



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

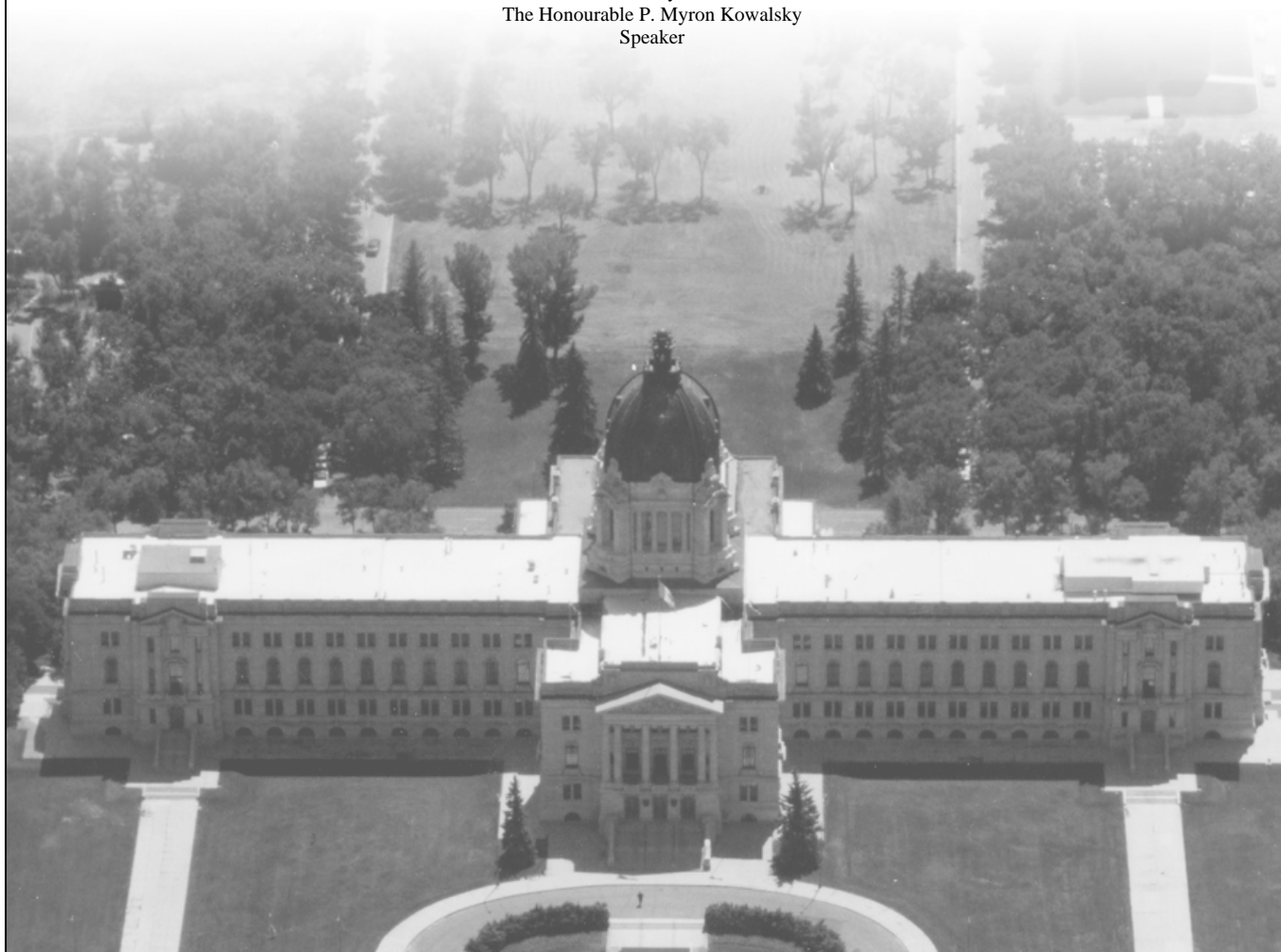
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I present again a petition on behalf of constituents from the communities of Prelate and Sceptre with regard to the condition of Highway 32. The prayer reads as follows:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today on behalf of people who are really concerned about Highway 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 the petition are from Wadena, Yorkton, and Foam Lake. I so present.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It won't come as any surprise today that again I'm presenting a petition from citizens concerned about the safety of Highway No. 5. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to upgrade and widen Highway 5 from Humboldt to Saskatoon.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are quite spread out. They're from Meacham, Nut Mountain, Saskatoon, Quill Lake, Wadena, Preeceville, Englefeld, Humboldt, St. Brieux, Wadena, Colonsay. And interesting, Mr. Speaker, there's a signature from Edmonton, Alberta and Acme, Alberta. I so present.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I rise today to

present a petition from constituents who are opposed to possible reductions of health care services in Biggar:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Biggar Hospital, long-term care home, ambulance services maintain at the very least their current level of services.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the council of the village of Perdue. 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 with concerned citizens of Saskatchewan. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here for calling on the Government of Saskatchewan, pertaining to the Department of Highways section shop:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This particular petition is signed by the good citizens from Watrous, Martensville, and Young, and Manitou Beach. I so present.

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

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise in the Assembly today and present a petition regarding autism spectrum disorders. And it's a very lengthy prayer, Mr. Speaker, which I will shorten. It states:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to act upon some of the following recommendations including, but not limited to, encourage and support autism-related research in

Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition comes from the city of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

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

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to act upon the recommendations made February 2005 by the Government of Saskatchewan caucus committee on human services dealing with autism.

I will read two of those:

Provide adequate and effective early treatment based on intensive behavioural intervention and include speech communication and occupational and physical therapy and medical attention for ASD-related conditions and to encourage and support autism-related research in Saskatchewan.

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

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

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14(7) are hereby read and received as additions to petitions previously tabled being addendums to sessional paper nos. 6, 7, 8, 13, 64, and no. 639.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day 46 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Environment: in the fiscal year 2005-2006, did your department provide any money to Northwest Community Wood Products? And, if so, how much?

And, Mr. Speaker, I also have similar questions for the Minister of Industry and Resources, the Minister of Northern Affairs, the Minister Responsible for Investment Saskatchewan, and to the Minister Responsible for Crown Investments Corporation.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following questions:

To the Minister of Labour: is management of the department aware of any allegations of fraud or other illegal activity within the department or its agencies in the year 2000-2001, such as information received from employees, former employees, customers, clients, suppliers, or others? If so, what is the nature of that activity?

Mr. Speaker, I have the same question for the year 2001-2002 and 2002-2003.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Labour: what did management of the department find as a result of its monitoring of any established programs and controls to mitigate fraud risk or detect fraud in the year 2000-2001?

I have similar question, Mr. Speaker, for the year 2001-2002 and 2002-2003.

Mr. Speaker, I also give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Labour: does management of the department have any knowledge of any actual or suspected fraud or illegal activity within the department during the year 2000-2001? If so, what is the nature of this activity?

Mr. Speaker, I also have a similar question for the year 2001-2002 and 2002-2003.

Mr. Speaker, I also give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Labour: did management of the department have established programs and controls to mitigate fraud risks or to help prevent or detect fraud in the year 2000-2001?

I have a similar question, Mr. Speaker, for the year 2001-2002 and 2002-2003.

And, Mr. Speaker, my final question. I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Labour: 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 2000-2001?

And a similar question for the years 2001-2002 and 2002-2003. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for STC: 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?

In addition I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the Minister Responsible for STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company]:

How did management of the department monitor any established programs or controls to mitigate fraud risks or to help prevent or detect fraud in the year 2001?

To the Minister Responsible for STC: 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 also, Mr. Speaker:

To the Minister Responsible for STC: 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 finally:

To the Minister Responsible for STC: is management of the department aware of any allegations or fraud or any 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 series of questions, Mr. Speaker, for the year 2002.

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for the Sask Crop Insurance Corporation: did management of the department have established programs and controls to mitigate fraud risks or to help prevent or detect fraud in the year of 2001-2002?

I have the same question for 2002-2003, Mr. Speaker.

I also give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Agriculture: 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 2001-2002?

The same for 2002-2003. And I have a number of other written questions, Mr. Speaker, to do with the Department of Agriculture.

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

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following questions:

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

I also have the same question for the years 2001-2002 and 2000-2001.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following questions:

To the Minister of Industry and Resources: what did management of the department find as a result of its monitoring of any established programs and controls to mitigate fraud risk or detect fraud in the year 2000-2001?

The same question for the year 2001-2002 and 2002-2003.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following questions:

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

I have similar questions for years 2001-2002 and 2000-2001.

Mr. Speaker, I also give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following questions:

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

I have similar questions for the years 2001-2002 and 2000-2001.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following questions:

To the Minister of Industry and Resources: 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 2002-2003, 2001-2002, and 2000-2001?

Thank you.

[10:15]

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for the Sask Watershed Authority: is management of the department aware of any allegations of fraud or other illegal activities within the department or its agencies in the year 2000-2001, such as information received from employees, former employees, customers, clients, suppliers, or other? And if so, what is the nature of this activity?

I have similar questions for 2001-2002 and '02 and '03.

I also, Mr. Speaker, give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Sask Watershed Authority: does the management of the authority have any knowledge of actual or suspected fraud or illegal activity within the authority during the year 2000-2001? If so, what is the nature of this activity?

Similar questions for '01-02 and '02-03, Mr. Speaker.

I also have a series of other questions. I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for the Sask Watershed Authority: does the management of the authority have established programs and controls to mitigate fraud risks and help prevent or detect fraud in the year 2000-2001?

I have similar questions for the subsequent two other years, 2001-2002 and '02 and '03.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall ask on day no. 46 the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for the Sask Watershed Authority: what did management of the authority find as a result of its monitoring of any established programs and controls to mitigate fraud risks or detect fraud in the year 2000-2001?

I have similar questions for the years 2001-2002 and 2002-2003.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for the Sask Watershed Authority: what did management of the department find as a result of monitoring any of the established programs and controls to mitigate fraud risk or detect fraud in the year 2001-2002?

And I have similar questions for the two subsequent fiscal

years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I have a notice of written question. I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Justice: has the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission negotiated a start date for Jack Hillson to return to work?

Thank you. I so present.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you two individuals seated in the Speaker's gallery. They are of course the Rev. Femi and his wife Remi Ogunrinde. They are the parents of Sope who is here doing a great job as a Page of course. I'd just like to say a little bit about the family.

They have been very active at the Lighthouse to All Nations ministry which is located in Regina Elphinstone-Centre I'm happy to say. And I also wanted to say, Mr. Speaker, that Pastor Remi gave a very stirring sermon at the occasion of Gerri Carroll's passing and presided over that funeral with a lot of vigour and a lot of grace and gave a very inspiring message. So I'd ask all members of the Assembly to join with me in welcoming the Ogunrindes to their Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to stand today and join with my friend, the member from Elphinstone, in welcoming Pastor Femi and Remi to this House. Pastor Femi's become a friend of mine, and we stay in touch regularly. I want to commend him not only on the spiritual work that he does in this province because he speaks at a number of churches around the entire province of Saskatchewan, but also has taken leadership roles in a very civic manner within the churches, encouraging his flock to be involved with their governments, that we need to make changes here not just up above.

He's a wonderful man, and I'm glad to see his wife here today too, and would ask all members to welcome them to their Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina

Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my sincere pleasure to rise in the House today and ask the Assembly to welcome two guests in the west wing. We have with us today Phoebe DeCiman and — west gallery — and Rumali Werapitiya. This is a fine example of young people in our province who are educated here, who are among the brightest students and finest citizens that we have in the province who have chosen to stay in the province and are currently working in the minister's office of Culture, Youth and Recreation. And I'd like to welcome them to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly today, I would like to welcome a couple constituents of mine from Hafford — Orest and Nadia Proban, and if they would stand and give a little wave.

They're on their way back from Arizona to check on their farm in Hafford, but more importantly they're here to check on their son Neil who works in our caucus office. And I would ask all members to welcome them to their Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Easter Wishes

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this weekend Christians around the world will take the time to reflect on the message of the Easter season. Millions of people will gather with family and friends at Good Friday services where they will pause to reflect on the gruesome details of the Cross and the message of love extended to mankind by a loving, heavenly father through his son, Jesus Christ.

Mr. Speaker, a year ago the film director Mel Gibson, through his film *The Passion*, caused people of all faiths to ask themselves, who was this man we call the Christ and why would a loving God allow such excruciating abuse, pain, and humiliation to be inflicted on such a loving, caring, and giving person like Jesus Christ?

While we are moved to reflect on the details of the crucifixion, there is no doubt that the greatest message of the Easter weekend is, "He is not here. He has risen." Those words are truly a message of love and hope which should cause us to ask ourselves, how well do we reflect this message to those around us?

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of your Majesty's Loyal Opposition the Saskatchewan Party caucus and staff, we extend to each and every resident of our province our prayer for a safe and blessed

Easter weekend.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Accomplished Cumberland House Resident Retires

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Mr. Speaker, every once in a while someone comes along who is so engaged in the life of the community, who so intensely and so successfully pursues their interests and activities that they stand out from the rest.

Mr. Speaker, a constituent of mine from Cumberland House, Franklin Carriere, is one of those remarkable individuals. His exploits are legendary in the North. In 1966, Mr. Carriere won the Ten Dog Sled Championship at the Prince Albert Winter Festival. A year later, he and nine other paddlers re-enacted the famous Voyageurs Rendezvous, a journey of 300 kilometres from Rocky Mountain House to Hudson Bay.

Mr. Carriere began competing in events in 1971 and was Saskatchewan Open Champion for ten years. He was declared King Trapper World Champion in Le Pas, Manitoba in 1989 and has been known as the King Trapper ever since. And just for good measure, Mr. Speaker, Franklin Carriere still holds the Saskatchewan record for portaging — a record he set in 1978 by carrying 1,250 pounds of flour on his back.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Carriere recently retired after 30 years of competition and from the Department of Northern Affairs. I want to acknowledge Franklin Carriere's many accomplishments and thank him for his ongoing work with young people and for his contributions to life in the North. I wish him a long and happy retirement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Kyle Elks Win League Final and Provincial Championship

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The headline in the *Kyle Times* read: "Double the glory." The story is a feature of the Kyle Elk Senior Men's hockey team. The Elks were chasing two titles and were successful in reaching both of them. The Kyle Senior Men's team came up against the Outlook Ice Hawks in the league final and won the league in three straight games.

The other title the Elks won was the highly sought SHA [Saskatchewan Hockey Association] C-provincial championship. To get there the men won every game they played starting with Kerrobert, then Eston, then Leask, and finally a 6-3, an 8-4 pair of wins over Milestone to claim the 2005-2006 provincial banner.

Congratulations to all the players and all the fans who provided great support throughout the season. A special mention to coaches Dan Leshures and Doug Pittman and their manager,

Doug Hodgins. Speaking of Hodgins, he and Craig Van Buskirk dug up the good luck loonie hidden in at centre ice, and that money I'm sure will either ensure the financial stability of the team or else they'll go out and buy coffee.

Mr. Speaker, "Double the glory" — yes but I know that all members will join me in congratulating the Kyle Senior Elks provincial champions on a fine season. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

University of Regina's 31st Annual Athletic Awards

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I recently had the pleasure of attending the University of Regina's 31st annual athletic awards, an evening dedicated to celebrating the commitment of almost 300 athletes from 16 varsity teams and honouring the achievements of outstanding U of R [University of Regina] athletes both past and present.

Mr. Speaker, Lara Schmidt received the President's Award, the award presented to a student athlete who best represents a combination of superior academic and athletic performance. Wrestler Ali Bernard won her second consecutive award as Outstanding Female Athlete. And second year track and field athlete, Wade Huber is this year's Outstanding Male Athlete. Female Rookie of the Year is volleyball player, Beth Clark. And track and field athlete, Ian Jestadt is Male Rookie of the Year.

Mr. Speaker, each year the U of R also gives out two awards for Cougar excellence otherwise called ACE [Awards for Cougar Excellence] awards, recognizing the achievements of former athletes. This year the ACE recipients were Dr. Sue Hilton, who coached the women's basketball team from 1971 to 1980, and the 2001 CIAU [Canadian Interuniversity Athletic Union] women's basketball team, winners of the University of Regina's first ever national women's basketball title. I'm pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that two of our staff members who are currently sitting in the gallery, Rumali Werapitiya and Phoebe DeCiman, were part of that spectacular team.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, I congratulate all the University of Regina athletes on their efforts and on their achievements. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Melfort's CJVR Radio Station Wins Awards

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to tell you about Melfort's CJVR country radio station's achievements once again this year. CJVR celebrated their 40th year on air by winning the Fans' Choice Radio Station of the Year Award at the Saskatchewan Country Music Awards. Melfort's radio

station can boast that no other radio station has been able to win this prestigious award for 11 straight years.

Mr. Speaker, this remarkable achievement was earned against a strong field of competitor stations with a much bigger market. CJVR's own David Baker also returned to the awards podium this year to receive the On Air Personality and Best Director awards. They've also hosted CJVR's show Canadian Coast to Coast, repeat winner of the Country Radio Show of the Year. This is a program that features and promotes only Saskatchewan and Canadian country music artists.

The manager of CJVR, Ken Singer, is very proud of his staff for the dedication and passion they show to Canadian country music.

Mr. Speaker, and members of the legislature, please join me once again in congratulating the CJVR team for their success in country music radio entertainment in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Spring Holiday Season

Ms. Hamilton: — This is a season of renewal, Mr. Speaker, especially for Saskatchewan where the winters are so often extreme. The fields and streets have emerged from their blankets of snow. We see green springing from the earth as it thaws. Flowers sprout and trees adorn themselves with leaves, and the lakes shed their icy layers after months of winter's chill.

And this is the Easter season, Mr. Speaker. Christians across the globe will share their own understandings of renewal and of rebirth. Also, Mr. Speaker, at sunset yesterday began the Jewish Passover. For Jews this is a season to celebrate their Exodus. It's a time for the renewal of Jewish faith and for their nation.

Whatever your faith stance in life, Mr. Speaker, this is a time every year that we see the land reborn, and we can reflect on the themes common to all of us. Suffering, wisdom, sorrow, joy, death, and rejuvenation are familiar to everyone.

Mr. Speaker, spring is an exciting time for our great province of Saskatchewan. The Easter weekend marks a time to celebrate rebirth. It's a time for hope. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to wish you, the Assembly, and all of the staff a holiday filled with peace, with joy, and with love. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:30]

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

Remarks Regarding Crystal Methamphetamine

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House I apologized unequivocally for using language that was not befitting this legislature. Then I waited to hear if the Minister of

Finance would have the personal integrity to acknowledge the insults and accusations he made about our stand on crystal meth were not just true, but certainly not befitting the position of the second most powerful man in government. I was not just disappointed that he did nothing, but that the Premier did not deal with the issue in a morally expeditious manner.

Mr. Speaker, this is a statement that I made in House. I quote, "So I'm on record, we're all on record as knowing . . . we'll do whatever we can to eliminate or . . . decrease any chance . . . there would be a manufacturing of crystal meth."

Somehow this is the way the Minister of Finance interpreted what I said, quote, "Yesterday the member for Kelvington-Wadena stood in this House and said it was more important to have cough syrup in grocery stores than to . . . shut down the meth labs . . ."

The NDP want to talk about credibility. My question is, how credible can this minister be when he's willing to misquote and make statements that are unbelievable and outrageously wrong? My grandmother always said you have to earn respect; no one has to give it to you.

The minister and his whole government has a long way to go to earn the respect of the people of this province on any issue when they're willing to use the procedures of this legislature to their benefit, yet ignore their responsibility to the people of this province to tell them the truth. Their actions speak louder than could any words when describing their own credibility and integrity.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order.

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Forestry Task Force

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On October 4, 2005, the Premier announced the formation of a task force. The purpose of the task force was to assist in finding a buyer for the Weyerhaeuser mill. Mr. Speaker, what has the task force accomplished to date?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to say that the task force has been working, along with officials within government, very diligently. There have been long, long hours put in, and there's been much thought given to the future of the forest in our province. And I want to say this morning that I commend the men and women on that task force who have given of their time, given of their

expertise to support their community but more importantly to support their province.

The task force is not the entity that is involved in bringing players to the table. That's not its role. That's not its function. That's the function of the officials who are now housed in the Saskatchewan Forestry Secretariat. And I want to say that they have been doing a very excellent job on behalf of the province. I'll also say that the people who have come to view Weyerhaeuser's assets, who have come to take out documents are there as a result of the work that the government of this province has done. That's what we've been doing.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Seven hundred people out of work at the mill, 200 people laid off at Big River saw mill, hundreds of other local suppliers will suffer. So will hundreds of people who run skidders and feller-bunchers that get the trees to the mill. These are highly skilled workers who are leaving. Many will never return.

All of this could have been avoided if the government had heeded the warnings issues by Weyerhaeuser. This NDP government could have acted quickly on cogeneration. It could have looked at stumpage fees and adjusted other regulations to help all forestry operators become more profitable. Mr. Speaker, has this government learned its lesson from the Weyerhaeuser closure?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, let me say to that member of the Saskatchewan Party, let me say to his leader, and let me say to the former leader, if there is a lesson to be learned, it should be learned by the Saskatchewan Party who, on the last forest initiative in Prince Albert, chose to involve themselves. And there is a member sitting in that corner of this legislature as a direct result of the inappropriate involvement by that person and that person.

And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, we've got the best people in Canada engaged to make recommendations for us, to work for us . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. The Minister of Highways and Transportation.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, we have the best professional advice that we can find in this country working for us. And I want to say if we're looking for further advice, it won't be from old worn out Tories. We'll phone Grant Devine directly, not Grant Devine lite over there.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for

Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now the minister in charge of forestry task force is talking about direct investment of taxpayers' money into the Weyerhaeuser mill. I think when the minister responsible for SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] starts talking about direct investment, everybody should get a little nervous. We all remember what happened with SPUDCO. It was a complete disaster. Millions of dollars were lost.

Mr. Speaker, now that this minister has failed again, what is the plan? Will they now find someone new for their task force, someone who can talk with the local people about how to make the forestry sector viable?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — You know, Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the level of understanding that members on the opposition show in this interest. Mr. Speaker, here we have a pulp and a paper industry in North America under some severe constraints with respect to saturation of market. It's not just a Prince Albert initiative. It's not just a Saskatchewan initiative. Mr. Speaker, this industry is under pressure North American-wide. If he took the time to understand what was going on, he would also understand that you don't put a deal of this size, of this magnitude, together overnight. He should also understand that this is Weyerhaeuser's process, not the Government of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we have acted responsibly as a government, bringing potential purchasers to Weyerhaeuser's table. Mr. Speaker, we have marketed this forest, which is one of the best forests left in North America. It's an incredible asset, as are the people of our province. And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, we don't need any advice from the likes of those folks over there.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Changes to Education Grants

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the minister's attention the grant cuts of another school division. The South East Cornerstone School Division just received its budget as a newly created school division. And there's a problem here too, Mr. Speaker; it's short \$5.3 million. That's a cut of 56 per cent. I would like to repeat that, Mr. Speaker — 56 per cent. Over half of their grant money is gone, and someone's going to have to pay for it.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain why property tax owners in Weyburn and area could face property tax hikes to pay for the NDP's [New Democratic Party] cuts to education grants?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, education financing is really a shared responsibility between the province of Saskatchewan and the property tax base. We recognize that there is concerns with the education property taxes and, Mr. Speaker, we took some very significant steps over the last couple of years — \$110 million that was paid across for an 8 per cent reduction for property tax . . .

The Speaker: — Members will come to order. Minister of Learning.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, we . . .

The Speaker: — Members will come to order. Minister of Learning.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, we made some significant steps over the last two years: 110 million that was put towards property taxes, greater education portion of property tax in the last two years, and then also 53 million that was targeted at agricultural farm land. Mr. Speaker, that brings to the total of 67 million that was put towards agricultural property land.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, there's a hidden agenda on that side of the House. It's a hidden tax agenda.

Mr. Speaker, I quote from the South East Cornerstone's School Division media release dated April 7, and it says: "This substantial financial impact will be felt fully and immediately by education property tax payers of the southeast."

I know that this is something the people of Saskatchewan should know. Maybe it's even worthy enough to make a commercial, but I doubt if ever the minister will tell the people on TV that they're going to have a hidden property tax agenda in the Southeast.

Mr. Speaker, why is the minister hiding possible tax hikes from the people of Saskatchewan? Are the people of Weyburn expected to pay more because the NDP have cut their educational grant by over \$5.3 million?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, there is always changes in the foundation operating grant, in changes in enrolment in the school division, changes in assessment. And this year we've seen a further shift with the zero-grant boards and the amalgamation into the larger school divisions.

Mr. Speaker, now this is how the opposition has absolutely no credibility in this area. The numbers are posted on the Department of Learning website. The school divisions have

been spoken to many times. They have been involved in the review and restructuring of the foundation operating grant. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has absolutely no credibility, and this line of questioning is ludicrous.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, the Prairie South School Division received its first provincial budget as a newly amalgamated school division. It's about \$16 million, but there's a problem. It's short \$2.6 million in comparison to the grants the former seven divisions received — a 14 per cent cut, Mr. Speaker.

This money has to come from somewhere or it means a loss of services. Does this cut mean people will be seeing a property tax hike to make up the shortfall? Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain why Prairie South's grant was cut so drastically?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, yes we can explain why there has been a shift in the foundation operating grant. We will see this in a number of divisions. With the larger school divisions, the zero-grant boards, being eliminated, have a huge impact on the operating grant that goes out to the various school divisions.

Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear. We have been very upfront with the school divisions. Mr. Speaker, this is part of the initiative to restore equity within the school divisions. And, Mr. Speaker, the school divisions were well aware of the movement that was happening.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, the Finance minister took a lot of pride telling the people of Saskatchewan how much money this government's spent in the recent budget. We even see him on TV telling us how good the budget was. But he's not telling us the whole story, Mr. Speaker. He won't tell the people, he won't tell the people about school board grants being cut. I wonder why that is, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order please. Order. Members will come to order. Member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — I wonder why that is, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure the people of Saskatchewan would like to know whether they are facing property tax hikes because of this NDP budget. Mr. Speaker, this money has to be made up somewhere. Will that minister explain why the Prairie South School Division has to deal with this massive cut, and who will have to pay to make up the difference?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite clearly has no credibility when it comes to this issue. Mr. Speaker, you can see clearly, we were very clear that there was an increased . . .

[10:45]

The Speaker: — Once again I'd ask the members to come to order. The Minister of Learning.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, there clearly has not been a reduction in the foundation operating grant but there has been shifts in where that funding goes to. The elimination of the zero-grant boards, Mr. Speaker, we knew that was going to have an effect on the divisions. We were very clear in that, but it's all part of the process of restoring equity to the divisions and providing consistent services to the students of Saskatchewan right across the province.

Mr. Speaker, this is all about improved services and opportunities for young people and students in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Crime in Saskatoon Riversdale

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Trinity is located in the Premier's constituency. On March 30 Ernie Stefanuk, the parish president, wrote a letter to the Premier about crime in the area. He writes, and I quote:

Our Cathedral and adjacent auditorium has and is experiencing acts of vandalism, theft and confrontation with prostitutes and gangs. Our parishioners and volunteers are harassed and in fear . . . [for] their personal safety. Worshippers have had articles stolen and their cars vandalized.

Mr. Speaker, what is the Premier going to do about this serious problem in his own constituency?

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I hope that the member from Saskatoon Southeast wants to ask this question twice because I have a question for him. But on the issue of inner-city neighbourhoods, Mr. Speaker, we have added in this budget more safer communities and neighbourhood investigators. They are, and they have been over the last two years, shutting down buildings in which gang activities are taking place, illegal drugs are being sold, there being prostitution.

This is the initiative, this is the legislation that the member from

Saskatoon Southeast called part of a set of strange and bizarre pieces of legislation and which he said was full of flaws and inadequacies, Mr. Speaker. He hardly has any credibility on the issue of safety and crime.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Well, Mr. Speaker, whatever it is that they're doing, it's not working so far. Ernie Stefanuk goes on in his letter, and I quote:

This situation has existed for a long period of time and is getting worse, including personal threats and physical harm. In addition, there is a serious potential harm from discarded needles and condoms on cathedral property.

Mr. Speaker, this church is right in the Premier's own constituency. What is the Premier going to do to address street crime in his own constituency?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, this budget also adds, of course, 14 police officers, some of whom are stationed in Saskatoon, specifically directed at gang suppression; two designated prosecutors, operational money for that. We're taking steps, Mr. Speaker. We don't think organized crime is a pesky housefly like the member from Saskatchewan Southeast.

Now the member from Saskatoon Southeast made an accusation that there was a political vendetta against another individual in this province. Then an hour later he couldn't remember making the accusation. Then he said he misspoke himself, Mr. Speaker, a word popularized by Richard Nixon, but which suits the member very well. Now where is the member's apology, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we have a serious problem with crime . . .

The Speaker: — Members will . . . Order. Order. Members will come to order. Member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we have a serious problem with crime in our province. We expect this government to do more than flail about. We expect positive results.

Mr. Speaker, this church, as well as the Pleasant Hill Community Association, are doing their part. The community association is holding a public meeting tonight at Pleasant Hill community school. The church has improved visibility and security by installing lighting and alarm systems. They're hiring security officers. The community association deserves the

presence of the Premier at this event.

Is the Premier going to go tonight, and will he set up a meeting with these people to try and deal with the problem that's in this Premier's constituency? Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, there'll be two members of this government, two members . . . Mr. Speaker, there'll be two members of this government, two members of this cabinet at that meeting, and there will be the leader of the safer communities and neighbourhoods initiative at this meeting to explain what has been done, what we are doing around gangs and around SCAN [safer communities and neighbourhoods]. There have been eight shutdowns of buildings in Pleasant Hill alone since this program was initiated.

Again I say to the member from Saskatoon Southeast, he made an accusation which he couldn't remember which he admitted outside was not true, and where is his apology to this government and to the members of the Legal Aid Commission?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Advertising Campaigns

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we know in an unprecedented fashion the NDP government is going to spend a half million dollars advertising its budget, 10 times, 10 times more than the former Finance minister spent to promote, provide information about his budget. We don't know if it's about damage control for the budget or if it's about the minister's leadership campaign that's clearly under way over there. Or maybe it's both, Mr. Speaker.

But on top of that, we know that this fall, the Minister of Industry, not to be outdone, Mr. Speaker, in the leadership race over there, has already indicated the government will blow another \$2.5 million on another version of the Future is Wide Open campaign, Mr. Speaker.

Now isn't that interesting? Isn't that interesting? The last time they ran a campaign showing ads promoting Saskatchewan in Saskatchewan was just before the last election. Now, Mr. Speaker, we see them positioning themselves again to use taxpayers' money for their campaign.

At the very least, can the minister assure this Assembly that he won't personally appear in those advertisements?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I haven't spoken to my agent about this yet, but I would say to the Leader of the

Opposition that we will have a campaign this year to promote the province, Mr. Speaker. The bulk of the spending will be outside Saskatchewan. It will not be within Saskatchewan. Although I suppose, Mr. Speaker, that if we get the story out right about Saskatchewan, many of those people outside Saskatchewan may come to Saskatchewan, invest in Saskatchewan, and live in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And that is the goal.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — That's what we will try to do because people have told us that we have a good story to tell about Saskatchewan that we need to get out to the world, and we're going to take that positive message to the world as part of our campaign, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, it was so very obvious last time around with the Future is Wide Open campaign, with 8 million taxpayers' dollars spent, it wasn't about promoting the province of Saskatchewan. It was about promoting the interests of that party over there. That's what it was about.

Now we see it again with this budget . . . a half million dollars, the minister personally appearing in the advertisements because the budget, frankly, is going south on them when they thought it would be a positive thing, Mr. Speaker. And now they're going to do it again. Now the other leadership candidate . . .

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we know the Minister of Industry is upset and a little envious and jealous of the Minister of Finance's financing his leadership campaign with taxpayers' dollars. So the assurance we want from him is this: will he simply assure the House, will he assure this Assembly that he doesn't need to appear personally in the advertisements, firstly. And secondly, will he ensure the House that these ads — all of the advertising, whatever they budget, Mr. Speaker — is going to be outside the province of Saskatchewan, because we know when they pay for advertising with taxpayers' dollars in Saskatchewan, it's about NDP politics not about promoting Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I already indicated to the Leader of the Opposition and the House that the bulk of the spending by far would be outside the province. I already indicated that, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to make it clear that we will be working with the Rotary clubs of Saskatchewan on the Your Future Is Here campaign which is aimed at young people, encouraging them to

consider pursuing job opportunities in Saskatchewan. So I will not say that no activities will go on in Saskatchewan, but the bulk of it will be outside Saskatchewan.

But I want to say to the Leader of the Opposition and the House, Mr. Speaker, that one theme that we have heard consistently from business people, over and over and over again has been the need to market the investment opportunities in Saskatchewan to the rest of the world. We are going to do that, and we make no apologies for doing that.

And I'm sorry that this is going to disappoint the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, but no, I do not intend to appear in the ads.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, we want to thank the Minister of Industry for showing significantly more good sense than his colleague then, the Minister of Finance.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Here is . . . The NDP government spent \$8 million on the Future is Wide Open campaign that started in November 2002. That month when they started the campaign, there were 475,000 people working in Saskatchewan. Today, after the campaign, \$8 million — 472,000 people working in Saskatchewan. In the fall of 2002 there were 996,000 people living in Saskatchewan. Today we're down to 991,000 people living in Saskatchewan.

The proof is this, Mr. Speaker. More than an advertising campaign, we need the product. And right now the NDP simply don't know how to deliver that product — a complete growth agenda for the province of Saskatchewan. Will the minister commit to this, will he commit to implementing the Saskatchewan Party's growth agenda so in fact there's something to promote, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, isn't it interesting that at a time when there's record investment in mining exploration in Saskatchewan, the Leader of the Opposition says there's no investment growth in Saskatchewan. Isn't it interesting, Mr. Speaker, that when there are record exports in Saskatchewan, record manufacturing growth in Saskatchewan, and, Mr. Speaker, record increase in private investment in Saskatchewan, that the Leader of the Opposition would say that there's no growth in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is growing. The Saskatchewan economy is growing. And there are more people working in Saskatchewan this year than there have been two years ago or the year before, Mr. Speaker. There's no question about it. And

over time, we're having more people employed, and we have more investment. The only thing not growing in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is the popularity of that party over there.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

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

Bill No. 205 — The Recognition of First Nations and Métis Children Act

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move Bill No. 205, An Act to recognize First Nations and Métis Children in Saskatchewan be now introduced and read a first time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Swift Current, Leader of the Opposition, that Bill No. 205, The Recognition of First Nations and Métis Children 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 member for Swift Current.

Mr. Wall: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

[11:00]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, I'll be tabling answers to written questions 856 to 886 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 856 to 886 inclusive have been submitted.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

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

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

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to enter into the debate on the final day of the debate on the budget as presented by the NDP.

Before I get into my brief remarks, because I understand that we are under a time constraint this morning, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to just indicate first of all to the residents of Canora-Pelly that June 21 of this year marks the 11th year that I have been elected as the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Canora-Pelly. And indeed, Mr. Speaker, a lot has happened in those 11 years, and I'm very grateful to the people of Canora-Pelly, especially the so many residents that have come forward — whether they supported me or not — to bring concerns to my office, to ensure that we develop a solution to the problems that we face, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to indicate that I have a tremendous staff back in my office. I want to express my appreciation to Bob Blahay who is my constituency assistant — who's been with me I think probably nine and a half of those 11 years — and to two other individuals who assist whenever needed, and that being Renee Parsons and Carol Sleeva. Those people do a tremendous amount of work for me, providing me with information, and they're pretty organized as well in the office. And as my colleague indicated, I do appreciate that fact very much, that we try to be able to inform and help people whenever we can.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to spend my time on a few issues because it's so difficult to talk about everything that I'd like to get on the record. Mr. Speaker, last week I had the privilege of being in the town of Canora to help the CIBC [Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce] celebrate its 100th anniversary. They opened their first branch in Canora on April 5, 1906, and of course that's 100 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate for the record that in 1966 the CIBC Canadian bank report indicated this about the area served by this bank. It says that it covers about 1,100 square miles and the population is about 11,000, which means that in Canora was about 2,600 people.

And the thing that caught my interest, Mr. Speaker, in this it said that the area is a good mixed-farming area devoted chiefly to grain growing with livestock operations still being expanded. Agriculture products such as milk, butter, eggs and poultry are shipped into the mining centres of northern Manitoba. The town continues to increase in importance as a shopping centre with first-class medical facilities.

Mr. Speaker, that's 1966, 40 years ago when the people of Canora and area, going all the way out to Preeceville and Sturgis and Kamsack, were the hub of providing products for northern Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, wouldn't it be nice if this province was moving in a direction that would allow east central Saskatchewan to become the hub? The communities of Preeceville and Canora would become centres of providing

information and products to a growing east central Saskatchewan.

We know that it's possible. We know that very well, Mr. Speaker, that the Athabasca oil sands and the oil shale project in Canada which includes the Pasquia Hills is a huge project. We see the potential development north of Canora and north of Preeceville for hundreds and hundreds of square miles of potential oil reserves. The other product, Mr. Speaker, is that this area is going to be able to probably produce a product called benzene, which is going to mean a huge development.

But, Mr. Speaker, the investors, the people that will make this grow are not willing to come to a province that is led by a socialist government that in fact inhibits growth. And that's what's wrong with this province. Mr. Speaker, that's what's also wrong with this budget.

When we take a look at agriculture . . . and I'm going to begin with that topic. You know, in the Canora-Pelly constituency the largest industry is of course agriculture. Many farmers have expressed their concern about products. And the grains and oilseeds market, the return for the product is at an all-time low. Mr. Speaker, farmers are thankful that at least the BSE [bovine spongiform encephalopathy] crisis has been addressed to a degree and in fact a product that they sell is at least returning some dollars.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, this provincial government had the ability to address a number of concerns. One of the concerns that is on the minds of every farmer is of course crop insurance. And, you know, to put this into perspective, Mr. Speaker, you have to be able to explain it so that people in a business community, people who insure their businesses can understand it.

Mr. Speaker, crop insurance is like a business interruption insurance. If a business is going to buy business interruption for a particular tragedy it purchases that insurance to guarantee that its resources, its revenue can be maintained to get it through that particular tragedy. Well, Mr. Speaker, in crop insurance, the crop insurance that a farmer can purchase, no matter how good a farmer is, no matter what farming practices he has, the best insurance that that farmer can purchase is one that still leaves a 20 per cent deductible because they can only purchase 80 per cent coverage. Now, Mr. Speaker, if you ask any business person to buy a business interruption insurance that would have a 20 per cent deductible, I'm sure that they would laugh at you because that is something that just will not ensure that a business can survive.

So here we have this government, who is not pushing forward an agenda with the federal government of the past and the current federal government, that says we need to develop a better crop insurance program. What this government is doing is in fact cutting the actual coverages. And this year the crop insurance program has seen a reduction in the amount of money that this province is willing to put forward to ensure that farmers at least have an opportunity, if everything around them is failing, things that they cannot control, whether it be the weather or whether it be other related incidents that contribute to a loss of revenue . . . This government is not behind them. And that's what we're seeing, Mr. Speaker, in the Canora-Pelly

constituency.

I listened over the last number of days to the many members opposite talk about taxation and talk about the fact that this government was so proud of the fact that it was addressing the 60/40 spending of monies from the two sources that support education, which is government and property tax.

Now let's take a real look at what has happened, Madam Deputy Speaker. The government has, through its budget, cut the amount of money that it in fact is going to be allocating. If you look at the total budget increase to education costs, the government has increased the foundation grant by \$11 million for the entire province.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, you can speak to many different people involved in the education community. The costs that the education system will actually incur this year, the increases are probably going to be in that area of 40 to 70 million. Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, if the government is only adding \$11 million to that pool of resources, how can the Premier stand up at a SARM convention — which is the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities — and say we've reached 60/40? That 60/40 split will not be maintained.

As we heard this morning in question period, there are many school divisions who are surprised by the fact that their transfers from the provincial government through the foundation grant formula in fact show reductions based on the amount of money that they were receiving before amalgamations took place.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, I know that a number of members opposite don't also understand that in these urban systems, in the public systems, there was a need to address an inequity — that in fact the amount of money transferred per student was not the same in rural Saskatchewan as it was in urban Saskatchewan. And in fact I understand that the Regina public board of education will be receiving as much as \$10 million more; the Saskatoon public board of education will be receiving a number of millions of dollars more to address that concern.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, if the pot of money has only grown by 11 million and you've added additional funding to larger urban boards because of addressing that inequity, where are you going to find the rest of the money? The rest of the money, Madam Deputy Speaker, is coming from rural Saskatchewan. That's what this budget is all about. It's from shifting that money from rural Saskatchewan into the NDP's lack of vision, if I might add.

Madam Deputy Speaker, another item that I wanted to speak about in the few minutes that I have left is health care. One of the most important issues in Canora-Pelly is of course the construction of the integrated health care facility in Preeceville.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this project has been announced by the NDP government now for seven consecutive years. And I raised this, Madam Deputy Speaker, in question period a week ago when I read from a news release of the Government of Saskatchewan, the Executive Council, dated August 16, 1999, and it said that, you know, the project at Preeceville was one

step closer to being completed.

And then, Madam Deputy Speaker, there was another press release, September 19, 2003, that says, “The government is moving ahead with plans for a new integrated health care centre in Preeceville . . .”

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it’s interesting because the local papers in the fall of 2003 covered the visit of the then minister of Health. And there were a number of photo ops that took place. Pictures were taken involving the minister. And it was in the *Preeceville Progress* of September 25, 2003, where the minister of Health along with other dignitaries in Preeceville — including the NDP candidate in Canora-Pelly at that time — posing for a photo, Madam Deputy Speaker. I found that interesting in the month of September 2003 that that would take place, and then the election would be called in October for an election date on November 5.

Isn’t that interesting, Madam Deputy Speaker, that for seven years this government has said, you know, the Preeceville project is important. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, to the people of Preeceville and Sturgis and Endeavour and all surrounding area, you bet it’s important. It’s the most important project to them probably for the next 30 years.

But the problem, Madam Deputy Speaker, is this. When that project was announced in 1999, the estimated cost of that project was \$4.5 million dollars. And of course under this current government’s plan the local community must fund 35 per cent. So the local cost was \$1.6 million.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there have been a tremendous amount of fundraising projects. People in fact have indicated that, you know, for the last seven years they’re almost exhausted by the number of projects that have been undertaken. Individuals have donated \$10,000 to this project to make sure that the 1.6 million that was needed was there.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, because of this government’s procrastination and delay, now there has been a revision of the project based on new costs. The new costs now, Madam Deputy Speaker, are \$10 million. So now the local community has to fund \$3.5 million. That’s an additional 1.9.

So the people of Saskatchewan . . . And I give the mayor of Preeceville, you know, all the credit in the world. Mayor Grant See is saying, you know, this is so important; we cannot let the fact that this government is unwilling to change the formula stop this project. So they’re trying to, Madam Deputy Speaker, put together another \$1.9 million after working for the last seven years to get the first \$1.6 million together.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget did not address the fact that this government needed to address the percentage of funding that is necessary to make sure that health care facilities, whether they be in Moosomin or in Outlook or in Maidstone or in Swift Current . . . that there is a need for this government to step forward and say, we approved you for a specific amount of money and now this government is going to pick up that additional cost to ensure that the health care facilities can be provided.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there are so many things in this budget that are lacking. And that is why I will be supporting the motion put forward by my colleague, the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs, and I will be not supporting this budget.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[11:15]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Yorkton, the Deputy Premier.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am very pleased today to join in the debate on the budget. I want to also say, Madam Deputy Speaker, how pleased I am to have the opportunity to represent the constituency of Yorkton, Madam Deputy Speaker, that in fact has provided me with an opportunity to assist in helping build a strong Saskatchewan environment, a strong Yorkton environment. And I want to thank the constituents of Yorkton for the opportunity to serve them.

I also want to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, that this is the 15th occasion that I’ve had an opportunity to be part of the budget process. And I want to say that this is one of the proudest moments that I have, in standing in this legislature and speaking to, in my view, one of the best, strongest budgets that we’ve had in Saskatchewan, Madam Deputy Speaker, in decades — not only, not only in this term of this administration, but in decades, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The fact is I want to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, when we arrive in this legislature, all of us who sit here, we always attempt to leave this place a little better than how we found it. And I would like to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget, in my view, provides for me an occasion to be able to say that today Saskatchewan people, the people of my constituency of Yorkton are far better served because of this administration and the work that this Premier, this government, and members on this side of the House have been able to do in order to bring about a difference in the Saskatchewan climate. And I’m proud, Madam Deputy Speaker, to be part of this administration that’s made such a difference for Saskatchewan people.

I also want to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, how proud I am of the fact that in Saskatchewan today, our economy is firing on all cylinders. We’ve achieved that through a period of time where we’ve had low commodity prices, droughts, and frost but, Madam Deputy Speaker, very careful planning and investment in this province. But most of all, Madam Deputy Speaker, for the tremendous support that Saskatchewan people have provided to this government in times where things were difficult, and today where things are in a far better place to be realizing the successes of the toils of their work and ours, Madam Deputy Speaker, in making a difference and a strong appreciation for the people of Saskatchewan for helping us get to the point that we are today.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in the next few minutes we are going to have an opportunity to listen to both the Leader of the Opposition and, Madam Deputy Speaker, to the Premier. And,

Madam Deputy Speaker, it will be clearly visible in the next few minutes — when we have an opportunity to listen to the two leaders, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition — about what leadership, Madam Deputy Speaker, is all about and about how it is that you build a Saskatchewan economy, and how you, Madam Deputy Speaker, work away at tearing down an economy in Saskatchewan, Madam Deputy Speaker. And I think it'll be important for us to pay attention to the differences and the contrasts.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this Premier and this government and this budget has set an agenda, a plan, Madam Deputy Speaker, where nobody gets left behind on the path to opportunity and to building a better future right here in Saskatchewan, Madam Deputy Speaker. And it's a balanced approach of which the Premier will be speaking of and the Minister of Finance and those of us on this side of the House have spoken of.

And we said about how it is, Madam Deputy Speaker, how we've been able to balance the finances of the province over a period of 15 years, at a time, Madam Deputy Speaker, when we had some difficult experiences here and a huge debt that was left to the Saskatchewan people, Madam Deputy Speaker, by an opposition and a Conservative Party in this province, Madam Deputy Speaker, of which many members and philosophy today still exist on the opposite side of the House, Madam Deputy Speaker.

This budget invests in communities. It invests in people, Madam Deputy Speaker, and it provides tax relief on a number of fronts. And that's why, Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget talks about building a better future right here in Saskatchewan — building a better future where we're cutting the business taxes, where we're in fact freezing university tuitions and funding 64,000 students in this province, Madam Deputy Speaker, and increasing assistance, Madam Deputy Speaker, here in this province.

I want to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, that this budget also addresses a number of areas as it relates to communities and agriculture and areas of which in this province are so important in building a stronger Saskatchewan climate, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I want to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, that in our review of what this budget is about — and I've been about the province now on a number of occasions — I have yet, Madam Deputy Speaker, to find anybody in Saskatchewan who says that this budget has not provided the kind of balance and success of which they were looking for. And I'm so proud, Madam Deputy Speaker, with, Madam Deputy Speaker, the exception being only the members opposite from the Saskatchewan Party who go on a regular basis condemning the virtues of the budget.

I want to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget is presided and overseen by the Minister of Finance. But more importantly, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is overseen by the leader — a leader, Madam Deputy Speaker, who understands the economy of Saskatchewan, who is an economist, who understands the economic climate, not only in our province but across the country. An individual, Madam Deputy Speaker, who's been a public servant in this province on a variety of different levels.

An individual, Madam Deputy Speaker, who understands the needs of Saskatchewan families, who pioneered in this province the child tax reform, not only for this province, Madam Deputy Speaker, but for the country, and leads that campaign today. An individual, Madam Deputy Speaker, who has worked within the health care field and understands, as the minister of Health, the importance of growing and sustaining a strong Saskatchewan healthy community. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, who served in the cabinet of the years of the '80s and '90s, Madam Deputy Speaker . . . or during the '90s, Madam Deputy Speaker, where in fact the debt needed to be slain, Madam Deputy Speaker, and were able to turn that around and today presides over an administration, Madam Deputy Speaker, where we have not seen the kinds of successes that we enjoy today.

And a leader that goes about the province and a party that goes about the province talking about hope and optimism and creativity and how we can build a stronger Saskatchewan community.

And then, Madam Deputy Speaker, you contrast that with the kinds of leadership that we see from the members opposite, where we see, Madam Deputy Speaker, members getting up on a regular basis, the Finance critic . . . And I expect in a few minutes we're going to hear from the Leader of the Opposition who's going to say that single-handedly somehow he's responsible and their party is responsible for Vicq, Madam Deputy Speaker. We're going to hear him tell us about Vicq.

He's then going to tell us about how he and his party reformed the personal income tax in the province. And he's going to talk about the CO₂ development. None of which, Madam Deputy Speaker, has any factual credibility because those projects, Madam Deputy Speaker, were led by the Minister of Industry and Resources, were led by the Minister of Highways, Madam Deputy Speaker, in this province, making a difference.

We're going to hear, Madam Deputy Speaker, the member opposite talking about how in fact we should grow the economy. But I bet you, Madam Deputy Speaker, we won't hear one, one signal about what the Leader of the Opposition believes of his own plan, Madam Deputy Speaker, which is his document, Enterprise Saskatchewan. I bet you, Madam Deputy Speaker, we hear nothing about Enterprise Saskatchewan when he stands up and talks about how he would grow the economy, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And I bet you that he won't stand up and talk about how he intends, Madam Deputy Speaker, to decertify labour unions in this province, Madam Deputy Speaker, and how he intends, Madam Deputy Speaker, to tear up labour contracts in this province. I bet you he doesn't make any . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. Other members have had an opportunity to enter in the debate. I would ask that they allow the member on his feet to continue. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Madam Speaker, I bet you the Leader of the Opposition won't stand up and talk about how he muzzled his critic of Agriculture so he doesn't go to Ottawa to participate in the most significant debate today affecting Saskatchewan people, how he muzzled the critic from Saltcoats Melville so he doesn't go to Ottawa.

I bet you, Madam Deputy Speaker, he doesn't talk about assisting the government today on its equalization plan which he railed on about on a regular basis in the last session in November, where it was important for us to take a trek to Ottawa and get a better deal for Saskatchewan people and Canadian people on equalization. I bet you he doesn't touch on that at all today, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And I bet you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we'll be watching to see whether or not the kinds of apologies he makes, Madam Deputy Speaker, for not allowing his member from Saltcoats Melville to participate in the debate on agriculture and bring home a package for Saskatchewan people. Why, Madam Deputy Speaker? Because he didn't like, the member from Saltcoats . . . member didn't like it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to say that the member, the unelected leader from the Saskatchewan Party, the new conservative party, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm going to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, to this end. We've watched in this House the new strategy of the Leader of the Opposition where there is now a new code of ethics. This new code of ethics has allowed in this House for us to hear on a regular basis, apologies from the members opposite. Every day in this House we have an apology on the new code of ethics, Madam Deputy Speaker.

We have an opportunity here now to see the member from Weyburn, Ms. Bakken-Lackey who is no longer sitting in their caucus, Madam Deputy Speaker. Why? Because we have a new . . . today the democratic reform that's working on that side of the House, Madam Deputy Speaker, where politics oversees over principle is what the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy, Madam Deputy Speaker, talks about.

And I want to say, Madam Deputy, the new democratic process, Madam Deputy Speaker, where the member from Canora-Pelly says that the most respectful female in the province, Madam Deputy Speaker, who provides leadership to the Crown and that of Lieutenant Governor is not a team player, Madam Deputy Speaker. Can you believe the member from Canora-Pelly standing up in his place and saying that the Lieutenant Governor of the province is not a team player when they were Liberals together, Madam Deputy Speaker. And today he finds himself in the corner of the Saskatchewan Party which is a Tory party, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And the violating of the principles of democracy in the Melville-Saltcoats riding, Madam Deputy Speaker, where not only do you have the voters of the community selecting a different candidate and then having it overturned by the new Saskatchewan conservative party . . . That's the kind of code of ethics, Madam Deputy Speaker, of which the new party, the new conservative party in Saskatchewan today purports to.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to say that I am proud, I am proud, to be a member of this government. I'm proud, Madam Deputy Speaker, today. I'm proud, Madam Deputy Speaker, to be part of an organization or part of an administration today that is doing a number of things: cutting the business taxes, freezing university tuitions until 2008, increasing assistance for the most vulnerable — Madam Deputy Speaker, a budget that is balanced in its priorities and in its bottom line.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am proud as members on this side of the House to be led by a leader, Madam Deputy Speaker, who understands community, understands the fabric of Saskatchewan people on values and co-operation and commitment, and who presides, Madam Deputy Speaker, over a budget today that has helped Saskatchewan people get to a place, Madam Deputy Speaker, where we now have new opportunities. Now we have an opportunity to grow the economy in our Saskatchewan.

And I want to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, that as long as I have a voice in this province, irrespective of where it comes from, Madam Deputy Speaker — whether it's from my constituency or this legislature or members of this Assembly — we will never, ever, Madam Deputy Speaker, vote for a . . . ever want to see in this province again, Madam Deputy Speaker, a group of men and women who presided like they did in the '80s, which are the Conservatives of the past who are back here again, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And I want to say that not only will I be supporting this budget, Madam Deputy Speaker, but will be working, Madam Deputy Speaker, to work hard to make sure that Saskatchewan people are well benefited by the outcome of this budget.

And I want to say in closing, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I am proud to be a New Democrat. I am proud to be serving the people of Saskatchewan from the constituency of Yorkton, and to be part of an administration that's led by a leader who understands Saskatchewan community and is building an economy in our province that is left unheralded in many fronts. Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I look forward to voting for the budget.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Swift Current, the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, it's a great pleasure to enter the budget debate today on the day of the budget vote, and what I'm sure will be a successful vote on the amendment to the budget that have been put forward by my colleague, the member for Silver Springs.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I haven't been able to be in the Assembly for as many of the budget debate speech efforts as I would like to have been, but certainly I've been trying to keep track of them in *Hansard*. And I have noted, Madam Deputy Speaker, I have noted the speeches made by members on this side of the House. I have noted, Madam Deputy Speaker, that they have been quite appropriately about the budget. They've been about the things that were done right in the budget, the one thing that appears to have been done right in the budget. And our speeches from this side of the House have been also about the unfortunate long list of things that represent failures in this most recent NDP budget, but to be sure the speeches were on point and they're about the budget.

[11:30]

What have we heard from that side of the House? I also, Madam Deputy Speaker, if you can believe it, well I looked at

some of the speeches in the *Hansard* from members opposite. And I've had other members tell me about them. And what have they been talking about?

This is a budget that they're all very proud of, or so they say. They say, some at least in the early part of their speech . . . For one sentence, I think the former minister of SaskWater — the one that presided over SPUDCO — said this was one of the proudest moments of his time in the Legislative Assembly. And then he went on to talk about anything but the budget, talked about 20 years ago and 15 years ago. They simply weren't talking about the budget.

I think my colleague, the member for Saskatoon Northwest, pointed out that the minister for Community Resources and Employment, the minister responsible for a very important file in terms of social services in the province of Saskatchewan entered the debate. He was given 15 or 20 minutes, as all members were to debate. What did he talk about? Did he talk about those in need? How much time did he spend on his file with respect to people that are vulnerable in our society, people who need a government to lead in their efforts to become independent and off the cycle of dependency? How much time did he spend on his file? Twenty words. Twenty words in 15 or 20 minutes from the minister responsible for Social Services.

And you know what the rest of it was, Madam Deputy Speaker? It was politics. That's all it was. It was 20-year-old politics. Because you see, as we saw in question period with respect to the Future is Wide Open campaign, they're planning again . . . Heaven help us all. We saw it in question period. For this party opposite it has been for decades about politics and not about what's good for the province of Saskatchewan, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And interestingly enough, Madam Deputy Speaker, while the Deputy Premier was just speaking . . . And I don't know why so many of his colleagues weren't really interested in what he had to say, but I noted particularly — I noted particularly — the Minister of Agriculture spent his time, when he should have been listening to the words of the Deputy Premier, he wasn't. He was heckling over here to this side of the House. And I kind of caught a little bit about what he said, but I had to have it confirmed to me by my colleagues who hear it.

And do you know what he said during this budget debate from his seat, Madam Deputy Speaker? He said the reason that that imaginary Belle Plaine ethanol plant that was announced by the minister for SPUDCO — you remember that — the reason that it failed was because of the Saskatchewan Party member for Thunder Creek. That's what he was . . . And he believed it. Because when the member for Thunder Creek said no, that's not the case, he got all animated and said absolutely it is.

Madam Deputy Speaker, here's the reason why the imaginary, why the imaginary Belle Plaine ethanol plant didn't work. It's the same reason that this budget is a failure, Madam Deputy Speaker. The reason is that the author of that deal and this budget is that NDP government on the other side of the House. That's the problem. That's the problem.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Madam Deputy Speaker, we're at a pivotal point in the history of our province. We are on the brink of unprecedented opportunity for this province, both within Confederation and within what is becoming an emerging new West inside of Canada.

And I would give you — and I admit this is anecdotal evidence — but I'd give this to the members of the House, Madam Deputy Speaker. Not long ago, shortly after I released that economic vision that the Deputy Premier was so generously pointing out here moments ago — the Enterprise Saskatchewan plan — moments after I released it . . . and so there for days after, the former Finance minister, Janice MacKinnon, said, boy this is a step in the right direction. She said she really liked the direction of that plan.

A couple of days after that we went to Calgary. And there was a meeting that had been organized there by a young entrepreneur in Calgary who was born and raised in Calgary but has a love for Saskatchewan. His name is Andy McCreath.

He's the same young gentleman that actually brought to our province former President Bill Clinton, and he brought here Lance Armstrong. And not long before that, Bill Rancik was here from *The Apprentice* show. And I was grateful to have the opportunity to speak on that panel with the winner of the first season of *The Apprentice*.

But anyway, young Mr. McCreath had organized, through his company, this luncheon. And at this luncheon was exclusively ex-patriots from the province of Saskatchewan. They were all under 30 years old. They all had moved to Calgary. So before I spoke, I went around the room and I asked each person that was there, I said, you know, if there was opportunity for you to come back to Saskatchewan, would you come back? And do you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, I was surprised at the numbers because I was hopeful that maybe half, maybe half of those young men and women I asked that question to — the hundred or so that were there — would say yes, we would come back to Saskatchewan.

I assumed well they were, you know, recently graduated, having fun in the, quote, "big city," in Calgary and enjoying themselves, and I wasn't sure that more than half would say it. And do you know what? This is a modest estimate based on going around the room, Madam Deputy Speaker. I tell you, I would say two-thirds to three-quarters of these young people, they didn't even hesitate. They did not even hesitate to say were there an opportunity to come back to Saskatchewan, they would come back.

What were the opportunities they were looking for, Madam Deputy Speaker? Well many of them were involved in the corporate sector in Calgary. Yes, yes they were involved in that sector that the NDP's political bedfellows call greedy corporate hucksters, you see, because, Madam Deputy Speaker, there is a critical mass of private sector companies and co-operatives, frankly, in that city. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, there is opportunities then for the graduates from all over Canada who graduate commerce, who are marketing graduates, who have accounting designations, for lawyers, for engineers, you name it. And that's why they're there. But the good news is this, Madam Deputy Speaker, they want to come back. They want to

come back would there but only be the opportunity to do so.

So therefore, Madam Deputy Speaker, that's why we look at this budget through the following lens, through the following filter if you will, and that is this: does this budget implement a complete growth agenda, a government-wide growth agenda that can provide the leadership that will lead to the opportunities so the people in that room in Calgary, those young people, can come home, Madam Deputy Speaker? And the answer, Madam Deputy Speaker, is absolutely not. Absolutely not.

The NDP government in this budget has made the mistake of picking from one of the Saskatchewan Party's planks for a growing economy — and there are many, many planks; there's many, many elements. They've taken one step, and they think that's a growth agenda.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the analogy is like . . . You know what the analogy is? The analogy is a football team that needs . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . They do. It's like a football team that needs a quarterback, a wide receiver, a middle linebacker, a new strong safety, a place-kicker, and a new offensive coordinator. And that team goes out and gets a wide receiver — a good wide receiver mind you — but it gets out only a good wide receiver and that's all. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, the chances then of that team turning things around and winning aren't very good because they missed the complete picture.

And that's why, continuing with the analogy — as I know the member from Indian Head-Milestone would want me to do as he's paying attention very carefully to these words today — to continue with the analogy, you remember, Madam Deputy Speaker, when we raised with this Minister of Industry in the budget, in what followed after the budget debate, we asked him how in the world could we have lost 5,200 jobs in the last year in the middle of a boom? We asked him that. And you know what the minister said? Well the minister said he took comfort from the fact that his government wasn't doing as bad as it usually does, Mr. Speaker.

That's that same team, that's that same team I just talked about that went out and got a wide receiver when they needed all those players. Can you imagine what would happen if Danny Barrett had a press conference midway through the season and said, well we haven't won a game yet, but we're not losing by as many touchdowns as we used to lose. You know what would happen, Madam Deputy Speaker? You know what would happen? That kind of leadership would be replaced and replaced with a different kind of leadership that could win some games, Madam Deputy Speaker.

But if you listen to the budget, if you listened to the budget debate efforts across the floor, you will have heard a good old NDP-style fearmongering. They've started for the next campaign already. We know, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the favourite fellow campaigners of the NDP are fear and loathing, both of them. Sometimes they bring along envy for the campaign, but really they like to campaign with fear and loathing. And so they go back as far as they think they need to go back and they talk about 20 years ago.

And amazingly yesterday in this Legislative Assembly, the

Minister of Industry, the Minister of Industry of all people, offered these little nuggets for everyone to consider. He was talking about, he was talking about what might happen if the Saskatchewan Party . . . Actually what he was talking about was the situation that will happen when the Saskatchewan Party wins the election . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — But he was making stuff up. He was absolutely making stuff up. He was fearmongering. What he was doing was similar to what we saw in the last campaign. I don't know if my colleagues remember those billboards that the NDP put up in the campaign that said that the member, the current member for Rosetown — the then leader — had a plan to wipe out the minimum wage. Unbelievable. Not a shred of evidence, not a shred of evidence. It was about fearmongering, Mr. Speaker. It was about fearmongering.

So that Minister of Industry got up yesterday and tried to portray our growth agenda in the following terms. Here's what he said. He said the Saskatchewan Party would gut the occupational health and safety standards of this province. You know, making stuff up, just pulling it right out of the air, Mr. Speaker, pulling it right out of the air. Starting their ridiculous campaign of fear and loathing 18 months ahead of the next election.

And then believe it or not, you know what? He went on. He drew the analogy then between the future of this province and the Virginia coal mine disaster. Can you believe that, Mr. Speaker? I guess he was intimating that if you elect the Saskatchewan Party, that that's what could happen in Saskatchewan. It was the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker? There's a bit of a miscalculation going on here politically because their little fear and loathing tactics have worked to some extent obviously in Saskatchewan politics for 60 years.

Oh they've said that anybody opposing them will shut down hospitals. I remember the Assiniboia-Gravelbourg by-election because I was working in this building, and I was following politics then. And you know what the NDP said during that by-election? They said if you elect these . . . if you re-elect a member other than an NDP member, the government will close all five hospitals in that constituency. That's the kind of fear and loathing that that Deputy Premier is now engaged in today.

And do you know what happened, Mr. Speaker? Do you know what happened? Those hospitals did close. And do you know who closed them, Mr. Speaker? That socialist government right across the way. That's who closed those hospitals, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Well we're seeing it now. We're seeing the fear campaign start already. Can you believe it? The West Virginia coal mine disaster. The spectre of that great human tragedy that took the lives of miners in that state now raised for political purposes, but disgracefully, by the Minister of Industry. And I don't know about my colleagues, but I'm waiting for the day when he stands up and apologizes for that ridiculous remark,

Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the budget fails the test because like other budgets previous, the authors haven't changed. The authors of this budget are still the NDP, the NDP government that has presided over the loss of 5,200 jobs in the last year; 2,065 people left Saskatchewan just in the last quarter. They've already passed judgment on that government. They passed judgment on their fear and loathing tactics and on their backwards policies and their lack of an economic plan, and unfortunately they have left.

Since the Premier took office in 2001, 12,758 people have left Saskatchewan. Over the last five years, Saskatchewan recorded the highest youth out-migration levels in the Dominion of Canada — 8,701 people between the ages of 20 and 29, like those young men and women I met in Calgary, Mr. Speaker, have left under this Premier's watch.

And the changes in the budget — notwithstanding the fact that they're positive — they don't change the fact that this is still the NDP government in power. And they don't change the fact that yesterday we were able to raise, unfortunately in this Assembly, from the *Resource Investor* website who were writing about the oil sands in Saskatchewan, we raised this quote. And listen very, very carefully because here's the problem. Here's why, Mr. Speaker, this NDP budget is not the answer for the province of Saskatchewan. Here's the quote:

... Saskatchewan hosts rich oil sands ... [perhaps] even richer than Alberta's. The problem is politics. The Saskatchewan government has been ... [all but] closed to development ...

That's their reputation. That's the reputation you get from a government's attempt to shove most available hours down the throats of our economy, only backed off by a municipal sector and universities and businesses who stood up to this government.

That's the kind of approach, that's the kind of indictment you'll get from places like the *Resource Investor*, of a government who likes to compete with the private sector with their own money. A government who decides to be ubiquitous in the economy. I don't know how many investments in companies that they have, Mr. Speaker, competing with the private sector and sending a negative message to venture capitalists from within and outside our province who could create jobs and help to grow our province.

And I'm going to return to that in a moment, Mr. Speaker, but if you'll permit me to address some very specific concerns I have that affect my riding, constituency of Swift Current, to be sure but really the whole province — some gross inadequacies of this NDP budget.

Agriculture, we're in the middle of maybe the worst and most significant crisis in agriculture in the grains and oilseeds sector certainly that we have seen in Saskatchewan. Over this week we've had a chance, yesterday in Moose Jaw and earlier on southeast Saskatchewan, talk to a number of producers. And

you know, here we are in mid-April, in mid-April and the producers that I'm talking to, that many of our members are talking to, when you ask the question what are you planting, what are you seeding, they don't know. They almost unanimously have said — and the member for Thunder Creek was there last night — they don't even know. Middle of April, we don't know what we're seeding.

[11:45]

That's how serious the situation is. They've looked at all the commodity options. They've looked at their planting options and the prices, and they can't square the circle. That's the situation we're in today in agriculture in grains and oilseeds sector.

So what does this government do in the budget? You would think then that an NDP government that says they care about all parts of the province, you would think, Mr. Speaker, when they're sitting on 1 billion more dollars than they had last year, that they would show a little compassion, that they would back up words with actions, Mr. Speaker. Right?

What was in the budget, Mr. Speaker? They are again refusing to fully fund CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization]. As imperfect a program as it is, they've yanked that money back from farmers. They've yanked it back again, Mr. Speaker. They cut \$12 million from crop insurance, never mind the fact that they showed no flexibility with respect to the deadline for crop insurance. That's what came in this budget, Mr. Speaker. That's what we got from this government, and that's why they will never elect an NDP member in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — That's why. Because when they needed this government most, when they needed that Deputy Premier most ... He's the Minister of Rural Economic Development, and when they needed him to stand up at the cabinet table and fight for farmers in the middle of a crisis, when they had 1 billion extra dollars, he wasn't there, Mr. Speaker. He let them down. And he will pay a price for that in Yorkton constituency in the next election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — That's why the numbers in Yorkton aren't looking so good for the Deputy Premier anymore because they understand there that this government — and he is in leadership — has lost their way, that in the middle of a crisis they would cut the agriculture budget, Mr. Speaker.

What about health care? We have the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses saying you know, we need some targets. We desperately need this government to set some targets for recruitment and retention of nurses. Here's a budget, good chance to do it. Billion extra dollars, good chance to do it. Wasn't there. No targets. Minister said he doesn't like to set targets because the chances are they won't hit them. And unfortunately the people of the province believe them. But you know what, we still need leadership that's prepared to set targets and be held accountable to those targets.

The Manitoba budget will increase nursing students to 3,000, double Saskatchewan's 1,557. We have the worst retention rate of RNs [registered nurse] in the country at 66.8 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

What about Avastin? Was there a commitment to fund it? Was there a commitment for copayment for this cancer-fighting drug that can extend life? No, not a dime. Not a thin dime, Mr. Speaker. The minister says, well it's expensive. Well I don't know. How much are 150 Saskatchewan sunsets worth? I don't know. How much is it worth to perhaps have life extended long enough for some other drug or some other treatment to come along that can save life or extend life? But not here in NDP Saskatchewan. They're sitting on \$1 billion extra and what did they say? If you can afford Avastin, if you can afford it, you go ahead and buy it. If you can't, I guess you're out of luck.

Do you know there was a movie on not long ago — I forget the name of it — about a man who fought against that very, very notion. That if you could afford health care, you could have it, and if you couldn't afford it, you'd have to do without. And here this NDP government, unable to plead poverty with \$1 billion more, and they say no. If you can afford it, you're on one tier, and if you're not, you're on the lower tier.

And we've seen that in NDP Saskatchewan because, Mr. Speaker, two tier is not just about ability to pay. Two tier is also about where you live, Mr. Speaker. This government has presided over the greatest separation in the tiers of health care people can expect in this province of any government in history. And they better not be claiming the legacy of Tommy Douglas.

Consider, Mr. Speaker, whether, consider whether someone in Consul, Saskatchewan today because of where they live has the same health care as someone that lives in Swift Current or lives in Regina, especially when we know that medical travel is borne, for the most part, by who? By the patient or by the patient's family. That's also two-tier medicine. If you live in one spot, you get this quality of health care. And if you live somewhere else, you get this quality of health care. That's their record, Mr. Speaker. That's the record of this NDP government, and the budget doesn't address it.

We raised yesterday the issue of autistic children, families forced to leave the province to get diagnosis and treatment for kids. That's another different tier. The budget fails to address it.

In health care they re-announced — how many? — 1, 2, 3, 6 facilities. They re-announced them. I mean, the government isn't so good at doing anything, but they're pretty good at re-announcing projects.

Do you know what, Mr. Speaker? The Swift Current Hospital which I think's been announced five times was announced again, and it's half built, Mr. Speaker. In Swift Current the hospital's half built. Meantime the communities of Moosomin and the communities of Preeceville and the communities of Humboldt and Ile-a-la-Crosse, they wait and they wait and they wait. And guess what? The community share — that NDP rural tax of 35 per cent — it grows and it grows and it grows because the cost of construction increases, Mr. Speaker.

And then this government is, this government is surprised. Well

why don't more people like this budget? Well maybe because of actions like this of cynical announcements about health care that actually cost the region, the communities, the localities more money, and don't deliver on the promises that this government made. Maybe that's why they have no use for this NDP budget, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Long-term care, was there a target? Was there a plan for long-term care in the budget? No, there was not a plan for long-term care.

And so in my constituency women like Hilda Krohn who helped build this province, a 93-year-old lady who was suffering from cranial shingles, if you can imagine, turned away from the hospital in Swift Current and sent by ambulance to an inappropriate bed — at that point at least certainly the medical community felt that — and waited and waited and waited because there was no long-term care bed.

She now . . . Because her case I believe was raised in this Legislative Assembly, magically a long-term care bed has appeared. And, Mr. Speaker, there's long-term care bed issues across this province, and they're unaddressed with respect to a target.

What about DCRE [Department of Community Resources and Employment]? That minister — I hope he's still here — that minister who stood on his feet and had a chance to talk about his budget that does social services and important work, his staff do important work across the province, spent 20 words on the issues that matter to his department and the rest on politics.

Well maybe this is why, Mr. Speaker. With respect to drug treatment beds, Project Hope, short-term beds and interim measures are still the order of the day for the government. There's no long-term plan. There's no commitment to work with people like Teen Challenge in this province who are already out there, unwilling to wait for this government . . . slow to act. They're already out there putting together plans, building long-term care facilities, providing drug treatment, treatment for young people, while the NDP provide news releases and politics, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — We shouldn't be surprised though. Right? We shouldn't be surprised that this is what the government would do with this important issue because it is about politics. The Premier, the Premier after refusing to acknowledge the importance of meth as an issue, suddenly put his name all over the Project Hope, which a lot of people by the way on the front lines of this issue are calling project hype because it is more about talk and not a lot about walk.

And, Mr. Speaker, what did the Premier do when he was the minister responsible for SADAC [Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission], that separate commission that everyone on the front line tells us we need again in the province of Saskatchewan for alcohol and drug programs? Shut it down, Mr. Speaker. That's what he did.

What did he do with our youth treatment facility that we already had in the Deputy Premier's riding, Mr. Speaker — White Spruce treatment facility — this Premier who says that he cares about treatment issues? He shut it down, Mr. Speaker. That's what he did. And in this budget we get more politics.

Mr. Speaker, what about the Learning element of the budget? You know the other shoe is dropping from this budget. And the people in southeast Saskatchewan, people in Moose Jaw area, people in my home area of southwest Saskatchewan are waking up to a brand new NDP tax, a brand new education tax from the NDP. School boards will be facing millions in shortfalls.

The South East Cornerstone School Division that encompasses Weyburn-Big Muddy, Mr. Speaker, lost 5.3 million in operational funding, 56 per cent cut from that Premier and that Minister of Finance. Chinook School Division in the southwest, our division for myself and so many members from southwest Saskatchewan — the NDP doesn't seem to get elected down there very often — lost \$3.35 million in operational funding, 47 per cent cut. Prairie South School Division in that Moose Jaw area, 14 per cent cut.

Where is the money going to come from, Mr. Speaker, under this NDP education tax? I'll tell you what it'll come from. It'll come from property tax hikes. It'll come from . . . or cuts. They will preside over the closure of schools, and teachers will be laid off under this NDP plan, Mr. Speaker. That is what's going to happen. That's what's in this budget. And were there nothing else wrong with it, I'd vote against it on that grounds, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we see, we see debt increasing in this budget. In this '80s-style budget we see debt increasing. And I remember . . . Now the member for Nutana wants to enter the debate from her seat, and that's fine. I think she sat over in these benches and decried '80s-style budgets that were all about sort of a . . . no plan increases. There doesn't seem to be a plan for any of the increases, no targets. And the debt would go up, and the debt would go up in those. And that's what's happening here.

The Provincial Auditor has said if you want to find out about the net debt of the province, you want to look at the summary financial statements and net debt. And what do you do when you find that in this NDP budget? An increase in the debt of 288 million for our young people. Their debt went up. There was no PST [provincial sales tax] decrease or relief. There was no benefit. But the NDP added to the debt of the people of this province, to the children of this province. Another reason to vote against the budget.

But, Mr. Speaker, the number one reason, although there are many, to vote against this budget is that at this pivotal time in our history when we need a government with a clear vision for a growing province — a clear vision that we would stay, remain a have province; a clear vision that we're not the wee province as the Premier likes to call us; a clear vision that says no, we don't have to be in and out of equalization, we ought to be a permanent member of the have province club; a clear vision that rejects the words of the member for Wascana when she says it's

statistically impossible for this province to grow at even 1 per cent — when we need that vision, when we need a whole growth agenda, we don't have it, Mr. Speaker.

Because after the budget was delivered, what was the same in the province of Saskatchewan? This NDP government was the same. And the negative brand, the negative business climate, the negative aura that they give our province as a place to do business and create jobs because notwithstanding the budget, Mr. Speaker, we still have the NDP. We still have a governing party who on their website have the Regina Manifesto that calls for the eradication of capitalism. We still have the NDP government that chased out the oil and gas sector in the '50s. We still have an NDP government that nationalized the potash mines, Mr. Speaker. And I hear about it still as I travel around the country. People can't believe anything that comes out of their mouth about a proper business community, based on that act.

We still have the NDP that presided over SPUDCO; the NDP that poured \$800 million into the Meadow Lake pulp mill, Mr. Speaker; the NDP that have presided over the loss of our most precious resource — young people who have left in the thousands. They've presided over the worst job creation record in the Dominion of Canada in the middle of a boom. This budget doesn't change it, and that's why I'll support the amendment and vote against the budget today.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have listened with some interest to the Leader of the Opposition for the last half hour or thereabouts. I note that when he began his remarks, he was observing from his point of view that members of government during their presentations to the budget had engaged in some politics. Mr. Speaker, we have just listened to a half an hour of nothing but politic, nothing but politic from the Leader of the Opposition.

We did not in that one half an hour hear any specific concerns about the budget that's before this legislature. We heard nothing about any alternative that might be recommended by that leader or that party to the budget. We've heard nothing but a tirade of politics, Mr. Speaker. Well I'm not here to engage in that. I'm here to talk about one of the most substantive budgets that's ever been tabled in this legislature to build a better future for the people of Saskatchewan and do it right here, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And, Mr. Speaker, before I begin my more formal remarks, I want to extend a very deep thanks to every member of this government caucus for the work that we have put in, in preparing and putting before the people of Saskatchewan and this legislature the 2006-7 budget. I particularly want to thank the member for Regina South, the Minister of Finance, for having put together, fashioned a budget which, in my experience in this legislature, is unprecedented in both its acceptance and its support among the people of Saskatchewan. I want to thank him, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, as it has been noted, the budget that the Minister of Finance presented and delivered to this House and to the people of Saskatchewan seven days ago is an historic budget. It is the first budget in Saskatchewan's second century, and a budget that sets this century in the right direction, building a future right here for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[12:00]

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And, Mr. Speaker, when this House began its sitting in the fall, we opened with the Throne Speech. And at that time, Mr. Speaker, this government identified our vision for the province of Saskatchewan and its great people. And we said, and I quote, Mr. Speaker:

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

That's the vision of this government for the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And, Mr. Speaker, this budget, this budget takes us considerably along the road to that path of opportunity where no one is being left behind, to a province of diverse and growing communities with a green and a prosperous economy. That's what this budget is doing, Mr. Speaker, for this province and for its people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And, Mr. Speaker, it is founded on a fundamental conviction of mine and of my party and of this government that you will not enjoy social progress in this province without economic progress. You will not. But, Mr. Speaker, there should not be economic progress that does not result in progress for the people of our province. That's the fundamental principle, Mr. Speaker, on which this budget is built.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And so, Mr. Speaker, in this budget, through this budget, we are building a better future for our young people right here in Saskatchewan with a record \$1.5 billion investment in education, by funding 32,000 university seats, and 34,000 training spaces, by increasing the graduate tax credit, and by freezing tuition fees for two years until the year 2008.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, we are laying the foundations for even greater prosperity for all by increasing the

small-business tax threshold, by implementing a comprehensive business tax cut to further stimulate our economy to provide greater opportunities to create even more jobs for our young people in Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to pause here and extend my personal and our government's deep thanks to Jack Vicq and the commission who worked on the business tax review. I want to thank them again for their work and their report.

You'll know, Mr. Speaker, that we called upon Professor Vicq and the commission as a follow to the centennial summit that was held last year to open our centennial year. The first ever Saskatchewan economic summit where we brought together business people, small and large, the resource sector. We brought together working people, the trade unions, First Nations, young people, citizens at large came together.

And from that discussion about Saskatchewan's great potential and economic future it was pointed out by almost everyone in the place that we needed to sharpen our competitive edge. As a result of that discussion, Mr. Speaker, we appointed the Jack Vicq commission. We have his work. We've implemented his work even before the timetable he set out. We are building a Saskatchewan competitive edge, and we are building a future right here in Saskatchewan for our people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And just in passing, Mr. Speaker, just in passing, there was only one group of citizens who boycotted the Saskatchewan economic summit. And which group was it? Members of the Saskatchewan Party elected across the way. There were members of their party there, but not one elected member of the Saskatchewan Party came to the economic summit and joined in the people of Saskatchewan to build the future.

Fact, Mr. Speaker, this budget, this budget goes to building prosperity and it goes to our young people. Mr. Speaker, this budget provides for the first time a head start to young people entering the trades with a trade entry tax credit for employees required to purchase their own tools. And, Mr. Speaker, it goes beyond that. We're providing an annual incentive, an annual maintenance tax credit to offset the costs of maintaining and replacing those tools. And I want to join with the Minister of Finance and this caucus and the people of Saskatchewan in thanking the member for Regina Northeast for his work in putting this provision into this budget and into reality for the young tradespeople of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, with this budget we are literally building, we are literally building the province with the largest capital program ever announced in Saskatchewan's history — \$407 million capital in this budget for the province of Saskatchewan. That's schools, that's hospitals, and it's highways, Mr. Speaker.

We're supporting our communities. We're supporting the communities of Saskatchewan in building the diverse and growing communities of which we vision. And we're

strengthening our neighbourhoods, Mr. Speaker, with increased funding for police and crime prevention.

In this budget, Mr. Speaker, we are providing \$97.3 million in revenue sharing to our municipalities. Mr. Speaker, we are supporting our farm families with a reduction of the education property tax on agricultural land by a total this year of \$67 million. We're supporting our farm families. We're supporting our farm families with the base funding to CAIS of \$98.8 million in base funding to CAIS and \$100 million for crop insurance, Mr. Speaker. And led by the Minister of Agriculture and the farm leaders of Saskatchewan — with the exception of course of the critic from across the way — we're working with the national government to ensure even greater support for the farm families of Saskatchewan particularly this year, particularly this year in this spring season.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And, Mr. Speaker, in the course of this . . . Since we have returned to this House, there has been an historic occasion. And that was the presentation of this mace runner that now sits on the table, a reminder to each elected member, a reminder to each citizen of the province of Saskatchewan the significance of the treaties signed with our First Nations peoples. It is a reminder and a symbol that we are all treaty people in this province. It is a reminder and a symbol of all of our Aboriginal peoples and all of our Aboriginal First Nation and Métis and Dene communities, Mr. Speaker. This has been a historic presentation. And it was on a historic day.

Mr. Speaker, I will argue that this budget too is historic in its relationship with First Nations and Aboriginal peoples because, Mr. Speaker, for the first time in the province's history, a Minister of Finance has stood in this legislature and said, and I quote: the pavement does not end at the boundary of the reserve.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And, Mr. Speaker, this budget is historic in its relationship with First Nation and Métis peoples in this province because for the first time in the history of Saskatchewan, this provincial government is directly investing in training spaces in the Saskatchewan Institute of Indian Technologies. Mr. Speaker, we are proud of this.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, in the future prosperity of Saskatchewan, in the future of an unbreakable social fabric, First Nations and Métis peoples will play a very, very significant role. And we are proud of the partnerships that we are building with our Aboriginal peoples in Saskatchewan and across Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we're equally in this budget ramping up immigration in our province. We are opening the borders of Saskatchewan again to those who will come from other parts of this great country, who will come from across the continent, who will come from across the globe. We are ramping up our ability to bring newcomers to our province, to bring the immigrant, to give them a future and a prosperity here that we

will share with them. And they will build our future with us, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very balanced budget, balanced in its priorities, balanced in its approach. And, Mr. Speaker, I remind you and I remind all members and I remind the general public, balanced again at the bottom line. This is the 13th consecutive balanced budget in the province of Saskatchewan and that is a Canadian record in modern times.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And, Mr. Speaker, this budget is also paying down debt — continuing to pay down the debt racked up by that party opposite when they occupied the Treasury Board benches, continuing to pay down the debt so that today we have a debt that is now lower than at any time in the last 15 years, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, it is responsible fiscal management that has made this budget possible. We've not just balanced 13 straight budgets, Mr. Speaker; this government has now earned 13 straight credit rating upgrades, Mr. Speaker — 13 straight.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And so the work, Mr. Speaker, that began in 1991 has come to fruition with a debt-to-GDP [gross domestic product] ratio that is now lower than at any time since the early 1980s. And we are proud of this record, and we are proud of the history of this government and this party in government, Mr. Speaker, which if I may say, Mr. Speaker, contrasts — if I may just pause here and say it contrasts, the pride that we have in our record in government — contrasts significantly with what goes on across the way.

You know, I turned up the other day the Sask Party website to check out the biography of the Leader of the Opposition. What did I find? Seven years missing, Mr. Speaker, in his life history. Seven years missing in his biography. Which seven years, I wonder, have they decided they do not want to display to the people of Saskatchewan? The seven years that he worked for the Devine government, Mr. Speaker, that's the seven years that are hiding.

Well I tell you we're not hiding. We're not hiding from any year that we've spent in government or in opposition. We're proud of our history. We're proud of our record. And we're proud of this budget, just as we are proud of the people and the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I want to take a little time in this debate because all we hear from across the way is the negative. Nothing surprising. This has been the case of that party since it was founded. It's even more the case since the member from Swift Current took over the leadership. All we hear is the negative. He leaves the province. He is doom and gloom on the province. He is doom and gloom within the

province. That's all we hear is the negativity.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want the public of Saskatchewan and all members to listen to the voice not of the Leader of the Opposition or the Saskatchewan Party cranky caucus over there, I want the people of Saskatchewan to listen to the voices of people of this province, both in leadership and beyond leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I want to share with you and with this legislature, response to the budget which is now under debate in this legislature, response that has come from Saskatchewan citizens.

Well Mr. Ted Hillstead, Mr. Ted Hillstead is from the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Hillstead said:

Overall, we are very positive, and as a small business owner, as a large corporate owner, and as an employer in this province, you have got to be quite happy.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, Craig Gates, the Regina Regional Economic Development Authority future leaders program. Mr. Craig Gates said:

I think that what we have seen today [He said this on budget day. I think that what we have seen today] on behalf of the government is a positive step forward . . . [to] creating more opportunities for young people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Building a future right here, Mr. Speaker, right here in Saskatchewan for our young people. Marilyn Braun-Pollon, Canadian Federation of Independent Business said, and I quote:

Business owners will be smiling. Saskatchewan business owners were looking for decisive action on corporate tax relief and this budget delivered that.

Quote, “. . . business owners will be giving this budget the thumbs up.”

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — It is thumbs-up, Mr. Speaker. It is thumbs-up from the business community on this budget. It is thumbs-down on the negativity of the Saskatchewan Party and its leader.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Nola Joorisity, Nola Joorisity from the Chartered Accountants of Saskatchewan, a group of men and women who have real insight, insight into economy and into the business future of this province, Nola Joorisity said:

[It is good.] It is good to see that we are looking to the future and trying to stimulate the economy and I think that is a win for everybody whether you are [in] business or not business. It just helps . . . grow Saskatchewan.

That's Nola Joorisity, Mr. Speaker. And from the academic world, Eric Howe, economics professor at the University of Saskatchewan, what does Professor Howe say?

If business grabs the bull by the horns, we'll see investment projects ramping up. We'll see further investment in the uranium industry, further investment in the potash industry, further investment in the province in general.

That's Eric Howe, professor of economics, University of Saskatchewan. That's his view, Mr. Speaker. Contrast that view from what you've heard from the leader or the critic or any member over there in this debate.

Paul Martin, chairman of the Regina Regional Economic Development Authority, Regina REDA, Paul Martin. Paul Martin says, and quote . . . And members opposite should listen to this. They should just listen to this. Mr. Martin says, “We've got this new tax regime so that we can go out and crow about it to the rest of the country.”

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And you know what, Mr. Speaker? You know what? Well that is exactly what we are going to do. We are going to take this message of the future that's being built right here in Saskatchewan and we are going to take it to the nation as we have done before. We're going to do it again.

And I don't care frankly, Mr. Speaker, how much complaint I get from the Leader of the Opposition, how much negativity he wants to bring to this debate, Mr. Speaker. I'm not going to be prevented from telling the Saskatchewan success story to Canadians coast to coast, to North Americans, and to the world.

And by the way, Mr. Speaker, we're also going to be telling this success story to our own people, to our own young people right here in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[12:15]

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And they can complain. They can moan just as they did and do when we went with the Wide Open Future campaign. I tell you when I and the Minister of Industry and every member of this government is out and about in Saskatchewan, we're going to be on the air waves. We're going to be on the journals. We're going to be across the nation telling the Saskatchewan success story and telling our young people and telling the world that this is a place to build your future right here, right here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And, Mr. Speaker, it's not just the large corporate sector. It's not just the large-business people. It's not just the academics and the REDA [regional economic development authority] people that are talking about this budget. Don Richardson, restaurant owner, small-restaurant owner — Don's Place in Stoughton — who is Chair of the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association, what does

Mr. Richardson have to say? He says, quote, about this budget:

As a small business owner, I am very happy. As representative of the industry [the restaurant industry], I represent 1800 restaurants in the community of Saskatchewan. They too will be very happy with the taxation relief that they are going to experience from this budget.

Mr. Speaker, small-business people are praising this budget, supporting this budget. What in the world is wrong with the party opposite who will not support this budget?

But, Mr. Speaker, it's not just the business community. It's not just the business community. It's not just the academic community. It's not just the corporate community or small-business community. Educators in our province have looked at this budget. And what are the educators of Saskatchewan saying about this budget? Well, Richard Florizone, vice-president of finance and resources, University of Saskatchewan, what does Mr. Florizone say about it? He says, quote, "This is a good news budget for the University of Saskatchewan."

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — That's what he says. It's a good news budget for the University of Saskatchewan. He goes on to say, Mr. Speaker, quote, "... the province has been a great partner here, in helping us to build a strong college of medicine at the University of Saskatchewan." He says, quote, "... it is a good budget."

Bob McCulloch, president of SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] where so many of our young people today are learning the skills and the trades and the training they'll need for their future and for the future of our province, what does Bob McCulloch say about this budget? He says, quote, "All the training system partners and the folks in the construction trades saw good things and good directions in the budget."

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, a good budget according to educators. He went on to say, Mr. McCulloch went on to say:

The equipment that our skilled workers are using now isn't things that you pick up on the \$1.49 sales rack. It is all very expensive.

He's speaking to the tool tax credit that we've put in place, Mr. Speaker. But you know it's not just the leaders of our academic institutions. It's not just the leadership of the universities that praised this budget. It's not just the leadership of SIAST and the regional colleges and the trades training. No, it's students themselves, Mr. Speaker, the students who will build this future, the students who are choosing Saskatchewan to do their education and choosing to build their future right here. It's the students, Mr. Speaker.

Victor Thomas, president of the University of Regina Students' Union, what did Victor Thomas have to say? He says, quote, "It

is a huge step in the right direction." A huge step in the right direction; that's his . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And Mr. Gavin Gardiner, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Gavin Gardiner, president of the student union, president of the student body, representative of all of those students today in attendance at the University of Saskatchewan, Mr. Gavin Gardiner said, quote, "This is a tremendous victory for students." We believe that too, Mr. Speaker. We believe that too. This budget is a tremendous victory for students. He goes on to say, "Students across the province have to be happy today because this is going to help a lot of them out."

Mr. Speaker, and it's not just, it's not just the students. It's not just the students, Mr. Speaker. It's not just the students. It's their families. It's their parents who want access for their young people to our universities, professional training, academic training, to the arts, Mr. Speaker. Families are supportive of this budget. Families are supportive of this budget.

Mr. Speaker, it's not just, it's not just small-business leaders, It's not just large corporate leaders. It's not just those who assess our economy from beyond. It's not just educators. It's not just students.

Representatives of organized labour in our province, Larry Hubich says, "We are encouraged by this government's social reinvestment." Mr. Speaker, social reinvestment, you cannot build, Mr. Speaker, social progress without economic progress. But there should not ought to be economic progress that doesn't result in social progress. Mr. Hubich has hit the nail right on the head — encouraged by our social investment in the people and communities of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — We share governments. We share governments in this province. We share it with our First Nations. We share it with our municipal leaders. What, Mr. Speaker, have our municipal leaders had to say about this budget? Well Dave Marit, president of SARM, quote:

We were very pleased with the Highways budget going up by \$45 million. It's vital for the [real] economic . . . [diversification] of rural Saskatchewan.

And what does Don Schlosser say, president of SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] and a mayor, a serving mayor, the mayor of Weyburn? He commented on the government's, the government's commitment through the budget to provide an extra \$52 million to local governments this year for that total of 97, Mr. Speaker. You know what he said? Two words. Two words. He said, "We're happy."

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — The mayor of Regina, His Worship Mayor Pat Fiacco, mayor of Regina — what did he have to say about this budget? He says, "... it is a good looking budget." That's what the mayor of Regina said, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — But you know what, Mr. Speaker? It's not just, it's not just municipal leaders. It's not just students and their families. It's not just leaders in the educational world. It's not just the academic world, and it's not just the financial institutions. It's not just the small-business people. It's not just the corporate sector.

I have here, Mr. Speaker, a very important assessment of this budget that comes from Mr. Peter Gilmer, Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry. Mr. Peter Gilmer says, and I quote, "Overall, it will significantly improve the quality of life for low income people in Saskatchewan." Mr. Speaker, this budget . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — This budget will significantly . . . I want to say those words again, Mr. Speaker, because I believe them, Mr. Speaker. I accept the assessment of Peter Gilmer of the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry who says overall this budget will significantly improve the quality of life for low-income people in our province.

And our former colleague, Bob Pringle, now executive director of the Saskatoon Food Bank, Bob Pringle says, "It appeared that the government was listening to low-income people because a lot of thought was put into this budget."

Now, Mr. Speaker, that's the assessment of those who are working on a daily basis, on a daily basis, with our neighbours in need. That assessment joins the assessment of so many in our province.

Mr. Speaker, and get this. Get this, Mr. Speaker. Even a noted political columnist, who should be in the gallery at this moment, even a noted political columnist in this province — what did he say? What did he say? It's "a really, really good budget."

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — "A really, really good budget." And, Mr. Speaker, and, Mr. Speaker, even — get this — even the Finance critic across the way, when he was out here in the media, when he wasn't going the other way from the media, when he was out there and actually subjected to a few questions, after he got it straight, after he got it straight that we don't charge sales tax on groceries, after they straightened that matter out with him, then at all of this accolade about the budget coming from every corner and quarter of the province, then finally we get even the Finance critic admitting it's a good news budget.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — So . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — No, no, no, no. No, no. No, no. Let's not get carried away. Mr. Speaker, I could go on. I've got piles and pages of comment from Saskatchewan people, from leadership of every sector of our economy, accepting and supporting and

endorsing the budget decisions that this government has made. Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on.

But let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, all of these important voices are perhaps not as important as the voices you meet when you visit a coffee shop or when you walk into a shopping centre or the drugstore or just happen to be encountering people here or there. And, Mr. Speaker since the day of that budget, I've done nothing but meet people, meet people in their circumstance, in the circumstance of their business or in the circumstance where they're just out and about, whether we're at a skating event or whether we're in the drugstore, Mr. Speaker. And I tell you, I tell you the people of Saskatchewan recognize this budget as significantly contributing to their lives, significantly contributing to the future of Saskatchewan, and significantly building a future for our young people, our communities, our business people right here in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I don't want to spend an extended period of time, Mr. Speaker, on what the opposition has put in their amendment. I tell you it speaks to the lack of credibility. It speaks to the incredible nature of this opposition. The best they could put into an amendment to criticize this budget was something that indicates, well there's nothing in this budget for Saskatchewan families. That's about what they could come up with.

Well I don't know where they live, Mr. Speaker, but you go ask the student, second-year student in education at the University of Regina or the first-year student in engineering or their parents, if there's nothing in this budget when we've frozen tuition fees.

You just go ask, you just go ask the people who are receiving social assistance in our province today when they see those new resources coming into their family household, you ask them if there's nothing in this budget.

You ask the parents of Saskatchewan, the grandparents of Saskatchewan who want to see a future for their young people in Saskatchewan, who want to see opportunities — when they see the kind of sharpening of the competitive edge, the investment that will follow — you ask those families if there's nothing in here.

You ask the people who are paying property taxes on the farm land this spring if there's nothing in this budget for them, when we've cut that to the fair 60/40 ratio.

You ask the people of the municipalities of Saskatchewan, the cities and the towns — with new capital dollars flowing as a result of this budget into their communities to build playgrounds, to build senior citizens programs, to build highways and roads right past and through their communities — you ask them if there's nothing in this budget.

The only thing this group can come up with is a phony-baloney, incredible kind of criticism, and a heap of politic, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not what the Saskatchewan people are looking for either from their government or, if I may say, from their opposition. They look for better than that, Mr. Speaker.

They look for better than that.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I come to some conclusion. I come to some conclusion. And what I want to do today, what I want to do today is try — just in a very, very few minutes that are left to me — put this budget in some context, Mr. Speaker.

And the context is this. I was privileged to be elected to this House in 1986 in the midst of that government, which nearly brought this province to its knees. Nearly brought this province to the verge of bankruptcy that government did, Mr. Speaker. They sold off our resources. They destroyed our social programs, and they left us with a debt, Mr. Speaker, that's still costing us 500-and-some million dollars in interest payments a year. That's the legislature I entered, Mr. Speaker. And we fought hard against that government, and we defeated that government. The people of Saskatchewan defeated that government.

And all the time I was sitting here in this Chamber in that opposition chair, where was the Leader of the Opposition? Right upstairs, right upstairs in the same building even though he takes it off his website today.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we inherited government in 1991, given that privilege by the people of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, not unlike the Douglas government of the 1940s, it took us nearly a decade and more perhaps, Mr. Speaker, to put the finances of this province right again. We too had to go to the bankers and bond dealers. We too had to put right the finances of the people of Saskatchewan, and we did it with the people of Saskatchewan. They sacrificed, Mr. Speaker. They sacrificed, and we bore a high taxation regime, Mr. Speaker.

Ten years it took us to put . . . Well it's not done yet. The work's not done yet. We're still paying down their debt, but ten years it took us, Mr. Speaker.

When I assumed the office of Premier — and I was privileged to assume the office of Premier and be re-elected by the people of Saskatchewan — I took it as my mission that my objective was to see this economy revitalized because there can be no social progress without economic progress. I took it as my mission that we're going to revitalize the oil and gas sector. We're going to revitalize the mining sector. We're going to invest in training and education and research and development. And we're going to invest in quality of life. We're going to do that, Mr. Speaker.

We've done it, Mr. Speaker. And out of that work, out of that 15 years of work today, today, Mr. Speaker, we can build a budget that is building to our vision of no one being left behind, no one being left behind in the path of opportunity.

We're building a community that reflects what Franklin Delano Roosevelt said so many years ago, I believe in the 1930s. Franklin Delano Roosevelt said . . . And I repeated those words in this legislature when I was first elected, Mr. Speaker. Franklin Delano Roosevelt said . . . And we in the New Democratic Party share this conviction:

The test [Mr. Speaker] of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is

whether we provide enough for those who have little.

Mr. Speaker, I am voting against the amendment, the phony-baloney amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition. I am voting for this budget because, Mr. Speaker, this budget takes us a huge step forward in ensuring that no one in Saskatchewan will be left behind on the path of opportunity we are building together. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[12:30]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Pursuant to rule 17(3), I now interrupt proceedings to allow the mover of the main motion to exercise his right to close debate. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to say again what a pleasure it is today to rise to close this debate on our provincial budget. It is a budget that I had the pleasure to introduce on behalf of this government and this caucus after many months of consultation by my predecessor, the member for Regina Douglas Park, by the members of this caucus, and by this Premier as they went and talked to Saskatchewan people about what it is that they wanted us to do in this budget.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — It is a budget that is our largest ever at \$7.7 billion. It provides an 8.4 per cent increase in spending that'll allow us to provide \$7.1 billion in program support this year. It contributes more than half a billion dollars to service the debt built up by the previous administration, and it establishes a \$102 million surplus to be used for debt reduction.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — This budget builds on our debt reduction approach which has seen us pay off nearly \$450 million in the last three years alone. Mr. Speaker, this budget includes a record \$3.2 billion in health care spending. It provides a record 1.5 billion in education and training. It includes the largest increases in social assistance rates in a generation, and it provides the single largest business tax cuts in this province's history.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, this budget also provides \$67 million in property tax cuts for farmers. It provides \$100 million for crop insurance, 98.8 million for the base payments under CAIS. And it will allow us to be able to top up the payments under CAIS as we look at what the final costs are when the third quarter comes.

This is a budget that provides \$180 million in grants to Saskatchewan municipalities in terms of capital support, in terms of revenue sharing. It provides a record \$400 million for infrastructure. It increases tax credits for students who are starting their careers here, and it freezes tuition for all undergraduate programs at the 2004 level until the year 2008.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, this budget provides for a new tax credit for people who are employed in the trades. It provides for us to exceed our election commitment by creating more than 5,400 new training spaces. This is an increase of more than 20 per cent during this term of office alone.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is balanced in its priorities, and it is balanced on its bottom line. It reflects the commitment that Saskatchewan people have made to pay down the debt, and today that debt is at its lowest point in 15 years. It is the third lowest in terms of the debt-to-GDP ratio anywhere in Canada today.

Mr. Speaker, this budget can afford to invest in tax cuts, in labour force development, in debt reduction, and in social programs because our economy is performing well. This year we expect to see economic growth of approximately 2.5 per cent.

As this Assembly knows, we have adjusted our GDP and job forecasts downward as a result of the impact of Weyerhaeuser's decision to close the pulp and paper mill in Prince Albert. Today is a tough day for my hometown of Prince Albert. It's a tough day for our province. But, Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate today what I said in the budget speech a week ago. The people of Prince Albert and the communities that are involved in our forest sector know that we can build a better future in forestry, because the jobs that come from our forests come from the forests and those forests belong to Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I want to tell this Assembly that this caucus is fully onside with the members from Prince Albert and area and the minister who's working today to encourage Weyerhaeuser to sell their mill and assets, rather than simply dismantle them. We will continue to support that work that he's done and is doing today to help bring new buyers to the table and the work that he is doing to help secure a better future for our communities.

Mr. Speaker, forestry, like agriculture, is going through a tough time, but I remain confident that a better day for forestry and agriculture is near. I remain confident that we will not only be able to expand production but the type of products that our

forests and farms generate as a result of the changes that we have made in this budget to attract new investment and new jobs and to provide a better environment for business to come and create those jobs here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this budget builds a better investment climate, a better business climate, a better workforce and job climate. It provides a comprehensive plan to attract new investment, new jobs, and new opportunities in communities all across this province.

In spite of the trouble some sectors are seeing today, the general outlook for this province will see us securing the prosperity we enjoy today for generations to come. This budget puts us on the path to being a permanent have province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, this budget is the time that we believe that we should be making the investment in our economy through business tax cuts. We believe that the tax cuts that are contained in this budget will encourage new investment and job growth across the province, and that is why this budget contains the most ambitious program of business tax cuts in Saskatchewan history.

We are implementing the changes recommended by the business tax review committee to phase out the general corporate capital tax, to cut the general corporate income tax, to cut the resource surcharge rates, to make all new investment tax credits on manufacturing and processing fully refundable immediately, to increase the threshold for small business, and to make sure that all new capital investment in this province is without any application of the general corporate capital tax.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, this has been characterized as a leap of faith. We believe strongly that these measures will build a better future for Saskatchewan communities, for Saskatchewan people, and for Saskatchewan business. In the next four years, these cuts will represent a \$620 million tax benefit to businesses to stimulate our economy. With these changes, Saskatchewan will have one of the most competitive business regimes in North America and certainly within western North America.

We believe that business will take advantage of these changes to strengthen their position in Saskatchewan through increased investments, through new ventures, and new jobs. I want to say that, along with providing one of the most competitive business environments in Canada, we know our future depends on strong well-skilled workforce.

This budget gives access to more than 65,000 students to post-secondary education and training opportunities in this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — And so doing, this budget will provide \$196 million for the training system and \$300 million for our universities. More than \$100 million will be provided in student

financial assistance this year. About 70 million of that will be in the form of non-repayable grants, bursaries, scholarships, and income support. This will help students get access to our institutions.

And for the first time, Mr. Speaker, for the first time, this budget provides funding to the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — And it gives young Aboriginal people more options on how they can gain the skills that they need to be more active participants in our communities, in our labour force, and to take their rightful place in our provincial economy.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, this builds on the partnerships we already have in place with the First Nations University of Canada, with Gabriel Dumont Institute, the Dumont Technical Institute, with SIAST, with the regional colleges, and our universities.

This budget also provides a 260 per cent increase in the immigration program. It will be providing the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment with nearly \$6 million dollars — slightly more than \$6 million — to help attract up to 5,000 new immigrants annually to the province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — This budget contains a tax credit to help out ordinary working people who are employed in the trades. That tax credit will help make sure that people who are employed in the trades for the first time have a credit that puts them on par with the ability of those employed independently and work in the trades.

Mr. Speaker, as the Premier has so eloquently articulated just moments ago, we know that a strong economy and a strong labour force also require strong communities. We believe that all Saskatchewan people have a right to share in the prosperity of this province. As such, this budget provides significant new investments in our social programs.

In particular there's a \$300 million increase in this budget for medicare and its related programs which amounts to a record 3.2 billion for health care. It is a large budget that will allow us to provide for millions of visits to doctors and specialists, more than 100,000 MRI [magnetic resonance imaging], CT [computerized tomography], and other advanced diagnostic procedures, and more than 94,000 surgeries this year alone. It is a budget that will help us ensure that we can reduce the wait times. This budget provides new support for a renal dialysis unit, and it will provide planning money for a new diabetes centre at the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation. Our social spending, Mr. Speaker . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Our social spending, Mr. Speaker, also includes 4.9 million for new child care and pre-kindergarten

support that will continue. It will continue despite the decision of the federal government to break faith with us on the agreements. This new funding deepens the subsidies available to low-income families. It fully implements our plan to add 1,600 new child care spaces, and it expands the pre-kindergarten programming for the children in our most vulnerable neighbourhoods and communities. This budget provides \$2 million in support for literacy initiatives.

This budget also makes the single largest increases to social assistance payments in a generation to help those most in need in our communities.

These programs together, these programs together are important to ensuring that no one is left behind on the path to opportunity.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, the response from the public has been positive. I would say it has been remarkable. We have seen this budget described by anti-poverty groups as being the best in a generation. We've seen the chambers of commerce and business leaders who have told us that this budget will help them attract investment and create jobs. SIAST students say the new tool tax credit will help them get a career started right here at home. University students have said the tuition freeze will help them get their education here. Parents and child care providers have said that our plan to create new spaces and deepen subsidies is the right way to support families.

What has the opposition said, Mr. Speaker? They've said very little except, not enough. In fact in their rebuttal to the budget I'd argue that it has been simply predictable. The single most common question they ask is, what's in it for me?

Today they've argued, as we've heard many times before, we should be cutting the PST by a point. They have said this. But what I find very interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that when we last cut the PST by a point, the then-leader of the party described it as simply, quote, "pathetic."

Today they call for us to undertake a plan that when they were criticizing the last time, the member for Melfort stood up and said, it will do nothing to keep young people in the province, it will do nothing to create jobs and investment. But today they call on this because that is what they are left to criticize.

They are saying today that in order for us to stimulate growth and jobs we need to go further by going to war with working people. They have presented in each of their speeches a common theme that says we need to dumb down the labour laws in this province and take away the hard-won rights of working people.

They have found it passing very strange in this House, Mr. Speaker, as I listened to the member for Saskatoon Southeast speak the other night. And he said what is it we should do, we shouldn't have done all these increases. We shouldn't have cut taxes. We should have put all the money against the debt. Well I've got to say this about the debt, Mr. Speaker. Not only is our government committed to retiring the provincial debt, we are committed to retiring all those over there who helped create that debt.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I felt a little sorry for the response the member for Saskatoon Southeast got from his colleagues, calling for us to pay down the debt. He did however, I want to just remind members, he did redeem himself — or perhaps forgot what he had said the last time he stood up — but he redeemed himself by immediately listing off at least a dozen new initiatives that we should then spend money on.

Unbelievable, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite have gone back to the kind of old-time religion that was so common during the Grant Devine government. It is in fact, Mr. Speaker, an old Tory recipe that they are trying to put forward. It is the same recipe that brought us the budgets that the Leader of the Opposition supported to spend a \$1.25 a year for every dollar we were bringing in. It's the same old recipe that spared no expense in dealing with whatever the political whim of the day was, but could find no political will to actually constrain their spending.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that it was a recipe that they would use in making the budget today. Certainly it is tried and true. We saw it during the Devine days. Sure it's been repackaged or, as the Leader of the Opposition likes to call it, rebranding. They've got a brand new brand, there's no doubt. But make no mistake about this, Mr. Speaker, regardless of the pretty packaging and the glitzy marketing, the contents are still 100 per cent Grant Devine lite.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[12:45]

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, the response of the members opposite was predictable. The critique by each member was very typical. And the critique by each of their members said the same thing — that the path forward required us to go to war with working people. It required us to make unsustainable tax cuts. It required us to ramp up spending. It required us to go beyond what would allow us to have a balanced budget.

It was the usual long list of demands: more tax cuts, more spending, more debt retirement, more capital spending, more, more, more. And always ending with the question, what's in it for me? That is exactly what we'd expect from the Saskatchewan Party.

I know this, Mr. Speaker. This budget is not very good for the Saskatchewan Party. But it is extremely good for Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I say to the members opposite who say, what's in it for me, Mr. Speaker, I say to them that this budget benefits each of us as citizens, as members of communities, and beneficiaries of one of the strongest economies in Canada. It benefits us by building a better future for growth and investment, by building a better future for young people, by building a better future for our communities through our social programs like medicare, like programs that will

develop infrastructure, that will cut property taxes for farmers.

It's a budget that is balanced. It is balanced on its bottom line and it is balanced in its priorities. It is a budget that pays our bills and it reduces our debt. It is a budget that builds a better future for youth, for students, for seniors, for business people, for farmers, for our communities, for our families. And, Mr. Speaker, it is a budget that builds a better future right here.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, this is a good budget. It builds a better future for all of us and it helps us make sure Saskatchewan remains the best place in Canada to live, to work, and to raise a family.

That, Mr. Speaker, is why I ask all members, why I ask all members to join me in supporting this budget and working together to build a better future for Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, please. It is now my duty to put the questions before this Assembly. The questions before the Assembly . . . Order please, order please. Order please. I thank the members. The questions before the Assembly is the main motion moved by the Minister of Finance, the member for Regina South, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment, the member for Saskatoon Nutana, which reads:

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

and the amendment to the main motion which is . . . that has been moved by the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs, seconded by the member for Humboldt, which says:

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

"disagrees with the general budgetary policy of the government because the Premier and cabinet have not fully implemented a growth agenda and Saskatchewan continues to fall further behind other provinces, losing population during an economic boom, and because this budget does nothing to help . . ."

Order. Members ought not to heckle the Speaker please.

" . . . because this budget does nothing to help the average working family when the government has \$1 billion in extra revenue; and further, because there is no comprehensive plan or accountability for health care in the province when health care expenditures are almost half the provincial budget, and this budget reflects an '80s style of record expenditures with a \$288.5 million increase in debt."

First we will dispose of the amendment to the main motion. Is the Assembly ready for the question? Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the amendment?

Some Hon. Members: — No.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Speaker: — Those who favour the amendment, say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Speaker: — Those who are opposed to the amendment, say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Call in the members for a standing vote.

[The division bells rang from 12:50 to 12:51.]

The Speaker: — Order please. The question before the Assembly is the amendment as just read momentarily. Members will take it as read. Those who favour the amendment please rise.

[Yeas — 27]

Wall	Toth	Elhard
McMorris	D'Autremont	Krawetz
Draude	Hermanson	Bjornerud
Stewart	Wakefield	Chisholm
Hart	Harpauer	Gantefoer
Eagles	Weekes	Cheveldayoff
Huyghebaert	Allchurch	Kirsch
Brkich	Dearborn	Merriman
Morgan	Kerpan	Heppner

The Speaker: — Those opposed to the amendment please rise.

[Nays — 29]

Calvert	Hamilton	Lautermilch
Van Mulligen	Hagel	Serby
Atkinson		

The Speaker: — Order. Order.

Cline	Sonntag	Wartman
Forbes	Prebble	Crofford
Belanger	Higgins	Thomson
Nilson	Beatty	Taylor
Junor	Harper	Iwanchuk
McCall	Quennell	Trew

The Speaker: — Order. Order.

Yates	Addley	Morin
Borgerson		

Clerk Assistant (Committees): — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 27; those opposed, 29.

The Speaker: — I declare the amendment defeated. Order please. Order.

The question before the Assembly is the main motion moved by

the Minister of Finance, the member for Regina South, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment, the member for Saskatoon Nutana:

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried. Call in the members for a standing vote.

[The division bells rang from 12:54 to 12:55.]

The Speaker: — The motion before the Assembly is the one moved by the member for Regina South, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Nutana:

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

Those who favour the motion please rise.

[Yeas — 29]

Calvert	Hamilton
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The Speaker: — Order please. Order. Order. Order.

Lautermilch	Van Mulligen	Hagel
Serby	Atkinson	Cline
Sonntag	Wartman	Forbes
Prebble	Crofford	Belanger
Higgins	Thomson	Nilson
Beatty	Taylor	Junor
Harper	Iwanchuk	McCall
Quennell	Trew	Yates
Addley	Morin	Borgerson

The Speaker: — Those opposed to the main motion please rise.

[Nays — 27]

Wall	Toth	Elhard
McMorris	D'Autremont	Krawetz
Draude	Hermanson	Bjornerud
Stewart	Wakefield	Chisholm
Hart	Harpauer	Gantefoer
Eagles	Weekes	Cheveldayoff
Huyghebaert	Allchurch	Kirsch
Brkich	Dearborn	Merriman
Morgan	Kerpan	

The Speaker: — Order. Order, order.

Heppner

Deputy Clerk: — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 29; those opposed, 27.

The Speaker: — I declare the main motion carried.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[13:00]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce five motions related to the assignment of estimates consideration.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested leave to make several motions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

MOTIONS

Referral of Estimates to Committees

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Opposition House Leader:

That the following estimates and supplementary estimates being:

- vote 12, 18, 175, 176 to 177 Finance;
- vote 23, Industry and Resources;
- vote 20, Labour;
- vote 43, 144, Regional Economic and Co-operative Development;
- vote 35, Saskatchewan Research Council;
- vote 71, Fiscal Stabilization Fund;
- vote 159, Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan;
- vote 151, Municipal Financing Corporation of Saskatchewan;
- vote 154, Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation;
- vote 152, Saskatchewan Power Corporation;
- vote 153, Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation;
- vote 140, Saskatchewan Water Corporation;
- vote 150, SaskEnergy Incorporated;

be withdrawn from the Committee of Finance and referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

I so move.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader, seconded by the Opposition House Leader, that the following estimates and supplementary estimates being . . . Will the members take it as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Members will take it as read. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, with leave I move, seconded by the Opposition House Leader:

That the following estimates and supplementary estimates being:

- vote 37 and 169, Advanced Education and Employment;
- vote 36, Community Resources;
- vote 73, Corrections and Public Safety;
- vote 27, Culture, Youth and Recreation;
- vote 3, Justice;

be withdrawn to the Committee of Finance and referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

I so move.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — On the motion just moved by the member from Moose Jaw North, the Government House Leader, and seconded by the Opposition House Leader, will the members take it as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, with leave I move, seconded by the Opposition House Leader:

That the following estimates and supplementary estimates being:

- vote 25, First Nations and Métis Relations;
- vote 30, Government Relations;
- vote 16, 17, and 145, Highways and Transportation;
- vote 75 and 163, Northern Affairs;

be withdrawn from the Committee of Finance and referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

I so move.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader, seconded by the Opposition House Leader, on that motion, will members take it as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion's carried. Chair recognizes the

Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, with leave I move, seconded by Opposition House Leader:

That the following estimates and the supplementary estimates being:

vote 74, Information Technology Office;

vote 13, Property Management;

vote 33, Public Service Commission;

be withdrawn from the Committee of Finance and referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

I so move.

The Speaker: — Will the members take the motion by the Government House Leader, and seconded by the member for the Opposition House Leader as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, finally I move with leave, seconded by the Opposition House Leader:

That the following estimates and supplementary estimates being:

vote 34, Chief Electoral Officer;

vote 76, Children's Advocate;

vote 57, Conflict of Interest Commissioner;

vote 55, Information and Privacy Commissioner;

vote 21, Legislative Assembly;

vote 56, Ombudsman; and,

vote 28, the Provincial Auditor;

be withdrawn from the Committee of Finance and referred to the Standing Committee on House Services.

I so move.

The Speaker: — Will the members take the motion just read by the House Leader, seconded by the Opposition House Leader as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, with wishes for a happy Christmas — sorry, could be, could be a big break, Mr.

Speaker, could be a big break — for a very, very happy Easter weekend to all the members and those connected to the Assembly. I move this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I wish to thank all the members for their dedication, perseverance, and passion balanced with restraint, and wish all members a pleasant, restful, blessed Easter holiday.

By order of the Assembly of this House, it stands adjourned until Wednesday, April 19 at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:03.]

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Lorne Calvert
Premier

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hon. Frank Quennell
Minister of Justice and
Attorney General

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

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

Hon. Len Taylor
Minister of Health

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

Hon. Harry Van Mulligen
Minister of Government Relations

Hon. Mark Wartman
Minister of Agriculture and Food

Hon. Kevin Yates
Minister of Corrections and Public Safety