



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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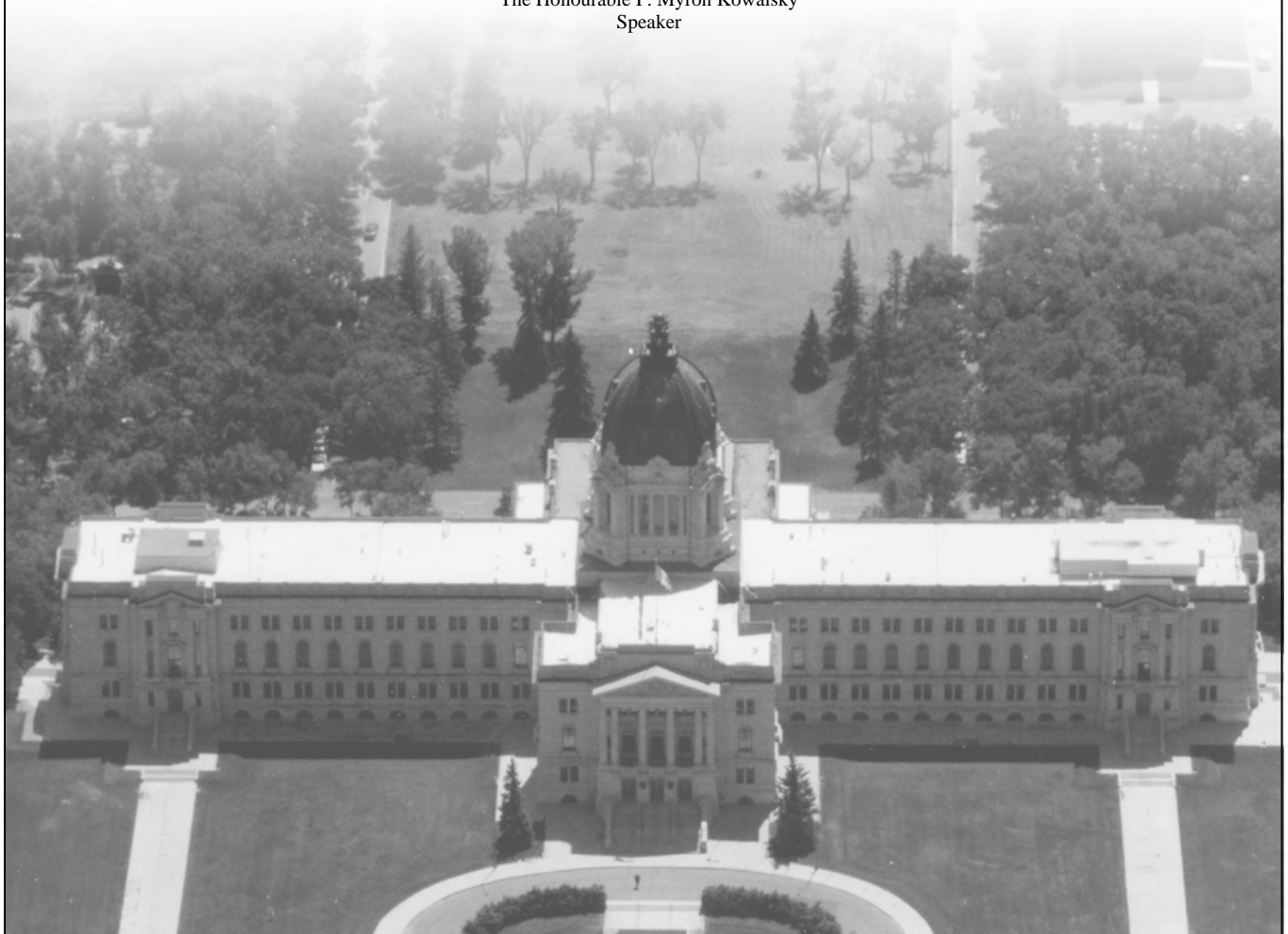
**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
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The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

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

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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

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

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It just so happens that I have a petition to present again today. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and 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, today's two pages of petitions are signed by individuals from the communities of Prelate, Sceptre, and Kindersley. I so present.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise again today on behalf of people who are really 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 Foam Lake, Wadena, Kuroki, Lanigan, Kelvington, Saskatoon, and Mannville. I so present.

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

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have several pages of a petition of people 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 Spalding, Buchanan, Warman, Saskatoon, Quill Lake, Humboldt, Meacham, Wadena. I so present.

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again to present a petition from the constituents of Biggar. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that the Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to reverse the decision to close the rural service centre and Environment office in Biggar.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens of Biggar 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 petition reads as follows:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition are from Saskatoon. I so present.

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

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on the deplorable conditions 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.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

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

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that a portion of the province's windfall oil revenue be used to reduce the provincial gas tax.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

### 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:

A new petition concerning crop insurance premiums, that's sessional paper no. 664;

And addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 7, 8, 12, 64, 638, and 639.

### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 45 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskPower: at any time was an investigation done into contractors contracted by SaskPower doing work at employees' homes and billing the cost of the work to SaskPower and, if so, what was the outcome of the investigation?

I have that same question to the Minister of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan].

I give notice that I shall on day no. 45 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy: at any time was an investigation done into contractors contracted by SaskEnergy doing the work at employees' homes and billing the cost of the work to SaskEnergy? And if so, what was the outcome of the investigation?

And again, Mr. Speaker, I have that same question to the Minister of CIC.

I give notice that I shall on day no. 45 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskPower: did management of the department have established programs and controls to mitigate fraud risks or to help prevent or detect fraud in the year 2001?

And I have that same question for the year 2002.

I give notice that I shall on day no. 45 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskPower: how did management of the department monitor any established programs and controls to mitigate fraud risks or to help prevent or detect fraud in the year 2001?

And I have that same question for the year 2002.

In addition, I give notice that I shall on day no. 45 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskPower: does management of the department have any knowledge of any actual or suspected fraud or illegal activity within the department during the year 2001? If so, what is the nature of this activity?

And I have that same question for the year 2002.

I give notice that I shall on day no. 45 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskPower: what did management of the department find as a result of its monitor of any established programs and controls to mitigate fraud risk or detect fraud in the year 2001?

And I have that same question for the year 2002.

And finally, I give notice that I shall on day no. 45 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskPower: is management of the department aware of any allegations of fraud or other illegal activity within the department or its agencies in the year 2001, such as information received from employees, former employees, customers, clients, suppliers, or others? If so, what is the nature of the activity?

And I have that same question, Mr. Speaker, for the year 2002.

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

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 47 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Agriculture: has the Government of Saskatchewan and the Department of Agriculture taken a position with respect to the UN moratorium on the use of the terminator gene? Has there been any correspondence between the department and the federal government in respect to the use of terminator genetics? And if so, could the minister table this correspondence.

I so present.

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

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 45 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskWater: please indicate how much money SaskWater is spending to renovate and buy new office equipment for its offices in Moose Jaw. Please also indicate if SaskWater tendered the contract for the office renovations and new office equipment and, if so, how much was the amount of the successful bid.

I so present.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to introduce some people in your gallery who have joined us. Two of them have been there before but let me introduce them again. Greg and Leone Ottenbreit are here from Yorkton. Greg of course is the nominated Saskatchewan Party candidate in the Yorkton constituency. And I'm just . . . I'm choked up at the prospect of him becoming an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], Mr. Speaker, after the next election and how well that community will be served.

But also joining us, more importantly frankly today, are the young women that have joined Greg and Leone. We want to welcome their daughters to their Legislative Assembly. Katelin and Rayanne are both here. Maybe they could give us a wave. We welcome them here today and I'd ask all members to join me in doing that this afternoon.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Deputy Premier, the member for Yorkton.

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join the Leader of the Opposition in welcoming my constituents to the legislature today in the Ottenbreit family and to say to them, I know that they're here to observe the workings of the legislature and what their member from Yorkton is busy doing.

And I want to also say, Mr. Speaker, that the Ottenbreit family do outstanding work at our community in . . . working on the cancer work, Cuts for Kids. The Ottenbreits are well known in our community for the great work that they do.

And I want to say to the members opposite and to my friends the Ottenbreits from Yorkton, I know that Greg is not afraid of heights and so my intention is to keep him in the Speaker's gallery in the future, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. And welcome the Ottenbreits.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I'd like to introduce six constituents of mine from the Porcupine-Somme area. Many of this group attended the legislature a week or so ago to bring to the attention of members here the plight of the agricultural problem in rural Saskatchewan, especially in the Northeast.

And Mr. Wesley Black attended meetings in Ottawa with the minister in the last couple of days to bring to the attention of the federal government the need for a disaster program. I want to thank them personally for their work and their dedication to farming and their commitment to their community. And welcome to your legislature.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture, the member for Qu'Appelle Valley Regina.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is a real pleasure for me today to be able to introduce to you and to members of the House some of our newest Saskatchewan citizens. We have in the gallery two centennial babies, along with moms and guests. We were supposed to have three, but unfortunately one of the babies is not feeling too well today so she came and got her medal but headed for home.

Out of 27 reported centennial babies, Regina Qu'Appelle Valley is home to three of them. And I would like to introduce to the House, Sofia and her mom, Teri Peters. If you would just . . . a little hard to stand with Ethan kind of holding you down there, isn't it? And guests, Sofia's brother Ethan and her dad, Jason. If you'd just give a wave, folks.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — And I would also like to introduce baby Kailey and mom, Tamara. And they're in the gallery as well, and their guest, Don Cairns.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Baby Angelina was unable to make it. Her mom, Amanda Parisian, and guests had to take her home. But they are accompanied by my constituency assistant — one of the most able, thoughtful, and caring constituency assistants in the province — Donna From. So I'd like you to welcome them to the gallery, Mr. Speaker. And then I have another introduction as well if I might.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — I would like to join with the member opposite in welcoming Wesley Black. Wesley did accompany the group of us on our trip to Ottawa and presented very well the case for the people in the Porcupine disaster area, as well as very clearly standing for farmers across the province and the country in the need for immediate funding for grains and oilseeds. I want to thank him for his contribution and to welcome him as well to the gallery or to the . . .

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Ms. Beatty:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce and welcome two staff members to the legislature who work in beautiful northern Saskatchewan in the La Ronge Northern Affairs office. And they're sitting in the west gallery — Scott Boyes, director of communications, along with Willie Billette, information officer with the communications branch of Northern Affairs. I would like all members to join me in welcoming them here today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to members of the House, I would like to introduce two very special visitors in the west gallery. Mr. Speaker, it's my daughters, Darcy and Tanya.

Tanya lives in East Lansing, Michigan, has just recently completed her residency in anesthesiology and will begin work at Ingham regional medical hospital on the middle of this month, about the 17th, 18th. So it's nice that she could come home before she got into work and spend some time at home with family. And I know we're very pleased to have her home for a couple of weeks with her family. And, Mr. Speaker, the girls are going out tonight, so I'm very glad my daughters could come in town. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Citizen of the Year Dinner Honours Anglin Lake Residents

**Mr. Borgerson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last Saturday I attended the annual Citizen of the Year dinner in Christopher Lake. There was a large turnout for the event which speaks to the strong sense of community spirit that exists in the Lakeland area.

Everyone was there to honour and celebrate Alice and Dick Tataryn who are residents at Anglin Lake and very active not only in their community but in the whole region. Alice has served on the Prince Albert Health District Board and presently chairs the Prince Albert Cooperative Health Centre. She is a member and past Chair of the Lakeland Fire Department and, along with Dick, a member of the Citizens on Patrol program. Alice is known to this government as a tireless advocate for natural gas delivery to Anglin Lake, Waskesiu, and La Ronge.

Her husband, Dick, has been a councillor for Lakeland RM [rural municipality] for three years. He is an active member of the recreation board and sits on the east watershed advisory committee and on the Saskatchewan Association of Resort Communities. Mr. Speaker, the Tataryns are active in their church, and they are both members of the odd-job squad that tackles numerous projects, large and small, in the community.

Mr. Speaker, it was a great celebration with local musicians and a community choir; lots of laughter thanks to MC [master of ceremonies] Jim Logan; a great potluck feast; numerous gifts and words of thanks; and a touching tribute from their neighbours at Anglin Lake, Ed and Shirley Haid.

Congratulations to all the contributors and volunteers, and especially to Alice and Dick Tataryn who really exemplify what this province is all about — generosity, enthusiasm, energy, and

outstanding community spirit.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### 2005 Melfort and District Chamber of Commerce Awards

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to recognize the achievements of several constituents of Melfort that were honoured at the 2005 Melfort and District Chamber of Commerce annual Mel-Bex and Citizen of the Year Awards.

Before a packed house, the community honoured a very deserving lady, Gailmarie Anderson, as Citizen of the Year. Gailmarie has an endless list of community and provincial involvement, having served in director, president, and Chair capacities for the Rotarians, Canadian Booksellers Association, and the Melfort School Board. She's currently serving on the University of Saskatchewan senate, is the owner of the Melfort Bookstop, and curator of the Melfort and District Museum.

Others walking away with awards at Mel-Bex included Fouillard Carpet Sales Ltd., Meyers Norris Penny, the 2005 provincial centennial, and the 2006 Saskatchewan Winter Games steering committee.

The "I Am Melfort" Award was most deservedly handed to Peggy George. Peggy has worked tirelessly to beautify our city and promote our community with great pride.

Neil Forer walked away with the Minor Sports Award. Neil reminisced with great passion and broad humour about his love of sports, the rewards of being a coach, and his genuine interest in children.

Mr. Speaker, and members of the Assembly, please join me today in recognizing these very deserving people from the city of Melfort.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Saskatchewan First Nation Winter Games

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Next week thousands of athletes, coaches, parents, and fans from all across Saskatchewan will be coming to Regina for the 2006 Saskatchewan First Nation Winter Games. Just think, Mr. Speaker, only five more sleeps.

Since 1980, Mr. Speaker, these games have been a big part of First Nations sporting tradition here in Saskatchewan. First Nations youth from north and south, from on-reserve and off-reserve, gather to compete in hockey, badminton, broomball, volleyball, and for the first time this year, basketball.

Mr. Speaker, the games help foster self-esteem and personal

development for First Nations youth, they build community and promote community spirit, and they showcase First Nations culture and athletics. This year's well-chosen theme is Pride in Community and Strength in Teamwork.

Mr. Speaker, an event of this magnitude can't happen without meticulous planning and tremendous effort by organizers and volunteers alike. Gordon First Nation is the host of the 2006 games and I know that the organizing committee, initially under the leadership of past chief Glen Pratt and presently under the leadership of Chief Bryan McNab, they have been working very hard to ensure that these are the finest games yet.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be attending as many of these events as I can, starting with the opening ceremony on Monday, and I invite all members of the Assembly to take the opportunity to attend these very special games as well. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Parkland Regional Science Fair

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, 90 students with inquiring minds and innovative projects from throughout the parkland region competed at another successful regional science fair at Foam Lake.

All the awards, except for three, went to students from Foam Lake. Many in this legislature are aware of the efforts of Milligan biodiesel of Foam Lake to utilize canola in the biodiesel industry.

Brittany Faye took the product of Milligan biodiesel one step farther and ran tests to see whether glycerine, a waste product of biodiesel, could replace glycol and provide another market for Milligan biodiesel project.

Kerrie Andreas won second overall with a two-year project where last year she attempted to use feed wheat to make bread. This brick-like result was very unfavourable to say the least, so this year her project added gluten, and greatly improved the quality of the bread.

Kelsey Bugera won the third overall project and studied the efficiency of hand sanitizers to determine if they killed as many bacteria as was claimed.

Rikell Kowalchuk won fourth overall by designing fire logs made from different blends of agricultural waste, including barley chaff and feed grain blended with paraffin wax, and compared it to a Java-Log, a commercial project made from coffee grounds.

Courtney Halldorson won fifth place overall with a study of hot peppers to determine whether or not they killed bacteria.

Mr. Speaker, these innovative students are Saskatchewan's future, and I ask this Assembly to join with me in congratulating them on their success and wishing them well on

future projects.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Accuracy of Member's Comments

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is incumbent upon all of us to speak accurately when making statements in this Chamber. Keep in mind every word is permanently recorded in *Hansard*. Mr. Speaker, last Tuesday the member from Carrot River Valley was speaking about STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] membership dues and he said, quote:

And, Mr. Speaker, there's no question that some portions thereof, of teachers' actual STF membership fees, go to support certain political parties — speaking mainly of the socialist, NDP government.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no question that no portion of STF fees are used to support any political party. For the record, the STF statement of policy and bylaws says, quote:

The STF will not align itself with any political party or group . . .

And quote:

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation shall not enter into organizational affiliation with any political party.

Over one week has passed and there has been no Sask Party correction. Mr. Speaker, Sask Party innuendo and dissemination of false and disingenuous information makes their credibility and code of ethics suspect. How does their statement and lack of correction comply with article IV, clause 6, of the Sask Party code of ethics? I would encourage the member for Carrot River Valley to do the honourable thing and take the opportunity to stand in this House and make a correction. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Congratulations to the Shaunavon Hometown Club

**Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Speaker, they call themselves the Hometown Club, aptly named as their common goal is to do whatever they can do to help Shaunavon. With 20 official members and 20 non-members who help out, the Hometown Club of Shaunavon is an active group. Their main project, a cardboard and paper recycling project, keeps them busy every weekday. In an effort to decrease the amount of recyclable material in the local landfill, the Hometown Club decided to collect and bundle all of that material in the entire community.

This project involves a daily commitment from two to four members in the morning. They drive around the community, collect the cardboard and paper from local businesses, and then

in the afternoon several members man the recycling depot where they sort and package and stomp all that material into bales for shipping. At the present time they're producing 5 tonnes of cardboard and 10 tonnes of paper a month. All the monies generated from this project are given back to the community.

Projects supported by the Hometown Club include free community skating and shinny, graduation scholarships, and donations to support different community organizations. They spearhead a Christmas hamper project for the needy. They've purchased benches to be placed around the town. They man the Christmas Salvation Army Kettles, and they volunteer when asked to do so at various community events.

I may have forgotten to mention, Mr. Speaker, while it is not a requirement of participation to be a retired senior, the average age of the Hometown Club members is 75 years. Now how is that for an active senior population?

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join with me to extend a thank you and congratulations for the hard work of the Shaunavon Hometown Club.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### **Yorkton Terriers Win Hockey Championship**

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's déjà vu again and the Terriers are moving on, Mr. Speaker. This year the Terriers provided the member from Indian Head-Milestone a lesson in hockey by defeating the Notre Dame Hounds. And then they also took out the Weyburn Red Wings, which we think might be the cause for the by-election, Mr. Speaker.

The two teams, the Hounds and the Terriers, were evenly matched. They split the first two games, but the Terriers won the third game in Yorkton, Mr. Speaker, and never looked back.

The member from North Battleford knew that this would be a tough series, and he suggested to me a week ago that I should start preparing this member's statement, Mr. Speaker. And with last night's 3-1 victory, the Terriers took the final game of the five-game series.

I want to congratulate the Terriers' head coach, Ed Zawatsky, and Chad Nehring, who scored last night's winning goal with 10 minutes left in the third period, and to the many players and the assistants who helped them win the series.

The Terriers will move on now on to the Anavet Cup to face the Winnipeg South Blues, and the winners will go on to the Royal Bank Cup. And nothing would be more happier for me than to stand up in this House in the coming weeks and inform all the members of this legislature that Yorkton has won again.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind the Minister of Health that he is now in golfing season. And I would very much like to participate in a match which would be paid for on his

credit card.

But in the meantime I'd like to invite him and all of the members here to join in congratulating the Terriers as they go forward to win the next round against the Winnipeg South Blues. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### **ORAL QUESTIONS**

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

#### **Advertising Campaign for Provincial Budget**

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, there I was sitting in a television studio yesterday ready for my interview. It was an interview that I didn't have to pay for by the way. And what comes on the monitor just before my interview starts, Mr. Speaker? A TV commercial featuring the Minister of Finance.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — You can imagine, Mr. Speaker, you can imagine how surprised I was to see the minister launching his leadership campaign because I hadn't even heard that the Premier was stepping down. But, Mr. Speaker, I was in for even a bigger surprise later when I heard this minister was spending nearly a half a million dollars on this ad campaign. That's 10 times more than last year, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, how can this minister justify spending nearly half a million taxpayers' dollars to make himself and his budget look good?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that's the nicest thing the Finance critic's ever said to me. I really appreciate it.

The budget that we brought down contains a number of significant changes in it. It contains changes that will cut business taxes to encourage investment in jobs. It contains changes that will freeze tuition. It contains changes that will provide new tax credit for people working in the trades.

It's a good budget. It's a budget that we should make sure Saskatchewan people are aware of. This advertising campaign helps to do that, and it is reflected even by the comment of the member yesterday who said, you know, it's a good budget and you shouldn't have to sell it. Given that it's such a good budget, I want to know has that member changed his mind, and is he prepared to support it tomorrow?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — I know the minister never lets facts get in the way of his statements, but I said a good budget sells



itself. And, Mr. Speaker, this isn't a good budget.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Mr. Speaker, once again this minister showed his arrogance and his complete disdain for Saskatchewan taxpayers. A reporter asked him yesterday why it was necessary for the minister to personally appear in these ads and he said, because, and I quote, "It's my budget." It's my budget, Mr. Speaker; that's what he said. Well if it's his budget, Mr. Speaker, maybe he should pay the half a million dollar advertising bill.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Mr. Speaker, unlike the NDP [New Democratic Party] government opposite, the Saskatchewan Party believes that the budget belongs to all the people of Saskatchewan. And we don't need a Minister of Finance spending half a million taxpayers' dollars to promote himself. Mr. Speaker, again to the minister: why is this minister spending 10 times as much as his predecessor to promote himself and his leadership campaign?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm quite interested in what the member's asking, as I've already explained a number of new initiatives that are in the budget. I am pleased to hear that he's saying a good budget should sell itself. He's arguing we shouldn't be needing to advertise; hence he must believe it's a good budget. What is the argument here?

As to the question, Mr. Speaker, as to the issue that he raises about the advertising and the fact that we are moving it forward through the Department of Finance, I find it interesting that he has not stood in this House to provide this government and this legislature with any information about how much money that party has spent advertising the latest policy hairball that they coughed up.

There was nothing in terms of information that they provided about . . . What was the ad that I saw the Leader of the Opposition appearing in just the other night on my television set? Here he was for 30 seconds with his TV ad, billing it directly to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. What's up with the difference? What makes this so much of a hypocritical statement on the part of the member opposite?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Mr. Speaker, if he's choking on his own hairballs, it's not my problem. Mr. Speaker, when it's time to reject the pleas to fund new cancer drugs, it's somebody else's budget. When it comes time to break the law and refuse to give Jack Hillson his job back, it's somebody else's budget. When it

comes time to talk about people at Wascana centre lying in their own filth because there aren't enough nurses, it's somebody else's budget, Mr. Speaker. But when it comes time to go on TV, he says it's my budget, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when the NDP broke their promise not to raise taxes, they didn't spend a half a million dollars on advertising. When they raised fees — dozens of fees, Mr. Speaker — they didn't spend half a million dollars on advertising. In fact they didn't tell anyone about it, Mr. Speaker. And the opposition NDP MLA for Athabasca said it was the opposition's job to let people know, Mr. Speaker. But now with the NDP dropping in the polls, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister of Finance ready to run for leader, they spend half a million taxpayers' dollars on advertising.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: will he cancel this bogus advertising campaign today, now?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Again, Mr. Speaker, I ask the members opposite to table in this Assembly today the cost that they have billed the taxpayers for advertising the Leader of the Opposition's latest campaign platform. And I would go further, Mr. Speaker. I would ask them to justify and explain why they are running election-style advertising in the Weyburn paper, charged to the taxpayers.

I have today an advertisement which ran in the latest Weyburn paper where the . . . Here's a picture, a smiling picture of the Leader of the Sask Party saying, quote:

While voters in Weyburn-Big Muddy wait for Lorne Calvert to call a by-election to elect your new MLA, Saskatchewan Party MLAs are here to work for you.

When did it become acceptable . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — When did it become acceptable, Mr. Speaker, for taxpayers' money to be used speaking to voters about elections and an upcoming by-election in support of a party that uses its own name in the advertising? It's duplicitous. It's not right, and the member opposite should come clean.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite will have ample time for concession speeches about the Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election in late June, and he should wait till then before he does that.

Mr. Speaker, you know, it's funny. Mr. Speaker, it's funny. This member is spending half a million dollars to tell the people of Saskatchewan how great his budget is. And, Mr. Speaker, you know what? He can't even convince all his NDP colleagues

opposite. During the budget speech yesterday, here's what the NDP MLA from Greystone had to say, and I hope the minister's listening, and I quote:

... Mr. Speaker, I'm concerned about the impact of phasing out the corporate capital tax and reducing the corporate income tax from 17 ... to 12 per cent. I worry that these tax cuts will leave ... government short of revenue to fund essential ... programs ...

Mr. Speaker, from the hon. member over there. Mr. Speaker, why is the Finance minister blowing half a million dollars to convince Saskatchewan people that this is a good budget when he can't even seem to convince his colleagues that it's an okay budget?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Speaker, I have the utmost respect for my colleague, the member for Saskatoon Greystone, who has spoken out many times in this legislature with passion about what he believes in. And that, probably more than anything else, symbolizes the difference between the party that forms the government in this House and the party that sits in the opposition.

We welcome the voices of people from all parts of this province who are free to express their views. If only that were true today, we would not be having a by-election in Weyburn-Big Muddy, and the member opposite should know that.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well speaking passionately about issues, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to put into perspective the amount of money the Finance minister's spending on these ads. The half a million dollars is the exact amount that a group in the city of Saskatoon is raising to build a long-term addiction treatment centre.

Teen Challenge has been fundraising for over a year, Mr. Speaker. They're working very hard to reach a goal of a half a million dollars — the same amount this minister is spending on advertising. This is the same amount Teen Challenge needs to build a 24-bed long-term treatment centre for young men in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, doesn't the minister think this half a million dollars would be better spent on a Teen Challenge-type long-term treatment centre instead of TV ads?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Speaker, this budget contains in it \$18.2 million to assist in the Premier's Project Hope that is being delivered by my colleague, the Minister Responsible for

Healthy Living Services. This budget contains in it record spending for health care. This budget contains in it support for our most vulnerable in our communities.

But I will tell the members this. What does not ring true in this House today is the fake approach that they're taking in terms of their concern when they are prepared to spend taxpayers' money advertising for an upcoming by-election, when they are prepared to spend money on television ads that do nothing other than feed the ego of the Leader of the Opposition, when they are prepared to simply spend taxpayers' money and hide behind it and say, but we're allowed to be political; we're the opposition. That, Mr. Speaker, is simply hypocritical, and the members opposite know it, and they should be ashamed.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Merriman:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd be delighted to tell that member not only did I not spend taxpayers' money; I donated \$10,000 of my own money to that cause.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Merriman:** — A half a million dollars to tell us this budget is good, well that's not so good for Teen Challenge and addicted children in this province. They've been scraping together every nickel and dime they could to try and build a long-term treatment centre for children with addictions in this province. No child will be left behind if we have our choice, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Merriman:** — What about the half a million dollars? You know, is this money well spent? As for the minister's commercials, wouldn't that \$500,000 have been better spent elsewhere? Mr. Speaker, will this minister explain to Teen Challenge and to this Assembly why he chose to spend a half a million dollars on blatantly political ads instead of giving the money to people who most deserve it.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Speaker, this budget contains record increases in terms of the support for the most vulnerable in our community, a budget that that member had the audacity to say he'll vote against. He stands in this House and he raises these questions, but he will not actually vote for the budget to increase the spending on the most vulnerable. He will not support spending the \$18 million that we are going to do to put the Premier's Project Hope into place.

Yesterday the member for Kelvington-Wadena stood in this House and said it was more important to have cough syrup in the grocery stores than to help shut down the meth labs in the province ... [inaudible] ... It is ...

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Funding for Treatment of Autism

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is not the only person doing advertising in the papers this week. The Health Sciences Association has a much smaller budget, I'm sure, than this Minister of Finance. They could only afford a small newspaper ad whose headline says, "One more reason to move to Alberta." It's a very powerful ad. It says that preschool children with autism are not getting the diagnostic and treatment services they need. The association says the lack of treatment for preschool children with autism is, in their words, "One more reason to move to Alberta."

Mr. Speaker, the money spent on advertising this budget would have gone a long ways to help children with autism in this province. Can the minister tell us why these children are being left behind?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Addley:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government is very concerned about the individuals that are facing families that have children with autism. They have very special challenges that this government stands behind that. And this is something that has been going on for a number of years, the amount of money that the government has pledged to address this. In fact in 2004 this government committed over \$1.2 million. Last year it increased to \$1.65 million, and this year the commitment will grow to \$4.15 million, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The reality in this province is that children are waiting up to 8 to 12 months before autistic children are diagnosed. Once they are diagnosed, they have another year to wait for speech therapy and occupational therapy. That's far too long.

According to the association, in some parts of the province there is no services whatsoever. Mr. Speaker, the association says these waiting times are unacceptable. Members of the association are frustrated and overworked. These families are seeking private psychiatric services.

Mr. Speaker, it's just another example of two-tier health care in this province. Will the minister address these problems, or does he expect families to pay out of their pocket for services this government should be providing?

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Healthy

Living Services.

**Hon. Mr. Addley:** — Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan and our Premier is developing and providing more comprehensive services for individuals with autism. Mr. Speaker, this \$4.15 million will be provided in a number of departments, including Learning, including Healthy Living Services. And this will increase the ability for increased assessments, supports, and prevention programs, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are aware that parents and families are dealing with a serious problem such as autism. It is growing because the diagnosis is improving and people are able to get the help they need and earlier. We know that there are concerns that need to be addressed, which is why we've increased the budget from \$1.2 million to over \$4 million in this upcoming budget. Mr. Speaker, we know that this is a concern. We are working on it, and we'll continue to work with families to ensure that they do have the help that they do need.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The numbers of autistic children in this province are continuing to rise. It's estimated that over 1,000 children — preschool and school-aged children — have this terrible condition. And they're being left behind in this province or being told to move to other provinces to get treatment. That's absolutely unacceptable. In a recent brief by the former president of the Autism Society Canada, says, "The lack of treatment negatively impacts a child's right to an education."

The Minister of Health in the rotunda said yesterday, well I think that the Department of Health and the Minister of Health is ultimately responsible for everything that happens in the health care system. Yesterday we learned of the situations that were happening in the Wascana Rehab Centre that were absolutely unacceptable. Today we're seeing the health services association advertising, telling people they have to move to Alberta to get the services they should get in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, children waiting 8 to 12 months for diagnosis is absolutely unacceptable. Will the minister commit today to reviewing this situation and making sure that the children of our province aren't being left behind?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Addley:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I can assure that member, I can assure this House, and I can assure the parents and families that are challenging with autism; this is extremely important to me personally. It's very important to this government. It's not a matter that we need to review it because we're reviewing it weekly, on a weekly basis, Mr. Speaker.

I'm new to this file as of last fall, and the department has met

with parents. I'm meeting with parents later this month to deal with this issue. I know I've spoken to MLAs about this, Mr. Speaker. We have increased the funding from just over \$1 million to just over \$4 million. Mr. Speaker, the parents and families that are dealing with this issue, they need all the support and the help that we can provide. And this government is committed to do that, and it's something that we will continue to do, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

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

### Plans for Economic Growth

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, unfortunately the Minister of Finance's new leadership TV campaign commercials that the taxpayers are paying for aren't going to change the negative reputation that the NDP government has given our economy. Mr. Speaker, the *Resource Investor* is an online news service. It provides the latest news about the resource industry and to investors from around the world. Yesterday they posted an article talking about the Saskatchewan oil sands. And here's what they said, quote:

Looking at a map, one possibility burned bright,  
Saskatchewan . . .

In fact, looking deeper we found historical evidence that Saskatchewan hosts rich oil sands . . . even richer than Alberta's. The problem is politics.

I'm still quoting, Mr. Speaker.

The Saskatchewan government has been . . . closed to development, meaning that almost no companies have pursued projects [there].

Mr. Speaker, this is the evidence. This is the problem with this NDP government. It is the brand. It is the reputation they've given our province for a poor investment climate. What is the Premier going to do to change the negative reputation that he is giving to our economy?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the Leader of the Opposition and that entire caucus over there will have an opportunity to vote in favour of the most progressive plan to develop the economy of Saskatchewan, to provide opportunities for our young people, that we've seen in many a year and that's in the presence of this budget, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have the opportunity to travel the country. I have the opportunity to travel beyond the country. I tell you, Mr. Speaker, outside of this province, investors, citizens, people of all sorts are looking at Saskatchewan as a province with a great future, a province which is holding their interest.

Mr. Speaker, we have made considerable change, considerable change, but I tell you the changes we're not about to start to make. The kind of changes that are being recognized or offered up by the Leader of the Opposition, one of which, one of which, is to tear away the hard-earned benefits of working people in this province. I'll tell you that isn't going to improve the climate here, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've got a positive plan, and I invite the Leader of the Opposition tomorrow to stand up and support it.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, you don't have to go very far to find out what the rest of the investment community in our province and outside Canada believes about this Premier and the business climate, notwithstanding his budget. In fact if you do a Google search on oil sands, on oils sands, the second story that pops up is from this resource review that says the problem in Saskatchewan is the political leadership, Mr. Speaker.

I too have heard from people from across this country. One particular entrepreneur has said, you know Saskatchewan has great potential. He said, it's like Microsoft in the mid-1980s. But he said, the problem is we don't much like the CEO [chief executive officer]. The problem in terms of investing and acting on it is the reputation this NDP government has given to this province.

We've asked the Premier countless times what is he going to do for a complete growth agenda. Is his answer simply the simplistic approach that it's only about tax cuts? Is that his plan? Because clearly that's not the case. When will he adopt, when will he adopt the complete Saskatchewan Party plan to grow this province, Mr. Speaker?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Now I think I've heard it all, Mr. Speaker. I don't know for how long the Leader of the Opposition over there has been promoting the notion we need to have a more competitive, more competitive environment for investment. Well exactly what we've done, Mr. Speaker. But then he says, well we need a bigger plan.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government that has talked about a more competitive environment. We've talked about significant investments in education and training for our young people, significant investments in research and development. You take the synchrotron. You take the Research Park. We talk about immigration, Mr. Speaker. We talk about quality of life, Mr. Speaker. This is how you build not only economy, you build society.

Now he wants to talk about going onto Google. Well I've gone onto Google too, and I tried to google up a biography for the Leader of the Opposition. What did I find? I find a biography that now has seven years missing. Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't know, but if I'm hiring someone to do a job and they provide

me a biography that has seven years missing, they don't get the job, Mr. Speaker. That's the fact.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that the Premier is apparently becoming more proficient with the computer. He's now, he's now doing Google searches. Not too many months ago he couldn't get around certain security fences or, as other people like to call them, firewalls.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, the Premier, the Premier doesn't have to google it. If he wants to read about the biography, he can go to our website. And while he's there, why doesn't he download our entire plan for a growing economy for the province of Saskatchewan?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Wall:** — Why doesn't he do that? Mr. Speaker, the problem with this NDP government is the mixed messages it sends. On one hand it says to investment: come here, come here, come here. And on the other hand members like the member for Greystone say: get away, get away, get away.

Here's his quote from his budget speech. He said, and I quote — this is an NDP MLA:

Saskatchewan should . . . charge extra high royalties on oil sourced from tar sands.

Mr. Speaker, let me repeat that. He said that his government's going to charge extra, extra high royalties on oil sourced from the oil sands. Is that the position of the Premier, Mr. Speaker?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, point number one. How is it that the Leader of the Opposition and the Sask Party don't look at the facts, don't look at the facts given to us by the Royal Bank of Canada who will say, Mr. Speaker, according to their figures, boom times are coming in Saskatchewan?

Why don't they look at the facts of real investment decisions that are being made today on the globe, on an investment decision made by Mr. Li Ka-shing in Hong Kong to present \$2.3 billion into the province of Saskatchewan? Now that's the kind of reality that they don't want to talk about, Mr. Speaker.

And I tell you what else they don't want to talk about. They want to talk about the member of Greystone. I want to talk about the former member of Weyburn-Big Muddy. Now how is it, Mr. Speaker, how is it that a duly elected member of this legislature has to resign her seat in this legislature because she says she is denied, she is denied by her leader and by her caucus of expressing her opinions, of expressing the views of her

constituents?

Mr. Speaker, if he wants to talk about freedom of speech in a caucus or the legislature, let's talk about Weyburn-Big Muddy's former MLA.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill No. 55 — The Reclaimed Industrial Sites Act

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 55, The Reclaimed Industrial Sites Act be now introduced and read the first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Industry and Resources that Bill No. 55, The Reclaimed Industrial Sites Act be now introduced and read for the first time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? Is it 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 this Bill be read a second time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

### Bill No. 56 — The Residential Tenancies Act, 2006

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

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 56, The Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 56, The Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

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

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

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 57 — The Residential Tenancies Consequential Amendment Act, 2006/Loi de 2006 portant modification corrélative à la loi intitulée The Residential Tenancies Act, 2006**

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

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 57, The Evidence Consequential Amendments Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 57, The Residential Tenancies Consequential 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:** — And when shall the Bill be read a second time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

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

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 59 — The Education Amendment Act, 2006/Loi de 2006 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur l'éducation**

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

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 59, The Education Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Learning that Bill No. 59, The Education Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

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

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 60 — The Evidence Act/Loi sur la preuve**

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

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 60, The Evidence Act be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 60, The Evidence 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:** — Motion is carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

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

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

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 61 — The Evidence Consequential Amendments Act, 2006**

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 61, The Evidence Consequential Amendments Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 61, The Evidence Consequential Amendments Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

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

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

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting. Why is the member for Melfort on his feet?

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, to raise a point of order.

**The Speaker:** — Would the member state his point of order?

**POINT OF ORDER**

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in a reply to questions, I directly heard the Minister of Finance use the word duplicitous. Mr. Speaker, this House well knows that you can't do indirectly what you can't do directly. Certainly *The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus* defines the word duplicitous as double-dealing, deceitful.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this is inappropriate use of unparliamentary language and I'd like you to ask the minister to withdraw and apologize.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, to respond to the point of order.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader to respond to the point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, I recognize that the Opposition House Leader makes reference to not being able to do indirectly what we are not allowed to do directly. However it's totally irrelevant to the matter that he raises.

I heard the minister refer to conduct of the opposition as duplicitous. It was a reference, Mr. Speaker, to a character of the actions taken and, Mr. Speaker, is certainly acceptable within the rules of the House. It was not a direct attack on the character of the individual.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, on this point of order, if I can also raise a point of order about a behaviour or the language of one of the members opposite directly intended for one of the members of the . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order please. Order please. Order please. Order please. We just have to deal with one point of order at a time in this House.

Members, dealing with the request by the House Leader, or the point made by the House Leader of the opposition, I find that I also heard the word. And when I take these words into context a lot of it is how it is used and also for the effect it has on disrupting the legislature. And in this case I found that the word did disrupt this legislature, raise the level to a level of debate that is not desirable.

And I would ask the Minister of Finance to withdraw the word.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Speaker, I was unaware of that. I will withdraw the word.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader on a point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, I will reinforce the point that the Opposition House Leader made about not being able to do indirectly what you are not allowed to do directly. And it is a long-standing principle, Mr. Speaker, in the conduct of members of the House that we're not allowed to do when we're not on the record what we are not allowed to do when we are on the record.

Clearly, clearly heard by many members on this side of the House, perhaps by yourself, Mr. Speaker, off the record — clearly not expressed by one of the opposition members who was on their feet during question period — the hon. member for Kelvington-Wadena shouted, shouted across the floor, directing

her comments I believe to the Minister of Finance, the word liar.

Mr. Speaker, that is clearly, unequivocally unacceptable language in the House. And I would ask that you would ask the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, to withdraw that remark and apologize to the House.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena to speak to the point of order.

**Ms. Draude:** — I apologize.

[14:30]

**The Speaker:** — I thank the member. The apology is accepted. And why is the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Mr. Speaker, to ask leave to introduce guests.

**The Speaker:** — Leave for introduction of guests has been requested. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted. The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, the Minister of Agriculture.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is with great pleasure that I have the opportunity to introduce to you and to this House a Member of Parliament from BC [British Columbia] and our Agriculture critic in the New Democratic Party of Canada, Alex Atamanenko.

I have to say that we were clearly well heard by members of the New Democratic Party, members of the Liberal Party, and government caucus while we were in Ottawa yesterday. And I'm very pleased that Mr. Atamanenko is here today. He is going to continue to listen to farmers of Saskatchewan, meet with folks from the Porcupine disaster area. Today he is accompanied here by his wife, Ann, and by cousins John and Betty Atamanenko from Saskatoon.

If I might, Mr. Speaker, I would like to just give you a bit of background. Mr. Atamanenko is the son of refugees of the Russian Revolution, born and raised in New Westminster. He has had a variety of work experience throughout his life. He's served as an interpreter during the prime minister's visit to the Soviet Union in 1989 and for the Canadian Navy trip to Vladivostok in 1990. He brings to the parliament many gifts and abilities and we are thankful that he is here to help move forward the agenda of seeking a payment and more support for Saskatchewan farmers and Canadian farmers. And we ask you to welcome him to this Assembly. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Why is the member for Saskatoon Massey

Place on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, with leave to introduce guests.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted. The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Massey Place.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to just very briefly join with my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, in welcoming our guests today.

And I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Alex Atamanenko, MP [Member of Parliament] recently in Saskatoon. And we had the opportunity to discuss various matters, and he clearly is a very experienced and well versed Agriculture critic for the New Democratic Party in our federal parliament.

And I also would like to join in welcoming John Atamanenko and his partner, Betty Wanner. They were former constituents of mine in my former constituency and long-time friends. And it's a pleasure to see them all here today. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### TABLING OF REPORTS

**The Speaker:** — Before orders of the day, I wish to . . . Order please. Before orders of the day, I wish to table from the Office of the Provincial Auditor the report to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan on the 2005 financial statements of CIC Crown corporations and related entities, dated April 2006.

**The Speaker:** — Why is the member for Saskatoon Meewasin on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Before orders of the day, I ask for leave to move a motion.

**The Speaker:** — Would the member state the nature of the motion.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — The nature of the motion is to recommend that Kenneth Acton of Moose Jaw be reappointed as a member of the Public and Private Rights Board pursuant to section 6 of The Expropriation Procedure Act.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Justice.

#### MOTIONS

##### Reappointment to Public and Private Rights Board

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I

rise today to move a motion:

That a humble address be presented to Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor:

This address will recommend that Kenneth Acton of Moose Jaw be reappointed as a member of the Public and Private Rights Board pursuant to section 6 of The Expropriation Procedure Act.

The reappointment would be effective April 15, 2006, for a term of five years.

Mr. Acton has been a member of the Public and Private Rights Board since July 1, 1990, in his capacity as director of mediation services branch of the Department of Justice and more recently as director of the dispute resolution office, Saskatchewan Justice. Mr. Speaker, this arrangement has proven to be very useful.

The primary function of the dispute resolution office is to provide mediation, facilitation, and other collaborative problem solving processes to assist parties in resolving disputes. The Public and Private Rights Board provides a dispute resolution process in relation to The Expropriation Procedure Act. The Public and Private Rights Board has the authority to review matters relating to the expropriation of land or the intention to acquire land by expropriating authorities in an effort to help the parties reach mutually acceptable solutions. Landowners may request the board to review either or both of the following: the root situation or design of a public improvement and the amount of compensation offered for the expropriated land.

As a consequence of a similar action of the board and the dispute resolution office, the reappointment of Ken Acton as member of the board is appropriate, Mr. Speaker. As director of the dispute resolution office, Mr. Acton has extensive experience in dispute resolution. He is recognized by his peers throughout Canada and the United States for the leadership role he has taken in the field of dispute resolution. Mr. Acton recently received a centennial medal in acknowledgement of his leadership in mediation and collaborative problem solving. Mr. Acton's experiences ensure that landowners who face expropriation have access to an enhanced model of dispute resolution. His background in administration has facilitated the effective administration of the board. His work with expropriating parties to encourage them to adopt a more collaborative approach has decreased the number of complaints received by the board.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore move, seconded by the member from Moose Jaw North, by leave of the Assembly:

That our humble address be presented to Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, recommending that Kenneth W. Acton of the city of Moose Jaw in the province of Saskatchewan be reappointed as a member of the Public and Private Rights Board, effective April 15, 2006, for a term of five years pursuant to section 6 of The Expropriation Procedure Act.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!



**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice, the member for Saskatoon Meewasin, seconded by the Government House Leader, the member for Moose Jaw North:

That our humble address be presented to Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, recommending that Kenneth W. Acton of the city of Moose Jaw in the province of Saskatchewan be reappointed as a member of the Public and Private Rights Board, effective April 12, 2006, for a term of five years pursuant to section 6 of The Expropriation Procedure Act.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Speaker:** — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The motion is carried.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government I will be tabling answers to written questions no. 834 to 855 inclusive.

#### 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 Industry and Resources, the member for Saskatoon Meewasin.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly a pleasure for me to rise today to speak in favour of the budget presented by the Minister of Finance last Thursday.

And before I get into my remarks, like others I'd like to thank the people of my constituency, Saskatoon Massey Place, for allowing me the privilege to speak on their behalf in this legislature. It's a responsibility I take very seriously, Mr. Speaker, and like all members of the House, I seek to represent their views and advance the interests of our province on their behalf.

And with that I'd like to say, Mr. Speaker, that I very sincerely

believe that this budget does advance the interests of my constituents and it advances the interests of this province.

And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that there is a theme in the budget very much around the issue of business tax reform. And of course there was a committee appointed under the auspices of the former minister of Finance last year called the Vicq committee. And it was formed to look into the question of business taxation, and it came up with the report. It consulted around the province, and it asked people: what do you think that we could do in Saskatchewan to change business taxes in order to create more investment and jobs in Saskatchewan?

That committee reported several months later after going around the province, listening to people. It provided a report to the government. And in a very open and transparent way, the government of course made that report public. There was discussion about the report in the public.

And ultimately the Minister of Finance, a week ago tomorrow — last Thursday, that is — stood up and presented his plan to the legislature and to the people of the province. And that plan, Mr. Speaker, not only included the full implementation of the tax recommendations of the Vicq committee — other than the question of harmonization, which the committee itself said should wait until a later time — but actually advanced the implementation of one of the recommendations and made it quicker as of July 1 this year rather than waiting two years.

And some people say, Mr. Speaker, well how does reform of business taxation benefit the average person, because it's a cut to business taxes as opposed to cuts to the . . . or benefits for the average people? And I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that I truly believe that these changes will benefit the average person — working people, business people, professional people, young people in Saskatchewan. Why do I say that? I say it for this reason, Mr. Speaker. For a long time people have been saying we should reform the business taxation regime to make Saskatchewan a more competitive place to do business.

And I was looking at a report recently done by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. Their director, Marilyn Braun-Pollon, was in my office showing me the report. Basically it was a report of what their members, who are mainly small-business people, had to say about various issues. But one of the questions that was asked the members, the business people, was: if the government reduced business taxation, what would you do with the increased money that you would have?

And I think this is very important, Mr. Speaker, because the business people indicated two things. The first was more investment in Saskatchewan which is certainly a major objective of the government obviously and of most people in the province. That was the first thing, more investment. Well what does more investment mean? It means more jobs. And to state the obvious, that is good for ordinary people, for young people in Saskatchewan because what people have been telling us is they want more opportunities for growth and jobs for young people in Saskatchewan. That's what we're trying to do.

The other thing I thought that was very positive about what the business people said was they would use the increased financial flexibility they had to increase the wages of their employees.

And that's very significant as well, Mr. Speaker, because one of the problems we've had in Saskatchewan I think has been that our business taxes have not been as competitive in some areas as they should be. This budget addresses that. We will now be one of the most competitive places in Canada, if not North America — a great place to invest.

But the other issue we have, and I think we should recognize and acknowledge it, is if you're going to keep young people in Saskatchewan, if you're going to provide them with job opportunities, you have to have decent wages and benefits. And unlike some folks in the House, Mr. Speaker, as most people in Saskatchewan who have followed my record in politics will know, I am a proponent of developing the private sector as well as the Crown sector. I believe in the Crown corporations, but I believe strongly in developing the private economy as well — the market economy, the oil and gas sector, the mining sector, and so on, manufacturing, forestry, all of them.

I believe in that, Mr. Speaker. I believe that we should have a healthy business climate. But my belief in that does not prevent me from saying also that if we're going to have a strong economy that is attractive to people and attractive to young people, we have to have decent wages and job benefits. I am not afraid of labour standards, Mr. Speaker. I am not afraid of occupational health and safety. I am not afraid of minimum wage. I am not afraid of better wages for our people.

And so to link up the budget objective of increasing investment, Mr. Speaker, and how it benefits people . . . When you hear business people saying I'm going to use some more of my flexibility to raise wages for working people, Mr. Speaker, that is something that also will contribute to the prosperity of our province and help people stay here.

So it's a very positive thing. It's a positive message. It's a positive budget, Mr. Speaker. It is a budget that people have been calling for, and the government has responded. And I commend the present Minister of Finance, the member from Regina South, for presenting that budget. I commend the former minister of Finance, the member from Regina Douglas Park, for formulating the Vicq committee which came up with the recommendations on the business side.

[14:45]

Now some will say, Mr. Speaker . . . So far I've tried to explain how I believe this will benefit ordinary people in our province and provide opportunities to young people — a very positive message. Some will say — and certainly some of the opposition say — well how does that differentiate you, the New Democratic Party, from the opposition conservative Saskatchewan Party? And here's the difference, Mr. Speaker. I just said a few minutes ago that we want to have a strong business sector as well as a strong Crown sector, and we want people to have decent wages and benefits and working conditions. And when I hear, Mr. Speaker — in response to that positive message — the Leader of the Opposition and other members over there saying ah, you're helping business out, they say, but you haven't gone all the way because, they say, we need competitive labour laws, they say. And they say, you need to get government out of business, Mr. Speaker.

And we need to ask ourselves what it is they mean. And, Mr. Speaker, I think this is what they mean, and this is what I object to. They mean, Mr. Speaker, that they think that the occupational health and safety laws we have in Saskatchewan are maybe a little bit too burdensome. They talk about regulation.

They don't like the minimum wage. Every time the minimum wage is increased, they're opposed to it, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, they don't really believe in decent working benefits for working people. That is their record, Mr. Speaker, and it's well documented. I don't have to go into it here.

And I will say to people that think that way, Mr. Speaker, I will say to them, Mr. Speaker, this. They like to talk about government regulations. There was a fire, Mr. Speaker, in the Mosaic potash mine at Esterhazy, and 73 people were saved because the occupational health and safety laws of this province required that there be safe areas for those workers, Mr. Speaker, in underground mines.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — And, Mr. Speaker, that is not what they have, for example, in West Virginia. And when miners were trapped in underground mines in West Virginia, tragically, people died, Mr. Speaker. And the Leader of the Opposition is laughing, Mr. Speaker. The member from Estevan was laughing when I said that, Mr. Speaker. And my point is this, Mr. Speaker. People should remember that when the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Estevan and the rest of them, Mr. Speaker, say we need competitive labour laws and less regulation, it is that kind of thinking, Mr. Speaker, that does not protect — does not protect — people in the workplace.

And, Mr. Speaker, we are not going to join the race to the bottom of occupational health and safety. We are not going to join the race to the bottom of wages and benefits for working people. We're going to advance the interests of the business community as we have in this budget. And at the same time, Mr. Speaker, we're going to stand shoulder to shoulder with working people and business people and professional people in this province so that everybody shares the benefits of this budget and no one is left behind on the path to opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — And I want to say this as well, Mr. Speaker. People should be very careful about what they say when the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues say they want government to get out of business. What do they mean? They say, Mr. Speaker, that they believe in the Crown corporations like SaskTel, SaskPower, SaskEnergy — that they're not going to sell them off — and yet on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker, they get up and they attack them.

And I just say this, Mr. Speaker. I say to the people of the province, that when the opposition says that they're going — in addition to the business tax agenda that was very positively presented by the Minister of Finance — that they're going to create a competitive labour environment and they're going to get government out of business, be very, very cautious about

the fine print, Mr. Speaker. Be very, very cautious. Because this is basically a conservative party, Mr. Speaker, with a hidden right wing agenda — and we should never forget it.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to remind people of this as well. In 1999, Mr. Speaker, I had the honour of being the Minister of Finance, a position that I held for five and a half years. In that budget, Mr. Speaker, we presented an idea that we would appoint a committee — it was also the Vicq committee — to look at the area of personal income taxation. And indeed the committee was appointed, they made a report, they recommended the biggest reform of personal income taxes in the history of the country. Now the reason I refer to that, Mr. Speaker, is we now have this opposition — in response to the new Minister of Finance who is presenting another report which is the biggest reform of business taxation — we have this opposition voting against it.

And I want to remind everyone that when we presented the plan of the biggest reform of personal income tax in the province's history . . . a plan, Mr. Speaker, that no one would be opposed to today. No one would credibly be opposed to it. And if the members opposite disagree and if they say they would undo it, they can get up and say so. But they won't because, Mr. Speaker, it is widely accepted by the people of the province as a good plan.

And I want to say this. One of the members over there said it was out of their platform. They voted against it, Mr. Speaker. This is not credible, Mr. Speaker. They cannot take credit for an idea and then vote against it. Or to put it another way, only they would say something was their idea and vote against it.

But my point is this. This is a very familiar record, Mr. Speaker — the people over there saying something is a bad idea and won't work for the province and voting against the budget, which is exactly what they did in the year 2000 when the personal income tax plan was presented.

So I have a lot of sympathy for the present Minister of Finance dealing with this opposition. Because you know what, Mr. Speaker? There is a song by the Canadian singer, Corey Hart, Corey Hart. And the song is about love, but he's complaining in the song. He says it's not enough; it's never enough for you. And his complaint is, it doesn't really matter what he does. The person he loves is never satisfied. It's not enough. And, Mr. Speaker . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Do you love them?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — I do love the opposition. I do love them, Mr. Speaker, because they are . . . And I'm glad the member from Estevan says she loves me too. And that warms my heart, Mr. Speaker. I love them as individuals. But the problem is, it's just like Corey Hart. It doesn't matter what you do; it's never enough for them.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have personal income tax reform that was done by this government which they had said they wanted. But when we did it, it wasn't enough for them, Mr. Speaker. We have one of the highest rates of economic growth in the country, but it's not enough for them, Mr. Speaker. We have the biggest reform of business taxes in the history of the province,

but that's not enough for them either, Mr. Speaker.

And what the people of the province need to bear in mind is, it doesn't matter what is in reality going on in Saskatchewan. It's never enough. A few minutes ago we heard the Leader of the Opposition up in question period and he said that, you know, you couldn't invest, you couldn't do business in Saskatchewan. Yet the amount of money being invested this very year in mining exploration in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is projected to be \$196 million — the highest it ever was in history, Mr. Speaker.

But more important than that, more important than that, Mr. Speaker, I want to close with this message. This province — and this should never be forgotten by anyone every time they hear the members opposite moan and groan with their doom and gloom about how bad things are in Saskatchewan — Saskatchewan is, and has been since 2003, a have province, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — And I want to say this. To be a have province today — and I dare say, having talked to officials from the Department of Finance, into the foreseeable future as far as anyone can project, we will be a have province — is a dream, Mr. Speaker, that has been sought by governments, whether they were CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation], NDP, Liberal, Conservative. That is a dream we have pursued for decades. And we have achieved that, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan is paying its own way in this country. We are not on welfare any more, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — And I want to say this, Mr. Speaker. When I was elected to this legislature in 1991, after nine years of government by those sorry Tories over there, Mr. Speaker, this province was in despair. It was in despair. It was close to bankruptcy, Mr. Speaker.

Today after 13 credit rating upgrades, after being a have province for three years now with one of the highest rates of economic growth in this country, we are a province that is full of hope, Mr. Speaker. And I am full of hope.

And I want to say, last week the Leader of the Opposition got up and ridiculed me in this House because I used the word that I hoped our job numbers improved over the next several months. And the member from Wood River laughs about that. Well that is my hope, Mr. Speaker, because I will never apologize for having a belief in this province and for always being hopeful, looking at the future. And this budget, Mr. Speaker, gives me even more hope than I've ever had for the future of this province. And I will be voting against the amendment put forward by the opposition and I will be standing up and proudly voting for this budget, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, I would ask for leave to

introduce a guest.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted. The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — In the west gallery is Darcy Marriott, a constituent of mine from Saskatoon who also happens to work with us at our constituency office in Saskatoon. I think that this is Darcy's first visit to the legislature. He takes a keen interest in politics in our province and he also takes a keen interest in what's happening nationally and internationally.

Darcy has recently attended SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] Kelsey Campus in Saskatoon. I understand he continues to further his studies there but in the meantime he is a huge support to Judy Gossen, our constituency assistant in Saskatoon Nutana and myself as the MLA in the work that we do on the behalf of constituents.

So I would ask all members to welcome Darcy to the legislature this afternoon.

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

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand with a response to the budget speech. But first of all I have a couple of points of clarification.

When the member from Saskatoon Massey Place, who preceded me in speaking, was speaking about the tragedy at the Virginia coal mines and said that the Leader of the Opposition and I were laughing about that event, I just want to clarify that that was not true, Mr. Speaker. And another thing that he said that wasn't really accurate was, Mr. Speaker, when he was talking about love. And he certainly must have some hearing problems over there because I never said anything like what he thought I did. So that member seems to be picking on me today but I just wanted to make those clarifications.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to stand and respond on behalf of the people of the Estevan constituency. The Estevan

constituency is a constituency of vast grain fields and oil fields and the people of the Estevan constituency, through the oil and gas fields, contribute very heavily to the government coffers. And the sad part of it is, Mr. Speaker, is that in that area where much of the revenue comes from, we don't even have a decent road to drive on.

And, Mr. Speaker, my family, as you know, is involved in the agriculture industry and at that point I would like say thank you to my family, to my husband Vic, to my kids Terry, Trisha, and to my grandchildren for all the support they give me. And you know without them a person just couldn't function properly and I truly appreciate the support that they have always given me and continue to give me.

[15:00]

But, Mr. Speaker, agriculture is a huge industry in my riding and the people in the agriculture sector feel that they have been totally ignored again by this NDP government. The Ag budget was cut by \$166 million, Mr. Speaker, and last week, in fact on budget night, I was at a rural ratepayers dinner in my constituency and the people could not believe this NDP government's total disregard for the producers of this province.

Again at an auction sale last Saturday, farmers were appalled by this government's action or inaction. And these farmers now realize that the \$52.8 million that was announced — and ironically it was announced just before the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention in March — that is not going to do anything to help them tax-wise because it doesn't address the cost of inflation. So increasing mill rates are a great concern to them.

Mr. Speaker, the provincial Agriculture minister blames the feds all the time. Daily we see him get up in here and blame the federal government. And the way he talks about the federal Agriculture minister is absolutely despicable. One moment he's insulting him and the next minute he's wondering why he doesn't have any influence on the federal government.

And the provincial Agriculture minister says the farmers are going broke because of business decisions. And Crop Insurance and ultimately the provincial Ag minister are making many of these business decisions for farmers. Number one, they insist that farmers harvest crops that are virtually non-existent, costing farmers more in fuel than they harvest. Number two, Crop Insurance insists on producers fertilizing and spraying, and often spraying more than once, or they penalize them heavily. And number three, just recently the provincial Ag minister sent out registered letters through Crop Insurance to all the farmers insisting on payment of last year's premium by March 31 or they would not be able to have coverage for the coming year. And, Mr. Speaker, that just goes to show how totally out of touch our Agriculture minister is.

And yet at this point in time all of our roads have road bans on them so farmers can't haul their grain to the elevator even if they do have a chance to do so.

And I guess, bluntly put, Mr. Speaker, the people in my area are saying that if this government can't support agriculture, perhaps that they shouldn't even eat. And you know, they just feel that

they've been kicked pretty hard with a pair a steel-toed boots.

Mr. Speaker, my husband farms land that his grandfather broke in 1910, and at one time that farm supported a family and supported a community. Now that same land doesn't even pay the expenses.

And I don't think the members opposite just knows how much input there is into growing a crop. And you know when you have farmers that are spending in the tens of thousands of dollars a day to put a crop in, you know it doesn't take long to rack up \$100,000 worth of expenses. And with the cost of . . . the price we get for our commodity today, it takes a long time to get it back.

And my husband and I were just talking this morning, and we have to haul our grain to Weyburn. And when we take the semis of grain up there, when we haul eight semi-loads of grain up there, one semi-load goes just to pay for the fuel for the semi. So you know that is some indication. And then I . . . you could probably take off another load or two to pay the freight to get that commodity to port.

And, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on the subject of agriculture, my mother-in-law was an English war bride. And she came over and brought her young son with her right after the war, and that young son ended up being my husband. But when she was a kid in England, she saw hunger. She was raised in the southeast part England, and she saw hunger over there. And Churchill said that hunger would never happen again over there and it hasn't. Farmers with small plots of land are very wealthy people. And all the farmers in this country want is to be able to make a decent living.

Mr. Speaker, this budget focused on keeping youth in Saskatchewan, and last year the forecast for job creation was 4,800. This year the NDP cut its forecast for job creation to 3,200. That, Mr. Speaker, is a cut of 33 per cent. And I guess what the NDP are admitting . . . that is they're defeated. And when it comes to their job creation ability, they are a failure. And the Minister of Immigration wants to bring in 5,000 immigrants, and that's wonderful. But what are these people going to do when they get here, when the target for job creation is only 3,200? And this is in sharp contrast to the targets of BC at 41,000 new jobs. Alberta expects to create 39,600 jobs, and Manitoba expects to create 5,200 jobs.

**The Speaker:** — Order. I would ask leave of the Assembly to make an introduction at this time.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — I thank the member for Estevan for yielding for an introduction. Members of the Assembly, in the Speaker's gallery there are seven people which I would like to introduce at this time.

Members may recognize some of these faces. First of all there is the people who are associated with our internship program. And first of all there are the interns who are working now with the member of Kelvington-Wadena and the member for

Saskatoon Southeast, and that's Michel Carpentier. Is he here? Give us a little wave. And the member for Saskatoon Eastview is paired with Haley Gagnon who's also here. The member for Cannington has his intern, Justin Leifso who is here, and the member for Regina Walsh Acres paired with Stewart Low who is here.

Now we could not conduct this legislative internship program without the sponsorship and co-operation of outside agencies beyond this legislature, and we have two of these agencies represented today.

First of all university of Saskatoon from where the director of . . . academic director, that is Ken Pontikes, is here with us. And also representing one of our sponsors, representing First Canadian Title, which is a company that issues insurance policies with respect to real estate transactions. And this company, First Canadian Title, issued more than 782,000 title insurance policies and guaranteed services last year. It employs about 500 people. And their customers include more than 11,000 lawyers and notaries nationwide, every major Canadian chartered bank, other lending institutions, real estate agents, mortgage brokers, and builders. And we're proud to have them as one of our sponsors.

And I would ask the members to also, in addition to the people I mentioned so far, to welcome from First Canadian Title, Julia Jones who is the regional director for Western Canada and Wendy Rinella, the director of government relations. So I'll welcome all of these people to the legislature.

**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 Speaker:** — The member for Estevan.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I join you on behalf of the opposition to welcome our special guests here that are seated in your gallery.

Mr. Speaker, I was very happy to see that this government implemented the findings of the Vicq commission regarding corporate taxes. I must add, Mr. Speaker, that the Saskatchewan Party was the only political party to make a submission to the Vicq commission, and we were happy to see that the corporate tax relief that was in our submission was implemented.

But, Mr. Speaker, that was only one part of the growth agenda. And I find it ironic, Mr. Speaker, that this socialist government did the right thing regarding corporate taxes, because remember these are the people that the NDP government refers to as

greedy, corporate hucksters. And remember the *Regina Manifesto* which this government still abides by that states no CCF-NDP government will rest content until capitalism has been eradicated from this province. So this tax relief is long overdue, Mr. Speaker, but it is surprising that this government actually did something about it.

Mr. Speaker, I will be waiting anxiously to hear the location of the announced dialysis unit for southeastern Saskatchewan. A commitment was made to Estevan some time ago — and I know I'm a bit biased, Mr. Speaker — but I think it would only make good sense to have a dialysis unit in Estevan as it would serve Carlyle, Carnduff, Oxbow, and the area to the Manitoba border. And they would still have a one and a half hour drive, but it would sure beat the three and a half hour drive they have right now to Regina. And, you know, too many of our people have moved out of the community to be closer to a dialysis unit, and unfortunately some of those people have passed away waiting for something like this to happen. But you know, they haven't had that accessibility up to this point, and I certainly hope that the future bodes well for them.

And I was sorry, Mr. Speaker, that our senior citizens were left out of this budget, and they are wondering too if they don't count. The government has \$1 billion in oil and gas revenues, and that is \$1,000 for every man, woman, and child in this province. And so for an average family of four, of course that would be \$4,000. And all those families just have to ask themselves, how did you do with this budget? Are you any better off? And you know, all the while, Mr. Speaker, the province went deeper into debt. According to the summary financial statements, we now have \$288 million in added debt.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Dewdney was in my constituency just a short time ago, and he did an interview with *Lifestyles* newspaper. And it says here, and I'm quoting, Mr. Speaker, that "Yates said they will significantly invest in education, so that young people receive adequate training."

And, Mr. Speaker, I welcome the increase that SIAST received in their budget. Finally this government is taking action to reduce the long waiting lists for our trades programs in Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, a constituent of mine . . . you know, we brought it up in question period yesterday, but this young lady had applied to take training for the medical radiological technician program. And she received notification stating that although — and they being SIAST — were unable to predict precisely when she could expect to begin her studies, she could anticipate a wait of possibly 15 years. And, Mr. Speaker, when I was talking to this young lady's father, he said that he wished he'd have put her on the SIAST waiting list when he enrolled her in the kindergarten program and that way she would only have another two years to wait. So as I said, Mr. Speaker, I am glad that some movement was made on that.

And, Mr. Speaker, I almost want to quote another item that the member from Regina Dewdney said when he was in Estevan. And it says here, quote:

Our potential is . . . unlimited . . . The only thing that stands in our way is our willingness and ability for us to do it.

And that again was said by the member from Regina Dewdney. And, Mr. Speaker, what's stopping them? The member states willingness and ability. So I do agree with them that the thing that's stopping them is that this tired, old, socialist government doesn't have the willingness or the ability or, as a matter of fact, the credibility to do anything about that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I guess in closing I can't believe that this government would spend a half a million dollars advertising this budget. And if it's so great, it would sell itself. And I can't imagine those people who are paying for their own Avastin feel that this government can blow \$500,000 on the Minister of Finance's self-glorification and they won't give one red cent to those in desperate need of this medication.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that I will not support the budget. However I will support the amendment put forward by the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Lakeview, the Minister of the Environment.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, it's a great pleasure this afternoon to get up and talk about a budget that's the 13th consecutive balanced budget in the history of our province. It's also a pleasure to get up after my friend, the member from Estevan, as she has laid out some of the things that some of her members have tried to say about this budget.

But I think what we need to talk about in this province is about hope and opportunity and about positive things that we can do as members of this legislature to make sure that the economy grows, that our people are able to find good jobs here, and that we can all work together to make a better place to live. And that's my goal, and that's what I want to speak about a bit this afternoon.

[15:15]

This budget has \$7.1 billion in operating spending. It's allocating over \$100 million for reduction of our debt, which means over the last couple of years we've reduced the debt by \$450 million. We have health spending of \$3.2 billion which is almost a 10 per cent increase and the largest health budget that we've ever had. And, Mr. Speaker, as you know, I'm very proud of the work that the people in the health care system do. And we are pleased to be able to provide these resources that they continue to provide services for the individual patients and clients right across this province. There's education spending of one and a half billion, a 5 per cent increase . . . education spending that will assist in all aspects of our education system in the province.

But, Mr. Speaker, for two months now I've been the Environment minister, and there are many positive things in this budget that relate to my portfolio. And I would like to take some time this afternoon to explain those things for the public and for the members here so that they can understand what

important things we're able to do as we move forward.

This year's budget includes an overall increase for the department of \$14 million or seven and a half per cent. So the total departmental budget this year is \$202 million. That represents an investment of \$202 million to promote and protect the environment and its natural resources as part of this government's commitment to a green and prosperous economy. While the green strategy has not been fully finalized yet, this budget lays a firm foundation for its implementation once it is approved.

And I would like to take a couple of minutes to share some of the significant initiatives funded by the Environment budget. The year 2006 marks the 75th anniversary of the provincial parks in Saskatchewan, and I can assure you that we have much to celebrate. Our provincial park system plays a complex and important role in the life of this province. They are a cornerstone of tourism. They provide recreational and cultural opportunities, and they preserve significant ecosystems, natural features, and resources. They attract over 2.3 million visits annually and contribute \$129 million a year to our local and provincial economies.

I'm delighted to tell you that this budget provides \$3 million in parks capital funding to enhance our parks and the experience of parks visitors. This is initiative under the green strategy, and this money will be used to illustrate the effectiveness and the value of green technology.

Projects will include solar heating of swimming pools, the development of enviro campgrounds, and — I know this will be of practical value to everyone — the installation of cleaner, more modern washroom facilities with low-flush or composting toilets. In conjunction with the plant educational interpretive programs, these projects will give visitors the opportunity to learn more about energy and water conservation, green power, and the use of innovative technologies to address day-to-day requirements.

There will be 75th anniversary celebrations in our parks throughout the summer, and I encourage all of you to come out and join us. And in this area, we have many fine Saskatchewan people who will provide the services in the parks and manage the parks. And I would really want to say thank you to those people for the work they've done, and I look forward to all of us enjoying their hospitality as this year unfolds.

This year's budget also provides the resource to establish funding arrangements for the urban parks in Weyburn and the Battlefords. Our urban parks provide close-at-hand outdoor recreation and relaxation to urban residents, especially those who cannot get out to our regional and provincial parks. The Battlefords River Valley Park and the Weyburn's Tatagwa Parkway will join Wakamow Valley in Moose Jaw, Pêhonân Parkway in Prince Albert, Wascana Centre in Regina, Meewasin Valley in Saskatoon, and Chinook parkway in Swift Current as all-season getaways for over 50 per cent of our residents.

This budget also includes new funding to support new economic opportunities while ensuring the sustainability of the environment and our national resources. This year, the

department is doubling the number of staff who will review oil, natural gas, and mining exploration and development proposals, and monitor the activity in this area.

In 2004 the department reviewed almost 5,000 proposals worth \$2 billion in new investments. We anticipate receiving many more than that in 2006. Madam Deputy Speaker, in this area it's not often realized how crucial it is for the future of our province that we have clear regulation as it relates to the environment, which will assist businesses to know that they're coming to a province where people are welcoming of the work that they do, provided that it's done in a way that enhances our community, our environment, and the future of our province. And so we say, let's work together with these people. And that's what we plan to do.

Two new conservation officers will be located in Pinehouse and Stony Rapids. And they will also assist in the day-to-day enforcement activities and those activities as well as working in the mineral exploration field. Adding more staff in the oil and gas and mineral exploration areas is a reflection of growing exploration and development activity.

Enhancing our review process directly impacts on industry productivity and the perception of Saskatchewan as a good place to do business, all the while ensuring protection of the environment. The new staff and funding for oil and gas and mineral exploration permitting and monitoring are an acknowledgement of strengthening our compliance and enforcement capabilities which is a key piece in the foundation of our green strategy.

Our budget this year also provides \$26.8 million in capital funding for our wildfire management strategies. Our fire management and forest protection branch works hard to keep our forests healthy and to protect the lives, communities, and businesses that rely on the forest.

We are continuing the aerial fleet renewal with the scheduled arrival of two Convair C580A aerial fire tankers this spring, and two more aircraft next spring.

This year's budget will also provide funding for the construction of additional fire towers, increased wages for emergency firefighters, and the renewal of agreements with northern communities and First Nations for sustained firefighting crews.

While there are many questions about what the future holds for the forest industry in Saskatchewan, I am confident that this budget means that Saskatchewan Environment is well positioned to ensure that our northern forest remains healthy and vibrant.

In this year the department's budget also contains \$1.35 million for a new Forestry Secretariat. The secretariat, led by my colleague, the hon. member from Prince Albert, will provide an opportunity to address the various challenges facing the forest sector in this province. Saskatchewan Environment will remain responsible for the management of the forest resource in the province. The department and its staff will play a pivotal role in the work of the secretariat.

Water, one of our most precious natural resources, is essential to sustain human life as well as the health and sustainability of our environment. The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority has a mandate to protect and manage our water supplies including all surface and groundwater. This year's budget includes the continuation of \$2.6 million in Saskatchewan Watershed Authority capital to fund 24 projects including Lac La Ronge, upper Qu'Appelle rehabilitation, the Blackstrap North dam, the Lac La Plonge dam, and Gardiner dam.

The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority will also initiate a water conservation action plan which will provide increased support to watershed plan implementation and coordinate development of an integrated water management strategy as part of the green strategy.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to at this point acknowledge the very good work that's been done by the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority. And in January 2006 my predecessor, now the Minister of Labour, released a report which is called the *State of the Watershed Reporting Framework*. And it's not something that has received wide publicity, except for in those areas where people are especially concerned about water — which means in a interest group right across this country and right across North America.

What this watershed reporting framework does is it provides a outline of how we are going to continue to monitor the 28 watershed authorities that we have in this province by measuring some very specific things in the health of all of these watersheds. And, Mr. Speaker, this framework allows for then the development and affirmation of the work of the watershed authorities right across the province.

This morning I was pleased to be part of a launching of the very first of the source water protection plan which was completed by the lower Souris River watershed. Now for those of you who are wondering where the lower Souris River watershed is, it's that part of the province which is located right in the southeast corner. So it includes communities like Carnduff, Gainsborough, Redvers, up to Maryfield, Fairlight, Wawota, Kennedy, and all the way up to Moosomin and Wapella. So it includes a number of areas.

And in this particular watershed area there are three different groups of community members who have been working with scientists, with local people, with the community, to set out a plan for how they can make sure that the source water for their everyday use in residences, and also the source water that may be used in industry, agriculture, or any other areas — recreation I'm sure — will have the best water possible for the coming decades and centuries.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're especially pleased as the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority to have this plan done because we also know that there are a number of other parts of the province that are following right on their heels, including the Moose Jaw area and a couple of other areas.

And, Mr. Speaker, what this says for all of us in this province is that we have a plan. It's a good plan. It's based on science, it's based on evidence, it's based on community involvement, and it's going to allow us to be ready to deal with any issues that

we'll have in the watershed area.

Now the interesting point that has arisen as we've developed our framework for reporting about watersheds is that other provinces and territories in Canada have been contacting the policy people who've been working on developing this work, and they are asking questions. On a national basis, one of our goals as the country of Canada is to have a watershed planning framework for the whole country. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm fairly confident that the work that we've done here in Saskatchewan will contribute greatly to the setting of national standards about how we protect our watershed. So that's something we should all celebrate.

It's facilitated by the dollars that are in this particular budget. The specific dollars that are going to be helping this year will be to allow these new watershed authorities to actually implement their plans. And we'll be having dollars available for local people to be hired to monitor what's going on and work with the committees. So this is all a very positive thing that is happening primarily in the rural and northern parts of our province and we're very pleased about that.

Another area which I want to emphasize is the fact that the Great Sand Hills regional environmental study is taking place right now. And this budget provides \$1.6 million for the final year of this particular study. This Great Sand Hills regional environmental study represents a truly comprehensive approach that will guide our planning to protect the environment while enabling sustainable economic development in this truly unique ecosystem.

And once again I encourage people in appropriate ways to go and experience some of the parts of this particular characteristic landscape in the southwest part of our province. But also remembering that it's a fragile area and we need to be working very carefully to make sure that it stays as a treasure for the province of Saskatchewan.

[15:30]

Another area that is receiving some specific funding in this budget relates to recycling. Recycling is an important activity because it reduces our impact on the environment and it provides new economic opportunities. It's also important because it's an activity that each and every one of us can do as individuals and it allows us to participate in doing some of these things. And in fact earlier today we heard a member's statement praising some of the work that was done in this area in the Shaunavon area.

With this budget we'll be increasing the funding for SARCAN's recycling programs to \$11.3 million. And as many of us in the legislature know, the SARCAN operations right across the province are crucial for the local communities in that they provide jobs for quite a number of people, but also that their activities will make sure that there's recycling available.

This year SARCAN will be able to expand the collection activities to include waste paint — and that was announced and is now in effect as of April 1 — and people are encouraged to take their waste paint to any of the 70 SARCAN sites across the province. We'll also be coming soon with a plan of how we'll



be able to manage our e-waste, or our electronic equipment waste, which will provide a place for computer terminals and cellphones and other devices like this so that they can be recycled in a sustainable way.

The Saskatchewan Environment budget represents an investment in the park system. It allows us to celebrate this 75th anniversary. It allows us to continue to manage our forest resources in this province to make sure that they're healthy and vibrant, and it allows us to deal with the environmental management issues in the oil and gas and mining industries. And these are some of the specific new investments from this year.

But also in the budget of the Saskatchewan Environment, we have the total . . . over \$200 million also funds many ongoing activities which have been provided by many capable civil servants and others to make sure that our air and our land and our water and our wild plants and our animals, and all of these things, will allow Saskatchewan to remain one of the most attractive places in the world to live and work and raise a family.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — And, Madam Deputy Speaker, when one talks about the future and about the hope for ourselves, for our children, and for our grandchildren, one talks about what it means to be somebody from Saskatchewan. And I think that the types of choices that have been made in the budget this year makes some strong statements about where this government intends to go in leading the development of our province for many, many years to come. And what we need to recognize and celebrate is some of the strong assets that we have.

Many of those are natural resources, the agricultural land, the fertility of the soil that we have here. But I always return to recognize that the one true great asset that Saskatchewan has is the people that live here and serve here, and also those people who are part of our community who have gone to serve in other parts of the world. And we need to make sure that we include everybody in what we think about when we talk about Saskatchewan.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this particular budget speaks to the future. It speaks to our families, and for that reason I'm going to be voting against the amendment and I'll be voting for the budget. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure today to rise in the House to speak on the budget and to represent the people of my constituency in Saskatoon Northwest which has both an urban and rural component. It has been a delight over the last two years to hear from my constituents on both the positive and negative of what's going on both in this House and in our government and in our economy. I spend an inordinate amount of time, Madam Deputy Speaker, dealing with my portfolio which is social services, or

DCRE [Department of Community Resources and Employment] issues in my constituency and those of most constituencies in Saskatoon.

You know I heard a lot of going on, Madam Deputy Speaker, from previous speakers. And I want to quote from one:

. . . I just read an article . . . [and] it's very clear . . . [that] what I've described over the last few minutes that Brad Wall, the current Leader of the Opposition, not only knew but participated in these activities.

You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, they're accusations. And I wonder what Andrew Thomson, when he was assistant . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. Order. I would ask the member to keep in mind that members are addressed by the constituency they represent and not by personal names.

**Mr. Merriman:** — I'll give you the direct out of *Hansard* from the other member, from Dewdney, that called the Leader of the Opposition on three occasions, Brad Wall.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. A member is not to do indirectly what they cannot do directly in the Assembly. So I ask the member to take that under advisement and keep it in mind for the rest of his address.

**Mr. Merriman:** — Well thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Two sets, so I guess that's okay.

What I'm going to do today is to take my time to talk about two separate functions within the budget. One is on the business and the economy side. And then I'd like to take some time to talk about DCRE and that side.

I seem to note in the minister's reply, the Minister of DCRE — and I want to give him credit for speaking on DCRE — and he said a whole 20 words. Here's the minister that had one of the largest increases in his budget, and what did he have to say about DCRE? Twenty minutes. Let me quote. Twenty words:

Now when we talked about the Aboriginal commitment in this budget, whether it's SIIT or help through the SAP [program or] . . . TEA increases or whether [we're] talking about pavement . . .

Twenty words about the budget and about social service issues. Wow. Must be pretty proud of that budget.

Let me talk a little bit on the business side. I just had the opportunity to be back in Saskatoon yesterday and to meet with a group of business people and to talk about the budget. To the person at the table, when I asked what they thought of the budget, they said the business tax things were great but they had no trust in this NDP government. They had no trust in the mismanagement of this NDP government.

They go back to tell the story of the nationalization of the potash industry and how that affects worldwide investment. You know today people offshore remember this. They remember how this government nationalized an industry. They also remember . . . And there are people in Calgary today who

remember the raising of the royalty rates on investors in the oil and gas industry, who drove them out of this province and then started SaskOil, and it was that government.

**An Hon. Member:** — That's right.

**Mr. Merriman:** — The Minister of DCRE says that's right, very proud of that, that they're driving business out of our province. This is a minister that can say a whole 20 words on his portfolio. Should be proud of that, very proud of that.

You know the NDP government and its Crowns continue to compete with small- and large-business owners around this province who try to start businesses. The NDP treats investors such as those who invested in the potato industry with disdain. The minister in this House never told the truth for months on the potato industry. And then what'd they do with those poor people . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. I would ask the member, and I think he's well aware of the Speaker's earlier request not to impugn wrong motive to members of the Assembly, and so if he would take his remarks and withdraw that.

**Mr. Merriman:** — . . . accurate information for six years. You know, how does this NDP government and the Premier prior to the last election tell the public that there'll be no new taxes. And then what happens? We have a raise in the PST [provincial sales tax]. Again they didn't portray accurate information. And again the business community has a long memory in this. The business community, and certainly the business community in Saskatoon, understands that in order to do business in this province you have to have a government that's stable and continues to hold its policies and programs year after year after year.

How about the Premier stating that nuclear fuel is the dirtiest form of fuel? I believe he said it came out of a tailpipe. I was in the office of the president of Cameco the day after that event took place, and he said to me, people are calling from all over the world, Ted. They want to know, is the product safe? Are they going to nationalize the industry?

What this NDP government has to understand is that we're in a global market and comments travel throughout the world in seconds. And still today the question is asked by those in the nuclear industry, is the product safe? Are they going to nationalize it? So why would the business community have faith in this government delivering on its promises?

You know, Madam Speaker, what happened just after the last election was something that came out, called most available hours. This government, even in meetings with business and industry, said there would be no new labour laws. And what happened? The most available hours, the job-killing monster was born. And if it wasn't for businesses, cities, universities, and people rising up to tell this government that that would kill jobs and move people out of this province, it would have happened.

And the business community is leery; they're waiting. They're waiting for the son of most available hours. They know it's coming. Then the universities and the cities are waiting. They

know it's coming. They know it will be under a different name, but they know it's coming. And why do they know it's coming? Well they know it's coming because this government received from unions around the province \$285,000 in the last election for their MLAs — \$285,000; that's 30 fully funded campaigns. And somehow that has to be repaid.

You know, Madam Speaker, the Sask Party had two union candidates in the last election. One was the president of SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses]. The other was a member of the media. When they went to their unions and asked for financial support the answer was zero — zero. Funny how you can give 285,000 to one side and not a nickel to the other side. Wow.

You know, the Minister of Industry and Resources comments frequently, in this House, refer to the opposition leader, that he wants to set up a committee to tell him how to run the economy. And what's his fix? Well he does this through the Vicq commission and through things like ACRE [action committee on the rural economy]. You know, what is the difference? I don't understand. The business community don't understand.

**An Hon. Member:** — Nobody understands.

**Mr. Merriman:** — Nobody understands. Nobody is sure what is coming. The member from Silver Springs was the first to present to the Vicq commission and presented the Saskatchewan Party plan. The government tried to ridicule him, laughing about his presentation.

It's evident that not one member on the other side read his submission, for if they had they would have congratulate him for his efforts. It's evident that not one of them attended his or possibly any presentations of the Vicq commission, although our member from Silver Springs or a representative was at them all.

The current NDP reported that the Saskatoon business community — and this is the one that truly bothers him — were what? Greedy corporate hucksters, greedy corporate hucksters. How does you think this makes the business community feel? These are the men and women who sits on boards of NGOs [non-governmental organization], CBOs [community-based organization] and who raise countless of millions of dollars for those less fortunate than others. Who is it that's working to build a children's hospital in Saskatoon? Who is it that's raising the money for a cancer centre for women? Who is it that supports the food banks around this province? The greedy corporate hucksters. You know you can't call somebody a greedy corporate huckster and then expect them to come to the table and be a partner.

[15:45]

Larry Hubich, the president of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, said at Christmas that businesses only donate to charities to get their name in the paper. How insulting is this to the hard-working business people in this province who give back to their communities on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, that's why this budget will not work. You can't tell someone to buck up and then expect them to trust you on

matters as important as the economy.

This province has invested our hard-earned dollars in business investments that have lost over \$1 billion, from Channel Lake to SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] to dot-coms to the Meadow Lake pulp mill. You know the Minister of Industry and Resources says this was a Conservative venture. So was Rafferty-Alameda dam, but I don't hear him telling about how that one filled up. I seem to think they said that will never fill up. He says this was a Conservative effort. Who's been managing that effort for the last 14 years? It certainly hasn't been the Tories.

And there are many, many more. Why would the business community now say, oh the leopard's changed its spots? This government doesn't have the confidence of the business community or the majority of the people of this province.

On the social services side of the budget, Madam Speaker, you know I was just astounded when I read the *Hansard* from the Minister of Community Resources. Fascinating, he spent the majority of his time talking about agriculture. You know I'd be the first to admit that I don't know a lot about agriculture, but I can guarantee you what he knows, you could put in a thimble. You know he spent a whole 20 words on his portfolio — 20 words. You know . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Maybe he does know more about agriculture than he does about social services.

He said to the foster families, in his ministerial statement, that foster families was close to his heart. Well you know, Madam Speaker, they got a 2 per cent increase in the budget. I'm sure that they were glad that they were close to his heart because they sure weren't close to his pocketbook.

You know, we increased rates for the most vulnerable in the last budget by a whopping 33 cents a day — 33 cents a day in the previous budget. In this budget, Madam Speaker, I believe it's around \$1.32 a day, not enough for a cup of large coffee at Tim Hortons. You know we've been pushing this government on these issues for two years. And I've been here, and I've heard them say things that, you know, why does this have to happen?

We've recommended to index the amount of social service assistance for food. We've recommended to raise the amount of the tax level so these people don't have to pay taxes. And why all of the sudden, Madam Speaker, are they rushing to this aid? It's because, Madam Speaker, they have let it deteriorate to a point of crisis. Over 10 years, they gave a whopping ten dollars last year . . . should be proud. And the minister can't even get up and talk about his own portfolio.

You know, I was reading the paper last night and looked at the situation with, you know, the child sex offenders. And I want to read for you a quote, and this quote comes out of today's paper, I believe:

These are . . . most vulnerable youth, and still . . . a real bureaucratic nightmare to try to get services for these kids.  
We're talking . . .

This is pretty funny. You should listen. It's real funny.

We're talking about 13- and 14-year-old kids here. It's easy for us to get a kid into treatment the first time, because we don't have to go through the bureaucratic process. But the second time, the kid has to have a drug and alcohol assessment and . . . addictions worker, and by the time we get [through] . . . that . . . we lose them.

An all-party committee created by the provincial government several years ago to study the addressing of children's sexual exploitation spent hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars and made some 50 recommendations for action, but provincial officials seem to have carried out only the ones that were easiest to accomplish, such as [the amended] . . . Highway Traffic Act so johns' cars can be impounded.

You know, the Premier was the one who closed the White Spruce Treatment Centre, an addictions centre that was state of the art in the 1980s, 1990s. The people really appreciated that. And now we have project no hope. You know we didn't put \$1 into long-term treatment even though we know that it works. The NDP didn't.

You know, we need to look at how we deliver programs and how we treat people. You know, people aren't files. They're people. We need to stop clawing back every time someone tries to get ahead and is pushed back into the system by the unfair clawbacks of this government. If you make a dollar and you lose a dollar on clawback, how much further are you ahead?

You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'll close by saying how disappointed I am that the Minister of Community Resources couldn't even take a portion of his time to talk about his file. How proud is he of that? And on that note, Madam Speaker, I'll wrap up. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I'm very pleased to be able to stand and speak today in favour of this budget. It is a tremendous budget. Of course I will not be voting in favour of the amendment. With such a tremendous budget, Madam Speaker, I think we have a great future in front of us in this province, in every area.

I want to just comment on some of the immediate reactions that I had to the budget from some of those who had an opportunity for a preview. The first folks that I spoke to as I arrived in the Legislative Building on budget day were some members of the Regina Chamber of Commerce. And they just said, Mark I want to tell you that is a great budget. And I was pleased to hear that from these members of the chamber who have really been working hard to try and build the economy in the area, people that we work with regularly.

After the budget when I walked out into the rotunda, I was very, very pleased to run into a member from . . . or pardon me, Peter Gilmer who is with the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry. And Peter of course has been lobbying very hard for many years on

behalf of poor people — not just in Regina, but across the country — and doing a tremendous job for those folks.

And Peter said to me how pleased he was, that this was the best Saskatchewan budget that he had ever seen. And I was thrilled to hear that because one of the things that our Premier said to us when he was running for the leadership of the party — and he has continued to say to the people of Saskatchewan — is that in order to have social progress, we must have good, strong economic progress. And my hearing of what he has been saying . . . says next, but we must not have economic progress without social progress. And, Madam Speaker, in this budget those two concepts are inextricably linked. And I think that is part of the strength of this budget, not only that it provides funding for business and motivation for business to come and operate in Saskatchewan which is clearly the best place in the world to live and to work and to do business and to raise our families, Madam Speaker.

And this budget and the cuts that were made for business provide them with the opportunity to help strengthen their sector and to pay wages which are certainly competitive with wages anywhere in the world, especially for people who are living in a place like this with such a low cost of living.

Madam Speaker, as well, the other part of that was really clearly providing funding for people in need, increasing the social assistance payments, increasing payments to people who are in need all across the spectrum.

And I want to then with those words move into the issue of agriculture, an area that I am very pleased to serve and an area where there is also much need and where this government has clearly responded to that need, and responded by listening to what farmers were saying, listening to what farm representatives were saying, that the education portion of property tax was a very onerous burden and needed to be dealt with.

Our Premier said a couple of years ago the status quo wasn't on. We moved immediately to put some funding into the property tax area — about eight per cent a year. And now, Mr. Speaker, the impact of that for this year for farmers is \$67 million. And when you consider what this province, the people of this province and this government have been putting into agriculture to add to the budget this year — \$67 million — to help provide relief for farmers in Saskatchewan, I was very, very pleased that we could hit this number one priority item and hit it that hard and provide support for our farmers.

I recognize clearly that that is not the be-all and the end-all however. There is significant need in this industry. For our province, I am proud of the way that we have come to the table, pleased with the per capita spending that we do in Saskatchewan. It far outstrips what any other province is doing including Alberta next door to us with their huge dollars. Saskatchewan on a per capita base is putting significantly more into the agriculture sector. And I can say I am very thankful for colleagues who are concerned and who back that kind of spending for this industry which has been hurting over many years.

And so with that, I would also like to say that when we look at

the overall picture of our Saskatchewan budget, \$555 million in new spending . . . The resource funding that has come in we are using to help build and strengthen the very fabric of this province so that no one, no one will be left behind on the path to opportunity.

I'm very proud of the work that has gone into building this budget where agriculture receives funding, a portion of this new funding, second only to health almost . . . Just over 9 per cent of the new funding is going into the agriculture sector, and I am thankful for that commitment of my colleagues. 52.8 million new dollars this year in property tax relief for farmers — this is a good spend, a spend that will help people who today are in dire straits.

When combined, as I said earlier, the total relief for this year is almost \$67 million — no small amount when you consider our overall commitments to agriculture where, on a per capita basis, we are paying \$700 per capita, \$700 million last year, \$1.32 billion over the last couple of years.

You know I hear the opposition trying to take potshots at this government around our commitment to agriculture, but the numbers do not lie, Mr. Speaker. The numbers are clear. The funding that we are putting into agriculture is far more on a per capita base than any other province and on a real dollar base more than most, Mr. Speaker. And I'm very, very pleased about that commitment.

We also as a government clearly have acknowledged that historically the federal government has made decisions that have pulled significant dollars out of the province. And I do not and I will not apologize for the numbers of times that I speak in this House and that I speak publicly challenging our federal government to come to the table. It's not about throwing blame outward. It's about doing our part, coming to the table with \$700 million last year, \$1.32 billion over the last couple of years.

Doing our part and then calling the federal government to be accountable, that's what it's about. It's not about trying to pass the buck, Mr. Speaker. It's about clearly, clearly calling on the federal government to provide the similar level of support to what other federal governments around this world are providing for their agriculture sector.

With that kind of support, this industry and this province and across this country can be very, very effective in providing the goods that are needed and in making sure that the primary producers get the return that they want.

That's the kind of support I'm hoping that we're going to get from this new federal government. And I can tell you, reflecting on yesterday's meetings, that we were well heard in Ottawa when we met with members of the opposition caucuses. They heard clearly what the need is in this province. And I can tell you as well that with an extended meeting with the federal minister where we get along — I just need to say this for the opposition's benefit — we get along very well. We were well heard at that meeting, and we have some hope that this new government is going to respond positively to our ask which would be for 575 million new dollars, emergency dollars to flow into Saskatchewan — 1.6 billion across the country for

grains and oilseeds. That is a reasonable ask, Mr. Speaker, an ask that needs to be responded to positively.

[16:00]

And I can tell you, coming home we have greater hope than we did when we left because of the respectful listen that we got all across the political spectrum from government members, from opposition members. And I am thankful for that responsive ear. And I think our Saskatchewan MPs are going to do everything they can, whether they are Liberal or Conservative. They're going to do everything they can to try and make sure that Saskatchewan gets this payment. And I'm thankful for their responsiveness, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Mr. Speaker, we know over many years that we have been dealing with a mentality in Ottawa that has been pushing a 60/40 split of agriculture programs on the people of this province and on the provinces in total. And I can tell you that there is not a province, Mr. Speaker, that hasn't looked at that and said this is unaffordable.

Now if the other provinces are saying that a 60/40 split is unaffordable, then, Mr. Speaker, in a province where we have 43 per cent to 45 per cent of the arable agricultural land, and we have 30 per cent of Canada's cattle herd, clearly, clearly 60/40 is not fair for the people of Saskatchewan. And we need a change in that formula, and we will continue to press for a change. And I will not apologize. And I expect, Mr. Speaker, that the people sitting across from us agree that 60/40 is not right and that we need to push and challenge on that front on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, with the changes in property taxation, with the support that we have been providing over these past few years, we know that this province is coming to the table to support our farmers, and we are calling for significantly more from our federal government. But we will continue to be there and fulfill our commitments and go beyond those commitments in this coming year.

We have moved the agenda ahead on CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization] quite significantly, and we're quite sure that we will still have CAIS pretty much unrevised in the upcoming year.

But we've moved the agenda ahead by fully funding CAIS '05, announcing that full funding in the third quarter of last year. And in moving that agenda ahead, there has been a clear commitment from our Finance minister that we will not backtrack, that we will be announcing our funding by the third quarter of this year. And I can tell you that that has provided significant relief to farmers to know that they will be hearing well ahead of what they were previously about the funding for these programs.

We will also be funding fully our commitments to the crop insurance program, and I might add that we will also be paying down the debt in crop insurance and continuing to try and construct a crop insurance program that will meet the needs of Saskatchewan producers.

In addition to the \$200 million that we provide to CAIS and crop insurance, we also provide an additional \$107 million for topping up the '03 CAIS program, 75 million for topping up the '04 CAIS program, and 80 million, as I said, which we announced in the third quarter of last year, to top up the '05. This is far over and above what the federal government said we would be compelled to pay to support this program; nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has come to the table, has provided the funding that's necessary, and made sure that we do not shortchange the farmers of this province.

Mr. Speaker, we have committed also to review the CAIS program, to work hard to get a program that is responsive. There are farmers from this province, there are experts from this province, officials who have been working hard on the national CAIS review committee to try and develop a program that will work.

We don't know, Mr. Speaker, whether we will have the CAIS program a year or two from now. The federal government is doing some rethinking about what they said to us at the federal-provincial conference, and we may end up with something new. Mr. Speaker, if something new is put on the table and that something new will work better than CAIS, and if it will provide for farmers the support that is needed, it will be affordable, it will work in a timely manner, it will be WTO [World Trade Organization] green, Mr. Speaker, if there is a program that is put on the table like that, I can tell you that this government will be behind it.

But today we have said very clearly we don't want the baby thrown out with the bathwater. Anybody that would say that we are in favour of CAIS today would be sadly mistaken, Mr. Speaker. We are in favour of revising radically what CAIS is so that it responds to the concerns that farmers have raised, so that it deals with the issues of inventory valuation. But whatever the changes are that are made, and whenever those are made, I have no doubt, given our past experience, that this government will fully fund what is our commitment, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have been there for producers in the past. We will be there in the future. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because we recognize this vitally important part of our economy and, Mr. Speaker, because we care about the people who are out there farming the land and providing at the base level, at the primary production level, this wealth-producing commodity, this wealth-producing part of our economy. And, Mr. Speaker, we will be there for them in the years ahead.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Through our unprecedented support for agriculture, we are helping to address farm income shortfalls due to currency appreciation, high input costs, damaging international subsidies, and low commodity prices. We are working with our federal government to try and make sure that these issues are addressed so that our farmers will be able to compete against the farmers in the US [United States] who are so heavily subsidized in the main commodity areas that we are producing in and the farmers in the EU [European Union] who are also heavily subsidized in those areas.

But I can tell you that, working together with our provincial

ministers, working together with the other provinces and our federal government, we will fill the needs for our producers, Mr. Speaker. And this budget, where we have come to the table with 67 million new dollars for farmers through the relief on the education portion of property tax, indicates that we will not abandon the farmers of this province.

Mr. Speaker, we are building an agriculture industry that is strong. We are building an agriculture industry that will have a future, and that future will be appealing to young people. We are doing that through our continued funding of research. Research has shown that we can build a stronger and stronger industry, and for every dollar that we invest in research and development there is a \$40 return. That, Mr. Speaker, is a tremendous return and has impact on where farming is going in the future and where this industry will go, Mr. Speaker.

Through research we are keeping pace and in fact leading our competitors on many fronts. We are introducing new varieties. We are introducing new commodities. And, Mr. Speaker, we can be and we will be competitive.

Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food budgets more than \$12 million annually to ongoing research support. And when combined with funding for individual research projects, that figure climbed to over 17 million in 2005. That is the highest level in six years.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to believe that agriculture plays an important role in building the new economy through value-added activities and initiatives such as our expanded meat processing initiatives. This budget includes 3.5 million for the meat strategy, including 400,000 for the food centre in Saskatoon — such a vital part in the link of developing new products — 400,000 for the food centre and 1.1 million new dollars for the toll processing centre which, Mr. Speaker, again is a vital link in helping bring new product to market. It brings this product to market as CFIA [Canadian Food Inspection Agency] approved so that it can be sold not just provincially but can be sold anywhere in the nation or in the world. And this, Mr. Speaker, clearly is a good investment in our meat industry in Saskatchewan.

We know that as we build this industry, we will see more value-added development. We will feed and finish more cattle, more hogs, more chickens, more livestock overall in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, that will be a benefit to all farmers and all people of Saskatchewan, and I'm thankful for the investments that have been made through this budget.

Across all of government work continues on capturing the benefits of green energy — biofuels that can be produced from the crops we grow to meet the world's hunger for clean and dependable energy resources. Mr. Speaker, we have people who have invested thousands and hundreds of thousands of dollars in these biofuels industry, in research and development. We have farmers who have invested heavily in them. And, Mr. Speaker, this government works with those people as we seek to continue to build the biofuels industry, and we will continue to provide that support.

We've seen the effect of that support in the new ethanol factory at Weyburn, the NorAmera factory there which is producing

ethanol. And we will also see soon on line the 130- to 150-million-litre facility that Husky is building at Lloydminster.

Irrigation also brings us high-value crops and a different type of crop that can be valued-added — \$5.2 million in our Agriculture budget for irrigation and also a commitment to work with the people to develop new infrastructure, new opportunity, and to help clarify the kind of crops that can be used to help strengthen agriculture. Our new irrigation development branch will create a link between irrigation and value-added opportunities, including livestock expansion and higher-value crops.

We also very clearly value the organic industry. We have put 150,000 new dollars into new organic development funding. This is an industry where we see, in terms of the markets, 20 per cent growth every year in the European market, 20 per cent growth or slightly under that in the American market. The demand is there for organic products and in Saskatchewan we have a growing organics industry. We're investing to make sure that that industry can keep growing.

And we're also working with our Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership to make sure that those people who are producing organic products have the vehicle by which they can also market those products into the world where there is continued demand.

We will work on nutraceutical development where we're taking portions of these grains and oilseeds and that we're using those to help provide functional foods and nutraceuticals also which are in huge demand in the health food sector.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many positive things that are going on in terms of agriculture research and development. But where the link is broken and what is so important is that we get the support we need from our federal government so that the primary producers can keep going, so that there is a desire to stay on the farm, so that there is a desire amongst young people to take over the farm. And, Mr. Speaker, we know that with our provincial commitment if we get corresponding levels of per capita commitment from the federal government, that I tell you it will make a huge impact on this province.

Right now Saskatchewan is paying four times the federal per capita amount to try and sustain agriculture. And I can tell you that if the federal government came to the table at the levels that this province is at the table, we would see unprecedented growth in support in this industry. And we will continue to press unapologetically for further support from our federal government. We need it; the producers of this province need it.

And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the people who are in place in the federal government are understanding more clearly how vital this is to the whole economy of Canada. And I believe that we will see greater levels of support in the months and years ahead, support that really will help the farmers of this province and every province in Canada find a sustainable industry that provides a profit for them.

We'll continue to work with farmers to make sure that that happens. We'll continue to work with the federal government to make sure that happens. And we will work with our provinces

across this nation. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because we know this is a vital part of our economy and we are committed to providing the necessary supports.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This budget provides new support in terms of \$67 million, and for that \$67 million I am very thankful and I know that it will help many farmers. It's not the overall solution by any means. We know that there is much more needed. But at \$700 million last year from this provincial budget, at 1.32 billion over the last couple of years, we've been there. We will be there in the future and we will build and strengthen this industry together.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I will be voting in favour of the budget.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[16:15]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble):** — I recognize the hon. member for Melville-Saltcoats.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was without a doubt the most amazing speech I've heard from an Ag minister in this province for a long time.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — And I almost — almost — went to sleep when I keep hearing these same numbers, Mr. Speaker, and the minister say that the numbers are clear.

Well let's talk about numbers, Mr. Speaker, because in the budget itself, in the budget address, they talk about this budget provides \$98.8 million for base funding for CAIS. Let's talk about CAIS for a minute. And the minister can contradict these numbers if they're wrong, but I believe they're right, Mr. Speaker.

Last year there was \$98.8 million for CAIS program but then there was also additional money put in later in the year. Some years it's the 11th hour; it's at the last minute. Last year I believe it was halfway through the summer before they put it in, but there was another \$154 million put into CAIS funding from the province of Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to see this current Ag minister today show me in the budgetary Estimates book where the additional funding is, because if I'm reading these numbers right — and the minister can correct me if I'm wrong — but the amount of total spending on agriculture from the provincial government, this NDP government, is \$264 million. Now that's away less than last year. Last year it says here it was 424 million.

Well that's about \$150 million less than last year, but that's about 350 less than the minister just said. The Minister of Agriculture just said his government is spending \$700 million on agriculture. That is the farthest thing from the truth, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have ever heard.

And the farmers of Saskatchewan won't fall for it. At a time of need when the CAIS program is not working for farmers but it's the only program they've got, we need this government and we need that minister to come to the table for farmers. And what do they do? Remembering, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this government had a \$1 billion windfall from oil and gas, at a time of huge amounts of money, mountains of money to spend, what did they do, Mr. Deputy Speaker? They cut the agriculture budget for the farmers of Saskatchewan to the tune of \$166 million.

Mr. Speaker, that is amazing, Mr. Speaker, in a time of need for rural Saskatchewan and farm families in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, farmers are going to the bank right now and they've been going to the bank trying to arrange operating loans. How on earth do they get an operating loan from their banker when their provincial government won't even fully fund their share of the CAIS program, won't even come close to funding their full share?

And what I found amazing is that the minister was just down to the federal government asking for help for Saskatchewan farmers, which they desperately need, Mr. Speaker. And the farmers of this province were relying on that minister to go down there. But I don't know, Mr. Speaker, how that minister could go with a straight face asking the federal government to put additional dollars into agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan when he just finished cutting the budget in Saskatchewan for agriculture by \$166 million. That is one of the most hypocritical things I have ever seen this NDP government do, and they've done a number of them, Mr. Speaker.

Farmers in Saskatchewan are up against the wall right now and, in fact in many cases, are having a hard time paying their power bills, their gas bills, and being able to buy groceries for their families, Mr. Speaker. And we have a provincial government that sees fit to slash the Ag budget in the province of Saskatchewan to the tune that it's never been done before in the province of Saskatchewan.

For that minister to get up and say we're spending \$700 million — that government is, on agriculture — is a complete myth, Mr. Speaker. Because right here in their budget, their estimates for 2006-2007 is \$264 million. And the Ag minister hollers over that we don't understand it.

Well the auditor for the province understands this because I'm using numbers from him for last year. These are audited numbers; 2000 and 2005 revised estimates for the province of Saskatchewan, 424 million. And what do we do? We're spending \$160 million less for the farmers in Saskatchewan.

What that tells you, Mr. Speaker, is that government and that minister really don't care about rural Saskatchewan, really don't care about farmers in Saskatchewan. In fact, I believe they wish farmers would go away so we wouldn't even have to deal with them, and we could just have the cities in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it doesn't stop there with the CAIS program and

fully funding the CAIS program. What they've done to crop insurance is another thing, Mr. Speaker. We go on in last year. The minister has been bragging about them spending \$100 million for the crop insurance program. Well let's compare that number to last year's numbers, Mr. Speaker.

Last year the province of Saskatchewan put \$112 million in for the crop insurance program. So again we see a cut to the Ag budget for the province of Saskatchewan to the tune of another \$12 million. And, Mr. Speaker, I would think when the budget's being drawn up that the cabinet ministers around the cabinet table each have to lobby for the people that are under their leadership. And the leadership coming from that minister has fell far short of what we need for the farmers of Saskatchewan.

For a minister, when there's a \$1 billion windfall in gas and oil money, to come away from the cabinet table with \$166 million less for the area that he represents shows that he is a complete failure when it comes to supporting farmers and supporting agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

The crop insurance program — let's go a little further with that. It wasn't long ago we were asking the minister to delay the premiums that were due from last year. And all this does is really show how farmers are really up against it in the province of Saskatchewan and couldn't pay their premiums from last year.

So what we asked the minister to do, Mr. Speaker, to maybe do a few things that could help farmers in Saskatchewan, one of them being . . . is delaying the premium to be paid for say two, maybe three months, to give them time if possible to find some of that money to pay their crop insurance. And what did that minister say? Absolutely no way because it's not fair to the rest of the farmers.

Well, Mr. Speaker, farmers in this province are up against the wall and need help. And this was an option that wouldn't cost the NDP money, something they don't like to spend in rural Saskatchewan. They don't like to spend on agriculture. And the minister, knowing full well this wasn't a cost measure but it was something they could do out of the goodness of their heart to help farmers, and said no — can't do it. In fact a letter from the one farmer I got here and it's from Crop Insurance. And it said that if you don't make arrangements to make this payment by March 31 your crop insurance contract is cancelled effective first 2006.

Well isn't that something. Doesn't that show compassion from this provincial government, Mr. Speaker, when there's something they could do that doesn't cost money and that could actually help farmers. And what they're doing is actually putting the last nail in the coffin of farmers out there. Because it's not just that crop insurance premium, Mr. Speaker. It's also a cash advance that farmers can take out in the spring. But if you're not in crop insurance you've no need to even apply for the cash advance because you can't get it.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, that you can't do, is you can't go to the bank. Because if you don't have crop insurance, the first thing the bank is going to say, you're not in the crop insurance program; I'm not lending you any operating money for the year.

So in essence, what this minister and that government's actually done is taken about the 1,500 farmers that haven't been able to make their premiums, pay their premiums, they, number one, don't have crop insurance. They don't get the cash advance. They probably don't get an operating loan. So, Mr. Speaker, here we go again. Another nail in the coffin of rural Saskatchewan.

And the minister keeps hollering over: what about numbers? Well we saw how the minister deals with numbers when he said they're spending 700 million on agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, it's lucky if it's even a third of that. And he knows full well, and the Finance minister certainly knows because he was the guy that drew up his budget — his own personal budget that he drew up that he's trying to take credit for.

And, Mr. Speaker, rural Saskatchewan cannot afford this government for any longer. They've gone for 15 years under the leadership of this NDP government and they're at a time when they have no room left to go. They're right against the wall. There's farmers declaring bankruptcy. There's farmers going under. And what a time when they need help from their own provincial government — and the federal government, I might add; I'll agree with the minister on that. But at home, the things that we could do like reinstating spot loss hail, helping these guys with their premiums, Mr. Speaker, and the list just goes on and on and on.

And, Mr. Speaker, due to the shortage of time, I'd just like to take a minute or two to talk about this budget when it comes to constituents of mine. And I was listening very attentive that day to what the Finance minister was saying and I was thinking, now what does this budget do for the people in my constituency, the working families out there? In many cases the husband's working, the wife's working, trying to raise a young family; both paying income tax, both paying all kinds of tax out there. Where was the break for them?

And I am thinking of . . . in my constituency I have two mines out there. The Esterhazy mine's out there where there's fairly good wages paid but very good taxes also paid from these employees. Where was the break for these people, Mr. Speaker? Where, when this government has a \$1 billion windfall of gas and oil money, where was the break for these people that have been paying these high taxes for the last 15 years?

Well, Mr. Speaker, there is no break for RM employees, for town employees, for everyone out there in my constituency and for that matter across this province that pay taxes. Where is the break for these people? At what point are they going to get a break, Mr. Speaker? How many billions of dollar windfall before we actually see them get some benefit out of this government? And these are the same people, Mr. Speaker, at the same time there's no tax break for them, the waiting lists stay as long for health care.

All of the things that they deserve out there should be addressed in this budget and are not addressed, Mr. Speaker. So the cuts just keep going on and on and on. And, Mr. Speaker, I could add a lot more.

One thing I'd like to talk about is highways, Mr. Speaker. I look



at the condition of highways in my constituency and then I look at the budget to see how it's going to address the situation out there. And, Mr. Speaker, we've talked to the Highways minister about the possibilities of closing highway depots and satellite shops out there and we're still not sure what they're doing. The Minister of Highways made a commitment that under his leadership and as Minister of Highways none of these things would be closed.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that seems to be contrary to what a study that they've done and a projection that they've done that they are closing these depots. And I hope the minister will stick to his word because our highways — especially in my constituency and many of the members on this side — are in atrocious condition. They're falling apart. We bounce home on them every weekend. Now when the legislature sits and the spring of the year, this is without a doubt the worst time for highways in the province of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, I find it amazing that after three or four deficit budgets and now we have a windfall of \$1 billion, that the average person in my constituency sees absolutely no benefit from this budget, Mr. Speaker. And I'm sure you will understand by my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting this budget.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Prince Albert Northcote, the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to say how pleased I am to be joining this budget debate. And I want to begin by saying some thank yous to some people who I owe very much to, and that's the people of Prince Albert Northcote who have sent me here again. And I want to thank them for that.

I want to tell them how much I do respect the work that they do to make our community a strong and a healthy and a vibrant place. And I also want to tell them that I know we're going through some difficult times with respect to Weyerhaeuser's decision to close the pulp mill in our area. But I want to encourage them, and I want to say to them that we'll get through this and we'll come out with a healthy forest industry and again we'll be creating thousands of jobs in that forest sector in our province and other provinces around northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity last night to attend to our annual business award celebration, the Sam McLeod Business Awards. And I want to say how encouraged I was as I passed through the crowd with the Deputy Premier, and met with business leaders in Prince Albert, their response to this provincial budget.

Mr. Speaker, unlike the comments that we've been seeing from the Saskatchewan Party during this budget debate — and occasionally they'll speak to the budget in question period — the people of Prince Albert are very optimistic. And they're very thankful that the economy has allowed us to deliver the largest corporate tax cut in the history of this province. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, I along with them am very proud of

what this province has been able to achieve.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have to say that it's not universally approved. I'm told by members of the Saskatchewan Party that they'll be voting against this budget. And that's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, because this is one of the — in my opinion — one of the best budgets that this province has ever delivered for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, in the 20 years that I've been in this legislature, I will have to say that there are two budgets that really do stick in my mind and two budgets that I'm extremely proud to have been a part of. And I want to refer to the first balanced budget under this government in 2002, one of the first of 13 consecutive balanced budgets, Mr. Speaker. And how proud all of us in this province need to be for what we've achieved — on top of balancing our budgets, to be able to continue to pay down on an annual basis our debt. And so I want to say to them, thank you for their sacrifice. Thanks for their work that allowed this to happen.

[16:30]

And so that brings us, Mr. Speaker, to this year's budget. This is a result of many, many years of work. It's a result of many decisions made by this administration over the years. It's a result of the foresight that was shown in terms of tax reductions. And we've gone through a list of them.

And we have made this a very competitive province. We've made this a very good place to invest. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe that this budget adds to what we have done in the past. But more importantly, it's a result of the foresight and the economic planning and the planning that we have done in previous years.

Mr. Speaker, it's no secret that Saskatchewan people are hard-working. It's no secret that Saskatchewan people are willing to share and want to see a fair distribution of wealth. And I want to say, more than cutting business taxes this budget showed support for the poorest in our society in a very major way. And so I think it really does speak to what Saskatchewan people and who Saskatchewan people really are all about.

I indicated that last evening I attended to the Sam McLeod Business Awards in Prince Albert. And every year there's a Legacy Award and last night one of the business families in our community was given that award. And I want to say how well deserved the award is.

It's a family business that I'm referring to, Mr. Speaker. Ed Tash and his family were recognized for 26 years of service to our community. And I thought what a wonderful legacy these people are leaving for their children who are now involved in this business, as they're nearing retirement. Their family is all engaged in working in our province and creating wealth, generating job opportunities for other people. And isn't that what Saskatchewan really is all about?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Having been part of the small-business community all of my life, Mr. Speaker, my son

and daughter-in-law are now operating a business in Prince Albert that's a result of the third generation in our family. My father started that business in 1970, and we've operated continually in that province — myself and my wife, and now my son and his wife — and 36 years of generating jobs and working with our community to make it a better place. I had some pride in what the Tash family were able to achieve. It meant very much to me last night.

What I want to say though is this is a result of hard work. Their success didn't come by accident. It came by good planning. And that's the same kind of success that this budget is going to deliver for our young people.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, it's not just about business taxes. Obviously this budget has looked in so many different areas: increased money for education, increased money for health care, increased money for highways. And I will say a few words about the Department of Highways, one of the responsibilities that I have.

The largest budget in the history of this province allocated to the Department of Highways — a 17 per cent increase over last year — and, Mr. Speaker, that money won't fix all the roads. And I recognize that. We recognize that. But certainly it's a good base to create that economic tool for our province, and I think it's a darn good start, and I'm quite proud of what the department officials have been able to achieve. And I'm pleased with the allocation that came from the Department of Finance and the new Finance minister.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I said it's not all about business. This is about working people as well. My colleague, the member from Regina Northeast, has been a tireless advocate of support for tools of the trade for working people who have never been able to write them off as small-business people do or as large corporations do. These people have to pay, in many cases, thousands of dollars in order to have the tools that they need to do their work, to perform their work. And for the first time ever in Canada, they're now able to, as a result of the work done — by primarily the member from Regina Northeast — they're now able to use those as a taxable expenditure, an exemption from tax.

And so I said, Mr. Speaker, the group of people who have been working on the government side to put this budget together can all be proud of what they've been able to achieve.

So where did this money come from, Mr. Speaker? It came from oil and natural gas. And that's occasioned obviously by the high price of crude oil, but it's more than that because if the drilling activity and the production capacity hadn't been there, the money wouldn't have flowed. And if you look at the revenue that's come as a result of our other resources, some of our other resources, from potash and from uranium — record activity. Record investment I believe will come in a few years to ensure that we remain the world's largest producer of potash and that we remain the world's largest producer of uranium. And I want to say that working with my colleagues to ensure that we've got a good and a positive investment climate gives me a great deal of pride.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say as well a few words about some of the criticisms made by members of the Saskatchewan Party opposition. Mr. Speaker, unlike the business community that I referred to in Prince Albert, these people have not had a positive word to say about this budget, with the exception of the tax changes that Mr. Vicq, Jack Vicq and his commission recommended which they have the audacity, they have the gall to take credit for.

Mr. Vicq, Mr. Speaker, didn't need them to make his recommendations to government. Mr. Speaker, he understood the nature of this economy. He understood what it would take in terms of making us more competitive, just as he did when he made recommendations to government in other tax-related matters some years ago.

And, Mr. Speaker, I hear the former leader of the opposition chirp from his seat. And he'll have his opportunity to speak, I would assume, in due course. Mr. Speaker, he is . . . and will choose obviously to vote against this budget because he has never had anything positive to say in his political career that I know of. But, Mr. Speaker, I'll set that to the side because I want to speak about the good things of this province and the good people of this province and what they've allowed to happen.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to say how it is quite defining when you listen to their criticisms and when you listen to their defence of past performance of themselves and of their caucus. And I've just heard one of the members stand up here today and talk about indexing social assistance wages and cheques. And I find this really interesting because it was he and his colleagues who were advocates of a \$50 million cut to those very same people in the last provincial election, led by that member right over there, Mr. Speaker.

And so they can chirp from their seats, Mr. Speaker, but the facts are the facts, and you can't hide from them. Those are the realities. And that's what, Mr. Speaker, these people were all about.

And so I say, Mr. Speaker, this is for the business community, this budget. And it's for those of our families who are on our social assistance programs, on SAP [Saskatchewan Assistance Plan] and TEA [transitional employment allowance]. But it's also for students, Mr. Speaker: another two-year freeze on tuition. And what a signal that is for our young, bright people who are attending post-secondary facilities and who are getting their education here in this province. Here you are recognizing the increasing costs of getting an education, and this budget recognizes that by freezing for two years the tuition. More funding seats, Mr. Speaker, in our educational institutions, 32,000 university seats, 34,000 training spaces, new seats for the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology.

And so I say, Mr. Speaker, it is an obviously balanced approach to delivering a budget. And the members opposite . . . there was a rant just recently here with respect to our farm families — \$97.3 million in revenue sharing to municipalities, Mr. Speaker. That's an awful lot of money. The reducing education property tax on agricultural land by 67 million, Mr. Speaker; \$98.8 million for base funding of CAIS; \$100 million, Mr. Speaker, for crop insurance. And these members, Mr. Speaker, it's never

enough. It's never enough.

Mr. Speaker, I say that farm families are appreciative of the changes that have been made with respect to the education tax on agriculture. Even if that's not the message that these members opposite put forward, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to you and I want to say to all of the people of Saskatchewan that this budget is very much a support budget for agriculture.

The comments that my colleagues have made span sort of across the piece. I want to close, Mr. Speaker, just by saying a few words with respect to the new forest secretariat that has been established to deal with the changes in our forest industry occasioned by Weyerhaeuser's announcement that they will be selling a pulp mill. It's not only my hometown of Prince Albert that's impacted, Mr. Speaker. This goes across the province. It goes from Meadow Lake through to Big River. Towns like Glaslyn, Meath Park are all impacted. There are companies that are outside of our area that will be impacted in a negative way by these actions, Saskatoon as an example. Saskatoon Chemicals, a 100-and-some people working at that facility, they will be impacted as well. So it's important that we do what we can to help to facilitate the development of a Weyerhaeuser sale process in a positive way.

And I want to thank the people in the different communities who I've spoken to from Big River to Meadow Lake to Carrot River and through Hudson Bay. And I do appreciate the impact on all of those families who are impacted.

But I want to say, unlike members on the other side, we're optimistic that we will work with Weyerhaeuser and we will find a solution, Mr. Speaker, and we'll find a positive benefit to these changes. I'm convinced that we're going to position this province with a renewed forest industry that will create jobs and support families and ensure that they too will be part of the path to opportunity and that the forest sector workers will not be left behind.

Mr. Speaker, that is I think pretty much what I want to say about the budget initiatives. I want to say that I appreciate the positive reaction that the general public has had towards this budget. I want to say that there is no way I would be supporting the opposition's amendment to this budget.

I will be voting for the budget with pride, Mr. Speaker, because that's what the people of Prince Albert Northcote would expect me to do. They see a positive budget. They see a path towards future economic development. They see this province putting together a future for their children, just like the Tash family.

And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, the naysayers on that side can be where they are, and they can sit in their comfortable pew in opposition where you criticize everything and nothing ever works right because that's the kind of folks they are. They deserve to be there, Mr. Speaker. I promise you this. After the next election, the people will give them the same opportunity they have right now, and that's to sit and chirp from their seats from the opposition benches because they'll never be over here.

Mr. Speaker, I support this budget with pride, and I want to thank the people of Prince Albert Northcote for allowing me to do so.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've been looking forward to this opportunity to enter the debate on the most recent budget brought down by the NDP. And at my first glance of the budget I thought, how is this going to affect the people that I've been sent here to represent, the fine people of the Rosetown-Elrose constituency?

So of course, Mr. Speaker, being on the west side of the province, the part of the province that has helped this NDP government generate more revenue than they ever dreamed they could have generated because of the oil and gas sector, a large part which comes from the riding I represent, I expected to see a drop in the PST, Mr. Speaker because I knew that the NDP had got themselves into a jam a few years ago and they had to raise the PST, they said, to balance the books and get themselves out of the mess they created.

[16:45]

Well here the fine folks of Rosetown-Elrose helped them out of that mess, and did the NDP government show any appreciation, any thanks and lower the PST? Not a chance, Mr. Speaker. They are enjoying a gravy train on the backs of the people that I represent, and they weren't about to lower the PST and particularly help people on the west side of the province.

I looked at what this budget has done for agriculture, and it's not very much, Mr. Speaker. I see that almost \$200 million less are being spent on agriculture projected in this current fiscal year as opposed to what was spent last year. I find that CAIS is not being fully funded under the budget that was brought down by the Finance minister the other day.

I see in the budget that crop insurance is receiving fewer dollars to the tune of about \$12 million less this year than crop insurance received last year. There's no strengthening of the program. There's no return to spot loss hail, Mr. Speaker. Of course we know coverage has been reduced in the past number of years, so there was nothing positive for me to take back to the fine people of Rosetown-Elrose when it comes to agriculture.

I looked to see what was happening in highways, and we've got some real concerns about highways in the riding that I represent. And I looked to see whether they were going to widen and to put passing lanes on Highway 4 going through the South Saskatchewan River valley through the South Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park, something that's certainly been overdue for a long time. Didn't see anything in the budget. We know that the government, the Minister of Highways, has the power to put that in place to protect lives, to protect the well-being of the people of Saskatchewan. He refused to do that.

I looked to see whether there would be some commitment to maintaining the highway depots in the budget, but, Mr. Speaker, there was none. And in fact what the budgeting and the department led by the Minister of Highways is doing is draining

resources, pulling resources away from these highway depots so that, while they may exist as a shell, the services that are required from them are not being provided.

I looked to see whether anything was going to happen to the Riverhurst ferry to improve it. Nothing in the budget. And, Mr. Speaker, I looked to see generally what they were going to do to increase the quality of our roads and our highways in Saskatchewan, some of which are becoming dangerous to drive on — saw nothing in the budget.

So I thought, well we've seen the NDP strike out with agriculture. We've seen them strike out with highways. Now let's look at health care. And I looked in the Finance minister's budget to see what he was going to do to make sure there were more registered nurses to meet the health care demands in our province. The registered nurses have said that we needed 600 additional positions filled.

I saw nothing in the budget. So when I talked to health care people in the Rosetown-Elrose constituency, unfortunately I cannot bring them the good news that they were hoping to hear, Mr. Speaker.

I was hoping that the construction of the Outlook hospital would be accelerated instead of seeing the project dragged out and the costs increase and the officials from Health going back to the community and asking for more and more money. The last time I spoke with the fine folks in Outlook, they told me that the government was demanding that an architect be contracted with to check the work of the other architect who had done the drawings for the building.

So we had architects doing the work of architects who had probably done the work of engineers. Now, Mr. Speaker, I know that due diligence needs to be done, but the people of Outlook were frustrated at the lengthy and complicated process which was adding costs to the project that they would have to bear at the local level.

And, Mr. Speaker, I was hoping that we would see a commitment by the Health minister to move away from two tiered health care, but instead we're seeing the opposite. We're seeing in fact two-tier health care and the refusal to fund Avastin, a cancer drug. We also see two tiered health care in Rosetown-Elrose because the costs of ambulance services are not fully covered by our health care system.

And so those folks who happen to live outside of the major health care centres are indeed forced to pay much more for their health care, particularly emergency health care required from an ambulance, than are other people in the province of Saskatchewan that are closer to those facilities.

So, Mr. Speaker, then I thought, well is there something here for long-term care? Because as you know, I've mentioned many times I have constituents that require long-term health care and they are forced into a dingy basement in the Rosetown facility. And that community has been pleading with the Minister of Health to do something about it. That community has been crying for some compassion and for some decency from the NDP government, but it is not forthcoming in this budget.

So, Mr. Speaker, I looked at education. And I see that in spite of a commitment from the prior Education minister to fix the foundation grant, there was nothing in this budget, and we're going to be back to zero-base budgeting for the large district of education that exists in my constituency.

We are seeing a potential of forced school closures. As a result we're seeing a starvation of funding for the education system in the part of Saskatchewan that I represent. And it's of course compounded by the fact that we're seeing the province as a whole be depopulated by the wrong-headed policies of the NDP government, and thus we're seeing the loss of teachers as there are fewer students attending these schools. And, Mr. Speaker, it's hard to be optimistic about a budget when we see no commitment to reverse the depopulation trend in rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I thought it was rather humorous that the government made a commitment to immigration — which by the way I strongly support and would like to see more of — but their commitment was to bring in 5,000 immigrants into Saskatchewan on an annual basis. And yet their own job projections in the budget only predicted that 3,200 jobs would be created in this province.

In other words, they want to bring people into Saskatchewan to be unemployed because their wrong-headed policies are not creating the jobs that are required to employ people already in the province, let alone others who would come into the province of Saskatchewan.

So the NDP created quite a mess. Not much good news in this budget for the people of Rosetown-Elrose and certainly not much good news in the entire province. So what did the Minister of Finance decide he was going to do about it?

Well he decided, I'm going to spend more money advertising this budget and promoting this budget than we've seen in the history of the province of Saskatchewan. He said he's going to spend a half million dollars, get his mug, face on the . . . get his mug, pardon me, on the television, his face — Mr. Speaker, I know you want me to be clear on that — on the television trying to cosmetically make the budget look better than it really was.

Mr. Speaker, his attitude ran away with him. And he got in front of the television cameras in a scrum, and he started talking about the budget and why it was this way and why it was that way. And he said, well because it's my budget.

Mr. Speaker, the arrogance of the Finance minister to think that in dealing with billions and billions of dollars in this budget that they are somehow his and he can dispense with them as he pleases in the way he wants without being fully accountable and without being at least a little bit humble, realizing the labour, the sweat and toil that has been undertaken by the people of Saskatchewan, the taxpayers who have to fork out this money. He can stand up and say, it was my budget.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that is a sign that that government is far past its due date, and it's time to go. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't know. I hear rumours that that Minister of Finance has aspirations to replace the Premier. I understand that there's a

little coup going on, a little bit like the some of the fellows in Alberta that are trying to work behind the scenes to oust Premier Klein. And I understand that the Minister of Finance may be heading up one of those large teams to oust the current Premier.

But I've got to admit he really did his campaign damage when he got in front of television cameras and bragged about, my budget, Mr. Speaker. In fact when I look at this NDP government, there's a lot that reminds me of the 1980s. You know these folks on the NDP side, they will just not let the old Devine government be buried as it should be. It was a government of the past just like the Blakeney government was a government of the past, and Douglas and all of those . . . Thatcher, all of those. But they've got to keep trying to dig up the old Devine government.

Well when you look at the Devine government, they ran deficits. They ran deficits, Mr. Speaker, just like the Getty government did in Alberta at the same time. The Peterson government in Ontario did that. Mr. Speaker, federally, the Trudeau and the Mulroney governments were running up deficits. Of course the NDP, not to be outdone, ran up huge deficits in British Columbia. Dave Barrett was a deficit minded premier. And plus he had the Bingogate scandal — you know, some things that make Devine's administration look pretty tame.

However, Mr. Speaker, then there was Bob Rae. He was the man of the '90s that was trapped back in the '80s. And he ran up one of the hugest deficits that any Canadian jurisdiction has ever seen. In fact that's why Mr. Rae only lasted one term and they booted him out and they've never talked about voting NDP in Ontario since.

Well I thought we kind of buried those administrations. I thought, you know, we're going to put Bob Rae and Grant Devine and Getty and Dave Barrett and all those people, we'd leave them to the historians. And those of us who are worried about today's problems would look for today's solutions. But not the NDP folk across the way. Mr. Speaker. They're right back in the '80s.

And we had a briefing, and I sat in on that briefing when we switched our accounting system to summary financial statements. And I remember, Mr. Speaker, not only the Provincial Auditor but members of the Finance department, staff of the Finance department in briefing us said, lookit, do you want to know what the financial status of the province of Saskatchewan is? Do you want to get it in a nutshell? Those officials said, well you turn to the summary statement of changes in net debt. You look at that page in the budget and that'll tell you all you need to know. Now this is the minister's own staff, his own staff, that are telling us this.

And so that's what I did when the budget came out. The first thing I turned to was that line that says net debt, end of year, and also decrease, increase in net debt. And lo and behold, Mr. Speaker, lo and behold, the increase in the net debt according to the minister's own budget numbers — the minister's own budget numbers as we were directed to look by the minister's own staff — show an increase in Saskatchewan's debt of \$288 million. Welcome back to the 1980s, Mr. Speaker. The NDP are

back to their old tricks. They're trying to outdo the old Devine government.

But, Mr. Speaker, the rest of the world has moved on and realizes that those are mistakes. Except for the NDP. They're right back there. They're 30 years out of date, Mr. Speaker. They just don't get it and they're hurting the province of Saskatchewan as a result.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan deserves much better than this budget. We will grant that we needed to see the reduction in business taxes, but that was only a portion of what was required. We need a budget that helps Saskatchewan citizens, that helps the farm families of the Rosetown-Elrose constituency, that helps the construction workers and other industry workers across this province.

We're looking at what's happening in northern Saskatchewan with a loss of hundreds, I would suggest even thousands of jobs on the closing of the Weyerhaeuser plant. I remember just a few short years ago, the NDP promised to create 10,000 jobs in the forestry sector.

Well, Mr. Speaker, their problem was they had a number, but they didn't have a plan. They thought they could bring in negative legislation. They thought they could bring back the agenda of the 1980s and still create 10,000 jobs in the forestry sector. We look, Mr. Speaker, at the latest statistics and we see that Saskatchewan is currently losing jobs.

They are losing jobs under an NDP government that is back in the '80s that has buried its head in the sand with a lava lamp shining off in the horizon, Mr. Speaker. The NDP are still stuck in the days of shag rugs and the Bee Gees, Mr. Speaker. And as a result, Saskatchewan struggles.

We see the other provinces around us. They're in the next century. We look at Manitoba. Even with an NDP government Manitoba is creating jobs. NDP Manitoba doesn't have uranium, doesn't have the potash resources, the oil, gas resources that we have in Saskatchewan, and yet Manitoba's economy is outstripping Saskatchewan's because this is the most outdated, awkward, out-of-touch government in the province of Canada.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's simply the reason why I cannot support this budget, but I'm very pleased to support the amendment. And I hope the members on the other side who have also spoken some concerns about this budget might reconsider their blind obedience to the NDP Party and consider voting with the Saskatchewan Party on that amendment. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — It now being very near the hour of 5 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m. . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . This House stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### PRESENTING PETITIONS

Elhard .....	1141
Draude .....	1141
Harpauer .....	1141
Weekes .....	1141
Allchurch .....	1141
Kirsch .....	1141
Brkich .....	1141

#### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk .....	1142
--------------------	------

#### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Harpauer .....	1142
Dearborn .....	1142
McMorris .....	1142

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Wall .....	1143
Serby .....	1143
Draude .....	1143
Wartman .....	1143, 1153
Beatty .....	1143
Higgins .....	1144
Cline .....	1154
Atkinson .....	1158
The Speaker .....	1159

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

##### Citizen of the Year Dinner Honours Anglin Lake Residents

Borgerson .....	1144
-----------------	------

##### 2005 Melfort and District Chamber of Commerce Awards

Gantfoer .....	1144
----------------	------

##### Saskatchewan First Nation Winter Games

McCall .....	1144
--------------	------

##### Parkland Regional Science Fair

Draude .....	1145
--------------	------

##### Accuracy of Member's Comments

Morin .....	1145
-------------	------

##### Congratulations to the Shaunavon Hometown Club

Elhard .....	1145
--------------	------

##### Yorkton Terriers Win Hockey Championship

Serby .....	1146
-------------	------

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### Advertising Campaign for Provincial Budget

Cheveldayoff .....	1146
--------------------	------

Thomson .....	1146
---------------	------

Merriman .....	1148
----------------	------

##### Funding for Treatment of Autism

McMorris .....	1149
----------------	------

Addley .....	1149
--------------	------

##### Plans for Economic Growth

Wall .....	1150
------------	------

Calvert .....	1150
---------------	------

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### Bill No. 55 — The Reclaimed Industrial Sites Act

Cline .....	1151
-------------	------

##### Bill No. 56 — The Residential Tenancies Act, 2006

Quennell .....	1151
----------------	------

##### Bill No. 57 — The Residential Tenancies Consequential Amendment Act, 2006

##### Loi de 2006 portant modification corrélative à la loi intitulée The Residential Tenancies Act, 2006

Quennell .....	1152
----------------	------

##### Bill No. 59 — The Education Amendment Act, 2006/Loi de 2006 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur l'éducation

Higgins .....	1152
---------------	------

##### Bill No. 60 — The Evidence Act/Loi sur la preuve

Quennell .....	1152
----------------	------

<b>Bill No. 61 — The Evidence Consequential Amendments Act, 2006</b>	
Quennell.....	1152
<b>POINT OF ORDER</b>	
Gantefoer.....	1152
Hagel.....	1153
The Speaker.....	1153
Thomson.....	1153
Draude.....	1153
<b>TABLING OF REPORTS</b>	
The Speaker.....	1154
<b>MOTIONS</b>	
<b>Reappointment to Public and Private Rights Board</b>	
Quennell.....	1154
<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>	
<b>WRITTEN QUESTIONS</b>	
Iwanchuk.....	1155
<b>SPECIAL ORDER</b>	
<b>ADJOURNED DEBATES</b>	
<b>MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY</b>	
<b>(BUDGET DEBATE)</b>	
Cline.....	1155
Eagles.....	1158
Nilson.....	1160
Merriman.....	1163
Wartman.....	1165
Bjornerud.....	1169
Lautermilch.....	1171
Hermanson.....	1173

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