



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

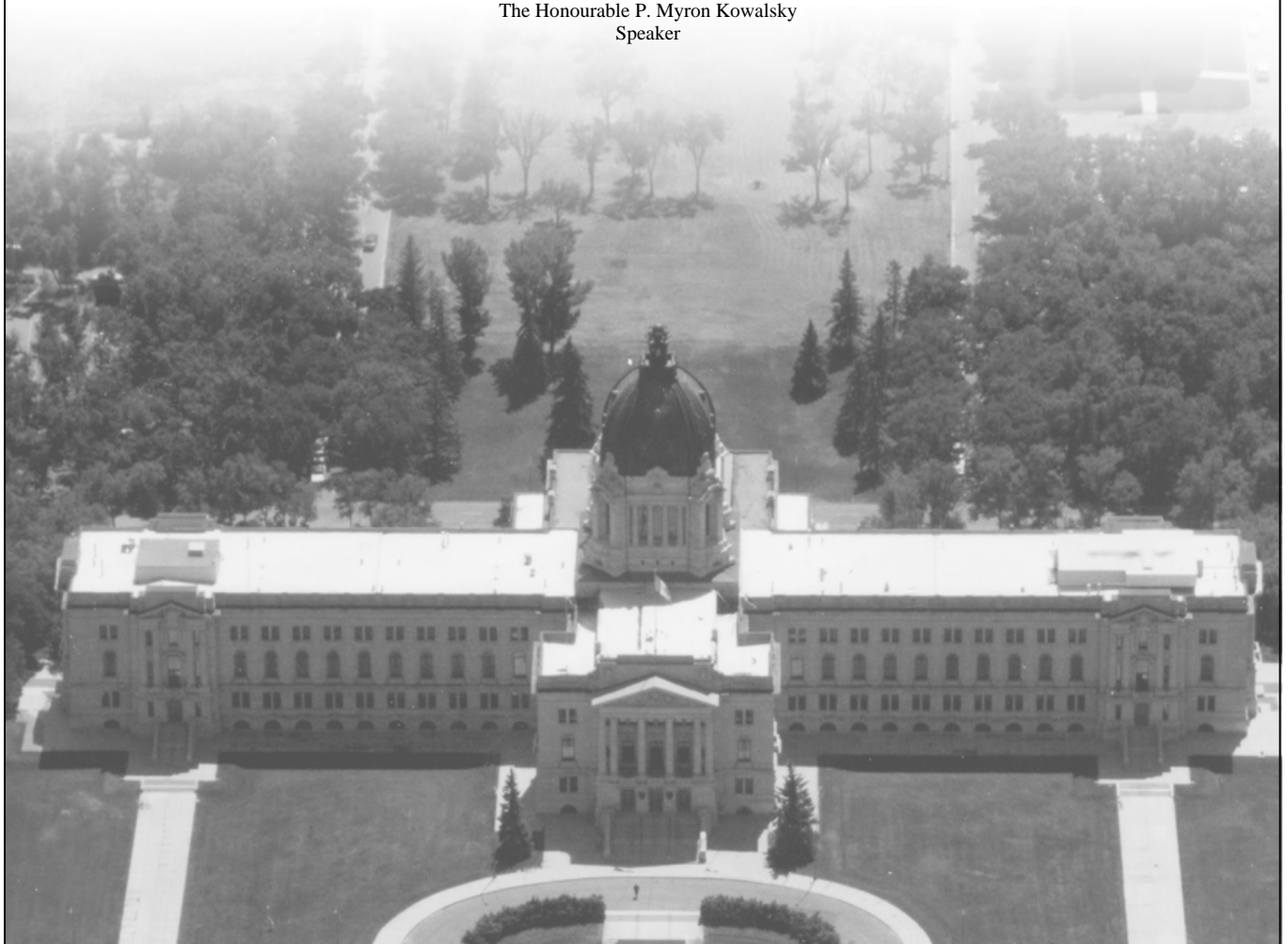
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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 |
| Duncan, Dustin | SP | Weyburn-Big Muddy |
| 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 |
| 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, Hon. 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 |
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| 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, Kevin | NDP | Regina Dewdney |
| Vacant | | Martensville |

[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. Mr. Speaker, today highways continue to be an important issue to the people of Cypress Hills. I read the prayer concerning repairs to Highway 18 as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to ensure that Highway 18 from Claydon to Robsart is repaved at the earliest possible time to ensure the safety of drivers in the area and so that economic development opportunities are not lost.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, today's petition is signed by residents of the community of Maple Creek as well as Robsart. I so present.

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on behalf of people who are concerned about Highway No. 49:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this government to repair Highway 49 in order to address safety concerns and to facilitate economic growth and tourism in Lintlaw, Kelvington, Preeceville, and surrounding areas.

The people who have signed this petition are from Saskatoon, Punnichy, Lintlaw, Odessa, and Regina. I so present.

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to do with the drug Avastin:

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

The signatures, Mr. Speaker, on this petition are from the communities of Carnduff, Glen Ewen, and Oxbow. I so present.

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

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the lack of provincial government funding for the cancer drug Avastin. And the

prayer reads:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Carnduff, Glen Ewen, and Alida. I so present.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who are very concerned with this government's plan for gravel highways in our province. 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 provide dust suppression on the gravel portion of Highway No. 99 between Junction 6 and Craven.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, signatures to this petition come from a variety of communities: Southey, Cupar, Regina, Buena Vista, Lumsden, and Raymore. I so present.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again today I rise and I have four pages of a petition of citizens concerned with the safety of when driving on Highway No. 5. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to upgrade and widen Highway No. 5 from Humboldt to Saskatoon.

And to demonstrate, Mr. Speaker, how this is a main corridor, on these four pages the signatures are from Saskatoon, Archerwill, Cudworth, Rose Valley, Melfort, Humboldt, Watson, St. Denis, Waskesiu, Colonsay, Regina, Spalding, Quill Lake, Codette, Wadena, and Prud'homme. I so present.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again today I rise to present a petition on behalf of constituents of mine who have concerns regarding the Estevan Daycare Co-operative. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to review the decision to deny the requested spaces for the

Estevan Daycare Co-operative.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by folks from Bienfait, Midale, and Estevan. I so present. Thank you.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I again present a petition from the citizens of Wilkie who are concerned about their health care services. The prayer reads:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens of Rockhaven, Wilkie and district. I so present.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to present a petition on behalf of people across the Saskatchewan who, for the past seven years, have been lobbying this government for a dedicated children's hospital within a hospital in Saskatoon. The prayer of the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement an allocation of financial resources this year to build a provincial children's hospital in Saskatoon.

The signatures come from the communities of Warman, Vanscoy, Leask, and Blaine Lake. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement a strategy that will see a dialysis unit placed in Broadview Union Hospital.

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

Mr. Speaker, signatures to this petition are from Sakimay First Nation and Grenfell. I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here with citizens that have been concerned about all the cuts that have been happening to rural Saskatchewan. This particular petition deals with section shops in Watrous:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Department of Highways section shop in Watrous remain open so as to ensure the safety of all motorists, 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.

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to rise today and present a petition that this is the first time in the province's history that the government has denied coverage of the cancer drug recommended by the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. The petition reads:

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

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

From the good people of Carnduff, Oxbow, Gainsborough, and Maryfield. Thank you.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions to present today on behalf of a constituent at Carnduff:

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.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These petitions come from the communities of Grenfell, Alameda, Carnduff, Redvers, Gainsborough, Carievale, and Glen Ewen. Mr. Speaker, I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order petitions tabled at the last sitting have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 15(7) are hereby read and received.

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 no. 15 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy: what is the projected start date for the La Ronge natural gas project?

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 15 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Highways and Transportation: how many employees are permanently stationed at the satellite section shop facilities in Gull Lake, Meath Park, and Shellbrook?

And also, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 15 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Immigration: has the department signed an exclusive agreement with the Philippines regarding immigration? If so, what is the length of the agreement?

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 15 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Property Management: when is the projected completion date for the construction at the front of the legislature?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Provincial Secretary, the member for Moose Jaw North.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, November 2006 has been designated War Brides Month in Saskatchewan. In 1975 Saskatchewan became the first home to a provincial association for war brides in all of Canada. And to honour the association and their contributions, Mr. Speaker, we are privileged today to have several war brides joining us here in the Legislative Assembly.

It is my pleasure to introduce to you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to all members of the Assembly, the war brides who are with us here today. And as I introduce them, I would ask that you just give us a wave so that we know who you are. And then when we've completed, then we'll show our appreciation to all of you together.

So, Mr. Speaker, if I may introduce in order: Mrs. Zena Allen, Mrs. Ruby Apperley, Mrs. Barbara Brandt, Mrs. Gloria Brock — and you may be interested to know, Mr. Speaker, that Mrs. Brock was the founder of the first War Brides Association here in Saskatchewan — Mrs. Heather Galenzoski, Mrs. Kay Garside — and Mrs. Garside was the secretary treasurer of that first War Brides Association — Mrs. Beryl Gould, Mrs. Doris Hammill, Mrs. Madge Kiel, Mrs. Betty Last, Mrs. Maisie

Lees-Dodman, Mrs. Eileen Malm, Mrs. Pat Orton, Mrs. Joyce Pinnow, Mrs. Pat Reslein, Mrs. Mary Taylor, and Mrs. Jean Thompson.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to show their appreciation to all that these war brides have done for Saskatchewan since coming to our nation as new brides of those who are veterans in our Saskatchewan and our Canada. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you it is my privilege on behalf of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition to welcome the war brides to their legislature.

My three sisters and two brothers and I always believe we were fortunate because our dad was a veteran and our mother was an English war bride. Some of my earliest memories were of Mom waiting for letters from home and her beloved Daily Mirrors that came in the mail.

She hid her loneliness from us and I know, like many of you, she only went home once in 26 years. As kids there was only one other family in our town that had their set of grandparents on the other side of the ocean, and we used to visit with that family very often. And I know that my mother shared memories and maternity clothes with that lady.

[10:15]

It's sad but as kids we never realized what mom had left behind to follow her heart to Canada. Mom was one of the 48,000 war brides and my sister was one of the children — the 22,000 children — that came on the two-week journey to Pier 21 at Halifax. I think you know that there was 8,000 war brides here in Saskatchewan.

It's only now that those of us who care take time to understand the culture shock that you must have gone through to come here in Canada. Most war brides left cities. They left homes with central heat and fireplaces and running water and you came to a place where there was a wood stove and a well and cold winters.

But as you celebrate the 60th anniversary of the war brides, on behalf of my leader and my colleagues we thank you not only for coming to Canada but for enriching our country and our culture. I hope you have pride when you know that one person in 30 in Canada can relate directly back to a war bride. So to use mom's words when she's finished her phone calls to England, I say, until we meet the next time, cheerio.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Government Relations, the member for Regina Douglas Park.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all of the members of the Legislative Assembly,

His Excellency, Otto Ditz, the ambassador of Austria. And I wonder if he . . . he is standing. His Excellency took up his appointment as ambassador of the Republic of Austria to Canada in January 2004.

This is his first official visit to Saskatchewan. This trip will provide an opportunity for His Excellency to meet several government officials and explore mutual interests between Austria and Saskatchewan. And I wonder if members would recognize His Excellency for attending here today.

And with him is a person who is no stranger to this Assembly and who's more accustomed to being seated on the floor or behind the bar, and this is Mr. Tony Merchant, the Austrian honorary consul for Saskatchewan. I would ask all members to join me in extending a warm welcome to these distinguished visitors. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition I too would like to join my colleague from the government side in welcoming His Excellency, Otto Ditz, the ambassador of Austria to Saskatchewan. We're pleased that he's been in Canada for a number of years and we're also very pleased that he recognizes the importance of our province. And I hope he's experiencing very warm hospitality from one of Canada's friendliest places.

Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of visiting Austria in the year 1999 between Christmas and New Year's. It was chilly there as it's chilly here, but the people were warm and friendly. And I think there is much to be gained if Canadians, particularly people from Saskatchewan, work with the people of Austria to increase trade and knowledge of one another and perhaps visit each other.

So on that basis we thank His Excellency, and we also want to thank Mr. Tony Merchant, the honorary consul for Saskatchewan to Austria, for attending the legislature this morning. We welcome you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina-Qu'Appelle Valley, the Minister of Ag and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to extend a general welcome to all of the war brides. But I also, on behalf of one of them, would like to . . . And this I would rarely do, but there was just a slight mistake in the House Leader's introduction. And I know that *Hansard* is accurate and records the mistakes along with the corrections. But the final war bride that was introduced, a long-time friend of mine who was also the musician this morning, is Jean Thomas, not Thompson. Thank you. And so, welcome.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Remembrance Day

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Canadians we are truly blessed and live in a land of plenty, free of the horrors of daily combat and war. Each November we remember the brave Canadians who have willingly placed their lives in jeopardy to secure the democratic freedoms and quality of life we now enjoy.

We remember in many ways, Mr. Speaker. We recall the lines of the poem, "In Flanders Fields," where poppies grow. We wear poppies to our lapels. We gather together in communities all across this country and lay wreaths at monuments to the fallen and many reflect privately on their own.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's war memorial bears 10,000 names from our province alone — women and men of all walks of life and all races who fought and died in the name of something greater. When we think of war, we always remember the brave men but, Mr. Speaker, during the Second World War alone over 50,000 women served, 8,000 of them overseas.

On Saturday we'll honour the thousands of Canadians who have died in the name of our freedom, and we'll hold a special place in our hearts for those who have lost their lives in recent weeks and months and for those Canadians fighting on foreign soil today.

Mr. Speaker, Gustav Mahler once said, "Tradition is not the worship of ashes, but the preservation of fire." We will remember them.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Saturday is Remembrance Day. It is a day dedicated to honour the men and women who at a desperate time of need left their farms, their families, and their friends to fight for freedom in strange countries. Many thousands gave their lives in armed conflict. They fought for liberty, for freedom, for each other, and for their country. Many of these young men and women were as young as 16 and lied about their age to fight for something they believed was right. They wanted to extinguish the flame of tyranny that was growing in the world.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has an exemplary record of answering this call to service. Over 140,000 men and women from Saskatchewan have served our country with pride and honour. Our province's war memorial bears the names of the 10,000 Saskatchewan men and women who gave the ultimate sacrifice, their life.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan soldiers fought in World War I, World War II, and the Korean War. They have participated in peacekeeping conflicts and are currently serving in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, November is also War Brides Month. We would like to recognize the 48,000 war brides that left their homes for Canada. And, Mr. Speaker, my mother-in-law was one of those.

With great courage they left their families and friends for a foreign land. They have contributed greatly to Canada and we thank them.

We remember the 232,000 killed or wounded in World War I. We remember the 96,000 killed or wounded in World War II. We remember the 1,558 killed or wounded in the Korean War. We remember the veterans of peacekeeping conflicts. We remember their sacrifice, and may we never forget. God bless.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Honouring Saskatchewan War Brides

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we now here all know that November of this year has been declared Saskatchewan War Brides Month.

It is estimated that some 45,000 women from England, the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Germany, and Italy came to Canada as war brides during and following the Second World War. Of these, Mr. Speaker, as we've heard, approximately 8,000 settled in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it took great courage for these young women to leave all that was familiar to them, their country, their homes, and their families to come to a new land and face an uncertain future. Many were unprepared for the conditions that they found in Canada, but most stayed, adjusted to a new way of life, and over the last 60 years have not only come to love Canada but have contributed to its development in so many significant ways.

In 1975 Saskatchewan became the first home to a provincial association for war brides, and I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge all the members of the Saskatchewan War Brides Association, especially current president, Mrs. Terry England.

Mr. Speaker, last year as part of the province's centennial the Saskatchewan War Brides Association published a book called *War Brides: our sentimental journey*, a collection of stories written by Saskatchewan war brides about their experiences as part of one of the most unusual immigrations in the province's history.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me again today in recognizing the many valuable contributions that war brides continue to make to our province and our country. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Honouring Canadian Armed Forces

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we prepare to observe Remembrance Day, we pause to reflect upon the men and women who sacrificed so much and to remember in gratitude those men and women who are still overseas fighting now the war against terror.

In the past week my constituency office in Swift Current had the opportunity to fulfill a very unique request from a family in Sceptre near Swift Current. Nona Wilkins called with a request on behalf of her son, Corporal J.P. Wilkins, who is serving in the Canadian Armed Forces in Afghanistan. Corporal Wilkins is an avionics technician and takes surveillance with a UAV, an unmanned aviation vehicle, for the American military at the airfield in Kandahar.

As a Canadian working on an American base he wanted to leave a Saskatchewan flag behind as proof that a Prairie boy was there, although I would note, Mr. Speaker, that every time a young Afghanistan girl goes to school in that country there is proof that Canadians are there, that Saskatchewan men and women are there fighting the war against terror.

Corporal Wilkins comes from a long line of military men as on both sides of his family, from great-grandfathers to the present day, they've always been men of service. His grandfather fought in World War II and was on the beaches of Normandy. And his father served as radio operator in Germany. The lore of his ancestors and his involvement with cadets led him to serve two tours in Bosnia and a tour in Afghanistan.

It is selfless Canadians such as Corporal Wilkins that make us very proud of our country and our troops, so we thank all of our men and women serving today in the war against terror in Afghanistan. We pray God's blessing and protection upon all of them as they are overseas, and we wish them all Godspeed and a safe return home to their families and their country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Regina Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion Celebrates Anniversary

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last Thursday, myself along with several colleagues from both sides of the House had the pleasure of attending the Royal Canadian Legion, Regina Branch 001, 80th anniversary gala. The title of the gala was A Night to Remember, and, Mr. Speaker, it certainly was.

A fine dinner was followed by an address from keynote speaker Pamela Wallin, daughter of Wadena and famous daughter of Saskatchewan. Fine entertainment was provided by Eileen Laverty, the Juventus Youth Choir, Marny Duncan-Carry, John McDermott, Le Raquette a Claquettes, and our very own Canadian Idol, Tyler Lewis.

Regina Branch 001 of the Royal Canadian Legion was the very

first of its kind in Canada, Mr. Speaker, a monument to our Canadian veterans. Years ago they gave everything for us — their youth, their innocence, and very often their lives.

On that Night to Remember, Mr. Speaker, we had the chance to give something back to our veterans. The event was sold right out; 600 people attended. And I'm very pleased to report that \$45,000 was raised to help keep alive the memories and traditions of those who gave so dearly.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to conclude by thanking Mr. Harold Hague, the gala Chair, past Chair of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 001 and a veteran of World War II. Thanks also to gala organizer Marian Donnelly; gala title sponsor, SaskEnergy; CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation], the many organizations that came together, the supporters, the sponsors, and volunteers that put together a gala that was indeed a night to remember. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Goodwill Manor at Duck Lake Celebrates Anniversary

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer my congratulations to Duck Lake Goodwill Manor on the occasion of their 20th anniversary. The special care home actually got its beginning in 1982 when the Duck Lake Board of Trade looked at the possibility of building a swimming pool or a seniors home. Residents supported the home, and after a two-year study they raised an impressive \$340,000. The total cost of the complex was nearly \$2 million.

Two years after the nursing home was built, the George Gauthier Foundation was created to raise funds to provide extras that the government funding did not cover. Fundraising over the years has allowed the foundation to purchase such things as patient lifts, Broda chairs, outdoor benches, and courtyards, a gazebo, and many other things.

Most of the residents of the home are level 4 care who are taken care of by the 60 full- and part-time staff. Goodwill Manor is the largest employer in Duck Lake. Goodwill Manor is affiliated with the Saskatoon Health Region yet retains some of its original independence because of its long-standing agreement.

Congratulations again to Goodwill Manor of Duck Lake on this memorable anniversary.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Celebrating Literacy Partnerships in Saskatchewan

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government is committed to making Saskatchewan the best place for young people to live, work, and build strong futures. As part of that commitment we have joined the Regina Public Library, Regina

public schools, and Regina Catholic schools to launch the Hand-in-Hand Partners in Literacy project at two inner-city schools right here in Regina.

[10:30]

Mr. Speaker, this project is about promoting literacy skills at the pre-kindergarten level and providing more support for vulnerable families with young children. A facilitator will work with the parents and children to develop literacy and reading readiness and children will be encouraged to use the resources of the Regina Public Library.

Mr. Speaker, this program and the \$2 million this government contributes annually through the Saskatchewan Literacy Commission is proof positive of our commitment to literacy programs and services and proof positive of our commitment to ensuring that all Saskatchewan people have the skills necessary to participate in and benefit from our strong economy.

Just as surely, Mr. Speaker, the silence of the members opposite in the face of federal funding cuts to literacy programs and their volunteers — cuts that hurt Saskatchewan people — is indeed unnerving. Please join your voices to ours in support of programs and services that will be provided for all, opportunities to young Saskatchewan people and their families.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Response to Requests from Cancer Patient's Family

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Crystal Bonderud, the widow of Doug Bonderud, has spent nearly a week in her Legislative Assembly. And I don't think any member of this Assembly on either side would disagree with the fact that she has demonstrated amazing courage and determination to try to get some answers on behalf of her late husband.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday after camping out in the Premier's office, he did finally meet with her. He did finally meet with Crystal and they had a chance to talk, I think, about the two issues — among other things — but certainly the two issues that we've been bringing to this Assembly. Number one, will the government review its decision not to provide for compensation for the family given that Doug received emergency surgery in Mayo and should therefore qualify for that help? That would have been discussed. Also, what is this government doing to ensure that patients and families are communicated with so they know all of their options with respect to health care? And in answer to those, basically the conclusion was ... from the Premier to her, his advice was go see the Provincial Ombudsman.

Mr. Speaker, he is the Premier. He is the leader of this government. He can make a difference on both of those issues. Will he do that this morning, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The opposition has a habit of misconstruing information and misrepresenting issues and today is another example of how the Leader of the Opposition will misconstrue certain information

Mr. Speaker, we have reviewed the issue with regards to the policy relating to out-of-country expenses, Mr. Speaker. We did it previously, and certainly during the course of this week we have reviewed this issue again.

Mr. Speaker, there are privacy issues that prevent me from answering all of the questions that are being raised here. But, Mr. Speaker, we have reviewed this issue, and we have concluded that the provincial policy has been followed in this case, that communication, adequate communication was made. And, Mr. Speaker, we stand by the position that we've taken.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, these questions are for the Premier. We already know his Minister of Health won't move on these issues. He won't investigate this situation. He won't review his decision not to provide compensation for emergent care that occurred in Mayo in the United States.

The provincial coroner though has decided to do an investigation into Doug Bonderud's death. I wonder if government members are yet aware of that. That is the result, by the way, of the work of Crystal. That's a result of the request of Doug's widow, Crystal. This NDP [New Democratic Party] government has done nothing.

Now the Premier did meet with Crystal yesterday. There are two important things that he can do. There are two important issues that he can impact on as the Premier of the province. He can commit his government to review the decision not to compensate the family for out-of-province travel as a result of emergent care that was needed. And he can commit to steps to ensure that this doesn't happen again, that patients are communicated with about all of their options when literally lives hang in the balance.

He can do those two things. Instead he refers Crystal, and others I guess, to the Provincial Ombudsman. Will he show leadership? Will he make the decisions that are required, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again I reiterate that citizens of this province when they have a complaint or an issue to raise about the quality of care — whether it's delivered at the physician level, at the agency level, or within the province — Mr. Speaker, the government has put

in place procedures, uncomplicated, uncostly, easy-to-access procedures for citizens to get answers to very specific questions that are not restricting government on privacy or legal matters.

Mr. Speaker, whether or not it's the coroner, the Ombudsman, the provincial quality of care coordinators, or the College of Physicians and Surgeons, there are easy-to-access investigative mechanisms that citizens can use.

Mr. Speaker, the Bonderuds have been directed to use those processes. And, Mr. Speaker, we believe, we believe very strongly that the family should review those options and proceed according to those which they feel are most appropriate.

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

Response to Poverty Study in Saskatoon

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, there's another picture emerging this morning involving our Premier, and it's not a pretty one either. A new study published in the *Canadian Journal of Public Health* shows there's an alarming gap between the health status of the rich and the poor in Saskatoon.

This study says that for every baby that dies in an affluent area, four babies die in the city's poorer neighbourhoods. The study says that in Saskatoon's poorest neighbourhood, right in the Premier's backyard, the people are 16 times more likely to try and kill themselves.

Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has had 15 years to deal with this issue. How did they let it happen?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, we've all had opportunity to look at the work that has been done on the west side of Saskatoon, work that we are very pleased to see done because this is unique in Canada — this kind of a detailed comparison of the health status as determined by income or poverty, in this case. Mr. Speaker, we do not welcome the results, of course. But we are, we are appreciative of the work that has been done.

What this work does, Mr. Speaker, is two things. It confirms much of the work that we are doing on the west side of Saskatoon and in fact in neighbourhoods across the province to endeavour to deal with issues of poverty. At the same time it confirms that more needs to be done.

And we will have opportunity, I would expect, in this question period or outside of this question period, to talk about some of that work. But let me say this. There is work that is being done — that work being confirmed by this study — and there's more work that needs to be done.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, the author of the study says he hopes that politicians will find these results shameful. Well I can assure you that members on this side of the House find those results shameful.

In Saskatoon's poorest neighbourhoods, cases of diabetes are 1,000 times higher than other areas. Suicides are 1,500 times higher than in poorer neighbourhoods.

Mr. Speaker, this isn't the Third World, it's Saskatchewan. Where you live and what your income is should not determine whether you live or die in Saskatchewan. The neighbourhood we're talking about right now has been in the care of the NDP premier for 15 years. The current Premier who represents that constituency was also the minister of Social Services for a number of years.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP had the power to change these conditions for 15 years. When are they finally going to do something about it?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the fundamental issue, the fundamental issue which this study has so clearly indicated, Mr. Speaker, is the relationship, Mr. Speaker, between poverty and health status. In these last 15 years, in these last five years, the initiatives and work that we have partnered with the community of the west side of Saskatoon is very, very significant — specifically, Mr. Speaker, around health care.

We have established, working with young students from the University of Saskatchewan, the SWITCH [student wellness initiative toward community health] program which is providing on-the-street medical attention and advice to residents of the west side of Saskatoon. We have established, just very recently, the West Winds Health Centre which moves resources for health care into the west side of Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker.

But the issues, Mr. Speaker, are here related to poverty — to poverty, Mr. Speaker. And we know those issues are related to education, to alcohol and drug abuse, to opportunity, Mr. Speaker. And when I have a chance again, I will document in this question period significant numbers of initiatives that are now available. And again I say, more needs and will be done.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the people that are suffering in the Premier's constituency will feel better when they hear the Premier's words.

I find it very interesting that, on the NDP website, there's an event highlighted at St. Paul's Hospital tonight that features the federal NDP social policy critic. He's there to talk about . . . a forum about poverty in Saskatoon. Some of the stats highlighted include, poverty in Saskatoon is real; 39,995 people are considered poor. That's 18 per cent of the population. 31,472 children live with parents who are on welfare.

Between 2002 and 2003, the number of food bank requests increased by . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order please. Order please. I would invite the member . . . Order. I would invite the member to repeat her question, please.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, my question to this Premier is simple. Why does the federal wing of the Premier's own political party have to send their social policy critic to discuss this NDP's horrible failures when it comes to poverty in Saskatoon? When is this Premier going to do something about it?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — On the west side of Saskatoon and in neighbourhoods across this province, we have been working with communities to improve the lives of Saskatchewan families in those neighbourhoods, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, in the west side of Saskatoon, we've established the White Buffalo Youth Centre for this purpose. We've worked with the young people in the west side of Saskatoon, with the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op, and just several days ago we made an announcement of a literacy program with the core neighbourhood co-op. Mr. Speaker, in the last budget this government put the largest increase to social assistance that's happened in 20 years in this province, and that opposition voted against it.

Mr. Speaker, when I became the Premier of this province, the minimum wage was at \$6. As a result of this Throne Speech, by next March this will be closer to \$8 — seven dollars and eighty-five, ninety-five cents, Mr. Speaker. They vote against it, Mr. Speaker.

And now the member wants to talk about federal issues. Well it's her Conservative friends that just cut the literacy programs in the poorest neighbourhoods in Saskatchewan. It's her federal cousins that cut the child care provisions that we worked out with the former government, Mr. Speaker. You bet my federal colleagues will be here as members of the New Democratic Party and meet with the community to find solutions, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Oyate Safe House

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Community Resources: what capital funding did the Oyate Safe House receive from the federal and provincial government?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I believe that the federal government and provincial government both contributed to capital costs associated with building the Oyate facility. I can get those exact figures for that member. They are probably documented in the auditor's report. And certainly I don't have that information handy with me, but I will get the information for that member, Mr. Speaker.

What I'll point out again, Mr. Speaker, once again there we have the opposition doom and gloom, creating fear, creating confusion. On this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, we're going to work on the solutions. The most important thing, Mr. Speaker, is the children are being looked after. Mr. Speaker, the problems that have been clearly looked at by the auditor and the advocate, we're going to move forward. And, Mr. Speaker, we are going to turn our energies on solutions, Mr. Speaker. And despite all the doom and gloom and all the fearmongering over there, Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. We intend to implement that plan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm that the Oyate Safe House received \$345,000 from the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, I think the member knows very well, as indicated by a number of people on our side of the Assembly, that the figures have been thoroughly discussed at Public Accounts. What I can confirm is that through the Sask Housing Corporation is that Oyate has a forgivable mortgage, and the premise of the forgivable mortgage is the fact that as long as they continue operating Oyate house as a house for people that are being exploited, that that will certainly diminish the amount owing on the Oyate home.

Mr. Speaker, this forgivable mortgage, as I indicated to that member, I'll get the exact figures so he knows. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, we intend to be fully . . .

[10:45]

The Speaker: — Order. Order please. I would ask members, I would just ask members to allow the question period to take place. I invite the minister to complete his statement.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Right, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the members opposite find the question funny. But the bottom line, Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious matter. And they can laugh all they want, they can laugh all they want, they can create fear all they want but, Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. And we'll provide as much information as required of me as a minister. And as I mentioned before, we certainly welcome all the scrutiny and will provide as many answers as necessary, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, I'm trying to keep the questions very simple. Mr. Speaker, it's obvious he doesn't know his file. Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain the terms of the loan provided to the safe house by the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation? Very simple.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, more than likely that member asked a question. And as I've indicated in the Assembly here not more than 10 seconds ago, I'll get the very specific answer as to the amounts that are owing on that particular house, Mr. Speaker.

If that member would have stopped laughing over there for a minute and start listening to the answer, I said this is a forgivable mortgage as long as the facility's being used to help with the youth that are being exploited on the street. Then as each year that the facility is being used for that purpose, of course, the mortgage is decreased, Mr. Speaker. So to answer the question, I don't have the specifics as determined what is owed today, but I'll certainly find out, Mr. Speaker, for that member and for all members of the Assembly. And I'm very willing to share that information and prepared to show that information and table it in this House, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, we're still going to keep them simple. Can the minister explain what would happen should the Oyate Safe House default on the loan?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated at the outset, that as long as the safe house is operational, then as each year passes and as each month passes, of course the mortgage will be decreased.

Mr. Speaker, I said I was going to reserve judgment, and certainly in the sense of where Oyate is going to be, until the 14th. At that time, Mr. Speaker, and maybe even prior to that, we'll give the Assembly full information as to what is owed on the current facility and what options are being considered for the current house.

But I'll point out at this stage of the game, on the 14th we will advise that member and the people of Saskatchewan what our intentions are. But until the 14th, he has to wait five more sleeps and then he'll find out, Mr. Speaker.

But I'll point out what is really, really important is that we are going to be working on the solution. As I mentioned, the

children are being looked after, Mr. Speaker. We're following the auditor and the advocate's advice, and we now need to turn our energies on the solutions and the plan that this government has for these children.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, I've tried to keep the question simple. Yesterday I asked for minutes of the meetings that the minister had with the Oyate board. He still hasn't been able to produce them.

Mr. Speaker, since the minister once again seems to know nothing, I would explain to him the terms of the loan. Saskatchewan Housing Corporation will forgive the loan over a 15-year period if Oyate is not in default. Under the terms of the loan agreement, default occurs if Oyate ceases to provide shelter to the victims of violence.

Mr. Speaker, could this be the reason that the minister is sticking with the Oyate board despite mountains of evidence on the contrary, despite the advice of his own officials? Could it be that he just doesn't give a damn about these kids and it's really all about . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Occasionally members tend to cross the line and I believe this is one of them. The statement that the member has just made is rather personal. I would ask him to withdraw the statement before we proceed any further.

Mr. Merriman: — . . . withdraw the word, not the statement.

The Speaker: — Would the member simply withdraw the statement unequivocally.

Mr. Merriman: — I withdraw the statement.

The Speaker: — All right. I thank the member. The Chair recognizes . . . Order please. Order. Order. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On the 14th of this month, we'll be making a very significant report as to whether we'll be proceeding with Oyate or not, Mr. Speaker. At that time we will certainly advise the people of Saskatchewan. We'll advise the opposition. We'll make sure people know exactly what is going to happen.

Until such time, Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the people of Saskatchewan that number one, the children are being cared for. That is really, really important for the people to know. Secondly, the Oyate Safe House is shut down. And, Mr. Speaker, despite that member's insistence that there's all these problems that are continuing to occur, I've said time and time again that the issues that he's raised are old news; they have been resolved. We've been working very hard to find resolution. And, Mr. Speaker, unless and until all the recommendations are met to the satisfaction of myself as the minister, Oyate will not open unless those conditions are being

met — very clear. In the meantime the kids are being cared, and work is being done.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Assistance to Farmers in Southwest Saskatchewan

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure it comes to no surprise for people of Saskatchewan, especially rural Saskatchewan — and it certainly comes as no surprise on this side of the House — that once again it looks like the NDP government and that minister is late in heeding the call for help in rural Saskatchewan.

Last spring if you remember, Mr. Speaker, in the spring session we on many occasions had to bring to the forefront the problems with flooding in the Northeast, in the Tisdale, Porcupine, Hudson Bay areas before that minister and that government would pay attention and actually address some part of the problem. And, Mr. Speaker, that problem goes on.

Mr. Speaker, now what we see in the Southwest — and we're receiving many calls and many letters — there's a drought problem in the Southwest, and this has gone on from probably since June of this year. Mr. Speaker, what is the minister doing to address this problem?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I really do have to question the sincerity of the member opposite. Mr. Speaker, when the question is asked to the member opposite, should government be helping farmers, what does the member opposite say, Mr. Speaker? He says, well should the government . . . The question is, "Should [the] government step in every time there are weather-related . . . problems in agriculture?" And the member opposite who raises the question answers that in *The Four-Town Journal*, and I quote, "No, I don't think there would be a need for government to step in . . ."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out to the minister that there wouldn't be need for help every time if we hadn't, number one, cancelled the GRIP [gross revenue insurance program] program, if that government hadn't gutted crop insurance.

In the last five or six years we've seen nothing but premiums increase and coverage drop. And if we had an adequate crop insurance program, an adequate CAIS [Canadian agricultural

income stabilization] program, these people wouldn't have to come to the legislature every time there was something happening in rural Saskatchewan. And that minister could help fix the problem.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, this problem has gone on since June of this year, and we've received letters, we've received calls, and I'm sure his office has also received calls. Now it's my understanding that that minister was down east and talked to the federal department about other issues.

What I want to know: did you raise this issue of drought in the Southwest with the federal Minister of Agriculture, and if so what are you going to do about this problem?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Ag and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again I do have to question the sincerity of the member opposite. *The Four-Town* . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order please. Order please. Once again I would ask members not to reflect on items in a personal way but to address issues the way they should be properly addressed.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will let the statement speak for itself. The member opposite has raised . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order. The . . . Order. The member ought not to reflect upon the ruling of the Chair and I would ask the member at this stage to withdraw his remark with respect to the sincerity of any member in this House.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, I withdraw any statement that I previously said questioning the sincerity. Mr. Speaker, I would like . . . oh, okay.

The Speaker: — I thank the member. At this stage let us proceed with question period. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote from *The Four-Town Journal* regarding a statement by the member opposite who raises this issue. When asked by *The Four-Town Journal*, the member from Melville-Saltcoats says, and I quote:

My personal view is that government should be out of your life and out of your way. Let business do it themselves. There's too much government intervention.

Does he believe that? Mr. Speaker, it is his statement. Does he believe it? Mr. Speaker, he said it; it is quoted. Does he believe it?

Mr. Speaker, in contrast to that, we are asking . . . I have written to the federal minister. We are trying to get a resolution to the situation in the Southwest because, Mr. Speaker, we care. I have met with the group. I have met with the farmers. We are working on it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess the first thing I'll have to do is buy a subscription to *The Four-Town Journal* for every farmer and rancher in southwest Saskatchewan. It seems to be the only way we find out what is going on in this province.

I don't think they really give a hoot if that minister is not really all that fond of me. What they really are worried about is buying groceries and paying their bills.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — And that farmer . . . that minister, I mean, doesn't seem to care what is going on out there. The problem up in the North has not gone away. Now we have another problem in the Southwest. We have 17 RMs [rural municipality] that are declared a disaster area and that minister has the nerve to stand here and belittle me and ignore the problem that's going on out there. They want an answer today; they can't wait for another six or eight months or a year. They're in trouble out there, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister actually address the question that I asked?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I want to know is, does the member opposite represent the policy of his party or not? He is the Ag critic. I have nothing against the member opposite personally. In fact we have spent some good times together and I've enjoyed his company.

But, Mr. Speaker, I will tell you this clearly and honestly, that if that member is representing his party's policy then it raises questions about whether or not that party's policy would provide support and intervention for farmers because, Mr. Speaker, and I quote from the member opposite from their website, Legislative Report May 3, 2006, and I quote.

This is what he says representing his party: "We don't believe in . . . direct investment in business by the taxpayers of this province," Mr. Speaker. That's what he says.

But, Mr. Speaker, because we care, we are providing resources. We are challenging the federal government to help us put program together that will help the people who are suffering in the Southwest.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Income Tax Changes

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In this year's Throne Speech we made a commitment to the people of Saskatchewan that they would feel real benefits from the prosperous and growing economy. In this past year alone we have reduced taxes by over half a billion dollars. We've done this by cutting property taxes, corporate taxes, small-business taxes, and sales taxes.

Today I am pleased to announce that we will now also cut income taxes, starting in January 2007. As such I am pleased to announce yet another measure that'll reduce taxes for average Saskatchewan families. I am pleased to inform the Assembly that we have increased the brackets and credits for Saskatchewan families on Saskatchewan income tax by the rate of national inflation. This indexation measure will save \$28.1 million for average Saskatchewan families.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[11:00]

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — This \$28.1 million in tax saving is another real benefit that will provide Saskatchewan taxpayers with protection from inflation, protection from bracket creep. It'll help maintain the buying power of wage earners and pensioners. These changes provide Saskatchewan families with real tax savings next year and they build on our commitment to ensure Saskatchewan people will continue to share in the prosperity we're enjoying today.

Mr. Speaker, with these changes and the other work of this NDP government we're continuing to make life better for ordinary Saskatchewan families and in so doing we will help ensure Saskatchewan remains the best place in Canada to live, to work, and to raise a family. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well again, Mr. Speaker, it's about time. People, people, people across Saskatchewan, people across Saskatchewan have been asking for automatic indexation so they don't have to wait for the government to decide well is it a good year, isn't it a good year; do we have the money to do it, don't we have the money to do it. The least that they could offer is automatic indexation so it wouldn't be at the whim of the particular Finance minister, Mr. Speaker.

That's what happens, that's what happens with this government. It's just too little too late, Mr. Speaker. The people of Weyburn-Big Muddy have spoken. Yes, it has initiated some changes, Mr. Speaker, but it's too little too late. Soon, Mr. Speaker, people across this province will speak. They will

speak by casting their ballot for change. They will speak for casting their ballot for a different government — a government that will come in and give long-term plans to Saskatchewan people, long-term affordability. That's not what we're getting from this government, Mr. Speaker, and again it's a great day because we are one day closer to the next election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Roadway Named Memorial Way

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, every year in November we take time to honour our veterans but we all know that one day each year is not enough time spent remembering the sacrifices that they have made. It's important that we recognize these individuals in a tangible way. Last year we renamed Highway 2 as Veterans Memorial Highway, complete with appropriate signage.

Together today with Veterans Affairs Canada, the Wascana Centre Authority, Saskatchewan Property Management, the Premier has announced that the roadway running parallel to Albert Street on the west side of the Legislative Building has been named Memorial Way.

Memorial Way, Mr. Speaker, is one of the most prominent locations on the legislative grounds where the World War I memorial, the World War II memorial, the Korean War, and peacekeeping operations, and the war brides memorial can be found. Each person who walks down this road will be forever reminded of the courage and selflessness of Canadian soldiers, people who deserve our respect and appreciation. Memorial Way is a tangible means for us to keep alive the memory of every Canadian soldier who has fought and died.

I ask all of us to take a bit of time, not just today but every day, to remember that because of the sacrifices of others, we live in a province and in a country that is free.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the minister for the advance notice of his statement today.

Mr. Speaker, we in the official opposition would certainly agree with this initiative by the government, by naming this roadway Memorial Way. Mr. Speaker, this morning in the service and today in the legislature, we've heard a number of stories, passionate heartfelt stories, and thank you to the veterans of the past.

As we know, Mr. Speaker, we as members of the legislature will be attending Remembrance Day services across the province. And it's so important, Mr. Speaker, that we as members help in that process of remembering those that have served in the past. And also, Mr. Speaker, I think it's very important as not only legislators but as parents, that we tell our children and grandchildren about the sacrifice made by

veterans.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is one initiative that will help in that process to remember the veterans — the people that gave the ultimate sacrifice in World War I, World War II, the Korean conflict, peacekeeping duties around the world. And today, Mr. Speaker, as we know, we must not forget that we have troops fighting the war on terror in Afghanistan, and certainly must remember those people and keep those people in our thoughts every day. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 3 – The Fuel Tax Accountability Act

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move first reading of The Fuel Tax Accountability Act, Bill No. 3.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 3, The Fuel Tax Accountability Act be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 201 – The Bio-diesel Fuel Act

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 201, An Act respecting Bio-diesel be introduced and read a first time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Arm River-Watrous that Bill No. 201, The Bio-diesel Fuel 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.

Mr. Brkich: — Next sitting.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I request leave of the House to introduce a motion to create a sessional order.

The Speaker: — The member's asked for leave. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

MOTIONS

Sessional Order

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce a motion to create a sessional order which will be seconded by the Hon. House Leader of the opposition to achieve an understanding that we've had regarding the rotation on private members' days in weeks subsequent to this week. And the motion would read as such, Mr. Speaker:

By leave of the Assembly

That notwithstanding rule 6(1), the time of adjournment of the sitting of the Assembly on Thursday November 23, 2006, shall be at 11:30 a.m., and;

That the 75-minute debate under rule 22 shall be suspended on November 23, 2006, with the effect that the rotation and ranking of government and opposition private members' day business for the remainder of the fall period of the parliamentary calendar shall be as follows:

It refers to the dates of November 16, 23, and 30, Mr. Speaker. And it has a chart which shall be posted and has been agreed to by both House leaders.

And further,

That the regular rotation and ranking of private members' day business shall be initiated at the commencement of the spring period of the parliamentary calendar as follows:

And then reference to the same thing for March 8, 2007.

Mr. Speaker, I so move, seconded by the House Leader of the opposition, the hon. member for Melfort. Thank you.

The Speaker: — There's a motion by the Government House Leader, seconded by ... pardon me, seconded by the Opposition House Leader. Will the members take the statement

as tabled? As tabled?

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.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Economic Growth in Saskatchewan

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks I will be moving the following motion:

That this Assembly recognize that the Government of Saskatchewan's new initiatives on immigration, skills training, public infrastructure renewal, northern initiatives, workplace safety, minimum wage increases, corporate and personal tax cuts, and occupational health and safety constitute a complete growth agenda that is creating both increased economic growth and new jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to speak to this motion. The Saskatchewan economy is on a roll, Mr. Speaker, and this government has a plan for continuing that economic momentum.

One of the major ways in which we're doing that is investing in a innovative workforce that will drive growth in this new economy, Mr. Speaker. And I'll be speaking to that in more detail in a moment.

But let me begin by providing some information, on the public record, on the latest numbers with respect to jobs growth and economic growth in the province, Mr. Speaker. Because the exciting thing is that we have more people working in Saskatchewan than we've ever had before — more than 500,000 people, Mr. Speaker, working in the province. And jobs for the month of October just past are up 21,800 over the year before.

Saskatchewan now has the lowest unemployment rate since 1979, Mr. Speaker. That, Mr. Speaker, is a major achievement. And of course the last time, Mr. Speaker, that we had those kinds of job numbers was when the Blakeney government, the NDP government that I was privileged to be a part of, was governing the province, Mr. Speaker.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, after years of economic decline under the Grant Devine administration, under the Conservative administration, we have now rebuilt our economy, Mr. Speaker. And I'm proud that our NDP government has achieved that.

Mr. Speaker, the record in the last few years couldn't be better. Manufacturing shipments up, urban housing starts up, international exports up, value of building permits up, retail sales up, Mr. Speaker. All the key economic indicators are heading in the right direction.

Now this hasn't come about by accident, Mr. Speaker. I would point out first of all that we have created a climate of economic growth. And we have dealt with the provincial debt which was key to providing economic momentum in this economy. We've driven debt down, Madam Deputy Speaker, by more than \$3 billion. And we have very substantially improved the relationship between gross domestic product and debt, to take it, Madam Deputy Speaker, from the worst in all of Canada, to the third best. And I think we can be very proud of that.

And that has allowed for tax cuts in all sectors of our economy, significant cuts to personal income tax. And the average family between 1999 and 2003, the average family of four had a personal tax cut of over \$1,000 per year. And we've had a significant reduction in the small-business tax, and it's been cut by almost half. And now, of course, a 2 per cent reduction in the PST [provincial sales tax] which has benefited everyone in Saskatchewan — benefiting families, benefiting small and large business, benefiting municipalities and public institutions. And this is going to be another important economic driver in terms of stimulating economic growth in our economy, and ensuring that all families benefit from the improved economy, Madam Deputy Speaker.

We've also created the right environment for business, contrary to what members opposite talk about, Madam Deputy Speaker. And this can be clearly seen when looking at the business surveys that are done across North America. One of the best known ones, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that done by KPMG, an international accounting and consulting firm. And they rank cities across North America and across the world with respect to competitiveness.

And the results are very interesting, Madam Deputy Speaker. Saskatoon, my own home city, ranked the lowest-cost jurisdiction among the 21 featured cities from the North American Midwest, moving up from a rank of second place in 2004. Moose Jaw and Prince Albert, Madam Deputy Speaker, ranked sixth and seventh respectively out of 128 cities surveyed by KPMG. Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that puts to . . . that clearly contradicts the claim by the Saskatchewan Party that we're not creating a competitive business environment, Madam Deputy Speaker.

[11:15]

Now our economy is strong on all cylinders, Madam Deputy Speaker. Outside of agriculture, we are booming in many sectors. And of course agriculture is the very important exception. And that's why, Madam Deputy Speaker, we are fully funding CAIS and have done so, Madam Deputy Speaker, for the last several years since the program was established.

But let me give you some of the statistics with respect to economic growth in other sectors. In potash, Madam Deputy Speaker, we see a record \$2.7 billion of potash sales. Our manufacturing sector in last year, Madam Deputy Speaker,

grew by 8.7 per cent so that manufacturing shipments now total \$10.4 billion.

Another key sector of our economy, Madam Deputy Speaker, is our Crowns. And our Crown corporations, now the big four Crowns — SaskEnergy, SaskPower, SaskTel, SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] — have business relationships, contractual relationships with 12,000 businesses in this province, Madam Deputy Speaker, making sure that when people pay their utilities, not only is it the lowest utility bundle in the country but those dollars, Madam Deputy Speaker, stay in our economy and circulate around for the benefit of local Saskatchewan businesses instead of going outside of the province, Madam Deputy Speaker.

We are strong in terms of the export sector. And our export sector is rapidly growing. In 2005 Saskatchewan exported \$29.7 billion in goods and services. And we have significant growth in the beverage processing and food processing sector, which is now a \$2 billion sector, Madam Deputy Speaker, with 6,100 people working in it.

We've had significant growth in our machinery and transportation sector which is now employing 6,400 people. And we are continuing to be strong in the farm equipment sector with \$275 million in export sales last year.

We now have 70 companies that are involved in the electronics and instrumentation field in Saskatchewan, which is an area that many listening may not be familiar with. So there has been substantial growth there, Madam Deputy Speaker.

We have now more than 300 companies that are working in the information and communication technology sector, and this is now generating more than \$1 billion a year in gross revenues for our economy.

We have new economic growth developing around the Canadian Light Source synchrotron in Saskatoon, one of the most important public infrastructure investments that this government has made.

We have new growth, Madam Deputy Speaker, in wind power and in biofuels. And of course wind power is now contributing 5 per cent of the electrical generation capacity of this province. And we have three successful wind farms operating and a fourth being planned for Broadview, Saskatchewan, near Moosomin.

And we now have three operating ethanol plants in the province, Madam Deputy Speaker, located at Weyburn and Lanigan and Lloydminster. And that industry will continue to strengthen in the years ahead.

Our tourism sector is continuing to grow, and we now have one in eight Saskatchewan workers employed in this important sector, generating \$1.4 billion a year.

We have a growing and vital set of cultural industries in our province. More than 40 independent publishers are now operating in Saskatchewan. More than 30 recording studios are now operating in our province. And our film and video industry is now creating 1,300 full-time jobs with 32 production

companies. Mr. Speaker, this is an example of the growth in the cultural sector. And of course we now have a state-of-the art production facility, the Canada-Saskatchewan Sound Stage in Regina, which is attracting much additional cultural activity in our province, Madam Deputy Speaker.

So the result is that we have facilitated growth in many, many sectors outside of oil and gas. And this is the key point I want to make, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that the growth is happening not just in oil and gas but right across our economy, Madam Deputy Speaker. And it is a result of sound government planning, working with the people of Saskatchewan. And it's a result of the industrious efforts of our people. And it's that combination that is creating a growth agenda, Madam Deputy Speaker, regardless of the negativity of members opposite in the Saskatchewan Party.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, we're going to continue this agenda. We have plans for expanded immigration in our province, and we are on track this year, Madam Deputy Speaker, to bring in 800 new immigrant nominees. And that will mean more than 2,400 immigrants in all this year, Madam Deputy Speaker, when you include family members.

We are continuing to strengthen our post-secondary sector. We're continuing our freeze on university tuition. We are growing our training spaces, Madam Deputy Speaker. Another 2,750 new training spaces created this year alone. We are continuing to work with our First Nations and Métis partners in terms of strengthening training in that sector as well, and I'm very pleased with the relationship that we have established with the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies.

We have established a new SaskJobs program, Madam Deputy Speaker, which is providing an important service to employers across our province. And we are continuing to strengthen our initiatives in occupational health and safety and minimum wage. Minimum wage will go up again in April to \$7.95 an hour.

We are strengthening our efforts in terms of workplace inspections. This, I think, is key. We have reduced workplace injury, down 14 per cent since 2002. We have increased the number of workplace inspections and, Mr. Speaker, all of this is key in terms of not only ensuring that we have a strong economy but also good quality of life.

And it stands in sharp contradiction, Madam Deputy Speaker, to the policies that are promoted by members of the opposition who have defined a growth economy as being an economy where there's different kinds of labour legislation, different kinds of environmental legislation. That's what they've talked about when they talk about a growth economy.

And the members opposite, the member for Estevan says well that's not right. But I remind her that her leader openly declared war on working people on the John Gormley show in October 3, 2005. I would remind her that her Leader of the Opposition called labour legislation, and I quote, "hurtful, unfair, paternalistic, and needless policies that harm our economic future and kill jobs."

I would remind her that the member for Biggar on April 10 of

this year in this Assembly said, "It seems that creating a competitive labour legislative environment, limiting government intervention in the economy, these things are very critical . . ." to an economic growth agenda.

What did the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook say, Madam Deputy Speaker. He said, and I quote:

But the tax reductions are only part of the overall growth agenda.

They should have went further, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And some of the things that must be included in this growth agenda must include creating a competitive labour legislative environment.

Well let me close by saying, Madam Deputy Speaker, we want none of that kind of policy that erodes occupational health and safety, that erodes environmental standards, that erodes workers' rights to a safe working environment and good labour standards. That's why we're going with things like our new statutory holiday and I'm pleased, Madam Deputy Speaker, to close and move the motion which I . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I congratulate the mover of this fine motion for an excellent job in your speech, the hon. member from Saskatoon Greystone university.

The Deputy Speaker: — I ask the member to come to order for a moment. The mover of the motion has the order paper and must put into record the motion and pass it forward to the Speaker, please.

Mr. Prebble: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm ready to send forward.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Saskatoon Greystone and seconded by the member from Regina Coronation Park:

That this Assembly recognize that the Government of Saskatchewan's new initiatives on immigration, skills training, public infrastructure renewal, northern initiatives, workplace safety, minimum wage increases, corporate and personal tax cuts, and occupational health and safety constitute a complete growth agenda that is creating both increased economic growth and new jobs.

I recognize the member for Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I congratulate my colleague from Saskatoon university on a terrific motion — outstanding — and a great job he did in his speech. Indeed the proof is in the pudding when it comes to economic growth and jobs, Madam Speaker.

You look at the latest numbers for Saskatchewan and it shows things like in October this year, 21,800 more Saskatchewan

women and men and young people working in Saskatchewan today than a year ago. It shows that we have the second lowest unemployment in all of Canada. And get this, we have the lowest unemployment rate that we've had in Saskatchewan. We're enjoying the lowest unemployment rate we've ever had since 1979, which was when Allan Blakeney and the NDP were in power in the '70s. All of the Tories on the other side, all of the nine and a half years of Grant Devine, they never came close to that, Madam Speaker. All of their old recycled ideas that they're now bringing up drove Saskatchewan in a downward trend.

We have youth employment this year up more than 8,000 — up 8,100 people — the second lowest youth unemployment rate in all of Canada. We've got all kinds of good news in manufacturing shipments that are up; natural gas, oil production, urban housing starts, international exports, value of building permits, retail sales — all of those areas, Madam Speaker, up — all of them.

Our economy in Saskatchewan is on a roll, and there's reasons for it. And part of it is, in no small part, some of the things we have done. When this Premier was merely a member of the government, indeed when he was a minister in the Roy Romanow NDP, he coined the phrase, we have to pay the bills, cut the . . . He says, cut the frills and pay the bills. And that's exactly what we have done consistently, and we're reaping the benefits of that here in Saskatchewan now.

We have enjoyed a record number of successive balanced surplus budgets. We enjoy, we enjoy . . . Madam Speaker, you compare Regina or Saskatoon to any other capital city or major city in Canada, any of them, and if you compare provincial income tax rates, credit rebates, health care premiums, retail sales tax, gas tax, mortgage costs, property taxes, home heating — and you can include energy rebate if you like — telephone, electricity, and auto insurance, combine that whole package and Regina and Saskatoon are one and two of the cheapest places in Canada to live, work, and build a strong future.

We have just this year reduced the PST from 7 per cent to 5 per cent. The last time the PST was at 5 per cent . . . It was the Grant Devine government that raised it from 5 to 7 per cent. I think it was 1989 when it was . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, Grant Devine had it at 5 and raised it to 7, the hon. former leader of the opposition. The last time the rate was 5 per cent, Grant Devine raised it. We have now lowered it to 5.

[11:30]

Personal income tax this year, as announced by the Minister of Finance, indexed to inflation, Madam Speaker, for the fourth year in a row. Working women, working men, young people see things like that and they say, yes Saskatchewan has its tax rate for people in a clear downward trend.

They have a government that cares for people. We have a government that is trying to make Saskatchewan a good place to raise your family and build a strong future. And, Madam Speaker, the proof is that we are working.

Saskatchewan is one of, notably one of two provinces in Canada that has more than 3 per cent growth each year for five

consecutive years — one of only two provinces in Canada. That's hardly an argument that we should quit what we're doing when we are one or two in each of the last five years for growth in Canada. It's absolutely outstanding.

I want to turn, Madam Speaker, a bit to . . . We have an immigration policy. We're targeting to bring in 5,000 immigrants to Saskatchewan by the year 2008. The minister responsible assures me we are on target. We've said this publicly. This year alone, for example, our immigrant, our immigrant numbers are doubling over what they were last year. We expect them to be double or very, very near double this year over last. And we continue to be confident we are on target to attain 5,000 new immigrants into Saskatchewan in the year 2008.

Our economic growth has turned the corner. I want to say, Madam Speaker, that it was pretty difficult. We've painted the picture, tried to explain as best we can how difficult things were when Roy Romanow and the NDP took office from Grant Devine and the Conservatives. Things were desperate. I know that we had not one, not two, but three serious discussions about what happens if Saskatchewan declares bankruptcy. It's absolutely unheard of for cabinet or government to have to enter into that kind of discussion.

And now, now we hear the opposition saying, oh, but we're the ones that are old. We're the ones that are devoid of new ideas. This is what they say. Well I want to say that in our worst year, our worst year, in terms of net . . . We want to talk about net out-migration, Madam Speaker. In our worst year — in fact our worst two years — we weren't as bad as the former government was in its worst year.

Let me phrase that a different way. When the Leader of the Opposition was a senior advisor to the Conservative government, the Grant Devine government, out-migration in 1989 hit 18,589 people — 1989, while the Leader of the Opposition was a senior ministerial assistant to the government of Grant Devine and the Conservatives. In the year counting 1989 and the year each side of it, the total net out-migration in Saskatchewan totalled more than 50,000 people. And he has the audacity to tell us that now he's got the fresh idea, the new ideas that are somehow going to lead us to the promised land. Well, Madam Speaker, I remind everyone that it is tired, old, recycled Grant Devine promises.

And we've heard quotes earlier today, get government out of the way. They say, Tories and Sask Party say, government doesn't work; let's get government out of the way so that business and people can get on with their lives. Well why is it they're so determined to get elected and prove that they can't do the job, that government doesn't work?

I say elect people that say government does work; people that every day they get up and they say, what can we do for Saskatchewan people today? What can we do to make our province a better place today? What can we do to build a stronger future in Saskatchewan? What a wonderful province we have.

I again say you can cherry-pick any two of our years of out-migration. You cherry-pick them, any two, the worst two

you can. We do not equal the out-migration you had in one year. Any two of our worst years and we don't equal the out-migration.

And now, Madam Speaker, they have the audacity to say, but they've now got the new, fresh ideas. Well they say, they say, cut taxes. I remember Grant Devine saying there's so much more we can be. He said effective midnight — midnight — election night, gas tax is gone. Well we saw the record then. It was a record number of deficit budgets. The deficit started with Grant Devine and the deficit grew, the debt grew. The debt grew until it was a millstone around our necks, Madam Speaker.

I am delighted to say we've turned the page. We're on a bright future in Saskatchewan. We have turned the corner. We're sharing things. The Minister of Finance's announcement today indexing personal income tax for the fourth year in a row. We've cut the PST from 7 to 5. We're sharing the good news with the people of Saskatchewan. We've turned the corner on the Conservatives and the tired, old Grant Devine era. We are on a roll. We are making Saskatchewan a better place to work, live, and build a strong future. I support this motion. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm certainly pleased to be able to enter into this debate and talk about the members' opposite motion. They talk about a complete growth agenda. And after 15 years, Madam Deputy Speaker, now they are finally talking about a complete agenda. And you know what? The people of this province are saying it's about time.

After 15 years, it took you this long. After we've lost some over 60,000 people from this province, and now this government, this tired, old government is going to put forth a complete growth agenda to create the environment that will create jobs and keep young families and young people in our province. I don't think so. I don't think the people are buying it. They didn't buy it in Weyburn-Big Muddy, Madam Deputy Speaker, and they're not going to buy it in the next general election, Madam Deputy Speaker.

They like to stand up and talk about all the great things that are happening in this province, and there are some great things happening in this province. But the truth is that they're happening in spite of the policies of that government, not because of those policies, Madam Deputy Speaker.

They remind me of farms that we have throughout this province, farms that I think we all know that are productive, have great resources, but really aren't managed all that well. But those farms and those families seem to get by. I think everybody has at least one in their area that you can point to. But because of the strength of the resource base and the climate and those sorts of things, those farms seem to manage. And that's what's happening in this province, Madam Deputy Speaker.

We have tremendous resources. We have tremendous people in this province, but what we don't have is leadership. We don't have leadership from that government in the last 15 years. And in spite of them, in spite of their bungling and their mismanagement and their ill-conceived ideas like SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] and Channel Lake and those sorts of things, Madam Deputy Speaker, this province continues to get by, and in fact it continues to grow in peaks of growth.

But all we need to do is look at some of the facts, Madam Deputy Speaker. Let's look at population decline in this province in the last 15 years. We've lost over 62,000 people. So what does that mean — that 62,000 people? It's a large number, but let's try and put it in a bit of context so the average person can understand that. It's the equivalent of losing all the people from Moose Jaw, North Battleford, and Swift Current. Under this government, we've lost those three cities, Madam Deputy Speaker — the equivalent of that. In the last year we've lost 4,500 people. That's like taking a town of Nipawin and depopulating it. That's the record of this government.

And now they're talking about a complete . . . They're finally arrived at a complete growth agenda. Well I don't think that they're there. They haven't been there in the last 15 years, and I certainly don't think that we're going to get there. They're putting a few ideas together, ideas that they have looked around and seen the policies we've put forward. And they're saying, ho, I mean, that's a good idea. Let's adopt it, and we'll call it our own, Madam Deputy Speaker. But the people see through that sort of strategy.

So who are these people that we are losing? Well the statisticians tell us that the bulk of the people that we are losing are between the ages of 15 and 45. Now if you think about that, those are our young people, our young families, the people who are starting their careers, are building their careers, and continuing in their careers. And they are a good chunk of our tax base. And that's part of the people, and that's the biggest segment that we're losing.

You go talk to young people, to graduating students and you ask them where they see themselves working after graduation. The vast majority of them say that it won't be in this province, and that's a real sad commentary on that government's growth agenda and policy.

Another group of people that we are losing, Madam Deputy Speaker, are people who have completed their careers, their work life, and they're looking at retiring. And many of those people are leaving this province to be with their children and their grandchildren, Madam Deputy Speaker.

In our own extended family, we have a father and a mother who will be retiring in the next 12 months from their careers. And they've already bought a condo in Calgary so they can be with their son and his family and their two grandchildren. So what they're doing is they're taking their retirement earnings that they've earned here in this province and they're going to another province and paying their taxes there.

That's serious enough. But if you look at something even more serious, I'm told by accountants that there are untold number of

business people who make arrangements to set up a residence in another province — and quite often that province happens to be Alberta — before they liquidate their businesses, and they pay all their tax upon retirement and upon liquidation of their businesses in another province. And why are they doing that? Because of the policies that that government has put in place over the last number of years.

And now finally at the eleventh hour, when they're down in the polls and they wake up every morning and they say, what can we do to improve our political future, they finally are making some adjustments that we on this side of the House have been talking about for a long period of time, Madam Deputy Speaker.

But, Madam Deputy Speaker, we don't need to always compare this province to Alberta. Alberta has a number of things going for it that no other province in this country have.

So why don't we see how our neighbour to the east — Manitoba — is doing? So what has happened with Manitoba's population, Madam Deputy Speaker? While we are losing population, our neighbours to the east, who have fewer resources and coincidentally also have an NDP government, but their population is growing. And there are some reasons for that, Madam Deputy Speaker.

One of the reasons is the immigration policy. The members opposite, they like to stand in their place and talk about this new initiative in immigration. Well how did we do last year? Did we have 1,000 new immigrants come and live in this province? The minister is shaking her head and saying yes.

Although I haven't seen the statistic, it seems to me more in the hundreds, not in the thousands. We are significantly behind what Manitoba has done in this area, Madam Deputy Speaker. So this government can't even compete with their Manitoba cousins, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And here at the eleventh hour they say, well we finally got it right. We finally got all the pieces of the puzzle together. Now we finally at the eleventh hour, we have a complete growth agenda. And part of their growth agenda, they said, well we're going to . . . we need to look at infrastructure and renew infrastructure — something that we on this side of the House have been talking about for a long time.

Today we see the Minister of Highways introduce a Bill that talks about dedicating all the fuel tax toward the transportation system. Something that we on this side of the House have called for, for many years, now finally they are deciding that they should do this to improve those key highways that lead to economic growth.

Hopefully this will mean perhaps that the people of St. Brieux and Bourgault Industries — who's a world-class manufacturer — may finally get a primary highway although we haven't seen any plans. Let's hope that perhaps in their wisdom and at this eleventh hour that they may see fit to start providing the people of St. Brieux and Bourgault Industries with a primary highway so that they can bring in the supplies that they need, and export their products and create more economic growth and employ more people in that area of the province.

[11:45]

What about Highway 5? The member from Humboldt has been calling for, on behalf of her constituents, to widen that section of Highway 5 and improve that section of Highway 5 from Saskatoon to Humboldt, particularly that section from Saskatoon to Junction No. 2. I've driven that highway recently and with the amount of traffic, the amount of trucks that are supplying the manufacturers in that central part of our province, and it's narrow, it's hilly, and it's certainly a very dangerous part of our highways system. Hopefully, Madam Deputy Speaker, that'll be part of their plan.

What this government has done in the last number of months, Madam Deputy Speaker, because they are out of ideas, they've looked at what we've done and they've adopted many of our ideas . . . to name a couple, most recently, mandatory retirement. A mere coincidence? I don't think so, Madam Deputy Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition announced it, and then later in the afternoon they say, oh I think that's a pretty good idea; we're going to do the same. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to rise in the Assembly and speak to the motion that was moved by the member for Saskatoon Greystone. This motion articulates some of the initiatives of our government's bold and positive vision for Saskatchewan families and young people.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I can't tell you how proud I am to be part of the political tradition that we are heir to on this side of the Assembly, a political tradition that Saskatchewan people know they can trust to be there for them.

One of such strong NDP legacies is occupational and health safety legislation. In 1972 under the leadership of Premier Allan Blakeney, the NDP government passed the occupational health Act, the first legislation of its kind in North America which became the template for other jurisdictions to follow.

This Act known as The Occupational Health and Safety Act has seen regular updates to the legislation since its inception, except for the years when the Grant Devine Conservatives ran roughshod over the working people of Saskatchewan. A labour history book, entitled *On the Side of the People*, describes this period of time as the nine lost years. To quote from the chapter "Nine Lost Years" from *On the Side of the People*, quote:

The Devine government never bothered to tamper with occupational health and safety (OHS) legislation or regulations put in place by the Blakeney government. It simply neglected to enforce them in a meaningful way. Following the 1982 election, Lorne McLaren explained the government's rationale: "Management is saying to us: 'Get off our backs, let us do the job'. So my response to

them is okay we'll get off your backs." McLaren argued that administering occupational health and safety was a management prerogative . . .

Madam Deputy Speaker, our NDP political tradition firmly believes that every working person in this province has a right to a safe and secure workplace. Our NDP political tradition firmly believes that every worker in the province of Saskatchewan has the right to know that they will come home safely to their families at the end of the workday, and in the event that something does occur through their work experience, that there is a decent system in place to provide them with the supports they require.

Our NDP political tradition does not believe that occupational health and safety is simply a luxury issue that can be dealt with as a management prerogative, but rather that it is a basic working standard that can be expected by workers in Saskatchewan, that will be properly monitored and enforced. This is an NDP political tradition that we are proud to continue on with.

This NDP government knows that Saskatchewan's social and economic well-being depends on healthy and safe workplaces. We have worked with employers, workers, and students to raise awareness about workplace health and safety. We have increased the number of workplace inspections, and we have tripled the number of prosecutions for occupational health and safety violations by bringing in a dedicated prosecutor. As a result, Saskatchewan has experienced one of the highest reductions in injury rates in all of Canada — a 14 per cent reduction since 2002.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Morin: — The action plan for healthy and safe workplaces, which is in its third year of a four-year plan, has the unique distinction of being supported by both business and labour. Some of its successes to date include 2,800 fewer workers being injured while the number of workers covered by WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] has increased by 11 per cent; \$28 million reduction in WC [workers' compensation] compensation costs; \$13 million savings to Saskatchewan businesses through a decrease of 10 per cent in WCB premiums; 22 per cent decline in youth injury rate over the past five years.

The members opposite have repeatedly denigrated labour legislation and regulations that are good for working people. Occupational health and safety, labour standards, and the workers' compensation system protect workers. This government knows that. Saskatchewan people know that. Saskatchewan business owners know that. It is time for the Saskatchewan Party to recognize that and stop attacking the working people.

Unlike the members opposite, this government believes that the occupational health and safety protections for workers are absolutely essential. This NDP government will continue to build on the legacy responding to the recommendations from the Occupational Health and Safety Council which is made up of both business and labour representatives.

In addition to responding to the council's recommendations, our government will continue to identify initiatives for reduction to the injury rate. Continue to support the over 4,500 current occupational health and safety committees to increase their effectiveness and add up to 325 new committees and provide over 200 training opportunities. Conduct a total of 4,500 on-site workplace inspections, including targeting of higher-risk workplaces with the highest number of illnesses or injuries. Enhance the support to initiate prosecutions more often for serious or repeated non-compliance with occupational health and safety standards. Help young people make the transition from school to work by developing more ready-for-work resources for use by teachers in high school courses, middle-year courses, and post-secondary institutions. Provide health and safety services for workplaces to reduce hazards by research projects and technical services in such areas as hygiene, toxicology, ergonomics, and radiation. Increase health and safe work practices as part of the community and workplace cultures through such partnerships as WorkSafe Saskatchewan and Safe Saskatchewan.

Any time someone questions the occupational health and safety requirements that this NDP political tradition has put in place, I simply point them to Esterhazy and suggest that they ask the miners about cutting safety regulations. When those 72 potash miners at Esterhazy emerged safely after having been trapped, there were no questions in anyone's minds about how crucial strict health and safety regulations are.

Thanks to the NDP government's progressive and aggressive approach to workplace safety, to mine safety, thanks to the dedication and skill of the mine rescue workers, lives were saved, families remained whole, and no one was left mourning for a loved one.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Morin: — The safe return of each and every potash miner placed Saskatchewan at the centre stage as the world leader in the protection of its workforce. Media the world over cited our regulations, and our mine safety inspectors have been asked by both the United States and China to share what we know about keeping miners safe. We can be extremely proud of that.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what does the Leader of the Opposition have to say? On April 22, 2005, the Leader of the Sask Party said, quote, "We don't want to have, we don't need to have anything unique here . . . We don't need to have in legislation a different balance here between worker and employer than there is anywhere else."

I seriously doubt that the opinion of the Esterhazy miners would be the same as his. Is this the value that he places on the lives of Saskatchewan workers whose productivity levels are touted as ones to be measured against? Or how about the Leader of the Sask Party referring to occupational health and safety regulations as, and I quote, "Red tape and regulations that have been hoisted onto the business community by this government," and then went on to state that occupational health and safety protections hurt the economy.

Of course this is not surprising given the fact that the Sask Party leader has openly declared war on working people on a radio

show in October 2005. It is also not surprising that the Leader of the Sask Party would denigrate the critical importance of occupational health and safety protections given his long history of opposing labour legislation that is good for working people. And I quote, "hurtful, unfair, paternalistic and needless policies that harm our economic future and kill jobs."

Madam Deputy Speaker, decent labour standards hasn't hurt our economic future. And I am wondering what policies does the Leader of the Sask Party take issue with, and at what cost to the Saskatchewan workers? It is time for the Sask Party to be clear about exactly what they would cut in terms of labour legislation instead of speaking in code as was described in a *Leader-Post* editorial entitled, "Business crowd got Wall's coded message" dated November 4, 2006. Or as my colleague from Regina Rosemont so accurately described as, what do they have hiding in the weeds?

Madam Speaker, I consider the Sask Party to be an even scarier proposition than the Devine Conservatives of the 1980s. Misguided as the Devine Tories were, even they never talked about tearing down everything that the province had accomplished in the previous 60 years, throwing it out and starting it over. Under this leader the Sask Party do. They do it all the time. Under this leader the Sask Party has become so disingenuous and so slick and so slippery that some kind of overarching descriptor is needed, and scary fits the bill. The Sask Party often expresses outrage at our using so-called scare tactics in our political battles with them. So I will make them this promise. I'll stop saying scary things about them just as soon as they stop being so scary. Come clean and articulate the Sask Party version of a growth agenda by "creating a competitive labour legislative environment."

Mr. Speaker, what is the Leader of the Opposition's enterprise friendly plan? I'll tell you what the Sask Party rhetoric is, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is an attack on the working people in the province of Saskatchewan. It is clear from their rhetoric that if ever given an opportunity to sit on this side of the House they would gut labour legislation. Thankfully Saskatchewan people know that the members opposite cannot be trusted. They know that the risks of cuts to labour legislation is real and would hurt working families. This NDP government believes that decent labour legislation is essential to the well-being of working people and the businesses of this province. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Recognize the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm very pleased to rise today and speak to this 75-minute debate. I've listened to the members opposite, their comments. I was quite interested in them, in particular when the member — I believe it was for Coronation Park — talked about 1979 was the last time that we've had similar low unemployment numbers. And I've got to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, 1979 was a real good year, not only for that, but it's the year that I was born, so it was a good year.

But you know, I want to say there are a few similarities between 1979 and 2006, and I'm not talking about the fact that the

member for Greystone is still in this Chamber. But if you look at our resources, Madam Deputy Speaker, if you look at our resources, the motion that was put forward by the government says that it's what this government has done that is creating both increased economic growth and new jobs.

And I have to say, you know, I don't think it's so much what this government's doing. It's what \$60-a-barrel oil is doing for our province, and what record high potash and uranium prices are doing for our province.

And I just had a quick look. I googled it up on the Internet. I dialed it up, and if you look back and compare 2006 with 1979, it's very much the same situation. Prices in these resources which we're so dependent on are at near record highs. 1979 was a good year for oil prices, certainly for potash prices. And uranium prices I note too were also quite high. So I think it's not so much what this government has done and what our industries have done.

And I do want to say . . . While I'm on my feet, I want to take this time — especially for me from the constituency that I represent and part of my family background — I want to thank the people that work in the oil industry and that work in the potash industry and the uranium industry and forestry — it's difficult times right now — and our producers.

You know I laugh a bit when I see government members. I know the Minister for Finance and to a lesser extent the Minister for Industry, and they seem like they're going to strain a muscle patting themselves on the back for the work that they've done.

And, you know, I'm sure the Minister of Finance is busy. You know, he's cutting taxes left and right. Their numbers are going down, but I didn't realize he had time to go out and survey the land and build the pad for the drilling rig and put the drilling rig up and then go service it. I didn't realize he had all that time to do it. But I do want to say thank you to the workers out there and, you know, people like my father who's driving his truck right now and the employees that he works with.

[12:00]

I do want to go on . . . I didn't realize how fast the time goes. I do want to say that it's pretty obvious — and we've talked about it a lot — that this government is old and tired. And you really see that in how many of the ideas that they like to borrow from this side of the House. And that's fine. I mean, we're pretty upfront in saying that we're not only going to oppose this government but we're also going to offer our own ideas. And if they want to steal them, I guess that shows how desperate they are.

But I think it's real telling, Madam Deputy Speaker, when you look at our population, not only our population but the party opposite's, their attitude towards population numbers. You know, before, they used to . . . Population wasn't a big thing. And I remember a time when Roy Romanow said we shouldn't use population as a benchmark for determining how well our province is doing. And we've had it from the member, the Minister for Highways who said, you know, we know what it is that when people leave the province, there's more for the rest of

us. And there's others like that.

And we found the same thing on youth, on out-migration of our youth. Before, they never talked about it. In fact, in the last Throne Speech, they promised — it wasn't a major thing — but the government promised a new award for youth, the Saskatchewan Youth Award. And a year later, they still haven't delivered on that. It's not a big thing, but it does show that they really didn't take the issue seriously until Weyburn-Big Muddy came along. And we all know what happened there. And I'm very pleased to represent the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy and certainly grateful for this opportunity.

And I can't believe I'm at halftime, Madam Deputy Speaker. I'm just getting started.

But it's the same thing with the idea of a growth agenda. Last night I went on Google and I googled in Saskatchewan NDP and growth agenda. And I went into the *Hansard* record and looked for it and I found one reference to a growth agenda.

In all the time in the last number of years that this side's been speaking about it . . . And the Leader of the Opposition likes to ask questions in question period on the lack of a growth agenda. And they could barely even say the words. They couldn't even say the words, growth agenda, and now all of a sudden they got to put a motion out saying that they're all for a growth agenda and this is what they're doing for it.

And it just goes to show that they're on to the last legs of this government, and they see what's successful on this side of the House. They see the numbers and see which way this party's going and which way that party's going, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And you know, I really notice this, I really notice this. About a year ago, about a year ago in February 2005 the Saskatchewan Party had our annual convention. We passed a resolution and I want to read part of it for you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's making Saskatchewan the energy heart of North America. And it's:

Be it resolved that a Saskatchewan Party government will set the goal of making Saskatchewan the energy heart of North America within ten years . . .

Now a month and three days later, this is what the Premier had to say at his business dinner. And listen to the wording; it's pretty interesting. He said, and I quote:

In this our new century, I believe that Saskatchewan has all the potential to become that jurisdiction in North America where energy is at the heart of our future.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, I've got to say that it's a bit, it's a bit telling for my age, but I grew up in a generation where the big movies of the time were *Star Wars*. And you know I remember a character, with all due respect to the Premier, a character . . .

An Hon. Member: — A sasquatch?

Mr. Duncan: — No it wasn't, but it was a guy named Yoda

and he liked to speak in reverse. And you know this is exactly what the Premier did. He took our resolution and just reversed it and tried to make it his own. And you know it's a shame I don't have enough time. I could go through a whole list of areas.

But I do want to speak about the Saskatchewan Party's growth agenda. And you know this. The Saskatchewan Party, we believe that we have a plan for a real growth agenda. And it's not just a buzzword that the government likes to pick up from this side because they see that it's successful. But it talks about creating Enterprise Saskatchewan, which I think is going to be a really good, new initiative by a new Saskatchewan Party government whenever that government decides to call an election.

And we talk about removing barriers to growth, not only taxes which we've seen in the dying days of a government. You know, they're how many months away from the next budget and they're already starting to cut taxes. They're trying to see if their numbers will go up and I don't think they will. And also the old economy infrastructure barriers — reducing those, roads and . . . especially places like my constituency where highways are a real big problem.

This government doesn't seem to want to invest any money in rural Saskatchewan, especially in things like high-speed Internet and especially cell coverage in my area.

I see my time is winding down and I'm just getting started here, Madam Deputy Speaker. And so that being said, you know, it's real telling and I can't get through all of these right now but, you know, I think as we see, we get closer to the next election we'll see more of the ideas that come from this side of the House. They're going to take more of those ideas and . . . But, you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think when we finally get the next provincial election then we'll see a real, a real growth agenda being implemented by a Saskatchewan Party government. And I, you know, I'm very pleased to say that I will not be supporting the motion. And thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I'm very pleased today to join in the debate that this government, the NDP government across, has put forward on the idea of a growth agenda.

As some of my colleagues have said just before me, this is the first time the government has even talked about, acknowledged that there is such an issue and how important it is. And the only thing it is the basis of a government need in their position. I want to . . . While listening to the members opposite, we would have to believe in their mind that life is absolutely wonderful in Saskatchewan.

My question to them or my questions to them are simple. With all the wonderful good news that this government has put forward in the last little while, and with the Throne Speech and the budget that they are talking about, the question is, why are people still tired of the NDP government? Why is your political

numbers still falling like a rock? Why, every time we answer the phone in our constituency, are people saying, is this government ever going to call an election? They don't have a clue what's going on in Saskatchewan. They're living in a little bubble where they like to believe that everything is great and we know it's not.

I can tell you that the government didn't get the bump that they expected in all their good news announcements because people don't trust this government. They don't trust in the words that they're saying and they say that actions are clearer than words. I guess the best example we have of that lately is the election in Weyburn-Big Muddy. The fact that this government came in third in that election is absolutely . . . should have been bewildering to them. But to us it wasn't surprising at all. Weyburn-Big Muddy is an example of how all the people in Saskatchewan feel about this NDP government and exactly what's going to happen to them.

And then when we stand in the House in the last two weeks and talk about issues like Oyate, and the people of the province know exactly what's going on. They know the truth and they know that there is denial going on, but they know that this government isn't standing by their word and they can't trust them.

For as much as people would like to believe that there's going to be a change in this government and a focus on the economy, the people in my constituency — in Kelvington-Wadena — know it's not true because they know the government doesn't understand the whole concept.

The best example I have of that is the member from Sask Rivers a couple of years ago got up in the House and talked about our leaders and a growth agenda. And he said, I don't understand what you're talking about; what do you mean by growth agenda? Talk about growth, all you want to talk about is grow, grow, grow. The Leader of the Opposition not too long after that had to stand in the House and say, he understands you don't know about a growth agenda. We know that. The people of the province know that because you don't get the whole concept.

Everything that's happening from that side of the House is nothing more than words and it's a list of foreign concepts that you don't understand because there's no recognition. There's a concept between the social economy and the financial economy that you have to have a growing agenda before you have money for programs like health care and education and social services. They don't understand it.

And I guess today in the House, the Premier himself didn't define that. He couldn't bring it to words when we asked questions about the problems in his own constituency. We talked about the fact that in his constituency that the latest study that was done shows that in that area four babies die in that constituency compared to one in another constituency at the same time. The people are 16 times more likely to try and commit suicide in the Premier's constituency than in another one. The poverty in Saskatoon is . . . There are 39,995 people considered in poverty in Saskatoon. That's 18 per cent of the population and most of them are in the Premier's riding. That 31,472 children live in homes where the parents are on welfare.

And what does that tell you about a government with an agenda that's based on growth and jobs? It's not happening. It's a figment of their imaginations. And people know that the only way they can make it happen is to dump those guys over there and get some ideas that are coming from the people who will put forward ideas.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, just to clarify something that one of the members opposite talked about and I think she spent most of her speech on safety regulations. And I have to tell her that whatever kind of concept she was trying to put forward that the Sask Party doesn't believe in safety regulations is false.

But I do want to tell you that none of the employers in Saskatchewan understand why you don't believe, why this government doesn't believe. Employers care about safety. It is not just the government. You don't have to put forward every rule and regulation, because employers know if you don't look after your employees, they're not going to be there. They won't want to come to work. They like their employees. You don't have to trust government to tell them what to do.

I, unlike most of the members on that side, have been an employer, and I know the importance of having a good employee. And the only way you can do it is by making sure they know how valuable they are. That's our job. That's how employers gain their employees in this province. And that's what they know about a good employer, is that they look after them. We don't need government to tell us to do that.

I just want to make sure that the people that are listening today understand that three out of the last five years, this government has posted a deficit budget — deficit. For as much as they'd like to tell everybody they've had balanced budgets, it is not true. If I could choose between the members opposite or the Provincial Auditor, any day, I will tell you, I believe the Provincial Auditor. He's says . . . [inaudible] . . . are not true.

We also know that we have our population out-migration is huge. We've lost 18,000 people under this Premier, and I think that is absolutely disgusting in a province with all the natural resources that we have. We have one-third of the world's supply of uranium, one-third of the world's supply of potash. We're the second highest producer of oil in Canada, the third highest producer of gas. Our forest industry is where BC [British Columbia] was 40 years ago. Our agriculture is unlimited.

And today the minister, instead of answering the questions we had about the people who are living in and really dire circumstances because of some of the issues around agriculture, chose to attack the member rather than addressing the issue. That really, really helps. That helps people. That really helped the people who have problems in agriculture, listening to our minister talk about it.

Let's talk about what you could do, what you could be doing as a minister. But no, they'd just rather blame it. You've spent the last 15 years blaming and looking through the rear-view mirror. And there's never been anything that you can do without help from somebody like this party.

The 100 ideas that we put forward last year, a lot of them have been implemented — thank you very much — but only because we gave them to you. And you could not have come up with most of those ideas at all.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there is so many things that this province has to be proud of. The one thing that we're not proud of is this current government. And I can assure you, as soon as the Premier has the nerve to call an election, he will show that quickly.

I'm very pleased to stand here today and say that I will not be supporting this ridiculous motion put forward by the NDP government, and that the people who know about this growth agenda is this party. And we'll be doing it right after the next election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Morin: — Madam Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has often taken the Premier to task for affectionately calling Saskatchewan the wee province. He claims this hurts our image. How does the Leader of the Opposition . . . This is a question to the member for Kelvington-Wadena. How does the Leader of the Opposition and the Saskatchewan Party think that constantly referring to Saskatchewan as, quote, "dead last", telling people that our economy is hooked up to a, quote, "suicide machine," and telling people that all the, quote, "best and brightest have already left," will help Saskatchewan's image and attract workers here?

[12:15]

Ms. Draude: — Somebody said a while ago that the only way that you can solve a problem is to recognize that you have one. And this government has not recognized that there is a province in here. When our Premier will refer to our province as a wee province, he's got the problem. Our leader, the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party, the next premier of Saskatchewan, will be telling the people of the province of all the possibilities we have.

So I thank you very much for the question, and I'm sure some day you'll have the chance to sit over here.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Recognize the member for Saskatchewan Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. My question is for the member from Saskatoon Greystone. In light of the fact that the Saskatchewan Party campaigned on tax cuts in the last election and in light of the fact that the Saskatchewan Party have repeatedly said that corporate capital tax is one of the most insidious taxes in our province and in light of the fact that the NDP told the people of Saskatchewan that if you cut taxes you can't afford health care and social programs, does that member support his Finance minister's announcement of corporate capital tax cuts and corporate income tax cuts? Does

he agree with the Saskatchewan Party that some tax cuts will trigger growth in our province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Member for Saskatoon Greystone.

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. Some tax cuts do trigger growth in this province and a good example is the PST cuts that we have just brought in. Another good example is the small-business tax cut that we have consistently implemented in phases until we halved the small-business tax cut. We've taken the PST, Madam Deputy Speaker, and we have cut it two points just, Mr. Speaker, in the last two years.

Now let me say that tax cuts will stimulate the economy if they're well thought out, they're well placed, and if they're sustainable and affordable. And what we saw from members of the opposition when they were in government, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that they made unsustainable tax cuts. They spent \$1 billion more than they took in each year and they drove this province into debt. We've introduced tax cuts after years of driving down debt and then making those cuts sustainable.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. My question is to the member from Coronation Park. The member from Coronation Park talked a lot about the debt from the previous administration but after 15 years of government — his government — he still can't accept any responsibility for the actions of those 15 years.

I would like to read a quote to him. And this is from the Hon. Ed Tchorzewski who was the minister of Finance, and this quote comes from 1992, Mr. Speaker, from *Hansard*. It says in talking about the debt, "Every single cent of it except the 3.5 billion, which . . . [is] a very modest debt, all in the Crown . . ." He was talking, Madam Deputy Speaker, about the debt of the province, \$3.5 billion which was Allen Blakeney debt plus over top of that, Madam Deputy Chair, is the almost \$3 billion at that time of unfunded pension liabilities. Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, my question to the minister is: why do we now have 4.3 billion of unfunded pension liabilities and \$21.3 billion of total debt according to the Provincial Auditor?

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank the hon. member for the question. I happily accept the responsibility for the actions of this NDP government for the last 15 years. We've got the lowest unemployment rate we've had since 1979. Taxes are on the way down for people — \$325 million tax cut this session with the announcement of a two point cut in the sales tax — in the PST.

With respect to pensions, I'm delighted with the moves that we are making and about to make. I am delighted that not one single pension cheque has bounced. We backstop pensions. That is the responsibility of government and we're growing the economy so that we are able to backstop. And we are able to make sure that every single Crown corporation employee

retired and every single civil servant retired, their pension cheque is going to be good and it's going to grow well into the future. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

While I'm on my feet I'd like to ask a question to get back into the cycle.

The Deputy Speaker: — Even though I had not recognized you before, I recognize the member for Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — I thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is for the member for Kelvington-Wadena who spoke about social services and the numbers of people you were referring to in the Premier's constituency. Let me remind that hon. member that the number of social services recipients in Saskatchewan in 1990 exceeded 60,000 people — 60,000. It is approaching half of that today and we're enjoying absolute all-time record employment. Does the member accept and agree that many of the people who had been reduced to receiving social services benefits, many who wanted to work, now have employment? Does the member agree that things are working in that regard?

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. My comment to the member opposite is when the member from this side of the House asked in estimates about the number of people on the provincial training allowance and on social services and moving back and forth and if they had kept track of them, the answer was no. Nobody knows who was on the PTA [provincial training allowance] and who was on social services and the numbers back and forth. This government has never kept track of.

And also I will remind this member that his government, being there for 15 years, never once looked at people on social services and gave them an increase until this side of the House suggested it had to be done. The social conscience over there is nil.

The Deputy Speaker: — Recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. This is a question for the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this government has made a lot of noise and a lot of announcements about the importance of immigration into this province. The minister has travelled around the world promoting immigration. But unfortunately, Madam Deputy Speaker, this minister is only bent on cutting out the consultants, the immigration consultants who is so necessary to attract immigrants into this province. As we know, Star-7 had 85 applications given to the government and all 85 were rejected.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I'd like to ask the member, will her government stop interfering with the private consultants and stick to the job that the department should be doing, and that is processing applications?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Recognize the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Well our initiatives in terms of immigration are proving themselves. We are well beyond our numbers in terms of what we wanted to bring into this province, and we are going to probably exceed those numbers, Madam Deputy Speaker. And that's something that we are very, very proud of.

But having said that, you know, it's interesting that they are wanting to switch sides in terms of the different persona that they want to portray. And interestingly enough, if you look at the quote from Regina *Leader-Post* from January 19 of last year, the quote says, "Wall's stances in the past year — no Crown Corporation investment, no gay marriage, and, most recently, no additional hours regulations for part-time workers — have left you with the impression that his leadership is no less socially and economically conservative than that of his predecessor, Elwin Hermanson."

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, the cat has not changed its spots. And, quite frankly, we are continuing on the path that we've started on. We are well onto the successes that we've laid out with respect to the immigration policy. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Meadow Lake.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. Given that education is often identified as a key in a successful economy, and given that many First Nations and Métis communities clearly identify education as a key in economic development in their own communities, and also given that Saskatchewan's future clearly, clearly relies on well-educated young, Aboriginal people, I would like to ask the member from Kelvington-Wadena — coincidentally also the critic for First Nations and Métis relations — whether or not she agrees with the federal government's decision to cut the literacy program that I know has affected many, many First Nations and Métis communities so acutely? Does she agree with that, yes or no?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena. Time has elapsed for the 75-minute debate.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Motion No. 1 — Loss of Confidence in the Government

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Chair . . . Speaker, I'm sorry. This has been a very interesting day. This has been an interesting debate. But I'm in . . . have the opportunity here, Madam Deputy Speaker, to speak to a motion of non-confidence that I will be moving a little later on. And I guess one of the things I appreciated about the 75-minute debate that just transpired was that much of that informs the discussion that I hope to bring to this debate in the next little while.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this Assembly has lost confidence in this Premier and his government. Worse, Madam Deputy Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan have lost confidence in this Premier and his government. But maybe most devastating of all, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that some of the Premier's own caucus and cabinet colleagues have lost confidence in the leadership this Premier is providing through his government.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this is an important discussion because I believe that rather than talking like the social democrats that this government proposes and espouses to be, members have stood in their place, time after time in the last number of weeks and talked like Wall Street bankers.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this is obviously creating confusion; not only in their ranks, but among the party faithful and, more importantly, among the many people of this province who have come to expect a certain level of debate and a certain position of advocacy that this government has traditionally held. But in recent days, in recent debates in this House, in recent announcements made by this government, you would think that they were the captains of capitalism.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would say that this government is uncertain of itself. It's off track. It's off message. And it's in a desperate ploy to hang onto power that this government has decided to disregard its ideology and do what it feels it has to, to cling to the reigns of power. That, Madam Deputy Speaker, is a recipe for a loss of confidence, both inside and outside of this House.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there are a couple of areas that this government traditionally has held on to as evidence of its concern for the general public, for its social conscience, and for its history. And I would refer, Madam Deputy Speaker, to first of all, health care. And secondly, I'm going to talk about some social issues that have afflicted this particular government in its tenure — most recently in the last half dozen years, but it goes back to the time this government first took power in the early 1990s.

When the Romanow government was elected, one of the very first things it did was closed 52 rural hospitals. Also, the Plains hospital in Regina came under the axe as a part of that decision-making process. The problem with that particular decision, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that it not only closed rural hospitals; it cut to the heart of this government's responsibility and its advocacy of health care, of equality delivery for everybody in Saskatchewan. And cutting those hospitals was symptomatic of a change in mindset that would affect this government in the years to come.

And if we look at the more recent record of this government, we can talk specifically about the problems that are affecting rural hospitals today. We've heard just recently of several hospitals that have been closed in the constituency of Canora-Pelly. I think that Canora is closed. Preeceville is threatening closure because of some problems in delivering services there. I think that they've had hospital closures at various times in that particular constituency, which has been hardest hit most recently. But as of last summer the hospital in Maple Creek was under some threat of closure for a lack of qualified people.

[12:30]

We've heard of hospital closures, although they may be temporary, in Spiritwood. There was a hospital closure announced for Arcola. The community of Central Butte had their hospital close down because of a shortage of registered nurses. Big River, they had emergency and acute in-patient services unavailable to that community since August.

Now I want to quote, if I may, Madam Deputy Speaker, the mayor of Big River. Sandra Gilbert says, "The town has been dealing with shortages for the past six years. It's rather exasperating."

Madam Deputy Speaker, these rural hospital closures are symptomatic of a much larger problem. We have raised in this House many times over the last number of years, in fact, the problem with the shortage of physicians both in urban and rural Saskatchewan.

In urban Saskatchewan, when there's a shortage there might be somebody there to help cover the load or take some of the load. But in rural Saskatchewan there's a doctor shortage, most times there's nobody there. And the consequence is that the people of the community are without service and the hospital is closed until that doctor or physician shortage is revisited.

We've talked time and time again about the shortage of nurses in the health care system. And as of last count, I believe the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses suggested a shortage of 600 nursing positions that require filling in the next little while to keep our hospitals operating on an effective and timely basis.

And 600 nurses, Madam Deputy Speaker, is a cumulative number, because that shortage didn't occur this last summer. It didn't occur in the last couple of weeks. That's a number that has been accumulating over the last half a dozen years or more.

This is not a short-term problem. This is a long-term problem. And this government has failed in its responsibility to provide the resources necessary and the people necessary to fill those nursing positions. And hospitals all across the province are affected by that failure to do diligent duty in that area of responsibility.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we're aware of the term code blue, which has been not heard quite so frequently in urban hospitals, but it was a fairly common occurrence over the previous few years. As a matter of fact, I was a patient in one of these urban hospitals when a code burgundy was announced as a need or as a course of the issues that were developing there, in terms of shortage of bed space and shortage of people available to deal with the patients that were coming in on an emergency basis.

So what we've got, Madam Deputy Speaker, is a government that talks about and takes some pride in its history of public health care, stands in the House day after day and says we're the, not just the proponents; we're the authors of public health care. Our party has a proud tradition in the delivery of health care. And yet we see it's starting to crumble around us.

One other thing that I'd like to address in terms of health care and that is the waiting lists that have been created by the

shortage of doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals. The waiting list at one time in this province was the worst in the country — the worst. In the home of health care we had the worst waiting list — longest waiting list in the country. And you know that's academic and it's just numbers until you start talking to the people who are on that waiting list; until you start identifying with the individuals who are at home waiting months and months for the opportunity to have a medical procedure performed on them.

It might not seem too important as long as we're talking about numbers but when you talk to an individual who is sitting at home taking morphine to address the pain, that number suddenly has a very painful face. And for this government to have shirked its responsibility in that area is just unconscionable and it speaks very clearly to the loss of importance that this issue has taken.

When we hear the Minister of Health stand in this House day after day and talk about processes and procedures and never once talk about individuals and how the loss of applicable and appropriate care affects them, then we start to understand where this government has gone off track. When processes become more important than people, the government has lost its way.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would say that that's one of the reasons why the people of this province have lost confidence in this government. They no longer live up to the reputation that they thought this government had for health care propriety. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think the issue goes right to the heart of this government, right to the heart of its public conscience, its social conscience. And I think it speaks very clearly to how this government has got so far off of message and so far off track that they don't really know who they are or what they stand for any longer.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there's other issues that I'd like to address. This government has historically had a reputation for being very deliberate and focused on social issues. And when I was first elected, I think I saw more of that from this government. But in recent years we've seen a lot less. And there are some issues that have come to our attention that make this apparent loss of conscience in this area very clear, very evident, not just to the members of the House but to the people of this province.

I'd like to refer to the Oyate Safe House debacle that we witnessed in this particular Assembly — the questions, the lack of answers, the issues. Madam Deputy Speaker, there have been problems with this particular house which was supposed to provide safe harbour for teenagers who are under extremely difficult circumstances, who are often sexually abused and were forced into the sex trade. This house was supposed to provide safe harbour for those young ladies.

But problems developed early. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, the government's response to the problems that developed has been to obfuscate, to hide, to run from its responsibility.

The minister of DCRE, the minister responsible for Social Services in this government, is by law the individual who is responsible personally on behalf of the government for the welfare of those children. That minister has parental obligations

to those children.

Have I heard him stand here and admit that or accept that responsibility? No, ma'am. I've heard him hide from the facts. I've heard him distort the response of the government. I've heard him defer to the report by the Children's Advocate and the Provincial Auditor when they in fact were holding him responsible for an abdication of authority. And I think, Madam Deputy Speaker, he's hidden behind those reports when those reports in fact were the origin of some of the most damning condemnation of this minister and his lack of responsibility.

So when it comes to the social conscience this government is so proud of, they have abdicated their responsibilities pretty clearly. And that's no way to build confidence in the people of the province.

The effects of poverty in this province. I think that if I recall, Madam Deputy Speaker, this government talking about eliminating the need for food banks in their elected lifetime. I think I remember them talking about eradicating poverty among children in their elected lifetime. And today in the news, in the printed and electronic media, we're hearing some very, very discouraging reports about what's happening in the province of Saskatchewan. The report is based particularly and specifically on research work done in the city of Saskatoon, comparing health outcomes and conditions in individuals on the west side of the city with those on the east side of the city.

The curious thing about this, even though it's a very damning and devastating report, is that the constituency that is most specifically identified is the Premier's own constituency. Madam Deputy Speaker, I don't know how much more, how much more condemnation this Premier and this government needs to hear than the results of this particular report. Because it points clearly to the failure of this government to address the very issues that their social conscience insists that they address. I'm going to read some of the report's results into the record today, Madam Deputy Speaker, because I think this speaks more loudly than anything I can say today.

In terms of suicide attempts, the people in the low-income areas of Saskatoon are 16 times more likely to attempt suicide than people in the rest of the city. In terms of mental disorders, the people in this study are 4.3 times more likely to suffer mental disorders than those in the wealthier parts of the city. In terms of diabetes, almost 13 times greater rate of diabetes in the people who were studied on the west side compared to the east; coronary heart disease, 1.7 times greater in these people than on the wealthier part of the city; doctor visits, 2.4 times higher; in terms of chlamydia, 14.9 times higher; hepatitis C, 35 times higher; infant mortality, 3.2 times higher.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I don't know how the government members sleep at night. I don't know how the Premier can stand in this House and talk about the record of his government in terms of social conscience issues and have reports and statistics like this arrive for public review as a result of a study. It's just unbelievable and it's unacceptable. And it speaks, it speaks directly to the issue of this government not knowing who it is, where it's going, or what's important to it any longer.

When I hear member after member after member stand up and

talk about job numbers and investment increases and all the good things that a growing economy produces but no references to the tragedy of the lives of these people, I think this government is missing the mark.

This government also has failed in terms of its social conscience in other areas. I recall, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Salvation Army, a well-respected community-based organization, faith-based organization, had a program operating in this city that did very good work. But the government decided it would no longer fund it because it wanted to remove itself from the faith-based activities of the Salvation Army. What did it do? It removed the funding to that group and turned around and created another government agency, moved all the funding to that government agency. We cancelled 23 jobs at the Salvation Army, put 23 additional government jobs in this new facility and chose to go that way.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there was no need to make that decision. No organization is better respected for the work it does among the poor and the indigent and the hurting than the Salvation Army. There was no reason to discontinue funding to that organization and create another government agency to do the very same job.

This government has no respect for those types of community-based organizations, and I think that there are other examples of it. In fact most recently we've heard about Teen Challenge and the great work it's been able to do for drug addicts in this province, particularly those who've been addicted to crystal meth, whose addiction produces such an erratic and difficult experience for the individual who's addicted that they're completely unpredictable. And Teen Challenge has stepped into the breach there and taken these young men and worked with them and produced some tremendous results.

And instead of supporting the work or encouraging the work that that agency does on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, the government decided to just move on with their own programs and ignore and almost disavow the work of Teen Challenge. And in fact I believe, Madam Deputy Speaker, there have been obstacles placed in the way of Teen Challenge and their ability to expand and increase their program in the Saskatoon area.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, with these instances and many others that I would like to have addressed, I think we've got a problem here in that this government has lost its way. It's wandering around in the wilderness. It doesn't know exactly what its focus is. It doesn't know where it's going. It's lost its attachment to its roots, and it's created a situation where it looks like the government is making announcement after announcement on a daily basis as an effort to detract people from the record and try to establish enough credibility coming up to the next election that they would have an opportunity to be re-elected.

[12:45]

But, Madam Deputy Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are starting to see through this. They're not easily bought with their own money any more. They're not convinced that this

government represents the very important issues that people hold important in their lives any longer.

And the interesting thing, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that when the government focuses more attention on economic issues than it does the very important social issues for which it's been known, it creates the very brand problem that this government has.

And even though it's made very important strides to look business-friendly, even though it's done some tax reduction — and I would say some of it's been important tax reduction — even though it's changed royalty rates for oil companies, even though it's provided incentives for development in other countries, this government still has a brand problem because it's not known to be a business-friendly government. It's a social democratic government. Social first, democratic maybe, but it's not a business-friendly government.

And if the government members can't understand why they've done all these good things for business — reducing this tax and that tax and this royalty and that incentive — it's because the people of the province simply don't trust the motives of the government. They don't trust this government to make smart business decisions that will have long-term benefit to their particular business.

Madam Deputy Speaker, a leopard cannot change its spots. And I make that reference in regard to this particular government because this is the genesis of the brand problem that is so important to this particular province. If you're going to move in a business-friendly way, the businesses that you want to attract to your province need to be convinced, need to be certain, need to be able to look back on your track record and say, we can trust this government to move in this direction and honour its commitments.

But the business community cannot trust this government. They've done what they've had to do not because they wanted to but because they felt obligated to or were being forced to do it because of disenchantment with their particular party. And I think that we'll probably see more of this as we move forward, Madam Deputy Speaker. But people will say, is this genuine? Is this real? Or is this just something that the government's doing for re-election purposes? It's that concern in the minds of the people of Saskatchewan that causes a lack of confidence. And so, Madam Deputy Speaker, this is a government in trouble. This is a government in trouble with this Assembly, with the people of the province, and within its own membership province-wide.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to address some rural issues at this point. I think the fact that we haven't talked about rural issues much in this House is a pretty clear indication of the government's lack of interest in this particular topic. I want to talk about crop insurance. That kind of came up in the 75 . . . no, I'm sorry, question period earlier today, Madam Deputy Speaker.

There is a drought happening in large areas of southwest Saskatchewan. And the Minister of Agriculture would have us believe that the government's crop insurance program is adequate to meet the needs of the people who are affected by

that. Well if it was true, Madam Deputy Speaker, that crop insurance was adequate, I wouldn't have had the 15 or 16 RMs afflicted by drought contacting my office after having declared themselves a disaster area. I wouldn't have had dozens of letters and phone calls from producers in my constituency who are wondering where they're going to get the money to pay their bills. If crop insurance was adequate, Madam Deputy Speaker, we wouldn't be in the legislature addressing the problems posed by this drought on the producers of southwest Saskatchewan.

I need to tell you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that crop insurance started out as a very good program. But with the wilful attention of this particular government, crop insurance has been reduced to a Mickey Mouse program. There are increasing premiums every year and reducing coverage at the same time.

I have a young man who farms, who's put his entire life into farming, is one of my friends and one of my constituents, come to my office a week or two ago and say he bought what he could afford in crop insurance. He bought the 70 per cent coverage. That was affordable. It really wasn't adequate, but it was affordable. The 80 per cent coverage of crop insurance was so out of line financially, he just couldn't afford to go there.

But when he had a crop failure this year due to the drought, his guarantee was 21 bushels to the acre. He produced just enough to reach the minimum, the guarantee, but the dollar value for each bushel that he actually harvested was so low that he wasn't left with enough money to cover his fixed costs — his fuel, his fertilizer, his chemicals. He wasn't left with enough money to cover his additional administrative costs, his unfixed costs, or his business cost, and he certainly wasn't left with anything for a living.

So for the government to intimate that crop insurance should cover this kind of a problem, is simply a situation where the government either deliberately has not made itself aware of the implications of the changes they've made or is completely ignorant to the reality of farming — one or the other.

And I just don't see where this government can hope to attain any credibility in rural Saskatchewan if they're going to perpetuate these kinds of programs for the producers of Saskatchewan. It's a situation where there is no confidence or no attempt to build confidence among the producers of the province.

There's forage insurance. I want to address this just for half a minute if I may, Madam Deputy Speaker, because forage insurance was designed to protect ranchers and individuals who grew forage for feed. And we had the driest year in southwest Saskatchewan, in most of the areas, since the dirty thirties — since the 1930s. And yet the individuals in our area who had forage insurance, when they expected a payment, were told they wouldn't receive anything at all.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, the reason they're not going to receive anything is that government has decided to impose a very strict recording of moisture that fell in the area. The weather stations now record moisture in the one-tenth of one millimetre amounts. Now anybody who knows anything about growing forage, if you've got a dry 10 inches of soil, it's going to take three- to four-tenths of rain to make any difference in

that forage crop. The government is saying if you collect one-tenth of one millimetre, that has to be counted toward . . . That's less than the dew. That's less than the average dew would produce. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, when you get programs that put strictures on producers of that type — that are just completely unreasonable — it's hard to generate confidence in the public.

And as an official opposition, it's our duty to represent the concerns of those constituents, and even those individuals who aren't our constituents, who are having these problems with this government. They just do not see this government as being aware of the issues that face them. Whether they're in urban Saskatchewan and dealing with street crime or if they're in rural Saskatchewan dealing with drought, there is no confidence in this government.

And so, Madam Deputy Speaker, it's my privilege to move this motion, and I do so now:

That this Assembly no longer has confidence in the Premier and his government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: — Seconded by . . .

Mr. Elhard: — The motion is seconded by the member from Indian Head-Milestone.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Recognize the member . . . Well I have to have the motion before me. Thank you. It's been moved by the member for Cypress Hills and seconded by the member for Indian Head-Milestone:

That this Assembly no longer has confidence in the Premier and his government.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a privilege to get into the debate and talk about this motion and seconding the motion of non-confidence in this government.

It certainly isn't just the number of people on our side of the bench that do not have confidence in this government. We know that thousands and hundreds of thousands of people across this province don't have confidence in this provincial government. And I can tell you why they don't have any confidence in this government and especially to the member from Regina Victoria. I know that people don't have confidence in his government because his government is acting exactly the way the Conservatives did in the end of their tenure. I don't see any difference between their government and the Grant Devine government at the end of its tenure.

The Grant Devine government, the Grant Devine government, at the end of its tenure, knew that the time was up but didn't

want to face the reality that they were going to get kicked out after the next provincial election. So what that government did at that time was, in order to get votes, they would start passing freebies out. They'd start handing out all these gifts thinking that that would get them elected. It's nothing different than what this government is doing right now.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it's just interesting the timing this government is doing it. We know that it's to salvage the leadership of a Premier that, quite frankly, doesn't have the support within his own caucus. We know that members on that side of the House do not support the Premier. So what the Premier has done is he's gone and thought of some giveaways.

I mean there's the family holiday that they've all of a sudden decided, after 15 years, they should present to the people of Saskatchewan because they don't have . . . people in Saskatchewan don't have confidence in this government. There's the one Family Day holiday. And now, the two points on the PST.

I mean it's like the deathbed confession. They know their time is up. They're no different than what the Conservatives were at the end of their tenure, trying to buy votes back so they can cling on to power. And it's nothing more than that. It's to save the leadership of a Premier. It's simply to cling on to the power that they could be government for another four years.

But it's interesting because why this is all coming about right now is because not only do we not have confidence in this government and this Premier, members on that side of the House do not have confidence in their leader.

We know that of course the member from Regina Dewdney spoke out and because of that he was kicked out of cabinet. But we know that there was three or four others on that side of the House, at least, that were supporting that member for speaking up against the Premier. And one of them was the member from Regina Victoria. We know for a fact that that member was feeling that their leader could not lead them into the next election and really felt that they needed to make a change.

But unfortunately one person spoke out on that side and we know what happened to him. He was made an example of. That member was simply made an example of. He was kicked out of cabinet, and the other people that were backing him thought well we better just keep our mouths quiet because what's going to happen, is if we speak up, if we speak up, we may lose our cabinet position. And that's exactly what has happened on that side of the House.

And now the Premier, in order to salvage not only the support from within his own caucus but the leadership of this province as Premier, is on the eleventh hour doing nothing more than trying to buy votes leading into the next provincial election.

When I had the opportunity to reply to the Speech from the Throne, I was talking about a number of the similarities between this NDP government and what went on in the '80s, and there are a number of striking similarities, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The issue of non-confidence rings true throughout the province,

and nowhere was it more evident than the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy. Weyburn-Big Muddy was an example where the once strong NDP under Tommy Douglas ruled that constituency. They ruled that constituency. And under the leadership of this Premier they have gone from ruling that constituency to finishing third in that constituency. That is a shocking testament to the leadership of this Premier. And we know, as I said before, not only is there a lack of confidence in this government from this side of the House, we know by watching the faces on that side of the House there is a huge lack of confidence in the Premier.

The member from Saskatoon Riversdale, which we heard some very interesting news coming out of his constituency today in question period — and the member from Cypress Hills talked about it — about, you know, the health of the people in that area and about how this government stands and talks about how it protects the poor and stands up for the poor. And then when you get a report like this, it just tells you they are interested in talking about it, but they're sure not interested in doing anything about it.

Well I just heard the member from Regina Qu'Appelle having a few words to say. I was very interested in question period when he was asked a few questions about agriculture, and he decided to talk about our critic and what he has said.

I remember not too many years ago, I remember not too many years ago when that member stood on his feet. He yelled from his seat and talked about it was a right thing to do to raise long-term care fees to 90 per cent. And I would be very interested if that member still thinks it is time to raise long-term care fees to 90 per cent. Is that what he believes in? Because he sure had no problem yelling from his seat that it was the right thing to do.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the right thing to do for this government is to realize the ghost is up; it's time for a change. Because people around this province know that it's time for a change. People within his own caucus, within that NDP caucus, know it's time for a change. It was nothing more than clinging on to power. That is why this government is making the moves that it's making now.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — It now being the hour of 1 o'clock, I wish everyone safe journeys and Remembrance Day ceremonies in their own constituencies well attended. And I do now adjourn this House until Monday at 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

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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
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Minister Responsible for Information Services
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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
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Hon. Deb Higgins
Minister of Learning
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