already talked about out-migration. But it says in the Throne Speech:

In the future, Saskatchewan communities will be larger and more cosmopolitan, requiring sophisticated infrastructure and services, and safe . . . affordable housing.

That's a laudable goal. That's a laudable goal for communities to be larger. But the reality is, the reality is it's not happening in Saskatchewan. Our communities are getting smaller and smaller.

And I want to use an example of a community that I grew up. I grew up in the small town of Lewvan. Lewvan's about 35 miles southeast of Regina, a community that was on the 306 Highway, railway going through.

And when I was growing up there, there was four elevators operating. My dad ran one of them, and in our family there were four. One of the other grain buyers that operated the Pioneer, they had a family of four. Two other families operating, whether it was the Pool and the National . . . but four elevators in that community.

There was a Co-op store. There was a grocery store. There was a post office. There's a community hall. There's a rink. All the services and in a short time, really I think it just seems to be overnight, but in a short time that community has gone from having all those services and about 40 and 50 people living in it to a community that there isn't one person living in that community — a community that had all the services to absolutely nobody.

I remember and I've told this story many, many times listening to . . . a few years ago, you listen to a western, and they'd talk about ghost towns in westerns. And I've thought, who in the world would have to worry about a ghost town? Why would there be a ghost town? Until you go into rural Saskatchewan today and there are ghost towns, and unfortunately I come from one of them.

But the NDP's Throne Speech is talking about larger, cosmopolitan communities. Reality of what's happening out there and where this government is, is nowhere close to being combined. They're completely out of touch.

If I can read back the fact that they are on an island of arrogance in the marble palace is exactly accurate for this NDP government, for this government run by the Premier currently.

Mr. Speaker, the main issue facing constituents that I hear from is agriculture in the constituency of Indian Head-Milestone, and certainly there are a number of problems in agriculture. The member from North Battleford says, are you glad to see the CAIS program? Let's talk a little bit about the CAIS program. You know I just find it absolutely amazing that they would sit in those benches and tout the fact that they have fully funded CAIS for 2005.

I want to tell you that when you sign an agreement with a federal government to fund a program and then you sit here and pat yourself on the back that you have funded it for 2005, no questions or no comments or no commitments as to what's going to happen in the future . . . The last time I went to the bank and checked my mortgage and I said guess what? I think I'm going pay you for 2005. I don't what I'm going to do in 2006. I sign an agreement. I've signed on the dotted line, and I think I might fund you for 2005. I think I may make the mortgage payments or the car payments or any other payment, but I can't guarantee you too much in 2006. I'm sorry.

And that's the way . . . That's the type of commitment this government makes. It wants to be real proud of the fact that it's finally fulfilling a commitment that it made three years ago. And you're pretty proud of that. And they're pretty proud of that.

You know there aren't too many farmers sitting at the kitchen table today after the first snowfall, serious snowfall, sitting there saying, you know we've got trouble on the farm this year, but thank God this NDP government is funding the 2005 program. I don't know anybody that's saying that because quite frankly everyone of those agriculture producers are planning for 2006. They're looking at how they're going to market the products they've got, they've grown in 2005. But they're going to the bankers and saying, how are we going to fund the crop in 2006?

Now if they would have said in the Throne Speech that we will fund fully the CAIS program for 2006, 2007, you would have got compliments from this side. But you know what? They stand there, and they say for the first two years, 2003 and 2004, the government did nothing but use farmers as pawns, saying we might fund it. Oh I don't know if we're going to fund it. Maybe if you talk nice about our government, we might fund it. They held farmers hostage. They used them as blackmail before they funded 2003 and 2004. And now you expect us to pat them on the back because they funded 2005. Well I'm sorry; that's not going to happen because until you start committing forward instead of past you're not going to be getting compliments from the agriculture sector here in this province.

Commodity prices are at an all-time low. In the constituency that I represent, we had some very good crops. We are fortunate not to have much effect with the weather as far as quality. We had great quantity. There are farmers out there with piles of grain on the ground, that have never had piles so large, of 200,000 bushels in certain piles within the constituency. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, they're wondering what are they going

to do to get rid of it.

The cost of the inputs are so high. I want to touch on the last speaker from Saskatchewan Rivers that was talking about the business of farming and the big corporations that are raking up all of the money, the big corporations that are raking up all of the money. Well if you were to talk farmer to farmer to farmer, if you're to be at SARM earlier last week, this past week, you'd find out one of the issues that they feel is most devastating to their farm is not the big corporation that's raking the money off the farm. It's the NDP government, that it fails continually to fund the education portion of property tax. It isn't whether Monsanto is charging however many cents a pound for Roundup Ready canola. It isn't whether Co-op is charging too much for its diesel. All those are factors, but the one factor that this government can control, they tend to do absolutely nothing about it.

It was interesting how the member from Saskatchewan Rivers talked about the squeeze that the input costs are rising significantly. You're looking at fertilizer at close to 500 bucks a tonne, which is absolutely unbelievable when I look about six or seven years ago and it was around \$250 a tonne. When you look at diesel right now that hasn't dropped down in price, you're looking at \$1 a litre. And the member from Estevan talked about how much it costs to run a piece of equipment for a day just for fuel alone. These input costs are increasing, increasing, increasing.

[21:30]

Oh yes, and property tax on the east side that has gone up 50 per cent, increasing, increasing — the one thing that this government can control. But the squeeze is input cost increasing and commodity prices decreasing. About four years ago canary prices were looking at about — I don't know — 15 to 20 cents a pound and even prior to that up closer to 40 cents a pound, but an average price around 20 cents a pound, 10 dollars a bushel. Right now you'd be hard pressed to get eight cents a pound or \$4 a bushel. So we've doubled input costs, and we've cut in half the price of our commodities.

The members on the opposite side are making jokes about canary and how much canary seed is. But you know it's . . . some of the products, when they stand there and they say well farmers have got to change their practices . . . Agriculture has changed so much in the last 10 years. Farmers are growing commodities that they can sell when they choose to sell them, not through the Canadian Wheat Board, Mr. Speaker, whether it's canary, whether it's lentils, whether it's peas, whether it's canola, whether it's flax. That's what's keeping agriculture alive today. But the problem is, is those prices are dropping down.

So you get a squeeze as the member from Saskatchewan Rivers said. And he was blaming the big corporations. But you know what was really interesting when he was speaking is that he stopped short of giving a solution. What is the NDP's solution then to big corporations? Are you going to cap the price of fertilizer? Are you going to cap the price of fuel? He'd like to blame, but he failed to find a solution. He failed to identify any solutions. And I would really be interested to hear from the Minister of Agriculture or anyone from the government benches



what their plans are to correct these large corporations that are stripping all the cash out of the agriculture sector.

Because I do know what the solutions from SARM are and SUMA regarding the property tax. We know what the solutions are, but this government fails to find solutions on the one thing that they can control — education property tax. Well the Deputy Premier's laughing. He said education property tax, it's not that big of a deal. Ask the member sitting right to your left, the member from North Battleford, the reception he got at SARM. And he said, oh it was a warm reception. Well there's the exact . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . it was a heated reception? There's that exact quote that I want to go back to the Premier when he sits on his island of arrogance in the marble palace. He doesn't have a clue what is happening on the ground around him, Mr. Speaker, and that's where this government is.

There are certainly many more topics in agriculture that I could talk on, but I do want to move on to I believe probably health care and the issues around health care and the issues around the waiting list. If there's ever an example that this government is on an island of arrogance in the marble palace, it would be this one. When we hear the Minister of Health talking about how great the health care system is and then we hear the story today about the Reynolds from Foam Lake and the situation that they have gone through.

And you know one of the questions when I was going through that and we were saying, is this a one and only situation or is it more common? Well believe me, for every one or two families that have the nerve to go public — and it's not an easy thing to go public with a health care issue, to stand in front of the cameras and have your story spread across the media — for every one or two of those people that go public you could expect 20 to 30 to 40 to 50 families that are going through the same thing that don't feel comfortable confronting this government publicly.

Because you know what we hear when we say it? I know of a couple of individuals that are waiting. One individual who is 49 years old, waiting for a knee replacement, has been on crutches for almost a year. He's been on the urgent list, and he hasn't had the knee replacement, and he's in terrible shape. If he had been working for somebody, I guess he would be off on workers' comp. He owns his own business, and he hobbles to work every day and hobbles back waiting for a knee replacement. I said, would you like to go public? He goes, no I don't want to do that. I don't know whether that's going to help me or whether it will bump me to the end of the list. That's what people feel like out there, Mr. Speaker.

And so when you hear the government and you see what the minister wrote in the *Leader-Post* about three weeks ago — health care is improving; health care is improving — that's the government spin. But the reality, the anecdotal evidence, the reality is, is that people do not see that health care is improving whatsoever. There are case after case after case where people are languishing on waiting lists, and it's absolutely unacceptable.

We heard the government talk again in the Throne Speech about re-announcing hospitals and it's re-announced the Humboldt hospital about five or six times. I think this is the sixth time it's

re-announced the opening of the Swift Current hospital. As well I know it's talked about Moosomin and re-announced that one many, many times. I believe that the people of Humboldt right now feel that, had the government come anywhere close to keeping its promises, it would have a hospital six times the size they really needed because they've announced it six times, Madam Deputy Speaker.

They just want the hospital built. Announce it once and follow through with your promise, Mr. Speaker, because this government fails to do that.

The health sciences building in Saskatoon has been talked about for two and a half years, and the funding is not in place yet. It's a great project. The Deputy Premier says it's a good project. We couldn't agree more with you. Fund it. Announce it once and follow through with your announcement. And that's unfortunately what the government doesn't do.

Another example, and we heard the speaker just previous to me from Saskatchewan Rivers talk about the story of midwifery and how it's impacted his family. Well I couldn't agree more that that legislation needs to be proclaimed. But why would a government pass legislation and sit on it for six years? Why would they pass legislation and sit on it for six years? Mind you, I do know that they've passed legislation — oh I don't know, 20 years ago — regarding hours of work and sat on it until it seemed like the opportune time to slide it as a carrot to the unions. Is that what it was? But I don't understand why midwifery was so tough to proclaim — to sit on it for six years. I will say though that they have finally made the right decision.

After talking to the industry, after talking to the industry, you certainly know that there is a problem because they need to self-regulate. Well they've taken so long to proclaim the legislation that many of the midwives have moved out of the province. Our information tells that there is only two or three midwives left in the province. It's pretty tough to self-regulate in that situation. But had they proclaimed it as soon as they passed it, it probably would have been a much different situation.

The last issue I want to talk about and it really does speak, if you ask me, to the very fact that this government is on "an island of arrogance . . . in the marble palace". And it's a quote again from the Premier, dated June 23, 1987, and we've all heard it a couple times and I'm sure we'll hear it quite a few more times:

People, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will forgive mistakes; they may even forgive incompetence; but they will not forgive betrayal.

And we hear the government members say oh, no, no, no, you can't characterize the minister of SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] that way. He didn't betray. He didn't betray. He didn't betray the people of Saskatchewan. Well I don't know what would you would call it then when the minister — and I give him credit for this — because I don't know if it was all his fault, definitely somewhere within the NDP circles. But that he would stand in his place and apologize for misleading the public for six years, he would stand and apologize for misleading the public for six

years — frankly, frankly, I would call that betraying the public. And the public will never forgive him, or never forgive this government.

And then for the Premier to stand in his place and put that member back into cabinet, after betraying the public for six years is absolutely unacceptable. It's absolutely unacceptable unless you happen to be on an island of arrogance in the marble palace. And then it's perfectly fine because if you're on an island by yourself, you don't have to worry.

But, Madame Deputy Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan do not accept that type of leadership. They will not accept that type of leadership. And because of that, I will be supporting the amendment to the Speech from the Throne and not supporting the Throne Speech. And I would move to adjourn debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved that we adjourn the debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Madam Speaker, that having been said, I think if you test the House, you will find that there is agreement on a motion to adjourn the House.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. This Assembly now stands adjourned until Tuesday at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 21:39.]

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Premier

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Minister of Healthy Living Services

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