



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

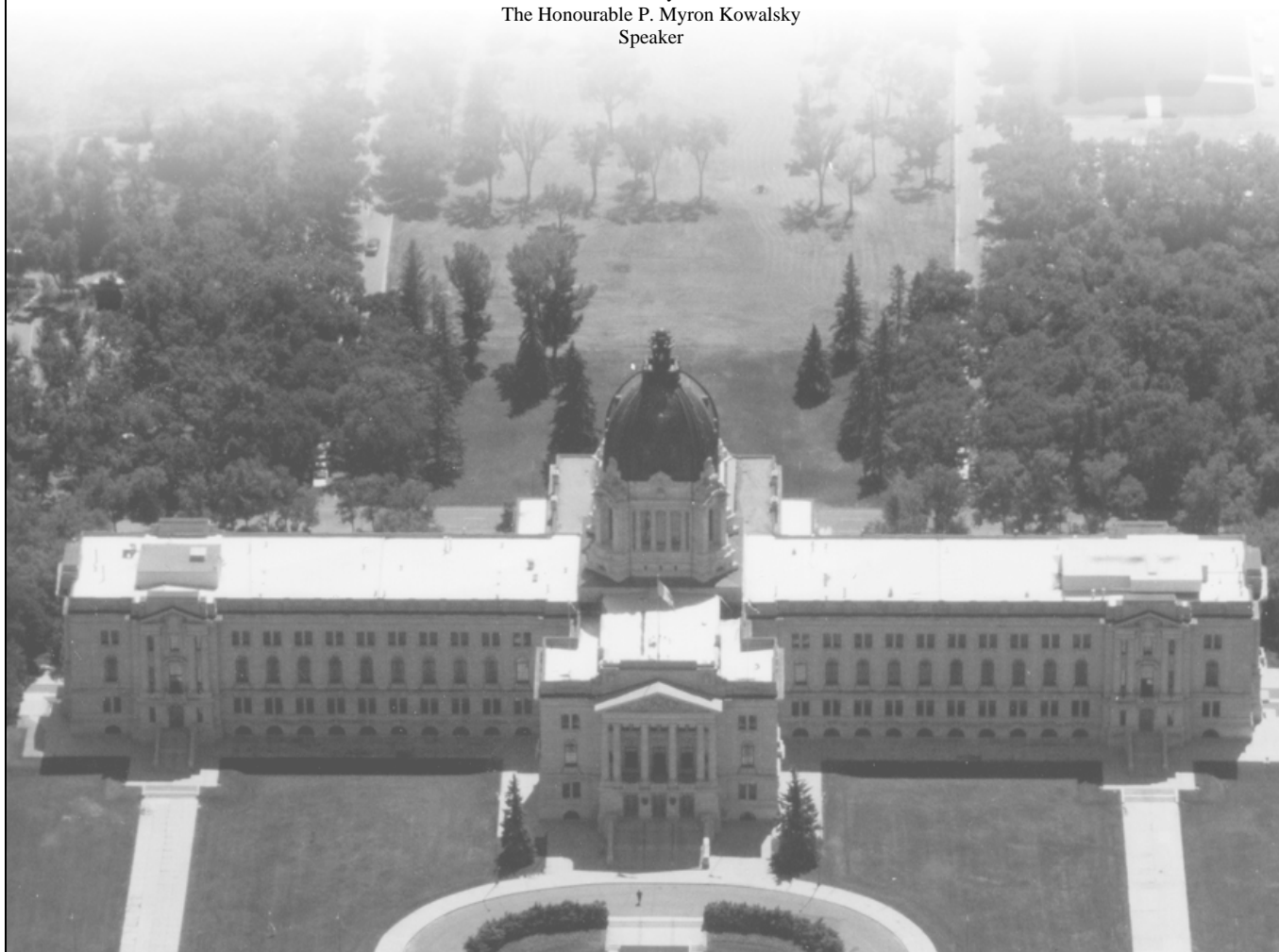
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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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. It's my privilege and duty to present a petition on behalf of individuals from the communities of Prelate and Swift Current today with regard to the condition of Highway 32. The prayer reads as follows:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the urgency of this petition is indicated by the full complement of signatures I present today.

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to rise again today on behalf of people who are very 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 that have signed this petition are from Kelvington, Kuroki, Margo, Fishing Lake, Saskatoon, St. Benedict, and Wynyard. I so present.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again today I have 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 No. 5 from Humboldt to Saskatoon.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from Saskatoon, Naicam, Wadena, Quill Lake, Landis, Bruno, Humboldt, Bradwell, Clavet, and Lake Lenore. I so present.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present

another petition from citizens of Wilkie who are concerned about the reduction of health care services 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 that 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, Landis, 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 citizens of Saskatchewan. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures of this petition are all from Spiritwood. I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to halt crop insurance premium hikes and coverage reductions:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This particular petition is signed by the good citizens from Bladworth and Kenaston. I so present.

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

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

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to act upon the following recommendations made by the Government of Saskatchewan caucus committee on human services regarding autism.

And I will read a portion of that:

Ensure autism spectrum disorder adult services and supports are accessible and based on need rather than an IQ or physical disability and to encourage and support autism-related research in Saskatchewan.

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

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

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14(7) are hereby read and received as addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 7, 8, 12, 64, 67, 638, and 639.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 44 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Advanced Education: as of April 11, 2006, what is the length of time a student must wait on a waiting list before they will be offered a seat in the following programs at SIAST: combined laboratory, x-ray technician; cytotechnology; medical laboratory technology; medical radiologic technology; practical nursing; industrial mechanics; welding and electricians' training?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 44 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Sask Property Management: what company or group of companies, organization, municipality, or other purchased the Echo Valley Conference Centre?

And, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 44 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Property Management: what was the appraised value of the Echo Valley Conference Centre?

And also, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 44 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Sask Property Management: what was the sale value of the Echo Valley Conference Centre?

I so present.

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

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 44 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Learning: how much funding has been provided for pre-kindergarten programs and services in the 2006-07 provincial budget, and how much of that funding is being provided directly to school boards?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Kowalsky: — For introduction of guests, members of the Assembly, it is my pleasure today to introduce to you a very fine-looking group of 42 students from Prince Albert seated in the west gallery.

These students are from École Vickers intermediate school. They have been attending music workshops, and they're taking some time off to visit us here in the legislature with their teachers, Mr. Perry Acorn and Madame Cecile Elliot.

And I might mention that amongst them is a future politician. One of the grade six students, Alana Toles who is the daughter of Brent Toles, an active member of SSTI [Saskatchewan Social Sciences Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy], has played the role of Speaker in her grade five class's model legislature.

Please help me, members, in welcoming this group. And also with them is chaperones Ms. Gerrie Johnson, Ms. Sally Rybalka, Ms. Annette Henbid, Ms. Tammy Sanderson, and Mr. Brian Gauthier. Welcome to your legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, within that group are two very special girls, and I'd like to introduce Alyssa and Mackenzie Hickie, if they'd stand up and give us a wave. They are the daughters of Darryl Hickie, the Sask Party candidate for P.A. [Prince Albert] Carlton. So we welcome here to the House, and I'd wish everyone to join with me in welcoming them.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In the west gallery is, I'll give them a few minutes to sit down. It's in . . . Again very special women from Buffalo Narrows.

Of course I introduced my new assistant at my office, Irene Pedersen. But with Irene is her friend from Buffalo Narrows, Therese Daigneault. And Therese's an avid canoeist. She's travelled many, many miles on many of the rivers in northern Saskatchewan. So even though she's above 40, she's still, she is still a very, very active young woman. And I'd mention and ask all members of the Assembly to welcome these very special

guests from Buffalo Narrows.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Prince Albert Mintos Win Western Regional Championship

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a couple weeks ago I had the honour to stand in the House and talk about the Prince Albert Mintos winning the Saskatchewan AAA midget hockey championship.

Mr. Speaker, again today I'm happy and excited to report that the Prince Albert Mintos AAA midget hockey team won the western regional championship that was held in Tisdale this past weekend, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I know you'll be happy to hear that Prince Albert handled themselves very well right throughout the tournament, both on and off the ice, Mr. Speaker. There were four teams involved in the championship: Thunder Bay, Winnipeg, the host Tisdale Trojans, and of course the Prince Albert Mintos.

Mr. Speaker, the Mintos played the Winnipeg Thrashers in the final and won with a score of 5 to 3. It was a great hockey game: lots of speed, lots of action, and just the right amount of physical contact.

Mr. Speaker, the MVP [most valuable player] of the championship was Dustin Tokarski, the goaltender for the Prince Albert Mintos who hails from Watson, Saskatchewan. But, Mr. Speaker, they were all really stars in my mind as I watched the game, including my friend Bobby Spigott who comes from Outlook, Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to congratulate the players, the coaches, the fans, the parents, and everyone involved on their championship. And, Mr. Speaker, the Prince Albert Mintos are now off to Charlottetown on April 24 to participate in the Telus Cup national championship. And I'll have a report shortly following that championship as well. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Reducing Poverty in Saskatchewan

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the provincial budget brought down by our government last Thursday makes a major investment in reducing poverty in Saskatchewan, and I'm very pleased with the measures that are being taken.

The adult basic allowance under the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan is being increased by \$40 a month to \$445. That will provide a central resources for the purchase of food, clothing,

and personal items in a household. And this change will benefit 16,200 adults, the majority of whom have a disability. It's a very positive change.

Disabled persons will also be eligible for extra help with housing costs. The disability housing supplement increases by over 40 per cent to a maximum of \$150 per month. Low-income families with children will benefit from a 33 per cent increase in the family housing supplement. And, Mr. Speaker, from improvements in child care subsidies, Mr. Speaker, under the new provisions in the budget, low-income families will have 85 per cent of their child care costs covered, Mr. Speaker.

These measures in total, Mr. Speaker, result in an increase in the Department of Community Resources's budget of \$43 million, Mr. Speaker. It's a good budget for low-income families in our province. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Celebratory Weekend in Moosomin

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, the Moosomin Chamber of Commerce held its first agricultural fair. And, Mr. Speaker, for this first fair I know that all the organizers were very pleased as they had more than 40 exhibitors.

And, Mr. Speaker, having the opportunity to attend the fair, it was not only a pleasure to visit with the exhibitors, but the many people who came to just see what the wares and the opportunity to get involved in agriculture and what the fair had to show to the people of the Moosomin area.

The chamber also celebrated its annual dinner, and they had over 250 people gather for a tremendous dinner provided by Carol's Catering. Mr. Speaker, 250 people actually is fairly crowded in our hall and, as the mayor noted, it's almost time for a new hall in the community of Moosomin — that, Mr. Speaker, they're working on as soon as the new hospital is up and running, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to acknowledge the special accomplishment of one lady in our community as well. On Saturday I had the privilege of joining a number of folks as they gathered to celebrate with Peggy Turmmire, 103 years young. As I was chatting with Peggy and congratulating her on reaching this milestone, she said to me, yes you were at my birthday celebration last year. And I said to her, and at the rate you're going and how young you look, I'll be there again next year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

[13:45]

Engineering Students Display Projects and Creativity

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, creativity was on display this past weekend in Regina, and I would say from what I saw and experienced, creativity is alive and well in Saskatchewan. The occasion, Mr. Speaker, was Project Day 2006, the event which showcases final engineering projects by students enrolled in engineering studies at the University of Regina in the areas of electronic systems, industrial systems, environmental systems, and petroleum systems. This annual event was hosted by the Regina Engineering Society and the University of Regina Faculty of Engineering, with the assistance of the Regina Engineering Students' Society.

Mr. Speaker, when you add creativity to engineering know-how, the result is a very impressive display of projects. In total there were 47 projects in the four engineering disciplines. My favourites included the lawn mower-mounted ice resurfacer that will effectively clean and resurface a sheet of ice. Brushes sweep the ice and a film of water is then applied for resurfacing. If you can't afford your own Zamboni, this easy-to-install and removable attachment is the answer.

I was also impressed with the heating-cooling travel mug, a portable beverage holder that utilizes thermal electric technology and rechargeable batteries to maintain the desired drinking temperature of a liquid whether it's hot or cold.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, a voice-controlled car which simulates the actions of a voice-controlled wheelchair in which the user controls the speed and direction of the car with voice input, offers great potential for people with some disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join with me in congratulating University of Regina engineering students for their excellent projects and their display of creativity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

A Phenomenal Season for the Wilkie Midget Outlaws Hockey Team

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Wilkie Midget Outlaws hockey team. The Outlaws had a phenomenal season, taking on numerous adept teams in the league and coming out of the regular season with a perfect 22 and zero record with an outstanding 164 goals for and 32 goals against. During the course of the season, the Outlaws entered a city tournament of the A calibre and showed that small-town grit can go a long way as they claimed first prize in the A final.

This brought the Outlaws to the league playoffs and some stiff competition. Wilkie once again came up victorious as the league playoff champions. The Outlaws also went on to claim the Saskatchewan Hockey Association provincial B playoff title, taking the first game against Assiniboia, champions of the South Central Minor Hockey League Midget 1 division in Assiniboia, and showed the heart and determination and skill of small-town Saskatchewan as fans packed the Wilkie arena for

the second and final game of these playoffs. Although they lost this game, they took the title with the total series score.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating the coaches, manager, players, and fans of the Wilkie Midget Outlaws for an incredible season and posting an overall season record of 39, 1, and zero.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Centennial Canoe Quest Wins Saskatchewan Tourism Awards

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Mr. Speaker, one of the most talked about events of last year's centennial celebrations was the Saskatchewan Centennial Canoe Quest. Mr. Speaker, the Canoe Quest was more than just a race. It was a cultural showcase and a demonstration of northern hospitality and spirit.

Mr. Speaker, the Centennial Canoe Quest has been honoured with not one but two Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence — the first for promotion and marketing, and the second, the Spirit of Saskatchewan Award. It's a special honour, Mr. Speaker. It's the first time in the 17-year history of the Saskatchewan Tourism Awards that a finalist has won in two categories.

Mr. Speaker, the people of northern Saskatchewan should be very proud. I want to thank every member of the Saskatchewan Centennial Canoe Quest for their talent, time, and skill they put into this great event. I would like to especially thank Sol and Renee Carriere of Cumberland House and Sid Robinson of La Ronge for coming up with the idea. I also want to thank the organizers and volunteers in each of the 13 host communities for their generosity, northern hospitality, and for showcasing the vibrancy of life in the North.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the Assembly to join me in congratulating all those involved in this memorial event. These two Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence are a special recognition of their accomplishments. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Conditions of Rural Roads

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well how can you tell it's springtime in Arm River-Watrous constituency? All along the highways there's little red flags popping up all over the place.

On 19 highway and Highway 15 running east from Kenaston, they're in deplorable state. Even a section of Highway 15 is closed down right now. I've been contacted by concerned constituents indicating that the pavement is seriously breaking up in many places along these highways. Drivers are attempting to avoid the gaping holes in an attempt to avoid major damage

to their vehicles. This poses a clear risk to traffic safety including school buses and public transit, not to mention vital economic transportation. What about provincial 911, ambulance service, and other first responders?

Each spring we have to urge this government to act on the same issues which are of such great concern for people's safety. Taxpayers are once again left wondering how the Highways minister can ignore these terrible highways especially since everyone knows that there is \$1 billion extra this year. So why are they not on top of this now? Does it take a serious accident or even a death on our provincial highways before this government notices rural road conditions?

This is just another sign of this government abandoning rural Saskatchewan. This NDP [New Democratic Party] is always talking that they care about people. Well I would advise them to take a trip outside Regina to see if they can make that statement with a clear conscience.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Waiting Lists for Training

Mr. Elhard: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we discovered last week, not only do Saskatchewan students often have to wait for an education, they have to pay to wait for an education. I asked the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment about a \$20 annual wait fee at SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology]. The minister said that SIAST was reconsidering the wait fee and yet the communications director of SIAST said that that was not the case. The fee was going to go ahead. Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us today if SIAST is still planning to impose a \$20 annual wait-list fee for five of its programs?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What I can indicate to the members opposite is that I have received a letter from the president and CEO [chief executive officer] of SIAST indicating that they're reviewing their waiting list policy at SIAST, including the \$20 wait-list fee for the five programs in question.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, Amanda Thompson of Bienfait has been told that she's number 224 on the wait-list for the medical radiological technicians program. This program, Mr. Speaker, accepts 16 students a year including three candidates from designated equity categories. Now at this rate, Mr.

Speaker, Amanda Thompson will have to wait 15 years for the training that she's seeking. Mr. Speaker, why is this government making Amanda and other students like her wait up to 15 years and why does she have to pay to wait?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Advanced Education and Employment.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, SIAST regularly reviews the labour market in the province to determine the numbers of seats that need to be allocated within various programs. I understand that in terms of the labour market, they believe at present that they are educating enough MRTs [medical radiation technologist] in our province for our internal consumption. And I would point out to the member opposite that yes, there is an MRT program in Alberta. They don't have a wait-list. Do you know why, Mr. Speaker?

Because they take people based on the highest qualification from each applicant. In the case of Saskatchewan, what we do is that we determine if people qualify and if you qualify, you go on to the list. And in Alberta, Mr. Speaker, what they do is that if you don't get through the door, you still have to pay an application fee. And you don't go on a wait-list; you reapply next year and determine whether or not you're eligible for entrance into that program.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, Richard Thompson is Amanda Thompson's father, and he's not happy that his daughter is on a 15-year wait-list for her SIAST program. Mr. Thompson wonders if he should have to put in an application for Amanda maybe when she was in kindergarten. Mr. Speaker, this situation is absolutely ridiculous. Will the minister begin addressing these impossibly long wait-lists?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Advanced Education and Employment.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, in the province of Saskatchewan we look at our internal market and determine whether or not we need to increase the number of spaces at our SIAST program. I'm advised that there are enough people coming through the program each year to deal with our internal consumption. We're planning for our own labour market.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has said, well they can go to Alberta and get in. Well, Mr. Speaker, in Alberta it's based upon the most highly qualified people getting into the program. They have to pay an application fee each year. And if they don't go in, they apply again for that program.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's a reason why they don't have any wait-lists, because they only take the people into the positions

that have the highest qualifications. Our policy is not that. We take everyone based upon their qualifications. They're eligible to go on to the wait-lists. And, Mr. Speaker, SIAST is re-evaluating its wait-list policy.

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, my question is to the Minister of Labour: is he aware of a letter written by the labour standards branch to former MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] Jack Hillson on September 30, 2004?

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

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In terms of that specific letter, I am not aware of that letter. So I would take that under advisement.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I have a copy of that letter from the labour standards branch that states that the Legal Aid Commission acted contrary to the requirements of section 80 of The Labour Standards Act. This letter states that public prosecutions in the Department of Justice chose not to proceed with the prosecution in the Jack Hillson matter.

Mr. Speaker, why was that decision made and who made that decision?

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I am quite surprised at the improvement in the behaviour of the member from Saskatoon Southeast. His usual practice, his usual practice in the legislature, Mr. Speaker, is to make an unfounded allegation for which he has no evidence as to who made the decision, even in the face — even in the face — of a contradiction by the decision maker as to who made the decision, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Now, Mr. Speaker, now we have had this allegation from the member of Saskatoon Southeast before, that decisions made by prosecutors were made by politicians and that prosecutors were directed by politicians to make those decisions. The member from Saskatoon Southeast is making those allegations again today.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it does not bode well for that member to stand opposite and accuse us of doing anything. We asked a simple question. We asked who made a decision. And according to this letter, Saskatchewan Labour concluded that the Legal Aid Commission broke the law. The labour standards matter then referred the matter to the Department of Justice to consider prosecution. The case was never prosecuted. Was a written legal opinion supplied? Why not? What happened with that matter? Where did it go, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — The prosecutors made that decision, and if the member wants to allege that anybody else made that decision, he should have some evidence.

And I again remind the member from Saskatoon Southeast that he is an officer of the court. He is governed by something more than the Sask Party's code of ethics which is not worth more than the paper it's written on. He is governed by a code of professional conduct. And if he is so confident that this decision was made by anybody other than prosecutors and cares to back it up, I again challenge him to repeat his allegations outside this House.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it is a fair question to ask who made a decision and how the decision was made. We have the Department of Labour saying that a law was broken. Then they sent the matter over to the Department of Justice to consider prosecution. A law was broken and the Department of Justice took no action. Why? And will the minister table any written documentation that he has with regard to that decision?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I've answered the question. Prosecutors made the decision. They made the decision as they usually do in these cases because there are other recourse than prosecutions, Mr. Speaker. That's how they made the decision. That's how they always make the decision in these cases. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that this time — today — the member take his questions, his written questions, outside the House with him so he remembers what he said in this House.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it is now painfully clear that the Legal Aid Commission was breaking the law. The labour standards branch said so and now a judge has also said so. The

people are asking the question: why did the Minister of Justice do nothing? John Gormley asks and I quote, “Did this sorry story have anything to do with the fact that Hillson was a Liberal MLA?”

Randy Burton writes, quote, “You have to wonder if an NDP MLA would have been met with the same treatment.”

The StarPhoenix editorial board says the commission’s actions, quote, convey the impression of a political vendetta; and quote, what appears to be a political vendetta. Why did the minister . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order please. Order please. Would the member just restate the question please?

Mr. Morgan: — Why did the minister allow this to happen?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I’ll say something for the gentlemen, Mr. Burton and Mr. Gormley. They had the courage to make their allegations where they were not protected by the immunity of this House. I would encourage the member opposite to have the same courage and, to assist him, to take his written questions outside the House with him.

The member from Saskatoon Southeast has not just said that the Law Reform Commission was mistaken, in the view of a Queen’s Bench judge, in their understanding of what the law was — which is the circumstance. The member from Saskatoon Southeast has said in the past — in *Hansard*, it’s recorded — he has said that they deliberately, deliberately broke the law. And while he’s withdrawing statements he has made about them, he should withdraw that one as well, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

SaskPower Investigation of Financial Irregularities

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just minutes ago a press release was brought to my attention from SaskPower. And it reads, “SaskPower investigating financial irregularities.”

“SaskPower is currently investigating a case involving financial irregularities by an employee.” Can the Minister of SaskPower please provide any further detail about this missing money?

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, SaskPower is investigating a case of financial irregularities. It comes as a result of an internal audit investigation and the total amount involved is less than \$100,000. But this matter is being dealt with. It has been referred to the Provincial Auditor, to the external auditors, and

they’re assessing the internal audit report at this point.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, considering the number of fraud cases that we’ve seen, this is of some concern. And the press release goes on to say that “. . . the matter will be forwarded to the RCMP for further investigation.”

So obviously this is a fairly serious case of fraud. How long has the minister been aware of the allegations?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for SaskPower.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I’ve been aware of it since last night and the matter was discovered by the internal audit on March 29.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The press release goes on to say that the employee is currently on leave with pay. And so could the minister please tell us why the employee is on leave with pay?

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, this matter is under investigation; that’s obvious. And at this point the member is with pay while the investigation continues. This is being reviewed on a daily basis.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Funding Allocations for School Divisions

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the other shoe is starting to drop on K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] funding throughout the province. The new Chinook School Division in the Southwest has now been given its grant amount for the coming year. And compared to what they used to receive before the school board amalgamations, they will see their grant cut by \$3.35 million or 47 per cent. Mr. Speaker, this amounts to a hidden NDP tax hike in last week’s budget.

The Chinook School Division says, and I quote, “This substantial financial impact will be felt fully and immediately by education property tax payers . . .”

Mr. Speaker, why is this NDP government cutting funding and raising property taxes in southwest Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this province has undergone the largest changes in our education system in the last 60 years. Over this past year the amalgamation of school districts, the review of the foundation operating grant, and reassessment have all had an effect on school divisions, the amount of grant that goes to those school divisions. Mr. Speaker, there's been many changes over the past while but the school boards and the school divisions are working through this quite well.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, this is exactly what the Saskatchewan School Boards Association was worried about on budget day. SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association] president, Lance Bean, said, and I quote, "Until we receive documentation that shows where the funding is being allocated, it's difficult for boards to know the actual impact of each of them."

Mr. Speaker, school boards are now starting to receive that information, and in some cases that news is certainly not good. The Chinook School Division has seen its grant cut by \$3.3 million. That money has to come from somewhere, so it probably means a property tax hike in the coming days.

Why is there a hidden tax agenda in last week's NDP budget?

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we know by the questions from the opposition that how . . . I mean there's just absolutely no credibility when it comes to this issue. The school boards . . . Mr. Speaker, when the amalgamation of the school boards and the restructuring of the divisions began, one of the large focuses was to remove the zero grant boards, to work with the larger divisions so we would have more equity and fairness across the system.

Mr. Speaker, the professionals that work in the school divisions knew that there would be a shift in the operating grant because of the zero grant boards, because of the assessment, and because of the decline of student population.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, in southwest Saskatchewan this NDP budget amounts to a hidden tax hike. Education grants have been cut by \$3.35 million or 47 per cent. The school board says this cut will be felt by the property tax payers in the Southwest. The question is, what else is happening across the province?

The minister says that everything is in hand and under control. I wonder if the minister would be kind enough to table for this Assembly the foundation operating grant formulas for each of the school divisions so people across this province will know the impact of their misguided amalgamation.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, one of the processes that we've gone through in the last year has been a review of the foundation operating grant. Mr. Speaker, this foundation operating grant has been . . . I mean quite commonly it's called FOG [foundation operating grant] for a reason, Mr. Speaker — that it is confusing, Mr. Speaker, that it has been confusing.

There is many factors that are involved in the foundation operating grant. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Learning, with advice from many of the organizations within learning, have begun a review of the foundation operating grant to make it clearer, more transparent, and more accountable to educators and the education system across Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Allegations Regarding Wascana Rehabilitation Centre

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday Sandy Tokar told a Regina radio station that her father, a resident of the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre, was allegedly left in soiled sheets and clothes and had unexplained bruises. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Health confirm whether these reports are accurate? Have residents at this home been left in soiled clothes and sheets?

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The day-to-day operations of the Wascana centre are the responsibility of the regional health authority. Mr. Speaker, the regional health authority has received and responded to information that has come forward from patients and families. And, Mr. Speaker, I am confident that the folks at the regional health authority will be answering to the patients and their families to the allegations that have been raised.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It takes a lot of courage for a family member like Sandy Tokar to come forward and go public and talk about the concerns she has about the care that her father has been receiving. And the minister continues to give no answers and continues to fail to respond to this situation. As the Minister of Health, I think his responsibility is the quality of care of all citizens in this province. That's that minister's responsibility.

This is not the first time these concerns have been raised about this facility. Sandy Tokar goes on to say that she thinks an independent review of the Wascana Rehab Centre is needed. Will the minister commit to an independent review of Wascana

Rehabilitation facility?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I certainly do appreciate the question. I think the member opposite would have more credibility if he knew what had actually been done to date.

Mr. Speaker, this is the responsibility of the regional health authority. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the regional health authority has engaged external consultants in order to address the issues and implement immediate short- and long-term initiatives. Discussions are under way with a mutually agreed upon, independent mediator to work towards addressing the issues. The region has contracted an independent consultant to complete care plan reviews and audits. And the region will contract an independent consultant to conduct a number of activities for information gathering and further planning purposes.

Mr. Speaker, the regional health authority is doing its job. It's doing the work that it needs to do to ensure that the people, the families, and the patients receive the care that they deserve.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Recruiting and Retaining Nurses

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, he continues to talk about credibility and saying that we don't know what the Regina Health Authority has said in this issue.

Let me tell you the first two things that the Regina Health Authority has said, and I quote, "It is staffing shortages, high sickness time because of limited staff . . ."

Mr. Speaker, that's the same issue that we have been raising in this House for weeks. It's not only this facility. It's facilities around the province that are facing staffing shortages, Mr. Speaker. And that's that minister's responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, Lynne Rieben told the *Leader-Post* this morning, and I quote:

"The short staff situation lead . . . to several incidents of involuntary [confinement] confining residents . . . [to beds]. We are not animals and should not be treated as such!"

That's what she goes on to say about staffing shortages. When will the minister start setting some targets and dealing with the real issue? Not the Regina health care issue, the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Authority's issue, but this minister's responsibility of retaining and recruiting nurses. When will he start setting targets and deal with the issue that's his responsibility?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. By his own admission the member opposite may have discovered a nursing shortage a couple of weeks ago. But, Mr. Speaker, this government has been acting on nursing shortages for several years. Mr. Speaker, in the year 2000 we put forward an action plan to address this issue. In December 2005 this government took further action, Mr. Speaker.

And when fully implemented, the plan in front of the people of Saskatchewan will improve Saskatchewan's self-sufficiency in training, create employment opportunities for newly trained professionals, improve our ability to recruit needed professionals, build a more representative workforce, provide continuing education.

Mr. Speaker, our plan has been in place for two years. It's taking action. It's having success. And, Mr. Speaker, we didn't find this out two weeks ago. We've been working on it for years.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, that answer is absolutely incredible. To stand in the House and say that we've finally brought up the issue of nursing shortages two weeks ago is an absolute joke. This is an issue that this Sask Party has been raising in this House for the last six years, Mr. Speaker. And this minister has failed to address that issue.

Mr. Speaker, he says that they've been working for the last two years to put in a plan — a plan that has no targets. How are you doing on that plan, Mr. Speaker, when you don't have any targets?

The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses have said that they need 600 nurses to fill the void in the province. This minister fails to think that's what they need, but won't give any targets. When will he stand in his place and do the right thing and give some targets so that he can be held accountable?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Goodness gracious, Mr. Speaker, now the member of the opposition is taking credit for our action plan. This is incredible, Mr. Speaker. I just can't believe this, that he would stand to take credit for our action plan.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite continues to talk about the need for replacing, recruiting, and retaining nurses in this province. Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge the shortage that's in place. We challenge the member opposite to bring forward the unemployment rate for nurses. Are there nurses in

Saskatchewan today unemployed, ready to take on those positions? No there are not, Mr. Speaker. But there are 1,500 nurses in training programs across this province, Mr. Speaker, who are in position to take those shortages, to fill those vacancies in the months and years to come, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Healthy Living Services.

Restrictions on Sale of Crystal Meth Precursors

Hon. Mr. Addley: — Mr. Speaker, as you may be aware, crystal meth is a growing issue in Canada and the United States. While the number of crystal meth users in Saskatchewan remains relatively low, this highly addictive drug has devastating consequences for individuals, their families, and society as a whole.

As part of an overall strategy to combat substance abuse, our Premier announced the Premier's Project Hope initiative this past August. Through this multi-year project our government is demonstrating its commitment to build on the existing network of professionals, volunteers, and agencies to ensure Saskatchewan has one of the most integrated and comprehensive systems of preventing and treating substance abuse in Canada.

One of the goals of Project Hope is going after the source of drugs of abuse. In doing so, Project Hope committed to build on Meth Watch, a voluntary program that monitors the sale of various crystal meth precursors. This past November we took the first steps to restrict access to cold remedies that contain pseudoephedrine, a product that can be extracted to make crystal methamphetamine. These cold remedies contain no other medicines, making the pseudoephedrine more easily removed than other cold products and a preferred product by small crystal meth labs.

Mr. Speaker, today we are building upon this commitment by taking another proactive step. Today we are introducing restrictions so that all cough and cold products containing pseudoephedrine or ephedrine will be sold in pharmacies only. Very shortly we will be sending out direction to non-pharmacy retailers, such as gas stations and convenience stores, with the expectation that they will no longer sell these multiple entity products. A transitional phase will be provided to allow managed change with these retailers and their suppliers.

Mr. Speaker, we remain very aware of the need to provide legitimate access to cold remedy products while weighing the concerns that they could be used for illegitimate purposes. Mr. Speaker, we are doing everything within our control to restrict access to those products that can be manufactured into crystal meth and today's announcement demonstrates our ongoing commitment to do so. At the same time we will remain vigilant for any future action that may be required to protect the health of Saskatchewan residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to start by thanking the minister for giving me an advance copy of his statement. I'm sure that everyone in this House knows that this issue is something that everyone in the Sask Party has talked about for many years. And any issues that we can do to deal with the manufacturing and use of meth is something that we're very willing to listen to.

The one thing that's different between the government side of the House and our side of the House, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that we all represent many small communities. In my constituency, places like Invermay don't have a pharmacy, and yet there's many seniors who will require a package of cold medication at some time. And how are they going to get it? It's going to mean a drive of 30 miles to go get the medication.

This government not too long ago talked about the issue of cigarettes, and that time the problem was solved by putting it behind the counter. I'm wondering if the minister has thought about this issue. We are putting many seniors at a disadvantage when it comes to rural Saskatchewan, the needs there. Why couldn't we put them in the same place that cigarettes were not too long ago?

We have . . . I believe in many cases this issue is being . . . The minister started by saying that this is an issue in Saskatchewan that remains relatively low. And I really do appreciate the fact that the work that everyone is doing on meth is something that's going to continue to make this issue not as huge as it could be. But I am very concerned that we're going to be affecting a huge number of people.

We've already had phone calls from places like . . . And I'm sure maybe the ministers, the members opposite haven't been to places like Hazel Dell, Saskatchewan or Okla, Saskatchewan or Invermay, Saskatchewan or Lintlaw, Saskatchewan . . . are really the source of the opportunity for people to get the medication they need.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think if the members opposite are saying it's a national program, well Saskatchewan is unique. We have many, many small communities. What happens if you need cold medication at midnight? We don't have the option that they have in larger centres to go to a store at midnight and pick up one package.

The other thing that maybe the ministers, members opposite don't realize, that in a town like Okla or Hazel Dell or Invermay, everybody that comes in there, people know. You don't just drop in on the street in Invermay. People know that people are in there. And if they pick up more than one package, there'd be lots of alarm bells ringing.

So my concern is that we have to balance, that Saskatchewan needs . . . We have to balance to ensure that if somebody is purchasing a lot of it. We have to be able to talk about this to the police. But how are we going to ensure that everybody has got the opportunity to get the medication that they need?

We've talked about this many times. And in fact the retail

association, when we first talked about the Meth Watch poster, recognized that there are needs in rural Saskatchewan. So . . .

The Speaker: — Order please, members. Order. I would like members to allow the member for Kelvington-Wadena to complete her statement.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I think one of the reasons that the minister makes his statement is to ensure that people on both sides of the House know what's going on. What we're trying to do is ensure that the minister realizes this is going to cause an issue in rural Saskatchewan.

So I'm on record, we're all on record as knowing that we'll do whatever we can to eliminate or absolutely decrease any chance that there would be a manufacturing of crystal meth. But please don't further hurt people in rural Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 48 — The Parks Amendment Act, 2006

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 48, The Parks Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of the Environment that Bill No. 48, The Parks Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 49 — The Police and Peace Officers' Memorial Day Act

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety.

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 49, The Police and Peace Officers' Memorial Day Act be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety that Bill No. 49, The Police and Peace Officers' Memorial Day Act be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the

motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Yates: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

Bill No. 51 — The Regional Health Services Amendment Act, 2006

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 51, The Regional Health Services Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 51, The Regional Health Services Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — The next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The next sitting.

Bill No. 52 — The Meewasin Valley Authority Amendment Act, 2006

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Labour and SaskWater.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 52, The Meewasin Valley Authority Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Labour that Bill 52, The Meewasin Valley Authority Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

The Chair recognizes the minister.

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 53 — The Economic and Co-operative Development Amendment Act, 2006

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 53, The Economic and Co-operative Development Amendment Act be now introduced and read for a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 53, The Economic and Co-operative Development Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 54 — The Cancer Agency Act

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 54, The Cancer Agency Act be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 54, The Cancer Agency Act be now introduced and read for the first time.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — At the next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government I have tabled written responses to written questions no. 800 to 833 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 800 to 833 have been submitted.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Thomson that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Cheveldayoff.]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Learning, the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to stand in the House today to speak in favour of our government's plan to make Saskatchewan an even better place to live, work, and raise a family. We've heard that before.

Mr. Speaker, before I get into comments on the budget, I would like to say a couple of comments about my constituency of Moose Jaw Wakamow. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my constituents for giving me the honour of representing them in this legislature. It truly is a privilege to be able to sit as the representative from Moose Jaw Wakamow, and they are a wonderful constituency to represent.

Wakamow is a constituency that is an urban-rural mix, and it contains part of the city of Moose Jaw, 15 Wing, which is home of the Snowbirds, and also about half of the RM [rural municipality] of Moose Jaw, a portion of the RM of Terrell, and all of the RM of Baildon. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'd like to think that I have the best of both worlds — that I have a real good cross-section of Saskatchewan people to represent. I get a very good cross-section of issues from right across the constituency, and it truly is a nice constituency.

[14:30]

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to thank my family because, truly, it's our family that gives us the support when we enter this occupation, role, job — whatever you want to call it. It ends up being a lifestyle that includes our family and takes over much of our time. So without their support, we would not be able to do this for sure, Mr. Speaker, and I will be forever grateful for that.

Mr. Speaker, before I make comments on the budget, I'd like to just make a few statements about how we get ready for a budget. It just doesn't happen that the Minister of Finance all of a sudden shows up one day in the House and reads a wonderful speech that speaks to the future of the province of Saskatchewan and gets to go out and buy himself a new pair of boots and . . .

An Hon. Member: — Workboots.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Yes, workboots, and show up here in the House. There's a great deal of work that goes into it, many long days, many long weeks, and can stretch over a couple of months at times, reviewing programs, reviewing projects, reviewing policy, going through department by department, line by line, reviewing our resources, reviewing our vision for the future of Saskatchewan, reviewing the plan that we have put forward for the province of Saskatchewan. But always keeping in mind where do the people of Saskatchewan feel that our province should go as, Madam Deputy Speaker, that's who we represent while we're here.

So you always have to keep in mind all of the special interests, all of the different interests that we will bring with us from all of our constituencies that vary right across the province of Saskatchewan.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, many nights when I'd be driving home after doing work on sections of the budget or portions that we'd been reviewing that day, I used to ask myself one simple question. How does this budget that we're putting together affect Saskatchewan people? How do people feel it? And, Madam Deputy Speaker, that was something that was important to me because that's why we're here. That's why we do the work we do, and that's why we've put in the hours that we do.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, that's a question that I keep in mind. It's something that is important to all of us on this side of the House and, Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe that we achieved success with this budget.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when you look at the highlights of the budget just quickly . . . And this is a difficult portion too. We have such a short time to speak, and there is so much good news in this budget. It is just full of it.

Thirteenth consecutive balanced budget, it allocates \$101 million to permanent debt reduction, bringing down our debt in this province. There's been nearly \$450 million paid down on the debt since the budget year of '04-05, bringing this government and our province to its lowest level of debt in 15 years, Madam Speaker — \$7.2 billion. That's our lowest level in 15 years.

Health spending is up. It brings Health budget to a total of \$3.2 billion. Education spending, Madam Deputy Speaker, at 1.5 billion. Madam Speaker, we have an economy that is growing. Not just the oil and gas — the resource sector, the minerals, the mining, retail sales are up. It just goes on and on, and it's wonderful news for the province of Saskatchewan.

Madam Deputy Speaker, one of the big things I'm sure that people will always talk about is the business tax reform that was

put forward on budget day by our Minister of Finance. Madam Deputy Speaker, when you think back to the platform of the New Democrats during the last election in 2003, our Premier made the commitment that we would reduce taxes when we had the resources to maintain the sustainability of those reductions. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, that's exactly what we're doing. We're reducing taxes when they're sustainable and when it is a beneficial process for the people of Saskatchewan.

One of the areas, Madam Speaker, that is important to many of us on this side of the House — and it's something that our colleague here in Regina has worked on — was the tax credit for employed tradespeople. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, to many people this might not be or sound like it is very important. But to recognize those people in the province of Saskatchewan that work in the trades, what they contribute, this is very worthwhile, and we were very pleased see that it was coming forward in this budget.

And also the various areas . . . help for young people being able to build their futures right here in the province of Saskatchewan; education, improvements made to the training system, nearly \$300 million for universities, and freezing tuition, Madam Deputy Speaker, for the year '06-07, '07-08.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, some of the students were here during budget. They were very excited. They were very pleased. They invited us to come over to the university after the budget just to celebrate and have a bit of a discussion. Well I would suggest and recommend that whoever has the opportunity, go for a visit because these young people are the future of the province of Saskatchewan. A person just feels so energized. They're wonderful to be around. They have good ideas. They are talented. They are intelligent. They are involved in their community, and they care about the province of Saskatchewan. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, it's a pleasure to be able to put some supports forward so that they can achieve their education and begin to build their careers here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Increase in training seats was important because we've all heard about the skilled shortages, not only just in Saskatchewan but right across North America and beyond. But also this budget is providing almost \$100 million in student assistance, 38 million in income support to over 9,500 students in basic education and apprenticeship opportunities, and also 60 million in student loans this year to support the goals and aspirations of young people.

And one program, Madam Deputy Speaker, that may have been overlooked in some of the larger numbers, but I know at the SIAST Palliser Campus in my community of Moose Jaw it will be recognized and appreciated because this is one program that they utilize to its fullest extent and they have always lobbied for it to be expanded, and that's the centennial merit scholarship program will receive a half-million-dollar injection, bringing the total for that program to \$1.5 million in provincial contributions for a total of 934 scholarship opportunities for Saskatchewan students. That will be very well received.

Also, Madam Deputy Speaker, support for communities and farm families — and I have to mention the \$67 million in education property tax relief on agricultural property land. I

think we all recognize the difficulties that farm families in Saskatchewan are facing. And I know when I meet with the RMs in my constituency, there are many issues that are troubling whether it's commodity prices, whether it's inputs, whether it's transportation. But the one that's closest to home is the education portion of property tax. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I was very pleased when this budget allowed us to put the extra money to, to bring the average of property tax on agricultural land to the 60/40 split that we so often talk about.

The increase in money and funding to immigration will also be felt, I know, in my home community. The Moose Jaw Multicultural Council has for many years done a wonderful job helping immigrants to Moose Jaw and surrounding community become adjusted to our community, whether it's language classes, whether it's help with finding houses, whether it's help with finding jobs. The multicultural council welcomes the support for immigration that will come from the provincial department, and it can mean nothing but good things for the province of Saskatchewan.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, one thing that we have to talk about, and I know our Premier has mentioned on a number of occasions when we talk about economic progress, there can't be economic progress without social progress. And in this budget, we've seen some of the best changes that many of us have in a long time. We are increasing assistance for some of our most vulnerable citizens — 14.2 million for Saskatchewan assistance program and the transitional employment allowance enhancement.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that may not look like huge dollars, but to many people that is a wonderful increase, and I know that our caucus and this government is thankful that we have the resources and that we have the dedicated work, I think, from many people on this side of the House who have realized the need is there and that it was time to put this money in when we had some extra resources.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Madam Deputy Speaker, \$1 million to provide an additional \$120 per year to the TEA [transitional employment allowance] recipients for the general living allowance . . . There is a number of provincial training allowance increases and, Madam Deputy Speaker, 17.1 million into the community-based organization wage increases. Now we can say that quickly and it doesn't sound like much, but it means a great deal to the people that work in our communities and provide the services that are important on a day-to-day basis. These people were falling behind in their wage scale, and it was very difficult for some community-based organizations to recruit new employees and to retain them. So this has been a huge help.

Also the extra investment into our health care — health care is important to the people of Saskatchewan, Madam Deputy Speaker, and we know that there will always be demands. There will always be difficult decisions as to where the money is focused, what are our priorities when it comes to health care? But we know that it's important, and we're very pleased to be able to put added income into the Department of Health.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, there's a couple things that weren't touched on or really highlighted in the budget speech or on budget day, but I'd really like to talk about them a bit today. And one of those is the creation of the new Department of Learning. And it's an exciting opportunity to increase learning activity early in life, ensuring better outcomes in school and to build a foundation for child care and pre-K to 12 education system.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this new Department of Learning will create support to give our children the best start in life by creating a unique blended approach to child care, and meet the educational development needs of children. And through this new department, we will continue to build on the success of the initiatives that we have already undertaken in our pre-K to 12 schools to build a stronger education system that will prepare our young people for participation in Saskatchewan's economy and in our province's future.

In this department, there's been . . . I know for me, it's been a real learning experience. I've had the opportunity over two months to be able to tour. We have toured libraries. I've met with many groups. I have had a number of meetings with the Literacy Commission.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, that's an exciting project. And we will see some announcements coming soon about funding to help communities expand and initiate literacy projects in their area. And all this is very important, not only to adult learners but to children in the schools, and to stress the importance of literacy and reading on a day-to-day basis.

Madam Deputy Speaker, one other area that I would really like to talk about is in May of last year, our government signed an agreement in principle with the federal Government of Canada to establish a national child care program. There was \$146 million over five years that was to be coming to the province of Saskatchewan to support our early learning child care programming in this province. And we all know that that deal has gone sideways and that the new federal government has withdrawn the funding for the five years.

Now what they've put forward is two years of funding, which is fine, Madam Deputy Speaker. But what we need to do is make sure that when we put forward the federal dollars that we do have, that it is in sustainable programs that have a good effect on young people in the province of Saskatchewan. And despite the setback of having the federal money withdrawn, we believe that there is a real importance of positive social programs to ensure that no one is left behind is the early learning and child care.

[14:45]

Now after the federal dollars were pulled . . . Well first when there was rumours that this program was going to be discontinued, there was a real concern. But, Madam Deputy Speaker, one of the things that I have said to many people is that it has not been a waste, by no means, the two years of work that was put in, year and a half to two years of work that was put in by many advocacy groups around the province, by many people within the department to develop a child care plan, a comprehensive child care plan that really recognized the

difference in the province of Saskatchewan. That whether you live in rural Saskatchewan, whether you live in urbans, whether you live in the North, whether you prefer to have a home-based child care facility for your child to go to, whether you like a child care centre, there's many different options. There's many differences that we need to recognize. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, we felt we did that with our plan.

We were looking at improving, making many improvements for children in the province of Saskatchewan. So while it was a disappointment, Madam Deputy Speaker, it also was an opportunity to say, we have a good plan; we have a good plan in place. And while our resources aren't as large as we'd hoped they'd be, we have a good plan to build from, and as resources become available we will move ahead.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, in this budget, we do see some of those improvements that have been put forward on our plan. This year's budget, we'll see some significant enhancements to support Saskatchewan families. Through the Department of Community Resources, we'll be making the largest investment in the history of child care subsidy programs. \$3.6 million in new dollars will significantly increase the subsidy rates and extend the reach of those subsidies to include modest-income families currently not able to access the program.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this is a 31 per cent budget increase and it's huge. It's a huge investment toward making services more affordable for families. We'll also be expanding our targeted pre-kindergarten programs, 15 new locations across the province. And this expansion will benefit approximately 240 participating children and their families.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, as you may have heard from my colleague, the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment, for the purpose of calculating student loans and provincial training allowance payments, the provincial government will not — and I repeat will not — be considering the \$100-per-month support to parents of children under six provided by the new federal government as income. We'll be passing that support on to student loan recipients and to PTA [provincial training allowance] clients, and that's very good news for these folks.

Also we are committed to providing a range of supports for vulnerable children, beginning prenatally, and to their families. And we believe that children deserve the best possible start in life and that the investment in the early years is a sound investment in our future.

Madam Speaker, here we are. I'm just about out of time already, and there's still just a pile of information that we could go through.

But, Madam Deputy Speaker, you know I go back to that, after all the work that goes into a budget and when we step back and think does this affect Saskatchewan people? Yes, it does. And on budget day, when I sat in the House and I listened to the budget speech being delivered — yes, Madam Deputy Speaker, it does reach Saskatchewan people. It affects our families. It affects working people. It affects seniors. It affects children. Madam Deputy Speaker, it provides the ability for new tax measures to spur on economic activity. It's a plan that builds on

our economic prosperity and helps young people build their futures right here in Saskatchewan. And it ensures that no one is left behind on this path to opportunity.

Madam Deputy Speaker, does this budget affect Saskatchewan people? Yes, it does loud and clear. And we know that by the response the budget has got from the general public right across Saskatchewan. Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm very pleased to support the government motion and the budget put forward by the Minister of Finance, and I will not be supporting the amendment put forward by the opposition. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Trew: — Madam Speaker, I'm begging leave to introduce guests.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has asked leave of the Assembly to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. Member from Regina Coronation Park.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank the hon. members opposite for allowing me to break into the budget debate. Madam Speaker, through you I'd like to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly two guests in the west gallery. These are . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. We do have guests in the gallery, and the member has asked leave to introduce them so if the members would respect that.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Madam Speaker. MLAs, Madam Speaker, in the west gallery there are two good friends of mine I very much want to introduce. One is my constituency assistant, Gord Spelliscy. But seated with Gord is Bill Edwards, and Bill and I go back some considerable time. Bill is my very first supporter. When Bill joined my team, there was Bill that could vote for me. I'm very proud of my friendship with Bill, and I ask all members to welcome these two people to the Assembly. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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 Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak about this year's budget.

Madam Speaker, we're pleased to see that the Vicq commission was implemented. The Sask Party was the first to do a presentation to the Vicq commission, and the Sask Party was the only political organization to do a presentation to the Vicq commission. So we feel that it is sort of part of us more than it is of the government's.

Implementing the Vicq is a good start but just a good start. We still have the highest-taxed poor people in all of Canada, under 29,000. No one left behind, Madam Speaker? How can that be if they're the highest taxed in all of Canada? That sounds like they're being left behind. The NDP has used that big tax boot on them again.

A start on property tax has been accomplished, but it's still got a long way to go. It was originally government 60 per cent and the property owners 40. And now we've seen 30 per cent for the government and 70 for the property owners. Way out of line, nobody left behind — we've got a long, long way to go.

We see that minimum wage goes up. And we're afraid that as minimum wage goes up, gas goes up, food goes up, clothing goes up, and the poor wage earner doesn't get any farther ahead. The real answer of course is less tax for the poor.

How about the PST [provincial sales tax]? You know that one that was promised wasn't going to go up and then went up anyhow. And now all of a sudden we've got a \$1 billion surplus and still that PST doesn't go down. A \$1 billion dollar surplus — that works out to \$1,000 per man, woman, and child. In the budget, does a family of four gain \$4,000? Do they see \$4,000 more for their family? Do they feel \$4,000 better off after hearing that budget? No, they don't, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Speaker, statistics reveal the other day that we've lost 16,000 youth in five years.

An Hon. Member: — How many?

Mr. Kirsch: — Sixteen thousand. It just . . .

An Hon. Member: — Better than 16 in one year when your leader was in office.

Mr. Kirsch: — Well here we go again. We're hearing this: better than, better than. How about we start doing better than instead of sliding?

And now to top it all off, they say they're going to slap a \$20 fee on the waiting list for SIAST. How do they expect youth to stay in the province? They talk about a youth retention program, and then they slap \$20 a year on for a waiting list. And we hear the waiting list is 15 years long. I mean how's that going to stop somebody? They can go to Alberta, and they can get into the class right away and here they've got 15-year waiting lists. My goodness. We must support our youth. We must stop this out-migration.

And then of course there's the big question of the balanced budget, the balanced budget. The Provincial Auditor says 288 million debt increase, and somehow they're translating this into a balanced budget. Why is there a difference? Why does it not align with the auditor's report? There should be a balance there, but somehow it isn't. So we would like to see something done to correct these errors in the words of a balanced budget.

Agriculture, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is worse than the dirty thirties. This is the ugliest time in all of Saskatchewan history for agriculture. In the '30s they could barter for what they needed. If you had a chicken and a few eggs and you could sell the eggs; a cow and you made some butter and sold the butter. And you traded and you kept going. Today everything is on a cash basis.

And so we're seeing from the other side of the House a complete disregard for agriculture. This year in the agriculture budget, \$166 million decrease from last year. And they say they care. How can you decrease the budget at a time like this, when agriculture is the worst it's been in all of history? And they say it's the feds' fault. And then they say they won't fund CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization]. Well maybe, might be . . . 154 million to fund CAIS. Not in November either, Madam Speaker. It should be now so that the farmers have a chance of getting that crop in the field. So we're going to wait like last year until November, and maybe then, maybe . . . I'm afraid bankers don't listen to that kind of talk.

From that mountain of money, that slush fund, that Fiscal Stabilization Fund, couldn't they have squeezed out 154 million for agriculture? I mean we have 47 per cent of the crop land of Canada, 47 per cent of the crop land.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. I think the members who are calling across and trying to enter into the debate know who they are, and I would ask that they would listen to the member who has the floor at present. Thank you.

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The time has come to put politics aside. Do something. I mean, ask the Melville-Saltcoats MLA, and he'll give you some ideas. I mean, there was that extension of crop insurance deadline which would've been no cost to the government. It wouldn't have cost them 1 cent. They could've just set it, and it would've been done. But no. And it would have helped the farmer, once again, in the worst time in all of history.

They could've reinstated the fuel tax rebate. And then of course, they did cut crop insurance by \$12 million. How are we going to handle that one? But no, they care. But how?

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to read a quote from the Throne Speech. It reads as follows:

Agroforestry, including the growing of trees as crops, is underway. My government has a bold vision for the future of this industry. Over the next twenty years, the goal will be to transform ten per cent of the arable land of Saskatchewan to agroforestry, creating another sustainable industry in our province.

Saskatchewan will continue to be a leader in forestry

management practices.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what happened to the green part of the economy? What happened to agroforestry? Where was it in the budget? We didn't hear a word about it in the budget. They have to plant the trees now in order to have them ready for 20 years from now. But yet nothing was in the budget. What happened to that 10 per cent of all arable acres?

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have another quote, and it's dated from the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix*, March 22 of this year. And I quote:

"We live in a world where . . . there are more housing starts in China this year than there are housing units in Canada. The growing market for finished wood product, worldwide, is going to be significant," Calvert said.

He said agroforestry will work by farming trees on land that has been cleared or used in other crop production.

All the anticipation, all the words that were put out — this one was at the forestry convention in Saskatoon — and what do we get? Poof, like hot air in a paper bag. Madam Deputy Speaker, forestry and agroforestry deserve better. If you really want to talk the talk, you must walk the walk. You planted the seeds, and now you stamped it out with your big tax boot.

[15:00]

Another situation that I want to look at is hospitals which is very important to my Batoche constituency and that has been Humboldt hospital. It has been promised for three elections — three elections. And now all of a sudden they say the price has jumped from 19 million to 30 million, and the Humboldt area has 45 days to raise \$8 million. And if they don't, they threaten to downsize it if they can't raise the money. Madam Deputy Speaker, Saskatoon and Regina pay nothing for a hospital building. Humboldt and area must pay 35 per cent of the cost. Is this a rural health tax? Is this once again two-tier, two-tier health care, and we're playing with small communities.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when we address waiting lists, I want to use an example. I have a brother-in-law here in Regina, and he was suffering from a gall bladder condition. And the waiting list here in Regina was months long. He booked into Humboldt hospital, and within weeks he had his surgery, and everything was fine. We are viable in our smaller communities.

For example if the SARS [severe acute respiratory syndrome] situation strikes again — and the World Health Organization says that these things are going to strike again — what happens if it strikes in Saskatchewan? Where are people going to go? If we've got all our eggs in one basket, what can you reach for safety? If we have hospitals like Humboldt and Melfort that can back us up, we'd be much better off.

We understand that the MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] waiting list in Saskatoon is so huge, and yet we hear that in the evenings the vets are bringing animals over from the vet college for MRIs. Why can we not look at more staff instead of more MRIs? More staff . . . I mean if they told you that you had to be there at three o'clock in the morning for an MRI, I know you'd

be there, because we just looked after my father's situation similar to that.

There's nursing shortages, and there's no mention of funding. Manitoba has a similar health budget and a similar population. Nursing enrolment in Manitoba is 3,000. Saskatchewan is less than half. Now it should be easy to line up with Manitoba with everything is similar. Something's wrong, something's not working in this formula. It has to be looked at. And all we're getting is rhetoric. There has to be a reason why they can do it on the same amount and we can't. And we have to look at those differences and address that.

Yes, Saskatchewan is the birthplace of medicare. But what happened? We now have the record of being the longest waiting list in all of Canada. That's unacceptable. Number one there is the wrong place to go. And we have to start looking at it, not just saying we are the birthplace. That's not going to carry much anymore.

Madam Speaker, when you look at our potential, when you look at our resources, we could be so much. We have oil, second only to Alberta. Natural gas, third to BC [British Columbia]. One-third of all the world's potash. One-third of all the world's uranium and the single largest deposit in the world. We have the largest kimberlite field in the entire world. And we have 47 per cent of Canadian farm land.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I had to list that just to have it on the record. We have so much potential. We could do so much. We must welcome the people and these industries. We must say to them: what do you need that we can help you succeed? We mustn't force them to leave and go other where . We must ask them: what do you need?

We must have a sustainable tax climate that the companies can compete on a world level. We're no longer playing on the market from here to Humboldt. I mean we're playing on a world market now. And our system does not match other provinces, so they go to other provinces and build their industry, or other states. I've heard now that the big biodiesel canola crushing thing has signed a contract in North Dakota, is where they're going to build, but they're going to get the bulk of their canola from Saskatchewan. We must build for the future on a world scale. We must stop being the wee province.

Also key to our future are our highways. Highway 368 in my constituency hauls \$150 million worth of iron down it annually. They can truck halfway. Then they have to bring out a second truck and transfer half the load over. This is unacceptable. For an area that's putting that much into the economy of Saskatchewan, we should be giving them support.

We need Highway 368 repaired, rebuilt, redone. But what do we get? Nothing. They've had rollovers. They've had semis rolling over. They've had cars with the undercarriage torn out. And yet it's not on their to-do list. Help them and they in turn will help build this province.

Another road that concerns us is Highway 5 to Saskatoon — narrow, hilly, dangerous; it's an accident waiting to happen. One morning we're going to wake up to the morning news and we're going to hear about semi-trailers smashing into cars. And

it's just a situation that has to be looked at, but we hear nothing from the other side. And our side has been delivering petitions and petitions and petitions, and still nothing happens.

Also in my constituency is of course No. 2 Highway, which is a corridor from Regina to Prince Albert, and in the future if Prince Albert is going to be the gateway to the North, it's going to be used very heavily. But there's one big flaw. Besides the highway needs a lot of work — besides that — there's the bridge at St. Louis. And the people of St. Louis say they've been waiting for 16 years and they've had talk, talk, talk, but still no bridge. And I understand on a good day crossing the bridge, you can actually see through it in places.

Highway 11 is another corridor again that connects our constituency and we've heard that it is again, again promised twinning of Highway 11. I don't know if maybe we have to put a statute of limitations on the number of times you can promise something for an election, but it seems to be more empty promises.

Madam Speaker, it has been said that if you're not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem. Therefore I would ask the government to step aside and call a provincial election. And, Madam Speaker, I will not support the budget but I will be supporting the amendment.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. I look forward to supporting this budget, Madam Speaker, and I do so with enthusiasm, because it marks the most important investment in social programs that I have witnessed in the Assembly in the past 24 years.

Mr. Speaker, in this budget, health spending is up by more than \$300 million and all the essential elements of publicly funded medicare are strengthened. Home care services are being enhanced, diagnostic and surgical waiting lists are being reduced, funding for the College of Medicine has been improved, and full accreditation has been achieved. A new academic health sciences building is being funded with an initial grant of \$100 million. Health care workers in my constituency are benefiting from improved collective agreements. This is a good news health care budget, Mr. Speaker, which will positively impact on the people that I have the privilege to represent.

Equally important to my riding, Mr. Speaker, is the benefit this budget will have on university students and the university community. Investment in the University of Saskatchewan capital projects is at record levels. University tuition will, as a result of this budget, be frozen for three years in a row. Meanwhile the universities in our province will receive a 7 per cent increase in operating funding this year. This cost of funding arrangement, Mr. Speaker, involves a \$17.8 million commitment by our government so, Mr. Speaker, this is a very, very important investment in post-secondary education.

In addition to the tuition freeze, our government has kept its

promise to increase the graduate tax credit to \$850 for every graduating student, effective this year. The tax credit will rise to \$1,000 next year, fulfilling an important election promise. The number of centennial merit scholarships is being quadrupled, Mr. Speaker, and this is another extremely important investment. So overall, Mr. Speaker, this is an impressive commitment to make post-secondary education more affordable for the average student and I'm extremely pleased with this package.

Most important of all, Mr. Speaker, this budget benefits the most vulnerable of all in our society: those with disabilities, those on social assistance, those who have special housing needs, and children in our communities, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, I understand one of my colleagues would like to make an introduction of guests so I'm going to cede the floor to him for a moment.

The Speaker: — Why is the member from Regina Lakeview on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave to introduce some guests.

The Speaker: — The member for Regina Lakeview has requested leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I would like to thank my colleague and I thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of our Pages here today, Kyla Will — and I think we all know Kyla — has her grandmother here, May Hobbs, who is from Regina. And I have known May for many years and so it's a real pleasure to welcome her here. And she's accompanied today by Nick Mosienko who's a retired engineer from Regina Beach. And I ask all members to welcome them here.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

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. Prebble: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to add my welcome to the guests in the gallery.

As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, the most important element of this budget is the benefits that it provides to the most vulnerable in our society. The adult basic allowance under the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan is being increased by \$40 a month to \$245. That will provide essential resources for the purchase of food, clothing, and personal items in a household. And this change will benefit 16,200 adults, the majority of whom have a disability.

Those receiving the transitional employment allowance will receive the same increases as Saskatchewan Assistance Plan recipients. And that will benefit another 6,000 people, Mr. Speaker. And those recipients will also benefit from a rate adjustment in utility costs, which for those heating with natural gas and also needing to take responsibility for power costs will receive an extra \$50 a month.

Disabled persons will be eligible for extra help with housing costs. The disability housing supplement is going to be increased by 40 per cent to a maximum of \$150 a month. There are improvements, Mr. Speaker, in the benefits for low-income families with children. They will receive a 33 per cent increase in the family housing supplement. And, Mr. Speaker, families with younger children will be eligible for increased assistance with child care costs.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, through the energy share program 1,500 grants per year are being made to low-income homeowners to help them upgrade the energy efficiency of their homes.

Mr. Speaker, in all the provincial government has boosted the budget of the Department of Community Resources by over \$43 million. An extra \$22 million has gone into new investments in social housing. This is a very good budget, Mr. Speaker, for low-income residents in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that there are other important investments being made for those in need in our province. An extra \$6 million is being invested in foster care to improve services to vulnerable children. And, Mr. Speaker, major road improvements are being extended to First Nations reserves and to northern Saskatchewan. And one of the measures in the budget, Mr. Speaker, that I'm very pleased about is the improvements in salaries for those who work in non-profit daycare and who work for community-based organizations that serve the disabled. These salaries, Mr. Speaker, take a big jump in this budget. And I'm honoured to be part of a government that's making these kind of significant social investments.

[15:15]

Mr. Speaker, this budget cuts the taxes paid by businesses in our province by a substantial amount. I'm pleased that the small-business threshold is being increased from \$300,000 to \$400,000 this year and to \$500,000 in 2007.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, I'm concerned about the impact of phasing out the corporate capital tax and reducing the corporate income tax from 17 per cent to 12 per cent. I worry that these tax cuts will leave our government short of revenue to fund essential social programs and may force government to draw down its savings fund, the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. I

would have preferred to preserve some of this tax revenue for poverty reduction, debt reduction, and meeting the needs of the elderly in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on the energy policy referenced in the budget speech. The budget speaks to the exciting investment made in wind power. And this is a visionary investment, Mr. Speaker. We now have 172 megawatts of zero emission electricity coming from our wind power facilities — one of the best public policy measures our government has taken during the past five years.

The budget also contains one of the most exemplary residential energy conservation programs in Canada, delivered primarily through SaskEnergy. And the budget speaks to plans for clean coal and announces significant spending on a study into the design of a clean coal facility. While there is merit in demonstrating clean coal technology and while this is an improvement over conventional coal-fired generating stations, this is not my preferred investment, Mr. Speaker. So-called clean coal is a misnomer. A lot of greenhouse gas emissions result from mining the coal and a lot more energy is consumed forcing the carbon dioxide from the coal-fired generating stations underneath the earth.

I would prefer to see our government take the \$1.5 billion that a clean coal plant would cost and spend it exclusively on energy conservation and green electricity technologies including a tripling of wind power in Saskatchewan. Our Saskatchewan government should require that all new electricity generation in Saskatchewan be emission free and come from green, renewable sources such as wind power, solar technologies, micro-hydro, biogas digesters, heat recovery systems, energy efficiency measures, and energy conservation.

SaskPower should remove the current barriers that discourage individuals, businesses, farmers, co-operatives, and municipalities from installing green power sources and selling surplus power to the electrical grid at a fair price.

The natural gas industry should be required to reduce flare gas emissions and use that gas to generate electricity. Methane gas should be collected from feedlots and landfills and used to generate electricity. Financial incentives should be provided for homes, businesses, and municipalities to install high efficiency, compact fluorescent lamps, high efficiency motors, and high efficiency street lighting. A massive energy conservation program should be launched in every sector of the Saskatchewan economy.

The consequences of global warming are extremely worrying, Mr. Speaker. There is an urgent need to support the Kyoto Protocol and sharply reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Saskatchewan. And that requires a major shift in how we use energy in this province.

Mr. Speaker, our policies with regard to export of energy also need review. The budget envisages an expansion of the uranium industry in Saskatchewan, and highlights the fact that we supply one-third of the world's uranium. But I have a different view.

Concern over nuclear weapons proliferation and its threats to human survival should always trump revenue that can be made

from an industry, Mr. Speaker. The United Nations non-proliferation treaty clearly spells out the rules for uranium trade in the world. Article 6 of that treaty specifically says that the nuclear weapon states promise to implement nuclear disarmament and in exchange the countries that do not have nuclear weapons promise not to acquire them. It is very clear, Mr. Speaker, that a great many countries in the world are violating article 6 and violating the non-proliferation treaty, and many of them are our buyers of uranium.

Uranium exports should not be made to any country in the world that violates the non-proliferation treaty, that tests nuclear weapons, that builds new nuclear weapons, or that stockpiles plutonium which can be drawn from at any time in the future for nuclear weapons production. With our big customers — including the United States and France — in violation of these important conditions and with a large potential customer, China, also in violation, it is clear that uranium exports in Saskatchewan should be steadily phased out until these important conditions are complied with. The promotion of a uranium refinery that would facilitate uranium exports should be dropped. Alternative employment should be assured to all those who lose jobs in the uranium industry as a result of this policy.

Mr. Speaker, tar sands have been found in Saskatchewan, and once again their development requires careful thought. In a world that is already burning far too much fossil fuel, tar sands need to be developed with special care because for every barrel of oil the tar sands generate for energy use, they will consume half a barrel of oil to simply extract their product from the ground. Greenhouse gas emissions are thus much, much higher on tar sands projects than they are on conventional oil sites.

Saskatchewan should therefore charge extra high royalties on oil sourced from tar sands and should use that revenue for only two purposes: first to build a green, safe, renewable energy economy in our province and second, to improve the living conditions of residents of northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, in the past I have commented on the damage video lottery terminals are doing in Saskatchewan. They are our worst source of gambling addiction and contribute to bankruptcies, social problems, and family breakup. I urge our government to phase out video lottery terminals across our province.

Mr. Speaker, while there are clearly some areas where I would like to see policy changes, the overall effect of this budget is very positive for my constituency and for the people of Saskatoon. In addition to the measures I have already mentioned, it funds 2,700 new training spaces across our province. It allocates additional resources to the development of organic agriculture. It funds the development of a new, downtown park space in Saskatoon adjacent to the South Saskatchewan River and west of the Sid Buckwold bridge. It significantly improves support for municipal projects across Saskatchewan and in Saskatoon. It supports the research and development agenda that is centred in Innovation Place in Saskatoon. It advances highway twinning on Highway 16 between North Battleford and Lloydminster, and on Highway 11 between Warman and Rosthern.

It reduces provincial government debt by \$109.9 million in this

fiscal year, for a three-year total of \$446 million less debt. It balances the provincial budget for the 13th time in a row and leaves the Fiscal Stabilization Fund with a balance at the end of the fiscal year of almost \$691 million. It helps ensure, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan remains a have province, and it guarantees that with our improved economic progress, we invest in social progress, Mr. Speaker.

When I reflect on the progress of the last 15 years of our NDP administration, Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the progress that has been made. The NDP government, Mr. Speaker, under Premier Romanow and under our current Premier, Mr. Speaker, has taken our province from a state of near bankruptcy under Tory rule to a government now, Mr. Speaker, that has one of the best debt-to-gross-domestic-product ratios in all of Canada, Mr. Speaker.

The work of this administration, Mr. Speaker, is in sharp contrast to the Tory record where we saw Crown assets being stripped down and sold off, Mr. Speaker. Those assets, Mr. Speaker, have now been built back up, Mr. Speaker, and the Crowns are an important part of Saskatchewan having become a have province, Mr. Speaker.

Our social safety net, Mr. Speaker, that was so badly damaged during the Tory years is being rebuilt. And, Mr. Speaker, our Premier is providing national leadership on many, many files including, Mr. Speaker, resisting the privatization of health care in Canada, pressing, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that daycare services that were committed to this province and to other province in Canada are fulfilled by the national government. With a change in federal administration, Mr. Speaker, this has become a very pressing issue.

Our Premier has again, Mr. Speaker, led the drive to ensure that we get a fair share of our non-renewable resources for the benefit of this province, Mr. Speaker, and a fair share under equalization. And, Mr. Speaker, this kind of national leadership is very, very important to the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this is a great budget. I'm very proud to support it. I will be opposing the amendment put forward by the official opposition, and with pride I will be supporting the government motion. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to rise and participate in the budget debate. Many of the MLAs use this as an opportunity to thank people that have been supportive in the last year or more. I would like to use this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to thank my wife, Sandy, and my constituency assistant, Rita Flaman Jarrett, for their hard work and their ongoing support. The life of an MLA is not always an easy life. People are away; they're on the road. And having supports at home and in the constituency office are absolutely essential, and I want to thank both of them for that.

Mr. Speaker, we've seen a budget coming in, and it's a surprising time for us. We have a lot of issues with this budget.

It is the largest budget in dollars in the province's history. It's also the largest revenue in the province's history, and we have \$1 billion more revenue than what was budgeted for. Mr. Speaker, we should — with a budget excess that happened of that magnitude — we should be able to do some incredibly strong and powerful things with that resource. What we've done is we've seen it frittered away.

I'm going to talk about some of the specific items, some of them in Justice. We've got ongoing issues and recurring issues with some of the commitments that were made by the NDP government as far back as 1999. And at the risk of sounding like a broken record, we had a commitment from the minister of Justice — the then minister of Justice — in 1999 to increase the number of police officers in this province by some 200.

What we've done is we have seen the current Justice minister playing every kind of numbers game available to say I added this, I added that, added that, but never able to say this is the number we had in 1999 and this is the number we have now. Unfortunately this is a minister that does not know how many police officers we had in 1999. He does not know how many we have in 2006. He only knows small snatches in between.

Well unfortunately an income statement or a balance sheet have two sides — there's ingoing and there is outgoing. And this minister loses sight of the fact that officers retire, officers get sick, officers move on. And the reality of it is we know from the Stats Canada numbers that, as of the most recent numbers that they have, we have seen an increase of only 82 police officers. So we are short still 118 police officers.

With a budget surplus of this magnitude, we could have made a real commitment to fulfill that promise and maybe once and for all actually fulfilled it. Well the reality of it is in this budget we saw \$1.8 million to be set aside to work towards completing that commitment, in spite of the fact that this minister stood in this House only a few short days ago and said, I have fulfilled this commitment. I have done this; I have done that.

The reality of it is the budget states that it's not done, and they've now set \$1.8 million aside. Well if you assume a police officer earns \$50,000 a year — and in fact by the time you include the rest of the ancillary cost, it's more — but we would have with this 1.8 million enough for another 36, if in fact all of that is applied which I doubt that it will.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to be watching the numbers from Stats Canada, and we will be listening for the minister to make his ongoing representations. But we will wait for and we will learn the real numbers from Statistics Canada. And once again we will be back in this House holding the minister to account, asking him to fulfill the 1999 promise that he made.

Mr. Speaker, we've looked at some of the numbers that are in the budget document. We note that there is a \$4.5 million increase in Justice accommodation. I'm hoping and expecting that that funds, those monies will go towards rebuilding the correctional facility in Regina. I'm not certain if it's planned to go anywhere else, but it's the largest single increase in this budget. So as they say, the devil is in the details. And, Mr. Speaker, we will be looking to this minister to see what is going to happen with regard to that additional accommodation money.

And it's my hope that it's not just for luxurious offices maybe, perhaps, at the new hangar that was built to house NDP MLAs while they're waiting for their flights.

[15:30]

If the NDP cabinet ministers would perhaps spend a little bit of time flying above the province and a little bit more time on the roads, they would have a better assessment of the condition of the highways and number of potholes. We know that the highways are now festooned with little red flags marking the highways. And the standing joke, Mr. Speaker, is somebody from out of province was travelling here and was travelling with one of the NDP cabinet ministers and asked what those little red flags were. And the NDP cabinet minister said, oh that's how we mark potholes. What do you do in your state? And the answer was, Mr. Speaker, well we fix them.

And, Mr. Speaker, that would probably be a good approach for this government to take. We'd welcome them taking down some of the flags and going out and getting the potholes repaired.

Mr. Speaker, we notice that there is an increase in prosecution spending in the budget this year of \$1.3 million. This is an increase of a little over 10 per cent. It is scarcely more than what the inflationary needs are and does little to address the rising crime in our province.

The increase in spending for RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] has gone from \$96 million to approximately \$103 million, an increase of approximately 7 per cent. Mr. Speaker, for a Justice minister and a Premier that seem to indicate that they are committed to reduction in crime, this is certainly not the approach they're taking when they're barely meeting inflation. We look to them to do something far better and to do a lot better for dealing with crime.

That's only the portion of money that's spent on RCMP officers. What about transfers to municipalities? What about other issues with regard to crime prevention issues, community policing, and things like early childhood intervention and programs in schools to try and keep children out of gangs?

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about the budget deficit a little bit further and the surplus that the province is enjoying. And I'd like to read from page 572 of the Public Accounts Committee:

The Chair: — And [it] would ... also be a correct assumption that the way the government accounts for the fiscal stabilization, if they add monies or withdraw monies from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, that has no impact on the surplus or deficit when you do summary financial accounting?

[The auditor says] That would be correct.

The Chair: — So then it is true that in three of the last four years the government ran a deficit.

[The auditor] For three years of the last five years, of course, yes.

The Chair: — Of the last four years, except for this year, the three previous years we saw deficits.

[The auditor] That's right.

The Chair: — Okay. I just wanted to clarify that because that's very important. I mean, there has been some misinformation in that regard and that had to be clarified.

The reality of it is the Fiscal Stabilization Fund is a myth, continues to be a myth. When you add its numbers in or out, this government continues to run a deficit in all but one of its years in . . . [inaudible] . . . and the incredible thing is in spite of \$1 billion of extra revenue, this government is still withdrawing funds from its fictitious stabilization fund to try and get in a balanced or surplus position — an unbelievable feat on their part to be able to actually do that.

We have 1 billion extra dollars in revenue for which they are not entitled to any credit, and they have done absolutely nothing to show for it. And what the effect of it is, we are now deeper in debt at the end of the year than we will before.

Mr. Speaker, this budget would be a great opportunity to do something meaningful. And if in fact this NDP government is so totally uninspired as they can't think of or understand what the province's needs are, they should have applied it all to the debt. If they had chosen to do that, Mr. Speaker, this province would be debt-free in a little over five years.

We pay an additional \$551 million in interest this year — \$551 million. I hear the Finance minister over there beaking about it. He is the one that presented a budget that's got \$551 million in interest costs. Mr. Speaker, there would be no better legacy for our grandchildren than a reduced debt that that minister is doing nothing to deal with. And he should be the one that's taking some element of responsibility for this.

The Speaker: — Order please. Order please. We will just wait for members to get it out of their system here. Thank you, members, and the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, if the Finance minister is done with his foolish antics and the chirping that's coming from his side, I'd like to proceed, Mr. Speaker. We still continue on his part to play foolish and childish games with fiscal stabilization. The government this year will show a transfer from fiscal stabilization of \$75 million out of that fund. In a year with record surplus, we are still really running a deficit when you use summary financial accounting — an unbelievable feat that you could have this kind of a surplus and still be running a deficit. Unbelievable, Mr. Speaker.

This budget should be used . . . If nothing else, repay the debt. Get the debt repaid. If they wanted to do something imaginative without giving a lot of thought, they could use some of this money . . . Treat it as one-time income, Mr. Speaker. They could use it to rebuild infrastructure. They could use it as a one-time catch-up on things like the Regina Correctional Centre.

They should not make the assumption that this money is going to last, but there is a host of things that they could do that would

be meaningful and of some value. We have highways that need to be twinned in this province. We have some substantial problems with roadways and with infrastructure in this province. We have problems with some of the correctional centres, with the programs that are in those prisons, with the facilities themselves.

We have municipalities, Mr. Speaker, that need bridges. We have school divisions that are waiting — and some have been waiting for a great many years — to build schools. We have the University of Saskatchewan. The University of Saskatchewan is one of the major economic engines in this province, and they could use money for the synchrotron and for a host of other programs.

And, Mr. Speaker, Health is not my portfolio, but unbelievably we did not see this government in this budget choose to fund Avastin. We have people in this province dying because that minister is not willing to fund drugs like Avastin and to fund health care properly. It is amazing that they will not choose to fund basic drugs that citizens of our province need so that they can continue their life and get another chance at it. They have the nerve to sit over there and say, we don't think it's a good business decision. A billion extra dollars and they're not willing to save a life with it — unbelievable.

What about parents that have autistic children? I've stood in this House, Mr. Speaker, and I've presented petition after petition on behalf of parents of autistic children. Children that are autistic have incredible needs, expensive needs that need to be met. They need early childhood intervention and diagnosis. They need early childhood treatment. They need to participate in programs that go all year long, not just during the school session. They need to have respite for parents. They need to have all kinds of diagnosis and specially trained programs.

It is more than just an educational burden. It is a health care issue, and this government has done little or nothing to deal with programming for parents with autistic children. And this would have been a good opportunity to implement programs for autistic children. I'm sure that their constituents have similar problems, similar concerns. And we've seen nothing on that at all.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I'm willing to give that government some credit for — and there isn't very many things I'm willing to give them credit for — is they've chosen to implement some significant portions of the Vicq report. I noted one of the newspaper columns that say, having this government implement portions of the Vicq report is a lot like an overweight person trying to put on a suit jacket “. . . that is two sizes too small.” Dealing appropriately or fairly with the business community is something that this government is not familiar with. Dealing with the business community is not something this government is even capable of doing.

So in any event I am pleased to see that that is happening, and I expect to see more of that type of thing in the future.

We have a province that desperately needs to grow, and it's the type of thing like implementing the Vicq report that is going to go a long ways to bring this government in a position where it's consistent with our competing provinces on either side.

Mr. Speaker, one of the troubling things about this budget was the typical citizen wanted to see some benefit from it. When you have a province that's got as much wealth as we've got right now, the citizens should either see a reduction in debt or some tangible benefit for each and every citizen in this province. The working people in this province have not seen any benefit by way of lower taxes, better services, shorter waiting lists, or anything that this government provides. In fact they've seen longer waiting lists.

And now bizarrely enough, we're seeing letters coming out of SIAST for 15, 16 and 18 years for people that are going to be waiting for getting into a program. What kind of government can run this? What do you say to somebody? Well your child's in kindergarten, you better get him on the waiting list. What if the child doesn't want to be in that program? How do you pick it when the child is five, six, four years old?

What kind of competence is that? What kind of an administration can actually sit idly by and say then, and by the way you're going to pay to wait. Well maybe that's a new fundraising initiative for them. I don't know what it is, but you know the people of this province are not going to tolerate it. And come the next election, they're going to turn those people out.

We have an incredibly long record of waste and mismanagement on the part of this government. We have a host of situations, Mr. Speaker, where this government has refused to admit errors and has compounded the costs and ran up costs to an unrealistic level. With the revenues that we've got, if they can eliminate some of the waste and mismanagement and incompetence from that side of the House, we would have a wonderful province.

And I'm going to give you a few examples, Mr. Speaker. There's a situation in the Klassen and Kvello trials in Saskatoon. This was a situation where that government would not admit that they had made a mistake on a prosecution, would not settle, would not apologize. The Minister of Justice who is now the Minister of Justice stood at a press conference and said, we're going to appeal this. We're going to fight this all the way. The opposition stood and raised this in the House. The Minister of Justice says independence, independence, independence and makes all this noise while the reality was we stuck up for those people. We went to bat for those people. And a few weeks later, we saw that minister over there apologize, and we saw that minister over there authorize a payment. And you know who made the payment? The citizens of this province because of the incompetence of that minister. Mr. Speaker, that is not acceptable.

Mr. Speaker, it happened again in the Martensville matter. We saw another prosecution that went awry, and what happened? Drag it out yet again, years and years, wearing down these people, destroying their lives. And once again at the end of the day, same thing from this minister — apologies and payments. Mr. Speaker, not acceptable.

SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company], another situation. We run this business millions of dollars into the ditch. Any other private sector business would have said, oh this doesn't work. We're going to put it into

bankruptcy and . . . No, they run it on, and they prop it up. It goes on and on. We waste more and more of the taxpayers' money. Absolutely unacceptable on the part of this government to have that kind of decision making, and now we're 30 or \$40 million in the red. Who's going to pay? Not that government over there. The taxpayers of this province.

What are we going to do with Navigata? Yet another one. Tens and tens of millions of dollars that we see this government run this foolhardy venture out of province. Everybody else is now passing this government on voice over Internet protocol. They're playing this game with this one in BC [British Columbia]. They've now effectively given up and said, well we're just going to absorb it into our books, so we don't have to disclose how many more tens of millions of dollars we're going to have for this program. And the service amazingly enough is still not available in Saskatchewan, and they won't authorize other people to do it.

Totally unacceptable . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . They are taxpayers' dollars because it's a Crown corporation, and it's money that would otherwise be available for citizens of this province for dividends out of the Crowns. And it's not there because the government on that side of the House chose to waste that money foolishly with a business investment that they were not competent to handle.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to go on with one final one before I take my place. Mr. Speaker, we saw the situation with the Legal Aid Commission and Jack Hillson. We saw Jack Hillson stand up and say last week he would have settled this matter for \$95,000. This minister's chosen to drag it out by not dealing with the department for which he is responsible, for the agency that he is accountable for. And now what we've got is an expense that's going to be a quarter of a million dollars plus, and they're talking about appealing of it.

Outrageous and unacceptable, but then why should I be surprised? It's continuing to go on like Martensville, like Klassen, Kvello. Today I'd like to invite the minister to do something competent for a change and make an apology to Mr. Hillson and undertake to pay it off promptly.

Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the budget. I will be supporting the amendment. And I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[15:45]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Sutherland, the Minister of Healthy Living Services.

Hon. Mr. Addley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to say thank you to the constituents of Saskatoon Sutherland for permitting me to be able to serve them. It's a great privilege to be able to sit in this Assembly and serve the people of Saskatchewan. And there's no people finer than the people of Saskatoon Sutherland.

I'd also like to thank my family for permitting me to let my name stand and to actually seek a nomination and seek election. I first got elected in '99, and my three boys were quite small,

and now probably this year they'll be taller than me.

I'd also like to thank my constituency assistant, Connie Lepard. She has served almost 20 years the constituents of Saskatoon Sutherland — two terms for me and three terms for the previous MLA, Mark Koenker.

I'd also like to thank my parents for instilling in me the values of service to other individuals. When I was . . . Before I was born my father ran twice federally, didn't get elected, but did very well and increased the popular vote for the NDP in that constituency.

Saskatoon Sutherland is a very good constituency. It's a microcosm of the entire province. The Royal University Hospital is within the constituency, University of Saskatchewan, the synchrotron, Innovation Place, Muskeg Lake First Nations. We have blue collar, white collar. We've got university, academic community. It's a very good constituency, and I take my place in this House as MLA for Saskatoon Sutherland very seriously. And I appreciate the opportunity to serve.

Mr. Speaker, this is the first Saskatchewan government budget that has included the Department of Healthy Living Services portfolio. The focus on promoting good health in the province, preventing harm, and enabling recovery from addiction shows the Premier's and this government's willingness to follow through on its commitments.

In my role as Healthy Living Services minister, I'm committed to supporting the research, the community connections, and the continued adoption of proven methods to achieve our goal of healthy people and healthy communities. Healthy Living Services funding has three main components: funding to regional health authorities, programs directly funded by the department, and as well senior services.

Mr. Speaker, the regional health authority delivered mental health addiction services, and many of the Saskatchewan mental health and addiction services are delivered locally, either through the health regions or through community-based partner organizations contracted by the health authorities. The overall RHA [regional health authority] base funding is increased by 9.6 per cent in this budget, including 613,000 to support RHA community-based organizations, wage and operating increases, the bulk of this increase to fund competitive wages and benefits for the front line staff delivering program support.

Most of the CBOs [community-based organization] contracted by health regions provide support in the mental health and addictions area. \$95 million in funding is provided to regional health authorities for mental health programs. Throughout the health regions, there are equivalent to 420 full-time mental health workers and professionals. Not including new funding for the Premier's Project Hope, \$26 million is provided to allow addictions treatment and counselling to more than 13,000 people annually. In health regions, there are equivalent of 250 full-time addiction workers.

Mr. Speaker, grants to CBO organizations . . . the government recognizes the importance of these community and individual in maintaining healthy people in healthy communities. There's

money for services funded directly by Health to CBOs which are not contracted through RHAs. Five point two million or \$222,000, a 3 per cent increase for CBOs was effective April 1.

Some of the examples of CBOs within Healthy Living Services that we work with are the Alzheimer's Society of Saskatchewan; Métis Addictions Council of Saskatchewan, MACSI; the Canadian Mental Health Association; the Saskatchewan Institute on the Prevention of Handicaps; the St. Louis Rehabilitation Centre; and the Schizophrenia Society of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, last year we began to implement the new tobacco control legislation, and some one-time education and enforcement costs were incurred. This year we're putting \$345,000 to work to enforce the sales and display provisions of our tobacco legislation, providing training and support for enforcement officers, signage, and information for retailers. We're also providing funding to the cancer society for the smokers' helpline and innovation programs to help young people stay tobacco free. We're very proud of the work done to denormalize tobacco. Our programs and policies are enjoying strong public support and will pay significant dividends to the health of Saskatchewan people in the long term.

We're continuing core funding to support population health promotion strategies as well as health promotion. We continue to develop and to support comprehensive and coordinated problem gambling strategies that mitigate the social consequences relating to gambling. Included is outreach services, a media campaign, treatment services, a problem gambling helpline, and specialized counsellor training. With a budget of \$2.5 million annually, we have the second highest per capita expenditure of any Canadian jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, there are core funding increases for complex care for special needs children. Funding is increased by \$100,000 for extraordinary costs in providing home care support for children. This new funding will allow more children to receive quality care in their own homes rather than in an institution.

Mr. Speaker, the cognitive disabilities is up \$860,000 for assessment and diagnostic services, alcohol and risk assessment training in all health regions, public education, and an FASD [fetal alcohol spectrum disorder] support network. Last year services were limited to Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and La Ronge. This year, Mr. Speaker, services are being expanded to reach across the entire province. Across all government, there's \$4.15 million budgeted to support the implementation of the cognitive disabilities strategy.

Mr. Speaker, one of the programs that I'm quite proud of is the Premier's Project Hope. The total budget across all departments is \$18.2 million, including federal funding. Saskatchewan Health funding for this initiative has increased by \$11.5 million for a total of \$13.2 million to allow full implementation of the plan including capital construction of new stabilization and treatment facilities.

As well an additional \$3.1 million will fund capital and operating costs of secure facilities including the cost of physicians, testing, training, evaluation, outpatient support workers, and outreach workers. We have an interim facility in

place, and we'll be breaking ground soon on new facilities permanently in Prince Albert. And, Mr. Speaker, that is a partnership with Prince Albert Grand Council, the regional health authority, the Department of Health. And this program, Mr. Speaker, will provide 15 new beds for young people in a longer-term situation.

As we know, most people can beat their addiction completely on an outpatient basis in the community, and research shows that that is the best way to treat most individuals. However there are cases where individuals do need an in-patient component. And we're building that continuing care, that range of services for those individuals, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm very proud of the partnership that we are developing with First Nations in Prince Albert to provide that longer-term service so that individuals can go in and detox and stabilize and get the in-patient treatment that they require, and then move out into the community and receive the care there on an outpatient basis, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier's Project Hope reflects our government's vision that no one will be left behind on the path of opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, what we're doing here is we're building that whole range of services on prevention and education. We have a new prevention and education directorate that is up and running and fully funded. And they're working with the regional health authorities and partners to ensure that everyone is aware of the dangers of using illegal drugs or inappropriate use of alcohol.

Mr. Speaker, we have signed a contract with the University of Saskatchewan to provide research at the university. And they're in the middle of recruiting a top-flight individual to come in and conduct research at the University of Saskatchewan and be a resource to the community and to addiction professionals.

Mr. Speaker, in January and early February we had an amazing conference that was put together by the education and prevention director in Saskatoon that attracted over 300 individuals from all across Canada. And they heard evidence-based best practices. They were able to discuss new services with their peers and actually get the guidance that they require and a sense of morale boosting as well, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, when I was there the opening speaker, Mr. Skinner from Ontario, said that there are different components of treatment. But one of the important ones, the first steps — in fact he even quantified it as 15 per cent of any kind of treatment — is hope. Just the fact that an individual believes that they're going to get well, that very belief if you provide nothing else, there's a 15 per cent improvement in that person's outlook, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, that's what I find so troubling with the opposition, Mr. Speaker. I've said in the past, as has the Premier, that the opposition has had — and I use the word advisedly, had — some credibility on this issue. They did a good job last year raising the issue and I think that the government has done a good job in responding to that issue. But time and time again, we hear from members of the opposition providing incomplete information to the public which I think will actually destroy hope. And, Mr. Speaker, that is a direct attack on parents and

families of people who are suffering with an addiction.

Mr. Speaker, I find that very upsetting when I think of those families and they're reading comments from members of the opposition that describe the Premier's Project Hope as project hype or project hopeless, because what they're trying to do is undercut the credibility of the government. And, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has received an award from the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse for leadership with addressing addictions.

And, Mr. Speaker, the member for Regina north . . . sorry, Saskatoon Northwest recently was indicating that he was giving information to parents but what we found out that the information that he was providing was incomplete. It did not contain all of the options for these parents. So I know that he's been going around the province giving updates and providing information to parents and families about the dangers and his experience with crystal meth, and I've encouraged that and I've supported that. But, Mr. Speaker, when the opposition or anybody provides incomplete information and is directly destroying hope for parents and families with kids with any kind of addiction, I have to question the credibility of those individuals.

So, Mr. Speaker, I find it very sad that some members of that opposition that have built up credibility over the years are now squandering that very credibility. And I think the public is going to be very concerned about members that continue to do that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, another initiative within the government is the children's rehabilitation services — \$250,000 for new physical and occupational therapists and speech and language pathologists. We also have a children's mental health strategy — \$1 million increase to support a children's mental health strategy for intervention, treatment, respite, and residential services for families with children who have mental health problems. This will take us forward in addressing some of the issues raised by the Children's Advocate in 2004.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to making announcements in the near future on details around these new programs. Step by step, we are building an agenda for healthy and happy children who can lead productive lives in this province because that benefits everybody. No one will argue that investing in children is one of the most strategic health measures possible.

[16:00]

Mr. Speaker, in the recent cabinet shuffle I was also given additional duties as Minister Responsible for Seniors and I've already begun meeting with different seniors' groups and organizations and touring different seniors' homes. And I'm really excited about the additional duties that I've been able to be provided by the Premier. This is an exciting area. We have probably the highest percentage of seniors in Saskatchewan in all across Canada. I believe one in seven of our population are seniors.

And these are people that have, with their hard work and diligence, have built the wonderful province that we have here today. We're very fortunate. We're a have province largely to the work that many of the seniors have done over the years.

They've sacrificed during the 1980s and early '90s as we've struggled to pay down the debt that members opposite supported — that government. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward to continuing to work with seniors' organizations throughout Saskatchewan and, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that we have \$1.7 million budgeted in that area to address some of the needs. And I'm looking forward to some announcements as the days and weeks and months go by.

Mr. Speaker, I see that my time is starting to come to an end in this speech. And so, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to switch gears a little bit. Of course I'll be supporting the budget and of course I'll be voting against the members opposite, their motion.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, some of the issues that I've heard in the last number of days from members opposite, I really feel the need to comment on. The Leader of the Opposition, the number of years that he spent working for the Grant Devine government, which a number of the MLAs went to jail and ran up a significantly huge debt and deficit . . . We still have recommendations from the Provincial Auditor in the area of liquor and gaming and up to \$20,000 of misappropriated alcoholic beverages that were served in cabinet offices.

And, Mr. Speaker, when that comes out and we point that out, somehow that's unfair. That's unfair to the opposition for us to point out that the potential person that they hope to see lead this province, when he was in his 20s, was working in a government that was doing this. And you know, somehow he's not held accountable. Hasn't apologized for some of the decisions that were done.

And it's somehow that they were only . . . he was only in his 20s, Mr. Speaker. And so, Mr. Speaker, you know when I was that member's age I was the father of three kids. I had been married for four or five years. No one was . . . I was responsible for a lot of things. Mr. Speaker, we've had attorney generals that were in their 20s, we've had ministers of Finance that were in their 20s. No one says, but they weren't accountable; somehow they're not responsible and it's just childhood indiscretion.

Now, Mr. Speaker, they may actually have a point if in that case, well this was just someone that was working there and, when he discovered all the things that were going on, decided to leave and go somewhere else and didn't want to have anything to do with that. The Leader of the Opposition was so upset why the billions of dollars that went missing, the billions of dollars of debt that went up, all of the corruption that went on, you know what he decided to do in 1991? He decided to seek a nomination for the PC [Progressive Conservative] Party of Saskatchewan. That's how upset he was. And Grant Devine was the leader.

So when he says, when the Leader of the Opposition says somehow this province has been misrun for 60 years and all the things that have gone wrong and we don't want to go back to the '80s and make the mistakes there, Mr. Speaker, he was part of that government. And you might be able to make a case, he was just an employee and so he didn't have any responsibility. But he was making the decision that he was going to seek the nomination. That's how good he thought it was.

And that was the year that, Mr. Speaker, everyone else in the province knew what kind of government that this was. Only the Leader of the Opposition seemed to think that they were okay. Because what happened at that election? The PC Party was wiped out. Wiped out. Premier Romanow was elected with a massive, massive, massive election victory.

And, Mr. Speaker, so I just . . . It's passing strange that the opposition are trying to minimize that somehow a 25-year-old kid is somehow is not responsible for his actions and somehow he's just trying to distance himself that. Now there were seven years he worked there. It's not on his website, Mr. Speaker. I understand that he's trying to forget that — similar to the member for Saskatoon Southeast who's trying to forget some of his speeches 20 minutes later.

And, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on the member for Saskatoon Southeast, Mr. Speaker, he issued a pamphlet in Saskatoon saying there will be no new beds until 2008. Now, Mr. Speaker, is he going to send a correction to every one of those people now that there are new beds? There are new beds in Saskatoon; there will be new beds in Prince Albert. Mr. Speaker, we have a secure care facility here in Regina.

So, Mr. Speaker, I see that my time is coming to an end. And I just wanted to say, I just wanted to say that I believe that this budget is a budget that will provide a good springboard — a fresh start, as the Minister of Finance has said — for building an economy where no one will be left behind on the path to prosperity and opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition is just not credible on this issue. The government has a very good plan that we're implementing to ensure that young people have a place to live, raise, work, and have a career here.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to be supporting the budget put forward by the Minister of Finance, and of course I will be voting against the motion that the opposition has put forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — I recognize the hon. member for Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was looking over my notes over the last hour or two, thinking about what I might want to finally say about the budget, which of course is what the subject that we are debating here today.

As I sat in the House, in the Chamber here today, and listened to members give their speeches, I must say to you that I was impressed by a couple of things. I was impressed by the fact that the Minister of Learning stood in her place, gave a speech about the budget. I may not always agree with everything that she talked about — of course she does and that's fair; she's in a different political party than I am — but I was impressed with the fact that it was a well thought out . . . She talked about the budget and what she thought some of the good things that it could do for the people that she represents and of course the province.

I also listened to the member from Greystone as he gave his speech, Mr. Speaker, and I was impressed as well that he talked about the elements that were in the budget. He talked about the things that he liked about it and maybe some of the things that he wasn't really even sure about. He talked about in his speech some things about, like cogeneration of electricity. He didn't really mention the word cogeneration but he talked about being in support of anyone really in the province being able to supply, to generate clean, green electricity and put it back into the grids, which of course is something that I agree with as well. So I was impressed, really quite impressed with those two speeches and the fact that they stuck to the topic.

Then the member for Saskatoon Sutherland then got up and was doing quite well. In fact I was thinking as I was just going to stand up, I was going to say, well you know, I'm going to compliment that member as well. Because even though I don't necessarily always have to agree with what he said, it was related to the subject that we're here to debate today. It was related to the budget. It was related to the area and the duties that he has as the minister. And I almost, I almost stood up and said good job until he got into the last five or ten minutes of his speech, Mr. Speaker, and then he kind of fell off the rails, to be real honest with you.

And I find it incredibly, incredibly amazing that he could stand up with that holier-than-thou, pompous, arrogant, socialist attitude and talk about something that I can't be responsible for. I wasn't here, Mr. Speaker. He tries to tie everything back to 20 or 25 or 30 years ago, Mr. Speaker. Two can play at that game of course, and I'm not going to really enter into that because I think that I don't need to get into that kind of a debate. But he ought to be ashamed of himself.

And I know that, I know that the reason he's doing it is because he sees the polling results in his riding, in his constituency, and he knows that he's in a desperate situation. And he's trying to play desperate politics to get re-elected. Mr. Speaker, I can hardly wait for the next election.

Mr. Speaker, I could play the same game that he did when he talked about our leader being in the old Grant Devine government. I could talk about SPUDCO, Mr. Speaker. And I could talk about that particular socialist government covering up and lying about SPUDCO for years and years and years and years.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Kerpan: — I could talk, Mr. Speaker, about the cases of fraud that are being investigated, in fact another one from SaskPower being covered up, Mr. Speaker. I could talk about those things, but I prefer not to. And I guess I'll sit down now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — I know the member for Carrot River Valley has strong feelings about the SPUDCO issue but I think he may have . . . He may not realize this but he actually . . . I believe that you made reference to the government lying about SPUDCO. And I would just ask that you withdraw just that one word, the reference to the government lying, because that is out of order. So I just ask the member to withdraw that word.

Mr. Kerpan: — Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all let me say that I certainly have respect for the Chair and for the position. But, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I cannot withdraw that remark.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — I'd just like to ask the member for Carrot River Valley again, please you are clearly out of order with the remark about the government lying about SPUDCO and that's an unparliamentary remark; it's not for use in this Chamber. And I would just ask you please just to withdraw that word and use some other choice of words please.

Mr. Kerpan: — Mr. Speaker, I fully realize the words and the terminology that I used but I fear that I must stand behind them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — I would just ask the member again to unequivocally withdraw the remark please. Unequivocally withdraw that one word please.

Mr. Kerpan: — Mr. Speaker, no I will not.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — This is the last time I'm warning the member. I'll have no alternative otherwise other than to name him which I do not wish to do. I ask the member for Carrot River Valley to please withdraw the remark that he used and that he's well aware of. Please withdraw that remark.

Mr. Kerpan: — Mr. Speaker, I've been in politics, elected politics, for some 13 years or so at this point in time and I have never once stood in any Chamber and said exactly what I think. But, Mr. Speaker, on this issue I'm going to stick with my words.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — Well, members of the Assembly and the member for Carrot River Valley, I'm afraid I have no alternative but to name you and I would ask the hon. member for Carrot River Valley to withdraw, to leave the Assembly please. So I regret very much having to do that.

I recognize the hon. member for Meadow Lake.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all let me say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I am thrilled to rise in my place here today and speak in support of the government's budget.

I want to first of all compliment the Minister of Finance for his very thoughtful balance in the budget. And when I reference balance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to talk about balance in a couple of perspectives. First of all it was a true financial balance. But in addition to that, Mr. Speaker, I think more appropriately for myself and I think to the citizens of Saskatchewan, there was also balance reflected in the social programming right across the budget. And I know in my post-budget meetings that I held in my community in Meadow Lake, it was extremely well received. And so I do want to compliment the Minister of Finance for that.

I also want to say that generally speaking, across the piece, while I think living close . . . I want to say, truthfully, living close to the Alberta border, a provincial sales tax reduction

would have been appreciated. People also understand that we as governments have to make difficult choices sometimes. And right now I think given the environment in Saskatchewan, everyone understands that with the oil and gas development and clearly with some challenges in the forestry sector, this was indeed the right decision.

[16:15]

I also if I could, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to take the opportunity to thank the good people of the constituency of Meadow Lake. I am truly honoured and privileged to be able to represent them for this many years in the legislature in Saskatchewan. They're a wonderful group of people there — the different communities that I represent — the different First Nations, the many, many, Métis people from the across the riding. Right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the constituency makeup is roughly as follows. There are roughly 50 per cent of the constituents — my constituents — are Aboriginal and roughly 50 per cent are obviously non-Aboriginal. And I take a great deal of pride in representing all of my constituents.

I also, like several before me, want to take the opportunity to thank my family for their ongoing support. As all of us in this Chamber know that when you've been in politics for quite a number of years, you would not survive if it were not for the support of your family and friends. So I want to thank my family particularly and many of my friends. It's truly appreciated.

And finally I'd like to thank my colleagues as well, all of my colleagues, who I think were faced with some of the same difficult choices that I was faced with in trying to help assist in putting the budget together. They were very, very thoughtful in their approaches and I think thought for the betterment of the people of Saskatchewan before they put themselves ahead. And so to them as well I want to say thank you very much for their contributions to the budget.

When I was first elected to the legislature in 1991, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the prospects of seeing the light of day with the mountain of debt left by the opposition party, Mr. Speaker, seemed like an impossible dream to overcome. And so when I stand here today and I realize how far we have come, it is incredibly gratifying for me to be a part of a budget like the one that's just been delivered. It feels like the literally hundreds and hundreds of difficult decisions that were made in bringing us to this point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it feels like finally many of those decisions have paid off. And I want to say this, that my biggest fear way back in 1991 was not about people leaving our province, Mr. Speaker. While that was a concern, it is being addressed in this budget. My biggest fear was that we quite literally — and I know the discussion happened — that we wouldn't have, as is described today, a province left.

So to have a circumstance that we have today now, as I said, is incredibly gratifying. When we came so close to bankruptcy as a provincial jurisdiction and when many of our bonds were quite literally traded as junk bonds on the markets, it is really, really gratifying and it feels wonderful, as I said, to be able to stand here and represent the good folks of Meadow Lake and to be part of a government that literally brought this province back from the brink of bankruptcy.

So there are still many things that we have to deal with, that is for sure. And I understand that. But I do want to say that I am incredibly proud of the fact that we've had 13 consecutive balanced budgets — a record in Canada. We've had the 13th consecutive credit rating upgrade. The government has now retired an historic amount of debt and the government debt now is at record low levels. We have an economy that is diversified beyond what I think many of us could ever have imagined 10 years ago. We have the most competitive jurisdiction in Canada as it relates to manufacturing and processing specifically. We've made significant improvements on the corporate capital side, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as it relates to reductions in the corporate capital tax. And of course the prospects for Saskatchewan's future look very, very bright.

Mr. Speaker, I want to, if I could as well, take a few minutes to talk a little bit about some of the different portfolios that I represent. And I want to first of all speak a little about the Crown Investments Corporation. This is a budget that will clearly invest in our communities and will encourage economic growth and job creation.

It's also a budget which will provide opportunities for our young and for First Nations and Métis people, giving them more reasons to stay here in Saskatchewan and indeed have a future in our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Our young and First Nations and Métis people are among Saskatchewan's greatest asset, and as I travel around the province that is so apparent, Mr. Deputy Speaker. By providing them with opportunities to realize a bright future right here at home in our province, we will make it an even better place to live, to work, and to raise our families.

Mr. Speaker, besides the initiatives that have been announced in the budget, our government has been taking other steps to provide opportunities for our young and First Nations and Métis people. I would first like to if I could, Mr. Deputy Speaker, outline some of the programs that have been developed recently by Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan. Then if I could, I will talk a bit about the programs and the initiatives of the Department of First Nations and Métis Relations, as I indicated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have kept our government's commitment to encourage the growth and the development of entrepreneurship and small businesses by establishing the Entrepreneurial Foundation of Saskatchewan and indeed the Saskatchewan Entrepreneurial Fund. The goal is to build Saskatchewan's economy by developing an entrepreneurial base.

The foundation and the fund are aimed at all existing and aspiring entrepreneurs. However, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a special focus on young, on rural, on northern, and on First Nations and Métis people, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The foundation will provide business advice; it will provide mentoring and support services, while the fund will provide financing of up to \$1 million for each approved business proposal.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Crown Investments Corporation is leading this initiative in partnership with SaskCentral on behalf of Saskatchewan's credit unions. And CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] will be providing \$1.8 million in

operating capital for the foundation and up to 25 million for the fund over the next five years.

And I say parenthetically, Mr. Speaker, many in the Chamber will know that before I was elected I worked in the credit union system, and so it is again gratifying for me to be able to see a fund like this put together between the credit unions of the province and between the corporation for which I currently have the privilege of being the minister.

We are working on a similar fund that will be aimed at creating economic development opportunities and jobs for First Nations and Métis people. We hope to announce details in the coming months.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Crown Investments Corporation is leading another very important initiative to create job opportunities for our young and Aboriginal people. CIC is investing \$20 million in programs aimed at hiring more young and First Nations and Métis people in our Crown corporations.

The goals are to replace an aging Crown workforce, to have our Crowns better reflect the diversity of our population, and to provide attractive careers that will keep our educated, skilled young and Aboriginal people in our province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we estimate that by the year 2017 more than half of the current employees in our Crowns, about 5,000 people, will have retired. We will need to replace them with skilled, educated people so that our Crowns will continue to grow and to prosper.

Several programs have already been announced and are well under way. The CIC Aboriginal bursary program has been providing financial assistance to undergraduate students at the University of Regina and First Nations University of Canada since the fall of 2004 semester. Twenty-six bursaries were awarded that first semester. Since then another 49 bursaries have been awarded and CIC expects to assist up to 165 students over five years. That's 165 students over five years.

Gradworks is a program that provides internships in the Crowns for recent post-secondary graduates. The purpose is to provide work experience that will lead to permanent jobs in the Crowns or with other employers.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this program has already been very successful and it has been in operation for just over one year. CIC and its Crowns filled 15 internship positions in 2004 and another 88 in 2005. Thirty-five interns have already been hired permanently by one of our Crowns while another 11 have full-time jobs in other corporations.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our goal is to provide 325 internships over five years and to eventually expand Gradworks to include other employers in the public and of course in the private sectors.

CIC is working with our universities to develop other programs for young and Aboriginal people. CIC and the University of Saskatchewan have established the mathematics and science enrichment program to help First Nations and Métis students prepare for further study or careers in the maths and sciences. And as I spend my time travelling around the province and

meeting with the private sector, clearly one of the significant impediments, whether it's in the private sector or in the public sector, is a lack of enough maths and sciences in many young people's background, Mr. Speaker. So we are obviously, as I've indicated, focusing on that and we hope that this will assist in bringing many, many more young people into our Crowns, into the public sector. And even if that training doesn't bring them into public service it will clearly benefit our province.

The program will assist up to 50 students each year. It got under way last fall with an initial enrolment of 33 students, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I had the privilege of attending an event at the First Nations University of Canada not so long ago where many of those students were present and recognized, and I want to very publicly commend them for the decisions that they've made.

Last December CIC and the University of Saskatchewan entered into an agreement that will enhance the Aboriginal student achievement program. A new recruitment strategy will be developed, and mentorship programs and other services will be expanded. CIC and the Indian teacher education program at the University of Saskatchewan are also teaming up on a pilot project that will be aimed at Aboriginal youths who have dropped out of school. The goal is to get them back into the education system so that they will be able to pursue and fulfill career aspirations.

CIC is working with the University of Regina right now and the First Nations University of Canada to develop an Aboriginal student recruitment and retention office as well as a leadership training program for Aboriginal and for non-Aboriginal students. Mr. Deputy Speaker, CIC will continue to work with its Crowns and our province's educational institutions to determine where it might be able to provide further assistance.

If I could now, I'd like to turn now to my other portfolio which has arguably even more of a focus on First Nations and Métis youth. The department has completed its first full fiscal year of operations, and it now has a performance plan available to the public which outlines its visions, its goals, and its objectives.

The vision I think is far-reaching. It speaks to and it says that First Nations and Métis people, we see them as full partners in society, contributing to and sharing in the prosperity of our province. Mr. Speaker, one goal to achieve that vision is First Nations and Métis people participating fully in the social, cultural, and economic life of this province. Another, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is maintaining effective relations and communications between the province and First Nations and Métis peoples and governments. First Nations and Métis Relations uses several tools to work towards these goals.

Our new tool is the First Nations and Métis economic development program. And it's a program, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I am particularly proud of. This innovative program officially began accepting applications in mid-February of this year. It provides grants to First Nations and Métis entrepreneurs on- and off-reserve to start or buy a new business or to expand an existing operation in key economic sectors of our province. The program is also designed to create more jobs for First Nations and Métis people.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also pleased to say that the Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation and the Clarence Campeau Development Fund are helping the department deliver this program, and they are integral to its success; 1.5 million has been allocated to this initiative this year.

The treaty land entitlement program continues to honour this government's constitutional obligations to Canada by negotiating agreements to resolve long outstanding First Nations claims. As you may know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the treaty land entitlement process exists because not all First Nations received the land that was promised to them in the treaties. We will work in partnership with the Government of Canada and First Nations to resolve these claims. Fifteen million is dedicated to treaty land entitlement this year alone, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[16:30]

So far, 21 of the 29 treaty land entitlement First Nations have achieved their shortfalls and the rest continue to work on this very, very important initiative. We are currently at the table negotiating with Canada and four other First Nations, specifically Pasqua, Muskoday, Gordon's, and Sturgeon Lake. And I'm hopeful that these negotiations will result in settlements later this year.

In terms of gaming, we have 29 million in this area in our budget which flows through to either the First Nations Trust, a community development corporation, or the Clarence Campeau Development Fund. This is a legal obligation. And the money distributed is used to benefit First Nations people on reserves and First Nations and non-First Nations communities near the reserves where casinos are located for initiatives in areas such as education, justice, and obviously health as well.

A portion of the gaming profits generated by the off-reserve casinos in Regina and Moose Jaw is also provided for Métis economic development. First Nations and Métis Relations also has 1.5 million to provide grants to Aboriginal organizations for employment and capacity building. The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations receives funding through this program for policy development. The department's Aboriginal employment development program is also receiving extra money to support employers who are implementing programs in their organizations through this funding.

Mr. Speaker, I am particularly pleased with the work that the Department of First Nations and Métis Relations has done in its first full fiscal year of operations. And I certainly look forward to the work that we'll be doing again this coming year in continuing partnership with First Nations and Métis leaders and people.

Mr. Speaker, there are many other initiatives of this government, housed in other departments and agencies, which have a huge impact on First Nations and Métis people. And I'd like to reference just a few because they are so very, very important.

Our government is providing funding for 83 basic education seats at the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology. We are continuing planning on the diabetes centre on the Muskeg

Lake Cree Nation. There will be work on the northern economic infrastructure strategy, including the start of construction on road access into Wollaston Lake. And money is also being earmarked for improvements to road access to reserves.

Mr. Speaker, the programs and initiatives I have outlined, along with the initiatives in the provincial budget, will help us achieve our vision of a province in which clearly no one is left behind on the path to opportunity. It is vitally important to our future that we provide solid, meaningful opportunities to all our citizens, but especially to our young people and to our First Nations and Métis people.

Mr. Speaker, I want to close with just a little story. And it's one that I relayed I think in this Chamber, probably not in my maiden speech but it would have been about 1993. And I realized with the creation . . . I was reminded of this story about a year ago when this department was first created.

It was quite an experience for me. I was on the Churchill River system quite some number of years ago. And I thought back to a meeting I had had with a fairly young chief at that time. And he indicated to me what it was like for him to have been taken away from a little community that had roughly 50 people in it. His entire life that he knew existed within about a 5- or a 6-mile radius. And when he was six years of age, in the fall of the year he turned six he was taken away from that community and brought back in the springtime, and the huge impact that had on his life.

Ironically he wasn't actually very bitter about it. But roughly three months later on a canoe trip, I had the opportunity to actually, in the wilderness, pass right through that community and stand on the spot that this young chief was standing on and where he was raised when he was five and six years of age. And it was quite something to realize that this young boy would have been removed from an environment like that.

And when I realize the injustices that our society has done to First Nations and to Métis people across our province and across our country, and to realize how far these good people have come, given the circumstances in which many of them were, I'm just thrilled to see some of the initiatives in this budget today that finally move past jurisdictional barriers and finally do things for First Nations people. And I think it's something we should be incredibly proud of. So I am so proud to be able to stand in my spot and support this budget. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly pleased to be able to enter into the debate on the 2006 budget that the Minister of Finance tabled in this Assembly last week.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that there were a few provisions within the budget that I certainly think I can support. But there were certainly a lot of omissions in this budget. There were certainly a number of half measures, Mr. Speaker, and there were

certainly a number of wrong directions that this budget will take this province, Mr. Speaker. And I would just like to comment on a number of these issues, Mr. Speaker.

This government, this NDP government has had a history of only getting things half right if we look at some of the things they've done in the past. They have perhaps some good intentions and they try to address them, but they just somehow can't seem to get their act together and get the whole package together. And I think, Mr. Speaker, in this year's budget we see that once again.

The action on the business tax front certainly is a step in the right direction. And that in itself, Mr. Speaker, in reducing business taxes for the sake of businesses isn't the reason that we on this side of the House have been calling for that. The reason that we need to have a competitive environment for those people who create jobs in our economy is because frankly, Mr. Speaker, we need more taxpayers in this province to help carry the load, to pay for the things like health care and education and highways, and to provide some transition funding to our grain and oilseeds producers to move that industry to the next century . . . in the second century of this province. And I think, Mr. Speaker, that industry will be, at least part of it, heading off in a new direction, and I'll have more to say about that a little later.

But one of the things . . . And, Mr. Speaker, I should say a couple of things about this government's lack of direction and lack of policy that has led to this, this seemingly unexplainable situation that we in this province find ourselves in. We are currently experiencing an economic boom in many sectors of the economy, yet we are seeing an out-migration of our young people and we are seeing a loss of jobs. And frankly, Mr. Speaker, many people including the members on that side of the House cannot explain what's happening.

And it's really no mystery, Mr. Speaker, because we don't have an environment that will foster that investment and that initiative that will create those additional jobs and provide the career . . . quality jobs that many of our young people are looking for. It's not good enough, Mr. Speaker, to say that there is a long list of jobs, that we don't have people to fill those positions, because, Mr. Speaker, frankly if you look in the job or help wanted sections and if you look at some around in our retail sector, Mr. Speaker, many of these jobs are in the service industry and certainly are not conducive and certainly do not attract our young, well-educated people who are leaving this province, unfortunately, and taking their tax dollars with them.

But one thing, Mr. Speaker, I must give this government credit for is the action they took with regards to the working men and women of this province, particularly those people who need to buy the tools of their trade so that they can earn a living — the tool tax credit, Mr. Speaker. I think this is something that should have been done some time ago, Mr. Speaker, and I certainly must give them credit. And when I listen very carefully to the Minister of Finance's remarks, he didn't take credit for it, Mr. Speaker. Who did he give credit to it? He gave credit to the member from northeast Regina. And I think that member certainly needs our support and our appreciation for his hard work in seeing this measure through.

Because, Mr. Speaker, I as a person who operates a business

and any other self-employed person who requires tools of their trade, they can either . . . they can write them off as a tax deduction. But there are a number of working men and women in this province who are not self-employed but are still required to provide the tools of their trade and they incur all the expenses, Mr. Speaker, and they really don't have any . . . they don't receive any tax credit for it. They don't receive any recognition. And so therefore as I said, the member from Regina Northeast certainly deserves full credit for the good work that he's done.

But when you stop and think about this for a moment, Mr. Speaker . . . And the Minister of Finance, as I said, in his address to the Assembly on budget day paid credit to that member. And so when I thought about that for a bit, it's really ironic. We hear from those members on that side of the House how they are the defenders of the working men and women in this province, that they are looking after their best interests.

So you would think, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Finance perhaps would have moved on this initiative or perhaps the former minister of Labour, the current member from Moose Jaw Wakamow who talks about constantly in this House how she is the defender of and looks after the working men and women in this province. You would think perhaps that she would have moved on this initiative. Or perhaps even the Premier.

But no, none of them moved on it. And those members are all members of cabinet. It took the member from Regina Northeast, a person who is not a member of cabinet, to bring this issue forward. And I suspect that he had to work quite some time to get this forward. I say that's a real shame. It's once again an example of talking the talk but not walking the walk. And there are many instances that we see with this government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we see a lot of talking the talk and very little walking the walk in the whole area of agriculture. What did we find on the very first day when we resumed? When we started the spring sitting the government came to us and said, we just realized we've got a crisis situation in agriculture and we need to have an emergency debate in agriculture. So we, certainly we agreed. I mean, we've been aware of this for many, many years. It seems to me we've almost had that emergency debate on agriculture almost every year since 1999. Now we're moving to semi-annual debates on the crisis in agriculture.

But this again, it's nothing more than lip service to a problem so they can go out and say to the farmers of this province, well we're doing something in agriculture. We had an emergency debate. And then they secretly hope that that problem goes away, that they don't have to deal with it, Mr. Speaker.

Well that problem isn't going away. And you know why we have that problem in this province, Mr. Speaker? And why we will continue to have that problem is because we don't see any leadership. We don't see any vision from those members and from that government. You would think with Saskatchewan having 47 per cent of the arable acres that at the very least, if they don't want to put any money into agriculture, they could at least provide some leadership, Mr. Speaker. But I'll have more to say about that in the days to come in this House, Mr.

Speaker.

Another area that we really need to take this government to task, Mr. Speaker . . . They talk about putting more money into highways, yet they pit RM against RM, community against the community, with their partnerships agreements whereby they are expecting rural municipalities — small rural communities — to put money up to rebuild highways. And the member from Arm River-Watrous has a highway in his constituency that was redone under that plan and that section of highway is closed, Mr. Speaker. And that's another area that we will certainly have to discuss with these members and with this government.

I have a couple of highways in my constituency — Highway 310 and a section of Highway 22 — that are in dire, desperate condition. And what do we hear from these people? Well we won't fix it unless you put some money up. And that certainly is not acceptable, Mr. Speaker.

I see my time is moving on, Mr. Speaker, and so I'm afraid I must move on to some other areas, Mr. Speaker. And one of them that I would like to cover, Mr. Speaker, is the area of the environment. And, Mr. Speaker, you know we had the Speech from the Throne last fall and so I pulled out the Speech from the Throne to see what one of the themes in that speech was, Mr. Speaker. And one of the themes that we hear from these people is a green and prosperous economy. That Saskatchewan is going to be the leader in this country as far as green initiatives. And what do we see in the budget, Mr. Speaker?

[16:45]

If you look at the news release, Mr. Speaker, and the portion of the government news release that deals with the environment, it's about a quarter of a page out of a three- or four-page document. I think that in itself speaks volumes as to the importance that this government places on the environment. They talk a good talk, Mr. Speaker, but I have to say they don't walk a very good walk.

But before I get into more specifics on what isn't in this budget, Mr. Speaker, and what could have been, I think, I recently read a book by Ray Anderson who's the founder and CEO of a company out of Atlanta, Georgia. It's called Interface. And they are the largest manufacturer of commercial floor covering in the world. And that company has embarked on a program of sustainable development where they will minimize their environmental footprint. Their goal is to completely recycle everything they use, Mr. Speaker. They're well down that road.

There are a number of hurdles that they need to overcome, but I listened to their VP [vice-president] of sustainable development last November in Saskatoon. And what they have done is, through their efforts in minimizing their environmental footprint, is they've been able to add over \$200 million to their bottom line. I think, Mr. Speaker, this is a company that we can look at, Mr. Speaker, and not only private industry, but governments and municipalities can look at what these people are doing and adopt some of their practices, Mr. Speaker.

But what Mr. Anderson in his book does is he gives an example that David Brower, the executive director of the Sierra Club, did as far as putting time into perspective. It's actually quite an

interesting read, Mr. Speaker, but I'll summarize just a few of the points. If from the beginning of time till now, approximately four and a half billion years, Mr. Speaker, if you compressed that into six days, mankind appeared on this earth on the sixth day at 11 minutes and 59 minutes and 54 seconds — just six minutes before midnight, Mr. Speaker. So we really haven't been here that long if you look at the total life of the earth, Mr. Speaker.

And I think another comparison, another analogy that Mr. Brower talks about is that if the lifespan of the earth at four and a half billion years was compressed into one mile, Mr. Speaker, the industrial revolution would occupy the last three one-thousandths of an inch on that mile of measurement and that a human lifetime would only be one one-thousandth of an inch. So that puts that into perspective, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, so having set that frame, we realize that in comparison to the life of this earth, this planet we occupy, mankind's time really has been pretty short.

But we have done some things to the planet that can be very devastating. And, Mr. Speaker, climate change is one of those things that we're seeing the result of, and we need to work at, Mr. Speaker. And what do we see in this budget? We see a few things, Mr. Speaker, but nothing of any real substance. They like to announce projects, Mr. Speaker, much like the hospitals. They announce the construction of new hospitals. They're now six or seven times . . . six or seven years in a row before actually anything happens, and then we see the costs go up, and they're unable to proceed.

Mr. Speaker, I came across an article in one of the papers out of Saskatoon, and it's an article that was written by the member for Saskatoon Greystone where he outlines a number of things that this government has done to address the climate change and the environmental footprint in this province, but the list is fairly small.

On the other side of the page, Mr. Speaker, that member lists all the things that Saskatchewan could do. And you know, Mr. Speaker, there are many things that he listed that I certainly can agree with, Mr. Speaker. He mentions things like wind generation and cogeneration, Mr. Speaker. One of the things that I certainly do agree with, he mentions in one of the bullets that I'm quoting, "Remove the barriers that discourage individuals and businesses from installing green power sources."

And here's the important part, Mr. Speaker: "In selling power to the electrical grid for a fair price . . ." And, Mr. Speaker, that is something that this government fails to do, Mr. Speaker, and it's something that needs to be done. It goes on to mention geothermal energy and that initiative, and that certainly is an initiative that we would support, Mr. Speaker.

The last bullet in the list of quite a number of things that the member from Saskatoon Greystone mentions, is he says, and I'm quoting again: "Involve SIAST in this vision and let's train workers in the manufacture, design, and installation of energy conservation systems." Mr. Speaker, I would add that we should probably involve the universities.

And one of the things that comes to mind, I heard the Deputy

Premier today in the media talking about ethanol. And you know, when that government talks about the ethanol industry, I always get a little worried because I'm not sure whether he's going to find another school group and rent a big tent and have another groundbreaking ceremony. And the only thing that became of that is a little hole in the ground near Belle Plaine, and well that's the only visible thing that we see.

But there was immense damage to the ethanol industry, Mr. Speaker. I'm told by a number of groups who at that time were working with real companies that were involved in the ethanol industry, that had some expertise, that were willing to move forward, when that government announced their mega-intrusion into the ethanol industry, those people, those companies packed up and got out of this province as quickly as they could. And I would hope that they learned a lesson, Mr. Speaker, because the people of this province certainly learned a difficult lesson when this government starts to interfere in some of the initiatives in the ethanol industry.

But getting back to what the member from Saskatoon Greystone said about involving SIAST, and as I said, I would include the universities in the vision to train and educate people.

There's a group in my constituency. They call themselves Blue Sky Biofuels, and they are currently working hard to put together a fund of money and develop a prospectus to get into the ethanol industry. And one of the things, Mr. Speaker, that they've identified — and I'm sure other people in the ethanol industry have also identified — is that if we do build some plants, who are we going to get to run these plants? There's a certain amount of technical expertise that's required, Mr. Speaker.

And I mean if these people are serious about the ethanol industry, I don't see any evidence in them taking any initiative to address that one item. There are many items within the whole biofuels industry that this government has no desire or at least no willingness to address, Mr. Speaker.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when I was . . . I mentioned earlier that I was up last fall, up in Saskatoon last fall to listen to the VP of Interface talk about all the practices that their company has put into place to minimize their environmental footprint. I was sitting at a table of young professionals who are very keenly interested in minimizing mankind's environmental footprint. And they have developed a term for those people who talk the talk but really don't walk the walk, particularly when it comes to environmental issues, Mr. Speaker. And that term . . . it's greenwashing, Mr. Speaker. And that term fits these people across the way absolutely. They greenwash on the environment, but they also greenwash on many other issues, Mr. Speaker.

So therefore, Mr. Speaker, I certainly will not be able to support the motion, but I will be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Massey Place.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the few

moments, very few moments available to us today before we adjourn, I'll just start out by saying . . . To demonstrate, Mr. Speaker, how misleading comments from the opposition can be, I want to pick up on something that that member just said. Anybody watching this will know that that member just said in his speech that because of actions of this government, the ethanol industry would not survive and thrive in Saskatchewan. That's what he said, Mr. Speaker. Yes, he says we chased it away.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, Husky Oil is building — and I would like to emphasize this — the world's largest grain-based, the world's largest wheat-based ethanol facility in the . . . the largest facility in the world at Lloydminster, Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — So here we have somebody that gets up in the legislature and says that there's no ethanol industry being built, and yet the largest wheat-based facility in the world is being built right here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Now why, why would it be, Mr. Speaker . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — They like to complain, Mr. Speaker, but they don't like the facts very much. But the fact is the ethanol industry is being built in Saskatchewan, and Saskatchewan is the only province in Canada that has legislated the mandated use of ethanol. And yet, Mr. Speaker, that member will get up and talk about how nothing is happening in Saskatchewan ethanol. And you know, Mr. Speaker, it's a disservice to Husky Oil. It's a disservice to the women and men that work for Husky Oil. It's a disservice to the province of Saskatchewan and the wonderful things that actually happen here.

Then I want to note what else the member said, Mr. Speaker, in his last few minutes. He said he went to Saskatoon and he was trying to demonstrate that somehow the Government of Saskatchewan wasn't on the environmental file. And what did he say? He said he listened to a man that was with Armstrong flooring in the United States, and talked about what a wonderful job they were doing on the environment, Mr. Speaker. Why didn't he mention, Mr. Speaker, that the uranium companies in Saskatchewan are regarded as world leaders when it comes to taking care of the environment?

And, Mr. Speaker, I think for a change it would be nice if the opposition, instead of their usual doom and gloom, would actually get up and talk about the good things that are in the budget, the good things that working people and business people are doing in Saskatchewan. But no, we just get more of the negativity and the false — as I've demonstrated, Mr. Speaker — gloom and doom that comes out of their mouths.

But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that there's a much more positive message — a positive message from people who believe in Saskatchewan and who love Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And I hope to say a bit more about that tomorrow when I have the opportunity.

And at this time therefore I'd like to move that the debate be

adjourned until tomorrow.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:59.]

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Premier

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

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Minister of Advanced Education and Employment
Minister Responsible for Immigration
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