



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

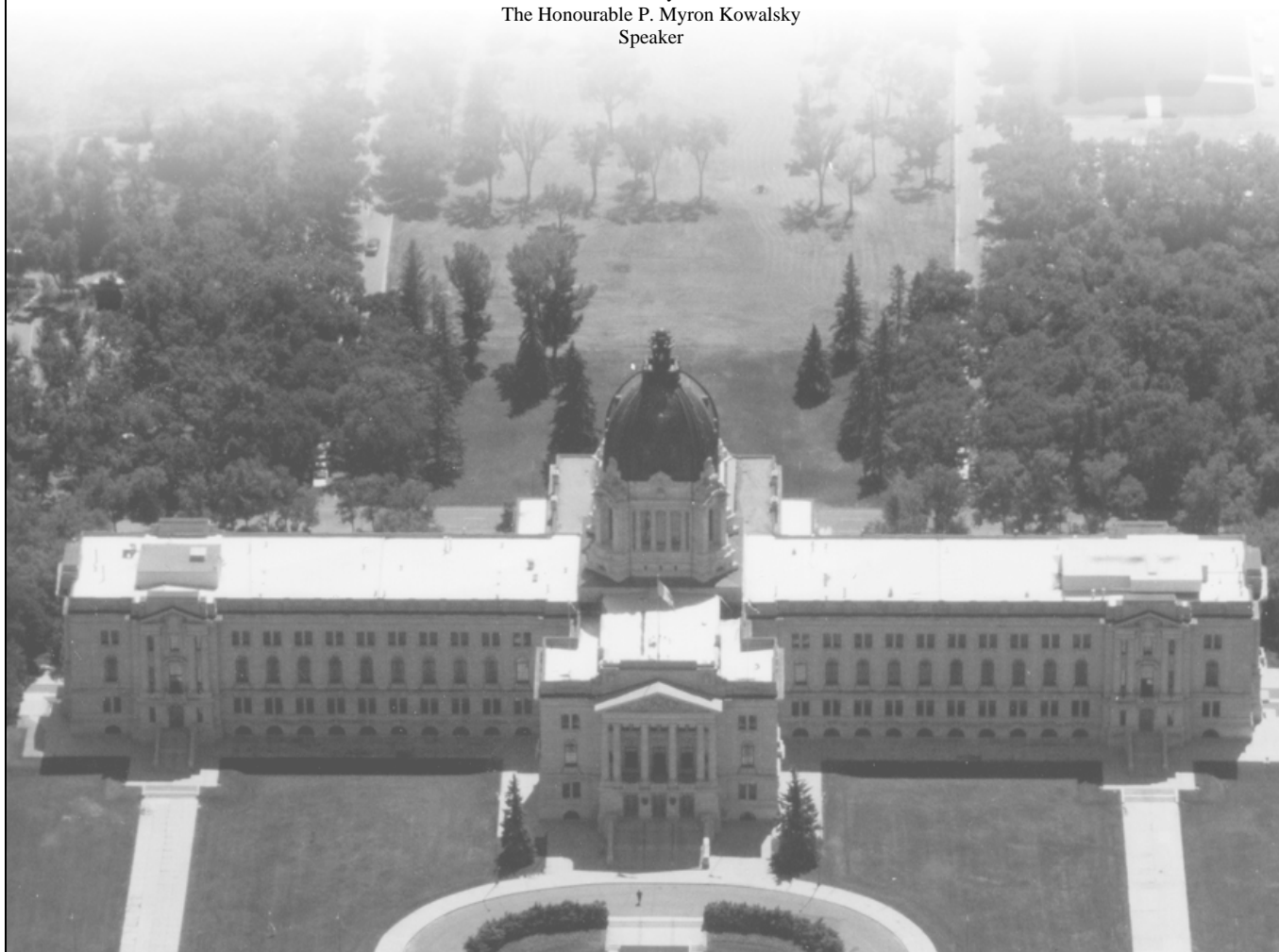
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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
Gantefoer, 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 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I present a petition on behalf of the constituents of Cypress Hills with regard to Highway 32. Many of the signatories to this particular petition come from outside of the immediate communities. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

As I stated, Mr. Speaker, some of the people who signed this petition come from local communities like Prelate and Lemberg, but there are signatures from Gravelbourg, Lloydminster, Macklin, Medicine Hat, and Mortlach. I so present.

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to rise again today on behalf of people in my constituency who are really worried about the shape of Highway No. 310. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this government to repair Highway No. 310 in order to address safety concerns and to facilitate economic growth and tourism in the Foam Lake, Fishing Lake, Kuroki, and surrounding areas.

The people that have signed this petition are from Kuroki, from Foam Lake, and from Wadena. I so present.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you and good morning, Mr. Speaker. I have yet another petition to fund Avastin. And this petition is signed by people concerned that the government made the decision not to fund the cancer drug Avastin. 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 ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, a number of signatures on this petition come from two communities, actually three communities — the city of Saskatoon, Warman, and Langham. And I'm pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It should come as no surprise to anyone here today I have yet several pages of citizens concerned about the safety of Highway No. 5. 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 upgrade and widen Highway No. 5 from Humboldt to Saskatoon.

And again the signatures, Mr. Speaker, cover a vast area of the province. The signatures are from Naicam, Spalding, Kelvington, Kindersley, Humboldt, Saskatoon, Englefeld, Watson, Meacham, Fosston, Wadena, Pelly, Yellow Quill, and Rose Valley. I so present.

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

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise with my colleagues on behalf of citizens concerned about the lack of funding for 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.

Signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the community of Melfort and Saskatoon. And I'm proud to present on their behalf.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again today I present a petition on behalf of those citizens of this province who are deeply concerned over the government's refusal to fund the cancer drug Avastin. 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 citizens of Saskatoon. 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 who are concerned about the NDP [New Democratic Party] government not funding 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 in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

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

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition. 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, the signatures to this petition are from Saskatoon and Dalmeny. I so present.

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I rise to bring forward a petition on 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.

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

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition calling on the government to maintain the Department of Highways section shop in Watrous.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Department of Highways section shop in Watrous remain open so as to ensure the safety of all motorists and Saskatchewan Highways employees who would be affected by such possible closure.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Watrous and Simpson. I so present.

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

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to rise in the Assembly today and present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan concerned with cancer and the drug Avastin. And the prayer reads, Mr. Speaker, 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 particular petition is signed by a number of individuals from the city of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on behalf of the citizens that could not be here today to present a petition on their own behalf for the government to fund 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 in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This petition today, Mr. Speaker, is from North Battleford and Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I rise again today to present a petition regarding autism spectrum disorder. I would just read a portion of it.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to act upon the recommendations made February 2005 by the government committee on human services.

And I'll just read a portion:

That the government support regional autism service providers and provide provincial autism organizations that are providing support to families and individuals with autism spectrum disorder and to ensure that ASD adult services and supports are accessible and based on need rather than on IQ or physical disability.

I so present, Mr. Speaker. This petition is signed by good citizens from Saskatoon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise today to present a petition on behalf of people who are concerned with the condition of Highway No. 55, and especially those folks who live in the communities of Red Earth and Shoal Lake. And the prayer 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 invest the needed money to repair and maintain Highway 55 so it can return to being a safe and economical route for Saskatchewan families and businesses.

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

Mr. Speaker, signed by the good folks from Tisdale. Thank you.

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. 639 and 644.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on Economy is recognized.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 22, The Forestry Professions Act, without amendment.

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I move this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — Before we do that, when shall the Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I move that we waive the consideration in Committee of the Whole.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested that the Assembly waive consideration in Committee of the Whole. Is the leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall the Bill be read a third time?

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 22 — The Forestry Professions Act

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I move this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 22 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 Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 42 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy: what is the policy of SaskEnergy with concern to mandatory retirement?

In addition I give notice that I shall on day no. 42 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskPower: what is the policy of SaskPower with concern to mandatory retirement?

Also, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 42 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskTel: what is the policy of SaskTel with concern to mandatory retirement?

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 42 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskTel: does SaskTel engage in the practice of awarding contracts to retirees upon retirement?

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 42 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy: does SaskEnergy engage in the practice of awarding contracts to retirees upon retirement?

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 42 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskPower: does SaskPower engage in the practice of awarding contracts to retirees upon retirement?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a great pleasure today to introduce to you and to all members of the Chamber someone who is very special to me in my life, both as a member of this . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. Minister of Health, member for The Battlefords.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I

was saying, I'm very happy today to introduce to you and all members of the Chamber someone who is very special to me — my wife and partner and good friend, Cheryl Cook-Taylor. She is in your gallery today. Cheryl's first visit to the Chamber while it was in session was yesterday for the delivery of the extremely good budget brought down by the Minister of Finance, and she's able to stay today to join us.

Cheryl is a property manager in the city of North Battleford, the former president of the Battlefords Chamber of Commerce and, Mr. Speaker, a very important volunteer in the community that we both reside in. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to welcome my spouse, Cheryl, to the legislature today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — It's my pleasure this morning to introduce through you to all members of the legislature the next member of the legislature from the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery is Graham Mickleborough and his wife, Gail. Graham has won the New Democratic Party's nomination for the constituency of Weyburn, Mr. Speaker.

As well known in the Weyburn area, Graham Mickleborough has had a long and distinguished career with the credit union movement in Saskatchewan. Born on the family farm, raised on the family farm, he has worked internationally, Mr. Speaker, and is currently serving as the chief executive officer of the Southeast Regional College — an educator, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to you and all the members of the legislature, the only nominated candidate in Weyburn-Big Muddy who chooses and actually lives in the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy. I want all members to welcome Graham Mickleborough and his wife, Gail, to the legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:15]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

2006 Paragon Award Winners

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, last night I and a number of my colleagues, including the Leader of the Opposition, had the opportunity to attend the Regina and District Chamber of Commerce Paragon Awards, celebrating business excellence in the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker. And there was a very large turnout there. In fact I believe that there was more people there than there was at the Premier's leader's dinner in fact.

Mr. Speaker, the Young Entrepreneur of the Year was Laura Englund from Zazu the Salon here in Regina — a very good shop, Mr. Speaker. Community involvement was won by the well-known and much beloved in this province, the Saskatchewan Roughrider Football Club.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Community alliance, Mr. Speaker, the winners of that award were the Regina Food Bank and 94.5 Jack FM Food for Friends, Mr. Speaker. And that was received — that award — by Woody from Bill and Woody morning show on Jack FM, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Marketing and Promotional Achievement Award was won by Prairie Motorcycle. Now on this particular award, Mr. Speaker, there was another finalist that I was cheering for, Burger Baron.

Mr. Speaker, export achievement was won by Partners in Motion; customer service excellence by Performance Marine; new business ventures by Imagination Ink; the Athena Award was won by Jeanne Martinson, Mr. Speaker. And the Business of the Year was Partners in Motion. Congratulations to them all.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

World Health Day

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, today is World Health Day. Today, the Pan American Health Organization is honouring health workers worldwide by proclaiming the next 10 years as the decade of health human resources.

They will begin this year by focusing on critical issues around distribution, training, and professional development of health care workers who they call — quite rightly — our most precious resource.

Mr. Speaker, this government also believes that health care workers are a very precious resource. And we are committed to retaining and recruiting health care professionals to Saskatchewan. We make this commitment in our *Working Together: Saskatchewan's Health Workforce Action Plan* released last December. This strategy is a comprehensive, detailed plan designed to improve health care in Saskatchewan by keeping and attracting health care professionals. And we reinforced that commitment in the budget delivered yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, World Health Day is a reason to honour health care workers for their invaluable role and contributions. I want to thank the thousands of hard-working health care professionals in this province for their work and dedication. A health care system is only as good as the people who work within it — and we do have the best.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Davidson Wins Two Provincial Titles

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to talk about two provincial championship sports teams from Davidson. The Bantam Huskies hockey team recently defeated the Avonlea Thunder for the right to be crowned Saskatchewan provincial champs, while the Davidson Raiders senior girls basketball team won silver medal at the 2A provincials.

Davidson Huskies were well coached by Lindsay Dieno and Everett Johnson. They have played well this past winter, but knew Avonlea had outscored their previous opponents 50 to 9 in the past three series. Game one in Davidson saw the Huskies defeat the Thunder 5 to 2. Davidson goal scorers were Kiley Lang, Preston Lynch, Gil Martens, Ian Johnson, and Bryce Prpick. Final game of the two-game set was played in Avonlea with the game ending in a 3-3 tie and an 8-5 series provincial win for Davidson squad. Goal scorers in the night included Garret Dieno, Luke Hundebey, Sheldon Kenney, with Mark Zoerb and Ryley Urlacher sharing the goaltending duties for the Huskies.

Davidson Raiders have had great success this year with a solid basketball team guided by Neil Zoerb. At Moose Jaw on March 18, the team won silver in a close final against the Kinistino Blues. Raider teammates Chelsey Vetter and Chandra Cool led the way in scoring throughout the tournament.

I would offer both teams my warmest congratulations and ask the members join me in offering them our best wishes today. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

First Nations University of Canada Powwow

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, last weekend I attended the First Nations University of Canada's 28th annual powwow in Regina. Thousands of First Nations people from Regina, across Canada, and from the United States gathered to celebrate the powwow.

The theme for this year's event was, quote, "Healing ourselves through prayer, song, and dance."

Richard Missens, a faculty member at the First Nations University, said the theme was appropriate, especially for a powwow being held in the spring. Spring, in his words, quote, "is a time for new life." Mr. Speaker, spring is also a time when plants, animals, and people that have hunkered down through the long, dark winter re-emerge to greet the springtime light.

The powwow was dedicated in part to all the students, staff, and faculty who have remained committed to the university in its time of troubles and who are looking forward to a bright future for the university.

The Brandt Centre was alive at noon Saturday as the event got under way with the grand entry. Colourfully dressed dancers

paraded on the arena floor accompanied by the beating of drums. The event was expected to draw about 6,000 visitors to Regina, including about 600 dancers. And, Mr. Speaker, there was lots of time to renew old friendships and even to make some new friends. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Spring Flooding

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think everybody in Saskatchewan is finally happy that spring is finally here and the water is running. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in some parts of Saskatchewan and central and northeast Saskatchewan, the water is really running.

Mr. Speaker, my neighbours, Jeff and Marlene Austman had to wait countless hours for Department of Highway officials to arrive at their farm after a frozen culvert caused water to back up and caused some serious flooding in their yard, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, you didn't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out that with the snow load that we had this spring that there was going to be flooding. And the department should have been there much sooner than they were.

But, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on the idea of highways, I noticed yesterday the Minister of Finance in his budget speech talked about the continuation of the twinning of Highway No. 11. Mr. Speaker, the last time I checked, in order for a project to continue, it would have to start before it would be able to continue, Mr. Speaker.

And also finally the last thing that farm families need this spring — after being insulted by the Minister of Agriculture and used and kicked with his steel-toed boots — is to have major flooding problems that are not their fault, should not be their concern, and should have been dealt with prior to this.

Mr. Speaker, this government has really no plan for Saskatchewan. It reminds me of a pop-up gopher game at the fair where you bang the gopher down when he pops out of the hole. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, I can tell you that people in Saskatchewan are tired of being hammered . . .

The Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed. The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Dewdney.

2006 Paragon Award Winners

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, last night I, along with the Minister of Industry and Resources and a capacity crowd, attended the Regina and District Chamber of Commerce seventh annual Paragon Awards celebrating business excellence. The minister and I appreciated very much the very positive and warm reception we received from the members of the chamber in the wake of yesterday's budget.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Yates: — There were nine awards given in categories, Mr. Speaker. The Young Entrepreneur Award went to Laura Englund and the Community Involvement Award to the Saskatchewan Roughriders Football Club. The marketing and promotional achievement went to Prairie Motorcycle; customer service excellence to Performance Marine; new business venture to Imagination Ink. The Athena Award went to Jeanne Martinson. And, Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to present 94.5 Jack FM with the SaskEnergy Community Alliance Award.

Mr. Speaker, Partners in Motion took home two awards, export achievement and Business of the Year. I just want to thank Partners in Motion for acknowledging the provincial film tax credit, JobStart/Future Skills, SCN [Saskatchewan Communications Network], and SaskFILM for contributing to their success in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I invite the Assembly to join with me in congratulating all the finalists and winners of the seventh annual Paragon Awards on their achievements and in wishing them the very best in the future, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Government Policies for Economic Growth

Ms. Harpauer: — Well well well, Mr. Speaker. They said they would never do it. They said that business tax relief would not grow the economy. And now in a desperate attempt when population is declining during a boom, they finally — finally — agree to implement the recommendations of a committee that they put together to review the unfair business taxes in this province.

The government couldn't figure it out so they struck a committee to tell them what to do. And here's what the committee had to say, and I quote:

We believe that Saskatchewan's business tax structure is outdated and poorly suited to deal with the competitive challenges of today and the future . . . Our heavy reliance on the taxation of business capital and income sends the wrong message to prospective investors.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party has said for a long time that unless you have economic growth, social programs are unsustainable. Well after 15 years, the government finally got the message.

Mr. Speaker, this NDP government constantly accuses the Sask Party of not having any ideas. Well this government has co-opted many of our ideas including our position on business taxation. And it appears the NDP are now becoming Sask Party lite.

Mr. Speaker, we will give credit where credit is due, and I know it must have been very difficult for members on that side of the House to come to grips with the fact that they've been wrong all these years. Now if they'd just finish the job and implement an

agenda for innovation, maybe our young people would come back.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Plans for Job Creation and Economic Growth

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately for Saskatchewan for the seventh straight month our province, under this NDP government's economic leadership or lack thereof, has lost jobs in the middle of a boom — 5,200 jobs that were lost, Mr. Speaker. Every other province in western Canada was creating jobs, Mr. Speaker, in this same time frame, over the last year — every other western province creating jobs, NDP Saskatchewan losing jobs.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, yesterday the government proved they could be Sask Party lite. They implemented one element, one element of a growth agenda. But, Mr. Speaker, there's not a complete plan there. The question to the minister, to the Premier, anyone over there that might want to answer is, will they implement a complete growth agenda so the province, this province, cannot trail the country in job creation but so that we can lead Canada in job creation?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well you know, Mr. Speaker, anyone can complain. Anyone can point out a problem. But what we really need is for people to point out solutions, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday my colleague, the Minister of Finance, presented a plan. And what we have on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, is a plan to create growth and opportunities for young people in this province. That plan is endorsed by the chamber of commerce, the chartered accountants, the Regina REDA [regional economic development authority] and people all across the province, Mr. Speaker. The only people offside with the plan for growth and opportunity and jobs are those people sitting over there, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister is right. The answer for Saskatchewan to turn around the woeful economic performance under this NDP's economic plan, the answer is the proposal of solutions. And that's what we've been doing for, well, about 7 years, Mr. Speaker, especially with respect to the corporate tax.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker? One of those solutions, one of them was adopted today. But we're still missing, we're still

missing a complete growth agenda for the province. Let me repeat; the job numbers out today show that our province — in the middle of a boom, under the NDP — lost 5,200 while every other western Canadian province was creating jobs. Mr. Speaker, the NDP job creation performance in the country, in the country — dead last.

When will they implement a complete growth agenda for the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:30]

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is right when he says that the Saskatchewan Party is always seeking solutions. The problem is they've never found one, Mr. Speaker. And then the additional problem is, it's a different solution every week, Mr. Speaker.

One day the Leader of the Opposition says that his plan is to appoint a committee, if he was premier, to advise him what to do. That's his number one plank, Mr. Speaker. What's his number two plank, Mr. Speaker? His number two plank is, he says, well I don't have to have a policy because I'm a different brand. We're still trying to figure out what the brand is, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to say to the Leader of the Opposition this. We have presented a plan, Mr. Speaker, that is supported by the working people and the business people of this province. It is a plan that is positive, and I say it's about time they supported a positive plan because they have no credibility, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — But you see, Mr. Speaker, the problem with the NDP being the party that would cut business taxes, the problem with the NDP cutting business taxes is that it's a little like getting vitamins from Dr. Kevorkian, Mr. Speaker. You're happy to get them, but you're worried about his long-term plan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — What hasn't changed today is that unfortunately our economy is still hooked up to the NDP suicide machine, Mr. Speaker. And the evidence is in this morning — 5,200 jobs lost over the last year, the worst job creation record in the country. Out-migration, we're losing our most precious resource — young people.

And they've only made one check on the Saskatchewan Party list of a growth agenda. Will they make the other checks, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I would ask members to refrain from name-calling across the floor. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, most people understand that when all that you can do is call somebody names, you don't have any valid arguments.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Members are not to reflect on the ruling of the Speaker. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, are we the only people that find it strange that the Leader of the Opposition had no problem supporting the Grant Devine Conservatives in the 1991 election, when the loss of people that year, Mr. Speaker, was in the 14,000 to 16,000 range, Mr. Speaker? And yet when we'd started to turn that around, Mr. Speaker, so that we're losing fewer people . . . and the Leader of the Opposition was mocking me the other day for saying we're going in the right direction when we're losing fewer people.

Mr. Speaker, isn't it a bit strange . . . but you know he said last week he didn't remember, Mr. Speaker, where the free liquor came from when he worked for the Devine Conservatives. He didn't remember, even though he worked in the office of the minister of Economic Development, how the Meadow Lake pulp mill came about. He didn't remember that. And apparently, Mr. Speaker, he doesn't remember what happened to the population under the government that he associated himself with in the 1990s.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Can you believe, can you believe, Mr. Speaker? Can you believe this? They should be all thrilled about a wonderful budget today, Mr. Speaker. They're still clapping. They're still patting themselves on the back, and yet they get into these non sequiturs from 20 years ago. This minister who is supposedly very pleased with this budget can't respond to the . . .

The Speaker: — Members will come to order. The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I wonder, I wonder would the minister answer the question, or better yet the Premier, Mr. Speaker, because yesterday, yesterday the Premier was talking about how this budget signals growth and this budget is his plan to keep young people, even though he cut his own job forecast in the budget that was all about job creation. And today we know why as the statistics are out, and we've lost under his

government 5,200 jobs.

What about BC [British Columbia]? They created 84,000 jobs. What about Alberta? They created 68,000 jobs. Manitoba — the province of Manitoba with fewer natural resources than we have by a country mile — created 4,600 new jobs, Mr. Speaker. The people of this province are sick and tired of a government whose economic plan actually has us losing to Manitoba, posting the worst job creation record in Canada. When will he adopt the rest of the agenda for the Sask Party, a growth agenda that will fulfill the potential of this province, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we know that the Leader of the Opposition doesn't want to talk about his past career with the Devine Conservatives because in fact he has removed that aspect of his career from his website, Mr. Speaker. We know he doesn't want to talk about it.

But I say this to the Leader of the Opposition. It's one thing to get up and complain and harp day after day, Mr. Speaker. It's another thing to present a positive plan for growth opportunities and jobs for young people, Mr. Speaker. And we recognize that there is work to be done in this province. The difference between our side and their side, Mr. Speaker, is with the budget delivered by the Minister of Finance, we're prepared to roll up our sleeves and do that work, not just harp and complain like the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Consequences of Budgetary Policies

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, instead of speaking about 20 years ago, let's speak about yesterday. Let's speak about today, and let's speak about tomorrow, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the government spent a \$1 billion surplus, but ordinary working people in Saskatchewan are left wondering why they aren't better off. There was no PST [provincial sales tax] decrease, Mr. Speaker. In fact there was not one dime in personal tax relief for working people in this province, Mr. Speaker. This minister had \$1 billion to spend — \$1,000 for every man, woman, and child in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, why did this minister use his steel-toed boots to kick Saskatchewan families?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, nobody's accused the

opposition of being very good at math, and they certainly aren't again today. Look at the budget number. It's \$700 million more. And you know what happened to that 700 million that we had? Seven hundred million — 300 million to health, 150 million to tax relief, \$100 million to debt reduction, more money for immigration, more money for education, and more money to support our social programs. If the members opposite want to start making changes to that, tell me today what you want to do, and tell me today where you're going to take it from.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, that minister will have the opportunity to play the role of the opposition Finance critic very quickly, very soon, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan families have a big question on their minds this morning. Not only did this minister spend \$1 billion; he also managed to increase the debt. How is his math on this one, Mr. Speaker? How did this budget squander a huge opportunity to improve the bottom line for working people, and yet this minister put taxpayers \$288 million in the ditch?

Mr. Speaker, why did this minister use phony math in telling people that he paid down the debt when actually it's going up?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I know the members opposite think that a quarter billion dollars is a rounding error. They seem to not quite get this into their mind that the budget went up by \$727 million. Let's just get that straight in the members' mind. It's 700 million — 300 million more to health, 100 million to debt reduction, 150 million to tax reduction, more money for immigration, more money for education, more money to support our social programs.

This budget is good for students. It's good for seniors. It's good for working people. It is good for our families. It is good for our communities. It is good for the people of Saskatchewan. I'm sorry if it's not very good for the Sask Party.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, it's not very good for that minister and his leadership aspirations.

Mr. Speaker, 288, \$288 million extra . . .

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, \$288 million, \$288 more on the credit card on every man, woman, and child in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this reminds me of an '80s type of budget — more spending, no plan and no targets, more money for government, nothing in tax relief for ordinary people, and an . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, an increase of \$288 million in the debt. What was the Finance minister thinking? Did he think he could throw money at the problem with no plan? \$1,000 for every man, woman, and child in Saskatchewan and not one dime for tax relief for them. Not only that but now they have \$288 on their credit card each.

Mr. Speaker, why did this minister bring down an '80s type of style budget?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you, when it comes to what was going on the '80s, I've got to take some advice from the member opposite because he was awfully close to that, even if the Leader of the Opposition can't remember what he was doing in the '80s.

I will tell you this, what I was thinking as I was putting together this budget. I was thinking what a shame that we are still having to call on taxpayers to commit \$560 a person — \$560 a person — in this province just to pay down the excesses of that administration that those members supported.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — That's what I was thinking, Mr. Speaker. And I was thinking about what it was that we could do to make the lives of Saskatchewan people better, what it is we could do to support businesses, what it is we could do to make this a better place for young people. And what we came up with is a great budget for Saskatchewan people. I'm sorry if it's not great for the Saskatchewan Party.

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, the government is now pouring more money into health care than ever before. It's eating almost 50 per cent of the budget. And yet there is no comprehensive plan for recruitment or retention of nurses.

The auditor is saying that many health authorities have no performance targets whatsoever. The Provincial Auditor is also saying this kind of spending on health care is unsustainable. The government is putting \$3.2 billion into health care without

a plan to hire a single nurse, Mr. Speaker, or without a target on how many nurses this province needs.

How can the province be spending so much on health care with so little of a plan for the future?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thought I might be spared a question or two for a few days, Mr. Speaker. With \$300 million worth of new money into health care, I thought the member opposite would be crying uncle on this issue.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, on the matter of nurses shortage, Mr. Speaker, we have indicated to the members opposite and to the public in general that in fact the shortage does exist. Dollars in this provincial budget, Mr. Speaker, are dedicated to the people of Saskatchewan and to the human resources of the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, it goes a long way to dealing with that.

The shortage needs had to be started. We had to address those issues a couple of years ago. The plan is in place, and it's working today, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Well after two weeks I'm glad he finally came up with one line that he could refer to that situation.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday he stood during his scrum and said the province's recruitment and retention plan was working based on anecdotal evidence, Mr. Speaker. But that's not what the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses had to say. This is what the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses had to say after hearing their budget. And they quote:

We have to wonder if the government truly is interested in recruiting and retaining RNs and RPNs in this province. They say [that] they are [no, they say that they are], but the . . . budget tells us, [a different story] our members, and the public that they are not.

That's what the budget tells the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, that there is no plan for recruitment and retention of nurses in this province. He's scared to set a target because he admits that he can't meet it. That is no type of leadership when you're putting \$3.2 billion into health care. When will he come up with a human resources plan? When will he work with SUN and come up with numbers that he will be held accountable to?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:45]

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We know the member opposite has no credibility when it comes to quoting media or letters in this place, Mr. Speaker.

The plan was released in December, and I would encourage the member opposite to read the plan and have a look at what it means to recruitment and retention, not only of nurses, Mr. Speaker, but of health care professionals for the entire province.

Mr. Speaker, the health care field is a very competitive field across this country — across North America. Mr. Speaker, half of the increase in the health care budget is dedicated to human resource issues, Mr. Speaker. Health regions, Saskatchewan Health are dealing with recruitment and retention of health professionals including nurses, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, this minister is in direct contradiction with the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses. They continually say there is no recruitment and retention plan. This minister fails to work with them. He has meeting after meeting but won't release any of the numbers that their department has. Marilyn Brown, first vice president for Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, says a vague plan will bring vague results, and that's what this government is doing. She goes on to say, and I quote:

There's targeted funding to the RHAs but what does that mean when you don't have . . . [any sort] of organized plan.

That's what the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses continually says. Will the minister stand in his spot and today commit to working with the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, releasing the numbers that this government has compared with Saskatchewan Union of Nurses so we can get some sort of plan going forward so we know when we hit a certain number, that's where we need to be. His plan has no numbers, and so we don't have any clue whether he'll ever reach it because he has no plan. When will he start working with them to create some realistic numbers?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Indeed we do have to go to the member's credibility and to what sort of holistic view he has of nursing in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, yesterday not just the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses but others spoke, including the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association who said nurses in this province will be pleased by the budget brought down by this government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the plan that was brought down in December addresses recruitment and retention issues across the professionals who work within the health care field. Mr.

Speaker, we are committed to working with Saskatchewan Union of Nurses and others in the field, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we are dealing with vacancies and further needs for nurses in the system.

And, Mr. Speaker, he wants to talk about numbers. Currently in the training program in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, there are 1,500 people that will soon be ready to work in this province as nurses.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Support for Agriculture

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday's budget is an admission that farm families don't count much with this NDP Government of Saskatchewan. Not only did they not give farm families any relief; they actually cut more from agricultural programs.

Mr. Speaker, what kind of heart does that NDP government have when they take away from those who need it most? In the midst of a crisis, they steal bread from the mouths of farm families. Mr. Speaker, yesterday's budget does not fully fund CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization]. It cuts money from crop insurance. Mr. Speaker, why did the NDP cut money from agriculture and farm families when they need it most?

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, the opposition is long on rhetoric on this but short on facts. Mr. Speaker, very clearly in funding agriculture this year, as we travelled the province, as we spoke with farmers, the highest priority in many, many situations was relief on the education portion of property tax, Mr. Speaker. \$52.8 million, Mr. Speaker, a total of almost \$67 million relief — that, Mr. Speaker, is not nothing. It's something.

Mr. Speaker, if they care, why aren't they travelling with farm leaders and myself to Ottawa on Monday? They were invited, but they're not going, Mr. Speaker. Tall on hope-you-do-well, but where are they when the work comes? Where are they when it comes to standing up for farm families? Nothing but rhetoric, Mr. Speaker, no credibility.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, this Agriculture minister has no credibility. We learned yesterday, we learned yesterday, Mr. Speaker, that he recently got a scolding from the federal Minister of Agriculture. He cuts money from his own farm families, and now he's going to go to the federal government

and ask for more emergency aid when all he does is antagonize
...

The Speaker: — Order please. Order please, order. Order. The member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And now he's going to the federal government to ask for more emergency aid when all he does is antagonize the federal Minister of Agriculture when he's here in Saskatchewan.

And now on top of it all, he's not keeping his promise on property tax relief either for farm families. Mr. Speaker, this budget is a complete failure to farm families — no money for CAIS, less money for crop insurance, and a broken promise on property taxes.

Mr. Speaker, can this NDP government explain how, with a billion extra dollars, it actually takes money away from rural Saskatchewan? What does that minister have against farm families?

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, members opposite need to stop being apologists for the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, it is well acknowledged by farm leaders in this province — farm leaders who I meet with regularly and who I am working with and who I am travelling to Ottawa with — that the federal government must come to the table. Mr. Strahl, in our discussions, acknowledges that we need more support here, Mr. Speaker. We're going there to try and point out how that can be done most effectively for Saskatchewan farmers.

Mr. Speaker, all we get from members opposite is rhetoric. All we get is politics. When it comes down to the work, Mr. Speaker, when it comes down to meeting with and working with farm leaders, when it comes down to working with the federal government, nothing but apologies for the federal government — nothing, nothing but rhetoric, Mr. Speaker. There's no credibility in that at all.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Website of the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday I attended an event to launch the website of the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police.

The Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police is dedicated to improving the safety of Saskatchewan residents. Members include all the chiefs of police and the commanding officer of

the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, an important part of the new website is a comprehensive listing of long-term missing persons in this province. Long-term missing persons are those missing for more than six months. In very rare cases a person may be placed on the list earlier. In the province today there are 81 long-term missing persons cases dating back to 1940. Each one is a heartbreaking story for the families and the friends of those involved as they wait and wonder what happened to their loved one.

Police efforts are important but the police need information from the public. Mr. Speaker, the website has names, photos, and descriptions. Having this information available to the public will increase the likelihood that information investigators need will come forward.

This fall, Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan provided police services with increased resources to investigate historical cases. That funding, along with initiatives such as this one, are important to help the police provide answers to families who have lived with the concern of a missing loved one or an unsolved homicide. These cases are never closed by a police service. They continue to work on them until they are solved, no matter how long that takes. And some Saskatchewan cases go back more than 60 years.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's police agencies are committed to doing everything that can be done to resolve these cases, and the launch of this website is one more step. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the Assembly to join me in congratulating the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police on the launch of its website.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the opposition would like to join with the government in congratulating the chiefs of police on this initiative. The chiefs and the RCMP should be commended to be working together for this initiative.

Nothing can be more profoundly devastating for a family than losing a child or a loved one. Mr. Speaker, this type of situation is far worse than losing a family member to death. In the case of death of a child or a family member, healing can start immediately following, and with time there can be some form of closure. In the case of a missing child or a missing family member, it can never be closed and can never be put behind them.

Recently we saw on television a case in the US [United States] of a 14-year-old girl who have been abducted and held as a captive for in excess of eight years and was ultimately reunited with her family.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is always hope, and this website will continue that hope. If successful in reuniting even one family with a loved one, it will be well worth the expense and trouble for this. I'd like to thank the police chiefs for doing this and on

behalf of the opposition, they should be commended and we look forward to working with them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Any further ministerial statements?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 50 — The Queen's Bench (Mediation) Amendment Act, 2006/Loi de 2006 modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Cour du Banc de la Reine (médiation)

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 50, The Queen's Bench (Mediation) Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 50, The Queen's Bench (Mediation) Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — On behalf of the government I'll be tabling responses to written questions no. 735 to 769.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 735 through to 769 have been submitted.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Thomson that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.]

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pleasure that I resume this debate. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we saw first-hand in this legislature this NDP government deliver a budget that failed to address the most pressing concern facing people in Saskatchewan today — retaining our young people, Mr. Speaker, in the province and stemming the flow of out-migration from our province.

Mr. Speaker, sadly the numbers speak for themselves. Last year we lost 3,700 people; they left the province. Over the past five years, Mr. Speaker, we have seen more than 16,000 young people between the ages of 15 and 29 leave the province. And yet with 1 billion new dollars in their pocket, what do we see from this NDP government in this budget, other than an admission that Saskatchewan will continue to be left behind by other provinces?

When it comes to job growth and keeping young people in our province, Mr. Speaker, what do we get? Lowered expectations, a one-third cut in the expected job creation and no plan to reverse out-migration. Not even the courage, Mr. Speaker, not even the courage by the Premier in question period yesterday to set a target to reverse out-migration, Mr. Speaker. It's a stunning admission of incompetence on the part of a government that has cut its own job creation forecast by a third in the middle of an oil boom, Mr. Speaker. And that estimate, if the truth be told, is probably optimistic.

[11:00]

After all, this NDP government predicted they would create 4,200 jobs last year. But what did they do, Mr. Speaker? And we just learned the news today — just today, Mr. Speaker, what did we hear? — Saskatchewan lost 5,200 jobs in the middle of an oil boom, year over year. Mr. Speaker, shame.

Compare that, Mr. Speaker, to our neighbours to the west or to the east, for that matter, and it doesn't look good for this NDP government. The BC government expects to create 41,000 new jobs this year. Alberta expects to create 39,600 jobs. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure members opposite will be interested in knowing that NDP Manitoba will create 5,800 jobs this year.

The Finance minister likes to talk about the math that's used in this Assembly. I challenge him to do the math: negative 5,200 for Saskatchewan; positive 5,800 for Manitoba. You do the math, Mr. Finance Minister.

And yet, yet Saskatchewan with our incredible natural resources, world-class education institutions, and talented workforce . . . And I'm sure the member from Moose Jaw would agree with me when I say we don't want to finish dead last in Western Canada in job creation again, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this government talks about leaving no one behind. They're not . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. I just ask members to wait their turn. We will have five days of debate on this motion, and right now I invite the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs to resume the debate.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Well we just want to make sure, Mr.

Speaker, that no one on the other side is left behind. They talk about leaving no one behind. I don't know about the credibility on that one, Mr. Speaker. Yet yesterday this NDP government demonstrated that we're being left behind by those from the east, by those from the west.

This government, they talk a good story. They talk about a better future for young people in Saskatchewan. In fact, Mr. Speaker, they produced a budget brochure. I would have brought that with me today, Mr. Speaker, but I know that that's not allowed in the rules of the House, and I wouldn't want to break one of the rules of the House, Mr. Speaker. But just to be clear, the young woman sitting on a bench in the brochure, and the slogan next to her says, "Building [your] . . . future — Right here."

Well what does that mean, Mr. Speaker? The reality is that this government does nothing to deliver on yet another promise, another broken promise, Mr. Speaker. We've heard about the broken promise of the PST increase when it should have been a cut in this year's budget.

Mr. Speaker, every year since this Premier took office his government, those members opposite — largely the same members, Mr. Speaker — they've made promises to the people of Saskatchewan to keep our young people here. Year after year, budget after budget, we hear the same promise. But they don't deliver, Mr. Speaker. Every budget has the same line and every year it's the same result, Mr. Speaker — more people are leaving Saskatchewan and that's sad.

More families are watching their children head to Alberta, to British Columbia, and yes, Mr. Speaker, even to Manitoba. More young people are choosing to pursue opportunity and build their future somewhere other than NDP Saskatchewan. And that has to change, Mr. Speaker.

Is it any wonder, given the failure of this budget to deliver real benefits for families in Saskatchewan . . . While the Finance minister, members opposite, the cabinet over there, sit on a mountain of money doling out higher salaries to communications staff in the Premier's office — no money for families across Saskatchewan. They spent \$1,000 of every man, woman, and child's money in this province. Not one dime for tax relief for working families in this province, but yes, lots of money for the Premier's communications staff, Mr. Speaker.

How does that add up? How does the Finance minister do the math on that one? Low-income individuals in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker: has anything changed for them? Unfortunately not. They continue to pay amongst the highest income taxes in the country. Yes, that from an NDP government. That is very sad, Mr. Speaker. Despite racking up another \$150 million last year to the stash of money, that PST increase that they've hoarded from Saskatchewan taxpayers after breaking their promise and increasing the PST, they said no tax relief for Saskatchewan families.

Let's take a look at that PST promise. No new tax increases, that's what the Premier said in the last election — no new taxes, none whatsoever. What did he do? Well he broke his promise to the tune of a half a billion dollars, \$500 million that this government has received from a PST that they promised

wouldn't happen, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, last year's \$1 billion surplus translates into a \$1,000 dividend for every man, woman, and child in Saskatchewan — a dividend that young workers rightly expected would be invested back into tax relief, a dividend that seniors were hoping would mean more nursing positions, a dividend that farm families would hope would be invested back into agriculture to reduce the devastation, Mr. Speaker, of rural Saskatchewan that has occurred under the watch of this NDP government.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, what have they done? Have they just held the line on agriculture? No they haven't. They've actually cut the budget of Agriculture, Mr. Speaker, cut the budget substantially, \$12 million cut to crop insurance just for an example.

And, Mr. Speaker, what did they say to nurses across Saskatchewan? What did they say to them? No more seats. No more.

Despite their mountain of money, Mr. Speaker, the NDP government chose to leave, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan behind. And, Mr. Speaker, nowhere in this budget did we see money put back into the hands of property tax owners — property tax owners in Weyburn, Yorkton, Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Swift Current, and thousands of communities across this great province, Mr. Speaker. Not one dime in property tax relief.

Mr. Speaker, this is a budget of failure. Cutting job projections is an admission that this government lacks confidence and certainly doesn't have a plan for the future. Why would the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, have the confidence in a government that doesn't have confidence in themselves? That's the question that Saskatchewan people are asking themselves today, Mr. Speaker.

Why should the people of Saskatchewan have confidence in a government that fails to commit a target to reverse out-migration? The Premier was challenged in question period yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition: give us a target. Tell us what your goal is. Do you have a goal? We've heard from other members that if you have a plan, you have a goal.

The Speaker: — I would ask the member to direct all of his remarks through the Chair. The member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, it's not only the Saskatchewan Party that has expressed a lack of confidence in this government's budget. What did the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce have to say? It was referenced today partly by the members opposite in question period. But let's see what the chamber of commerce have to say. I quote, "This budget does not yet fully bring Saskatchewan into a position to win the competition for investment at the level needed to arrest and reverse our youth exodus."

Mr. Speaker, and the member from Saskatoon Nutana, I'm glad that she's listening very intently. I expect her to take some of this advice back to the cabinet table. The quote is from Kent

Smith-Windsor, who is the executive director of the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce. I'm happy to provide the member from Saskatoon Nutana with that information.

In fact he goes on to, quote:

The changes announced today will attract business investment to drive job creation, but not enough to arrest and reverse the youth leaving our province. It's not good enough.

Mr. Speaker, that's a sentiment echoed certainly by the Saskatchewan Party and by people across this province.

While we complimented the government on adopting the tax measure that we put forward to the Vicq commission, we give credit where credit is due. It's something that had to be done a long time ago, Mr. Speaker, and it proved that the Leader of the Opposition and the Saskatchewan Party were right all along. You need to have a competitive tax environment to grow the economy. It's one step in an overall plan. They've got one step right. What about the others, Mr. Speaker?

Tax reductions for business are only one part of the equation, Mr. Speaker. We agree with the chamber who said, and I quote, "The Government of Saskatchewan's tax and labour policies are still creating doubt in the minds of investors, and these doubts are inhibiting the job-creation potential of our province." Mr. Speaker, that's a very, very important quote, "The Government of Saskatchewan's tax and labour policies are still creating doubt in the minds of investors . . ." Mr. Speaker, that's the challenge before us today.

Mr. Speaker, you can't blame the business community in this province for their lack of confidence in this NDP government. The government itself admits that their measures will cause job creation to decrease in our province.

The Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce was not the only group, Mr. Speaker, to express a lack of confidence in this budget. The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, what did they have to say, Mr. Speaker? And I know that there's former ministers of Health in the Chamber today. I know they'll be very interested to hear what the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses . . .

They voice their disappointment with the budget and the Saskatchewan government's commitment to health care in this province. The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses voiced their disappointment to the commitment of health care in this province, Mr. Speaker. It's not something that you want to see happen, but it certainly happened yesterday. They point out that no attention has been paid to the retention and recruitment of nurses, registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses.

And I know my hon. colleague, the Health critic, will be speaking more about this when his turn comes to rise in this Assembly and talk about the need for a health care plan in Saskatchewan. And he says he's looking forward to it, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure that he is.

No one is going to be recruited to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, for temporary work. And the nursing shortage in Saskatchewan will intensify — make no mistake about it — if this government

will not take action today and formulate a strategy to retain and recruit RNs [registered nurse] and RPNs [registered psychiatric nurse] in Saskatchewan. The first vice-president of SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] said about this budget, and I quote, Mr. Speaker:

We have to wonder if this government truly is interested in recruiting and retaining RNs and RPNs in this province. They say they are, but the new budget tells us, our members and the public, that they are not.

Not my words, Mr. Speaker, the words of SUN in Saskatchewan.

We also question this government's commitment to health care, when they have refused to change the funding formulas for hospitals in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, it's almost embarrassing to read the budgets time after time after time, sixth or seventh time now that they've mentioned certain hospitals in Saskatchewan and they still are delaying the actual building of those hospitals. They've refused to change the funding formulas for hospitals in Humboldt, Preeceville, Outlook, and other Saskatchewan communities.

Mr. Speaker, if business doesn't have confidence in this government's ability to create jobs and nurses don't have confidence in this government's ability to reverse the nursing shortage in this province and stem the outflow of nurses from Saskatchewan, how can the people of Saskatchewan have any confidence at all in this budget that was presented yesterday, Mr. Speaker? And, Mr. Speaker, the answer is they don't. Why should they trust the government that's sitting on a mountain of money but refuses to commit to a long-term plan for property tax relief in this province?

Let's go on to hear what other people had to say about this budget. SARM president, David Marit said, and I quote, "With the increase in the education budget today, not addressing the cost of inflation, [Mr. Speaker] increasing mill rates are now a concern." Mr. Speaker, people in rural Saskatchewan, people in urban Saskatchewan, that's the last thing that they wanted to hear. Increased mill rates are now a concern.

Mr. Speaker, the last thing that this province need is another tax increase under this NDP government. They've had enough. And yet that's exactly what they appear to be facing with this budget.

[11:15]

Mr. Speaker, rural Saskatchewan has suffered for far too long under this NDP government. In budget after budget, the NDP have sucked the lifeblood out of Saskatchewan's farm families. They stripped away their hope. They stripped away their livelihood. With \$1 billion in oil and gas revenue, the people of rural Saskatchewan, they had high hopes. They had high hopes and largely because some of the things that members of the government were saying that this budget would deliver — much needed assistance to agriculture. Mr. Speaker, this budget couldn't be farther away from delivering anything for agriculture in rural Saskatchewan.

Despite this massive surplus, agriculture was ignored in this

budget. Highways were ignored. We may be facing schools closures in this province, Mr. Speaker. And this, Mr. Speaker, in this budget the people of rural Saskatchewan, they feel left behind. They are left behind, Mr. Speaker.

Again according to the president of SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] and I quote, “The financial crisis is mounting on the farm, and many Saskatchewan farmers won’t have the cash flow they need to seed the crop.” Quite a damning indictment, Mr. Speaker, of this government and their policies toward rural Saskatchewan.

Where’s the growth agenda? Where’s the road map to turn this around? They’ve had \$1 billion to do it with, and it’s just not here, Mr. Speaker. Nowhere in this budget was there new funding for the farm crisis. They didn’t even match last year’s funding in agriculture. And they cut crop insurance, the very insurance that helps some farmers at least survive.

No plan to hire more nurses. No plan, Mr. Speaker, to address the negative labour environment in this province. It’s a key element in their growth agenda for this province, and this government, they totally ignore it. No wonder the people of Saskatchewan lack the confidence in this government and, more importantly, this budget, Mr. Speaker.

Even on the post-secondary front, Mr. Speaker, this government decides not to make the hard choices. We have yet to see this government make a sustained commitment to long-term stable funding, Mr. Speaker. It’s something that the Saskatchewan Party talked about in the last election and had the courage to put in our election platform: long-term, stable funding for post-secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of being the Post-Secondary Education critic for the Saskatchewan Party for a period of time. And I know my hon. friends will agree with me, the present critic, that it was something that we made a priority in our party — long-term, stable funding for universities, for post-secondary education, for community colleges, for SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology]. Give them long-term budgets so they can plan, so students won’t be hauled into the legislature every year to sit on the end of their seats to see what’s coming for education, Mr. Speaker. There has to be a better plan for post-secondary education. And that’s not even touching on the lack of an innovation agenda. Mr. Speaker, much more could have been done.

While this budget does contain some recognition that new training seats are needed at SIAST to deal with backlogs, half of the new money directed at our province’s universities will be taken up with a two-year tuition freeze for students, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, any time that more money is put into post-secondary education, members on this side of the House are supportive.

But let’s take a look at that tuition freeze. Let’s take a look at what happened on the tuition freeze in other provinces, Mr. Speaker. You know, someday when that tuition freeze is lifted, it’s not very good for students. Mr. Speaker, there was a better way to do it — long-term, stable funding for universities. This government chose not to do that and that’s a shame, Mr. Speaker. And I know that the Minister of Finance, when he was

the Minister of Learning, he has said that he agreed with that, that tuition freezes are in effect unsustainable.

So what we have in this budget, Mr. Speaker, is yet another ride on the NDP roller coaster — their post-secondary roller coaster. It goes up and then it comes down. And when the ride stops, Mr. Speaker, the students are no further ahead.

For the sake of post-secondary institutions and the students of this province, this government would be advised to go to the Sask Party playbook once again, Mr. Speaker. They’ve done it once yesterday and they can do it again today. And I know the Minister of Advanced Education is writing notes to do that and I would certainly be willing to help her with that.

Our province should provide post-secondary institutions with the long-term funding increases they deserve. Mr. Speaker, I think all members of this legislature would agree with that. Long-term, stable funding, you know, that’s the way budgets operate. That’s the way businesses operate. That’s the way universities with hundreds of millions of dollars in their budget want to operate. Why is this government not letting it do it that way?

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite can be forgiven for not quite understanding the concept of growth and how a growth agenda will help Saskatchewan turn around our economy and help young people stay here. After all, when potential investors to our province go on the NDP website to look for information on the investment climate of this province, Mr. Speaker — we’ve heard before in this legislature, what will they find on that NDP website — they’ll find the *Regina Manifesto*, the *Regina Manifesto*.

It’s about a government that is apparently . . . You know, I throw it out — members opposite, if they don’t agree with it, they can stand up in this House and tell us why they can’t take it off their website. But it talks about the eradication of capitalism. And I’ve yet to hear an argument from any members across the way of why they have the 1933 *Regina Manifesto* still on their website. Are they the friends of capitalists or are they eradicating capitalism, Mr. Speaker? Which one is it?

Mr. Speaker, how can the young people in this province believe this government’s promise of opportunity when the NDP won’t even commit to a growth agenda? They won’t set any targets, Mr. Speaker. Why would the young people, why would the young people stay?

Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Northeast, who I understand had some input into yesterday’s budget . . . You know, we will give credit where credit is due. He took a policy that was first introduced by the . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. I would ask members who are having perhaps a good time hollering across the floor . . . But members ought to recall that it’s one person at a time in here and right now it’s the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And what a privilege it is. I was about to pay the member from Regina Northeast a compliment, but it’ll have to wait till another time I guess.

Why would people in Saskatchewan stay, Mr. Speaker, when it's clear that the government believes that their job creation record is going to sink? Why would young people choose to stay in Saskatchewan when the Premier, Mr. Speaker, of this province — the very Premier — refuses to put a number on the amount of young people he wants to retain in this province?

How hard can it be, Mr. Speaker, to put a goal out there? But an admission that you can't even come up with a goal to meet, Mr. Speaker, that's a very sad scenario for the state of the Saskatchewan economy today and the state of our population today.

Despite, Mr. Speaker, the usual budget rhetoric from this government, we continue to lose jobs and to lose people. Mr. Speaker, long after this budget is forgotten about, what people will look at would be: did it turn around Saskatchewan's population? Grandparents and parents will be asking themselves: did it turn around; were my grandchildren, were my children able to stay in Saskatchewan?

Mr. Speaker, they won't have to wait very long for that answer. They can look in the budget documents of today and see that even this government believes that it won't turn anything around. In fact they've decreased their target, Mr. Speaker. That's the only target that we've seen and it's a decreased target from 4,800 last year to 3,200 this year, Mr. Speaker. We are moving in the wrong direction.

Mr. Speaker, our real disposable income per capita is the worst in Western Canada, and it's lower than the Canadian average. We continue to fall further and further behind our neighbours, whether it's to the east or to the west, Mr. Speaker, in both directions. Under this NDP government, Saskatchewan farm families experience — and nobody takes pleasure in saying this — the highest farm bankruptcy rates in the country.

And what did they see yesterday? A cut to agriculture funding, Mr. Speaker. This NDP government is leaving Colleen Whitmore and farm families like her further behind. This province has experienced massive population loss of our young people. No one likes to see that happen. And yet this budget does nothing to bring back the young lady from Gull Lake who has moved to Calgary because she wishes to train to become a medical radiologist.

Mr. Speaker, to sum up, the lack of confidence expressed by the NDP in this budget, their acknowledgment that oil production will remain flat this year. Mr. Speaker, oil production will remain flat this year. Their admission that they're going backwards on the job creation front. They're not moving forward, Mr. Speaker, they're moving backwards on the job creation front.

And, Mr. Speaker, the recognition that nothing in this budget will reverse the out-migration of our youth, the number one concern, the number one problem in Saskatchewan right now, they failed to address it. Mr. Speaker, for these reasons and many, many others, it gives us no choice as the official opposition in this province, than to vote non-confidence in this NDP government and their budget. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce a non-confidence motion at this time. Mr. Speaker, I move:

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

disagrees with the general budgetary policy of the government because the Premier and the cabinet have not fully implemented a growth agenda and Saskatchewan continues to fall further behind other provinces, losing population during an economic boom; and

because this budget does nothing to help the average working family when the government has \$1 billion in extra revenue; and further,

because there is no comprehensive plan or accountability for health care in the province when health care expenditures are almost half of the provincial budget; and

this budget reflects an '80s style of record expenditures with a \$288.5 million increase in the debt.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the member from Humboldt.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — An amendment to the main motion has been moved:

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

disagrees with the general budgetary policy of the government because the Premier and cabinet have not fully implemented a growth agenda and Saskatchewan continues to fall further behind other provinces, losing population during an economic boom; and

because this budget does nothing to help the average working family when the government has \$1 billion in extra revenue; and further,

because there is no comprehensive plan or accountability for health care in the province when health care expenditures are almost half the provincial budget; and

this budget reflects an '80s style of record expenditures with a \$288.5 million increase in debt.

Moved by the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs. And the amendment is seconded by the member for Humboldt.

Debate resumes on the amendment and the main motion concurrently. The Chair recognizes the member for Humboldt.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to enter the debate and follow my colleague from Saskatoon Silver Springs who very capably outlined a number of concerns that we have with this particular budget.

It's 15 years of this NDP government delivering budgets, and so they have a 15-year record that we can look back on and see

how successful their budgets are. Even if they don't want to set goals and look back on whether or not what they're doing is successful, I think it speaks for itself on what's happening within the province of Saskatchewan.

In particular this is six years for this particular Premier's leadership. And so we look at what have these budgets done for the working men and women within our province, for the seniors, for the young people, for families in general. Are we in Saskatchewan, is the average person in Saskatchewan, the average family in Saskatchewan better off, and will this budget make any difference than the past 15 years have made to the province?

We know that, and we've repeated a number of times, we're looking at: the longest surgical waiting lists; an increased usage of food banks which is appalling in a province that used to be and historically has been the food basket of the world; the highest taxed low-income earners and one of the highest PST rates and the worst job creation and the greatest out-migration, especially of our young people. So is this budget going to address any of those issues?

[11:30]

It seems as if for the past 15 years nothing's changed. Nothing's improved. And yet each and every year, we hear again and again this is the best budget, this is going to solve all the problems. They keep saying that this is going to be green and prosperous and we're going to retain young people. And it just doesn't happen. And you have to wonder why, other than obviously they have no plan, no vision.

They don't set goals. They've got nothing to measure whether or not something's working. And so therefore they can just keep changing where they throw the money at without ever checking to see whether or not it was successful in stopping all of the problems within the province.

The first thing of course that I'm going to look for in the budget — and did, being the member for Humboldt — is what was happening with the funding for the Humboldt hospital. And I found it in the Saskatchewan provincial budget highlights. And it lists a number of health care facilities in that document, Mr. Speaker, all of which have been announced in the past. But now, they're now dedicating some dollars to it.

And I noticed that \$4 million were dedicated to the Humboldt integrated facility. That's promising in a way, but it's kind of interesting that the government is taking the entire year to supposedly spend this \$4 million towards the project. A project, Mr. Speaker, that actually began in conception 20 years ago; that has been lobbied for by that community for that many years; a project that the government has promised time and time again.

And a project the government went out, or government representatives went out to the community of Humboldt, they called in the municipal leaders from the surrounding towns and villages and municipalities and told them on February 24 that they would have to come up with an extra \$5 million. Now the government's dedicating \$4 million when they're sitting on a billion dollar gas and oil windfall. And yet the community is

supposed to come up with \$5 million.

And do they have, you know, some time to work on that, Mr. Speaker? Do they even have the whole year to see if they can plan and budget and alter their, you know, things that they're doing in order to come up with that money? No. Actually, the government gave them 40 days — 40 days in which they had to say that they would indeed have that money in place — their entire amount that the community is responsible. And I just find it appalling that the government can drag its heels year after year and just put a little bit of money in each year just to appease the community, in order to keep going out there and keep telling the people within the Humboldt community that they're going to have a new hospital as long as they do things right.

You know, Mr. Speaker, there was an editorial in the *Humboldt Journal* on April 6 and I think that it outlines how the people of Humboldt are feeling about this latest announcement by this NDP government. And I would just like to read some of that editorial because I think that this particular writer says it far better than even I could. And it's headlined, "What are we so afraid of?":

As the weeks go by and our local governments are scrambling to find the money that's required to raise the local portion of the ballooning costs of the new St. Elizabeth's hospital, more and more questions about this project are being raised in my mind and the minds of others in the area.

But, it seems, people are afraid to ask some tough questions of those in charge, for fear this project won't move forward at all.

We're all grumbling about this extra cost we're required to pay. After all, if it were up to the populace of Humboldt, we'd be celebrating the fifth anniversary of the opening of the new St. Elizabeth's Hospital sometime this year. We'd have had it built and opened before the government had time to go, "Hey, what are you doing there?"

That is . . . if we didn't need their money.

The fact is, we do need their money to build it. There's really no way this area can handle the whole cost of the project. And we shouldn't have to. We really — should I dare say it — shouldn't have to . . . [come up with] any more [money] at all. After all, we're not the ones who dragged our heels on this until construction costs ballooned out of control. We were ready to go. If anyone is responsible for this delay, it's the government. But suddenly, it's not just their problem, it's ours, too, which isn't fair.

And that's how people are feeling in the Humboldt community. The article goes on to say:

[but] Do we say these things out loud? Do we yell at the government, telling them it's their fault and no way are we covering [all] for their mistake?

The Speaker: — Order please. I would ask members if they

have conversation that they really need to carry on that they meet behind the bar of the legislature. And the member from Humboldt may resume her speech.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will continue:

They've got us so scared that we're not going to get a hospital at all that we'll bend over backwards for them and take this kick in the teeth with a smile on our faces. Should we have to do that? No way.

And that is what the feelings of the people in the Humboldt and surrounding community are towards this NDP government. They have been blackmailed. They have been threatened, time and time again, either do this or raise this or you won't get a hospital; do this and raise this kind of money or you won't get a hospital.

And you know it was interesting, Mr. Speaker. I asked the minister questions over the last three days on the Humboldt hospital, and yesterday I specifically asked the Minister of Health, what will happen if the community can't raise the money, what if they simply can't? We all know that the rural economy is suffering due to low commodity prices and it affects the towns and the villages as well as the municipalities. We know that's happening. So what would happen if the community cannot raise the money?

And I pointed out that the minister would probably downsize the project, which is a great fear within the Humboldt community, or delay it even further. And look at the cost of this delay. And the cost, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out, isn't just to the community, it's also to the government. Like this is not exactly great financial planning on their part either, because the longer they delay the more and more this project is going to cost them as well.

The minister at the time said that I was quoting his words out of context, so I would like to actually take the transcript of the tapes and read them into record and that way we will know whether or not I was quoting him out of context. The question that the reporter asked the minister was, question:

Given the delays that have happened, is it fair to expect these communities to come up with more money They've been going into this with a certain number of dollars in mind. And then to have that changed — it seems like a fundamentally unfair system.

And the minister replied:

"The province is facing increased costs on this too. And we have had to pay our share of those increased costs."

"in other projects where the expectations have been greater, the arch. Has been told by the community and the planning people that we have to draw down this project to a certain extent, to within the resources available."

The next question by the reporter was:

So if they do that the project will either be scaled back or delayed further?

To which the minister replied, and I quote:

"It could be delayed further if the community share does not reach the commitment we have asked for".

So the minister can hardly deny that he suggested that either the community come up with this money within the 40 days or it will be drawn down — which has the community quite considerably concerned because it's downsized from their present facility already — or they'll delay it even further, which we all know is only going to cost them more, both the community and the government. So neither plan is actually very appealing to the community. But as long as we keep threatening them, if we keep threatening the people of Humboldt, if the NDP continue to threaten them that either you do this or you won't have a hospital, then I guess they will get the people to continue to jump through the hoops.

Mr. Speaker, the second area that was of considerable concern to me within the budget of course is agriculture, because the Humboldt constituency is largely agriculture or is involved around the agriculture industry — not just the actual producers themselves but there's a number of short-line manufacturers whose workers live within the Humboldt constituency. There's a number of suppliers and a number of small communities who are quite dependent upon the producers being successful for the success of their own businesses.

And it was disappointing to see that although the Agriculture minister has said time and time again, yes there is a crisis in agriculture, he didn't address it within this budget. The government is sitting on a windfall of money of extra billion dollars and they have in the past always said that they can't afford to fund the agriculture programs. And yet this year, when that excuse seems a little lame, yet again they cut the funding to that department by \$166 million.

They underfunded CAIS yet again which makes it very difficult for the producers within our province. In essence they too are held hostage because they wait to see if the government will put in their portion to the CAIS program. The announcement's made later in the year so the producers cannot go to the bank and arrange for financing based on the dependability that our government will step up to the plate because we don't know that. They in essence hold them hostage as well.

They've cut money for crop insurance which is now I believe the fourth year — I would have to look back in the records for sure. But it's the fourth year where the crop insurance program has been cut down, not necessarily in funding but definitely in coverage. In this particular year they cut down the funding available for it so I'm sure that they're going to change the program somehow, in the future, so that the coverage is poorer than it has been in the past. And they'll up the premiums for the producers themselves.

It's become a program that isn't working. It is not affordable to the producers. And so therefore I would think if they didn't tie it to other programs such as spring cash advance, the uptake of the program would almost be nil. The way that the government again blackmails and forces the producers into their crop insurance program, even though it's been severely gutted, is to tie it to other programs which puts the producers in a bit of a

bind and they're forced to partake.

The appalling thing that I have found over a number of years, Mr. Speaker, is that this particular government doesn't want to take any responsibility for this very important industry within our province. They have consistently and constantly said that it's the federal government's responsibility. And to a degree in some areas I totally agree with that, but not in all areas. However, agriculture is dependent on the national treasury to a large degree and as such it would be nice, Mr. Speaker, if we had ministers that would try and work with our federal Agriculture ministers. And I have not seen that, quite frankly, since I've been elected.

We can go back through a number of Agriculture ministers that we've had provincially, and those federally. We had Mr. Eric Upshall at one time, and that was when AIDA [agricultural income disaster assistance] was being planned. And Mr. Upshall went to Mexico when the planning of that program was happening and we ended up with an absolute disaster in AIDA. Didn't work for our producers; it wasn't a program that worked here in Saskatchewan at all.

That was followed up by Mr. Lingenfelter, who now has given up on Saskatchewan entirely and moved to Alberta. Mr. Lingenfelter was in place as the NDP Agriculture minister when CFIP [Canadian farm income program] was being designed. And he walked out as well of the meetings. Him and the Agriculture minister from Manitoba actually walked out of the meetings, said this was not going to work for Saskatchewan, but didn't stay and work with the federal government to make the changes. They just had a temper tantrum and walked out. And the result of CFIP was another disaster for Saskatchewan producers. That was a program that this government chose not to fully fund the one year as well. So we have some problems here at home.

The following Agriculture minister, the Deputy Premier, what did he do? Well he went and publicly had an outcry because he said the federal government underfunded our agriculture programs. We were shorted, I believe at the time it was \$20 million. When the truth actually came out, Mr. Speaker, it ended up that our province had borrowed in advance \$20 million, and so therefore they hadn't underfunded our program. But it made this Deputy Premier look good to blame the federal government for something that they hadn't actually done.

And now we have an Agriculture minister that has been suggesting that our new federal Agriculture minister is saying things that perhaps he didn't say.

[11:45]

So time and time again, Mr. Speaker, we have Agriculture ministers who instead of trying to work with our federal counterparts, in essence, just aggravate them. They absolutely aggravate them. They sit in the province and they go public and they blame the federal government and they accuse them of things that perhaps aren't necessarily true. And then they go to Ottawa and say, we need money for Saskatchewan farmers; I know we have \$1 billion more than we've ever had before and I know that I just maybe misled the Saskatchewan public as to what you've done, but we need more. And I don't think that's

been successful in the past, and I don't perceive it's going to be successful in the future.

Mr. Speaker, the other area that I'm going to talk to you — very quickly, because there are a number of other speakers who want to speak to this motion — is the job loss and population decline. And that is a huge measure of the success of these NDP budgets that I've been talking about and this budget in particular. We have seen, year after year, a decline in jobs and a decline in population in our province and in particular we're losing our young people. And that I think is a huge measure of how well a government is doing.

Mr. Speaker, there was an article in *The StarPhoenix*, I believe and it says it very well. And there's been a number of articles on this particular topic — "Economic boom, population bust." And within that article it states:

Every single premier in a generation has left the province with more people than he found it. Except now.

Meaning this Premier.

We are seeing an appalling out-migration of people and in particular young people. That's not only important to the Humboldt constituency and the constituents I represent, but that really hits home, Mr. Speaker, for my own family. I am the mother of a 22-year-old, a 20-year-old, and a 17-year-old and I hate to see them leaving the province.

So as my colleague said before me, it's an '80s style budget. There's a lot of spending with no direction, with no plan, no vision. There's \$288 million more in debt than what we've had in the past year.

So with that, I'm going to support the motion put forward . . .

An Hon. Member: — The amendment, amendment.

Ms. Harpauer: — The amendment put forward by my colleague from Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Nutana, the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, after listening to the members opposite, I can't believe that we live in the same province. Members of the government were out across the province last night visiting with members of the public, and I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, people everywhere said this was a really, really, really good budget.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Now, Mr. Speaker, it is my honour today to rise in the House to second the motion put forward by the Minister of Finance, the member for Regina South.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard from the Minister of Finance about our government's plan to build the economy through business

tax reforms, tax credits, and other initiatives to make Saskatchewan a more competitive and even a better place to live, work, and raise a family. Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan economy is booming, and our government's plan supports continued growth and opportunity for our province. And a healthier economy means better social circumstances for all of our citizens as we all share in the prosperity through positive social spending so that, Mr. Speaker, no one is left behind, in our province, on the road to prosperity and opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, a booming economy provides rich opportunities for jobs for our university and technical training graduates and for newcomers that we are welcoming into our province. This budget builds on our current economic prosperity and provides more reasons for our youth and immigrants to choose our province as the place to build their future. And this budget provides support to employers to help meet their labour market needs. Mr. Speaker, unlike the members opposite — the Saskatchewan Party — our government has a plan for growing the economy.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Advanced Education and Employment will play a critical role in our plan. This sector has a very significant role to play in the future of our province, and we know that the solutions to the fundamental challenges facing Saskatchewan are to be found within this sector. The Premier created this new department for a reason. Our new department will be there to provide high-quality education and training opportunities for our learners, so that they're positioned to participate in our economy, and to support immigrants and their families to settle in our communities and find connections to employment.

The budget supports our government's key priorities of increasing training system capacity and coordination, improving literacy, attracting and settling immigrants, and increasing affordability and accessibility for our students. These are all initiatives the members opposite seem to oppose.

Mr. Speaker, this year the budget to support the new vision for Advanced Education and Employment increases by 8.3 per cent, or \$46 million, for a total investment by the citizens of our province of \$604 million in post-secondary education and employment. This is a critical investment in Saskatchewan's post-secondary education and training institutions to support an estimated 66,000 learners in an array of programs.

This budget also provides a strategic investment in immigration recruitment and supports. This year we will increase our investment in the training sector by 8.6 per cent or \$15.5 million. Mr. Speaker, this is the largest investment in training in this decade, Mr. Speaker. And in the last two years . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — And in the last two years we've increased the amount of spending in our training system by 17 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, continued growth and prosperity depends on meeting our labour market needs. And as part of our government's plan, we'll enhance the role of our CanSask career and employment service centres located in communities

all across the province. We'll use the centres to ensure the local training system prepares people for skilled jobs and that trainees are matched to the labour market requirements of local employers. And we'll work with the sector to promote trades as a career option, to support labour market planning, and to work as a system to meet the training needs of learners and the labour market needs of employers.

This year we're going to expand our training system capacity by 2,759 training and employment opportunities under the CareerStart initiative. Mr. Speaker, this includes increases to technical training and adult basic education in urban and rural centres at SIAST, regional colleges, Dumont Technical Institute, and the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission. It also supports increases in the JobStart/Future Skills work-based training program and employment preparation opportunities.

In 2003, during the election campaign, we committed to expand by 5,400 the number of training opportunities in Saskatchewan during the term of our mandate. With these increases, we are on track to meet this commitment with 3,904 new opportunities being created in the last two years.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, we heard, when we did a review of accessibility and affordability and also the training system review, about the need to ensure more learners, particularly Aboriginal learners, gain the skills they need to enter into and stay connected to the labour market.

In response our government is expanding the number of adult basic education seats by 336. This expansion will help to address the wait-lists for our ABE [adult basic education] programs at both SIAST and regional colleges and Dumont Technical school across the province.

This year's budget is truly significant as we, in the spirit of the Kelowna accord, will take immediate action to invest for the first time ever in the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I really want to say publicly how important it is that we have the two members from northern Saskatchewan sitting in our caucus and at the cabinet table because they truly understand the need for First Nations people to take their rightful place in our province. And, Mr. Speaker, they are proud and articulate voices for First Nations people when it comes to public policy, particularly in the area of training.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, given that spirit, we are funding for the first time 83 new adult basic education seats at SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies], and we're providing provincial training allowances for students to attend the institute.

Mr. Speaker, jurisdiction is being broken down in the province

of Saskatchewan with this funding. We don't have time to get into jurisdictional skirmishes with Ottawa any more, Mr. Speaker. And we're making sure that First Nations institutions receive provincial funding even though there is federal responsibility, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — This investment in SIIT and its students will help more Aboriginal people participate and succeed in post-secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, we also heard during the accessibility and affordability review that low-income people need more support to enrol in ABE bridging and short-term skills programs. So, Mr. Speaker, we're spending \$3.8 million more on the provincial training allowance to cover basic living costs for more people while they pursue academic preparation, and we're increasing the support by \$60 per month for each learner in those programs, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, for families with children under the age of six, we're not counting the new federal support of \$100 per month as income, rather we're flowing this money directly to PTA [provincial training allowance] and student loans clients. As a further support to these and other learners, we're expanding our child care spaces by 1,200 between 2003 and 2007, and we're going to spend \$3.6 million to increase the subsidy rates and extend the reach of subsidies to include more families in our province. Mr. Speaker, this 31 per cent budget increase in subsidies will support parents to get the training they need to improve their lives and the lives of their children.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the recent evaluation and reinvestment process that the Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board is going through, and the determination of the need for fundamental changes to this organization, the Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board is currently in a transitional phase.

It is our intention, Mr. Speaker, to work with business and labour and other key stakeholders, particularly training institutions, to advance in transition the Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board into a new provincial labour business market . . . labour market planning council. This will bring together major decision makers from industry and the training system in order to plan labour market issues for the economy. The council will exchange their expertise and ideas and advise government of current and future labour market issues.

And, Mr. Speaker, we are sending a member from labour and business to Quebec to look at their model which is working, in this country, when it comes to labour market planning, Mr. Speaker.

To help encourage more youth to explore trades in our province, we have as a career option . . . This year we're going to support the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission to expand its youth apprenticeship program province-wide. So youth apprenticeship will be available province-wide as a result of this budget. In addition it's our government's plan to increase the apprenticeship

training opportunities in this province by 105 seats.

Mr. Speaker, we all understand the importance of these increases as apprenticeship supplies our labour market with many of the skilled workers necessary to fuel our expanding economy. I'm pleased to say that this budget provides support for increased quality of . . . [inaudible] . . . professional education and increased capacity.

An additional \$3.4 million will support the University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine's accreditation plan, and additional resources also fund a previous increase in enrolment at the College of Medicine and the nursing education program of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this year we will invest over \$19.4 million in nursing training. Today there are over 1,500 students enrolled in nursing programs across our province, and that's a 50 per cent increase since 2000.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to recognize that this budget makes a historical investment of \$6.3 million, up from \$1.7 million last year, for a comprehensive and a very aggressive immigration strategy that will attract more immigrants to our province and help them settle in our communities and labour force.

By 2008-09, Mr. Speaker, it's our goal to nominate 1,500 individuals each year under our immigrant nominee program. And once they've settled here approximately one year later, including their spouses and dependants, we will have 5,000 additional immigrants per year in Saskatchewan coming in under the immigrant nominee program.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[12:00]

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, we want to see Saskatchewan communities grow as confident, prosperous, and vibrant places where immigrants feel welcomed and included. Mr. Speaker, more people living here will mean more people doing business and spending money here.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I hear the members opposite chirping from their seats which they are prone to do and, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the members opposite and to the public, there are more than 6,000 jobs sitting vacant in this province. And with the demographic changes that are coming, with a fully integrated First Nations population and Métis population in our labour force, and with the boomers that are retiring, we will be short some 50,000 to 100,000 workers in the years to come. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, we are going to go and open our doors to the world to recruit people to this province to help fill that labour market need, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, the funding will help to keep newcomers here by assisting the agencies, those settlement agencies in Saskatoon and Regina and Moose Jaw and Prince Albert. And other groups are getting together across the province to settle newcomers that are coming to rural Saskatchewan. We're going to work with them to help with the

settlement and integration of newcomers into our communities.

Mr. Speaker, universities play a critical role in educating our young people to contribute to the economic and cultural success of our province. And universities provide opportunities for students to pursue higher knowledge and research to support society. This is why another key component in our plan for growth and opportunity is ensuring that finances are not a barrier for university students to obtain post-secondary education and training.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to spend some time with young people yesterday, and contrary to what the member from Silver Springs says — and he has literally hundreds of university students living in his constituency — contrary to what he says, those young people welcome, welcome a three-year tuition freeze in this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — And, Mr. Speaker, that tuition freeze will save those young people literally thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars, Mr. Speaker. So the Sask Party, the members opposite, are totally out of touch with what young people are saying about university tuition in this province. And it's time he went back home to get an education because this place obviously has kept him out of touch with his constituents.

Mr. Speaker, that is why we are going to provide our universities with operating funding increase as well as a backfill in all of those tuitions of \$17.8 million to continue to hold university tuitions at the 2004 levels for the next two years. And that, Mr. Speaker, is a significant amount of money to help students and their families. Mr. Speaker, these funds mean a 7 per cent increase in operating grants to our universities to ensure that they continue to provide a high-quality education to our young people.

As well, Mr. Speaker, through the provincial student assistance program we're going to provide an estimated \$60 million to approximately 15,000 post-secondary students, and approximately two-thirds of this funding is forgiven by the people of our province.

In the past five years we've granted nearly \$90 million in non-repayable support to students. And we are moving on our commitment to quadruple the centennial merit scholarship for post-secondary students by providing an additional half million, for a total of 287 new scholarships.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — In total, Mr. Speaker, in total 934 of our brightest and best students will receive these scholarships to study in our province. And, Mr. Speaker, the graduate tax credit will be increased from \$675 to \$850 for students graduating in 2006. And next year the tax credit moves to \$1,000 to provide further incentive for students to build their careers at home. This increase in the tax credit once again meets our election commitment in 2003.

Mr. Speaker, we've also provided the universities with unprecedented support for their capital priorities since 2000 in the amount of \$366 million. The government has recently provided \$100 million to the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] for the academic health sciences centre, a project that will strengthen the province's ability to recruit and retain health professionals, faculty, and students. And the Western College of Veterinary Medicine also received 17.5 million for a construction project providing students with access to specialized services of veterinary medicine.

An additional 4.6 million has also been provided for the University of Regina for the Lab Building. And \$5.5 million in capital upgrades and expansion at SIAST, Palliser, and Kelsey campuses will support 500 new training opportunities in key trades and the technologies over the next two years.

Mr. Speaker, another key role of the Department of Advanced Education and Employment is to support our government-wide research agenda, which in turn supports future job creation, economic and other spinoffs. This year, the province will provide \$9.8 million to the Innovation and Science Fund at our two universities. This support will fulfill our commitments to the biomedical imaging and therapy beamline project, research chairs, and the international vaccine centre.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite say that this government does not have an innovation agenda. I would challenge them to go to the two universities in this province and look at the research and innovation that is taking place on those campuses, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, this budget is a plan for continued growth and opportunity in our province and by focusing on high-quality learning opportunities, labour force development, and immigration, our plan provides the most comprehensive approach which we will work toward. Our common goal is support of a Saskatchewan economy that is vibrant.

Mr. Speaker, our budget builds a better future, right here and right now. The Saskatchewan Party's criticism of this budget is simply not credible. The Saskatchewan Party is not credible. Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely delighted to support the budgetary plan for Saskatchewan as we move forward with confidence, contrary to the members opposite who are not confident. But we are confident in the future of this province and we have a plan that is bright in terms of the future of our citizens, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, it's a pleasure to stand in this Assembly to address this budget speech that was just presented yesterday by the Minister of Finance. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, the interesting thing about the budget is not as much as what was in the budget, but part of it is related to the fact that ... the footwear apparel of the Minister of Finance. And I would

suggest to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the footwear apparel of the Minister of Finance spoke very loudly to the people of this province.

Because I think at the end of the day, Madam Deputy Speaker, for the people in general, they were actually given the boot by this budget. A budget, Madam Deputy Speaker, where this government had over \$1 billion more in revenues to share with the people of Saskatchewan and, contrary to the member from Saskatoon Nutana that we just heard speak, actually put forward a plan to build the province of Saskatchewan. And Madam Deputy Speaker, there's no doubt this budget was certainly lacking.

Let me begin, Madam Deputy Speaker, by at least giving the government a little bit of credit. Madam Deputy Speaker, as my colleague the critic for Finance, the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs mentioned, this budget did reflect the fact that the government did take some time to review very carefully the recommendations made by the Vicq commission. And over a period of the last number of months, there was strong indications that this government would not move forward with those recommendations.

But, Madam Deputy Speaker, to their credit they did move forward. While it's going to be implemented down the road, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is a step in the right direction. However, Madam Deputy Speaker, that is just one step of an overall program of planning in order for this province to move forward.

Madam Deputy Speaker, did the budget yesterday actually create a competitive labour legislative environment? Did it actually limit government intervention in the economy? I beg to differ, Madam Deputy Speaker. Did it create a long-term strategic plan for improving infrastructure, which includes own-source revenue sharing from municipalities? What about an innovative agenda, which includes a plan for long-term predictable funding increases to advanced education institutions and more progressive research and development tax credits to enhance commercialization of new technologies and research?

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, did it give greater economic co-operation or lead to greater economic co-operation with other Western provinces to reduce interprovincial trade barriers? Madam Deputy Speaker, when we talk about trade barriers it's an issue that I continue to deal with on an ongoing basis, especially with businesses in my communities that are along the Manitoba border.

And I know my colleagues along the western side of the province, the Alberta border, find that there are hindrances at times in relation to trade barriers interprovincially. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget . . . this government had an opportunity to begin to address some of those issues, and yet they lagged behind.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what we saw yesterday was a government with \$1 billion more to spend, but at the end of the day it was sprinkled here and there without a real plan to grow the province of Saskatchewan.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I'd like to just read a few comments

and observations made by others in regards to the budget that was presented to the Assembly. One person commented:

. . . [the government] has something meaningful to advertise in its efforts to convince the rest of Canada that Saskatchewan is still alive and well.

However, the person goes on to say:

. . . [there is still] something about this performance that remains unconvincing, something that requires the willing suspension of disbelief.

It's like watching a guy struggling to get into a suit that is two sizes too small. He's got it on all right, but you have to think that it's not all that comfortable.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it's very interesting following yesterday's budget that this government is crowing so much about, that chatting with individuals at the tourism awards last night in Saskatoon or even this morning as I was coming to the Legislative Assembly and stopped for a cup of coffee, or last night as we were leaving and we stopped for coffee, and you talk to people on the street, Madam Deputy Speaker, we didn't run into anyone — my colleague, the member from Maple Creek and I — who actually had anything good to say about the provincial budget that was laid before us. Even despite the fact that there was some \$700 million worth of expenditures in this budget.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would just want to go on and comment on some of the other comments that have been brought forward by people. One of the reporters said:

[This government] . . . fell into a billion-dollar resource windfall last year, but [it] could only find \$100 million to put toward permanent debt reduction.

Meanwhile, the government itself continues to expand. By the end of the year, there will be another 262.4 "full-time equivalent" positions created within government even as job creation in the private sector is forecast to shrink.

I find that very interesting, Madam Deputy Speaker — 262 more positions in government while the private sector continues to shrink. In fact the government through its own admission admits that with this budget, despite the \$700 million, we're actually going to see fewer jobs created in the province of Saskatchewan despite what the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower said a few moments ago as well. "In spite of," Madam Deputy Speaker, the writer goes on to say:

. . . in spite of the new . . . [set] of clothes, there are still signs of the same old NDP underneath. You can find it in things like a \$15-million investment in Maple Leaf Foods, one of the country's biggest and most successful meatpackers.

You can also find it in things like a new Crown-run "entrepreneurial foundation and fund" that will spend \$5 million a year helping budding entrepreneurs draft business plans so they can qualify for government investments.

[12:15]

I ask you, Madam Deputy Speaker, how is that going to build the province? How is that going to address the need for job creation and business expansion in the province of Saskatchewan when you see that most of the expansion, if not all of it, is going to come as a result of government intervention? And that, Madam Deputy Speaker, is one of the major problems in the province of Saskatchewan. It's the message that's being sent to business that this really is not a place to invest in.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this government shows no sign of reducing its role in the economy, and that's rather unfortunate. And the conclusion is while our Finance minister might look good in pinstripes, he'd likely be more comfortable in them if the government bought a piece of the suit company.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we've been listening to this government. We've been listening to members across the way tell us how they're going to build this province. And yet how can you believe them? How can you believe these members?

Madam Deputy Speaker, the government and the Minister of Finance talks about reducing the debt in the province of Saskatchewan. Yet in his own summary financial statements, he indicates that the debt is going to grow by \$288.5 million. Madam Deputy Speaker, how can you talk about reducing the debt when your own financial statements indicate it's growing?

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, that's just part of the equation. We've seen, for too many years, we've seen this government misuse the term of being forthright with the people of Saskatchewan in the way they present their figures.

And I think, Madam Deputy Speaker, we just have to go to the Provincial Auditor. And the Provincial Auditor, over the past number of years, has indicated time and time again that government's figures have not been very accurate. He talks about the Fiscal Stabilization Fund being overestimated. He talks about transfers to Crown corporations improperly recorded as loans, understate expenses by \$12 million. He talks about pension expenses understated by \$120 million.

In fact, Madam Deputy Speaker, it might be interesting to note — and this for people across this province and individuals who have government pensions, the old pension plan, the unfunded pension liability — that since 1991, since 1991, how well has this government done in addressing the unfunded pension liability? In 1991 it was \$2.7 billion behind. And it'll be interesting to see when the auditor's statements come out in November what it is. But as of November '05 it is now underfunded by \$4.2 billion.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I ask you, is that a plan of a government that knows where it's going, that knows how to manage the fiscal finances and resources of this province? I think not.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as I look at this budget and as we've seen over the last few days . . . We've talked about out-migration in the province of Saskatchewan. We've talked about job loss. We've talked about people leaving this province.

Is this budget going to draw people to this province? I doubt it. In fact, Madam Deputy Speaker, I was just chatting with a couple recently in my area who, as of Good Friday, will be moving to Alberta and will be starting work on Tuesday following the Easter weekend in the province of Alberta. Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget is basically saying to them, there's no reason why you should stay in the province of Saskatchewan. And that is tragic, and it's unfortunate because it takes children out of our school system. It takes people from our communities.

And the member from North Battleford chirps from the back of this Assembly about how well he's doing. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, maybe he should go around and look and talk to some of these people in rural Saskatchewan. Maybe he should talk to the people in Moosomin about how well they're doing when it comes to health care, how well they're doing in regards to their hospital, Madam Deputy Speaker.

People in Moosomin are concerned because they've seen what's happening in the community of Humboldt. And they're seeing about a callous government that has delayed the construction and going to tender of the Humboldt hospital to the point that it has now increased in costs. And now the people of Humboldt are being asked to go back to their own community to raise additional funds because of the government's dithering. And that's a concern that people in Moosomin have. They would like to see, Madam Deputy Speaker, this minister move forward with the commitment by the former minister to get this project to tender so that they're not left with an additional cost to their facility because, Madam Deputy Speaker, it's a facility that's definitely needed in the community of Moosomin. Not just Moosomin, but to a fairly broad area including the western side of Manitoba that are looking forward to this hospital.

Madam Deputy Speaker, my colleague from Maple Creek and I had the privilege of attending the tourism awards in Saskatoon last night. And when I talk about tourism . . . we've talked about this for years. We've talked about the opportunity for tourism across the province of Saskatchewan, and certainly the southeast of the province is no different.

I look at Moose Mountain Provincial Park, and Moose Mountain Provincial Park to my knowledge continues to be the most well-attended park in the province of Saskatchewan. Unfortunately there are some deterrents to that attendance, and part of that is highway construction. Highway 48 — is this government committed to working with the southeast transportation authority to ensure that Highway 48 from the Manitoba border will be completed over the five-year period, right through to the community of Kipling? Madam Deputy Speaker, that is a concern that the people of the southeast area of this province have in regards to commitments that this government is making and whether or not it's going to honour its agreements with local ratepayers and local taxpayers.

What about Highway 47 running north and south? Madam Deputy Speaker, that's a fairly important highway in regards to trade, north and south, in the province of Saskatchewan in the southeast, or Highway No. 8.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there are a number of issues that the people in the southeast part of the province, in the Moosomin

constituency, are concerned about. My colleagues, Madam Deputy Speaker, have also noted that there are some very major concerns regarding agriculture. And we see an ominous cloud beginning to build in the province of Saskatchewan. We saw it earlier as the catalogues came out from the sale from the auctioning companies and the number of farms that are actually up for bid. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, that hasn't slowed down.

I've run across individuals who've decided just in the last week, week and a half, that they're not interested in trying to grow another crop. When they sat down with their accountant and they looked at what their return was and their net return this past year and what it would cost them to put a crop in the ground this year, they said enough was enough. There's no sense fighting. There's no sense fighting, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And they don't see any leadership from this provincial government in regards to addressing the issues of agriculture, other than the Minister of Agriculture continued to point his finger and accuse the federal government of not taking immediate action. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture can continue to point his finger. But we would suggest rather than what we've seen in the past, maybe it's time for this minister to start making overtures to the federal government, of working with the federal government to be part of building a long-term plan — and a plan, not just a long-term plan, but a plan that will address some of the major concerns that are impacting people in the province of Saskatchewan agriculture community.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, when I talk about agriculture community, I'm not just talking about farmers themselves, farm families. We're talking about small communities. We're talking about communities that are struggling to survive. We're talking about communities where men and women have resided for years to build these communities, and they continue to see the outflow of young people from their communities.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it's time that we had an actual plan in place that would begin to address those concerns.

An Hon. Member: — How about the businesses?

Mr. Toth: — Madam Deputy Speaker, my colleague has also mentioned, what about the businesses? Yes, I talk to the business community on a daily basis. One business for example indicated or said to me that if it wasn't for the fact that there's actually some oil activity in our area, they may as well shut the doors because the agricultural community which was their main . . . where they derive most of their revenue resource, certainly hasn't been there for the last little while.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there are so many things in this provincial budget, and there were so many opportunities for this government to provide some direction, to present a more positive view to the investment community of this country to look at Saskatchewan as the place to invest in as well as a place to come and live in. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, we all agree there's a lot of positive aspects in this province. This province is indeed a great place to live. But, Madam Deputy Speaker, we continue to have a government that really is basically holding

back the ability of this province to move forward.

Therefore, Madam Deputy Speaker, Madam Deputy Speaker, I have to basically conclude by saying, this billion dollar surplus that this government had to deal with really has done nothing — the expenditures yesterday — to create a more positive view and feeling and sense of opportunity that the people of Saskatchewan were looking for. And therefore, Madam Deputy Speaker, I must vote in favour of the amendment and be opposed to the motion before the Assembly.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Crofford: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. And I just want to say that it's a real pleasure for me today to be able to discuss highlights from the 2006-07 speech. I intend today to speak in favour of the budget and against the amendment put forward by the opposition. And not to digress too much right at the beginning of my remarks, I can't understand why the opposition would be so willing to damage their credibility with a vote of non-confidence in the most popular budget that has happened in this province probably in the last 20 years.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Crofford: — So I think I will work a little more on the theme of credibility, Madam Deputy Speaker. The 2006-07 budget is about building a better future right here, and we are capitalizing on our economic success while reflecting the values of Saskatchewan people.

Yesterday on my way to Swift Current for an event there, I was very pleased to listen to all the dialogue about the budget on the radio. And one of the things that was said in some of the panels was, in all the provinces of Canada, this budget more strongly links social progress to economic progress than any other provincial budget that we've seen in a long time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Crofford: — The other comment was about the transformative impact that the tax changes will have on the investment climate and the ability for businesses to reinvest in the province. So transformation, social and economic progress, I think, Madam Speaker, those are the things that I will focus on today.

And you know, the previous speaker, the member from Moosomin, I have to say if we had had the financial practices of the government that he was part of, we would have no financial statements to discuss because the Gass Commission made it very clear that they often did not table financial reports in the Assembly. Reports that were tabled were often three years late. And there is absolutely no comparison in accountability performance between the government that those members were part of and the government that's before you today.

We have now instituted the practice of six-month reporting in virtually every area. And it is such a dramatic change from the

practices of the '80s that if the members opposite want to discuss accountability, we can have that conversation any day. And I am not at all concerned about how we'll come out in that.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Crofford: — And while we're on that subject, recently there was an article quoting Todd Hirsch from the Canada West Foundation. And he talked again about the unwarranted gloom among many Saskatchewanians and the fact that some of this comes out of the feeling of neglect that the West has always felt and its relationship with the East and Ottawa and the minority representation position that we've been in.

But the other observation that is made that throughout the world there's been two major migrations taking place: one is from poor countries to rich countries, and the other one is from the countryside to cities. And so when we're thinking about what that means for our province and the realistic application of our resources to a situation that is existing worldwide, I think that we do have to look at the fact that — as some of our rural folks choose either by necessity of the marketplace, which again the members opposite support the free market system that is doing so much damage to farmers today — that we do have to look at attracting those young rural people to the smaller and larger Saskatchewan urban centres rather than having them go to the oil patch because of course our young farm people have very good skills, very good work attitudes, and are very attractive employees for recruiters from other places.

So I challenge the members opposite to talk to those young people about staying here instead of working as hard as they can to drive them out of the province with their doom and gloom and negativity. You know, John Gormley — who's not my best fellow, though we do get along okay — he says it's about the attitude, dude. And I don't know why the members opposite haven't caught onto that yet. I'm sure they must listen to Mr. Gormley, and I'm sure he would not approve of their salesmanship when it comes to Saskatchewan.

[12:30]

The other thing I want to talk about in terms of their lack of credibility was comments made recently in an article about the Sask Party's penchant for paying fast and loose with the facts. And of course we all know about Brad Wall's missing seven years. I know people in Swift Current were certainly interested in that last night. They wonder why someone is not proud of their past. And of course we know very well that when he worked in the inner circle for the minister of Economic Development and Tourism, John Gerich, that he would have been very apprised of all the discussions and decisions around Meadow Lake and would have been there when the 250 million was committed to that project.

So to play innocent is disingenuous, Madam Deputy . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. I have to remind the member that when speaking about another colleague within the Assembly, they should use the respectful title of the constituency they represent or the Leader of the Opposition. Thank you.

Ms. Crofford: — Thank you for that reminder, Madam Deputy Speaker. I would refer then to the member from Swift Current.

The other thing that has become apparent is that the NDP has been following a very steady and progressive plan in its financial management. Number one, clean up the mess. Number two, when there was surplus money, make sure that Saskatchewan families had a tax break, with the largest tax break in the history of the province. Next, to look at the economic growth foundations and change many of the royalty and investment structures for mining, oil, and gas — all of those that have produced the strong foundation that we have.

As the member from the Conference Board of Canada said, you don't get eight years of solid financial progress by accident. This has been dealing with the fundamentals in Saskatchewan and convincing the financial agencies across Canada and the US that we are deserving of a AAA credit rating which is also, as anyone knows, a very important part of someone making a decision to invest.

So we've been working on the fundamentals: the people first, the resource and development and manufacturing tax breaks, now the corporate investment environment. And, Madam Speaker, I'm sure that next year we will be very rewarded when the Minister of Finance gets up to provide the sequel to this year's budget. And we'll see again the very solid planning that has brought this province forward out of the pit that it existed in previously.

You know when I was listening again to the budget discussion, there was a business person from, an Aboriginal business person from Meadow Lake. There was a disabled person, a student. To a person they were very supportive of the budget, again talking of transformation, talking of linking social progress to the economy. And the two themes they really twigged on was economic prosperity and youth. Those were the things they had gotten out of the budget presentation.

And one of the very interesting things, when we were having a discussion about the budget, is that when you combine the information that the studies that have been done about the cost of doing business in Saskatchewan and combine that with the new tax environment, this is actually a better place to do business than Alberta. So I say, come on and we'll kick a little bit of Alberta butt.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Crofford: — I am a little bit shocked when I hear the member from Humboldt indulging in revisionist history. If that member wants to revisit what happened to GRIP [gross revenue insurance program] and what happened to many of our important programs, they can look back to the foolish spending that occurred in the '80s that ended us up with a 15 billion debt which has continued to hamstring us. We could have gotten rid of four points on the PST right now if we didn't have the money that's being expended on interest on that old and tired debt that, quite frankly, I'd like to see the end of.

You know we have some real advantages in Saskatchewan. We have. If we compare ourselves to Alberta, in Saskatchewan an average family in PST in a year would spend 1,074. Well that

same family in Alberta would not pay that sales tax but what would they pay instead? This is a skill testing question. They would pay a health premium of \$1,056. Their mortgage would be 3,200 more a year. Their heating would be 1,000 more a year. Their car insurance would be 1,000 more a year. And I have to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the Alberta advantage disappears quite quickly when you look at these kind of figures.

Not to mention that . . . I don't know about my colleagues here, but I love this place. I think it's a terrific place to live. There is nothing I enjoy more, Madam Deputy Speaker, myself and my husband, than getting in our car and hitting the back roads in Saskatchewan to see all the interesting things — the nice homes and yards people have created, the farms. It's just a pleasure always. And you always come across something. There's a lot of creativity in Saskatchewan.

And I remember driving, I think in the Avonlea area. I lose track because we go down so many little back roads. But in the Avonlea area someone had a gigantic Elvis out in their field because the desire to engage in creative activity is just part of the Saskatchewan psyche and the Saskatchewan spirit. And I wish I was a better photographer so that I would be able to record some of those things.

Now a couple of highlights I'd just like to bring forward from the provincial budget is the very important tax credit for trade groups, both the one-time trade entry amount as well as the maintenance tax credit. And you know it's interesting when you read who falls into those trade groups. We have hair stylists, bricklayer, drywaller, roofer, insulator, glazier, painter, floor covering installer, plumber, pipefitter, gas fitter, carpenter, electrician, sheet metal worker, boilermaker, iron worker, autobody repair, vehicle mechanics, and heavy duty mechanics.

And you know this will be important financially to those folks but it's also a recognition of how important skilled tradespeople are to all of us in our everyday lives, especially if you've ever seen me try to fix something. It doesn't matter how many times I measure a board, it's still an inch out when I put it on the wall.

So I want to say that I want to thank my colleague from Regina Northeast for all the good work that he did on that change.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Crofford: — I would direct people to pages 56, 57 of the budget background documents that have the intercity comparison of taxes and costs. In every case Saskatchewan comes out ahead of every other jurisdiction in Canada. And again, just reminding people that we have an ongoing standing commitment to the lowest utility rates in Canada.

And you know what, Madam Speaker? In the last boom in Swift Current, there was 20.4 million in construction in 1987. Well in the boom today there is 70 million in construction. And last night I was pleased to share the podium with a First Nations person who was there helping to build the relationships as the new casino will be going into Swift Current. And it was wonderful both to hear the presentation where he started out speaking of the respect for the elders in the room — because that's something very important in his community — and how pleased he was to be able to speak to the wise group of elders

gathered there and to the young people in the crowd, the messages about the expanding opportunities that would come with the new casino in Swift Current.

It was a very good moment and I think is part of what this budget is about, is creating those opportunities and those relationships that will take advantage of that bit of the Saskatchewan advantage, which is the young Aboriginal population that is increasingly seeking education, seeking employment, and affirming traditions that keep the communities strong.

I want to also spend a minute on the changes that benefit low-income families. There was in the low-income supports a \$40 a month increase for most of the 27,000 SAP [Saskatchewan Assistance Plan] and TEA [transitional employment allowance] clients; a \$20 a month increase for SAP clients in long-term care; \$10 a month in the general living allowance plus utility flat rate allowance for TEA.

And for the employment supplement, increases for the 5,300 existing and 100 new families on that program who are in employment now but needing a little bit of support until they reach a more sufficient level of employment, and financial assistance for 17,000 low-income and moderate-income homeowners to defray the costs of draft proofing, heating and system upgrades, and window replacements.

For families and children, there was funding increases for foster care, therapeutic foster care, private treatment, family supports, out-of-home placement prevention and pre-protection, and enhanced child care subsidies to 4,300 parents. There was a reiteration of the increase for the CBO [community-based organization] wages so that the people who serve the most vulnerable in our society are not vulnerable themselves. The secure care project, the cognitive disability strategy, 500 new child care spaces, the CBO child care wage increases to value the work that people do in raising healthy and learning-ready children. To address the waiting lists for children with disabilities who require child care, we've eliminated waiting lists for disabled children requiring child care.

The enhanced literacy initiatives. I didn't know this, but a 1 per cent increase in literacy in the population has an impact of 2.5 per cent in the productivity of the community. The new Literacy Commission is working on these things for us. And as well, 15 new pre-kindergarten classes in the province to make sure that kids go into kindergarten with the best chance of success and completion of their elementary school.

And I just want to again come to the end of my discussion by talking about the ceremony that we had in the legislature the other day. It was only a few years ago that I heard the phrase that we are all treaty people. And it's true. In order to be in a marriage there's two partners. In order to be in a treaty there are two partners.

We benefited hugely from the land divisions that took place. Some people in Saskatchewan think that First Nations have too much land in the province. Well they have about 10 per cent of the cut zone of Weyerhaeuser in terms of actual land base in the province. And considering what they gave up in the treaties — all the access that we have to farm land, to resources, to the

places where our cities exist — this was I think a relationship that must be respected. And I was very pleased to see Florence Highway's runner and pillow take its honourable place in the legislature. And whenever the camera is focused on either Mr. Speaker or Madam Speaker, it's very much front and centre in the picture.

So, Madam Speaker, in closing, when we were elected last time we said four things. We said we would make Saskatchewan the most affordable place to live and raise a family; provide the best public health care in Canada; build a green and prosperous economy; build the future here for young people. Well this budget is consistent with all of these themes, building a better future right here.

And as I said, Madam Deputy Speaker, I look forward to the sequel. And I speak today in support of this budget and against the amendment proposed by the members opposite.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Brkich: — Madam Deputy Speaker, it's an honour to enter this debate. I've talked to some of the people in the Arm River constituency and they've given this budget a failing grade; they're not in support of it. So I won't be supporting this budget, I'll be supporting the amendment.

I'll give you some reasons why they're not supporting. The main one is agriculture. There is nothing in this budget that addresses the problem out there in agriculture. We've discussed agriculture here lots in this legislature and the government still has did nothing.

We could talk about the crop insurance deadline on March 31. That was some of the stuff, a little thing that this government could do to back up, to help the farmers. That's something that the Government of Saskatchewan could do to help the province . . . or the province could help the farmers of Saskatchewan. But did they? No. You know they could have extended that deadline.

We can go with the northern farmers. Most of them haven't taken the crop off. And yet you go all through this constituency, there is nothing but piles and piles . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Other members of the Assembly will have time to enter in the debate. I would ask that they respect the colleague on their feet, and we'll continue with debate.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I will address some of the concerns from the Minister of Health that was yelling from his seat. And that's one of the reasons that they're not supporting this budget was account of him. We have Davidson that has waiting lists in long-term care. Outlook, there's a waiting list. I have a waiting list in Imperial. I have one in Wynyard — waiting lists for people to get into long-term care.

[12:45]

There's a wing in Davidson that this government shut down that could be opened with that budget, probably only cost to renovate them rooms. Right now they're trying to price it out. There's a community-based organization that are trying to figure out what it would cost. And I'm pretty sure the cost would come under a quarter of a million dollars to renovate the rooms in the old wing of the hospital, that they could be used so the people don't have to leave. You know that could have been addressed very easily in the budget, on the money end, to help the people out there in rural Saskatchewan because it's forecast that there's going to be more of a waiting list in Saskatchewan with that.

Watrous is another one. Watrous has been on the list — I can't remember for how long — to build a new facility there. They need a new facility in Watrous. The roof leaks. The last time I was there, the roof was leaking. The rooms are getting in poor condition. They've raised their money over the years. They raised the money, and every year they raise a little bit more because they know the costs are going up. And they're sitting there with their share. You know what the government's share is? Five million dollars. That's all it would cost to go ahead with the plans. Has the government made that announcement? No they haven't.

And they keep hanging on and letting Watrous hang on and hang on. These people raised this money at least over a five-year period. And they expect to see results. They expect our government to step up to the plate and fulfill their commitment. When they went to the health district and said, we want to build a new facility, the health district said, you bet; that's good. You raise your share; we will be there. Were they there? No, they're not, Madam Deputy Speaker. They haven't stepped to the plate.

Them people went to work and raised them commitments, went to the local towns, went to the local RMs [rural municipality]. They donated money, put money in there, grew money. I can remember fundraisers they had there, different fundraisers. They still have a huge . . . What word am I looking for? It's not an auction. It's a draw that raises money there. They have some very good prizes there. They have raffles to raise money for that. And they did that for years. The people have donated money and come out to help that facility get built, and all they're waiting for is the government to come up with their share of the money. But has the government come up with it? No they haven't.

So do you think the people of Watrous are supporting this budget? No they're not. They're not. And you'll be hearing from them. I'll be bringing . . . There are concerns with it. They're not happy with it. They expected that they would be addressed in this budget. But what did they announce in this budget? Some old announcements.

They talked about Outlook. When Outlook was in my constituency, Madam Deputy Speaker, they made that announcement. I remember going there, in Outlook, and they'd been on the waiting list for five or six years. And then finally, the last year as an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], they finally made the announcement there. What do they do? They make the announcement again in this budget. They're finally maybe going to break ground after how many years of

that town actually going and raising the money for that. And then they had to raise the extra money.

Now Watrous is in the same situation. They don't even know how much money, when they finally does give the nod, how much more is the government going to say, the health district say, whoa now things have changed. Your plans have changed. Your building has gone up, inflation. We're going to need another \$1.3 million from you, and we're going to need it — if they are going to do it like Humboldt — we're going to need it in 40 days.

Do you know how hard it is to try and raise \$1 million in 40 days? You're basically putting a gun to their head and saying that if you don't raise it, you're not getting your hospital, you're not getting your long-term care people, that we don't care. And that's a message that is going out there from this government.

And that's the same message that they've sent to the agriculture out there too. The deadline . . . Getting back to crop insurance, there is piles of wheat everywhere because there has been a very slow movement of grain. Farmers can't sell their product, and right now it isn't . . . there isn't much money in it right now.

And on top of that, road ban is out. The road bans came out in early March, about March 10, March 12, in a lot of RMs. So now you can't move the grain even if you want. So even if you have the quota, if the elevator finally has some room, you can't move the grain to meet the March 31 deadline. You'd think that the Minister of Agriculture would have said, okay we'll give you at least a month or two, at least until the road bans are off or the people can get in their fields, the farmers can get in their fields.

You realize how soft it is out there right now, how much water is out there. I don't know if these people watching the news, if they watched it last night. The community next to me, Kenaston right now is in a flood situation. There's two highways — no. highway 50, no. highway 11 — both water pouring over them right now.

Last night at midnight, I was talking to a guy, and they were down to one lane on No. 11 by the old picnic grounds by Kenaston. No. 15 Highway, they're running pumps over the highway trying to move the water through it. So how do they expect farmers to get out in the fields and move grain with that much water? That much more . . . They can't even . . . Some of the roads . . . I talked to the RM of . . . in the RM of Rosedale, I think there was three or four roads, grids, that are flooded right now with water pouring over them. How can you move grain now to even make your deadline?

In the wintertime there was so much snow, you couldn't move it. So a lot of the farmers thought, well maybe March if it was a good winter, we could move it. But now with the weather conditions and the mud and the water . . . And all they ask was maybe a month deadline, you know, until we can move our grain. All they wanted was a month deadline. Do you think this government would give it to them at that end? No.

Oh they fund CAIS did they? No, they say they are throwing in 98 million. Well that doesn't fully fund CAIS. So when you go

to the bank and say, we need the money now in the spring, you're only going to get probably two-thirds of your money from the province when you can use it right now. Now is when they can use the money for CAIS, probably to pay their crop insurance deadline.

And what's the government do? They're holding back a third of the CAIS. You know, why are they . . . And then they wonder why they have no support in rural Saskatchewan, where people won't support this particular budget. Those are some of the reasons on there.

Another one is job loss. You know, the member from Regina Rosemont gets up, says well it's an attitude problem; that's why people don't stay here, it's an attitude problem. Well what do you think? People are going to sit around and . . . If she thinks that they're going to sit around and sing "Kumbaya" and everything's going to be happy, well things aren't in rural Saskatchewan because there is no jobs in Saskatchewan right now.

There is no jobs out there. There's no businesses in rural Saskatchewan. Agriculture is suffering. Every ag dealer is having to lay off a person or two. All the farmers are cutting back on help there. And then they wonder why there's no support there.

And is this budget going to get more people in Saskatchewan? They already forecast it's not. They expect, by their own admission, that it's not going to put more people in the province of Saskatchewan. They wonder why there's no support.

And there isn't. I was listening to Gormley this morning coming up. A lot of people phoned in — no support for this budget. And when they realize . . . they start actually looking at it, there was no support. There's no support for the average person out there. There's no tax relief for the average person out there. There is no jobs, going to be no jobs. There's absolutely no future there. And they wonder why people are moving.

You think they want to move? Do you think they want to go leave this province? Madam Deputy Speaker, no they don't. And I talked to them. They don't want to.

Everyone says, why aren't we doing more oil and gas here? We know it's here. Why aren't we? And I say, well you got your NDP government. You got a socialist government that basically does not work with oil companies. You had the Premier who sent out letters — what did he call the corporations? — greedy corporate huskers, you know. And then he wonders why the oil companies won't come here.

They talk about debt. Well I remember when Blakeney, when Blakeney nationalized the potash. Do you think he paid cash to them? That started the debt in this province by huge amounts. Nationalize the potash.

And we're going to nationalize the oil companies. That was their next step. That was their next plan. And thank God the people of Saskatchewan, they realized that the socialist government were going to nationalize the oil companies. They booted them out. Thank God. That was one of the best things that ever happened to this province, or we wouldn't even have

an oil industry.

Could you imagine? Could you imagine the oil industry being run? It would be run like SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] is now. That's how much money they would be losing at that end. There probably would be no oil in here.

But, Madam Deputy Speaker, at that end of it, that is why there is no oil development. You know, I get asked that constantly in my constituency. Every town has at least 10, 15, 20 kids go away to work in the wintertime to the oil patch. They say why aren't we drilling here? You know dinosaurs just didn't die on the Alberta side. You know they did . . . some of them did come across and they did cross the border into the Saskatchewan side, and some of them did die there. A few of them made it here to Regina and some of them I think are still in government, at that end of it. But most of them died, and they died on the Saskatchewan side.

There is oil, we probably have more natural gas here than Alberta. And how many new wells production? We're just barely staying even. Very low new well production here compared to Alberta, compared to BC. You know, why is that? Why aren't they drilling here like crazy? In Alberta they're punching rigs in all over the place. You get in the Camrose area there, with the new methane gas going in there, there's wells. There'll be about 10 of them on a quarter section, all spread out. And here, you know, we have little pockets of it here. And the oil companies say, you know, till this government actually really wants to work with us, really wants to work, and isn't going . . . and will give the assurance, and give the assurance that we will not nationalize you. And this government won't.

Do you know why they won't? Because of the unions. The union bosses basically run that NDP government over there, run the back bench of it for sure and some of the front bench, saying that they don't want . . . they won't be working with the oil companies here. And then that's going back to their *Regina Manifesto*, their grassroots. People that say corporations are bad, you know. But what is this . . . And left basically rural Saskatchewan right out of it. It's leaving Saskatchewan out. Saskatchewan is lagging so far behind the rest of Canada. It's such a shame when you look at this province, the growth potential this province.

When I talk to people, whether it's in the agriculture end, could be . . . what it could be in value-added, it could be in tourism, it could be in the oil and gas sector, and it could be in manufacturing, and we're not. We have more potash than anybody. We're second biggest producer of oil and natural gas, and what are we doing with that? Nothing. There is no development in this province at all. There is no growth. What did that . . . came out 5,200 job loss again, you know.

We're in an oil boom. We're the only place in the world that is having supposedly an oil boom that loses jobs. When you have an oil boom, I don't know if you've been involved in the oil industry, but that attracts people. People should be rolling into your province for work like they are in Alberta, BC. When I was a kid, I can remember when there was some guys used to go to Saudi Arabia to work because that's when the oil boom started there. They left here, and Saudi Arabia boomed; they

increased their jobs. Any place that there has been oil production, when oil is at an all-time high, the provinces or countries or states that are having . . . are creating jobs. They're growing in jobs. Why is this province losing jobs at that end of it in an oil boom?

And you know I'll have people ask me, and I say I can't explain it except an NDP government. And they'll say yes. You know we've been suffering under these guys for 14 years. And under 14 years, we've lost jobs, and we've lost people, and now we're losing young people at an alarming rate. And if that doesn't stop, there's going to be nothing left in this province at it.

Do you know how many people are leaving this province every year? It is alarming amount of numbers, and those are people that we need to grow this province. Those are the people that we need to pay the taxes in here that will provide the social nets, that will provide the health care for this province.

And right now they're here because they have no faith in it. When I talk to people now they just say, you know, they have no faith in this province. They have no faith in this government. They believe this government can't grow this province, and this government has shown it by having a continual job loss and population loss. They haven't did one thing to change that around. Until you change that around, if you change your population and your job loss, you are running a losing province. And you are going backwards.

And the people are realizing that now. They realized that in rural Saskatchewan, and they're realizing that now in the cities, and that is why there has to be change in government. You have to make, you have to make this province competitive with it. And there's various ways of doing it.

This government moved a little bit in the tax end of it, but there's more ways you could be moving at it. We have huge potential for tourism, and they're basically not doing nothing there. Huge potential for value added in this province, they're not helping one little bit in there.

You know lowering the PST would help, would help this province. And did this government do? When they raised the PST, they took \$500 million so far out of this province, \$500 million out of taxpayers' pockets left. And now they have some extra money, are they returning it back to the citizens? No they're not, Madam Deputy Speaker. They're not. They had a chance to actually help the average guy, but they took the money from his pocket. They took that money, and did they go back to help him back? They haven't helped farmers, Madam Deputy Speaker. They haven't helped the average person out there. They haven't helped students. They haven't helped nobody, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — It now being 1 o'clock, I have enjoyed the spirited debate and wish all members a safe and happy weekend with friends and family. I adjourn the House now until Monday at 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

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