



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

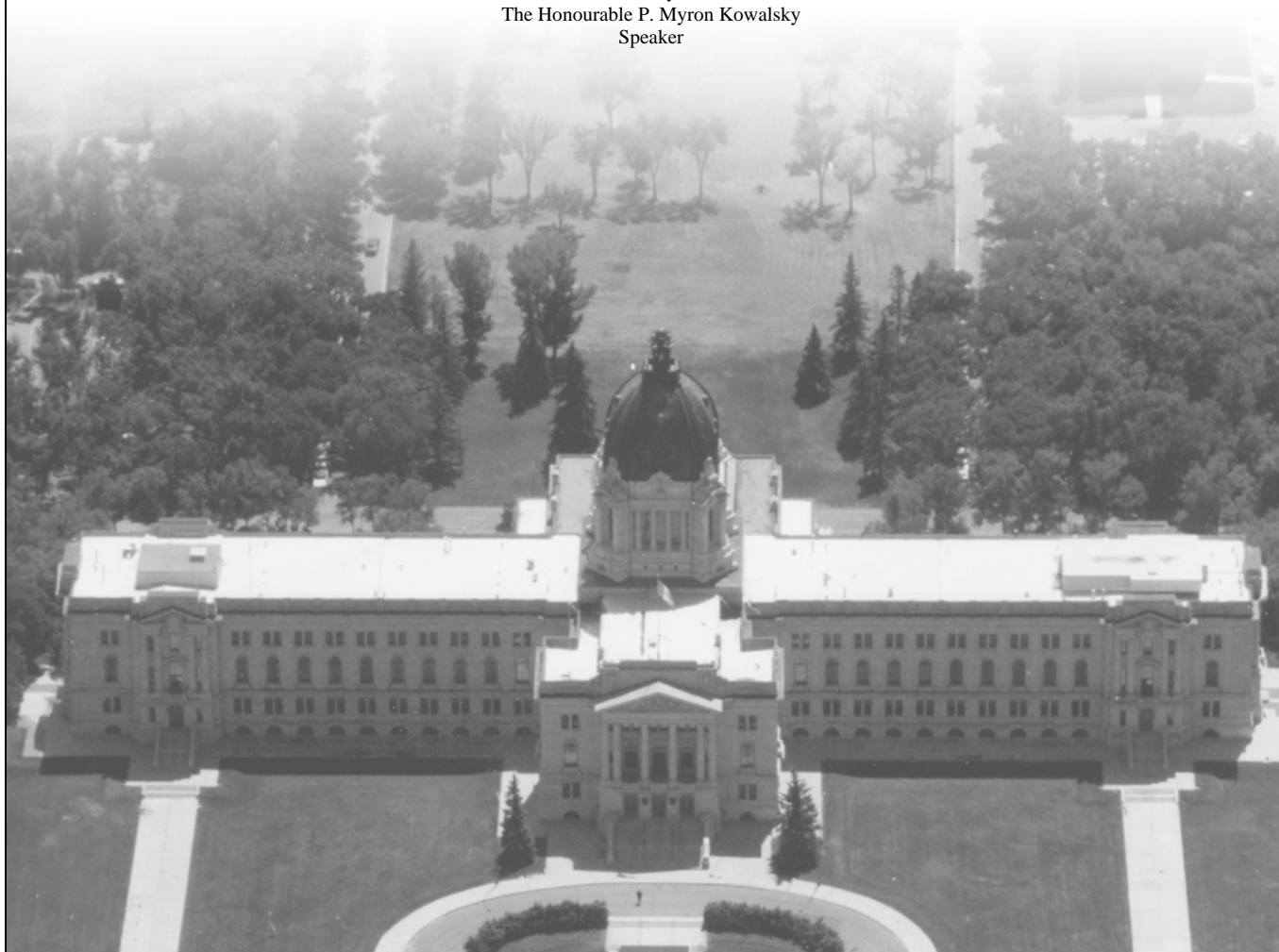
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Addley, Hon. Graham	NDP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Hon. Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Beatty, Hon. Joan	NDP	Cumberland
Belanger, Hon. Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornrud, 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, 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, Hon. 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, 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, Hon. Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney
Vacant		Weyburn-Big Muddy

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of individuals in this province concerned about the government's decision not to fund the cancer-fighting drug Avastin. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these three pages of petitions are signed by individuals from the city of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition regarding the issue around Avastin and the whole scenario of entering into two-tier health care here in the province. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed from many people in the Balgonie area. I so present.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have petitions opposed to the NDP's [New Democratic Party] two tiered health care. The petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from Saskatoon. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Swift Current, the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise on behalf of citizens concerned with the government's refusal to fund Avastin. The prayer of their petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

I present this on behalf of people from the city of Saskatoon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise today on behalf of people who would be unable to pay for the drug Avastin personally:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

The people who have signed this petition are from Bjorkdale, Zenon Park, Tisdale, Weekes, and Melfort. I so present.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to fund Avastin. And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by people who are concerned that forcing patients to pay for this drug is an example of two tiered health care. Mr. Speaker, the prayer of the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Mr. Speaker, a number of signatures on this petition, all from the city of Saskatoon, and I am pleased to present it on their behalf.

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

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

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

The signators, Mr. Speaker, are from the city of Saskatoon.

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

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As well, I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with this government's particular brand of two-tier health care as it

pertains to cancer relief. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Limerick, Watrous, Saskatoon, and Humboldt. I so present.

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

Mr. Wakefield: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition concerning the funding of Avastin. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly will be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

The signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Saskatoon, and I'm pleased to present it on their behalf.

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

Mr. Chisholm: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present a petition regarding the funding of the drug Avastin:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

The signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Saskatoon.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to present a petition on behalf of citizens of the province of Saskatchewan who are very upset with this government's refusal to fund the cancer drug Avastin. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the city of Saskatoon, and I'm proud to be able to present it on their behalf.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I too have a

petition of citizens that are concerned about a cancer drug only being available to those that can afford to pay for it. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are all from the great city of Saskatoon.

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

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In spite of my cold, I'm pleased to rise on behalf of my colleagues to present a petition in regards to the cancer drug Avastin. Signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the cities of Saskatoon, Regina and the communities of Tisdale, Sylvania. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

I'm pleased to present on their behalf.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too rise today to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who are deeply concerned about the implementation of a two-tier health system. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by folks from Balgonie. I so present.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again to present a petition from citizens of Saskatchewan concerned about the government not fully funding the cancer drug Avastin. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Signed by the good citizens of Saskatoon, Asquith, and Langham. I so present.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition on behalf of

families across Saskatchewan concerned that Saskatchewan is the only province besides PEI [Prince Edward Island] that does not have a children's hospital. The prayer of the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement an allocation of financial resources in this year's budget to build a provincial children's hospital in Saskatoon.

The petitioners today, Mr. Speaker, live on Kutz Crescent, Wright Crescent, and Kaplan Green in northeast Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise with a petition from citizens in Saskatchewan that are concerned with the NDP's two tiered health system. And the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by the good citizens of Saskatoon, Battleford, and one that's already left for Calgary. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also rise to present a petition. The petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures of this petition are from Saskatoon, Yorkton, and P.A. [Prince Albert]. I so present.

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan concerned with the cancer drug Avastin. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, it is signed by the good people of Saskatoon. And I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I join with my colleagues with citizens that are appalled at the NDP's two tiered health system:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This particular petition is signed by the good citizens from the town of Davidson. I so present.

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour and a privilege today to rise on behalf of the citizens of Saskatchewan who would like the funding of the drug Avastin. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

I so present on behalf of the citizens of Saskatoon.

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

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise today on behalf of concerned citizens who are concerned that forcing patients to pay for the cancer drug Avastin is a tailor-made example of two tiered health care.

And the prayers reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Mr. Speaker, signed by citizens from Saskatoon and Warman.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14(7) are hereby read and received as additions to previously tabled petitions being addendums to sessional paper nos. 5, 7, 64, 67, 639, 644, and 645.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Chair for the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 26, The Traffic Safety Amendment Act with amendments.

The Speaker: — When shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I request that the consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill be waived.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested that consideration for Committee of the Whole of this Bill be waived. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall this amendment be read the first time? The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS**Bill No. 26 — The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2005**

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the amendments now be read for the first and second time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that the amendments be now read a first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First and second reading of the amendments.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a third time? The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

THIRD READINGS**Bill No. 26 — The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2005**

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, by leave I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — Leave has been requested. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. It has been moved by the Government House Leader that this Bill No. 26 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day 41 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of SaskWater: is management of the department aware of any allegations of fraud or other illegal activity within the department or its agencies in the year 2002 and 2003 such as information received from employees, former employees, customers, clients, suppliers, or others? If so, what is the nature of the activity?

And I ask that same question, Mr. Speaker, for the years '01-02 and 2000-2001. While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 41 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of SaskWater: does management of the department have any knowledge of any actual or suspected fraud or illegal activity within the department during the year 2002-03? If so, what is the nature of this activity?

[13:45]

And I ask that same question for the years '01-02, and 2000 and 2001. I give notice that I shall on day no. 41 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of SaskWater: did management of the department have established programs and controls to mitigate fraud risks or to help prevent or detect fraud in the year 2002-2003?

And I ask that same question for the years '01-02 and 2000-2001. I give notice that I shall on day no. 41 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of SaskWater: how did management of the department monitor any established programs and controls to mitigate fraud risks or to help prevent or detect fraud in the year '02-03?

And I ask that same question for the years '01-02 and 2000-2001. And finally, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 41 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of SaskWater: what did management of the department find as a result of its monitoring of any established programs and controls to mitigate fraud risk or detect fraud in the year '02-03?

And I also ask that same question for the years '01-02 and 2000-2001. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 41 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskTel: in the calendar year 2006, how many of the 150 rural communities that do not have high-speed Internet will be getting high-speed Internet and which ones, if any?

Thank you.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 41 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of the Public Service Commission: is management of the department aware of any allegations of fraud or other illegal activity within the department or its agencies in the year 2002-2003 such as information received from employees, former employees, customers, clients, suppliers or others? And question no. 2, if so, what is the nature of the activity?

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 41 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of the Public Service Commission: what did management of the department find as a result of its monitoring of any established programs and controls to mitigate fraud risk or detect fraud in the year 2002-2003?

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I give notice that I shall on day no. 41 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of the Public Service Commission: does management of the department have any knowledge of any actual or suspected fraud or illegal activity within the department during the year 2002-2003? If so, what is the nature of this activity?

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I give notice that I shall on day no. 41 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of the Public Service Commission: how did management of the department monitor any established programs and controls to mitigate fraud risks or to help develop or prevent and detect fraud in the year 2002-2003?

And, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 41 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of the Public Service Commission: did management of the department have established programs and controls to mitigate fraud risks or to help prevent or detect fraud in the year 2002-2003?

Mr. Speaker, I have a similar set of questions for the year 2000-2001 and for the year 2001-2002. Thank you, Mr.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Tartan Day

Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, today is Tartan Day, a day of appreciation for the Scottish descendants here in Saskatchewan and across the country. Today not only celebrating the signing of the Declaration of Arbroath, but the many contributions that Scots have made to our great province.

Mr. Speaker, Scotland has lent its colours to the people of this province and to the history of Saskatchewan. Walter Scott, Saskatchewan's first premier and W.R. Motherwell, our first minister of Agriculture for example were both of old Scotia.

Our province was also home to another great Scottish descendant, a man recognized throughout Canada for his invaluable contributions to our way of life, Thomas Clement Douglas of Saskatchewan was born a son of Falkirk.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that all members had the opportunity to hear the Sons of Scotland Benevolent Association this morning. The association represents one of the largest Scottish organizations in Canada. They came this morning to share some piping and drumming in celebration of Tartan Day. Mr. Speaker, the focus of the Sons of Scotland is the preservation of Scottish traditions, history, music, and literature. And as we saw this morning, Scottish culture is alive and well in Saskatchewan.

I invite all members to join with me in extending thanks to the Sons of Scotland Benevolent Association for performing here today and in congratulating the many Scottish groups in our province on their day, Tartan Day. Slainte M'hath.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I think I got a little ahead of myself there. I would ask members to revert back to introductions of guests.

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I notice we have some guests with us today, and I wanted to, I wanted to introduce a few of the guests who are with us today in the Assembly. First I want to say thank you to all those who are joining us today in the Assembly in the various galleries throughout the building and who are watching us on TV.

I want to start today by welcoming members of my family who are coming today to watch me present the provincial budget a little later. And if I could just ask them to stand as I introduce them to members of the Assembly. I'd like to start by introducing my father, David Thomson, and his wife, Pat

Sonntag. My mother, Patricia Leson, and her husband, my stepfather, Ed Leson. My grandmother, Nora Patterson, from Spruce Home. My brother, Matthew. My sister, Lisa.

And the guy at the end isn't a member of my family. I'll introduce him in a minute. But these are the members of my family, and I'm very pleased they've joined me here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, in your gallery are seated three very important guests with us today that I would like to introduce to the Assembly. They're members of the business tax review commission. Joining us today are Jack Vicq. Jack, do you want to stand? Thank you. Cheryl Shepherd and Charlie Baldock. If I could ask all members to welcome these three very important individuals to our Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I received a whole lot of advice in helping to pull together this budget. This may be a surprise to some members. I certainly welcomed the many opportunities for discussion that I had around the province, the advice that I had from the business tax review committee. I also received advice from other people in our community.

Although they're not joining us in the Assembly today, I understand seated in one of the galleries in the building today is Bonnie Morton and Peter Gilmer with the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry. Their advice was very important to me as I put together this budget. I'd ask members to join me in thanking them and welcoming them to the legislature today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Finally, as an old student union president, I take great pleasure today in having some of the new student union presidents here. I wish they had maybe not followed all of my tactics in lobbying the government, but I am, nevertheless, very happy to have with us today Gavin Gardiner, who's seated on the floor of the Assembly from the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] Students' Union.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — And Victor Thomas from the University of Regina Students' Union. Victor, up in the east gallery. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me just say on behalf of all of us to all of those who have joined us here today: thank you very much for joining us, thank you for your advice, thank you for your continued commitment to Saskatchewan, and welcome.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for

Melville-Saltcoats.

Ministers' Comments

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, this looks like yesterday was about the fourth day in a row the NDP government has been caught not being completely accurate.

Yesterday the Minister of Agriculture revealed that he spoke to the federal Minister of Agriculture, and after being pressed by reporters finally had to admit to this, Mr. Speaker. And I have a quote from our Minister of Agriculture:

We did talk about me referencing Mr. Strahl's buck up comments when I spoke to him last week, . . . [but] I won't tell you exactly what he said to me.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it sounds like the Agriculture minister received a bit of a tongue-lashing, and I would have given anything to be a fly on the wall and heard that conversation.

But, Mr. Speaker, this is nothing new for this NDP government. Let's not forget that it was only a few days ago that the Deputy Premier was put in his place for comments such as that. And, Mr. Speaker, now we have the Ag minister having to live up to his less-than-accurate quotes.

Mr. Speaker, we've seen so many falsities this session from the NDP government, it's starting to become commonplace. They hoot and holler about credibility, but when it comes down to it, they're the ones whose credibility is routinely questioned. Mr. Speaker, they are the ones being caught explaining their misleading statements. And they are the ones, Mr. Speaker, who will be sitting on this side of the House after the next election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, I hope the Ag minister can take it upon himself to stop antagonizing the federal Minister of Agriculture and build a positive, mature relationship. The farmers of Saskatchewan deserve no less.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Saskatoon Dealership Wins Awards and Accolades

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise in the Assembly today to congratulate Nick and Cathy Allen, the proud owners of Redline Harley-Davidson in Saskatoon on receiving the Deeley Harley-Davidson Retailer of the Year Award and the Deeley Harley-Davidson CEO [chief executive officer] Gold Award.

This award is presented only to those retailers who exhibit the very best in business practice and who demonstrate excellence in performance, people, and facilities. This is the third time in four years that Redline has received the Dealer of the Year Award, demonstrating their strong commitment to customer service. And this is the fourth year in a row that Redline

received the CEO Gold Award. Such an accomplishment has never been demonstrated by any other dealership in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, Nick and Cathy are lifetime residents of Saskatchewan. They first opened Redline Harley-Davidson in 1988. In 1997, they moved into the old Firestone building on the corner of 23rd Street and 1st Avenue. Their continued hard work and dedication to downtown Saskatoon shows them to be true business leaders.

Their love for the legendary machines is evident. In their own words: "People form a common bond. You're going to see a construction worker alongside a lawyer and nothing else matters but the riding."

So I ask all members in the Assembly today to join me in congratulating Nick, Cathy, and all the good folks at Redline Harley-Davidson. Best wishes for continued success. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Losing People in the Middle of a Boom

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to deliver a message to the Premier and his government from the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are renowned for their strong sense of pride and tenacity. But they are tired of this government's attempts to lower the expectations of this province's potential, and sadly, Mr. Speaker, they are voting with their feet. When they hear things like the Premier call himself the wee Premier from the wee province, when they hear the member from Regina Wascana Plains say that Saskatchewan will never grow, or when there is less means more for the rest of us from the member from P.A. Northcote, Mr. Speaker, they are robbed of their pride.

Mr. Speaker, a couple emailed John Gormley and here is what they had to say and I quote:

My wife and I are both medical professionals with over 19 years of postsecondary education, all done here in Saskatchewan. We are young, [we] have a young family, and [we] enjoy our province. Why, then, are we leaving and many like us despite our "hot" economy?

Simple, there is no plan for this province . . .

We have just as many resources in our land, [our] water, and [our] people, but [they] avoid their massive potential . . .

By the way, a 1 or 2% tax break is not going to cut it. Until we see this vision and utilization of our potential, we will continue to vote with our feet and the government should not be surprised as the population continues to decline.

Mr. Speaker, why are we still losing people in the middle of a boom?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Saskatchewan's Booming Economy

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, what better time than a budget day to talk about some of the really good, economic news stories that have been coming out of Saskatchewan lately.

Let's see, Mr. Speaker, on the investment side, we have the recently announced \$2.3 billion expansion to the Husky Oil Upgrader in Lloydminster.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, Stats Canada reports that new capital spending intentions will increase well over 6 per cent — half a billion dollars. And for the first time, new capital spending will surpass the \$8.3 billion mark. Private sector investment will account for almost 80 per cent of the total \$6.6 billion.

Mr. Speaker, last year manufacturing shipments totalled over \$10 billion. This represents an 8 per cent increase over the year before.

[14:00]

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Research Council's hydrogen and ethanol dual-fuelled trucks were featured by Globe 2006, a biennial conference on business and the environment — this technology developed right here in Saskatchewan that is going to help pioneer the next generation of fuel cell vehicles in transportation industry.

And then there's the resource sector — from the announcement from Oilsands Quest about oil sands right here in Saskatchewan to the increase in drilling numbers to the 66 per cent increase in revenue from the sale of mineral rights.

It's good news, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's good news. And in spite of the unrelenting negativity of those members opposite, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's economy is booming. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Out-Migration of Talent

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm deeply troubled by the continued out-migration of very talented Saskatchewan people. I recently learned that Andrew Will, CEO of the Cypress Hills Health Authority, is leaving his post to go to Alberta.

Ben Weber, chairperson of the Sunrise Health Authority, is also packing up his family and moving to Alberta. Mr. Weber is the former mayor of Yorkton. And this is what Mr. Weber had to say yesterday in the Yorkton paper, and I quote:

This is becoming a very competitive world. People in my position are very mobile . . .

We can drift anywhere from BC to Newfoundland at the drop of a hat . . .

Where I'm going, the property tax is much less and certainly the services are as good or better.

As good or better, Mr. Speaker. How can that be? Less property tax, but services that are as good or better? Well I think the answer is obvious, Mr. Speaker. All of the Western provinces do things differently, and Saskatchewan is being left behind — left behind by CEOs, left behind by nurses, by volunteers, left behind by the very people that have been instrumental in building our communities.

I'm very concerned, Mr. Speaker, as many others are in Saskatchewan because of all these people leaving. Who's going to look after our seniors? Who's going to pay for social programs and health and education? Mr. Speaker, when we lose people during a boom, the long-term future of our province does not look very bright. It's time to tear up the *Regina Manifesto* and move into the 21st century.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Regina's Economy

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was extremely pleased to attend the Regina Regional Economic Development Authority luncheon earlier this week.

Mario Lefebvre, an economist with the Conference Board of Canada, had some very positive things to say about Regina's economy and also endorsed the careful and considered steps that Saskatchewan is taking to address issues associated with the economy and population.

He talked about the sustained economic growth and increased economic activity in Regina and noted that the city was in the top five in terms of GDP [gross domestic product] among Canada's 20 major metropolitan centres in 2005.

He had quite a bit to say about Saskatchewan's population problem and spoke very positively of the actions that this government is taking to address it. And, Mr. Speaker, he spoke at length about the problem of being located to the province with the hottest economy and fastest growing population in Canada and how, despite that, Regina has posted strong economic growth for the past eight years and will see growth for the next four.

All in all, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Lefebvre's were very positive for Regina's economy and Saskatchewan as a whole, quote:

"You don't get eight solid years of economic growth out of luck," or by fluke . . . [is how he put it.]

Mr. Lefebvre noted that there is work to do in the province, but he also noted that we are doing it. At no point, Mr. Speaker, did he suggest tearing down everything Saskatchewan has accomplished over the last 60 years and starting over. Why would he, Mr. Speaker? The notion is completely absurd.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Plans for Population and Economic Growth

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a few moments we're going to hear the sixth budget since this current Premier took office. And in every budget in some manner, some form, the Premier, the government has promised to attract young people, to retain young people for the province of Saskatchewan. And in every budget, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately for our province this NDP government has failed to do that.

Every single year since the Premier took office, there have been people moving out of Saskatchewan. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in the past five years under this current Premier, under the NDP's policies, a total of 16,000 young people between the ages of 15 and 29 have left the province. At the beginning of this session we asked the Premier a simple question: does he have a goal for population growth?

At the time he wouldn't answer the question. Apparently he doesn't have such a goal. Just moments ahead of this budget that he says is about prosperity and opportunity, we ask him again today: what is his goal for population growth for the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, point number one, I will be very proud to stand in this legislature with the Minister of Finance to deliver this budget. It will be the sixth budget since I've become Premier. It will be, Mr. Speaker, to note, the 13th balanced budget in a row, Mr. Speaker. That's a Canadian record, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now, Mr. Speaker, the next point the Leader of the Opposition makes is about out-migration over these past number of years. He indicated, I believe, that an out-migration figure of about 16,000 people has existed over five years, he says. Well I want to remind that member, that Leader of the Opposition, when he worked in the government of Grant Devine, in one year, Mr. Speaker, the year 1989 — in one year — we lost 16,909. One year, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we see the challenge that is before us: the

challenge to provide opportunities for Saskatchewan young people, the challenge of building a quality of life, the challenge of opening our borders, the challenge of engaging our Aboriginal young people. Mr. Speaker, this government sees the challenge, and this government has a plan. And if the member will just sit tight, he's going to hear it in just a few moments.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, no wonder this NDP government, and specifically this NDP government's economic plan, is such a wreck. They're trying to drive while looking out the back window, Mr. Speaker. That's what we hear from this government, from this Premier, all the time.

Here is his record. The population loss of young people alone since he took office, ages 15 to 29 . . . 16,000 people, the size of Yorkton, have left. They've already voted on this Premier's economic record. They voted with their feet unfortunately, and they left the province. He's gone on to post the worse out-migration population record in the Dominion of Canada, Mr. Speaker.

And so the question, and so the question to the Premier is this, the question is this: what is his goal? Surely the Premier of the province must have a goal for population growth. Does he have it, and if he does, will he stand up and share it with the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the people in Saskatchewan wonder why it is on a daily basis we're subject to the negativity of the Leader of the Opposition and the Sask Party. He stands in his place today, Mr. Speaker, if you can believe it, he stands in his place today and calls the Saskatchewan economy — what did he call it? — a wreck. A wreck, Mr. Speaker, a wreck. When the Royal Bank of Canada says we're going to lead economic growth in the country again with great GDP growth, the Royal Bank of Canada who is generating headlines in our province saying, "Boom times ahead . . ."

He calls an economy that has GDP growth leading the nation, an economy that is producing a record number of jobs, a record number of housing starts, record levels of manufacturing shipments, record activity in the energy and the mining sector, Mr. Speaker, record activity in research and development, record activity in the quality of life, Mr. Speaker — he calls that a wreck. Is it any wonder he's just not credible? That opposition is just not credible, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well I believe I said it

right the first time, but I want to thank the Premier for giving the opportunity to repeat it. Let's be very clear. What is a wreck, Mr. Speaker, in the province of Saskatchewan, is that government's economic strategy and that government's economic record. That's what's a wreck.

This Premier is presiding over his economic plan that is losing out to Manitoba, never mind Alberta or British Columbia. Manitoba, with — what? — the marginal percentage of resources that we have, is outperforming his economy, his current economic plan in jobs and in population.

We ask the Premier a very simple question. We know that some of his members say that it's statistically impossible for this province to grow from a population standpoint at even the national average which is 1 per cent. Is that the Premier's position? Does he believe it's impossible to achieve even the national average? And if he believes something else, why in the world wouldn't he stand in his place today, moments ahead of a budget, and say, here is the goal we have for growing our population? Why won't he do that, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the question that the Leader of the Opposition needs to ask is what in the world happened to his plan. Remember they ran in the last election, they had this thing, I believe it was called Grow Saskatchewan or something — Grow Saskatchewan. And they were going to get 100,000 people a year, 100,000 people a year. Well as soon as the people of Saskatchewan rejected that plan, they came up with another one. I think it was here last year. It was 100 good ideas. Mr. Speaker, where has that plan gone?

The Speaker: — Order please. I ask members for order, please. One at a time. The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as my colleague just says, we have a plan du jour, or no plan du jour.

Mr. Speaker, we will see in today's budget a solid vision and a solid plan for the people and the future of Saskatchewan. We will grow investment in this province. We will grow opportunities for our young people right here at home. And, Mr. Speaker, we will be investing in the education of those young people. We will be investing in the training of those young people. We will give them new tools to start in the trades. And, Mr. Speaker, we are reaching out to ensure that we build in this province an unbreakable social fabric.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Fiscal Policies

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry that the Premier missed our plan but fortunately for him today it's here today in the form of the Vicq report.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, the NDP, the NDP . . . Obviously, Mr. Speaker, none of them have read it.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously none of them have read our report or the Vicq report, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NDP has a long tradition — yes, they do — of kicking Saskatchewan taxpayers on budget day. But this is the first time, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Finance actually went out and bought steel-toed boots to kick Saskatchewan taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, in the 2003 election campaign this Premier promised to reduce taxes. Then just four months later, Mr. Speaker, what did he do? He broke that promise and hiked the PST [provincial sales tax] — \$150 million tax grab, \$500 million over three years. Mr. Speaker, the NDP now has over \$1 billion more in revenue than they did last year. But they refuse to give Saskatchewan taxpayers a break by reducing the PST.

Mr. Speaker, why is the Minister of Finance still kicking Saskatchewan taxpayers?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I've heard some whoppers in this House but nothing, nothing like what I've just heard from the Finance critic of the Saskatchewan Party who stood in his place and said, quote, the Saskatchewan Party plan is the Vicq commission or the Vicq commission is the Saskatchewan Party plan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, let me tell you, let me tell you the reality, Mr. Speaker. We hosted last year, to open our centennial, Saskatchewan's first economic summit where we brought together business leaders, small-business people, working people, trade unionists, Aboriginal people, young people, the entire cross-section of the province of Saskatchewan. We sat down to look at the future of our province and the economic changes that we needed to make.

From that, Mr. Speaker, from that arose the Vicq commission and from the Vicq commission has come much of what you will see in the budget today. But you know what, Mr. Speaker? There was only one group of people in the province of Saskatchewan who boycotted Saskatchewan's economic summit. Guess which group? For politics, the Saskatchewan Party boycotted. They've had nothing to do with the budget you'll see today.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier is sounding like the Sask Party leader lite. Mr. Speaker, what we need in this province is the Sask Party, not the Sask Party lite.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, a couple of years ago when this government was broke, the NDP broke the Premier's election promise and hiked the PST. Now this government is sitting on a mountain of money, a mountain of new oil revenue. And are they giving Saskatchewan taxpayers a break by reversing the PST increase? We don't know, Mr. Speaker. The Finance minister says no yesterday. We don't know but we'll find out, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the minister continues to put the boots to Saskatchewan taxpayers by refusing to roll back this massive tax grab. Mr. Speaker, the NDP has about 1 billion new dollars to spend. That's about \$4,000 for every family of four in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. How much of that \$4,000 for every family will the Minister of Finance be giving back to Saskatchewan families today?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is going to take his place very shortly and speak to this entire legislature and to the province of Saskatchewan. In the meantime, I just want to say this. When that Finance critic or that leader goes off to speak to their business functions in Calgary, their fundraising functions in Calgary, I just wish they'd tell the whole story. I just wish they'd tell the whole story in this legislature.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite will know that for the average family of four in Saskatchewan earning an income of \$50,000, they will pay in provincial sales taxes \$1,074 on average — 1,074. And they will pay no sales taxes in Calgary. But if they would just tell the whole story, that same family in Calgary will be paying a health care premium of \$1,056, Mr. Speaker — 1,056.

Meanwhile the family living in Saskatoon is paying \$3,200 less on their mortgage. They're paying \$1,100 less on their home heating bill and they're paying \$1,200 less on their auto insurance and they're guaranteed the lowest package of utilities in the country. Tell the whole story.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Recruiting and Retaining Nurses

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday a colleague — my colleague, the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Biggar — raised the issue about Bobbie Haynes, a mother in his constituency who is worried

about her daughter. Bobbie's daughter is a young nurse here in Regina who, only after five months on the job, is feeling burnt-out. She is really thinking about getting out of the nursing profession and, according to her mother, so are many of her nursing colleagues looking at burnout and looking at other careers. Mr. Speaker, it's a sad state of affairs when our young nurses are getting burnt-out within the first year of work.

Can this Minister of Health tell the Assembly today that the budget will address the real concern in health care recruitment and retention of our nursing professionals?

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too am looking forward to the delivery of the budget in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker. The people of Saskatchewan have been looking at the pressures and challenges faced in the health care system. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm very interested and very excited about the possibilities of some new dollars in the health care field later today.

Mr. Speaker, I'm expecting that the budget will provide the department and the people of Saskatchewan with additional dollars to implement sections of the workforce action plan — the report that we brought down just four months ago, Mr. Speaker — a plan that will improve Saskatchewan's self-sufficiency and training, create employment opportunities for newly trained professionals, improve our ability to recruit needed professionals, build a more representative workforce, provide continuing education and professional development, and better align the planning needs to match service and health needs with supply.

Mr. Speaker, this could be a very exciting afternoon for the health care field.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, we will be looking for some exact targets from this government because this spring the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses has called on this government to hire or recruit 600 new nurses to address the most important issues of patient safety and so that nurses can operate and practise to their professional standards, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Health doesn't think Saskatchewan needs 600 new nurses, but he doesn't seem to want to set a target. He's scared to set a target because, in his own words, he probably can't meet it. What an attitude, Mr. Speaker. He can't set a target because he won't meet it.

Mr. Speaker, nurses are asking this government for a comprehensive plan that includes targets. Will this budget address the issue on how many nurses we need to retain and recruit in this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to have the question today because I'm very pleased that when the budget is coming down, the Department of Health will have a multi-faceted approach to dealing with recruitment and retention of professionals who work within the system.

Mr. Speaker, specifically to nurses, we know that during the course of the next 12 months we will graduate some 233 nurses, some of them with bursaries. Mr. Speaker, just this week I have been informed . . . Mr. Speaker, I'd like to provide some good news to the members opposite. Just this week, Mr. Speaker, the chief of nursing in the province of Saskatchewan surveyed 80 graduates who will come from the nursing education program, registered nurses to be graduating in April, Mr. Speaker, this month. Of those 80, Mr. Speaker, of those surveyed, 90 per cent, Mr. Speaker, will be working in Saskatchewan. They have jobs. They will be working in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, this year.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Funding for Avastin

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health should be very familiar with these two names: Terry Rak and Bob Loeppky. These are two men in Saskatchewan who have colorectal cancer and are being denied funding of the drug Avastin to extend their lives.

Mr. Speaker, in a recent letter sent to the Premier, Marj Rak, Terry's wife, wrote, and I quote:

We have been betrayed by your government with . . . [your] refusal to fund the essential . . . [and] highly recommended drug [Avastin].

She goes on to quote:

We know our province has a . . . [extra] billion dollar surplus. What is a surplus for if not for improving the quality of life for the citizens . . . [in our] province?

Mr. Speaker, with a extra billion dollars worth of revenue, will the minister stand in his place and reverse his decision to force this province into two-tier health care? Will he do that?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the members opposite and those who were listening to our announcement a couple of weeks ago will understand that the decision that this government made was a very difficult one. The need to provide balanced, responsible care, Mr. Speaker — very important to this government and to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes the number of new

cancer drugs being brought into the workplace. We support very much the expansion of the common drug review amongst all provinces in Canada. And, Mr. Speaker, we support the development of a national pharmaceutical strategy that will help all provinces deal with this. Mr. Speaker, let's not forget no province in Canada, Mr. Speaker, provides universal access to the drug Avastin.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Funding for Hospital Construction

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on behalf of people in several Saskatchewan communities, one of which is Humboldt, who are being held hostage by the NDP government when it comes to new health care facilities.

The NDP government has announced these community facilities and hospitals on a number of occasions — and they're enjoying a photo op every time — but the delays have resulted in skyrocketing costs. Initially the good people of Humboldt for example were asked to come up with \$8 million and they did. And now the government has given them only 40 days to commit to an additional \$5 million.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister tell us what will happen to the Humboldt hospital if the community isn't able to come up with the money? But he probably won't answer that question. So I'll help him out because he told the media the other day that what would happen is that the project would be delayed even longer or it would be downsized, Mr. Speaker.

Will the minister commit today to more than just a reannouncement of hospital and health care facilities? Will he provide the people of Humboldt — and the other areas where they've made these promises year after year — with some breathing room by readjusting the cost sharing agreement?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The members' opposite credibility in this regard with regards to reading newspaper clippings and trying to interpret my comments, Mr. Speaker . . . The important thing that we're talking about here today, Mr. Speaker, is the commitment of this government to health care facilities across this province.

Mr. Speaker, each and every year we commit significant capital dollars in conjunction with communities in this province to provide capital to enable facilities to be built. Since 1994 communities have worked with this government to provide facilities in a 65/35 split on capital, Mr. Speaker. That has not changed at this point in time, Mr. Speaker. We are committed to working with the people of Humboldt, with the Saskatoon Health Region who are advancing this project forward and, Mr. Speaker, we expect that this project will go forward in the way in which the people of Humboldt will be pleased.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Support for Agriculture

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, myself and every farmer in this province in Saskatchewan is looking forward to hearing what's in the budget this afternoon, remembering that there's been many cuts over the last few years — in fact under that Premier's leadership — many cuts made to farm programs in the province of Saskatchewan.

Let's review a few of those cuts, Mr. Speaker. There's been closing of 22 rural service centres. There's the cancellation of spot loss hail. There's the increased crop insurance premiums and at the same time cutting coverage, Mr. Speaker. We had asked to extend the deadline for crop insurance premiums to be paid this year when farmers couldn't afford it, and when that didn't happen they lost their crop insurance coverage. We've had late funding for the CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization] program, Mr. Speaker, on an ongoing basis. And, Mr. Speaker, this government has \$1 billion in this budget to deal with these problems.

Can farmers look forward today for some relief for the first time in 14 years from this NDP government?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd first like to note that any additional funds that came in through our revenues over the past year have been spent probably six times already in question period by the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, there are limited resources with which to work. And with those resources I think this government has done a tremendous job in meeting the needs, Mr. Speaker. Last year in agriculture alone, Mr. Speaker, in agriculture alone, \$700 million, Mr. Speaker, to support the farmers of this province — \$700 per capita from the citizens of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, the last two years over \$1.3 billion, Mr. Speaker.

We have come to the table. We have tried, Mr. Speaker, with the resources that we have in this province, to meet every need that there is. But, Mr. Speaker, what we need, like the other people around this world, is support from a national government. The US [United States] and the EU [European Union] support their farmers, Mr. Speaker. We need the same levels of support here. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Agriculture minister to make a commitment today in question period that, number one, they will fully fund the CAIS program and not put part in now and part in later and leave farmers hanging when they go to their banks for their operating loans this spring. They need to know that the CAIS fund is fully funded by that government, Mr. Speaker, something that hasn't happened in the past three years.

And, Mr. Speaker, we've heard for the last two weeks that minister insulting the federal Minister of Agriculture to the point that we're lucky if we get any disaster relief in the province of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, that's a sad situation for that government to be in because you know who pays the price — the farmers of Saskatchewan. And not just the farmers, Mr. Speaker, but every business person out in rural Saskatchewan also is going to pay that price. And every family that lives in rural Saskatchewan is hurt when the farming community is not doing well out there.

Something that minister should do when he goes to Ottawa on Monday is apologize to that minister and tell that minister that will never happen again before he asks for help from that minister.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first of all I'd just like to note that the federal minister and I actually do have quite a good relationship. And I would also like to point out, Mr. Speaker, it is far better than what the member opposite's imagination would lead us to believe.

But I also want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that in the year '04 we fully funded CAIS for '03. We gave an initial payment; full funding announced by the end of the year. In the year '05, Mr. Speaker, we fully funded '04 CAIS — initial payment at the beginning, full funding by the end of the year.

But guess what else we did? Guess what else we did, Mr. Speaker? We fully funded the '05 year in the same year, Mr. Speaker. We have moved the agenda ahead so that we could give relief to the farmers, take away the stress.

Mr. Speaker, we have been there. We'll continue to be there. And we will fund the programs the people need. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:30]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — On behalf of the government, I'll table to responses to written questions no. 704 to 734 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 704 to 734 inclusive have been submitted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

TABLING OF ESTIMATES AND SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to submit the estimates and the supplementary estimates accompanied by a message from His Honour the Administrator.

The Speaker: — Would all members please rise for the message from the Administrator. The message is as follows:

The Administrator transmits estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31, 2007, and supplementary estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31, 2006, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly. [Signed by the] Hon. Mr. Justice S. J. Cameron, Administrator for the province of Saskatchewan.

Please be seated.

The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Government Relations, the member for Regina Douglas Park:

That His Honour, the Administrator's message, the estimates, and supplementary estimates be referred to the Committee of Finance.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance, the member for Regina South, seconded by the Minister of Government Relations, the member for Regina Douglas Park:

That His Honour, the Administrator's message, the estimates, and supplementary estimates be referred to the Committee of Finance.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure and an honour to deliver the budget in this historic Assembly today. This is the first budget of Saskatchewan's second century. And as I begin today, I want to

start by thanking my colleague, the Minister of Government Relations, the member for Regina Douglas Park, for his work and leadership in helping develop this budget.

I am also particularly pleased to be joined in this Assembly today by Ed Tchorzewski, whose work as the minister of Finance in the early days of this government helped to ensure that Saskatchewan's financial credibility was restored and that the tough decisions were taken early in order to allow this province to prosper.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, this is a budget that will build on the strong foundations laid down by those who have come before me and those across this province of ours who have contributed so much to building a better future for Saskatchewan people.

It is a budget that will build a better future by securing the prosperity that we enjoy today for a generation to come. It will build a better future by reinvesting in our social programs to ensure that no one is left behind on the path to opportunity. And it will build a better future by ensuring that Saskatchewan remains the best place in Canada to live, work, and raise a family.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, the budget I am delivering today is the 13th consecutive balanced budget of this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — It is a budget that will be our largest ever at \$7.7 billion. It will provide 8.4 per cent increase in program spending and will commit more than \$7.1 billion to program support.

This budget will contribute more than half a billion dollars to service the debt built up by the previous administration. It will establish \$102 million surplus that will be used for debt reduction. I would note that we have been able to pay off nearly \$450 million worth of debt in the past three years alone.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan was the first province in Canada to balance its books in the 1990s, and we are proud to have continued that tradition in every subsequent year. Government debt is now at its lowest point in 15 years. In fact today Saskatchewan has the third lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, this budget is balanced not only on its bottom line but it is balanced in its priorities — priorities that invest in tax cuts in economic growth, social program spending, and debt reduction. We have been able to do this through the continued dedication of Saskatchewan people who share our prairie values of common sense financial

management, of balanced taxation, and the desire to have an unbreakable social fabric that wraps around those most in need.

Today's budget is being delivered, as we enter our second century, at a time of significant opportunity and prosperity. Our economy is performing well. This year we expect to see economic growth of approximately 2.5 per cent. This builds on the economic success of Saskatchewan business that last year recorded the second highest growth in Canada for retail sales and manufacturing shipments.

Last year we saw Saskatchewan businesses and consumers push wholesale trade, business permits and exports, international exports, to double digit increases. This growth reflects the fact that Saskatchewan businesses and consumers are confident that we are building a better future and that we're seeing the benefit of being Canada's third largest producer of natural gas, second largest producer of oil, and the single largest producer of potash and uranium in the world.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the resources of our oil and gas fields, of our family farms and forests, of our mines are key to our continued prosperity. When our province first began, our economy was relatively labour intensive. A century later, we have an economy that today is relatively capital intensive. This change reflects a more mature economy and in so doing, it changes the dynamic of our labour force.

We believe however that this capital can be employed not only to create growth but to create jobs for young people and working families right across this province. It's worth noting that in the last five years alone, we have seen a 23 per cent increase in employment in the oil and gas industry. While the boom itself is not a secret, what is not well-known in this province is that Saskatchewan is emerging as a national economic leader and increasingly is receiving recognition as such from outside the province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatoon is quickly gaining the much deserved reputation as Canada's science city. It's an important economic engine in our province. It's home to much of Canada's agricultural biotechnology research, and it is home to the synchrotron. We've seen Saskatoon grow with the advanced, technology-clustered Innovation Place and significant new private sector investments in manufacturing processing facilities throughout the Saskatoon region.

In Regina we've seen our economy transformed from its traditional role as a seat of government to its emergence as a national centre for culture, for environmental research, for information and petroleum technology, and film and video production.

And indeed across Saskatchewan the strength of our manufacturing and processing facilities, mills, and factories, our forests and our farms continue to provide thousands of jobs and opportunities for Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, we have accomplished much as a people and as a

province. In 2002 Saskatchewan became a have province. Today's budget will put Saskatchewan on the path to being a permanent have province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — To do this, Mr. Speaker, we will implement the most ambitious program of business tax cuts in Saskatchewan history. These tax cuts will build on our previous measures to reduce oil and gas royalties, to encourage new investment in the mining sector, and to cut personal income taxes. These business tax cuts will help build a better future by making our economy more competitive and by encouraging business to invest more and to create new jobs right here at home.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, we will implement the changes recommended by the business tax review committee by phasing out the general corporate capital tax by July 2008, by cutting the general corporate income tax by three points this year and lowering it to 12 per cent by July 2008.

We will cut the resource surcharge rates for our oil, gas, potash, coal, and uranium in each of the next three years, and as of tonight, all new investment tax credits for manufacturing and processing will be fully refundable.

I am also pleased to announce that all new capital investments will be completely exempt from the general corporate capital tax as of July 1 of this year.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, these changes represent an investment of over \$200 million in our economy during this term, and they go further than the recommendations made by the business tax review committee.

Mr. Speaker, we also recognize that small-business owners create a large number of jobs here in Saskatchewan and that they too should enjoy the benefits of a prosperity that they have helped to create. As such, I'm announcing that we will raise the ceiling for small businesses by increasing the threshold to qualify for the small-business tax rate from 300,000 to 500,000 by July 2008.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, this will provide the highest threshold in Canada, and we believe that these measures will build a better future for Saskatchewan people by helping business invest and grow and to create new jobs for young people right here at home.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, while this budget makes historic changes to our approach for dealing with business taxes and will encourage new industries, new growth, and new jobs, we will continue to work with and support our traditional industries that continue to struggle.

As indicated earlier we anticipate a 2.5 per cent growth in the GDP this year alone. While this is a solid rate of growth, it reflects the fact that our forestry sector is under pressure. The resources, jobs, and opportunities attached to our forests that rightfully belong to the people of Saskatchewan are needing to be protected.

We remain confident that there is a better future for our forest sector that can be secured in areas like expanded OSB [oriented strand board] production, engineered wood products, dimensional lumber production, and other value-added industries in a reinvigorated pulp and paper sector. To this end, the changes in the capital taxes and the work of the new Forestry Secretariat are key to building a better future for the forestry industry.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, this budget also recognizes the ongoing pressure that farmers and other agricultural producers feel as they continue to deal with the impact of low commodity prices. As such, this budget provides over \$100 million in support for crop insurance and an additional 98.8 million for the base payment under CAIS. Mr. Speaker, while we remain concerned about the structure of CAIS, as in previous years we will look to providing additional top-up support in the third quarter as the 2006 final numbers become available. In fact, Mr. Speaker, this budget provides funding to ensure that we exceed the \$1 billion payment over five years for the business risk management chapter committed under the APF [agricultural policy framework].

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, this budget also provides very real and tangible support for farm families through a \$67 million reduction in property taxes on agricultural land as announced by the Premier earlier this year.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, we continue to be of the belief that agriculture is an important part of building the new economy through value-added products and initiatives like new approaches to organic agriculture, expanded meat processing opportunities afforded by the expansion of Maple Leaf Foods in Saskatoon, and new opportunities in grain-based ethanol production at facilities like those in Weyburn and Lloydminster that will benefit from the \$17.7 million in price support for ethanol contained in this budget.

Mr. Speaker, these investments show that we recognize that cutting business taxes is only one part of what we need to do to help transform Saskatchewan's economy and to secure our prosperity. We know that we must also invest in people to ensure that working families and young people can participate fully in the economic benefits of this province.

To this end I'm announcing today a series of initiatives that will support Saskatchewan people in participating more fully in our growing economy. Specifically this budget will provide a record \$1.5 billion in support for education and skills training.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:45]

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — This represents significant new funds to ensure that teacher's salary costs are fully funded, that literacy skills are enhanced in our population, and that the differential funding for the basic per-pupil rates in our schools is fully eliminated in this budget.

Mr. Speaker, this year more than 65,000 students will access Saskatchewan's post-secondary education and skills training programs. During this term of office we will have increased the number of training opportunities by nearly 20 per cent and will exceed our commitment to fund 5,400 new training spaces. In so doing, this budget provides \$196 million for the training system and almost \$300 million for our universities. Mr. Speaker, we believe in the value of education, and we are committed to expanding access and assuring that cost is not a significant factor in determining whether one pursues post-secondary education and then joins the workforce.

It is particularly important to help youth and students from farms and rural communities, northern communities, and students outside the major centres to attend our universities, colleges, and technical institutes. That is why our government will commit almost \$100 million to student financial assistance this year, of which nearly 70 million will be in the form of non-repayable, income-support grants, scholarships, and bursaries. Approximately 22 million of this is targeted specifically for First Nations and Métis students.

Mr. Speaker, this budget also increases the graduate tax credit to \$850 this year thereby helping students to get their career started here at home. It helps them by sheltering more than \$7,700 in income from taxation in the first year after graduation.

Mr. Speaker, I am also very pleased today to announce that we will extend the tuition freeze on all undergraduate programs at our universities until the year 2008.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order please. While I would like to advise all of our guests that our members do love the applause, you really have to be elected to be able to participate in the discussions here. So I ask them to restrain yourselves. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, as a former student union president, I can assure these young people their time will come.

Mr. Speaker, as we work to support students from across Saskatchewan get a high-quality education in order to start their careers, we recognize that for too many years First Nations and Métis youth have been left out of the halls of higher education. As a result they have been denied the ability to take their rightful places in our communities and in our labour force. This must change.

As such, we have introduced new measures to encourage the participation of these young Aboriginal people in higher

education through programs like the five-year, \$20 million Gradworks program, Aboriginal bursary programs, mathematics and science enrichment programs, and student achievement programs. We will also provide in this budget for the first time, funding for First Nations students to attend the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, in so doing we can recognize the important role the young Aboriginal people will play in helping secure the prosperity of this province for a generation to come.

Mr. Speaker, this is a province founded by Aboriginal and immigrant people. As we start our second century, it's fitting that this budget provides more than \$6 million to establish an ambitious new program to open up Saskatchewan again by attracting 5,000 new immigrants a year to live, work, and raise their families here.

Mr. Speaker, labour force and economic development require other investments as well. We recognize that today many employees make costly investments on their own to participate in our labour force. That is why I am pleased to announce, as a result of the work by the member for Regina Northeast, that we are introducing a new tax credit for tradespeople who, as employees, are required to provide their own tools to work in our growing industries.

This new tax credit will have two components: an entry credit for tradespeople who are just starting out as employees, and an annual maintenance credit that recognizes the ongoing cost of supplying and replacing tools.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, while provisions currently exist to allow self-employed tradespeople to write off the cost of tools, this measure is the first time that people employed in the trades will be recognized and provided with comparable benefit.

Mr. Speaker, the prosperity that we enjoy today is allowing us to build a better future by creating a better climate for investment and job growth. It allows us to build a better future by investing in our labour force. It allows us to build a better future by investing in the social programs that have been established and supported by our government for generations.

Today across Canada there is a grassroots campaign to make poverty history. This government will do its part to assist in this bold goal, to ensure that no one is left behind on the path to opportunity. We know that this will require new ideas, new thinking, and new investments. That is why I am announcing today that this budget will make the single largest increases to social assistance payments in a generation.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, we will increase payments to the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan recipients living in long-term care facilities by \$240 a year. Social assistance

plan recipients living independently will see an increase of \$480 a year. Transition employment allowance recipients living independently will receive \$600 a year in increased support, and will share in an additional 1.5 million of support for increased utility allowances. And individuals receiving the provincial training allowance will see their benefits increase by \$720 a year for a 12-month program.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Furthermore, in the next year this government will undertake a comprehensive review of the static caseload on our social assistance rolls. We will do this to help us determine if these programs are in fact the best way to meet the needs of those who are dependent upon assistance because of disability, and if these programs best respect and meet the needs of these citizens.

Mr. Speaker, this government has done much to advance and support the needs of the most vulnerable in our communities. It was this government that pioneered the National Child Benefit and helped forge new child care agreements with the national government.

It was this government that created JobStart/Future Skills, KidsFirst, and the Building Independence initiative to help people break the cycle of poverty. Through Building Independence — through this program alone — we have helped 12,000 individuals and families, including 17,000 children, move from being in poverty to being full participants in our communities.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we can and we will do more. To this end our government on behalf of citizens across Saskatchewan will undertake the following initiatives: we will commit \$4.9 million for new child care and pre-kindergarten support that will continue despite the decision of the new federal government to break faith with us on these agreements.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, this new funding will be used specifically to deepen the subsidies available to low-income families, to move forward our plan to create 1,600 new child care spaces during this term of office, and to expand pre-kindergarten programs for children in our most vulnerable neighbourhoods and communities.

We will invest nearly \$2 million in this budget to support literacy initiatives that will help people of all ages gain access to the skills they need to participate more fully in our communities and in our labour force.

\$17.1 million is committed to enhance wages for those who work in our community-based organizations so that those who assist in helping the most vulnerable in our communities are not forced into poverty themselves.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, as a result of this budget, 670 new families will gain access to the KidsFirst program this year to help ensure that parents have the supports that they need

to see their children get a healthy start in life.

This budget supports the HomeFirst program that will provide \$200 million over five years to ensure that 17,000 individuals and families benefit from better rental housing, home ownership, home maintenance, and home repair. For many families this support will give them for the first time the ability to enjoy the stability and the security that comes from home ownership.

Mr. Speaker, this government has pioneered many programs to help people move from welfare to work, and we remain committed to building a better future for those who work at minimum wage. Our government will continue to support a minimum wage policy that reflects the strength of a growing economy that can afford to ensure that no one is left behind.

During this term of office the minimum wage will have increased by \$1.30 an hour or by 20 per cent. Together with our social supports in health care, these measures are among the most comprehensive in Canada today in ensuring that no one is left behind on the path to opportunity.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, social programs and the benefits of government spending are enjoyed today by Saskatchewan people through universally accessible initiatives like medicare. As we begin Saskatchewan's second century, it is fitting that the single biggest investments in this budget will go to support the single most important contribution Saskatchewan has made to Canada.

Today I am pleased to announce that medicare and its related programs will receive nearly \$300 million more. This represents a nearly 10 per cent increase in provincial funding. As such, the budget will provide a record \$3.2 billion in support of our health care system this year alone. This funding will provide comprehensive, universal, publicly accessible, publicly funded access for more than 5.5 million visits to doctors and specialists, nearly 94,000 surgeries, and more than 106,000 advanced diagnostic procedures. Furthermore it allows us to employ the services of more than 37,000 doctors, specialists, and nurses; health care professionals; and support care workers. And for the first time, Mr. Speaker, this budget provides the funding to cover midwifery.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, in the coming weeks, my colleague, the Minister of Health, will make a number of announcements on how this new investment in our health care system will help further our plan to ensure Saskatchewan has the best quality health care in Canada.

Today I'm pleased to announce that this record health care budget includes a nearly 10 per cent increase in funding to our regional health authorities, half a million dollars for a new renal dialysis site in southeastern Saskatchewan, a quarter million dollars to begin planning for a diabetes centre on the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation.

This budget also provides a 17 per cent increase to the cancer

agency, \$1 million in new money to improve mental health services for children, and \$18.2 million to support the work of my colleague, the Minister of Healthy Living Services, in the provision of the Premier's Project Hope by funding treatment, detox beds, outreach services, drug programs, and secure care.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, this budget also provides 22 million to ensure that our hospitals have state-of-the-art technology and equipment available to them.

This budget provides the single largest investment in health care in our province's history. This budget also provides the single largest contribution to capital in the province's history. This year we will spend well over \$1 billion through this budget and our Crown corporations to maintain, renew, and build our provincial infrastructure. This will include new investments to support health care facilities, schools, laboratories, universities, highway and transportation corridors, telecommunication services, and other economic infrastructure.

This year alone we will spend more than \$340 million to build, maintain, and upgrade our highways and transportation networks. Funding in this budget will ensure the twinning of the Trans-Canada East and Yellowhead West will be complete by 2007 and that Highway 11 twinning expansion will continue.

Mr. Speaker, this budget also breaks new ground with an \$8.6 million investment in our northern roads program. This will include funding for the first time to ensure that paving projects and all-weather roads don't end at the edge of the reserve.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[15:00]

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, we have decided that we can no longer wait for Ottawa to meet the needs of First Nations communities in this regard.

I am also pleased to tell the Assembly that this budget contains a significant increase in funding for communities all across Saskatchewan. It includes more than \$111 million this year for unconditional revenue sharing and other grants as well as almost 70 million in capital funding for projects in our urban, rural, and northern communities.

Mr. Speaker, the continued economic growth and prosperity of our province depends on strategic investments in capital and in infrastructure. That prosperity depends in part on ensuring access to an affordable, secure, and stable supply of electricity. We believe that now is the time to begin to renew and rebalance our energy production profile through the use of renewable energy sources and green power. That is why the infrastructure program of this government commits \$17.6 million to help build the largest wind generation project in Canada at the centennial wind power facility southeast of Swift Current.

This is part of a quarter billion dollar investment that will see us generating 5 per cent of our electrical needs from this zero-emission source and will make Saskatchewan the largest wind power producer in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, our infrastructure program also recognizes that we have a 300-year supply of coal that provides one of the most stable and affordable means of power production in the world today. In order to help reduce the environmental footprint of this power source and thereby improve its sustainability, our infrastructure program will provide up to \$10 million this year, to be matched by the federal government, to begin planning for a new clean coal plant that will seek to achieve near zero emissions.

Mr. Speaker, the development of our economic infrastructure is not dependent upon government investment alone. As I present this budget, I am pleased to note the announcement by Husky Energy that they will undertake the engineering work for a \$2.3 billion expansion of the upgrader at Lloydminster, Saskatchewan.

I am also pleased to note that the private sector is prepared to co-fund a \$10 million study into the development of a new polygeneration plant at Belle Plaine. This \$3 billion plant would be one of the first of its kind in the world and would use the waste product from the tar sands as a feedstock for generating electricity, hydrogen, carbon dioxide, and steam in support of enhanced oil recovery, potash mining, and fertilizer production.

If proven viable, these industry-driven projects will have the potential to not only be the largest megaprojects in Saskatchewan history — creating thousands of new jobs — but they have the opportunity to further transform our economy by further establishing Saskatchewan as a world leader in the new generation of energy production and expertise.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, let me say that today I have presented to this Assembly a budgetary policy that is balanced in its priorities and balanced on the bottom line. It is a budget that pays our bills and reduces our debt. It invests record amounts in infrastructure and secures our economic prosperity while protecting our social programs.

This budget builds a better future right here. It builds a better future by investing a record amount in the education and training of our youth, a record amount in our medicare programs, and unprecedented new investments in those social programs that help ensure no one is left behind on the path to opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, this budget builds a better future by providing new tax cuts to support farmers, businesses, and tradespeople, and creates a new investment climate to create jobs right here. This budget builds a better future for our youth, for students, for seniors, for business people, for farmers, for our communities, and for our families right here. This budget builds a better future right here, a future that ensures Saskatchewan is and will be the best place in Canada to live, work, and raise a family for generations to come.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — That, Mr. Speaker, is why I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment:

That the Assembly approve in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Assembly will come to order. It has been moved by the Minister of Finance, the member for Regina South, and seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment, the member for Saskatoon Nutana:

That the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to begin today by thanking the many people who through their confidence and trust in me allow me to do the job which I love.

To my family: to my wife, Trish; my son, Carter; and my daughter, Paige. Paige is six years old and goes to kindergarten at Maria Montessori School in Saskatoon. Carter is eight years old and in grade 3 at Cardinal Leger French immersion, again in Saskatoon. And Trish continues her television career in broadcasting, as well as putting hundreds of hours of charitable work in and taking in the majority of the parenting responsibilities. Thank you for your love and your support.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — To my colleagues in the opposition and to the Leader of the Opposition, thank you for your confidence in me. As the Leader of the Opposition, you are providing Saskatchewan residents with hope and a vision for the future that will make Saskatchewan youth want to stay in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, to the wonderful people of Saskatoon Silver Springs who work so hard at making Saskatoon and Saskatchewan a better place, thank you for allowing me to be your voice in the Legislative Assembly. While I regret that there is no elementary school for Silver Springs in the budget today, I will continue to work hard to make sure that there is one soon.

Mr. Speaker, there are some very special guests with us today that I would like to recognize. Seated today in the legislature in the gallery are Jack Vicq, Chair of the Saskatchewan business tax review committee. Joining him are fellow committee members — yes, please stand — Charlie Baldock and Cheryl Shepherd.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — I want to thank them on behalf of the official opposition and on behalf of people across Saskatchewan for the work that they've done to provide a road map for the people of Saskatchewan and for this government.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank them for allowing me to present the Saskatchewan Party plan to their committee. It was the only one presented by a political party. I enjoyed making that first presentation in Yorkton. I enjoyed following them around all over Saskatchewan. And no, I wasn't stalking you.

Mr. Speaker, as an opposition we believe it's important to hold the government to account. Yes, but it's also important to present a positive and constructive alternative vision for this province, and that's what the Saskatchewan Party is doing, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — In fact the Saskatchewan Party made the very first presentation to the Vicq commission, and it was encouraging, Mr. Speaker, to hear many of the presentations that followed echoing the key recommendations that the Saskatchewan Party made. In our presentation, Mr. Speaker, to the Vicq commission, we urged the government to eliminate the corporate capital tax, reduce corporate taxes from 17 per cent to 11.5 per cent, and make the manufacturing and processing investment tax credit refundable, Mr. Speaker.

Today I am pleased to report that not only did the Vicq commission agree with many of the recommendations we put forward, now so does the NDP government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — In fact by adopting the recommendations put forward by the Saskatchewan Party and the Vicq committee in this budget, the Finance minister and the NDP government have clearly indicated that the Leader of the Opposition and the Saskatchewan Party were right all along, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — We've argued that high business taxes in this province are a barrier to growth. Mr. Speaker, last year the Leader of the Opposition put forward an economic vision for our province entitled *The Promise of Saskatchewan: A New Vision for Saskatchewan's Economy*. It contains our plan, Mr. Speaker, our plan to create long-term and stable economic prosperity for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, while we were flattered that the Minister of Finance took a page from our economic vision statement by reducing corporate taxes, it's too bad that he stopped reading at page 12 of a 35-page document. Had he continued to the end, Mr. Speaker, he would have realized that reducing business taxes is only one part of an overall economic growth strategy that we need in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — What this government hasn't included in its budget are the components we need to create jobs and to sustain economic growth, Mr. Speaker.

Nowhere in this budget is there a commitment to create a competitive labour environment. Nowhere in this budget is there a plan to limit government intervention into the economy. Nowhere, Mr. Speaker, is there a long-term strategic plan to improve infrastructure, including own-source revenue sharing for municipalities, Mr. Speaker — nowhere. And, Mr. Speaker, nowhere is there an innovation agenda. Nowhere is there a commitment to greater economic co-operation with other provinces, Mr. Speaker, as we in Saskatchewan should be taking our place as leaders in the new West, Mr. Speaker. Nowhere is there a commitment to that.

Mr. Speaker, because this government has failed to put forward a plan to grow Saskatchewan's economy in this budget and because this budget will fail to stop the out-migration of our young people, it is little wonder that this government has been forced, Mr. Speaker — this government has been forced — to cut its own job forecast in this budget. Yes, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, from 4,800 new jobs forecast in last year's budget to 3,200 new jobs forecast in this year's budget, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — It's little wonder, Mr. Speaker, that this government admits that Saskatchewan will be left behind, left behind other provinces when it comes to job growth and when it comes to keeping young people in our province.

Mr. Speaker, people throughout Saskatchewan had high hopes for this budget. They believe that an NDP government that was sitting on a mountain of money would finally take action to address critical areas — such as agriculture, such as health care — while providing much needed tax relief for working families in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, last year's \$1 billion surplus represents over \$1,000 for every man, woman, and child in Saskatchewan — \$1 billion that this government didn't count on, \$1 billion in windfall revenue. Mr. Speaker, that's a potential windfall of \$4,000 for every family of four in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, how do those families do today under this NDP budget? When those families sit down tonight to watch the news or to read the newspaper tomorrow — whether they're in Weyburn or Meadow Lake or Yorkton or Saskatoon Silver Springs — will they feel that they're getting their monies worth, Mr. Speaker? I suggest not.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, instead of giving back, the Finance minister has used his new steel toed boots to give the boot to farm families, to cancer patients, communities looking for a commitment for fair funding for their health care facilities, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, where is the commitment to Saskatchewan farm families who are now faced with a \$12 million reduction in crop insurance, Mr. Speaker?

Where is the plan to address the nursing shortage in our province? Mr. Speaker . . .

An Hon. Member: — No plan.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Yes. Where is the plan for Avastin and the assistance so desperately needed by cancer patients like Bob Loeppky and Terry Rak? Where is it, Mr. Speaker?

Where is the children's hospital for Saskatoon and for Saskatchewan? Families across Saskatchewan were hoping for a children's hospital in this budget. They had the resources to do it. Mr. Speaker, where is it?

And, Mr. Speaker, where is the reduction in the PST that this government raised after breaking their election promise to the people of Saskatchewan — a \$150 million gouge, \$500 million over the last three years? Where is the tax break for Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker? Where is the tax relief for working families? Low- and moderate-income families still pay the highest taxes in the country, right here in NDP Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, where in this budget is a plan? Where is a plan to get back those 4,400 jobs that this government chased out of the province last year? Mr. Speaker, and most importantly, where is the plan in this budget to get back the 3,700-plus people that left Saskatchewan in the last year?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, there is no plan. The 16,000 people — young people between the ages of 25 and 29 — they've left the province in the last five years, and that's a shame, Mr. Speaker. It'd make you wonder whether the NDP even has confidence in their own budget today.

A confident government would set clear population targets, clear goals for population growth, Mr. Speaker. A confident government would set a clear goal for bringing young people back to Saskatchewan today.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — A confident government would have set a much more ambitious goal for growth instead of lowering the bar, Mr. Speaker, by reducing its own job-creation targets. Mr. Speaker, it's clear this NDP government doesn't have confidence in itself. Why should the people of Saskatchewan have confidence in them, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, this is a government whose words are constantly betrayed by its record. They say no one will be left behind, Mr. Speaker, on the path to opportunity. Yet every day in this province, Mr. Speaker, parents are being left behind. Grandparents are left behind, Mr. Speaker. Friends and family and communities are left behind, Mr. Speaker, by the Saskatchewan young people whose path to opportunity has taken them outside of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people deserve better.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, deserves better. And if the NDP government lacks the confidence and the will to stem the flow of people out of Saskatchewan, then there is no way, Mr. Speaker, that the Saskatchewan Party can support this budget.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — No way, Mr. Speaker. No way, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will have more to say and my colleagues will have more to say in the days ahead.

For now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the many guests for coming to the legislature today. I look forward to conversations in the rotunda with them. And, Mr. Speaker, I move now that this debate be now adjourned.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs that debate on this motion be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried. The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

Resumption of Budget Debate

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That debate on the motion that this Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government be resumed on Friday, April 7, 2006.

I move that seconded by the Minister of Government Relations.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader, seconded by the Minister of Government Relations:

That debate on the motion that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government be resumed on Friday, April 7, 2006.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried. The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I move this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:20.]

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Lorne Calvert
Premier

Hon. Graham Addley
Minister of Healthy Living Services
Minister Responsible for Seniors

Hon. Pat Atkinson
Minister of Advanced Education and Employment
Minister Responsible for Immigration
Minister Responsible for the Public
Service Commission

Hon. Joan Beatty
Minister of Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. Buckley Belanger
Minister of Community Resources
Minister Responsible for Disability Issues

Hon. Eric Cline
Minister of Industry and Resources
Minister Responsible for Investment
Saskatchewan Inc.
Minister Responsible for Information Services
Corporation of Saskatchewan

Hon. David Forbes
Minister of Labour
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

Hon. Glenn Hagel
Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation
Provincial Secretary
Minister Responsible for Gaming
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance

Hon. Deb Higgins
Minister of Learning
Minister Responsible for Literacy
Minister Responsible for Liquor and
Gaming Authority
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Telecommunications

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Minister of Highways and Transportation
Minister of Property Management
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
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Minister Responsible for the Office of
Energy Conservation
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Deputy Premier
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Hon. Maynard Sonntag
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations
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Hon. Andrew Thomson
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SaskEnergy Incorporated

Hon. Harry Van Mulligen
Minister of Government Relations

Hon. Mark Wartman
Minister of Agriculture and Food

Hon. Kevin Yates
Minister of Corrections and Public Safety