



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

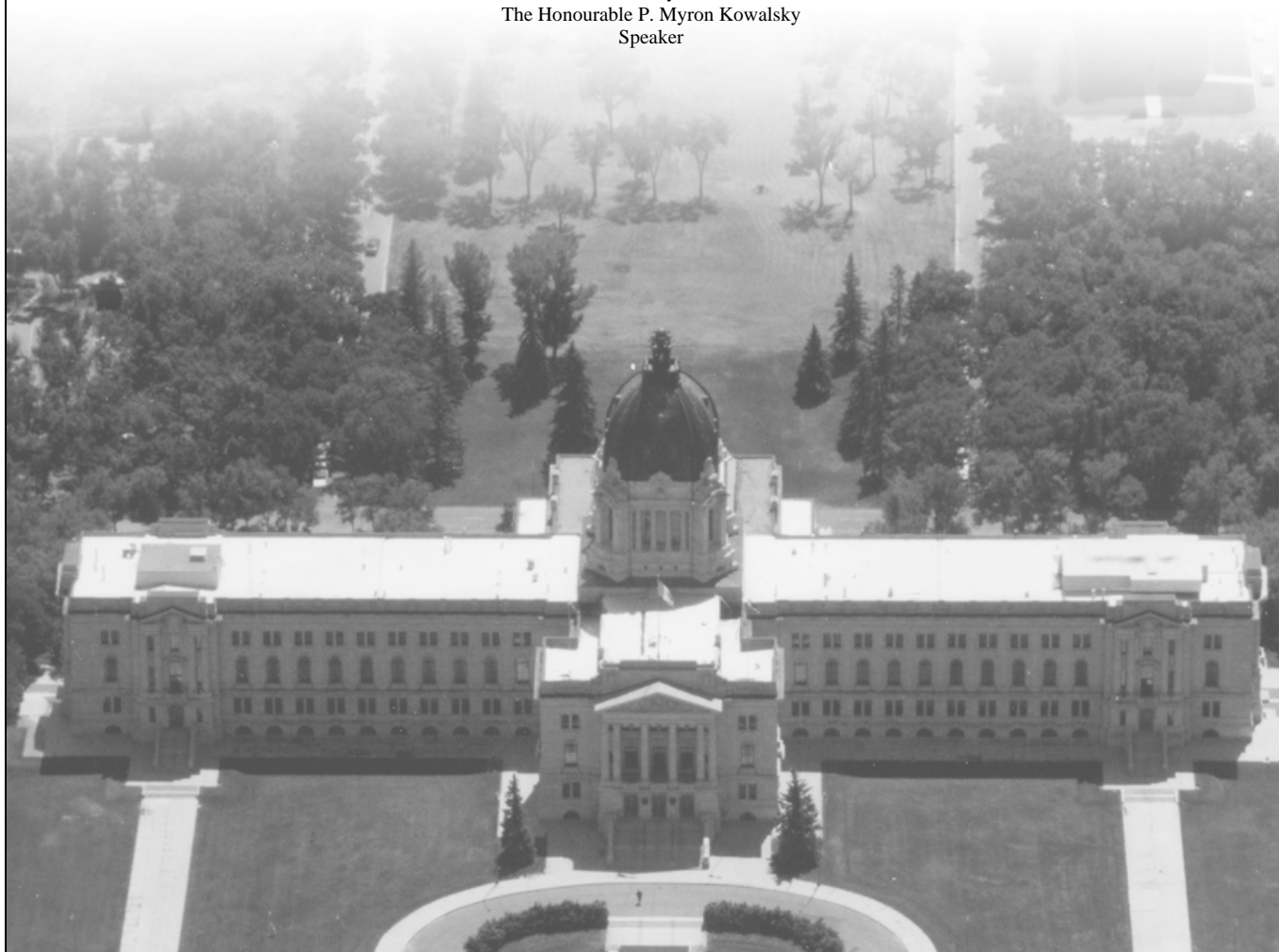
---

**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

| <b>Name of Member</b>    | <b>Political Affiliation</b> | <b>Constituency</b>       |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Addley, Hon. Graham      | NDP                          | Saskatoon Sutherland      |
| Allchurch, Denis         | SP                           | Rosthern-Shellbrook       |
| Atkinson, Hon. Pat       | NDP                          | Saskatoon Nutana          |
| Beatty, Hon. Joan        | NDP                          | Cumberland                |
| Belanger, Hon. Buckley   | NDP                          | Athabasca                 |
| Bjornrud, Bob            | SP                           | Melville-Saltcoats        |
| Borgerson, Lon           | NDP                          | Saskatchewan Rivers       |
| Brkich, Greg             | SP                           | Arm River-Watrous         |
| Calvert, Hon. Lorne      | NDP                          | Saskatoon Riversdale      |
| Cheveldayoff, Ken        | SP                           | Saskatoon Silver Springs  |
| Chisholm, Michael        | SP                           | Cut Knife-Turtleford      |
| Cline, Hon. Eric         | NDP                          | Saskatoon Massey Place    |
| Crofford, Joanne         | NDP                          | Regina Rosemont           |
| D'Autremont, Dan         | SP                           | Cannington                |
| Dearborn, Jason          | SP                           | Kindersley                |
| Draude, June             | SP                           | Kelvington-Wadena         |
| Eagles, Doreen           | SP                           | Estevan                   |
| Elhard, Wayne            | SP                           | Cypress Hills             |
| Forbes, Hon. David       | NDP                          | Saskatoon Centre          |
| Gantfoer, Rod            | SP                           | Melfort                   |
| Hagel, Hon. Glenn        | NDP                          | Moose Jaw North           |
| Hamilton, Doreen         | NDP                          | Regina Wascana Plains     |
| Harpauer, Donna          | SP                           | Humboldt                  |
| Harper, Ron              | NDP                          | Regina Northeast          |
| Hart, Glen               | SP                           | Last Mountain-Touchwood   |
| Heppner, Ben             | SP                           | Martensville              |
| Hermanson, Elwin         | SP                           | Rosetown-Elrose           |
| Higgins, Hon. Deb        | NDP                          | Moose Jaw Wakamow         |
| Huyghebaert, Yogi        | SP                           | Wood River                |
| Iwanchuk, Andy           | NDP                          | Saskatoon Fairview        |
| Junor, Judy              | NDP                          | Saskatoon Eastview        |
| Kerpan, Allan            | SP                           | Carrot River Valley       |
| Kirsch, Delbert          | SP                           | Batoche                   |
| Kowalsky, Hon. P. Myron  | NDP                          | Prince Albert Carlton     |
| Krawetz, Ken             | SP                           | Canora-Pelly              |
| Lautermilch, Hon. Eldon  | NDP                          | Prince Albert Northcote   |
| McCall, Warren           | NDP                          | Regina Elphinstone-Centre |
| McMorris, Don            | SP                           | Indian Head-Milestone     |
| Merriman, Ted            | SP                           | Saskatoon Northwest       |
| Morgan, Don              | SP                           | Saskatoon Southeast       |
| Morin, Sandra            | NDP                          | Regina Walsh Acres        |
| Nilson, Hon. John        | NDP                          | Regina Lakeview           |
| Prebble, Peter           | NDP                          | Saskatoon Greystone       |
| Quennell, Hon. Frank     | NDP                          | Saskatoon Meewasin        |
| Serby, Hon. Clay         | NDP                          | Yorkton                   |
| Sonntag, Hon. Maynard    | NDP                          | Meadow Lake               |
| Stewart, Lyle            | SP                           | Thunder Creek             |
| Taylor, Hon. Len         | NDP                          | The Battlefords           |
| Thomson, Hon. Andrew     | NDP                          | Regina South              |
| Toth, Don                | SP                           | Moosomin                  |
| Trew, Kim                | NDP                          | Regina Coronation Park    |
| Van Mulligen, Hon. Harry | NDP                          | Regina Douglas Park       |
| Wakefield, Milton        | SP                           | Lloydminster              |
| Wall, Brad               | SP                           | Swift Current             |
| Wartman, Hon. Mark       | NDP                          | Regina Qu'Appelle Valley  |
| Weekes, Randy            | SP                           | Biggar                    |
| Yates, Hon. Kevin        | NDP                          | Regina Dewdney            |
| Vacant                   |                              | Weyburn-Big Muddy         |

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of constituents from the community of Prelate who are concerned about the disintegration of Highway 32. The prayer reads as follows:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this situation is urgent. And this is proudly presented to you on behalf of constituents from the community of Prelate. I so present.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise again today on behalf of people who are concerned about Highway No. 310.

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 Foam Lake, Fishing Lake, Kuroki, and surrounding areas.

The people who have signed this petition are from Wadena, Prince Albert, Kuroki, Invermay, Margo, Leask, Kylemore, and Yellow Quill. I so present.

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

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand again today to present several pages of a petition 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 5 from Humboldt to Saskatoon.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from all around the province. From Yellow Quill, Kamsack, Martensville, Saskatoon, Wadena, Humboldt, Bruno, Peterson, and Meacham. I so present.

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

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of citizens concerned about the failure of this government to fund the cancer fighting drug Avastin. The prayer reads as follows:

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

Signatures on this petition today, Mr. Speaker, are all from the city of Saskatoon. And I'm proud to present on their behalf.

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition from citizens of Wilkie who are opposed to possible health care service reductions in their community. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Wilkie Health Centre and special care home maintain at the very least their current level of services.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens of Wilkie 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 signed by concerned citizens of Saskatchewan. 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 all from my hometown of Spiritwood, and Mayfair. I so present.

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

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here calling on the government to maintain its Department of Highways section shop at 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 at Watrous remain open so as to ensure the safety of all motorists, Saskatchewan Highways employees who would be affected by such possible closure.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This particular petition is signed by the good citizens from Watrous. I so present.

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

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to present a petition regarding autism spectrum disorders. And the prayer reads, lengthily, as follows:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to act upon the following recommendation made February 2005 by the Government of Saskatchewan caucus committee on human services to the Saskatchewan minister of Health, the Hon. John Nilson.

"The presentation from Saskatchewan Families for Effective Autism Treatment concerned issues surrounding the support of autistic children and adults that need review, one in particular being the availability of behavioural therapists. The committee was impressed with the commitment of the parents and families of people with autism and . . ."

**The Speaker:** — Order please. I would ask members just to restrict their petitions to the reading of the prayer, briefly. Would the member bring it to a close, please.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Mr. Speaker, this was the prayer.

And as is duty bound your petitioner will ever pray.

This is signed by citizens from Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, and I'm happy to present it on their behalf.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member from Saskatoon Southeast.

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present similar petitions regarding autism spectrum disorder. I will read only briefly a portion of it:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to act upon the following recommendation made by the Government of Saskatchewan caucus to the Minister of Health.

And I'll read a portion of that:

To continue to provide intensive behavioural intervention and other therapies for as long as an individual's lead medical professional team deems it to be required, and to increase the early diagnosis of children with ASD.

I so present, Mr. Speaker. This petition is signed by citizens of Saskatoon and Warman.

## READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Deputy Clerk:** — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14(7) are hereby read and received as additions to previously tabled petitions being addendums to sessional paper nos. 7, 8, 64, 67, 638, 639, 645.

## NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 43 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Justice: did officials in the office of the Minister of Justice undertake any written correspondence with the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission regarding the reinstatement of John D. Hillson at the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission, and if so, will the minister table this correspondence in the legislature?

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 43 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Justice: how much money was the Legal Aid Commission billed from private law firms for services related to the claim of John D. Hillson?

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 43 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Justice: did the Minister of Justice, his office, or Executive Council at any time make a recommendation to the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission with regard to the employment of John D. Hillson at the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission, and if so, what was the recommendation?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 43 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Learning: how much of the federal funding received under the early learning and child care agreement in principle between the federal and provincial government was allocated to the Department of Learning in the 2005-06 provincial budget? What programs was it allocated to and how much was allocated to each program?

I have a similar question, Mr. Speaker, for the budget year 2006-2007.

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

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 43 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Finance: how much money will the government spend in total promoting the provincial budget by advertising in newspapers, radio, television, and any other sources?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 43 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: what is the total cost commitment by the government and the community respectively for the Melville hospital?

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

**Mr. Brkich:** — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 43 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Regional Economic and Co-operative Development: in the fiscal year 2005-2006 what was the total amount of money in the forms of grants, loans, or other funding arrangements given to businesses or co-operatives in Saskatchewan?

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

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 43 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Community Resources: how much of the federal funding received under the early learning and child care agreement in principle between the federal and provincial governments was allocated to the Department of Community Resources and Employment in the 2005-2006 provincial budget? What programs was it allocated to and how much was allocated to each program?

Mr. Speaker, I also have a similar question covering the years 2006-2007. I so present.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — For introduction of guests, members of the Assembly, it is my honour today to introduce to you a group of teachers seated in the Speaker's gallery who are here in the legislature to attend the eighth annual Saskatchewan Social Sciences Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy. This institute started on Saturday, will continue through to Wednesday.

Already this group has met with the Chief Electoral Officer, members of the judiciary, and several government caucus and legislative staff. During the next three days they are scheduled to meet with Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan as well as House leaders, caucus Chairs, caucus

whips, private members from both sides of the House, and cabinet ministers.

The teachers will be developing new educational materials based on their learning experiences here in the legislature. The Department of Learning is working with them and will connect these lesson plans to the online curriculum making the resources available to all teachers in province.

I would ask, as I introduce these teachers, that they might just give a little wave. We have here today: Kathy Chomey from Battleford Central School; Megan Clake of University of Regina; Al Cooney, St. Joseph High School, Saskatoon; Ryan Hughes, École Vickers School, Prince Albert; Jason L'Heureux, Connaught School, North Battleford; Mark McKeen, University of Regina; Todd Miller, Campbell Collegiate, Regina; Ian Mitchell, Campbell Collegiate, Regina; Tana Mitchell, Winston Knoll Collegiate, Regina; Jeff Morari, St. Joseph High School in Saskatoon; Kevin Parisien, Imperial Community School, Regina; Steve Variyan, Yorkton Regional High School; Regan Williams, Milestone School; Karielle Willner, Davidson High School; Ron Zurevinski, St. Joseph High School, Saskatoon.

I would also like to introduce two special guests who are here to observe our institute: from the Manitoba Education, Citizenship, and Youth, Hugh Sigurdson; and from Saskatchewan Learning, Gerry Craswell.

I want to make special mention of our steering committee, composed of three teachers who attended past institutes. And these people are: Randy Glettler, from Winston Knoll Collegiate in Regina; Tim McFadden, Thom Collegiate, Regina; Erin McLeod, Campbell Collegiate, Regina. And also from the Department of Learning, Gail Saunders, Anna Schmidt, and Brent Toles. And the coordinators for the conference from the Speaker's office, Linda Spence and Ray Robertson.

I ask all members to welcome this group to the Saskatchewan legislature.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Qu'Appelle.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome to this legislation and introduce to members of the legislature, three of those who will be travelling with me to Ottawa to ask the federal government for an immediate payment of at least \$575 million for farmers.

Accompanying us on this trip are three members who are in the gallery: Dave Marit, who is the president of SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], from the Assiniboia area; Jim Hallick, vice-president of SARM, and Jim is from Sturgis; and also with them is the deputy reeve of Porcupine, Wes Black, and Wes is representing the Porcupine disaster committee.

Along with us will be members also from the National Farmers Union, farm support review committee, who are not with us in the gallery today. But I would like members to welcome them

to the gallery today. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

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

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to join with the Minister of Agriculture in welcoming the SARM representatives here today, and I want to wish them the very best on their trip down east to meet with the federal Agriculture minister. Every farmer in this province is waiting to see how they're going to make out down there.

Mr. Speaker, I also am very happy to hear the Minister of Agriculture talk about 575 today instead of the 200 million he's been talking about for the last month. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member from Meadow Lake.

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and all members of the Assembly a guest seated in the west gallery. Jack Purves, believe it or not, even though he doesn't look like it, actually taught me school for one year. He looks too young for that, I know, but taught me school I think when I was in grade 12. And at one time, Mr. Speaker, he actually looked like those younger teachers in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, but I guess we all were a bit younger at one time.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to say that Jack has served our community where I was born and raised — Goodsoil — very well over the many years that he has been there. He is currently the mayor of the village of Goodsoil and met with me earlier today actually in his capacity as a delegate with the credit union. And many of us in the Assembly here will know that the credit unions are in Regina at their convention right now.

So I'd ask all colleagues to join with me in welcoming a friend and neighbour from Goodsoil — Jack Purves. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd also like to welcome a friend of mine and a constituent, Wes Black from Porcupine. He has been working very hard with a group of people who are concerned about the agricultural industry. I know that everybody here is concerned about agriculture, but I really commend Mr. Black for his dedication and the work he's putting in to making sure that Porcupine's area is recognized. Thank you, Wes.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

Moosomin.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the east gallery, the opposition gallery, I'd like to introduce a young gentleman who called me with an interest to come to the Assembly and just to see how this place functions — Riley Potter, who is currently a university student at the U of R [University of Regina], taking human justice.

Riley tells me he hasn't been here since his grade 5 school tour, and he's certainly looking forward this afternoon to spending some time and just observing how this Legislative Assembly works and the process. And I'd like to welcome Riley and ask all the members, yourself, sir, to welcome Riley to his Legislative Assembly today.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

#### Anniversary of Vimy Ridge

**Hon. Mr. Addley:** — Mr. Speaker, at the dawn of April 9, 1917, Canadian forces engaged German forces at the battle of Vimy Ridge. On Easter Monday, all four divisions of the Canadian Corps led by Lieutenant-General Julian Byng attacked Vimy Ridge.

Mr. Speaker, the ridge was a tactical asset and key to German defences. Previous British and French attacks had failed, leaving Canadians to drive occupation forces from France. Months of meticulous and gruelling preparation prefaced the battle, including the construction of tunnels, trenches, tramways, and roads. No other single Allied advance was greater before that day of the First World War.

By the afternoon of April 9, Canadian forces had taken the crest of Vimy Ridge and by April 12 they had reached the summit, leaving enemy forces to flee under the cover of night. Mr. Speaker, during the battle of Vimy Ridge, which spanned only a few days, 3,598 Canadian soldiers were killed and another 10,602 were wounded. The soldiers fought bravely and left us with an obligation to never forget the great cost of war.

On a personal note, Vimy Ridge was my grandfather's first battle. On April 9, 17 years later his son, my father, was born. So when we celebrate my father's birthday, we remember Vimy Ridge.

In remembrance of the 89th anniversary of the battle at Vimy Ridge, I'd like to take a moment to honour the men and women who've sacrificed themselves in foreign lands for our freedom. It's our responsibility to maintain the peace that they have given their lives for. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Saskatoon Haberdasher Honoured for 50 Years in Business

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last night there was a celebration in Saskatoon that was 50 years in the making.

In 1956, a young, dashing entrepreneur named Elwood Flynn set out to change the way men dressed in Saskatoon, bringing the finest men's clothing to our province. Fabrics from New York, Toronto, Montreal, and Italy were soon meticulously tailored by Elwood Flynn and seen at every special occasion in the city.

Last night it was the city and menswear industry's turn to honour the man who literally changed the look of Saskatoon for 50 years. Guests came from across North America. People such as Jack Fraser flew in for the event, as did senior executives from Hugo Boss, Warren K. Cook, Arnold Brant, and Hathaway.

Former Saskatoon Eastview MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] Ray Martineau served as a most capable MC [master of ceremonies], introducing many dear friends who roasted and toasted one of Saskatoon's most respected members of the business community. In the audience were dapper looking individuals like the member from Saskatoon Southeast, former Premier Romanow, Jack Vicq, Dr. Lionel Lavoie from Melfort, and Mayor Don Atchison.

Mayor Atchison spoke of the fact that Saskatoon is 100 years old and for 50 of those years, half the life of the city, Elwood Flynn has been there, employing people, paying taxes, and contributing to every charitable cause imaginable, from the jazz festival to Rotary to Ronald McDonald House and everything in between.

Mr. Speaker, through you, I wish all members of the Assembly to help me congratulate Elwood, Joan, Barry, and Jeff Flynn on 50 successful years in business and for making Saskatoon and Saskatchewan a better place to live.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Saskatchewan First Nations Person Elected to Federal Parliament

**Mr. Borgerson:** — Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to be part of the recent ceremony celebrating the 100th anniversary of the first sitting of this legislature, especially because of the emphasis placed upon shared history, the treaty relationship, and the important role that First Nations people have played in the history of this province.

But, Mr. Speaker, it also brought to mind an event that took place back in January, one that seems to have passed almost unnoticed although I believe it to be a significant milestone in Saskatchewan's history.

Mr. Speaker, I am referring to the election of Gary Merasty to

represent the people of the Desnethé-Missinippi-Churchill River riding in Ottawa. It's been a long time coming, Mr. Speaker, but this marks the first time that a First Nations person has been elected in Saskatchewan to sit in the federal parliament.

Mr. Speaker, Gary Merasty is a member of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation. He is a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan's Indian teacher education program and holds a master's degree in Education. Mr. Merasty has served two terms as Grand Chief of the Prince Albert Grand Council, and throughout his career has worked tirelessly as a community advocate for improved education, health care, and infrastructure in northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Mr. Merasty and hold every hope that his election to parliament will prove to be not just an historic event but a turning point for Saskatchewan and First Nations people in this province's ongoing story. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Martensville Nomination Meeting

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Friday evening last I, along with a few colleagues, attended the Martensville nomination meeting held at Dalmeny. The members were from Lloydminster, from Saskatoon Silver Springs, from Saskatoon Northwest. And, Mr. Speaker, a former member from Humboldt was there. Her name was Arlene Julé.

The member from Saskatoon Silver Springs who is our Finance critic was guest speaker, and gave an emotional but a strong and forceful speech on the future of Saskatchewan under a new and creative party, the Saskatchewan Party.

The member from Martensville also gave a very emotional speech thanking the people in his life and the people of his constituency for the opportunity to serve his constituency. The member from Martensville, who we all know and love, talked about the many battles one experiences in life, but none like the one he and his loving wife, Arlene, and family are going through right now.

I remember back in 1999 when I was first elected, it was the member from then Rosthern who took me under his wing to help me with the learning of the role of a politician. He was my buddy MLA then, and now I have to prove to him that I am worthy of his vote as he is now my constituent.

We all congratulate the member from Martensville on his nomination, and we wish he and his wife and family health and happiness in the battles that lay ahead, and a speedy return to the Legislative Assembly.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Representatives to National Aboriginal Hockey Championships

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Everybody in the Assembly knows how much I love the game of hockey. It's good clean fun, Mr. Speaker, a game of speed, skill, and finesse with a little bit of rough-and-tumble thrown in just for good measure, Mr. Speaker. And because I love the game so much, I'm particularly pleased to rise in this Assembly today to say a few words about two constituents of mine from Buffalo Narrows who have been chosen to represent Saskatchewan at the upcoming National Aboriginal Hockey Championships in Kahnawake, Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, Marlee Dahn Durocher and Jena Ariel Autumn Nicholls have been named as members of the Bantam Female Aboriginal Team Saskatchewan and I know that they'll both go there and give their all in representing both Saskatchewan and the fine community of Buffalo Narrows.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Nicholls is 13 years old, and a proud Métis who has lived pretty much her entire life in Buffalo Narrows. She has wanted to play hockey for almost that long. Jena started playing hockey in kindergarten, and since then has played on both boys' and girls' teams. The only thing Jena may like more than hockey is living in the North.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Durocher is 15, and like Jena is very proud of her Métis heritage. She is currently attending Churchill High School in La Ronge where she excels both academically and in sports. One of her future goals is to play for the University of Saskatchewan women's hockey team.

Mr. Speaker, I couldn't be prouder of these two fine young women. I ask all members of the Assembly to join me in wishing them every success at the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships and in all their future endeavours. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Government's Attitude to Business

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — I'm concerned about the member from Nutana's memory loss. Last week she chirped about the opposition leader's dinner — a dinner that had twice the number that the Premier's own event had. She recalled the Progressive Conservatives' 1982 slogan, the province being open for business. Now I'd like to point out to the Minister of Advanced Education that the 1982 PC [Progressive Conservative] slogan was never mentioned in the Leader of the Opposition's speech but ironically it was in a news release put out by none other than her NDP government. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in a news release dated March 30 of this year the headline reads, "Open for Business workshops taking place." And the Deputy Premier is promoting them, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what we find very interesting on this side of the House is how members opposite can remember or even invent things purportedly happening 20 years ago, but they can't remember NDP statements or promises from even a couple of

weeks ago.

And though the member for Nutana mocks the Saskatchewan Party's plan for innovation and growth, this year's NDP budget is being deemed by many people as nothing more than Sask Party lite. Well, Mr. Speaker, we don't need a Sask Party lite. We need the Sask Party because this NDP government has been calling business people corporate hucksters and the like for far too long.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina-Elphinstone.

### Support for 2006 Budget

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan was the first Canadian province to balance its books in the 1990s, and on Thursday Saskatchewan delivered its 13th consecutive balanced budget. It's no small thing, Mr. Speaker. Devine debt is still costing the people of Saskatchewan over a half a billion dollars a year. But the provincial economy is strong and, Mr. Speaker, with this budget we begin building a better future right here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this is Saskatchewan's largest budget ever, \$7.7 billion being invested to secure the prosperity we enjoy today for a generation to come, reinvesting in our social programs to ensure that no one is left behind on the path to opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, we're cutting business taxes to stimulate the economy and create jobs. We're giving young people more reasons to stay in Saskatchewan by freezing university tuition and increasing training seats and enrolment opportunities. We're supporting our communities and farm families by increased revenue sharing and property tax relief, more funding for health care and education, and highway improvements across the province. We are supporting our citizens through enhanced social programming and assistance, increased funding for police and crime prevention strategies, and agricultural support.

Mr. Speaker, this budget reflects Saskatchewan values. It's all about working together to ensure that Saskatchewan remains the best place in Canada to live, work, and raise a family. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

### 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. Well, Mr. Speaker, the contrast in Saturday's papers couldn't have been more startling. The headline in the *National Post* read, relative to the national job numbers the headline read quote, "Job boom rolls along."



What was the headline in the *Leader Post* for that same day? In a province, frankly that should be leading the country, the headline in the *Leader Post* said, quote, “Job numbers take a tumble.”

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian economy is enjoying unprecedented job growth. We here in Saskatchewan have the foundations, frankly, to lead the country in almost every economic figure imaginable. Yet under the NDP, we’ve lost 5,200 jobs.

Mr. Speaker, we ask the Premier again today: when will he adopt, when will he adopt a complete growth agenda, a plan for the province of Saskatchewan?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, it’s not enough to get up day after day in the House and complain about things. What is needed, Mr. Speaker, is to have a plan. And on Thursday of last week, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance presented a plan.

And what did it say in Saturday’s paper? It said this, Mr. Speaker. Arlene Kish, a Toronto-based economist, said that she was really impressed with the budget and quote:

... [it] will attract investment to the province ... “People are going to say Saskatchewan is a viable option. Before, it was too expensive ... Here, they’re entering the playing field.”

Eric Howe, an economics professor at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] said, “I’m simply fascinated.” He said, he said, we’ll see ... Well they laugh at Eric Howe, Mr. Speaker; I don’t know why they laugh. But this is what he said ... he would say, we would see further investment in the province. Mr. Speaker. We have a plan and they don’t, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Wall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, they’ve adopted one element of a plan, one element of a growth agenda. And it’s a positive development, Mr. Speaker. It’s Sask Party lite when what we truly need is the Saskatchewan Party. And the evidence for that need, for the complete growth agenda and a change in the government, comes as you look more specifically, more deeply at the government’s own figures released on Friday.

Here are some facts, Mr. Speaker. There were a thousand fewer jobs for 15- to 19-year-olds. There were 600 fewer jobs for 20- to 24-year-olds; 4,700 fewer jobs for 25- to 44-year-olds in the province of Saskatchewan under the NDP; 6,300 fewer jobs for people who are under the age of 44. That’s the record of this Premier.

Mr. Speaker, will he not stand up and explain why he’s not adopting a complete growth agenda for the province of

Saskatchewan?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, another thing that Eric Howe said in the paper was that business was in a position to start investing in a big way in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition says we have no plan. Mr. Speaker, we have done personal income tax reform, oil and gas tax reform, mining tax reform, now business tax reform.

What ideas do we hear from the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker? None. He says this, Mr. Speaker. He says two things. That if he was elected Premier, he would appoint a committee to tell him what to do. That’s his first plank. His second plank, Mr. Speaker, is that he says, I’m a different brand, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there may be a little bit of sizzle to that, but there’s no steak, no substance.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Wall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, it’s a little ironic, the minister’s answer, considering the fact that in this budget, what did they do with respect to the corporate tax structure? We had given them our plan, but what did they decide to do? They went out and got a what? A committee to try to tell them what to do with respect to corporate taxes, and they implemented it.

As far as a brand change for the province, we most assuredly need a new brand of government on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Wall:** — Because the brand we’ve got, it’s like a can of new Coke, Mr. Speaker — bright red and nobody wants it, Mr. Speaker, in the province of Saskatchewan.

Here’s the question for the Premier. The day after his good news budget, the day after his good news budget, we couldn’t get him up. He wouldn’t get up on his feet and answer questions. He would not stand up and answer any questions. Then he told the media, apparently outside, that he wouldn’t talk to them on Friday morning at all either.

The day after this good news budget, the road map to prosperity, Mr. Speaker, for once in maybe two or three weeks, will the Premier stand up and specifically articulate his growth agenda for the province of Saskatchewan?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, I've already outlined what this government has done in terms of an economic development plan, but I want to say this, Mr. Speaker. I find it disturbing that the Leader of the Opposition and his Finance critic would be so arrogant that they would say that the former accounting professor, Jack Vicq, had to get ideas from them in order to write his report, Mr. Speaker.

The arrogance of that statement and the idea that that report was written by the Saskatchewan Party is an insult to Jack Vicq, and it's an insult to the intelligence of the people of this province. What is even more insulting, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that on the one hand they want to say the budget was all our idea, and on the other hand they say they're not going to vote for it. Well which is it, Mr. Speaker?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, the only thing disappearing more quickly than jobs unfortunately from the province of Saskatchewan is the Premier. Will the Premier please stand up and answer a question with respect to the job numbers released, the 5,200 jobs lost, the worst job creation performance in the country? Will he not stand up simply and explain to the province what his entire growth agenda is? What is the plan to turn these numbers around?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I will tell the Leader of the Opposition again — personal income tax reform, reform of oil and gas royalties, reform of mining taxation, the royalties and exploration incentive . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order please, order, order. Minister of Industry and Resources.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition doesn't listen. I mentioned what we're doing — education, training, immigration. Mr. Speaker, there is a plan. The plan is in the budget. The budget is supported by the people and the groups in Saskatchewan. The only people that don't support the budget — which is a budget of jobs and growth and opportunity on the path to prosperity in this province, Mr. Speaker — are the sorry Tories sitting right over there, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### **Future of Weyerhaeuser Mill in Prince Albert**

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Thursday of this week marks the planned closure date for the Weyerhaeuser pulp and paper mill in Prince Albert. Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister responsible for the forestry

task force: could the minister tell this Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan today whether or not Weyerhaeuser will shut its doors this week?

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, I can say to that member that, in spite of calls from our community and calls from this government to extend that date, Weyerhaeuser has chosen to proceed with the April 13 closure.

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

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Friday CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] reported the story of a young family leaving Prince Albert. They are leaving, Mr. Speaker, because the father has been laid off from Weyerhaeuser and cannot find quality work in Saskatchewan. Alvin and Trina Wieggers and their two daughters are packing up and heading to Alberta, Mr. Speaker. Here is a real life example of people leaving the province, Mr. Speaker, taking with them all they have contributed to the community.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote Trina Wieggers:

It breaks my heart . . . we built this house when we first got married and, you know, Alvin and his father built it together. I pounded nails too. That makes me feel sad.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the same minister: why has this NDP [New Democratic Party] government . . . forcing people to leave the province to find work? Why is the NDP government the only province to lose jobs? Why is that?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to that member opposite that his new-found concern for working people, as the former leader of the opposition and the current Leader of the Opposition, sure as heck wasn't evidenced when we were putting in place the forest centre in Prince Albert to support the industry and support families and to bring new businesses into that community. There was little support there, Mr. Speaker. So I find it interesting today that he feigns concern for families, Mr. Speaker. And to say that there are no quality jobs in this province I think speaks ill of the business community. It speaks ill of his own province. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that member is totally inaccurate.

If he wants a list, Mr. Speaker, I can trot in a list of people who found employment in this province as well. But I'm not going to do that, Mr. Speaker. Our job as government members, our job as opposition members, is to work to ensure that we have a healthy forest industry in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what we're doing.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Navigata's Financial Performance

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, in 2001 this NDP government decided to sink millions of taxpayer dollars into a BC [British Columbia] telecommunications company called Navigata.

In its first 40 months of operation, the NDP lost over \$42 million in Navigata. However the minister kept telling us that Navigata would be profitable by 2004. Mr. Speaker, in 2004 Navigata suffered its worst losses to date. In the year that the NDP told us that it would start turning a profit, it lost over \$16 million. But then the NDP assured us that Navigata would be profitable by the third quarter of 2005.

Mr. Speaker, could the minister please tell this House: did Navigata meet that target? Did Navigata make money in 2005?

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

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we tabled the annual report of SaskTel today, and it was a very successful year for SaskTel. There was some very strong customer growth, improved efficiency within the organization.

But, Mr. Speaker, without a doubt the results for Navigata were not as successful as we had hoped. The rapid turnaround strategy that was used reduced Navigata's losses by 60 per cent but, Mr. Speaker, we have done a review of Navigata and have put forward a plan that's been accepted to integrate Navigata into SaskTel.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, according to the NDP, Navigata was supposed to actually turn a profit in 2005. And what happened? Well it had its worst year ever. It lost \$21.6 million.

Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has lost \$64 million on this BC company. That's almost twice as much as SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company], and the losses just continue to mount year after year. The NDP have now sunk about \$70 million into Navigata, and what is that investment worth today? Well, Mr. Speaker, it's worth a mere \$3.3 million.

Mr. Speaker, how did the NDP get it so wrong? How did they lose money year after year on Navigata?

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

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, well this is a debate that happens every year in this legislature where . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Mr. Speaker, but what it boils down to is that the Saskatchewan Party dislikes the Crowns. They do not believe in the Crowns. They do not believe in the service that the Crowns provide to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, SaskTel provides great services to the people of Saskatchewan. That's its priority. That's its focus. And it will remain so, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, SaskTel is coming into 99 years old, and it has provided services in this province for all those years. And with the changes that we're making, it will continue to do that into the future.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that SaskTel has to cover up for NDP blunders. Last year the NDP lost \$21.6 million on Navigata. \$21.6 million is nearly \$60,000 a day. Mr. Speaker, \$60,000 a day would buy a lot of Avastin for cancer patients right here in Saskatchewan. Sixty thousand dollars a day would hire a lot of nurses right here in Saskatchewan. Sixty thousand dollars a day would fund a lot of nursing home beds right here in Saskatchewan. Instead the NDP are blowing \$60,000 a day on a money-losing company in BC.

[14:15]

Mr. Speaker, on page 40 of SaskTel's annual report it says, and I quote:

[If] . . . a particular venture within the portfolio . . . will not be profitable within three to five years from the beginning of operations . . . [SaskTel] will explore exit strategies.

Mr. Speaker, Navigata clearly fits this description. Is the NDP following its own policy and developing an exit strategy?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, this carries on the same old same old Saskatchewan Party theme where they have attacked SaskTel, they have attacked the Crown corporations. But, Mr. Speaker, on the other hand they will stand and say, build a cell tower for me; I would like better cellphone coverage. Mr. Speaker, on one hand, they want the services. On the other hand, they have a fundamental dislike for the Crown corporations.

Mr. Speaker, SaskTel has provided good services in this province. Integrating Navigata into the main body of SaskTel, we'll be able to provide better services to the people of Saskatchewan. We will be able to expand.

Mr. Speaker, this is the same old attack on the Crown corporations, and the Saskatchewan Party is not credible when it comes to the Crowns.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Former Member's Employment with the Legal Aid Commission

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, last year the official opposition raised the case of former MLA Jack Hillson who was denied re-employment by the government after losing his seat in the 2003 provincial election.

Mr. Speaker, according to The Labour Standards Act, Mr. Hillson was entitled to get his job back. The Justice minister condoned the Legal Aid Commission's refusal to reinstate Mr. Hillson. At that point in time, I warned the minister that he was breaking the law. Now the Court of Queen's Bench has determined that the government did indeed break the law.

Mr. Speaker, what is the Premier going to do with a Justice minister who refuses to ensure that one of his agencies is upholding the law of the land, Mr. Speaker?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the member is aware, and I think most members are aware, the Legal Aid Commission is not a part of the Justice department. It's not part of the line department.

Mr. Speaker, as most members are aware, and the member from Saskatoon Southeast should be aware, the commission is governed by a board of lawyers and lay people. They all have, they all have full-time jobs aside from this public service they provide. I am sure that they will be gathered together fairly soon to consider the decision that's been made by the court.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member from Saskatoon Southeast.

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, that is not an acceptable answer, to hide behind independence.

Was Jack Hillson being punished because he left the NDP cabinet to go back and sit as an independent Liberal? This was nothing more, Mr. Speaker, than a political vendetta. Does anyone think for a minute that this would have happened to Jack Hillson had he ran as an NDP candidate in the 2003 election? I think not.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell us . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order please. Order please. Order please, members, on both sides. Order please. Member for Saskatoon . . . Order. Order please. Member for Saskatoon Southeast.

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell us why we have a two tiered justice system — one set of laws for the NDP and one set for anyone who chooses to oppose them?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time the opposition has alleged political interference in this case. And I'd like to quote from a letter to the editor written in response to a *Star Phoenix* editorial by the Chair of the Legal Aid Commission, Robert J. Gibbings, Q.C. [Queen's Counsel]. Quote:

The editorial raised the spectre of political involvement, however, and although this is entirely unjustified, it has unfortunately been raised by others, perhaps for political gain. The SLAC's board made its decision not only without political interference or consideration, but totally unknown to any politician, governing or otherwise, until well after the fact.

Indeed, if any politician had attempted to direct or influence the decision, either to terminate Hillson or [to] retain him, I would have immediately resigned as chair because I would no longer consider the board independent.

I suspect other board members would have done the same.

I take it the member from Saskatoon Southeast disagrees with the independence of the board. He should state that clearly.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, that member knows full well the difference between the impartiality that Legal Aid has in carrying out its mandate and the ability to fulfill and follow the laws of this province.

Mr. Speaker, ultimately the Minister of Justice was responsible for this decision. He knew what was going on. As a result of this NDP government's mismanagement and incompetence, Mr. Hillson is now entitled to his job back. The NDP government will also end up paying approximately a quarter of a million dollars in costs and damages.

Where is this money going to come from, Mr. Speaker? Is he going to take it out of the impoverished clients of Legal Aid and talk about independence there, or will the department make it up? At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, the taxpayers of this province will have to pay for the utter incompetence of this minister.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier commit today by replacing this minister with someone who is capable of ensuring that that department and that agency comply with and follow the law, Mr. Speaker?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, the member from Saskatoon Southeast can backpedal as quickly as he wants to. In the previous question, he said this government was punishing Jack Hillson, that the decision was political, that the commission had taken political direction. He should withdraw

those remarks. We have Mr. Gibbings's statement on that. He should withdraw those remarks, and he should apologize to the commission.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, there will be no apologies for accusations against a government that insists on breaking the law and condones illegal activity.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Morgan:** — The judge in this case determined that the Legal Aid Commission breached section 80(2) of The Labour Standards Act. That section says that if an employee chooses to seek public office, the employer must grant the employee a leave of absence and, upon expiration of the leave, the employee must be allowed to continue their employment without any loss of privilege connected with seniority.

The government clearly thought that none of those rights should apply to Jack Hillson. Mr. Speaker, again the government knowingly broke the laws of the land and this Justice minister turned a blind eye to it.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: who is going to be held accountable for this government breaking its own law?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I will ask the member, when he's phrasing his questions, to not impute bad motives on the part of any member of the cabinet or on any member of the House, and the member's use of the word "knowingly" offends the House. I would ask him not to use that type of remark in the future. And the Chair goes to the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, I think it's quite clear the Chair, the Chair of the Legal Aid Commission said that there was no political interference, there was no political direction, and that no politician knew, knew about the decision because the decision was made by an independent commission.

Now I would, I would remind the member from Saskatoon Southeast that he has the same immunity in this Assembly that every other MLA does. But he is an officer of the court. He is governed by a code of professional conduct. And if he wants to allege that Mr. Gibbings is lying in this letter that he wrote to *The StarPhoenix* . . .

**The Speaker:** — Again I ask members not to do indirectly what you can't do directly in terms of referring to other members. Now order please. Order please. The Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — The member from Saskatoon Southeast should be very careful about what he wants to allege in the case of commission board members and what they have expressed publicly as what has happened here.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, as the judge in this case points out, the object of this section of The Labour Standards Act is to encourage employees to participate in the democratic electoral process. It guarantees them the right to return to their same employment positions with the same employer when they are finished serving office. Mr. Speaker, what kind of message does this government's flouting of the law send to people who want to run for office?

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier today apologize to Jack Hillson on behalf of his government? And will he get rid of the current Justice minister who is unwilling to deal with this issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, I have a question. Will the member from Saskatoon Southeast repeat his allegations that the commission, the Legal Aid Commission and the Chair of the Legal Aid Commission was politically punishing, politically punishing Jack Hillson when they made their decision, that they were doing it at my direction? Will he repeat those allegations outside the House so that Mr. Gibbings and the commission members will have recourse?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Order please. Order please.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government I'll table answers to written questions nos. 770 to 799 inclusive.

**The Speaker:** — Responses to question 770 to 779 have been submitted. Order please. Order.

## 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, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Cheveldayoff.]

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Coronation Park.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to support the budget. I rise today to support the best budget of today. It's a budget for today. And I hope that in my brief remarks I will outline why I feel so strongly that this is a budget for Saskatchewan's women and men and children. This is a budget for today, and it's all about the future and it's about that bright future that we're building right here in Saskatchewan where no one is going to be left behind on the path to opportunity.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, having just come through question period, I find it interesting . . . Now we get some heckling, but I heard, I heard very little about the budget. Here we are Monday, Monday, just having sat after, you know, took a weekend off for members to go and talk to their constituents, talk to their family, talk to their mothers, and find out what it is that they could complain about in this budget. Well, Mr. Speaker, the proof is in the pudding. There sure wasn't much to complain about in this budget. Not hardly a . . . nothing on the budget from the opposition today in question period.

So, Mr. Speaker, this budget is amazing. This is the first time in my time in this legislature, this is the first time that we have had diverse groups praise the budget. And when I talk diverse groups, I'm thinking of the . . . well we've got tradespeople welcoming tool tax relief. The member for Regina Northeast pushed that very diligently and I congratulate him on that. That's worth a couple of million dollars, but \$1 million a year ongoing for tradespeople in tool allowance and just a recognition of how valuable tradespeople are in today's economy and in the economy as we go forward. But we also have, the provincial budget received praise from a citizens' commission that prepared the alternative budget. They prepared the alternative budget proposals prior to the introduction of the actual budget on Thursday.

[14:30]

Well, Mr. Speaker, that group does terrific work and they're . . . In many ways I want to associate myself with them in that they believe that we have to look after, generally speaking we have to look after the people least able to look after themselves in our society. That's the position which I want to attach myself to. And I want to publicly thank the people that put together the alternative budget for being there year after year, fighting, proposing the betterment of people that are less fortunate, if I can put that mildly, in our society. These people do great work.

These people are praising this year's budget, Mr. Speaker. Why? Well I can think of about 480 reasons. For every person that is receiving social services, \$480 increase in social services, which I want to put that into perspective in terms of some of the things that that can buy. And an additional . . . Yes, here's what you can buy at your grocery store, Mr. Speaker. You could buy 4 pounds of bananas, a big jar of Cheez Whiz, 2 dozen eggs — that's the large kind of eggs. You could buy 6 pounds of extra lean hamburger and a box of corn flakes — and that's with the extra \$40 a month, Mr. Speaker. This is money that will make a real, real difference to real people, every day in every way in our society.

In addition to that, there's another \$120 a year in transitional funding for those who are transitioning from social services to the workforce, and that's in addition to the things that the government is doing for them, for our society today. Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of this budget for that reason, for those reasons.

I'm very proud that this budget remembered our post-secondary students, Mr. Speaker. We've got a two-year tuition fee freeze effective with the budget that was announced Thursday by the Minister of Finance. I'm very, very pleased about that because students deserve the opportunity to study and learn and prepare for their careers to the best of their ability without the burden of unnecessary expenses.

Now within that I recognize that a tuition fee freeze for two years does not make a permanent tuition fee freeze. But it is a recognition that at this point in time there are some things that we can do as a government that will help our post-secondary students. And we are very happy to help those young people and we're optimistic that many of those young people are going to choose to make their careers right here in Saskatchewan as they build their lives right here.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very, very pleased that this is our 13th successive balanced budget — 13 in a row. And I can't stress how important it is to, as I've heard the Premier say at different occasions, cut the frills and pay the bills. Well we've got some frills now and we're still paying the bills. And that's because Saskatchewan's economy has shown consistent growth year in and year out under this Premier's stewardship, under former Premier Romanow's stewardship.

We have balanced the books and we have enjoyed very good economic growth right here in Saskatchewan. And because of that we're able, in this budget alone, to increase our expenditures some 700 and I think it's \$29 million in one year alone. And we're forecasting an ability to continue to do that.

And I want to point out for all members, Mr. Speaker, that this is the third year in a row where we've been able to balance the budget without any drawdown on the Fiscal Stabilization Fund which is our own internal rate balancing, or balancing fund. So for three years in a row we've not taken a nickel out of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. In fact we have tended to top it up in that time.

And, Mr. Speaker, the debt, the total debt of the province continues to go down. It's an amazing record that we have on this side of the House. It's something that my colleagues should all be very proud that we've sort of set the table for the people of Saskatchewan. And the people of Saskatchewan should feel great pride in what they have been able to do, Mr. Speaker. The people of Saskatchewan are the ones that balance the budget, that do pay the bills.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Trew:** — Well before I leave debt, Mr. Speaker, I do want to point out that Saskatchewan's debt-to-equity ratio is now at about 17 per cent which is the lowest it's been since 1986-87. Lowest it's been since 1986-87 which was four or five years before Premier Romanow took office, before the New

Democratic Party took over from the right wing Conservative Party led in those days by Grant Devine. Mr. Speaker, we are proud of Saskatchewan people, and we're proud of what they're doing every day and in every way.

We have in this budget, Mr. Speaker, there's no question about it, this budget is one that introduced the largest business tax cuts in Saskatchewan's history. And I argue it's the right time for us to do that. We had asked Jack Vicq to do a report some years back, and he made recommendations that led to the set-up of the Saskatchewan income tax system where we were able to set our tax system for working people.

We introduced the largest personal income tax cuts in Saskatchewan's history at that time some few years back, and now it's time to . . . Oh pardon me. I should finish that thought. The projections were that income tax was going to drop, that Saskatchewan was going to be collecting . . . that income tax was going to drop. Well those projections weren't met in their entirety, in that the economy continued to grow and the amount of income tax didn't drop nearly to the extent that Mr. Vicq had forecast. So our provincial treasury was better off as a result of it, despite the fact that working women and men had enjoyed very good tax cuts.

Now the express hope is, Mr. Speaker, that the business corporate tax cuts will enhance Saskatchewan's position as a low-cost place to do business. We have a very good workforce. We've got very low costs. We've got relatively low taxes. Indeed you look at provinces around us, and there are payroll taxes. Saskatchewan has no payroll taxes. You look at Saskatchewan's utility rate bundle. We have the lowest-cost utility rates in North America and we're very proud of that.

Mr. Speaker, with the tax cuts that others will outline — I don't want to take my speech time on that — but with the tax cuts, the corporate capital and corporate income tax cuts that are introduced in this budget that we're so very proud of, I think we've set the table for businesses now. And we're going to be . . . I'm looking forward to welcoming businesses as they expand, as they grow their workforce, as they grow their corporations and their companies right here in Saskatchewan. And I'm looking forward to these businesses stepping right up to the plate and really, really making Saskatchewan a very happening province. So that's where we're heading.

Madam Speaker, I watched the budget being presented, and I'm fortunate — I'm blessed — I sit right behind the Minister of Finance. So I'm watching and I have to tell you that in the time I've spent in this wonderful Assembly, I have never seen opposition with such long faces. I have never seen an opposition look so sad as the budget was presented. Because, Madam Speaker, the budget . . . The opposition's job is to oppose. The opposition's job is to oppose.

Well we saw the opposition in question period today. We saw opposition, but it was centred on everything but the budget — everything but the budget. It was astounding to me to see the long faces. And I had a friend of mine summed it up to me on the weekend this way. This friend said, well it was interesting because the Minister of Finance got to his feet, spent three minutes welcoming his family and introducing a very few key advisers. Of course, he welcomed the gallery, the legislative

visitors. But three minutes it took him to do that.

And then for 27 minutes the Minister of Finance talked about Saskatchewan. He talked about Saskatchewan working women and men and children. And he talked about corporations in Saskatchewan, and he talked about Saskatchewan's wonderful and great future.

Then, then when the Minister of Finance was done, the opposition critic rose, and he spent three minutes talking about himself and his leader. And then he spent, then he spent the next 10 minutes talking about the Saskatchewan Party. I'm not sure he ever got around to the budget, Madam Speaker. I didn't hear it, but it was really interesting to me in that our Minister of Finance spent — get this — three minutes introducing and thanking a few key people, 27 minutes talking about Saskatchewan people and Saskatchewan corporations and our future. That's a total of 30 minutes.

The opposition Finance critic spent three minutes talking about himself and the Leader of the Opposition and 10 minutes talking about the Saskatchewan Party. Three and ten . . . oh, oh, I'm not superstitious; I wouldn't pretend to be. But that is 13 minutes. And then we follow it up today, Madam Speaker, with question period that is just absent of questions around the budget.

Well I actually did spend my first term in this Assembly in opposition of the Grant Devine government. I can tell you, Madam Speaker, we were on our feet, and we were doing the very best we could to beat up very, very bad budgets that did not do what they should have done. We were busy fighting a corrupt and a bad administration. The Monday after the budget was introduced, Madam Speaker, we were on question period about the budget, and we stayed on the budget for the entire week of the budget debate — always.

What do we get here? Talk about other things. I wouldn't talk about the budget either if I was in opposition. I wouldn't either.

Madam Speaker, before I close I want to leave people with this recollection. I'm realizing as I get to be a half century old that I'm no longer a kid, and I realize that many people don't have the corporate memory to remember the right wing government of Ross Thatcher. Who's that, they'd say? Right wing Liberal. Ross Thatcher campaigned, Madam Speaker, saying there wasn't enough funding for agriculture. The population of Saskatchewan was in decline. He said we have slow economic growth, and he said we have high taxation.

Well I remember those days. Those were the days of my political awakening, if I can describe it that way, because by 1971 when Ross Thatcher was driven from office, when Allan Blakeney led the New Democrats to the new deal for people, large majority . . . Well let's look at the things that Ross Thatcher campaigned on.

He said there wasn't enough money for agriculture. Well I can tell you I was on the farm, and the desperation in 1971 was immense. Madam Speaker, farmers were not able — by and large many farmers were not able — to pay their bills. It was a desperate, desperate situation in 1971. And that's after eight years, that's after eight years, member for Thunder Creek, that's

after eight years of Thatcher Liberals in power. After eight years, if they had a solution, they should have been delivering it, and they sure weren't.

[14:45]

After eight years of right wing Liberal government, we had a population that was in decline, just in a huge decline, Madam Speaker. He campaigned saying the population's in decline, and then he watched it and encouraged it as it continued and increased the decline. He said that the economy was slow. Well he may have had that right in 1964 when he was elected. But by 1971, the economy wasn't just slow; it was in reverse, Madam Speaker. And the taxes had been increased. That was the right wing Ross Thatcher Liberal government.

Then along came a fellow by the name of Grant Devine who said there's so much more we can be. There's so much more we can be. He said Saskatchewan has so much going for it, you can afford to mismanage it and still break even, he said. Well now, he campaigned saying that, you know, compared to Alberta, we're just backwoods here.

He said that the NDP hasn't cut taxes fast enough, and he promised to cut the fuel tax and to cut sales tax. And he said there wasn't enough funding for agriculture, and he said the population's in decline.

Well, Madam Speaker, by 1991 Grant Devine was . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. I'm sure some of the members would like to get into the budget debate, and there will be an opportunity. But till then, their voices carry, and we want to hear the member on his feet. Thank you.

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Madam Speaker. And by the end of Grant Devine's term in 1991, he was so incredibly disgraced. The population was hemorrhaging at 18,000 . . . We were losing 18,000 people a year at the end of his term — 18,000 people a year at the end of the Devine term.

This is a term that after the Leader of the Opposition spent seven years working for that government. The Finance critic worked for them for two years. Anyway, Madam Speaker, this is what right wing governments bring us to.

I want to say, Madam Speaker, as I close, this is a budget for today. This is a budget for tomorrow, and this is a budget all about making Saskatchewan the province that I want to continue to live in, that I want my children to continue to live in, and I want my grandchildren to have a future in. This budget will do much to make sure that everyone is included on the path to opportunity. Madam Speaker, I proudly support this budget.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. And I would like first of all to start by thanking my constituents for allowing me to be here again for the 11th time listening to the budget that's been brought down by the NDP government

across. I'd also like to thank my family for their support as I do my work here in the legislature on behalf of the people from the Kelvington-Wadena constituency.

Madam Speaker, the member opposite talked about a budget for the future, but I just want to remind some of the members opposite that the people in the Kelvington-Wadena constituency do not see this as a budget for them for the majority of them have got issues that were not addressed at all by this budget or, if they were, there's nothing there that has helped them.

Madam Speaker, for the people who don't know the Kelvington-Wadena constituency, some of the places in there that I'm very proud of are places like Foam Lake where we're doing a lot of work of biodiesel — work by themselves, work in promotion, and trying to get this issue across Canada. These are very hard-working individuals, are committed and dedicated to the work they are doing, and I am proud of them.

In the northern part of the constituency is the area where a lot of constituents came in last week talking about the flooding. They've experienced 17 inches of rain last fall and weren't able to get a lot of their crop off and what they did get off only happened because they put dual wheels on their combines and went through the fields, basically causing a wave of water in front of them trying to get the crop off so they could collect crop insurance.

People in Greenwater and Fishing Lake area are very concerned about the highways, the roads up to the lakes. I had the opportunity to go to both of those places on the weekend, and it's absolutely impossible to dodge all the potholes on the road to the lakes. Most of them are concerned that tourism this year is going to be a real concern trying to get people out to the lakes.

The Minister of Highways stood in the House a couple of weeks ago and talked about the satellite depots or highway depots that were open in different constituencies, and we'd heard rumours that some of them are going to be closed. And he assured this House that they would not close. But there are a number of people in these affected areas around Saskatchewan that are not certain that the minister is sure what's going on in every area. In fact I'm going to be so happy to hear directly from the people who are employed in those buildings saying that yes, they still do have a job because they aren't sleeping well at nights even with the minister's assurance there would still be work.

In the Kelvington-Wadena constituency, the SARCAN issues are large. Not only is there some problem about the number of containers that are accepted, but they are also wondering why so much of the money from recycling actually goes back directly into the General Revenue Fund and why it's not used for the environmental issues that the money was targeted for.

I have a school in my constituency, Theodore school. I know the Minister of Learning and the past ministers of Learning know about this school. The community fought very hard to keep it open, and even at this time they are being squeezed out. They know that they need the school in order to keep the community viable, but the issue that they are dealing with on a day-to-day basis was not addressed in this budget.



I visited the towns of Rama and Wishart which are very small communities, but again they have people that are working hard doing a lot of volunteer work to ensure that their communities do stay alive. And the issues of policing, which is something beyond their control, it's just a bill that's given to them, and the bill given to them for water and sewer treatment is more than their taxes will allow or can allow. Even the lights that SaskPower has in these small towns is costing more they can afford, and nothing like this was addressed in the budget.

Mr. Speaker, the farmers in my constituency waited with bated breath last week when they heard the budget, to see what was going to happen to them. Well I guess that is exactly the word — it was to them; it wasn't for them — because in this budget there was nothing, nothing new to help the farmers, not just the ones that are victims of the flooding in the northern part of the constituency, but all the farmers.

The CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization] program that is basically bankrupting most of our farmers because of the inconsistency and the fact that they can't even know for sure when they go to their accountants whether they're going to get any money or not, and if they do get it, a large percentage of them actually are asked to give the money back again. It's not helping them get the crop in the ground this year. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture has stood in the House and said that they were putting some money into CAIS. They're not even fully funding this year's CAIS program. He said that if the finances allow later on, they'll put more money in.

Anybody that's going to their banker this spring and trying to get a line of credit so that they can put their crop in the ground and know that they have to pay more money for crop insurance, get less coverage out of it, and the CAIS program isn't even fully funded, knows that governments are not there to help them out.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in Foam Lake the citizens of that community have been waiting to hear what this government . . . do more than promise something about their primary health care centre for a number of years. Their hospital was taken from them, but basically the minister assured them that they would be given a primary health care unit. And there is still nothing that leads them to believe that this government cares whether they exist or not.

The seniors in my constituency waited to hear the word senior brought up in the budget. And that's something that again was not addressed by any facet of the budget that we heard last week. And it brings great concern to many of my constituents.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there was twice in this budget that I actually did agree with certain initiatives of the government. The fact that they funded some of the seats at Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies and they decided to fund midwifery is something that I support. But I've learned after 11 years that the devil is always in the detail. So I'm waiting to see what actually happens, if it comes without strings attached and if there basically is going to be something for these groups of people.

Mr. Speaker, our leader stood in the House today and talked about the issue that this government does have a brand for and

that is their ability to keep young people in this province. He's talked about the loss of 5,200 jobs in Saskatchewan in the last year — 1,000 fewer jobs for people under the age of 20; 600 fewer jobs for people the age 20 to 24; 4,700 fewer jobs aged people 25 to 44. Madam Deputy Speaker, this isn't something that I'm proud of and I'm sure hoping the government is not proud of it.

We also learned today about one of the latest ventures that the government has decided to risk our money in, Navigata, and decided that losing \$70 million is okay in a province where the main job should be to attract people. In fact last year, they lost \$21.6 million. That's nearly \$60,000 a day this government decided it could lose. This is the same government that decided that they couldn't, they couldn't fund the drug Avastin. They don't have enough seats for nursing students, that they don't have enough money to help farmers. But they can gamble money, taxpayers' money in ventures outside of our province.

I have the opportunity and the honour of being the person responsible for looking after the First Nations and Métis Relations from the critic perspective. And I did hear both of these words come up frequently in the budget, but I am waiting to see whether this \$8.6 million increase in this department will actually show any real benefit for the people that are either First Nations or Métis. I know that \$360,000 in the minister's office has been added to his budget, and what it will actually do for the First Nations people that are waiting for real help, for them, is a matter of opinion.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in 1991-92, when the then Premier Romanow came into power, he authorized a report to be done by two individuals called Stabler and Olfert, and they talked about the economic feasibility of Saskatchewan. That report talked about 52 communities that were considered viable. At that time, I looked at the list and thought there wouldn't be one town left in my constituency, not one town that this government considered would be viable. But we thought well this can't be something that a government that supposedly is looking after everybody in the province would even look at.

But in the last 15 years, Madam Deputy Speaker, I looked at the number of things this government has done, and though they didn't say that there should be a certain number of towns basically having to roll up the rug, it's happened anyway. It happens in a way that most people are not conscious of. But when you do things like closing hospitals — and I believe there's about 57 hospitals closed now in small communities — there will not be a senior build a house in a community if there isn't a hospital.

We have schools closing right across this province, until they put the moratorium on two years ago, and we'll be waiting to see what happens when it's lifted. But this province is managing a decline of what they consider to be at least 35,000 students leaving this province over the next 10 years. They're managing the decline of 3,500 students a year. And this is something that this government isn't bragging about when they stand up and talk about the budget. Again a decrease maybe is supposed to be good for them. Maybe there's supposed to be more left for the rest of us. But if we don't have our young people, Madam Speaker, we don't have a future.

In 1991-92 I believe the budget for the Department of Agriculture was just over \$1 billion. And this year it's right around the \$300 million mark. That's for the industry that's supposed to be — and we all agree is — the backbone of this province, and this government is seeing fit to continually cut the funding to it for the last 14 years. They've cut funding to RMs [rural municipality]. They have not provided cell service that's required in the world today to carry on business in most rural communities. The rural service centres were closed.

And the member opposite a few minutes ago tried to talk about the amount of debt that this government is servicing and blaming it on the Conservative government.

[15:00]

Well there was definitely a debt increase during that time, but I have yet to hear a member opposite stand up and say that \$5.95 million of the debt was left by former Premier Allan Blakeney and that he's also responsible for unfunded pension liabilities in this province. So if that's something that this government is proud of, then I think they should stand up and talk about that as well.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am going to be supporting the amendment that our member from Silver Springs brought forward, and I will not be supporting the budget that the government brought forward. I believe it is unsustainable when you talk about the population decreases that this government has recognized in their own budget documents. They admitted in the budget documents that the debt is going up by \$288 million. This is in a year when we have just about \$1 billion more than was looked at in last year at this time, and still they cannot find a way to balance the budget.

We have an education tuition freeze which most students definitely were in favour of. But if they look at the big picture . . . And many of the university students talked to me about it and said, what are we going to do when the freeze is actually lifted? Who's going to pay for all the services that either have been cut — the number of teachers has been cut, the programs that have been cut — who's going to pick up the loss? And will we have enough young people left here, taxpayers to pay for it?

Madam Deputy Speaker, the member opposite talked about the rainy day fund and the amount of money that he said they have actually put into it. Everyone knows that there is no money in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. It's a line of credit. When you spend the money, you're debt goes up. There's no money sitting in it, but this government would like to believe or would like people to believe that they've put aside money for a rainy day. Madam Deputy Speaker, there's areas in this province that are having rainy days, and most of them are in the farming community. And this government isn't looking at it.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment put forward by the opposition, and I will not be supporting the budget.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for The Battlefords.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure for me today to be able to rise and debate the motions that are on the floor before us. The motions being the support of the budget brought down by the Minister of Finance and an amendment from the opposition that I'll be unable to support.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget brought down on Thursday of last week — it being Monday today as I stand before the House to make my remarks — the budget that was brought down on Thursday by the Minister of Finance is a result of a tremendous amount of work by not only the Minister of Finance, members of Treasury Board and cabinet but also, Madam Deputy Speaker, by the people of Saskatchewan themselves.

As you yourself will know, last January — a year and a half ago or thereabouts — the Premier hosted in the city of Saskatoon, a summit, an economic summit of business leaders and others from across this great province. A summit called the Saskatchewan Centennial Summit, a discussion by those who have an interest in the economic and social future of this province, those who have an interest in the opportunities that this province presents to all of us.

Those who have an interest in the future of Saskatchewan, Madam Deputy Speaker, sat down for a couple of days in Saskatoon, discussed the relevant and important issues, said things that were of a positive nature to the province and things that were of concern to the people of this province. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan listened, spoke, communicated with each other. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, at the end of that session, a number of things took place. Not the least of which, Madam Deputy Speaker, was the fact that the members of this government, caucus, and cabinet were listening very closely to the ideas that were presented at that meeting.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the budget brought down by the Minister of Finance on Thursday clearly indicates how well this government listened to the people who were in attendance at that economic summit. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, as was pointed out in question period on several occasions, the only group of people not represented at that conference in Saskatoon were the members opposite, Madam Deputy Speaker, the members of the opposition, the Saskatchewan Party members, who boycotted all the proceedings of that very important summit.

Now coming from that summit, Madam Deputy Speaker, were two important conclusions. Number one, the Department of Industry and Resources, the Minister of Industry and Resources subsequent to that meeting put together an action plan on the Saskatchewan economy. Madam Deputy Speaker, that action plan on the Saskatchewan economy recognized that we need to do things about stimulating the economy and bringing workers into this province dealing with immigration, dealing with First Nations and Métis people training programs. Madam Deputy Speaker, 81, 82 recommendations in the action plan on the Saskatchewan economy. Madam Deputy Speaker, a tremendous plan of growth for the people of this province.

Then, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Premier announced the Vicq

commission. The Premier announced that we needed to have a look, to sharpen the edge — the competitive edge — of Saskatchewan businesses in the world marketplace, Madam Deputy Speaker, set up a commission to take a look at corporate taxes in the province of Saskatchewan. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, that commission headed up by Mr. Vicq consulted the people of Saskatchewan again, dealt with the members of the business community, talked to others who have interests in the competitive nature of the Saskatchewan economy.

And just prior to the end of the year, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Vicq commission report was tabled. The recommendations were reviewed by this government. And as a result of that, Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget reflects the recommendations of the Vicq commission, making this economy more competitive in the international business community. Madam Deputy Speaker, what that means to the average person in the province of Saskatchewan — more investments, more jobs, more opportunities in all parts of this province.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm very proud to be a part of this government that has over the last year and a half listened to the people of Saskatchewan, and on Thursday last week, brought forward a budget that clearly listened to the people of Saskatchewan. Madam Deputy Speaker, there are numerous other examples that I can refer to, Madam Deputy Speaker, not the least of which were some of those items that were in my former portfolio as the former minister of Government Relations.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I can't tell you how many times members of the opposition told us during question period in this Chamber that this government had to do something about education property tax on farmland. Madam Deputy Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan had been saying to this government, we need to be doing something about the education portion of property tax on farmland.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Department of Government Relations, the Department of Finance, the Department of Learning have been meeting with representative organizations of the municipal governments and the school boards, meeting with various other members of other sectors of the Saskatchewan economy. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, concluded first and foremost we have a universal 8 per cent reduction in education property tax across the board for all properties in the province. That came into effect last year and, Madam Deputy Speaker, is reflected in this budget as a continuation of that program. In this budget, Madam Deputy Speaker, \$55 million, 8 per cent education property tax relief on all properties in the province of Saskatchewan.

Second to that, Madam Deputy Speaker, with additional resources available to the people of Saskatchewan and recognizing the discrepancy between some of the assessments on rural land and urban land, some of the differences in the way in which the education property tax is applied on agricultural land and on urban land, Madam Deputy Speaker, in the preparation of this budget, this government was able to take a look at the agricultural land side of education property tax. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, in this budget, another \$52 million of relief for education property tax on rural land in this province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that adds up to \$63 million worth of money for the reduction of the education portion of the property tax on agricultural land.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that issue is not concluded by any means. But, Madam Deputy Speaker, in this budget, a true commitment to the people of Saskatchewan, an indication that this government listened, understood, and responded to a need from rural Saskatchewan.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget also recognizes some of the other needs expressed by the people of Saskatchewan, not the least of which is now that which applies to my very own budget, the Department of Health. Madam Deputy Speaker, the Department of Health in this budget is going to receive a total of \$3.2 billion in financing. Madam Deputy Speaker, that's a 10.2 per cent increase over the funding that was committed to health care last year.

Madam Deputy Speaker, over the course of the last well, many years, Saskatchewan people have indicated their number one priority. The number one concern that they have is the health care system. Madam Deputy Speaker, this is consistent with the population Canada-wide, the population North America-wide. The number one issue, top of mind issue for the people of this province and across this nation is health care. Madam Deputy Speaker, unprecedented record spending in health in this particular budget. The government of this province, the Minister of Finance, supported by Treasury Board, cabinet, and caucus, listened to the people of Saskatchewan. Record spending, Madam Deputy Speaker, in health care.

Where is this money going, Madam Deputy Speaker? Front line services. Over 50 per cent of the new money in health care, Madam Deputy Speaker, front line services — doctors, nurses, pharmacists, technicians — those people in the system that deal directly with people who need care within our health care system. The commitment, Madam Deputy Speaker, of this budget to the people of Saskatchewan very visible, very clear in these new dollars assigned.

The other dollars, Madam Deputy Speaker, the three pressure points in health care, deal with human resources; the second, prescription drugs; and technology, Madam Deputy Speaker. Health care is becoming people, drugs, and technology, Madam Deputy Speaker.

This budget also addresses the needs of the prescription drug program, an extra 14 per cent in increased spending on prescription drugs, Madam Deputy Speaker. And new dollars, a full 8 per cent allocated to enhanced capital spending for facilities and equipment, Madam Deputy Speaker, again a clear indication of the strength of this government's support for the health of Saskatchewan people.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget takes a look at, in its increased spending, the three pillars that have been outlined by others who have gone before us that we have made a commitment to: reduced taxes, reduction in the provincial debt, and new program spending, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I'm also very, very supportive of the efforts that have been made in this budget to deal with the debt of the province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we are all aware, too much aware actually, that although the people of Saskatchewan have said, don't tell me about the debt; just deal with it, that we are forced, Madam Speaker, to deal with the debt of this province. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am very proud of the work that this government has done with regards to the debt of this province which, by the way, Madam Deputy Speaker, is now . . . The total accumulated government debt, Madam Deputy Speaker, is now at \$7.25 billion which is the lowest level it's been at since 1990-1991 and, Madam Deputy Speaker, this will fall further to 7.2 billion at the end of this fiscal year covered by this budget.

[15:15]

Madam Deputy Speaker, as the Minister of Finance has indicated in answers to questions in this Chamber — and we on the west side of the province are always concerned about the provincial sales tax, Madam Deputy Speaker — the total dollars that are spent on financing the interest on the accumulated debt in this province . . . Four per cent of the provincial sales tax, Madam Deputy Speaker, has to be used to pay just the interest on the accumulated debt left over from the previous government. Four points on the sales tax, Madam Deputy Speaker, something we're all very much aware of.

But, Madam Deputy Speaker, let's just take into account this budget provides \$101.9 million of a surplus that will contribute to the third consecutive year of permanent debt reduction, bringing the three-year total of permanent debt reduction by this government to \$446.6 million. Madam Deputy Speaker, the cumulative surplus under The Balanced Budget Act, that's 2004-05 through '07-08, is expected to be \$883 million.

The government to debt GDP [gross domestic product], Madam Deputy Speaker — and this is very important — the government debt-to-GDP will be 16.7 per cent at the end of '05-06. And it will decline further to 15.9 per cent in '06-07, the first time it's been below 17 per cent since 1986-87. And total debt-to-GDP will fall to 25.2 per cent at the end of '05-06 and 24.2 per cent in '06-07, the lowest rate since 1981-82.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, we should all be very proud of the work that this government has done under very difficult circumstances. Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget provides new money for hope and opportunity, more opportunities for investment, for jobs, for immigration growth, for training, and opportunities for First Nations people. Madam Deputy Speaker, every corner, every inch of this province will see some benefit from the opportunities presented in this budget.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget provides additional money for education and health care and the most vulnerable in our communities. Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget opened doors like doors have never been opened before for every resident of this province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm very proud to support the work of the Minister of Finance, the Treasury Board, and the cabinet. Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm very proud to support the budget brought down on Thursday. I will be voting against the

amendment, in favour of the budget and, Madam Deputy Speaker, I urge all members opposite to do the same.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Biggar.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to be able to speak to the budget and in the budget debate. I've been a member since 1999, have spoken to a number of budgets and it's always very important to me and to my constituents to outline really the setting of the Biggar constituency, their challenges, the problems in the constituency.

In the past few years, Madam Deputy Speaker, in the constituency of Biggar we have had a school closure. The Radisson school closed. There's been many problems within the Radisson community because of that. It's really divided communities. It's really created a lot of stress on students, on parents and costs on parents for them to try to get the best education that they can for their children.

Also the constituency of Biggar also includes the Vanscoy area. The Vanscoy people, the Grandora community, have been struggling with the creation of the natural gas caverns. It's affected their water quality, their water levels, and they have been fighting this NDP government for now years over that very issue. And certainly it's been a big, not only a frustration, again a cause, an alarm to the community concerning how they attract economic development. The worries over their health, drinking low-quality water, very dirty water. And the community there has struggled very hard. They have really forced this government to do things that you would normally expect a government to do ahead of time and look after the water quality of people in an area when these types of developments are taking place.

At the other end of my constituency we have the community of Wilkie. Wilkie has lost its hospital. Now it's basically a clinic. They still have a doctor but how long that doctor will remain when they don't have a working hospital is a big frustration to that community and there's certainly concerns over that. And again it all comes back to economic development and how a loss of services like a hospital affects that community. And the people are working hard at attracting new businesses but it's a great challenge. And because of the loss of the health care facility, it's a greater challenge.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when you come to the town and community of Biggar itself, there's a litany of closures that have taken place, that this NDP government has closed in the town of Biggar. This NDP government closed the rural service centre and the Environment office which it equated to the loss of three jobs, one family, and access to qualified and prompt service for a large farming community and left a prime and vast wildlife zone with no supervision. We had the closure of the hospital kitchen leading to a loss of one position and the use of a well-equipped, spacious facility. Also, Madam Deputy Speaker, recently also lost, had the closure of the SaskEnergy office and the loss of a SaskEnergy representative in Biggar. Also in the town of Biggar, the SaskTel representation has been downgraded by one person, leaving the town with just one individual trying to service the whole area.

Madam Deputy Speaker, not only those cutbacks have occurred in the community of Biggar and the constituency of Biggar, but also we notice that the recent amalgamation of school divisions has created the loss of the school office in Biggar. Once again more jobs going out of town into other . . . out of the constituency. This is an exodus of more individuals, more families, loss of representation and access to management for problem solving and as well as the abandonment of newly renovated facilities. Once again long-time residents who were involved in the community uprooted, leaving a void in the town and disrupted the lives of these individuals.

Madam Deputy Speaker, also during this period and also in the last couple of years we had an announcement in the town of Biggar that the CN [Canadian National] Rail terminal was going to be closed. And the town of Biggar and the community of Biggar went to work to save that terminal. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, everywhere from the mayor to the councillors in town to the citizens of Biggar and community signing petitions, writing letters to the federal and provincial officials and to the president and officials of CN Rail. And it seemed like a lost cause. CN Rail made the announcement, said they weren't going to back down. It was going to close. But as we . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. May I ask why the member's on her feet?

**Hon. Ms. Beatty:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, I ask leave to introduce a visitor.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Cumberland has asked leave to introduce a visitor. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. The member from Cumberland.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Ms. Beatty:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased and honoured to introduce one the youngest and best looking chiefs in the province of Saskatchewan. Chief Tammy Cook-Searson from La Ronge is here in your gallery. And the chief is very active in very many ways. She's queen trapper of northern Saskatchewan, and she's got children, and she's very sports minded and very progressive in promoting economic development and promoting young people in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. So with that I would like everybody to welcome the chief to our Legislative Assembly.

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.]

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Thanking the member for his indulgence, I recognize the member from Biggar.

#### 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, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Cheveldayoff.]

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I'd also like to welcome the guests in the gallery to today's speeches.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I was speaking about the potential closure of the Canadian National Rail terminal in Biggar. And it was amazing how the community got behind the drive to save it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I would ask why the member from Athabasca is on his feet.

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Again to ask leave to introduce a guest.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member also asks leave to introduce a guest. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. The member from Athabasca.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — I apologize for the member for the interruption. It was supposed to be a one-two punch and I just missed my cue to make sure I didn't interrupt. So I apologize for the interruption.

I want to join my colleague from Cumberland in of course welcoming Chief Tammy Cook-Searson, one of the most progressive chiefs in Saskatchewan. And I also wanted to recognize the colleague that she's with. He's the CEO [chief executive officer] of Kitsaki development management group, I think. And Russell and I go back many, many years. It's of course . . . the CEO is Russell Roberts and he's done some valuable work in northern Saskatchewan.

Many people point out that he's got valuable experience in banking, many, many experiences in developing businesses, and certainly worked under people like Ray McKay. And he's probably better looking, and younger than Ray at this stage of the game anyway. But a lot of people don't know that Russell worked many, many years in the athletic field as well, and he played a lot of volleyball. And it was there that I met Russell, and today now how life certainly continues on.

He's in the arena of business development with First Nations, and of course we're in the arena of politics. But the healthy respect that Russell and I had for each other, to his days in volleyball, his involvement in Northern Development Board, and now CEO for Kitsaki Management which is one of the biggest, most successful groups of First Nations enterprises in the country.

I want to join with my colleague in recognizing a very impressive chief and a very dynamic CEO, both members of the First Nations of La Ronge Band. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Biggar.

### 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, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Cheveldayoff.]

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. As I was saying, the Canadian National Rail announced that they were going to close the terminal in Biggar some months back. And it was amazing to see the community get behind the drive to save the terminal. People came out in droves to meetings. The town council and mayor sought to have meetings with company officials. A number of letters were written to company officials and to the provincial and federal governments concerning the issue. There was a petition drive that was undertaken. And the community really threw its whole heart and soul behind saving the terminal. If the community had lost that terminal, it was going to be a serious economic loss to the town of Biggar.

And it's interesting, Madam Deputy Speaker, all the lists of things, of cutbacks that this NDP government has created in the constituency of Biggar. And then we come to a multinational corporation like Canadian National Rail. And at the end of the day, the community of Biggar convinced . . . The community of Biggar which involves the elected representatives, the local MP [Member of Parliament] and myself, and individual people, citizens of the community, and I have to say the workers of CN Rail — there was two unions involved — and they all worked together and convinced CN Rail not to close the terminal.

And I think it's just amazing what you can do when you can talk to a multinational corporation and convince them to change their policy, change their mind. But when it comes to this NDP government, the people of Biggar constituency couldn't get them to change their mind on any of the closures in the constituency. Madam Deputy Speaker, it's quite amazing to watch that happen. And it's really the people in the Biggar constituency are very disappointed how the NDP have treated the constituency of Biggar and the town of Biggar in particular concerning these many issues.

Going on to the budget, Madam Deputy Speaker, it's pretty obvious that there's some huge failings within the budget. The budget was an admission of the NDP cutting its forecast for job creation in 2006 by one-third, from 4,800 to 3,200 jobs.

[15:30]

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, when you compare that to other provinces, what's going on around us . . . BC expected to create 41,000 new jobs. Alberta expected to create 39,600 new jobs, and Manitoba expects to create 5,800 new jobs. It's incredible that during the middle of an oil boom that this NDP government cannot create jobs. We continue to lose jobs in this province. And we really see no turnaround in that coming because of the continuing policies of the NDP government, and really just the attitude of the NDP government and the attitude it has had for really decades to the private sector.

They have taken one piece of the puzzle and implemented it. But this NDP government haven't brought all of the areas that needs to be brought into play in order to get this province going, get the economic growth agenda that this province needs.

It seems that creating a competitive labour legislative environment, limiting government intervention in the economy, these things are very critical . . . to have the government constantly competing with the private sector and quite frankly, in an unfair basis . . . Having a long-term strategic plan for improving infrastructure which includes own-source revenue sharing for municipalities, an innovation agenda which includes a plan for long-term predictable funding increases to advance educational institutions, and more progressive research and development tax credits to enhance the commercialization and new technologies and research, and greater economic co-operation with other Western provinces to reduce interprovincial trade barriers.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this government isn't even going to meetings. They won't even meet with the other provinces and the other partners in the new West in order to be included in projects that's taking place in Alberta and BC as far as road and rail links, and Fort McMurray project and just . . . the list goes on and on and on.

Then, Madam Deputy Speaker, when you get down and look at the numbers in the budget, what do we have? This government, this NDP government has actually increased the debt to the province, to the taxpayers, by \$288 million. They go on and say, if you look . . . part of the budget they pretend that actually the debt went down. Well when you look at the summary financial statements, not just the General Revenue Fund, you see the debt of this province has gone up by \$288 million.

And that is a debt that . . . The previous speaker was talking about the interest charges on debt. Well they have increased the debt. There's going to be more interest charges to be paid by the taxpayer in the future, in the future years.

Madam Deputy Speaker, you look at the \$1 billion in revenue that this government has to spend. That's \$1,000 per person or \$4,000 per family. Well what does the individual, the individual person in this province going to get out of this budget? Well unfortunately next to nothing.

Look what is happening in agriculture. This government is actually cutting back the Department of Agriculture by \$166 million over last year — \$166 million to an industry that is on the verge of collapse, quite frankly, especially the grains and oilseeds. It's amazing that this government today with \$1 billion in extra funding will not put up the \$154 million to make

sure CAIS is fully funded.

Also, Madam Deputy Speaker, this NDP government has cut back Crop Insurance by \$12 million in this budget. Again a vitally important farm program that farmers desperately need and this government is cutting it back. It's an incredible thing to see this government make those types of cuts, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And so what do we have? What can we say to the folks back home, the farmers that are preparing to seed in a few weeks, farmers and ranchers who are calving their cattle out? Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all the Minister of Agriculture was only asking the federal government for \$200 million. He thought that was enough. Well that doesn't even scratch the surface.

Finally — finally — now the Minister of Agriculture, after being lobbied by not only the official opposition, the Saskatchewan Party, but by farm groups and finally now when he's going, I understand he's going to Ottawa, they've raised their commitment. Or not their commitment so much as what they're asking the federal government, up to \$500 million — much more realistic figure that the farmers of Saskatchewan need.

Well we also hear the Minister of Agriculture announce that APAS [Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan] was going with him on this trip. Well APAS just came out just today and said no; they're not going with the Minister of Agriculture.

Well what does it say to the credibility of this NDP government and to the Minister of Agriculture when they can't have support, they can't have the presence of the most important farm organization in Saskatchewan and they refuse to go with the Minister of Agriculture to speak to the federal officials? It's quite amazing.

But I believe part of the answer is why groups are distancing themselves from the provincial Agriculture minister is because of how this government and this provincial Agriculture minister has treated the federal Minister of Agriculture. They constantly insult the federal Minister of Agriculture. They insult the federal government, and then they go with their hand out, expecting the federal government to give them something. Well I think it would be much more constructive if this government was supportive and on a business-like manner go and discuss these issues, these very important issues with the federal government for the good of the producers of this province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, another item that is very disconcerting — and recently we brought it up in question period — and it's concerning the budgeting and the target for funding for nurses in this budget. And this Minister of Health will not commit to a target, funding for nurses. And the reason that this minister will not commit to a target because he said, well what happens if you can't meet the target? Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, you know, what is his plan? Well is he going to open more training seats for nurses or is he not?

Now I'd like to enter into the record a letter from a mother. Her name is Bobbie Haynes from Biggar, Saskatchewan. And the letter reads:

Dear Mr. Weekes:

My name is Bobbie Haynes . . . I am writing to tell you something that I know you already know but the situation is nearing crisis proportions and I feel I need to add my warnings to the people who have the power to change it.

Please read the enclosed newspaper article and know that the situation is no different here in Saskatchewan. My daughter finished her RN last October and immediately started a job at a Regina hospital. She worked so hard to get through the very difficult program and was so looking forward to working and now . . . [only after] a few short months, she is already facing burnout and looking for something else to do. This is bad enough but she tells me that several of her classmates are feeling the same way and will be getting out of the profession before it is too late for them. She works on a neuro ward and is responsible for 8 very ill patients every day and one of her best friends works on a cardiac ward and one day was responsible for 14 cardiac patients. These numbers are unacceptable for any nurse let alone a new nurse with very little experience.

She goes on to say:

My daughter is a hard worker, does not complain and always gives everything her very best — she is a real trooper. And believe me, I do know the difference because I have 3 grown children and they don't all the work ethic that she has. She is heart sick over this and truly does not know what to do. As I said, she worked very hard and graduated with distinction only to face this after a few short months.

I would not be writing this letter to you if I wasn't very aware of this being a very common situation . . . I see this burn-out in almost every discipline of health care but it really frightens me with the nurses because we cannot have health care without nurses.

The letter ends:

. . . This is not good health care and, as highly taxed taxpayers, we all deserve better.

Thank you for attention.

Sincerely, Bobbie Haynes

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that pretty well says it all. We have long waiting lists for people waiting for health care. We have nurses who have just graduated, after only a few months, already being burned out from overwork. And it's not only being overworked but that critical situation where there could be mistakes made, and they're putting not only the patients' and the nurses' health at risk when they continue to understaff hospitals, hospital beds in the province of Saskatchewan.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I can only say that when the people of Biggar constituency and the people of Saskatchewan look at this budget, they're going to say, what is in there to improve their life? And, Madam Deputy Speaker, they're going to say

there's nothing in this budget to improve the lives of the people, their children, and their grandchildren. The government talks about creating jobs. All this is going to do is continue to see our young people leave the province, leave the farms, leave our cities to go elsewhere for a better living and to put down roots and grow other parts of the world.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment brought forward by the official opposition, and I will not be supporting the budget. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's definitely a pleasure to participate in this debate. The budget of course is where the rubber hits the road. It's where the government puts its money where its mouth is, and it backs up the priorities of the Throne Speech or of platforms with actual money that is of course sent here by the taxpayers of this province.

And you know, in terms of that level of trust that people have to have with their public officials, there's nothing more important than the budget in terms of delivering on that trust and listening closely to the people as they enumerate their priorities, as they talk about what they want to see in Saskatchewan, and in terms of delivering on those priorities, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I guess I'd first of all like to say a few words of thanks to the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre that have sent me to this Chamber, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to represent them. I was born and raised there, grew up there, lived there. A lot of folks know me in Regina Elphinstone-Centre and it's a privilege that they've sent me here, Madam Speaker. As sometimes I want to joke, Madam Deputy Speaker, they know me and they still voted for me. But anyway it's a privilege to be here.

At the risk of, at the risk of using my tie as a prop, Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to point out that today I'm wearing a fine tartan tie of the Wilson clan. And the Wilsons of course were my grandmother's family. My grandmother is Scottish and she passed away in the recent past, Madam Deputy Speaker. And I think she for me embodied a lot of the things that are really great about this province.

The people that got through the Great Depression, Madam Deputy Speaker, that went through World War II, they built a new life for this province. After that war . . . She was one of the best, Madam Deputy Speaker. She had deep rural roots and she has, you know, adapted to the life in the city, coming off the farm in the '50s, and she raised a tremendous son in my father. And she was a great grandmother to all us McCall kids, and we miss her very deeply.

But she also taught us a thing or two, Madam Deputy Speaker, about how to manage your books. She was Scottish of course and she was pretty prudent with the money. And she did a heck of a job in terms of being a single person putting together the wherewithal to not just make a good life for her son but then to

partially defray the cost of us McCall kids going on to post-secondary education.

So I want to say at the start of my remarks, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I'm thinking about the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre and I'm thinking about my grandma. And I think that I want to do them some honour in the remarks that I'm going to make here today. And I'm also thinking that we want to do them some honour in terms of the budget that we've put forward, the budget that the Minister of Finance has put forward, and the priorities therein.

I also want to say off the top of the remarks here, Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance. He follows in a fine tradition. We've had some very able fiscal stewardship on this side of the House. The member for Douglas Pleasant Hill . . . Northwest, the member from Saskatoon Massey Place. We've had some very able Finance ministers in this House. And certainly the Minister for Finance, the member from Regina South, carries on in that tradition. And I also might point out, Madam Deputy Speaker, he's the youngest Finance minister in Canada.

[15:45]

And I guess I think about the able budget that the Minister of Finance delivered on Thursday, particularly when members on the opposite side of this Chamber like to talk about a government that is supposedly old and tired and all this. You know, we've got experience and we've got youth. We've got a good balance, just like the priorities in our budget, just like the bottom line in our budget, and we're going to keep moving ahead, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. McCall:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, I think in this budget, in the 2006-2007 budget, we're building a better future right here. We are capitalizing on our economic success while reflecting the values of Saskatchewan people. We are working together to make Saskatchewan the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

With this budget we have cut business taxes to stimulate the economy and create jobs. We are giving young people more reasons to stay in Saskatchewan with more training opportunities and a university tuition freeze for yet another two years. This government is building a better future for our communities and rural residents through revenue sharing and property tax relief initiatives. This government is also supporting our citizens with enhanced social programming and assistance to ensure no one is left behind on the path to opportunity through enhanced social initiatives.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I just also want to point out that on the day of the budget there was a funeral for Gerri Carroll, who is the founder of Soul's Harbour Mission, and did a heck of a lot of work in the city of Regina for the poorest of the poor. And certainly it was a pleasure to be at that funeral and at that celebration of a tremendous life. And I was there with the member from Moosomin.



And I think that in terms of the certain priorities in this budget, I think that the people like Gerri Carroll that are out there working with the poorest of the poor, Madam Deputy Speaker — there are measures in this budget that I'll be speaking about shortly — but I think that she would have been very interested to find out about the increases around the social assistance program and increases around TEA [transitional employment allowance]. And I guess that I want to say that if we in this Chamber can live up to the kind of work that's done by people like Gerri Carroll, I think this is going to be a better province. And certainly those are the kinds of aspirations we have in this budget.

Highlights in this 2006-2007 budget include it being the 13th consecutive balanced budget. There was \$7.1 billion in operating spending. There was an allocation of \$101.9 million towards permanent debt reduction, bringing our debt reduction total to nearly \$450 million since 2004-2005. Government debt at March 31, 2006 will be 7.2 billion — its lowest point in 15 years, since 1991, Madam Deputy Speaker.

In other words, the debt is at its lowest point — government debt — since 1999 . . . 1991 when the NDP took over from the Grant Devine Conservative administration. Government debt to GDP will be 16.7 per cent at the end of 2005-06 and declined to 15.9 per cent in 2006-07 — the first time it's been below 17 per cent since 1986-87.

Now the Finance critic opposite likes to talk about how this is somehow an '80s-style budget. And I guess it is an '80s-style budget in one regard, Madam Deputy Speaker, because we're getting back to historic lows in terms of our debt-to-GDP ratio. Furthermore, our total debt to GDP will fall to 25.2 per cent at the end of the 2005-2006 and to 24.2 per cent in 2006-07 — its lowest rate since 1981-1982.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is at once a happy thing, a joyous thing. And it's also kind of depressing because in this House, the members opposite like to beat up on Allan Blakeney. They take great delight in talking about what supposedly bad things Allan Blakeney did for the province of Saskatchewan. But I'll point out for all here of course that, in terms of our total debt-to-GDP ratio as a government, it's the first time since Allan Blakeney left office — left the Premier's office — that we're in such a good place in terms of our debt-to-GDP ratio. So the members opposite like to cast aspersions on the good name of Allan Blakeney but, Mr. Speaker, I think the record shows they're not fit to carry his shoes when it comes to the fiscal management of this province.

Mr. Speaker, also a priority in this budget, health spending of \$3.2 billion — nearly a 10 per cent increase in our largest health budget ever. There is also education spending of \$1.5 billion — over a 5 per cent increase.

Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan, there's an economy that is growing . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. McCall:** — I thank the member from Regina Northeast for his enthusiasm. Saskatchewan is currently experiencing unprecedented economic success. Several of our key industries

are performing well. Mining, oil, and gas industries remain strong and Saskatchewan is the second largest producer of oil in Canada. We're also the third largest natural gas producer in Canada. And Saskatchewan is the largest potash and uranium producer and exporter in the world, supplying approximately 30 per cent of the world's demand.

Our province also has a wealth of other mineral deposits: coal, salt, base metals, clay, sodium sulphate, and gold, and the potential for diamonds and rare earth minerals. We have seen a 23 per cent rise in employment with the oil, gas industry over the last five years. And the mineral industry is rapidly expanding, nearly doubling exploration in the past year, primarily in the North.

We are one of three have provinces in Canada and with the steps taken in this budget, Mr. Speaker, we are making the necessary investments in order to stay a have province.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. McCall:** — Now one of the main planks in this budget, Mr. Speaker, was cutting business taxes and other measures to stimulate the economy, to sharpen our competitive edge. Business tax cuts will grow the economy by attracting and stimulating capital investment and creating jobs and job opportunities for young people.

This will be done through a multi-year plan to eliminate the general corporate capital tax on existing capital investments by July 1, 2008; by eliminating the general corporate capital tax on new capital investments in Saskatchewan on July 1, 2006; by reducing the corporate capital tax research resource surcharge rates beginning July 1, 2006; reducing the corporate income tax rate from 17 to 12 per cent by July 1, 2008; increase the small business threshold from 300,000 to 500,000 by July 1, 2008; immediately convert the non-refundable income investment tax credit, the ITC, for manufacturing and processing into a refundable tax credit and extend the carry forward for unused ITCs previously earned to 10 years. In 2006-07 these cuts will result in a \$95.3 million business tax cut to improve Saskatchewan's competitiveness.

Other initiatives, Mr. Speaker. There's the creation of a new tax credit for employed tradespeople wherein a one-time trade entry tax credit that recognizes the high initial cost of work-related tools purchased as a condition of employment by eligible tradespeople, which will result in \$1 million in savings annually. And an annual maintenance tax credit that recognizes the ongoing cost of maintaining these tools — an estimated \$1.9 million in tax savings for tradespeople annually.

And at this moment, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say that this does two things. This, at once it fills a campaign commitment that we'd made in the 2003 election. And it's also very much impacted by the hard work of the member from Regina Northeast who did an awful lot of work on this file. And I want to salute him at this point for the good work that he has done in terms of putting some money back in the pocket of our tradespeople and making their cost of doing business all the more competitive.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, we are supporting groundbreaking technology that will boost the economy and clean up the environment in Saskatchewan, Canada, and the world.

The province is assisting with an initiative to develop and demonstrate an enhanced oil recovery process for heavy oil reservoirs in Western Canada. This budget also supports the Weyburn CO<sub>2</sub> monitoring and storage project and the International Test Centre for CO<sub>2</sub> Capture which will significantly reduce greenhouse gas levels.

Mr. Speaker, a very important part of this budget is helping young people to build their futures right here, and as I pointed out earlier the total budget for education is \$1.5 billion, a record investment. Funding for education increased 5.2 per cent or \$75.1 million over the 2005-2006 approved budget.

We are investing in the education and futures of our youth. This is particularly true with the new Department of Advanced Education and Employment. And I want to send out congratulations to the Minister for AEE, the member for Nutana, who will do an able job there in this very critical portfolio. The funding there increased by 8.3 per cent or \$46 million for a total investment of \$604 million. That's putting our money where our mouth is, Mr. Speaker.

This critical investment supports an estimated 66,000 learners. It's also a strategic investment in immigration recruitment and support. We are making the largest investment in the training sector this decade. We are investing an additional \$15.5 million in the training system and its learners. This represents an 8.6 increase. Over the past two years we have increased our investment by 17 per cent.

We are expanding the training system capacity by 2,759 training and employment preparation opportunities under the CareerStart initiative. We are on track to meet our commitment to expand existing training opportunities by 5,400 over four years — 3,904 new opportunities being created in the last two years. Mr. Speaker, we made a promise in the 2003 election and we're keeping that promise.

Mr. Speaker, we are expanding the number of adult basic education seats by 336. This is on top of last year's expansion of 1,000 new adult basic education seats. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure as an educator you've worked with people learning to better themselves, better their opportunities for their families. And in terms of one of those critical pieces of the learning system, adult basic education is so vitally important to give people the tools to improve themselves and improve their lives. And I'm very glad to see that in this budget, Mr. Speaker.

In the spirit of the Kelowna accord we are taking immediate action to invest for the first time ever in the Saskatchewan Institute of Indian Technologies. We are funding 83 new adult basic education seats at SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies] and we are providing provincial training allowance for students who attend the SIIT at a cost of \$900,000. If we are going to build a province where no one is left behind on the path to opportunity, training for all Saskatchewan citizens is vitally important. And we're taking a move to step beyond jurisdiction and get to results, Mr.

Speaker.

We are spending \$3.8 million more on the provincial training allowance, with an average \$60 per client per month increase — again a great step, Mr. Speaker. We are supporting the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Training Certification Commission to expand its youth apprenticeship program province-wide, getting our young people into the trades right out of high school. We are supporting the ATCC [Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Training Certification Commission] to increase apprenticeship training opportunities by at least 105 seats.

We are supporting universities to continue to hold tuition at 2004-2005 levels for the next two years. This applies to all undergraduate programs and many graduate programs. In 2006-2007 we are spending \$17.8 million to hold tuition to the 2004 levels. This is a 7 per cent increase over last year's funding level. And again, Mr. Speaker, it's a fully funded freeze, so in terms of what the university needed that they were going to make up through tuition, this bridges that gap. And it makes that university education that's so important if we're going to be working for a society that is more equal, that allows people to realize their potential, affordable university education and post-secondary education generally is critical to that cause, Mr. Speaker.

We are investing \$6.3 million, up from \$1.7 million in 2005-06, for a comprehensive immigration strategy that will attract more immigrants to Saskatchewan and help them settle in our communities and our labour force. I note that one of the women nominated for the YWCA's [Young Women's Christian Association] women of distinction is an individual named Marianne Skoropad who's worked for the past 25 years plus, bringing people from around the world and getting them settled here in Saskatchewan. And as we set about the work of this immigration strategy — trying to live up to our province's motto of "from many peoples, strength," I know that we're going to learn from the example of people like Marianne. We're going to be inspired by the work that they've done over the years, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to carry that forward.

We're moving on with our commitment to quadruple the centennial merit scholarship for post-secondary students by providing an additional \$500,000 for a total of 287 new scholarships, and we're increasing the graduate tax credit from \$675 to \$850 for students graduating in 2006. The tax credit will increase to \$1,000 in 2007, again, Mr. Speaker, providing a good reason for young people to look at Saskatchewan to start their future right here at home.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to talk about the things that this budget does to support our citizens to ensure that no one is left behind on the path to opportunity. In this budget, there are \$18.2 million for Project Hope, for treatment, for detox beds, outreach services, and drug programs, including \$3.7 million for the secure care initiatives. And I know that certainly the member from Saskatoon Sutherland has done an awful lot of work on this front and on this file. And it's very important for the Premier himself and I applaud this allocation of government resources — of the people's resources.

[16:00]

There is \$6.2 million in funding to the Saskatchewan rental housing supplement to make higher quality rental housing more affordable for families and people with disabilities and supporting the province's five-year, \$200 million HomeFirst strategy. And again, Mr. Speaker, you think about the fundamentals in life in terms of food, shelter, and clothing. It's so important that people have access to that good quality of shelter if they're going to make a good life for themselves and for their families and if we're going to have stable neighbourhoods. And I couldn't think of a better expenditure of money.

We're supporting 670 new families through KidsFirst, again a groundbreaking program that this government has a lot to be proud of but the people who deliver this program have even more to be proud of, Mr. Speaker. We have \$14.2 million for the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan and transitional employment allowance enhancements. This includes \$13.2 million to provide a \$480 per year increase to SAP [Saskatchewan Assistance Plan] and TEA for an increase to adult allowance rates. And people living in residential care facilities will receive a \$20 per month increase to the personal living allowance. There's \$1 million to provide an additional \$120 per year to TEA recipients and \$1.5 million to TEA enhancements to increase utility allowances.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the hard, good work done on this file by the member from Rosemont certainly when she was the minister for Community Resources and Employment. I want to commend the work that's been done on this file by the member from Greystone that's been such an advocate for the poor in this province over decades in public service. I want to commend the work that's been done by the member from Athabasca and the current member for the Department of Community Resources.

And you know these are issues where we're not where we need to be, Mr. Speaker. But I think that with this budget we've taken a giant leap forward in terms of getting to that place where no one really is left behind. Where we are making sure that the basic assistance is adequate — that it's the help it needs to be; that it's living up to the spirit and the work of people like Gerri Carroll, Mr. Speaker.

We are also including in this budget \$1.8 million for \$720 per year on the provincial training allowance enhancement, again to provide the increased cost of living for students in training. We are providing \$4.6 million to support child care — both new spaces and an increased subsidy to contribute to enhanced quality and assist parents to participate in the labour force. We are putting \$17.1 million into community-based organizations' wage increases and again, Mr. Speaker, an allocation of funding that I think is sorely needed and will be well put to use because these people are out there on the front lines, they're doing some very difficult work often under very difficult circumstances. And I think what this government is doing is recognizing that important work they do and trying to back it up with more adequate funds.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many great things in this budget, I could go on for days and days and days, but in the interest of allowing my other colleagues a crack at the speech, I guess I'll begin to wrap up my remarks.

But I guess I want to say, Mr. Speaker, I'll be supporting the budget quite obviously and quite proudly. I'll be voting against the amendment put forward by the opposition. It's an interesting amendment, Mr. Speaker, but I think it's infinitely worthy of being defeated. So as I say, I'll be supporting this budget. I'll be supporting the efforts of this government to help people build their future right here and to make sure that no one is left behind on the path to opportunity. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise in the Legislative Assembly today and enter in on the budget debate, to follow the fine speeches by my colleagues in this House, and I hope I'm able to worthily follow in their footsteps.

Mr. Speaker, sadly with regards to this budget and the people who I represent in the riding of Kindersley, there was little that seemed to come through for our geographical area. We have been fortunate to be blessed under the ground with reserves of petroleum in both natural gas and oil, and there has been increased activity all the way up from Macklin in the North, down to my own hometown of Eatonia in the South.

What is tragic, Mr. Speaker, is that so many of these companies operating have come in across the border. They used to be located in towns like Kindersley and Unity, and after 1999 and continued New Democratic Party government they have sought greener pastures in Alberta as have many members of my own family and many of my neighbours and friends of our neighbours. Our communities as a whole in west central Saskatchewan has seen this out-migration of people.

It is slowing, Mr. Speaker, and that I wouldn't say is due to the fact of any good work of this government. It happens that the pool has gotten smaller and smaller, Mr. Speaker, and there's so few left. There's very few people left to leave.

It's challenging, Mr. Speaker, in the agricultural sector at home, in the most dire of ways. We have very large, well-established, successful farmers — through no fault of their own — looking, Mr. Speaker, at not being able to farm this year. There are record number of auction sales occurring throughout the riding and throughout the province.

The credit union managers who I have spoken with have piles and piles of financial papers on their desk because various lending institutions have called their loans, and these producers have been scrambling to get credit. One of the large people in the agribusiness in the riding of Kindersley noted to me that there were many farmers who won't be farming this spring. They just aren't absolutely certain of that yet, because they haven't been denied their credit when they come in either to get their parts or pick up their chemical or whatnot. And this budget, Mr. Speaker, did not address those concerns.

It's problematic, Mr. Speaker, having had the opportunity to live outside of this province to know what our Dominion of

Canada sees Saskatchewan as. Largely we are seen as an agricultural province, and there's nothing wrong with that. In fact there's something to be proud of there. It builds a work ethic that is second to none right across this province. And we only have to travel to any jurisdiction where we have individuals that have left Saskatchewan, and they've done very well because of the backbone of the beliefs and ethics that come off of our agricultural sector.

And years ago, I think this was something that the New Democratic Party or the CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] felt akin to, but sadly that change has left us, Mr. Speaker, and that's reflected in the votes that are in the House now where the rural residents are represented mainly by my party. And the problem with this, Mr. Speaker, is at this point we see a budget exploiting this political divide and trying to sever our province into a situation of political haves and political have-nots. We see a corridor forming with gaps in it from the Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, and the North versus the rest. This is not the Saskatchewan that I have in mind and I think it's shameful that it's this level of politics that is being played, Mr. Speaker, to hold on to power, to forward their own agenda.

You can see, Mr. Speaker, in this budget . . . Just for example I had to deal with a parent today, a parent looking at retiring who has a child that is a teacher in rural Saskatchewan. And the school board, the new school board now amalgamated has taken on extra administration and they're talking about cutting 38 teaching positions. And they asked me and called and they said, is there any way that this could be true? And I said, sadly, I believe that it could be true and that more than likely this will happen.

And, Mr. Speaker, when this happens it will undeniably be coupled with rural school closures. And the pain that these closures cause to a community as a whole, it's not represented just in the education, Mr. Speaker. It's economic, it ends the commerce in the town, it ends the cultural and the recreation abilities of those communities to support one another.

And it bothers me that though it is an international phenomenon about rural depopulation, that one of the places in Canada that tends to lead has had no leadership from government for the past 13 years. It actually seems to the constituents that live in these ridings that they're under attack. And we see this again with the closure of the highway depots.

Mr. Speaker, in my less than illustrious political career, I've come to believe that there are few things that the persons of Saskatchewan really expect from us. They expect decent health care, they expect a fair and quality educational system, a road to drive on, and a government that hopefully will be answerable to them. And sadly, in the riding which I represent, those are things that my constituents do not see and they do not see it on a regular basis. And it makes the populace very cynical indeed when it looks like a good news budget — that's what the government is stating — and yet for the communities which I represent, there's very little that I can point to, to say this is going to be helpful for you.

Now with that being said, Mr. Speaker, there was a movement to adapt the recommendations of the Vicq commission. And as

members of my party have said, we welcome that.

The problem in the larger political context which I see is that in the adaption of the Vicq commission, it is an attempt to move away into the centre to try to retain power hopefully on a marginal amount of swing votes in certain ridings. And having the basis of politics for these decisions is disheartening. Though they were overdue, I think the motive behind them becomes exceedingly problematic in that if this is a means to an end — and having studied some ethics — you know, the intent behind it becomes as important as what the substance of the move is.

Sadly we have seen in the history of this province an impeccable ability by the party opposite to understand the base of the minimalist required in the political atmosphere and through that be able to retain power. This budget speaks highly to that tradition and will attempt once again to build these divisions amongst our society. And I find that problematic.

There were small steps taken to increase social assistance payouts, and the government does, it does deserve commendation on that. Where the larger tragedy lies is the huge number of children that we have in this province who live in poverty on a day-to-day basis.

The problems that we have amongst our First Nations and our First Nations children . . . And again as the Saskatchewan institute for technology, Indian institute for technology has been funded . . . That is a step in the right direction. But these things are so slow. They're late, and they are following on an agenda that — I think if we looked at the larger picture — it is almost, almost to a T, callous which makes it very sad, Mr. Speaker, that we would have these tiny steps when obviously so much needs to be done.

I know that there are members on the other side of this House that share the sentiments that children in poverty is shameful anywhere. But when we come from an agricultural province, when we come from a province which is a net exporter of food, the fact that we have children in poverty here at all becomes even more disgraceful. And yet this is not the basis of solving these problems from the budget that we've seen come forward. We've seen a small move to the centre, addressing what has to be the economic engine for this province as a whole.

[16:15]

In the past I believe that the GDP of the province has been controlled, directly or indirectly, in the neighbourhood of around 40 per cent. And this is a model, Mr. Speaker, that I don't think is matched in very many jurisdictions in the First World. And in the event that it is, it's not one that is globally competitive. I've spoken to this in the former budget debates in saying that we need to be competitive on a global basis. And the longer that we resist this, the more painful that transition is going to be. And the resistance that we've seen, Mr. Speaker, in that the Vicq commission has been slow oncoming, has been demonstrated primarily through the exit of the population moving out of the jurisdiction.

The future economy for all of Canada and for Saskatchewan is going to be service-based. And the movement in the agriculture sector towards that is not being aided by this government in any

means when individuals are forced to leave this province to find economic opportunity elsewhere. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, much of what's come here has been too little, too late. And it becomes very difficult and highly problematic to be able to hear or articulate a vision of how we're going to change things when we have this history behind us, with a party that has been in power for so many years.

And I frankly don't have an understanding, and I know that many of the constituents of Kindersley don't have an understanding, of what a green and prosperous economy means. Mr. Speaker, since I've been re-elected here, I haven't had the opportunity to enter into any sort of meaningful debate on the environment, and yet this is one of the main planks of the New Democratic Party's platform for the last election . . . was that we were going to have a green and prosperous economy.

I care about the environment. I care about it on my farm. I care about it for the whole province — air quality, water quality. These are things that are important to all of us. They're important for business. They're important for labour. They're important. And we have a government that seized on the spin of saying, let's talk about this as being important, but let's actually deliver on nothing.

And I don't know, Mr. Speaker, since the 2003 election, any major environmental Bills that have come forth to be able to meet the demands and the needs of the people of Saskatchewan.

What this is an example of is, it is an example of a government that will once again try to split our populace, try to maintain power based solely on the intention of maintaining power. And by that I mean, Mr. Speaker, if there has to be a corridor of have versus have-not seats for the NDP to be re-elected, that will be the focus.

Mr. Speaker, the farm economy is in the worst position it has been in, in eight decades. And this is absolutely amazing. Worse than that, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe for a second that our commodity prices will vastly improve throughout the course of this year. This will mean that we will see near critical situations.

My area, things are very tight, but we did have a good crop last year. But the reality is most acres probably will be seeded in the south end of the riding. I know that there are other ridings in this province, Mr. Speaker, where for the first time in history, last year we had land lie vacant because people couldn't even get the taxes for it to be farmed. This is a tragedy, Mr. Speaker, and this is one where the federal government does have a responsibility. And I have every faith that the new Conservative administration is going to work towards this.

What is not needed, Mr. Speaker, is flip-flops from our minister who, I understand, is going to be leaving for Ottawa today to speak to the federal minister where he has been calling for \$200 million of aid and then today comes to \$570 million of aid. It frankly does not send a lot of credibility to Minister Strahl that this Agriculture minister really understands the nature of the problem which is out there and is existing, especially when various groups such as the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan will not accompany them and they've been calling for much higher numbers.

What is needed, Mr. Speaker, is a change in government in this province. And there were small steps taken in this budget, but they are largely not going to benefit the people of Kindersley, the infrastructure in Kindersley, and that goes for most of rural Saskatchewan. And hence we have a division occurring, trying to have NDP have seats, non-NDP have-not seats, and I find this extremely troubling, and I think most of the electorate will too.

Mr. Speaker, with that being said, I will be speaking in favour of the amendment, against the budget as it is put forth. And I would now defer to some of my more apt colleagues to enter into the debate and hear their views. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a delight and honour to enter into the debate today, into our first budget debate of our second century. This is truly a memorable moment and something that's very important, and I'm delighted to be here representing the riding of Saskatoon Centre, the constituents which have a lot of interest in the budget. We represent downtown Saskatoon and also some very important communities of Saskatoon that have a lot of history. And so they have a lot of interest in this debate.

Mr. Speaker, I want it to be known that I'll be of course voting for the budget as it's presented by the Minister of Finance, the member from Regina South, and against the opposition's amendment. And I have to say just that when I read the amendment, I was just amazed, and it left me wondering how the opposition has any credibility at all when it comes to financial matters when they craft such an amendment.

Mr. Speaker, this budget's title, "Building a better future — Right here," clearly outlines our objective. We have a plan, a blueprint to build a Saskatchewan future for all, right here. And it's our first step in our second century that speaks to our priorities of a people's agenda. Now, Mr. Speaker, this follows the work of our Throne Speech last fall towards our new century. This budget provides the tools to make the Throne Speech come alive and have meaning.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Finance remarked, this budget speaks for all of Saskatchewan. But in particular, it speaks to young people. We know that young people are critical to the success of our province. They are and will be the drivers of our economy, so it's important to engage them now.

Now the three themes of this budget provide a strong foundation for the government's vision as outlined in our Throne Speech. And I want to quote that our vision is that:

. . . of a province where no one is left behind on the path to opportunity, a province with an unbreakable social fabric, built on a foundation of diverse and growing communities, in a green and prosperous economy.

Now the themes come clear and are well supported in our budget — unbreakable social fabric, diverse and growing communities, in a green and prosperous economy. This ensures that no one's left behind on the path to opportunity here in

Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to contain my specific observations to three areas of interest, labour, of course, and green initiatives. But first I want to speak to those initiatives that have particular meaning for those folks, young and old, who reside in Saskatoon Centre and the business community.

Now this is actually a bit of a difficult task because there's so much to profile. Some quick things come to mind. The \$97 million in increased municipal revenue sharing, the new training spaces, especially at SIIT — this is very important. The increase in health care allotment that will ensure the vitality of our health care system, the tuition freeze, the tool tax credit, safer communities — this is a very successful and a very important initiative for the people of Saskatoon Centre. The Junos are coming to Saskatoon; now that's great news. Phase two of River Landing . . . and the list goes on Mr. Speaker.

But I want to highlight some of those of particular interest to my neighbours and the community downtown. The first of course would be the business tax cuts. These are significant, but I believe the plan as laid out by Jack Vicq and his commission is sound, and clearly the time is right for us to make this investment. It is clear that businesses see this initiative as an opportunity to invest here in our province, creating jobs and opportunities and as well ensuring that wages and benefits are competitive. The time is now, and this is very essential.

But just as important to my neighbours is the concept of the unbreakable social fabric. And clearly our commitment to those on social assistance and transitional employment allowance, with significant monthly increases, is worthy for us all to support. We will see increases of \$40 per month and other increases as well. This is very good stuff, Mr. Speaker.

Another worthy increase is for the KidsFirst program where we will see another 850 families be able to take part in this worthwhile initiative. This is very important to the people of Saskatoon Centre and right across this province, Mr. Speaker.

And of course, Mr. Speaker, it's critically important that we continue to support the work of the CBOs [community-based organization] in our communities. And in ridings such as Saskatoon Centre, the work, the good work that's done by the CBOs sector is critically important.

I also want to say that the new work in improving school funding is a major step forward. I am delighted as an MLA representing Saskatoon to see this change that will have a significant impact on our Saskatoon and Regina schools. This is a big step forward and I know this will be greatly appreciated by students and families and all those associated with education. So I want to say a big thank you to the Minister of Learning.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I also want to take a moment just to highlight the green initiatives as provided for in this budget. Many of them are very noteworthy. First, I want to wish our parks a very happy 75th birthday. This is a wonderful milestone, so congratulations to the minister and to the department. It should be a very exciting year in our parks across Saskatchewan. I would note though, Mr. Speaker — and I'm

not sure if you would know this — that while our park system started in 1931 with six parks, our neighbour Manitoba is some 30 years younger when their park system started in 1961. Now, Mr. Speaker, I understand that the parks will model in many ways some of the innovative green strategies in terms of energy and recycling and water, and so I'm very much looking forward to seeing this come alive this year.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I want to draw attention to our clean coal enhanced oil recovery project. This is a very significant, innovative project for our country actually. This is a tremendous project that will have huge potential for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. My hope that it is successful and that the federal government remains committed and on board.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the 2006-07 budget is also good news for the Department of Labour. This year's budget provides a \$1.1 million increase in support of the department's work, which is good news for the province as a whole. It's good news because the Department of Labour works with both employers and workers to improve the health and safety in Saskatchewan's workplaces.

The importance of this work became evident earlier this year when each and every one of the 72 miners trapped underground by a fire in Esterhazy potash mine emerged unscathed. Thanks to our progressive approach to mine safety, lives were saved, families remained whole, and no one was left mourning for a loved one. Now the safe return of those potash miners placed Saskatchewan at centre stage as a world leader in the protection of its workforce. Mr. Speaker, in the days and weeks that followed the fire, media from around the world cited our regulations. Our mine safety inspectors have been asked by both the US [United States] and China to share what we know about keeping miners safe. The department, along with the mining industry and the miners themselves, should be very proud of that.

The majority of the increases the department will get this year will be used to allow the department to do increased education and enforcement — work that builds healthy and safe workplaces, as well as work that helps to build fair and co-operative workplaces.

[16:30]

Now, Mr. Speaker, the budget this year will stimulate the economy by attracting new investment and creating more jobs. Building a robust and vibrant economy will improve the lives of Saskatchewan people. We are working together to make sure Saskatchewan is the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

This government is also supporting our citizens to ensure that no one is left behind on the path to opportunity through enhanced social initiatives. This budget will help support the continuation of the department's work to improve work opportunities for Saskatchewan residents. In the commission report on improving work opportunities for Saskatchewan residents, this government received 25 recommendations to improve the life of Saskatchewan people who struggle to obtain employment that will enable them to adequately care for themselves and their families.

Now clearly, Mr. Speaker, helping Saskatchewan women and men secure employment opportunities that allow them to better support themselves and their families is key to making that vision a reality. And, Mr. Speaker, while there is no one-size-fits-all solution for addressing this challenge, stimulating our economy is certainly an important piece of the puzzle. So too is providing opportunities for young people to gain the knowledge and skills they need to participate in the workforce. Mr. Speaker, this budget supports that goal.

It will also continue to build on past commitments to child care, which we know is another important part of addressing the challenges facing some of Saskatchewan's residents.

Mr. Speaker, the 2006-07 budget also provides financial support required to review The Workers' Compensation Act. The committee of review which I announced last month will look at The Workers' Compensation Act and regulations as well as administration of the Act. This periodic review is conducted by a committee with equal representation from both employers and workers. Their work, which will include a public consultation, is important because the modern workplace is constantly changing and we need to ensure that our compensation system changes with it.

One recent example of success in this area is the introduction of increased compensation protection for Saskatchewan's 700 full-time professional firefighters. As a result of this amendments, ureter, colorectal, and testicular cancer as well as lung cancer in non-smokers, and heart injuries that occur within 24 hours of an emergency response are now presumed to be an occupational disease for full-time professional firefighters.

Mr. Speaker, we made this change because it was the right thing to do, because it ensures that when these people need us most, we will be there for them.

Now the current committee of review will begin consultations this fall, and I hope to receive their report by the end of the year. I look forward to seeing what new suggestions will be presented for ensuring that Saskatchewan continues to provide up-to-date compensation system that is fair and responsive.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Labour always does important work, and thanks to this year's budget the department will enhance its ability to pursue prosecutions when situations against occupational health and safety legislation merit such a serious step. And I look forward to making additional announcements later this year about the ways in which the department will use some of its additional funding to enhance the operation of labour standards compliance unit . . . review unit. The upcoming year, Mr. Speaker, will be a good year for Saskatchewan and it will be a good year for the Department of Labour.

So, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, as our province enters its second century and my home city, Saskatoon, celebrates its centennial year, I'm reminded of something that David Dinkins said as the first Black mayor of New York City, one of the largest cities in the world — we should vote for our hopes, not our fears. And if you were to listen to the opposition then we would soon become hopeless, lost, and afraid. Mr. Speaker, they absolutely have no credibility when it comes to financial

matters.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's my intention to vote for the budget as presented by the Minister of Finance and against the amendment presented by the opposition. Thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to rise today and debate the budget speech. I'd just like to start off with some comments made by the member from Regina Coronation Park. He got up and he talked about, oh the people on the other side, they're not even talking about the budget. And then what did he do? He talked about the '60s, the '80s. He talked about everything else other than the budget and yet he complains that we aren't talking about the budget. Talk about credibility and talk about integrity.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I wish to talk about the budget because I had the opportunity this weekend of touring my constituency. And when I went around asking people, what did you think of the budget? — I got quite a number of mixed reviews. They ranged from, oh I see they adopted your tax cut from the Saskatchewan Party proposal. I said, yes they did. And the range the other way went to, believe it or not, laughter. Now when people laugh at something like the budget, I think that should be very embarrassing for the members opposite that somebody will actually laugh at it. And the reason they laughed at it . . . As people are aware, I represent a rural constituency, and what did this budget provide for the rural people?

Mr. Speaker, there is a farm crisis out there and it's not recognized by the NDP government or the Minister of Agriculture. And when I talk about farm crisis, I talked to an individual and he explained to me — he said, he said, I cannot get money from a financial institute to put in my crop. Here I'm in a position, I have continuous crop for three years, there's no way that I can put the crop in without fertilizing and I cannot get money for fertilizer from any financial institution. What do I do? So he's caught between the proverbial rock and a hard spot, because he cannot get money for fertilizer, therefore he cannot sow a crop. And that's happening unfortunately to too many places around this province.

Mr. Speaker, talk about the tax reductions. And the NDP government actually adopted the Vicq commission recommendations which were provided to the Vicq commission . . . Contrary to what anybody on that side of the House thinks, the recommendations to the Vicq commission came from our Finance critic and they were adopted in total. Our recommendations were adopted by the Vicq commission. So we're very, very glad to see the Vicq commission recommendations adopted by this government.

But I have a little bit of an issue of sorts with it, from their perspective. Here we have the left, the far left, and the extreme far left, talking about tax cuts. It must have been a real issue in that caucus over there talking about tax cuts. And I went and reviewed the manifestos — both of them; the Regina one and the other one — and you know what? You cannot find tax cuts in either of the manifestos that I viewed. So for some of those people over there that are so far left, how could they even sit in

caucus or cabinet and talk about tax cuts? We're very, very pleased that they reduced the taxes, but it must have been quite interesting within caucus or cabinet to debate the tax cuts within their caucus.

Now you have to look at also, Mr. Speaker, what did the NDP government do to create this economic boom? We know that we're in an economic boom. We also know we're losing jobs, but we're in an economic boom. And I have to ask the question, and I asked the question as I was talking about the budget around the constituency and in Regina these last few days is, what did this government do to create the economic boom, supposedly, that we're in right now? And you have to look at . . . was it something within their plan? And I asked that question, I asked that to people. What part of the NDP plan created the economic boom?

Well, Mr. Speaker, people in this province have never even heard of a NDP economic plan. They could not identify one single issue of a plan from the NDP government that could create an economic prosperity or economic prosperity in this province. So I asked them — I asked them flat outright — do you think it was the green and prosperous economy that created all this economic boom? And again you get laughter. People on that side of the House can't even tell us what a green and prosperous economy is.

So when you ask the public, tell me, was it the green and prosperous economy that created this economic boom? And there's nothing there. So I said to them, well do you think it was their available hours of work legislation that they introduced? Was that the driver for this economic prosperity in the province? Well again you get chuckles.

So what was it? What was it that that government did to create this economic prosperity that we're in in this province? Well absolutely nothing. The economic prosperity of this province today is because of the oil and gas prices around the world — the oil and gas prices.

Now I rhetorically ask, what caused the oil prices to go up? Well, Mr. Speaker, the oil and gas prices around the world went up directly because of the Iraqi war. So let's throw that back to the NDP. They didn't support the Iraqi war. They didn't want any part of it. So isn't it ironic that here they're totally against the Iraqi war — they've said that vocally — and yet it's the Iraqi war that has provided this economic prosperity for the province of Saskatchewan? You talk about falling in a cesspool and come out smelling like a petunia, that's exactly what's happened in this particular case.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to comment on the fact that the tax cuts were very much a Saskatchewan Party proposal. That's why we refer to the people opposite as NDP lite now.

But one of the places they did not go . . . They brought in the tax cuts, but tax cuts is only one part of a plan for economic prosperity, continued economic prosperity in this province. One of the other aspects is creating a competitive labour market, creating a competitive labour market. That was not done in this budget. There was nothing mentioned in this budget on that.

Limiting government intervention in the economy, now that's a

huge one. And I want to come back to that because limiting government intervention in the economy . . . Now in the budget someplace there's \$25 million more for investment. There again is a government investing against private business.

Now I want to carry on a little bit there because we have people from the other side that feel that the government has to be involved in the economy, which I totally disagree with. Government should be setting the infrastructure and setting the regulation and get out of the way. But what do they, what do they do over there? They wish to be involved in the economy. Well let me just give you a little bit of a rundown on some of their success stories, or lack thereof, of investing in the economy.

Now let's just look at SaskTel. We have tapped *into.com* — this was an investment into the economy — \$6.7 million loss; Persona, \$9.4 million loss; Navigata, who knows what we're up to today. Navigata we talked about today, and we're somewhere to 60 to \$70 million loss and climbing. Contrary to what members opposite said, it's going to make a profit — two years ago, three years ago, last year — and this year we're into the tank for another \$21 million or so.

How about Retx.com? That was only \$26 million, Mr. Speaker. That didn't even match the SPUDCO one. NST [NST Network Services of Chicago] was \$16 million. Clickabid, Clickabid lost \$1.9 million; Soft Tracks, \$2.2 million; Ag Dealer, \$8.9 million; BWI [Business Watch International], \$2.2 million. That's in SaskTel alone, Mr. Speaker.

That's that government's record of investment in the economy. The NDP record of investing in the economy through SaskTel alone is a \$126 million loss, and I repeat — loss. How about SaskWater? How about SPUDCO? We have the member from Prince Albert who is the infamous dealer of SPUDCO and that was a \$35 million loss. Now that we're getting up close to \$70 million in Navigata, I think the current Minister of Highways will probably want to reinvest in potatoes so he can get back up in the top part of the poll of losing money.

[16:45]

How about SaskPower? We've heard about Channel Lake in Guyana. That's only \$17 million loss. SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], \$16.1 million loss in Coachman Insurance. How about mega bingo? What a thing to get into — mega bingo. Well it was only an \$8 million loss, Mr. Speaker. That's small potatoes compared to SPUDCO. How about the ethanol deal? How about the ethanol deal? That was only \$750,000. But the fact that there was such fanfare about going out and the government being involved in this new ethanol project, and I think the only thing left out there is the hole where the spade went in because that's all that ever happened out there. How about Pangaea? A \$3.5 million loss.

Mr. Speaker, this comes to a total of \$207 million — \$207 million. Now I want to add to that, Mr. Speaker, and that's a 500 per cent over budget for ISC [Information Services Corporation], Information Services — 500 per cent over budget. Now I have not talked about the Meadow Lake pulp mill as yet but if you add that in, there is over \$1 billion lost by that NDP government in investments outside or where they



shouldn't be investing as far as I'm concerned — \$1 billion.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk in my few minutes I have left about a couple of other things. One is out-migration. We talk about out-migration. What is there in this budget to keep young people here? We hear the continuous rhetoric. Oh this is going to keep our young people here. We're investing in the future of our young people. That's been going on for how many years? The figures are since the current Premier took office that we have lost something like 2,000 — actually we lost 2,065 people in the last quarter. Since the current Premier took office this province, this province has lost 12,758 people.

Oh but we're working to keep our young people here. We've got a plan to keep young people here. How often can people of this province hear that rhetoric and not see any results? 12,758 people out of this province. But we have a plan to keep young people here. We hear that so often it's almost getting tiresome hearing that because there's no plan to go with it.

And, Mr. Speaker, the other problem that we have with that is called the demographic doughnut. We are increasing the . . . We have the highest proportion of people under the age of 15 and over the age of 65. It's the people in between the age of 15 and 65 that we have a low number. That is called the demographic doughnut.

From 2001-02 to 2004-05, Saskatchewan lost 8,701 people between the ages of 20 and 29. Now how can anybody on that side of the House say well that's all right, it's a glitch. We've heard it's a glitch; it's an aberration. I think they ought to call it what it is — and that's a disaster. And that's exactly what it is. It's a disaster that we're losing young people from this province. And what do they do about it? Nothing, nothing. A little bit more rhetoric, a little more rhetoric.

Now I want to just touch on immigration because by the NDP's own admission, their plan is a failure to keep young people. It's a failure. And this is by their own document, their budget document. Their job creation numbers for 2006 are cut by one-third — by one-third. They set a very low target, Mr. Speaker. Can't meet it and so they change their numbers downward in a budget that they say this is going to attract young people to our province.

And they don't have the intestinal fortitude to even put numbers on it. Oh of course, as the Minister of Industry and Resources said one day in the House, he said well, you can't put numbers on unless you have a plan. Well obviously they don't have a plan, which we've been saying all along.

But here, we've got the job numbers that they're aiming to create down by one-third, down by 1,600. And I want to talk just about that for a minute because, on the other hand, we have the Minister Responsible for Immigration saying, saying that we're going to have 5,000 people immigrate into Saskatchewan within the next year. A lot of fanfare, stand up and say 5,000 people.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to identify the dichotomy in this. We're creating 3,200 jobs, we're keeping young people in the province, and we have 5,000 immigrants coming in — it doesn't compute. Are we going to have 1,800 immigrants?

Even if no young people stay, there's still an 1,800 person shortfall compared to the number of jobs that they have stated at 3,200 and 5,000 immigrants. Is it the minister's idea that we're going to have 5,000 immigrants come into this province, but we're going to create 3,200 jobs. Therefore we'll have 1,800 of them on what? Social Services? I mean how, how ridiculous can this be. We want 5,000 new people in here but we do not have the courage to put a number up that we'll create jobs for all of these people we've got coming into this province — absolutely, absolutely ridiculous.

Mr. Speaker, in this budget also we hear from the people across the way and says, no one left behind. Well if you're an NDP supporter, I guess you're not left behind because we notice in the budget document FTEs [full-time equivalent] are up by 262 people. That's full-time equivalents are up. The government is growing. If you're part of the NDP organization, you're not left behind; government is increasing.

How is the rest of the province doing? How are the rest of the province . . . We already talked about the job losses. We've got, we've got piles of job losses. I think it's 5,000 or something job losses that we're looking at right now. But if you belong to the NDP organization you're not left behind because FTEs within their own budget document are going up.

And in addition to that, here's something very interesting for the people of the province to understand. If you happen to be working in the Premier's office, if you're working in the Premier's office, you get along just fine. There's no FTE in the Premier's office or Executive Council. But, but by their own budget document, the budget is going up by \$600,000 in the Premier's office — \$600,000, a 7 per cent increase. It's over a 7 per cent increase.

Now you go out and try and explain this to people that can't put crops in the ground, because they have no money, and then go ahead and tell them that well Executive Council is going up by \$600,000. That really doesn't make a lot of sense to the people out there that are really, really suffering.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to touch on the debt. We heard the Minister of Finance get up and we've heard other members get up and talk about the fact that we have lowered, we have lowered the debt by \$101 million. How many times have we heard that? Budget day people on that side gave a round of applause for the fact that the debt was going down by \$101 million. Now this is in their own document — their own document — and it says that the net debt increase is \$288.5 million increase. Now how can they get up and talk one hand that the debt's going down, and in their own document it's gone up \$288.5 million? Mr. Speaker, I'd like somebody on that side of the House to explain that to the media.

Mr. Speaker, I gather my time is up. So you can tell from my comments, I will be supporting the amendment and I will not be supporting the budget.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Why is the member from Carrot River Valley on his feet?

**Mr. Kerpan:** — With leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted for a guest's introduction?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted.

**The Speaker:** — Members of the Assembly, it being near 5 o'clock, this House stands recessed until 7:00 p.m. tonight.

[The Assembly recessed until 19:00.]

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Kerpan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I am happy to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, a friend of mine and a friend of Saskatchewan Party politics from Saskatoon, Mr. Philipp Strenger. Philipp was a candidate for the Saskatchewan Party in the last provincial election, and as well has been active in politics in Saskatoon for many years.

And I'd like to welcome Philipp to his Legislative Assembly here this afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### 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, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Cheveldayoff.]

**Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it's indeed a pleasure for me to rise and enter into the budget debate, speaking of course in favour of the motion before the Assembly and against the amendment placed by the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, all you would have to do is visit the constituency of Regina Wascana Plains to see why this is an important budget and very worthy of the support by all members of this Assembly. We are a part of a rapidly growing southeast corner of Regina, home to many businesses and persons who run their own businesses or are part of the executive of many corporate businesses. We are also employees in the business sector. There are Crown employees. There are farm folk. And they are all well aware of the many tax reductions and tax measures and incentives that have been put in place over the years by this government.

Mr. Speaker, in the many years that I've been here there has not been one budget that there hasn't been some form of tax measure and tax incentive. And after the supper hour, Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to tell everyone about those measures and about the pride I have in the budget that is before the Assembly. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move to recess the debate.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### PRESENTING PETITIONS

|                 |      |
|-----------------|------|
| Elhard .....    | 1047 |
| Draude .....    | 1047 |
| Harpauer .....  | 1047 |
| Gantefoer ..... | 1047 |
| Weekes .....    | 1047 |
| Allchurch ..... | 1047 |
| Brkich .....    | 1047 |
| Dearborn .....  | 1048 |
| Morgan .....    | 1048 |

#### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

|                    |      |
|--------------------|------|
| Deputy Clerk ..... | 1048 |
|--------------------|------|

#### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

|                    |      |
|--------------------|------|
| Morgan .....       | 1048 |
| Gantefoer .....    | 1048 |
| Cheveldayoff ..... | 1048 |
| Harpauer .....     | 1049 |
| Brkich .....       | 1049 |
| Merriman .....     | 1049 |

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| The Speaker ..... | 1049 |
| Wartman .....     | 1049 |
| Bjornerud .....   | 1050 |
| Sonntag .....     | 1050 |
| Draude .....      | 1050 |
| Toth .....        | 1050 |
| Beatty .....      | 1065 |
| Belanger .....    | 1065 |
| Kerpan .....      | 1078 |

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

##### Anniversary of Vimy Ridge

|              |      |
|--------------|------|
| Addley ..... | 1050 |
|--------------|------|

##### Saskatoon Haberdasher Honoured for 50 Years in Business

|                    |      |
|--------------------|------|
| Cheveldayoff ..... | 1051 |
|--------------------|------|

##### Saskatchewan First Nations Person Elected to Federal Parliament

|                 |      |
|-----------------|------|
| Borgerson ..... | 1051 |
|-----------------|------|

##### Martensville Nomination Meeting

|                 |      |
|-----------------|------|
| Allchurch ..... | 1051 |
|-----------------|------|

##### Representatives to National Aboriginal Hockey Championships

|                |      |
|----------------|------|
| Belanger ..... | 1052 |
|----------------|------|

##### Government's Attitude to Business

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| D'Autremont ..... | 1052 |
|-------------------|------|

##### Support for 2006 Budget

|              |      |
|--------------|------|
| McCall ..... | 1052 |
|--------------|------|

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### Plans for Job Creation and Economic Growth

|            |      |
|------------|------|
| Wall ..... | 1052 |
|------------|------|

|             |      |
|-------------|------|
| Cline ..... | 1053 |
|-------------|------|

##### Future of Weyerhaeuser Mill in Prince Albert

|              |      |
|--------------|------|
| Kirsch ..... | 1054 |
|--------------|------|

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| Lautermilch ..... | 1054 |
|-------------------|------|

##### Navigata's Financial Performance

|                |      |
|----------------|------|
| Harpauer ..... | 1055 |
|----------------|------|

|               |      |
|---------------|------|
| Higgins ..... | 1055 |
|---------------|------|

##### Former Member's Employment with the Legal Aid Commission

|              |      |
|--------------|------|
| Morgan ..... | 1056 |
|--------------|------|

|                |      |
|----------------|------|
| Quennell ..... | 1056 |
|----------------|------|

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

|                |      |
|----------------|------|
| Iwanchuk ..... | 1057 |
|----------------|------|

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| The Speaker ..... | 1057 |
|-------------------|------|

**SPECIAL ORDER  
ADJOURNED DEBATES  
MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY  
(BUDGET DEBATE)**

|                          |      |
|--------------------------|------|
| <b>Trew</b> .....        | 1058 |
| <b>Draude</b> .....      | 1060 |
| <b>Taylor</b> .....      | 1062 |
| <b>Weekes</b> .....      | 1064 |
| <b>McCall</b> .....      | 1068 |
| <b>Dearborn</b> .....    | 1071 |
| <b>Forbes</b> .....      | 1073 |
| <b>Huyghebaert</b> ..... | 1075 |
| <b>Hamilton</b> .....    | 1078 |

# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

## CABINET MINISTERS

---

**Hon. Lorne Calvert**  
Premier

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Hon. Eldon Lautermilch**  
Minister of Highways and Transportation  
Minister of Property Management  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Transportation Company  
Minister Responsible for the  
Forestry Secretariat

**Hon. John Nilson**  
Minister of Environment  
Minister Responsible for the Office of  
Energy Conservation  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Power Corporation

**Hon. Frank Quennell**  
Minister of Justice and  
Attorney General

**Hon. Clay Serby**  
Deputy Premier  
Minister of Regional Economic and  
Co-operative Development

**Hon. Maynard Sonntag**  
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations  
Minister of Crown Investments Corporation  
of Saskatchewan

**Hon. Len Taylor**  
Minister of Health

**Hon. Andrew Thomson**  
Minister of Finance  
Minister Responsible for Information Technology  
Minister Responsible for  
SaskEnergy Incorporated

**Hon. Harry Van Mulligen**  
Minister of Government Relations

**Hon. Mark Wartman**  
Minister of Agriculture and Food

**Hon. Kevin Yates**  
Minister of Corrections and Public Safety