



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

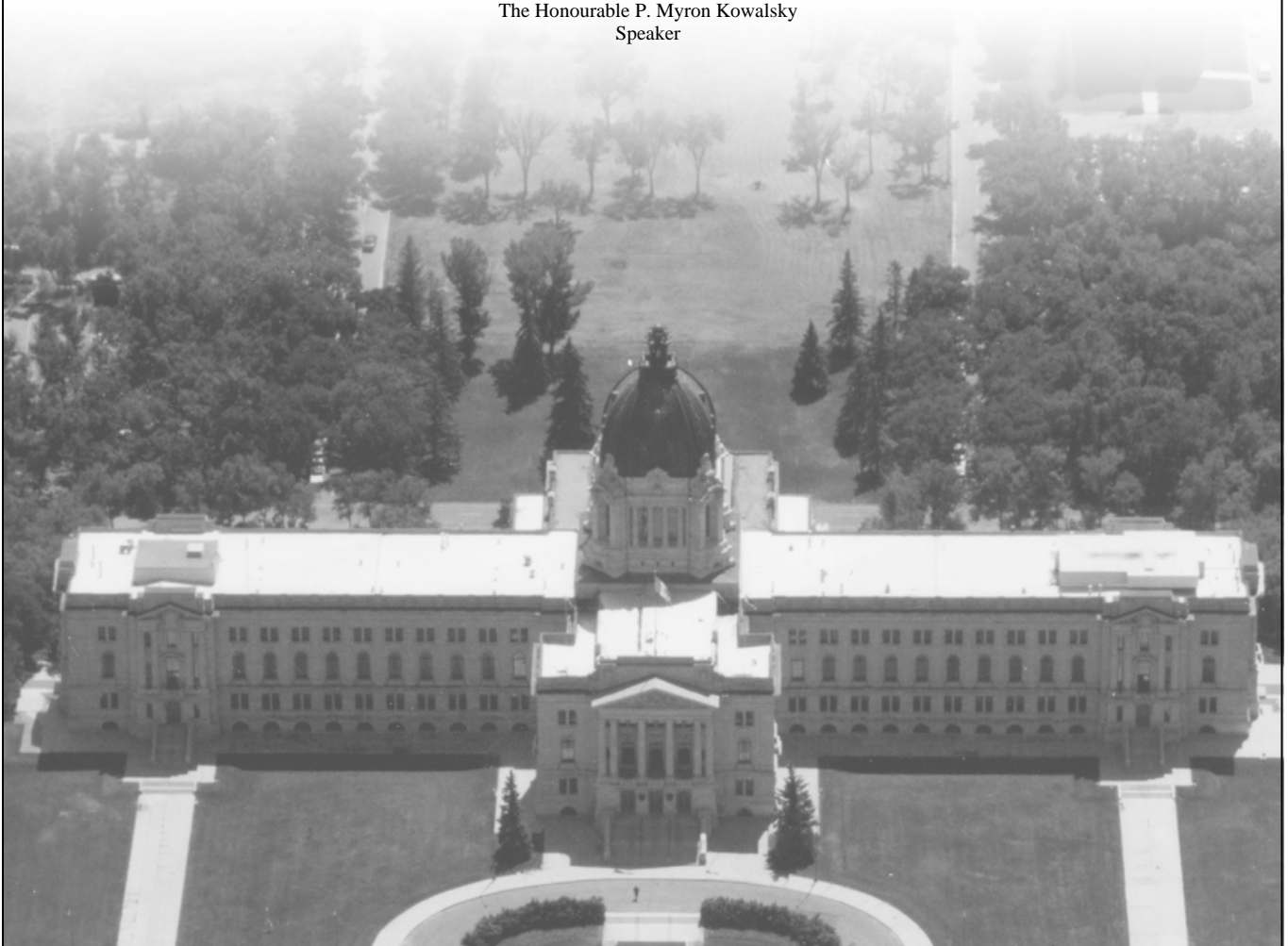
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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
Bjornrud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Borgerson, Lon	NDP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Calvert, Hon. Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Cline, Hon. Eric	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Crofford, Joanne	NDP	Regina Rosemont
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Dearborn, Jason	SP	Kindersley
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
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
Sonntag, Hon. Maynard	NDP	Meadow Lake
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Hon. Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Thomson, Hon. Andrew	NDP	Regina South
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Hon. Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
Wakefield, Milton	SP	Lloydminster
Wall, Brad	SP	Swift Current
Wartman, Hon. Mark	NDP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Yates, 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 Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure again this morning to present further petitions in regards to a dialysis unit in the Broadview Union Hospital. And the prayer reads, Mr. Speaker, it says:

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, the petitions that I present to you today are signed by the good folks from Broadview, and Broadview again, and all signed by the community of Broadview. Thank you.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege and obligation to present this petition on behalf of constituents of Cypress Hills concerned with the status of Highway 18. 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 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 seven or eight individuals from the community of Maple Creek. And I so present.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions to present on behalf of citizens of the province. This petition that I'm presenting today on behalf of them is regarding the cancer drug Avastin. I'll read the prayer right now. 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 actions to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people mainly in the Regina area. I so present.

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

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

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Regina, Carievale, Midale, Carnduff, Alida, Carlyle, Glen Ewen, some valley some place — I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker. And I so present.

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning I have a petition to present on behalf of people who have travelled Highway No. 5 from my constituency to Saskatoon and wish to express their concern. 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 as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures to the petition this morning come from the communities of Warman, Humboldt, Regina, Saskatoon, Bruno, Canora, and Preeceville. I'm pleased to present on their behalf.

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased today to rise on behalf of people who are concerned about Highway No. 49. The prayer reads:

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 Kelvington, Lintlaw, Preeceville, and surrounding areas.

The people that have signed this petition are from Kelvington, Rose Valley, and Regina and Lintlaw. I so present.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Highway 49 is another one of a long line of highways that needed to be improved. And the petitioners pray:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, a number of signatures on this petition come from the communities of Weekes, Lintlaw, Okla, and Kelvington. And I'm pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

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

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

The petitioners, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Saltcoats, Carnduff, Carievale, Oxbow, and Redvers.

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, Redvers, and Gainsborough. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Mr. Chisholm: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise this morning to present a petition to urge the upgrade of Highway No. 22. 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 maintain Highway 22 so that it can return to being a safe and economical route for Earl Grey and area families and businesses.

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

The signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of

Semans, Silton, Cupar, Earl Grey, and Southey. Thank you.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with my colleague in presenting a petition urging this government to deal with Highway 22. 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 maintain Highway 22 so that it can return to being a safe and economical route for Earl Grey and area families and businesses.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures to this petition are all from the constituency of Last Mountain-Touchwood. They come from the communities of Earl Grey, Bulyea, Southey, and Cupar. I so present.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It won't be a surprise that I again today stand with several petitions of citizens concerned with the safety of Highway No. 5:

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, Mr. Speaker, again the signatures indicate how well-travelled this particular highway is, and they're from Grandora, Kindersley, Crystal Springs, Fulda, Hafford, Lanigan, Humboldt, Elfros, MacNutt, Colonsay, Quill Lake, Archerwill, Saskatoon, Kelvington, Canora, Bruno, Spalding, Lintlaw, Meacham, Asquith, St. Gregor, Englefeld, Wadena, and Calgary, Alberta. I so present.

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of the citizens of the province concerned with the issue of Avastin and the lack of provincial funding thereof. Their 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 fund the cancer drug Avastin.

And, Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today are from the city of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise with my colleagues this morning on behalf of citizens concerned about the lack of funding for the cancer fighting drug Avastin. The

prayer reads as follows:

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

Signatures on the petition this morning, Mr. Speaker, are from the city of Regina, from Regina Beach, from Balgonie, and from Moose Jaw. And I'm pleased to present on their behalf.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning I rise to present a petition on behalf of constituents of mine who have deep concerns over this government's refusal to fund the 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 is signed by citizens of Estevan. I so present. Thank you.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to present a petition for safe driving conditions on Highway No. 3. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to resurface and properly maintain Highway No. 3 from Fairholme to Turtleford and the Livelong access road.

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

Signed by the good citizens of Livelong, North Battleford, Turtleford, and Lloydminster. I so present.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to present another petition on behalf of the 600 children under six years old and their parents in the Saskatoon Silver Springs constituency regarding a much needed elementary school in the Arbor Creek and Willowgrove area of 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 an elementary school in Arbor Creek.

The petitioners today, Mr. Speaker, live on Peters Cove, Wright Crescent, and Hinit Place in northeast Saskatoon. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Wood

River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a petition from citizens that are very, very concerned about the NDP's [New Democratic Party] two tiered health system 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 actions to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by the good folks from Estevan and Frobisher. I so present.

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

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan that are concerned with the NDP's two tiered health care system. 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 actions to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures to this petition are from Carnduff. I so present.

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring forward a petition about the condition of Highway 5 off of the Bruno access. 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 the Bruno access road off of Highway 5.

And as duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, it is signed by the good people of Bruno and Pilger. 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 are calling on the government to upgrade Highway 20 to primary weight status. The prayer goes as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that Highway 20 be upgraded

to primary weight status to ensure the economic viability in the surrounding areas.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This particular petition is signed by the good citizens from the town of Lanigan, Drake, and Jansen. I so present.

[10:15]

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

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to stand in the Assembly today and present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan concerned with funding cancer drugs, specifically Avastin. The prayer reads as follows:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Carnduff, Estevan, Carievale, and . . . I'm sorry, I can't make this out. But I'm happy to present it on their behalf. I'm sure it is a town worth noting.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to present yet another petition regarding the cancer fighting drug Avastin. Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to read the prayer for relief:

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.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Saskatoon and Vanscoy and areas surrounding Saskatoon. I'm pleased to present on their behalf. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today in the Assembly to present another petition calling on the government to fund the cancer drug Avastin. And I'll read the prayer:

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 the people of Carnduff, Carievale, Oxbow, Gainsborough, and Midale. And I so

present.

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to be able to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who are very concerned about the future of the Canadian Wheat Board. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to continue to actively and strongly support the position that it is the right of all Western Canadian farmers to decide the future of the Canadian Wheat Board, not the federal cabinet.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to report that the signators of this petition are one from Regina, but Langham, Watrous, Outlook, Morse, Riceton, Rose Valley, and Leross. I'm honoured to present this petition on their behalf.

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

Mr. Borgerson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who are very concerned about the future of the Canadian Wheat Board. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to continue to actively and strongly support the position that it is the right of all Western Canadian farmers to decide the future of the Canadian Wheat Board, not the federal cabinet.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, signatures to this petition come from Herbert, Leross, Swift Current, and Bengough. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I too am pleased to rise today to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who are concerned about the future of the Canadian Wheat Board. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that the Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to continue to actively and strongly support the position of the right of all Western Canadian farmers to decide the future of the Canadian Wheat Board, not the federal cabinet.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have signatures here, many from Regina and from Indian Head. And I so present, Mr. Speaker, the

petition.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

The Speaker: — Order. Order please.

Clerk Assistant: — According to order the following petitions for private Bills have been reviewed, found to be in order, and are read and received:

Of the Hotels Association of Saskatchewan in the province of Saskatchewan praying for an Act to amend the Hotels Association of Saskatchewan Act; and

Of the Full Gospel Bible Institute, praying for an Act to amend the Full Gospel Bible Institute Act.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy is recognized.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 2 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill No. 2 be considered in Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I would request leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 2, the PST [provincial sales tax] amendment Act of 2006, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Finance has requested leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole for Bill No. 2, the PST Act. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall this Bill be read a third time? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 2 — The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2006

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I would move now that Bill No. 2, the PST amendment Act of 2006 be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 2, the PST amendment Act be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the

Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy is recognized.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 16 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill 16 be considered in Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the minister of . . . Order please. The Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I would request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bill No. 16, The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2006.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Finance has requested leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole for Bill No. 16, The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall this Bill be read a third time? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 16 — The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2006

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I would move that the Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by Minister of Finance that Bill No. 16 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy is recognized.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 35 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill 35 be considered in Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I would request leave to waive consideration of Bill No. 35, which is The Infrastructure Fund Act.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole of Bill 35, the infrastructure Act. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall this Bill be read a third time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 35 — The Infrastructure Fund Act

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I would move that the Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — Order please, members. It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 35 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy is recognized.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 36 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill 36 be considered in Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — As part of our trifecta of tax cuts this session, I would request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bill No. 36, The Income Tax Amendment Act.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bill 36. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall this Bill be read a third time? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 36 — The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2)

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I would move that Bill No. 36, The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2) be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 36, The Income Tax Amendment Act be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

The Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation, the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a very distinguished group of Saskatchewan citizens who are in your gallery today, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, these folks all come from the arts world in our province and are here today because of their strong interest in the first reading of a Bill that is on the agenda for later this day. I'd like to introduce them, and I would ask that as I introduce them that they would either stand or give a wave so that we can recognize them. And then we'll recognize them all together when I've concluded the introductions.

If I can introduce, Mr. Speaker, to you and to the members, the hon. members, Marianne Woods, who is a councillor with the Canadian Actors' Equity Association. Brenda Niskala, the executive director of the Saskatchewan Publishers Group. Marnie Gladwell, executive director of the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance. She is joined as well by the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance committee member Sheila Roberts, with her husband, Joe. And Sheila is seated on the floor behind the bar.

I'd like to introduce Rose Gilks, who is the general manager of SaskCulture. Brenda Sherring is the executive director of the Museums Association of Saskatchewan. Don Young is the president of the Regina Musicians' Association, and is joined as well from the Regina Musicians' Association by secretary-treasurer Brian Dojak. Patrick Close is the executive director of the Canadian Artists Representative. Kevin Korchinski is the performing arts coordinator with the Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils. Mark Stobbe is

the executive director of the Saskatchewan Craft Council.

Stéphane Rémillard is the executive director of the Conseil culturel fransaskois. And he is joined as well by the project coordinator, Pierre L'héritier. Susan Hogarth is here; she is the executive director with the Saskatchewan Writers Guild. Noreen Neu is the executive director with the Saskatchewan Recording Industry Association, SRIA, and also here from SRIA are Terry Mayer and Lorena Kelly. Diana Chabros is from the Saskatchewan Arts Board and is joined from the Arts Board as well by Sandi Desjarlais. And finally I introduce the director of the Wanuskewin Heritage Park, Sheila Gamble.

Mr. Speaker, these people and the associations they represent make a tremendous difference in the quality of life that we know in the province of Saskatchewan and I would ask all hon. members to join together in showing them our appreciation for what they do and welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister and welcome the very distinguished guests in your gallery today. I'm sure I speak for many in our province who are totally in awe with the talent of these many people and wish that we had some talent as you people do. It's your special gifts that add value to all of our lives and we thank you for being here in our province. On behalf of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

World AIDS Day

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow activist groups all over the world will rally in support of a common cause. Since 1988, December 1 has been recognized as World AIDS [acquired immune deficiency syndrome] Day. Mr. Speaker, although fundraising is an important aspect of AIDS day, it is also about increasing awareness, fighting prejudice, and improving education. Friday will be important in reminding us all that HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] is not a disease of the past and that there's still much to be done.

Mr. Speaker, for the past two years the World AIDS Campaign has organized World AIDS Day activities across the globe. The slogan for their work is, "Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise" — an appeal to governments and regional health authorities to comply with initiatives that target HIV.

Mr. Speaker, AIDS has killed more than 25 million people, making it one of the most destructive epidemics in recorded history. The lives of an estimated 3.1 million people were claimed in 2005 alone, more than 500,000 of whom were

children. According to UN [United Nations] AIDS estimates, Mr. Speaker, there are now 39.5 million people living with HIV, including 2.3 million children.

Mr. Speaker, I've been to Africa — one of the most affected regions in the world — and seen first-hand the horrors of this disease. Though the vast majority of those affected live in developing nations, HIV today is a threat to men, women, and children on all continents around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to encourage all members to support the fight against AIDS by wearing a red ribbon. Because of the work of dedicated groups like the WAC [World AIDS Campaign], a world free from AIDS epidemic may sometime be a reality. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:30]

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

Archerwill Athlete Wins Bob Adams Award

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It gives me great pleasure today to rise and recognize a young lady from my constituency, Chelsey Revoy of Archerwill, who was awarded the esteemed Bob Adams Award as the top female Saskatchewan track and field athlete for 2006.

Chelsey was honoured with this prestigious award in recognition of a year of outstanding performances which were showcased in gold medals in junior girls' shot put and discus and a bronze medal in javelin at high school provincials. This was followed by gold medals in shot put, javelin, and silver medals in discus and hammer at the Juvenile Dual Meet.

She earned gold medals in discus, javelin, and hammer and a silver medal in shot put at the Saskatchewan Athletics championship in Regina. And Chelsey topped these superior performances with a gold in shot put in the Canadian National Juvenile Championships in Burnaby, BC [British Columbia] this summer where she threw her personal best of 12.53 metres. This throw was only 1 centimetre short of breaking a provincial record.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that we'll all be hearing a lot more about this young lady's achievements as she is already in training for the upcoming indoor session, and she plans to attend her first meet in December.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

First Recipient of Aboriginal Business Education Award

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words about an extraordinary woman who grew up in my constituency of Cumberland in the community of Cumberland House.

Monica Goulet is a Métis woman whose education and experience have made her an outstanding advocate of human rights and an exceptional role model for First Nations and Métis youth.

Mr. Speaker, Monica was once a high school dropout. Today she has multiple degrees including a Bachelor of Education from SUNTEP [Saskatchewan urban native teacher education program], a Bachelor of Arts with distinction in English. She is a published author and most recently an M.B.A. [Master of Business Administration] candidate at the University of Saskatchewan. This mother of two is an inspiring example of living your dream.

Mr. Speaker, Monica has been named as the first ever recipient of the Scotiabank Aboriginal Business Education Award, a \$10,000 scholarship awarded annually to an Aboriginal student in a Master of Business Administration program at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan]. I would ask all members to help me congratulate Monica Goulet on all her achievements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Balgonie to Host Tournament of Hearts

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night there were many receptions held around the city of Regina and other communities. Last night I had the opportunity to go out to Balgonie and attend the media kickoff of the 2007 Scottie SaskPower ladies' provincial curling championships, better known as the Tournament of Hearts. This championship will be held in Balgonie on January 31 to February 4, '07.

Balgonie has hosted this Tournament of Hearts before in the year 2002-2003 with great success. Many of the competitors thought it was one of the better provincials they had ever attended. And part of the reason for that is the facilities that Balgonie has. They have a really a top-notch rink, a brand new rink where every seat is a good seat when it comes to a Tournament of Hearts championship. And immediately beside the rink of course is a multiplex which serves for banquets and also for a lounge if you need to stop in between games and have a refresher.

Mr. Speaker, the heads of the organizing committee, made up of Wayne Kiel and Ken Bakken, along with all the volunteers and directors I know will put on an absolutely great weekend. Balgonie is becoming well-known for its curling prowess, whether it's hosting provincials like it has or of course last year with the Mandy Selzer rink ending up winning the provincials, the nationals, and second in the world.

So Balgonie is certainly being put on the map for curling, and I would like to welcome everybody to Balgonie for January 31 to February 4 for the Scott Tournament of Hearts.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for

Saskatoon Centre.

Saskatoon Public School Board Wins Premier's Award

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since 1999 the Premier's Innovation and Excellence Award has been recognizing educational achievements and improvements that focus on student achievements and have been advanced or directed by boards of education. The broad purpose is to recognize and celebrate board of education involvement in the improvement of learning opportunities for Saskatchewan children and youth.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier's office supports this award in recognition of this important role boards of education play in the development and improvement of publicly funded education here in the province. The Xerox company provides the \$3,000 prize to the Saskatchewan winner of this award, and it's administered by the Saskatchewan School Boards Association.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to share with the Assembly today that the 2006 winner of this prestigious award is the Saskatoon Public School Division for their Literacy for Life program. Literacy for Life is a multi-year initiative to improve students' reading skills with the goal of having all students, K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12], reading at or above grade level, and the \$3,000 award will be used to support or extend this project.

Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge Xerox company's commitment to education through their sponsorship of this initiative, and I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Saskatoon Public School Division on receiving the 2006 Premier's Board of Education Award for Innovation and Excellence in Education. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Families Need Friendly Government

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I read the reports this morning of the Premier's fundraiser dinner in Saskatoon I was struck by the fact that \$200 a plate was a high price to pay for an admission of failure. After five years in office, the Premier has come up with a new, single focus in the dying months of his government, making Saskatchewan the most family friendly province in Canada. Mr. Speaker, a laudable goal. However this government's deathbed conversion seems a little too late and a little insincere.

I wonder when this NDP government is going to start being family friendly to the family of Terry Rak, who is paying for his own cancer drug. I wonder when this NDP government is going to start being friendly to the family of Doug Bonderud, who needlessly died of cancer. I wonder when this NDP government is going to start being friendly to the families suffering from a drought in my constituency and the other constituencies of the Southwest.

And there are other families looking for friendship, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday we heard that while the food bank use was

dropping in Canada, Saskatchewan posted the second highest increase in the nation. The NDP government has produced the second highest percentage of children who are food bank clients. The NDP also distinguished itself by producing the nation's highest number of clients whose primary source of income is social assistance. This is a shameful record, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

2006 Saskatchewan Book Awards Winner

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the writing of *On the Side of the People: a History of Labour in Saskatchewan* involved four years of dedication and hard work from Jim Warren and Kathleen Carlisle. Their efforts were recently rewarded at the 2006 Saskatchewan Book Awards as the book won both in publishing in education and scholarly writing categories.

This well-researched publication details the events and personalities that have shaped the thoughts of working people in Saskatchewan and the province that those workers built. Beginning with the year 1777, Mr. Speaker, *On the Side of the People* describes the first story of worker organization in Saskatchewan. Fur traders of the Hudson's Bay Company banded together in a strike to protect their rights and improve living conditions. The book continues its account of the labour movement in Saskatchewan and describes the many struggles that Saskatchewan workers have overcome — the arrival of the railroad brotherhoods, the emergence of craft unions, two world wars, modernization, and the dawn of the present age, just to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, I believe Jim Warren puts it best when he says, quote: "The struggles of Saskatchewan workers to improve their lot and develop . . . [their] province is truly a magnificent journey." This journey continues today, Mr. Speaker, and there's still much to be done.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Jim Warren and Kathleen Carlisle on receiving two prestigious honours at the 2006 Saskatchewan Book Awards. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Asset Management Contract Awarded by Investment Saskatchewan

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Janet Wightman is the CEO [chief executive officer] of Investment Saskatchewan. In addition she is now the CEO and major shareholder in Victoria Park Capital. Can the Minister for

Investment Saskatchewan please outline the process that was used to award the contract for the management of Investment Saskatchewan assets to Victoria Park Capital?

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, this contract was awarded to Victoria Park Capital by the board of Investment Saskatchewan, which is an arm's-length quasi private sector board created by government to manage Crown assets. And, Mr. Speaker, when this organization was created, the government said that it was going to have non-political running of the investments of the Crown, the non-core investments by Investment Saskatchewan.

And if the opposition does not believe that this board should be independent and should make those decisions, I invite the opposition to say so. But the position of the government, Mr. Speaker, is that this is an independent decision made by an independent board.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, the minister obviously failed to explain anything about the process that was used in choosing Victoria Park Capital. But last year Janet Wightman was the highest paid civil servant in Saskatchewan, and she earned just over \$300,000. The management of some Investment Saskatchewan's assets have now been privatized and is in the hands of Victoria Park Capital. Since she's also the CEO and major shareholder in Victoria Park Capital, will she still be receiving her salary from Investment Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, if it is a complaint of the member opposite as she just said that Ms. Wightman is the highest paid civil servant, the member from the opposition should be very happy because the answer, Mr. Speaker, is that, no, Ms. Wightman will no longer be receiving any pay from Investment Saskatchewan or the Government of Saskatchewan because she works for Victoria Park Capital which is a private company that has been set up and is majority employee-owned, Mr. Speaker.

And I repeat again that the Premier set out a vision of private sector management of the government's investment assets. We have pursued that vision and put these decisions in the hands of the board of Investment Saskatchewan. And if the member opposite and her party disagree with that position, Mr. Speaker, I invite them to say so.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, to return a bit or for a moment about the process, what involvement did Janet Wightman have

in the discussion to allow herself to take over the assets of Investment Saskatchewan? Is there not a conflict of interest if she, with Investment Saskatchewan, made the decision of awarding the assets to Victoria Park Capital?

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, it has been the practice of the party opposite to play fast and loose with the facts and to use the immunity they have in the Legislative Assembly to cast aspersions on public servants and people in this province which, Mr. Speaker, they then cannot repeat out the Chamber where they do not have immunity. And I say to that member opposite that if she is alleging that there's a conflict of interest on the part of Ms. Wightman, she should say so outside of this Chamber and be prepared to defend that in a court of law, Mr. Speaker.

The decision to set up Victoria Park Capital, Mr. Speaker, was a decision of the board of Investment Saskatchewan, not Ms. Wightman. Ms. Wightman was an employee of the board, Mr. Speaker. And if that member has any evidence to the contrary, she should go outside this Chamber and do so, but she will not do so, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, the minister's grandstanding is utterly ridiculous and I . . .

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister's political grandstanding are utterly ridiculous. We have no issue going and saying was there a conflict of interest or not. We're not making an accusation; we're asking a question. Was there a conflict? Was she involved in the process? Since he wouldn't tell us what the process was . . .

[10:45]

The Speaker: — Order. The member for Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the minister wouldn't tell us exactly what the process was, we were asking a question.

Mr. Speaker, what other companies were considered as possible candidates to manage the assets of Investment Saskatchewan, and why was Ms. Wightman's company selected over all the other applicants?

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, now we see some backpedalling from the member. I will say this to the House, Mr. Speaker. I answered the question, Mr. Speaker, by advising

the House that the decision was made by the board of Investment Saskatchewan, not by Ms. Wightman.

I said, Mr. Speaker, that I invited the member, if she had any allegations of conflict of interest or evidence, to say so outside the House. And I will tell you this, Mr. Speaker, whatever I say inside this House will be what I say outside this House. I don't think that applies to the member . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, a decision was made by the board of Investment Saskatchewan which is an independent board. I have invited the members opposite to say whether they believe in that process or whether they don't. And if they don't, they can say so, Mr. Speaker, but I will say this. The opposition, Mr. Speaker, has a habit of trashing the reputation of good Saskatchewan people in this House, and, Mr. Speaker, we will not tolerate that any longer.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Province's Ranking in National Wait Times Assessment

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Wait Time Alliance released its interim report card on achieving wait time benchmarks and implementing wait time commitments. The Wait Time Alliance is made up of several national medical societies, including the Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Association of Radiologists.

The report grades provincial performance in five priority areas outlined in the 2004 first ministers' ten-year plan to strengthen health care. They are diagnostic imaging, joint replacement, cancer care, sight restoration, and cataract care.

Mr. Speaker, in four of those areas, the NDP's performance is more than disappointing. Mr. Speaker, for joint replacement the NDP government received an F, meaning that more than 50 per cent of the population is not being treated within the benchmark set out in the 2004 report. Can the minister explain why Saskatchewan is last in that area?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And indeed we welcome the Wait Time Alliance's report, as we will other reports, as they monitor progress that's being made on the first ministers' commitments.

Mr. Speaker, members of this House will know that the commitments, the benchmarks were set in December 2005. And, Mr. Speaker, each of the provinces has until 2007 to build a strategy and a response to the agreements that were reached less than one year ago. The Wait Time Alliance, Mr. Speaker, has made it very clear in their about nine-month report that they — and I quote the WTA [Wait Time Alliance] Co-Chair Dr.

Lorne Bellan, “‘Today, I think it’s fair to say that government efforts on wait times are showing promise.’”

Mr. Speaker, indeed while we welcome the initial responses, we know that we’re all making significant progress, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member’s time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In two of the five priority areas, diagnostic imaging and cancer care, this NDP government received a mark of incomplete. We know the NDP government has still failed to provide public access to wait times for cancer care on its Saskatchewan Surgical Care Network. People in Saskatchewan diagnosed with cancer still have no clue as to how long they’ll have to wait when it looks at their Surgical Care Network. We know from patients, we’ve heard from many, many patients that it takes up to three months for their first visit to an oncologist — that’s three times the national average.

Can the minister explain why his NDP government has received marks of incomplete for two priority areas that we hear from people in Saskatchewan every day?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And as I’ve explained previously, as we’re dealing with reports comparing one level of government to another that the data collection processes used in this period of time, Mr. Speaker, are all over the map. In fact the Wait Time Alliance interim report card indicates under limitations there are wide variations in the manner by which government reports wait time data, including timeliness of data measurement standards and use of indicators and benchmarks.

Mr. Speaker, the Wait Time Alliance at this point is indicating very clearly that the way in which they’re comparing data is not the same from province to province, Mr. Speaker. So the data collected simply is an indication of where they think the provinces are and where they’re going.

That having been said, Mr. Speaker, the province of Saskatchewan has made wait time reduction one of our significant priorities. And we’ve . . .

The Speaker: — The member’s time has elapsed. The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — It’s amazing, Mr. Speaker, it doesn’t seem to matter which report comes forward; it’s always incomplete or incorrect data by that organization. It doesn’t matter whether it’s SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses]. It doesn’t matter whether it’s a Wait Time Alliance. It doesn’t matter whether it’s the Health Quality Council of Saskatchewan. Everyone is failing because they don’t have the correct data.

But the point being is everyone is saying the same thing — that we have some of the longest waits in Saskatchewan, and it’s absolutely unacceptable. This alliance is made up of health care professionals from around Canada, and it’s judging all provinces the same. And unfortunately we get an F when it comes to joint replacement. We get a D when it’s sight restoration or cataract surgery. Mr. Speaker, when will the minister live up to what all these reports are saying and start dealing with the real issue — the longest waits in Canada?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite is willing to look at the negative and not the positive. He neglects to indicate that the Wait Time Alliance points out very clearly, we get an A in cardiac care, Mr. Speaker, an A.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — That having been said, Mr. Speaker, I think we’ve got to stick to the facts in the province. On average there’s 257 surgeries performed every single day in this province, Mr. Speaker. We have targeted almost \$9 million in this current budget, that they voted against across the way, to continue to reduce the wait times on surgery in this province, Mr. Speaker, specifically targeting the long waiting lists.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have reduced hips and knees, where we have amongst the longest waiting lists in the country, we’ve reduced hips and knee surgery in this province because of this method, Mr. Speaker, and these resources by 23 per cent.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Impact of Health Professionals Shortage on Rural Health Facilities

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Roughly one month ago emergency room services and patient admissions at the Spiritwood Hospital were indefinitely suspended. This was due to a lack of doctors. On November 3 in North Battleford the minister assured me that the issue in Spiritwood has been resolved. What did the member mean by this?

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Health tell us or tell the Assembly whether or not he has resolved this problem? And how much longer will the people in Spiritwood have to wait?

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite has an interesting memory, and we won't question that in the Chamber today, Mr. Speaker.

The matter in Spiritwood is being reviewed by a considerable number of people who are very close to the circumstances in that area, Mr. Speaker.

The member knows that just two weeks ago there was a community meeting in the town of Shell Lake, Mr. Speaker, with representatives from Prince Albert, Big River, Shell Lake, Shellbrook, and Spiritwood, Mr. Speaker. In the last three days, Mr. Speaker, physicians from all of the sites in that area have been meeting to discuss how collectively they can provide assistance while the regional health authority is doing recruiting. Mr. Speaker, there are many efforts by many very good people involved in solving this problem, Mr. Speaker, and they are continuing.

The Speaker: — Member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago I rose in this Assembly to ask the Minister of Health questions about the temporary closure of health centres in Bengough and Coronach. Mr. Speaker, according to the November 1 edition of the Regina *Leader-Post*, and I quote, "The suspension of . . . [health] services in rural Saskatchewan is a fact of life, Health Minister Len Taylor said . . ."

Mr. Speaker, I think the minister hit the nail right on the head with that comment. It is becoming a fact of life under this NDP government. Mr. Speaker, the emergency services in Bengough and Coronach will once again be closed over the coming weekend. This is the second time in a span of two weeks. Can the minister tell this Assembly what is being done to rectify this ongoing problem?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite puts quotation marks around the writer's comments in that story in the *Leader-Post* and certainly not a direct quote from me. He quotes the writer of the story, Mr. Speaker. Again we cannot misrepresent statements that individuals make. That . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the member opposite has heard me on many occasions in this Chamber talk about the valuable work that the regional health authorities and the medical associations and others, including those in Saskatchewan's recruitment agency, Mr. Speaker, are doing to try to help to relieve the physician and nurse shortages in this province, Mr. Speaker. There are many incentive programs in place. There are many efforts being

made. There are dollars targeted to . . .

The Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, these health centres will not be offering emergency services from Friday until Monday. On-again, off-again emergency services is a public safety risk. These services are supposed to be available 24-7.

It looks like the doctors' shortage in rural Saskatchewan is so severe that we are now facing a shortage of locums to fill in for doctors when they are not able to work.

Mr. Speaker, Coronach is home to a SaskPower power plant that produces a quarter of all electricity in the province, and it's also home to the Poplar River coal mine. As the members are aware, these lines of work can be dangerous, and the potential for a serious emergency is very real. Mr. Speaker, what kind of disaster will it take for this minister and this government to take action?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have provided information in this Chamber, to the media, and to the public through a number of different means, Mr. Speaker. I have provided information about the increase in physicians practising in the province of Saskatchewan over the last couple of years.

Mr. Speaker, there remain communities and locations within this province, Mr. Speaker, where from time to time because of . . . for various reasons, there are temporary closures as a result of physicians who have either been in car accidents or broke their wrists or had family emergencies.

Mr. Speaker, we have been doing a very good job in a competitive marketplace in attracting physicians and nurses to this province, Mr. Speaker. We have targeted resources to ensure that we're going to be able to do an even better job, Mr. Speaker. We are committed to that process, Mr. Speaker, and we will . . .

The Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Crop Insurance

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, farmers and ranchers right across Saskatchewan are concerned with the crop insurance program. Yesterday was just another

example when the farmers and ranchers from the Southwest had to come into their legislature to bring the issue to the minister and really got no satisfaction.

Mr. Speaker, the minister also feels that his responsibility to farmers and the crop insurance program is to do two things: lower the coverage and raise the premiums. And that's all we saw from this minister and that government over the last number of years.

Will the minister commit today to do something constructive and help farmers and ranchers of Saskatchewan and fix the crop insurance program?

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, the drought committee that was up yesterday did have a meeting with me previously. I met with them again yesterday after the session, and I explained to them some of the things that we were doing in crop insurance that would help make a difference. And indeed working with the farm support review committee, with the Crop Insurance Corporation through the department, we have some good, innovative plans to help make a program that really will work and will expand the service and coverage that crop insurance is able to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[11:00]

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, this government's been in power for 15 years, and all we've saw is the gutting of programs to help farmers and ranchers in this province. And I don't think they believe for a minute there's going to be many changes this year.

Mr. Speaker, they're asking to improve the crop insurance program so that when a disaster of any kind happens out there, it helps them get from the spring to the fall and have an adequate income to get to the next year.

Mr. Speaker, in the Economy Committee the other day, the minister even agreed that the program isn't working. And he says, and I quote, "And so there are situations where the program doesn't apply and doesn't work." He goes on to say, "That's a fact." Another quote from the minister is, "There is a yield loss program available for forage but nobody buys it." Well nobody buys it because it doesn't work, Mr. Speaker.

They have farmers and ranchers in a position where they have a program that doesn't work, and yet they're forced to buy it to get into the spring cash advance and operating loans. Will the minister finally make some constructive changes to that program?

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, of course the program is in place. Farmers are buying the program. Is it as effective as it could be? No, Mr. Speaker, and that's why we're working on making changes.

Part of it, as we explained to the members in estimates, is that the technologies that are available today do not allow for measurements in that forage area. But we are developing and working at technologies that will give us the ability to do that. When those are in place, Mr. Speaker, then we will have the opportunity to build even better programs.

But I want to say clearly that the crop insurance program and the programs that have been used over 15 years, Mr. Speaker, to help support farmers, have been effective. We have faced some incredible difficulties with BSE [bovine spongiform encephalopathy], with drought, with huge frost, Mr. Speaker, and we have put billions of dollars — billions of dollars — into the agricultural economy, Mr. Speaker. And this government, this NDP government, will continue to support the farmers of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well, Mr. Speaker, that minister says that that government stands behind farmers. I don't believe he could find one farmer in this province that says crop insurance is working for them today.

We've saw for 15 years since they cancelled the GRIP [gross revenue insurance program] program, they've downloaded on to everybody out there — municipalities — all over this province which costs farmers money. But at the same time they've gutted crop insurance and other programs that might actually sustain farmers in the time of need.

Mr. Speaker, Doug Davidson yesterday made some comments — one of the members of the Southwest group that were in here and I quote, "The last two years have been extreme drought — very extreme." He goes on to say:

... the Ponteix-area rancher said the severity of this drought and the deterioration of Saskatchewan Crop Insurance means "we can't even obtain [any] coverage."

"The crop insurance program has been gutted," . . .

That's what farmers think of that program. That's what farmers think of that government. And they can't wait forever for changes. They need them now for next spring's contracts, Mr. Speaker.

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 think the member opposite better widen his circle of people that he consults with because, Mr. Speaker, there are people, farmers across this province, who have received tremendous benefit from the crop insurance program.

There are farmers who have engaged with us in terms of building better programs. Mr. Speaker, we're engaged in doing that. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because this joint federal-provincial program, crop insurance, provides a good solid support but it does so in conjunction with other programs, Mr. Speaker, programs which will provide significant cash advances to help farmers through difficult periods.

Mr. Speaker, there is difficulty where there is drought. There is difficulty where there is flood. But the programs that we are developing do meet those needs. How much, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker, we are doing three times more per capita than any other province, than any other government in this country, Mr. Speaker. We are meeting the needs. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order please. Why is the member for . . . Order please. Why is the member for Saskatoon Greystone on his feet?

Mr. Prebble: — With leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Greystone has requested leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The member for Saskatoon Greystone.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Speaker, it's my great pleasure to introduce 25 students, grade 7 students from Greystone Heights Elementary School who have joined us in the west gallery. And with those students is Michelle Pantel, their teacher. And they're also joined by three chaperons: Mrs. Gomis, Mrs. Sidhu, and Mr. Giesbrecht.

And I want to say how pleased I am to have these young people in the gallery. Greystone Heights Elementary School has made it a real point of visiting this legislature on a regular basis, and I'm looking forward to meeting with them later this morning. And I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming this group of students and their teacher and chaperones here this morning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill No. 40 — The Status of the Artist
Amendment Act, 2006/Loi de 2006 modifiant la
Loi sur le statut de l'artiste**

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 40, The Status of the Artist Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation that Bill No. 40, The Status of the Artist Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When will this Bill be read a second time? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I'm referring this Bill to the Human Services Committee. The Act will require artists and engagers to enter into written contracts with specific elements. It also provides new definitions for the terms artist and engager, and I am also asking the committee to recommend the best way for collective bargaining to be put in place for professional Saskatchewan artists.

And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 40, The Status of the Artist Amendment Act, 2006 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation that Bill No. 40, The Status of the Artist Amendment Act, 2006 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried. This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

The Speaker: — Members of the . . . Order please. Order please. Before orders of the day, I wish to table the business and financial plan for the year ended March 31, 2008 as presented to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, November 2006, from the Office of the Provincial Auditor.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — On behalf of the government, Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the responses to written questions 198 to 203

inclusive. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The answers to questions 198 to 203 inclusive have been submitted. Order please.

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Recognition of the Government's Commitment to Young People

Ms. Crofford: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I apologize for the delay. I couldn't hear over the other conversations going on in here.

Mr. Speaker, the history of Saskatchewan has been a history of decades of social progress that have only been interrupted from time to time either in periods of economic downturn or by poor financial management by very few governments of the day. And I'd have to say that our Premier couldn't be more right when he says that you cannot achieve social progress without economic progress.

But he also says that if you do have economic progress, it's incumbent on you to ensure that there's social progress. And this, Mr. Speaker, is where we sometimes deviate from the members of other political parties who do not tie the linkage directly between economic and social progress.

And today with the very strong economy that we have in Saskatchewan we've turned our attention to seeing what really are the things that over the years we had to hold the line on or cut back, and where are the opportunities now for those new investments in social progress that will continue to build on the legacy of innovative social change in Saskatchewan. And certainly we've seen — ever since '95 actually when we got the budget into a positive situation — the progress has been steady, but we are in a position now to move more quickly on a number of things that ourselves and the people in the bureaucracy have wanted to do for a very long time.

And one of those things of course is to continue to make Saskatchewan the best place for young people to live and work and build strong futures. And they actually have a double opportunity now, Mr. Speaker, because not only is the economy very good, but there's a lot of us, myself included, who will be retiring within the near horizon. And certainly quality work opportunities are an important part of moving into that strong future.

As well, we want to ensure that Saskatchewan families benefit from the strong economy, and I'll provide more detail, Mr. Speaker, as I move through my remarks on the specific things that are being done.

And as well, we believe that although our province is very down-to-earth, only the sky is our limit. We have a history of people who dream big and innovate. I think we have the largest numbers of patents per population of anywhere, perhaps in the world — very innovative people here in Saskatchewan.

And today we've seen with the status of the artist legislation, the continuing innovation that takes place, as well as the progressive people who understood the need for people who dedicate themselves to making our lives more enjoyable to share in the benefits of that work that they do.

I don't know if you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, but some of the first instruments ever found were found in caves, and they were drums made of skin and flutes made of bone. And what interests me about that is that even when people lived in very primitive conditions with survival very much on their minds, they still took the time for arts and culture. They still did their cave paintings. They made music. And the spirit has always been a very strong part of survival in the human life.

In the province today we do have a labour shortage. And one of the reasons we have a labour shortage is because of the very competitive nature of Saskatchewan today for youth who wish to pursue an entrepreneurial direction, who wish to be involved in business and Crowns and those type of employment opportunities.

We had a recent study done by KPMG about the alternatives of doing business in the 128 cities and 9 countries. And it included France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Japan, Singapore, the United States, and Canada. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, four cities stood out as having a very good standing for places to come and establish your business or if you're here, to decide to take that idea you've had, that dream you've had, and establish your own business. And those places, Madam Deputy Speaker, are Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, and Moose Jaw.

And of course Moose Jaw being probably one of the most interesting stories because when people thought that they really didn't have an opportunity to have that economy grow, they decided that they were going to take matters into their own hands, and they built a spa and discovered their heritage of underground tunnels and have built a very interesting tourism economy based on the very natural assets that they had in that community.

[11:15]

And many communities around Saskatchewan are doing that today. They're taking their natural assets, the good investment climate, finding partners, and making things happen. And certainly we've seen the growth taking place in Saskatoon, and we have seen a trend for people to move from the rural areas into the urban areas. And sometimes when people make that move, if they're moving to a urban centre, they will sometimes bypass the urban centres in Saskatchewan. But I think, Mr. Speaker, we'll see that changing.

I read an article recently that talked about the co-op employment centre at the university. And it used to be that quite a few of their students would look for employment opportunities outside the province. Well today over 90 per cent of the students that go into the co-op centre are indicating that they want a placement in Saskatchewan and this is where they want to be and this is where they want to stay. So this a very good place to work and to go to school and to do business, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things that makes students decide to do that is the people who work in the co-op centre are very positive about Saskatchewan. They talk to the students about opportunity. They talk to them about benefit. They talk to them about the very good companies that they'll be working for or perhaps it might be a government department.

And it certainly contrasts with the steady stream of negativity from the party opposite. I have here several pages of quotes that represent virtually half the members over there, and it's just negative, negative, negative. And certainly if they're interested in seeing how their comments appear to others, I could certainly share the information with them.

But I want to turn to the benefit to people from a very hot economy. And one of the strongest benefits of course is the ability to have a good minimum wage because a lot of people today do work in the service sector, and that means that they're working in minimum wage employment. And sometimes as an economy gets more competitive, employers will pay more because they have to compete with the person down the street who's wanting to hire that same person.

But we did announce a three-stage increase to the minimum wage, from 6.65 to 7.05 last September 1; 7.55 on March 1, 2006. And then it'll be moving again to 7.95 on March 1, 2007. And we're very proud of that, Madam Deputy Speaker, because minimum wage wasn't always so.

In fact it's always an interesting fact to me that one of the reasons the minimum wage was established many years ago was to help women raising children from being destitute and from going on the streets to earn money. And this was a very important thing. So it really started out initially as a protection for women and children and has expanded to be thought of as a way to address quality-of-life issues for low-income working people.

And of course we do as well in Saskatchewan have a low-income wage supplement so that families who even with a minimum wage do not have adequacy, there is the ability to have that income supplemented by a range of programs, services, child care subsidies, transportation subsidies, etc., that make it very much easier for people to live.

I contrast that, Madam Deputy Speaker, with an article I read recently about Alberta and the huge number of people living on the streets, people who have been fooled into going to the land of milk and honey only to find out that someone who's starting out there can't afford a place to live. And that's even if they could find one. And so they're having a problem which you wouldn't think would exist in a very strong economy. They're having a problem of very low-income people living on the streets. And I'm sure that is reaching more crisis proportions as the weather gets colder and colder. And hopefully they will use that very rich economy they've got to do something about that situation, and not do as has been done by some governments in the past and buy people bus tickets out of sight.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, that we've done . . . I keep calling you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to have to get better glasses, Madam Deputy Speaker.

One of the other things that we've done recently is to establish a family holiday in February. And I think this is hugely important for a couple of reasons. I don't know anybody today that isn't too busy. I'm sure that kids are wishing that their parents were home more often, that they had more time to do stuff with them, that they could all be together as a family and do some things. And I know that's what my granddaughter says to me frequently, you know, when do I get my day to spend some time?

So I'm hoping that everybody here and everybody in the province really takes advantage of Family Day, to dedicate that day to doing some special activity with their family because I think that is really what it's all about. And sometimes just by giving something a name and declaring it, you can get people excited about building a family project around it or a family outing.

And these kinds of things, I think, are particularly important in the busy world that we live in today where everybody's off doing their own thing or else sitting on their computer or some other thing like that. When really, what makes us feel good is to spend time together with people that we love and care about. And so I'm very happy about that day off and again urge people to make good use of it.

One of the things I do want to talk about is health. You know, we talk about health a lot, and there's no question that doctors and hospitals and all those things are hugely important to health care — drug plans, all of those things. But also what's very important to health is education.

The many studies that have been done about health care over the years have drawn a very strong link between education and health care. And the better educated people are, the healthier they tend to be. And that's not only because they can be better informed about what makes you healthy — good food, exercise, healthy living — but also they tend to then be able to get better jobs. And when you have a better job, you can afford a better diet. And so education is very fundamental to health and well-being.

And certainly when we talk about investments in health, we're not talking just about investments in the medical system. We're talking broadly about housing, about education, and other areas of people's lives.

We are very committed to a publicly funded health care system where people never have the experience many people have in the US [United States] at arriving at a hospital and being denied treatment, certainly an experience that our historic leader Tommy Douglas had when his family was in need of treatment and they had no way to pay the doctor. And people's commitment to something often comes out of a personal experience where they have experienced a huge injustice.

And that's part of our work here when people come here who have experienced a problem, then we have to make a decision about how to respond to that and I think generally, more often than not, do very well. But it's always difficult, Mr. Speaker, because if there's one thing you learn when you're elected, is that there's always more needs in the world than there is money to pay for them. And that is probably one of the toughest things

about being an elected person.

But, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have a great education system, with many investments in elementary, secondary, pre-kindergarten, world-class universities, four skills training campuses, a regional education system. And it's these educational supports — including one that I'm very proud of, the only First Nations and Métis education institutions in Canada — means that we're able to connect to our communities' education needs in a way that's not possible in many other places.

So I want to say, Madam Speaker, that I want to move:

That this Assembly recognize the government's ongoing commitment to ensuring that young people have every opportunity to be successful and raise a family here in Saskatchewan.

And we certainly intend to do our part, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Regina Rosemont and seconded by the member for Saskatoon Massey Place:

That this Assembly recognize the government's ongoing commitment to ensuring that young people have every opportunity to be successful and raise a family here in Saskatchewan.

I recognize the member for Saskatoon Massey Place, the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I'm very pleased to rise to second the motion.

And I want to talk about the positive economy that is going on in Saskatchewan and the positive environment there is for young people. And in part of my remarks, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm going to refer to some things that have been said by the opposition about this, and then I'm going to demonstrate how what the opposition has said is not accurate.

But I want to begin my remarks, Madam Deputy Speaker, by saying that not everyone in the province agrees with the doom and gloom and negative attitude we hear from the opposition. I want to quote from the Saskatchewan young entrepreneurs recently in the media. This is the same group, by the way, that last year the member from Silver Springs claimed were cheering the Leader of the Opposition and they had to . . . Actually the young entrepreneurs sent out a release saying that they were non-partisan and that they did not support the Leader of the Opposition. That's what they had to say, Madam Deputy Speaker. But their president, Madam Deputy Speaker, says this. He says . . . And that is Rick Peddle. He says:

The recent changes to the tax structure are helping to keep young business people [in Saskatchewan] and giving . . . [them] ammunition to attract others back to the province.

He says, contrary to the opposition, and I'm quoting, Madam Deputy Speaker:

The recent tax changes are definitely a plus, capital tax is a big one and just the attitude of being open for business and just the change of attitude is a very positive thing for this province.

He goes on to say that:

Young business people have been able to find jobs for themselves or their partners which has enabled them to move back to Saskatchewan from Alberta, something that hasn't happened in awhile.

And I want to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, something that certainly did not happen when those people were in office in the 1980s.

In fact you know I know that the opposition doesn't like it when we refer to things that actually happened in the 1980s, and they like to say that well, we didn't have anything to do with that so why are you asking us about it. But I want to point this out, Madam Deputy Speaker.

In 1985 a government task force on youth employment called the Saskatchewan youth employment development committee was created to deal with this problem of the youth leaving the province under the Conservative government. And guess who one of the youth members appointed to this committee was, Madam Deputy Speaker? It was none other than the present Leader of the Opposition. Now what actually happened? What did that committee accomplish? Well I'll tell you what it accomplished. Five years later there were 17,000 fewer young people working in the province, and there was a net out-migration of 5,500 people under 25 in the province.

Now the opposition likes to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, that everything is bad in Saskatchewan. I want to refer to what is actually happening in Saskatchewan. Then I want to say what the opposition says about it. Here's what's happening. In October 2006 there were 21,800 more people working in Saskatchewan than a year before, and 8,000 of those were young people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[11:30]

Hon. Mr. Cline: — That's what the fact is. They don't like to hear the fact, but I'm going to repeat it for the opposition: 21,800 more people working in Saskatchewan than a year before, and 8,000 of those were young people. It's an all-time record for jobs in the province, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Now the economy is going well. Everybody knows things are going well. I talk to business people every day that say things are going well. What does the opposition say? Listen to this, Madam Deputy Speaker. They say our employable age people — this is the member from Melfort; he says — are all leaving. He says they're all, everybody's leaving, yet 8,000 more young people working, 21, 800 more people working. He says everybody's leaving.

But not to be undone, the member from Cypress Hills, he says we're in a death spiral, a death spiral — 21,800 more people working, economic growth near the top of the country. And they say we're in a death spiral. But not to be undone by that, the Leader of the Opposition had this to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, he said, our economy is still hooked up to the NDP suicide machine, he said.

I mean, talk about over-the-top, desperate, political rhetoric from a group of men — mainly men and some women — who want what, Madam Deputy Speaker? They want power, as the Minister of Highways said the other day, naked ambition for power. That's what they have.

And, you know, the Leader of the Opposition was up on his feet last week, and he made this statement. He said the economy was in a mess. I went to Saskatoon the same day. I was talking to a business person. And you know what he did? He laughed about that. He said, Madam Deputy Speaker, he said it's not credible what the Leader of the Opposition says because he wants to say that the economy is not growing, while at the same time the facts from Statistics Canada are, Madam Deputy Speaker, 21,800 more people working than a year ago, 8,000 more young people working.

And I think that that party over there . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . and they're chirping from their seats about how many left the province because they can never stand any good news. They should take a page and listen to the advice of the young people of this province, Madam Deputy Speaker, who say this, and I'm quoting. They say — the young professionals and entrepreneurs — they say this:

. . . we would do well to hold up, as examples, those who have either migrated to Saskatchewan instead of away from Saskatchewan and those who have left and since returned."

Then they say, "It is vital to accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative."

And all they do, Madam Deputy Speaker, and they are doing it right now from their seats, trying to shout me down, and I want the people watching this to know that they are trying to shout me down when I say that there are more jobs in this province. They are totally negative, Madam Deputy Speaker. They say that everything is bad in Saskatchewan and everything is wonderful in the province of Alberta.

Here's what the young people have to say. Dallas Carpenter moved back to Saskatchewan. He says it, ". . . was the best thing I could have done for my career and lifestyle. My career has progressed significantly and . . . [we] were able to purchase a house."

Maria Groenen says this: "I can't afford to live in Alberta. The money I've saved would have been spent on rents I would pay in Alberta."

Brent Edwards said:

. . . the whole idea of going back to Saskatchewan was just great — cheap healthcare, cheap housing, cheap

everything; my expenses are nothing now compared to what they were before.

Alberta tries to lure you with dollars, but that's all there is. Out here you can actually spread a paycheque [he says].

Colin Luciuk says, "When we looked . . . at the job opportunities and . . . what the real estate situation was, we decided to leave after twelve years." And they came back to Saskatchewan.

Dennis Dale, the president of Jay's Moving says, "what is happening is a lot of people that have moved from Saskatchewan have moved back because of the cost of housing and everything else."

David Parkinson says, "When I came back to Saskatchewan . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — I know that members get anxious to enter into debate, but I'd ask all hon. members to allow the member on their feet to speak and then your turn will come. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — And I want the people watching this to know, Madam Deputy Speaker, that when I say something positive about our wonderful province, opposite me are a bunch of people that are trying to shout me down. And when they get up on their feet after I sit down, Madam Deputy Speaker, they will say negative things about this great province.

But I am going to continue quoting what David Parkinson says. He says, "When I came back to Saskatchewan I just felt that here I have an opportunity to . . . create a business and get it going, and everyone here [has] welcomed me with open arms when I did get back."

And you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, they should listen to the young people. And again I want to say the young professionals and entrepreneurs said to us, "It is vital to accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative."

And as long as we have people like the members opposite that trash this province on a daily basis and say that nothing good happens in this province, Madam Deputy Speaker, we still will have some people that are prepared to believe their snake oil that somehow the economy of Saskatchewan isn't growing.

But on this side of the House, Madam Deputy Speaker, we are proud of our province. We love our province. We know there are great things happening in our province. We're going to be positive. We're going to continue to fight the negativity that comes from over there.

And I predict, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the end of the day when people of Saskatchewan have to judge who has a plan and who just criticizes, they're going to decide that they'd rather remain positive about the future of this province than listen to them. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's always a pleasure to rise in the Assembly to speak on behalf of the people that I represent, and particularly on a topic that is so important to our province and the young people that are our future.

You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, I don't know whether or not to give my remarks or to counter everything that I just heard over the last 10 or 15 minutes, Madam Deputy Speaker. But I will say, I will say . . . I will say that, you know, the Minister of Industry and Resources, he says that we're negative and I want to say that I'm very positive about this province. I love being in Saskatchewan. I love living here. We have a great province. The only thing I'm negative about, Madam Deputy Speaker, is the government that we have opposite. And we'll have a change.

You know, he talks about our negative attitude. And I will say that the government did make some good decisions on changing some of the business taxes. But what kind of attitude is it, what kind of message does it send when they send out messages like greedy corporate hucksters? What does that send? What kind of attitude does that send to the business community in our province and people that are looking outside? What kind of message does it send to have an attitude that when people leave the province there's more for the rest of us? I think that's shameful. I think that's shameful.

Madam Deputy Speaker, you know it's interesting. This government likes to talk about what's happened in the past but they've been the government for 15 years. What have they been doing about this important issue in the last 15 years?

You know, and I see a news article from today's *Leader-Post* talking about, talking about, talking about the Premier's dinner last night. And I see that it was reported it was close to 550 people attend, and I think in NDP arithmetic that's about 315 or something like that. But, you know, this is what the Premier said. He's quoted in the newspaper. He said, "I could not have said, when I became premier of this great province (five years ago), in complete confidence to a young person, 'Your future can be here.'"

Madam Deputy Speaker, I graduated from university about five years ago, about the time when the Premier took office, became the Premier of the province. And I think it is shameful that a Premier would say that. He couldn't say that this was a great place to be. What kind of a message is that sending? What kind of a message is it sending to young people? Because, you know, five years ago, you know, my wife and I made the decision that we were going to stay in Saskatchewan. And we had opportunities to go elsewhere and . . . But it just sends a bad message when even the Premier of the province admits that he didn't have confidence in our province only five years ago. I think that's pretty, pretty shameful.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to speak a little bit about what young people are saying and I think the government members would know this. The Canada West Foundation report that has . . . 25 per cent of people under the age of 35 in our province today think that they'll be moving out of the province within

five years. Now what, you know . . . I think if you look at our province and all the things that we have going for us, all our resources . . . And I come from an area of the province that is blessed with a lot of natural resources. But you know, it's kind of telling a message to this government that even with all that we have going for us, record prices in our resources, that yet we still see 4,500 people leave in the last year.

And I would like to quote, Madam Deputy Speaker, the executive director . . . The executive director for the Prairie policy institute, Mr. Al Evans, was quoted in the *Saskatoon StarPhoenix* on July 7 of this year. He said — and I'll quote him — he said, quote:

"We honestly believe Saskatchewan is the best place to be, could be the best place to be in 100 years," said Evans. "We have all the ingredients to be a powerhouse. We just don't know how to bake the cake."

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, all you have to do to realize what that means is, look opposite. They're the government in this province. They're the Government of Saskatchewan. They're the ones that are in charge of . . . I guess to use Mr. Evans' comments, they're the ones that are baking the cake. And yet we continue to see young people leave our province.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, I also want to talk about some other issues. And I know the motion put forward by the government is to talk about that young people have every opportunity to be successful. And the member from Rosemont that moved the motion talked about that when it's good economic times, there's a responsibility to make sure that there's social progress, and I agree with that.

So when we speak of young people I think we also need to speak of our record in this province of having the second highest percentage of children, almost 50 per cent are . . . Saskatchewan has recorded the second highest percentage of children as clients of food banks in this province. That reminds me of something that was said quite a number of years ago by the Premier when he was a member, when he sat in opposition. He dreamt of a province, he dreamt of a province where food banks would be a thing of the past. And yet under his leadership in times of prosperity, times of prosperity, food bank usage has increased by 3.7 per cent. And you know, that's just . . . it's a shameful, shameful record of this government, Madam Deputy Speaker.

There's some other interesting notes especially around the area that he represents in Saskatoon, and I think this is Saskatoon as a whole, but close to 40,000 people in Saskatoon live in poverty, are considered poor. And almost thirty-one and a half thousand children live with parents who are on assistance. And you know, it's just they say one thing and they obviously do another, Madam Deputy Speaker.

You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, if you look at some of the problems that this government has had in keeping young people, part of it is training, part of it is young people having the ability not only to be trained in this province, but then to have a job after they're finished.

And I do want to close, Madam Deputy Speaker, on two points.

One is to talk about . . . and I know the members opposite talked about experiences that people that they know have left the province, and I've had family members that have left the province. But I know of one family, Madam Deputy Speaker, in this province that are becoming very good friends, and I think their experiences are fairly typical of a lot of families in this province. It's quite a large family. It is seven children in the family. And just to run down where . . . All the children are either between the ages of their early 30s to about 20:

[11:45]

The oldest daughter, seven years ago, moved to Edmonton. She's a physiotherapist and her husband is a doctor; in fact he's a specialist. They have children that they're raising in Alberta. And you know, those are professions that are in demand in this province and yet they've had to leave the province.

The oldest son works in the financial industry in Calgary. And he had to leave the province because he just couldn't find a job after he graduated a number of years ago.

There's another daughter. She's in nursing school in Alberta. She couldn't get into the program. She didn't want to have to wait the long waiting list to get into the program here. So she's training to become an RN [registered nurse]. And she's married to a young man from Saskatoon, or getting married to a young man from Saskatoon who's also in Calgary now.

And there's also a son who's a skilled tradesman. He's a plumber in Calgary. And he couldn't get into a technical school — the wait was too long — and so he's had to move.

And you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, this family's just one of many that I know that have had to leave the province. So before my time ends here, I will be moving a motion that reads:

All the words after "that" be removed and the following be substituted:

this Assembly condemns the government's lack of commitment to ensure that young people have every opportunity to be successful and raise a family here in Saskatchewan.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Thank you. I thank the member for debate, but I am to inform the Assembly that the amendment is not in order. It's the same effect as voting down the motion before the Assembly. So in effect, the amendment is not in order. We'll continue with the debate on the main motion. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to enter into this most positive debate about the future of our province and about the role that young people can and will have in the development of our province. I very much enjoy talking about young people in our province and the need to keep more of them here, something that's lost on the government members opposite.

I think the debate can be characterized in the context of an article that appeared in the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* back on December 26, day after Christmas 2005. What does the article say? And I quote:

How can it be that Saskatchewan, with its almost unlimited opportunities for growth, and situated in the heart of a country that boasts the second-highest rate of population growth amongst G8 nations, continues to see its human resources slip away? Population loss reversal needs . . . [to change. Saskatchewan needs a] cultural change.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that that summarizes what we're talking about today, about the history of this NDP government for the last 15 years and what they've done. They like to talk about what happened in the '80s. They like to talk about what happened since 1944, but I tell you, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is not a good story. I'd rather talk about what's happening today. And the Minister of Industry and Resources talked about the Saskatchewan Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs and what they . . . their ideas.

What I'd like to do in my time allocated today is talk about their ideas and gauge that against what this government is doing. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is not a pretty picture, not a pretty picture whatsoever.

SYPE [Saskatchewan Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs] has said that we need to be able to compete on the world stage. That's something that needs to be done. They realize that there is a global economy. But it's something that members opposite refuse to talk about. They talk about the . . . SYPE talks about the human element. Well the human element is the loss of 2,000 more people in the first quarter of 2006. Saskatchewan's population dropped below 990,000 for the first time since July 1982 — not a statistic that anybody likes to talk about. But in talking about the real situation that we're in in this province, it's a statistic that needs to be mentioned.

There's many, many reasons why this has happened. Fifteen years of high-tax policies of this NDP government I would say is close to the top of the list, if not right at the top of the list. And that's what members of SYPE and other youth organizations across the province know, that the tax policies of this government have done anything but attract or retain young people in Saskatchewan. That is exactly true and I'm glad that the Minister of Industry and Resources agrees with it.

Another thing that SYPE talked about is the need for innovation in Saskatchewan. The need . . . Not only words but the need to have deliverables, to make sure that innovation takes place in this province. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, what do we see in *The StarPhoenix* from a couple of days ago, Tuesday, November 28, and I'm sure the Minister of Industry and Resources has read this article. What does it talk about? The synchrotron in Saskatchewan landing \$40 million of federal funding through the Canadian Foundation for Innovation. A very important program, an important program for the economy of this province; an important program to the youth of this province.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, it's good news that

Saskatchewan researchers and Saskatchewan professionals who have worked hard and applied for these grants were successful in getting them but, Madam Deputy Speaker, that's only part of the story. Canadian Foundation for Innovation relies on money from the provincial government as well. What response did we hear from the provincial government? What did we hear from them when they were asked about how they contribute to the Canadian foundation? They weren't available for comment.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, in fairness we'll wait and hear for the official response but, Madam Deputy Speaker, we shouldn't even have to wait. We should have a program in this province that addresses the need for matching funding to enable to leverage funding from Ottawa. It should be an automatic program and we certainly . . . we don't have it here in this province.

Other things that the young people of Saskatchewan are talking about are the nuclear industry. They ask questions about it. They want to know; they want to understand. They ask the question of the government and the government says, well we haven't seen a business case for nuclear development in this province. Well those that try, those that try to get the information, they run into a roadblock when SaskPower says, well trust us. We can't give you the information but there's no business case here.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what young people across this province want is the information so they can decide for themselves. It's much like what the uranium companies want in this province — to be able to see that information so they can make that decision. But more so, what they want is leadership from this government. Not just more words, not just a flip-flop about it being the dirtiest type of energy ever created. We heard that from the Premier. We hear different things now from the government but still mixed signals and it just isn't, it isn't boding well for the future of the youth of this province. They want that information.

Young people are asking questions about oil sands development in this province, why we're not seeing the job creation in that sector that we should. They go back to the history of Saskatchewan and what happened in the '40s and '50s and '60s and '70s in this province, why oil companies chose to leave this province. It had a lot to do with the socialist philosophy of the government at the time.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the time is running by very quickly and I want to talk about many, many other things. I know I've got the captive interest about . . . of the group opposite, Madam Deputy Speaker. But I want to talk about . . . I want to talk about the need for vision in this province. It's something that we haven't seen from members opposite.

And the Minister of Industry and Resources, he talked about a forum that took place in Saskatoon last year where 2,000 young people were brought together to talk about the future and the vision. Who was invited to speak at that? The minister worries about who organized the group. It's less important who organized it, but it's more important who the young people of Saskatchewan chose to be the speakers at that event, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Do you know who they chose? Yes, they chose Bill Rancic, who was the apprentice. Someone who captured the imagination of people across Saskatchewan. They had Catriona Le May Doan there. They had people like Robyn Regehr, who is a successful professional hockey player. And do you know who else they asked when they wanted a vision for the youth of this province? They asked the Leader of the Opposition to be one of their guest speakers.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — And, Madam Deputy Speaker, I can tell you with all sincerity that to this day I still hear from young people across the province that were in attendance at that event and say bar none that was the best visionary speech for the young people of our province that they have ever, ever heard. Madam Deputy Speaker, they were very, very pleased with their choice of having the Leader of the Opposition speak.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, we talk about things in this Assembly, but what is more important is when we go out of this Assembly and talk to the young people one-on-one. And I had that opportunity. I had the opportunity during the Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election to talk to many young people across the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency. And I must say it was just very positive to see the number of young people that were involved in that campaign, supporting one of their own, supporting the youngest member of this legislature. Young people from across that constituency were there supporting him so they could have a voice in this legislature. Young people were very engaged.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, the reason that I'm so positive about this is that I'm seeing the same thing happening in Yorkton. I'm seeing the same thing happening in Meadow Lake. I'm seeing the same thing happen in Saskatoon — where young people are saying enough is enough. Young people are saying that a government needs to change, a government should be in for 10 to 12 years, do their thing, and then get out of the way.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we see a government whose expiry date is long past. It's time for a new generation of leaders. It's time for somebody who has the vision like the Leader of the Opposition to put a plan in place, to put a plan like the Enterprise Saskatchewan — that's what young people want to see. They want to see a plan. They know that all problems can't be solved overnight. They know that 15 years of this NDP administration, we won't be able to turn it around overnight but they want to see a plan. They've got a plan from the Leader of the Opposition.

They want to see a plan from this government. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, they've been sadly, sadly disappointed. They haven't received that information, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Well young people are engaged . . . I hope that young people are watching this debate. I hope that they have a chance, Madam Deputy Speaker, a chance to exercise their franchise. And many of those in their late teens will be voting for the first time. They will have an opportunity to make change in this province like never before, an opportunity to vote for the vision and the leadership of the Leader of the Opposition.

Thank you for allowing me to enter this debate, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I was listening to the members speaking and wondering about them not being negative. I wondered who it was that voted on the Throne Speech and the budget on some of the most positive changes we've ever experienced in Saskatchewan.

But, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to talk about the unprecedented wealth that is being generated here and, Madam Deputy Speaker, most notably what I'd like to talk about is about the minimum wage increases that we have announced. We announced them a few years ago and we announced them over a gradual period of time, Madam Deputy Speaker. And what did the opposition think of that, Madam Deputy Speaker? What did they think? They came up and they thought the whole thing was a negative experience.

I'm proud, Madam Deputy Speaker, to repeat that promise here; that as of March 1 of next year the minimum wage will be increased to 7.95 an hour. Raising the minimum wage will put more money into the pockets of working people and their families. Madam Deputy Speaker, this was a plan that was in place for over a year — for over two years — and a perfect example of the ongoing and continual commitment of this government and this Premier to making Saskatchewan the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan has always been a leader in fostering balance between work and family. That is exactly why once again we want to help everyone benefit from a strong economy. Madam Deputy Speaker, that is why in our Throne Speech we announced a new Family Day, a statutory holiday in February. In those dark days of February, Madam Deputy Speaker — and they are cold as I recall because I was elected in a by-election in February — families need a chance for a rest, for a day to stay home with their families and to visit.

[12:00]

Madam Deputy Speaker, another tangible benefit that will help make young people a decision to stay and work in this province is the youth apprenticeship expansion that was announced in this year's budget. Five thousand high school students will have the opportunity to learn more about careers that are available to them right here in Saskatchewan, Madam Deputy Speaker. That's 5,000 young people who are being given a positive reason to make Saskatchewan the place they choose to live and work from.

We're building the workforce of tomorrow, Madam Deputy Speaker, and as I mentioned earlier, all this in a budget which was attacked by those members opposite. In this budget we increased training spaces by over 2,700 spaces. That's hundreds of people every year that are being prepared to take place in the workplace of Saskatchewan.

Madam Deputy Speaker, while we are doing this, the federal Conservative government is cutting funding to adult literacy programs. Our government is backfilling and improving services here. We need the young people and all people. We need to give them the tools to participate in a modern economy.

Madam Deputy Speaker, on the question of tools, we have also introduced a tool tax credit this past spring. As pointed out at that time, many of today's young tradespeople need to purchase tools as a condition of their employment. They have to buy these tools with their after-tax dollars, Madam Deputy Speaker, and it seems only fair that they should also benefit from the booming economy that we are now experiencing. There are 15,000 working men and women that will benefit from the tax credit, Madam Deputy Speaker. That's 15,000 young people who are seeing the benefits of a booming economy and 15,000 young families.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan's labour climate is without doubt one of the best in the country. We have vacations of three weeks after one year, four weeks after ten. These allow workers in the province a break they so richly deserve. Mr. Speaker, this is very positive for young families in Saskatchewan. These are the kind of things that will address the issues of students and allow them to have opportunities right here at home.

Again, Madam Deputy Speaker, the need to benefit all of the people is why we're continuing the commitment to providing Saskatchewan people with the lowest cost utility bundle. Mr. Speaker, under this government, Saskatchewan families will feel the real benefits of Saskatchewan's strong economy. They will feel it when they heat their homes. They will feel it when they insure their cars. And they will also have access to the highest-speed Internet in Canada. Madam Deputy Speaker, it was not too many people that could disagree with the lowest cost bundle of utilities. And we have the lowest cost, whether it's Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, or British Columbia.

Madam Deputy Speaker, while we are partnering with citizens, municipalities, and school boards, and various groups in our province, I want to remind all here of when it was not so. Madam Deputy Speaker, they say, say it's not so. Well I remember in the 1980s when the leader was part of the governing conservatives and, during that time, this government established group homes. They established group homes throughout Saskatchewan because they deemed it a better way to provide service to group home residents.

Well for the workers, Madam Deputy Speaker, for the workers, they stripped them of their rights. They stripped them of their rights of overtime. They took away, they took away, through some slick interpretations, they did away with the minimum rates of pay. They took away the minimum rates of pay. And what did this mean, Madam Deputy Speaker? What did this mean? It meant that when these workers worked and had to sleep overnight at their workplace, they didn't get paid, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And you know what they said, Madam Deputy Speaker? They said this was pin money. This was pin money, is what they said. Because these workers, Madam Deputy Speaker, a large percentage are women workers in this province, Madam Deputy

Speaker. And that's what they did to workers. They stripped people of their rights under The Labour Standards Act.

And we hear that today, Madam Deputy Speaker. We hear that today. We hear that today because now they are going to war with workers and the working people of this province. That's that what the Leader of the Opposition says. He says we're going to go to war.

Well I have this to say to that Leader of the Opposition. We defeated you in 1991. And I know they're in a bit of a rush, they're in a bit of a rush but we have some work to do. We have some work to do before we call another election and defeat them again, Madam Deputy Speaker, before we defeat them again. So they should just be a bit patient about this because that's what's going to happen, Madam Deputy Speaker.

But what did our government respond to the group-home workers? Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm proud to stand here and say that we put in \$30 million to wages for the group-home workers of this province, \$30 million that were taken away from these workers. That's what we did, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think those members across should understand the amounts of money that we have put in, and whether into the education sectors or whatever. And I think we should hear about those — 1.5 billion into the education system, Madam Deputy Speaker, \$300 million for universities. We've frozen university tuition until 2008, and they voted against that. We've created over 34,000 training spaces and 32,000 university seats in 2006 and 2007. Madam Deputy Speaker, this includes 83 new seats at the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies and, as I mentioned earlier, 134,000 to expand the youth apprenticeship program province-wide.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I felt the full brunt of their policies in the '80s because I was a negotiator on behalf of the group homes and many other things. So they don't fool us for a second. They don't fool us for a second.

Madam Deputy Speaker, at this point in time what I would like to do is congratulate all the young people in this province for their enthusiasm and their innovation in building a great Saskatchewan. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a privilege for me to be able to join the debate today and to read this motion. I was almost struck by the humour of it. I don't have a moment's hesitation in saying that I believe the government really has the best intentions at heart, they just don't have a clue how to fulfill the mandate of a government in terms of keeping young people in the province of Saskatchewan.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we've alluded to the problem of out-migration and especially youth retention in several instances previously in this House. I think I spent a fair amount

of time just a week or two ago elaborating the devastating consequences of youth out-migration from the constituency of Cypress Hills and indicating how if our experience was extrapolated over the entire province from constituency to constituency, both urban and rural, there would be a complete and total loss of young people in the province.

Fortunately some of the other areas of the province don't experience the same out-migration numbers that we have in the southwest of Saskatchewan. But nevertheless, Madam Deputy Speaker, the consequences to the province are pretty stark and pretty serious. And I think we need to be addressing that today.

The fact of the matter is, Madam Deputy Speaker, that when you engage people in conversation and ask them about their families and where their children are, with rare exception you will run into somebody who will say that their children are still in Saskatchewan. You often find people who say, well out of the three or four children I've got, you know one or two are in Saskatchewan but the other two are elsewhere. But more and more frequently now, Madam Deputy Speaker, what we're hearing from people is that they are here; their children are elsewhere. And the consequence for the province of Saskatchewan is serious, not just in the short term but particularly in the long term.

We find that this is backed up by reports of surveys done. I think the Canada West Foundation was the most recent source of this type of information where they completed a survey which indicated 25 per cent of people in the province of Saskatchewan under the age of 35 fully expected themselves to be moving out of the province in the next five years.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that's not a statistic or a number that anybody should take lightly, especially those in power, in positions of influence, who have within their mandate an opportunity to address specifically the concerns of people in that age group. At age 35 and under, you're just really starting life. You're establishing relationships. You may be getting married. You may be starting a family. You're certainly into the workforce in an intensive and deliberate way. You have expectations about your future and your career development. And that is the age group that provides the most important part of our economic engine.

If so much of Saskatchewan's economy is based on small business — as we've heard repeatedly from the government, and it's backed up by evidence — those small businesses are driven by a consumer economy. And consumers in the age range of 25 to 50 are the most likely to spend. But those in the age range of 25 to 35 are likely the most important component of even that group.

So when we have a report that indicates that 25 per cent of young people 35 and under are fully expecting to have to leave the province, that doesn't augur well for the future of this province. And it behooves the government to take that kind of statistical information very seriously in the policy it develops as we go forward in this province.

Apparently the government has not seen fit to do that. Or if they have, it's been inadequate because the statistics are still showing increasing out-migration of both total population . . . in

terms of total population numbers and in youth out-migration.

You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, we can stand here and talk about numbers all day. And we can argue back and forth about the impact and the cause and effect and so forth. But it's really important, Madam Deputy Speaker, for us to personalize this. And when you bring these out-migration stories down to the very personal situations, such as the Marie Broberg case that we brought to prominence last spring, a young lady from Gull Lake who was on a waiting list at SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] for six years — six years, Madam Deputy Speaker. She virtually was forced to move to Alberta to achieve her educational opportunities earlier.

When we hear that kind of a story, when we hear the story of a young Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] graduate from the University of Saskatchewan who had one job opportunity offered to him in the province of Saskatchewan and was actively pursued and recruited by a company in Calgary and chose — even though he wanted to stay in Saskatchewan — chose to move to Calgary to pursue his career opportunities there when he became aware of them.

When you hear of those kind of individual, heartbreaking stories, those anecdotal instances of people who wanted to stay here and found themselves being compelled to leave, it reinforces the idea and the acknowledgement that this government has not been able to address this issue satisfactorily. Young people would like to stay here, but they haven't been allowed to by the policies of this government and by the inertia of this government.

And what we found, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that the government, the NDP government is a johnny-come-lately to the realization of the catastrophe that this out-migration issue is posing for our future and for our economic growth and our economic prospects.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would say that if this NDP government truly believed its own words in this debate, they would have acted more forcefully and intentionally to make every effort to keep young people in Saskatchewan. The response has been woefully inadequate and much too late.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I will be supporting the amendment.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[12:15]

The Deputy Speaker: — The motion before the Assembly . . . We'll enter into a question and answer period. And I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. My question will be for the member from Fairview. The motion before the House is talking about Saskatchewan being a leader and fostering a balance between work and family. My question is, how does your government consider the balance between work and family for farmers that are leaving this province to work in Alberta over the winter?

And in fact last year, the town of Rose Valley had . . . a large percentage of their men left home, and the wives were looking after not only their children and their home and the livestock, but they're looking after the community. Where was the balance between work and family there when the only time the family got to see the father was when he got to come home occasionally for a few days off? There was no balance. And this family . . . They've risked and put all their capital into their farm. They worked for years to make sure that it can stay viable, but they weren't allowed to stay there. The question is, where is the balance for farmers?

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — . . . for the question, Madam Deputy Speaker. This government has worked hard, and in the Department of Labour we also have and are concerned about work and balance in family. And we have addressed it, as I have earlier said, with the vacations that we have, Madam Deputy Speaker. We've addressed it on many fronts and we continue to work in there.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the funding for education and our daycare dollars that we have attempted to do which were deducted by the . . . or not followed through by the Conservative government, are a great concern to us. And I think that the member across should be more concerned about issues like, in terms of the funding and the help that can be provided, than simply criticizing our budget and the Throne Speech. Thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. My question is for the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs. He stated in his speech that certain people were complaining about high taxes in Saskatchewan. Will the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs admit that income taxes in Saskatchewan on the personal side have been decreased by approximately 35 per cent since tax reform was implemented in 1999?

The Deputy Speaker: — Saskatoon Silver Springs, the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Madam Deputy Speaker, it's a pleasure to answer the question. I could get used to answering these questions, you know, in the future, that's for sure. But, Madam Deputy Speaker, it's important to hear what . . . or to talk about what the experts in this province have to say.

Mr. Jack Vicq, who was the author of the Vicq commission report, both the first one on income tax and the second one on corporate taxes, Madam Deputy Speaker, what did he have to say? Well he said that Saskatchewan had the highest effective tax rate, not only in Canada but in his opinion in entire North America and maybe the world, Madam Deputy Speaker. That is the tax situation that this province has experienced under this NDP government for the last 15 years — the highest corporate capital taxes, the highest personal income tax, the highest rate of income tax for low-income earners. The minister likes to talk about the low-income earners in Saskatchewan.

We had a plan to put more money in their pocket. What happened, Madam Deputy Speaker? Members on that side of the House voted against it. They voted it down. They like to talk about having increases in the minimum wage, but who does that benefit, Madam Deputy Speaker? It doesn't benefit the workers as much as it should. It benefits the government coffers. Madam Deputy Speaker, I can assure the members opposite that we will have more ideas on property taxes and other taxes for them.

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

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, my question is for the member for Saskatoon Fairview. Madam Deputy Speaker, how can young people believe that the NDP government will create jobs and opportunities for our young people when it was this government that attempted to bring in most available hours legislation, the job-killing monster as it's been called?

They would have done nothing to improve the chances of young people to gain employment in our province, and in fact it was opposed by student organizations all across this province. So how would this legislation have helped young people in the province, and would he support the government trying to bring it back?

The Deputy Speaker: — . . . Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I know the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy has often said that he cares about the present. But I think we should go back to the 1980s on this question when that party was in power and saw the exodus of young people out of this province, and their policies.

And let me talk about most available hours. Let me talk about most available hours. Well they laugh, Madam Deputy Speaker. The issue is, most available hours was brought by because of the economic basket case that they created. Those folks over there created that. They created more part-time positions where people were unemployed. And what happened was that most people had to take jobs, part-time jobs. And what did that do to the students? The students were pushed out. They were pushed out into other jobs. That's what happened. That's what happened in the '80s. Yes it did.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. My question is for the member from Regina Rosemont. The NDP have failed to provide educational opportunities for a good many of our youth who wish to have post-secondary training in this province. We have seen too many of the students who wish to attend post-secondary forced to go out of this province to receive their training. For my constituency they go to Brandon and Winnipeg and Minot and Calgary and Medicine Hat and Edmonton but they have a hard time getting into their own province in Saskatchewan.

So to the member: why has this NDP government failed to provide the proper number of training spots and educational

opportunities for the students of this province which would encourage them to stay in Saskatchewan rather than driving them out of the province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Rosemont.

Ms. Crofford: — One of the things that's been very difficult to have the opposition understand is that you can't spend money you don't have. But as soon as we did have the money due to the actions we took to improve the economy and the competitiveness of taxes, both business and personal, the fact is is that we added 5,000 new training spaces in this year alone. And we're going to keep going up.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — . . . the member for Cypress Hills, Madam Deputy Speaker. In a recent *Leader-Post* article the headline read, "Jobs, Jobs, Jobs. . ." Madam Deputy Speaker, "Jobs, Jobs, Jobs. . ." Now the members have voted against most everything and continually negatively speak on this. What I would like to hear from this member is, does he support that article and does he support this economy and does he support the jobs, jobs, jobs in this province?

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to answer that question because I addressed that very question in a speech I participated in and presented in this House a week or 10 days ago.

The jobs may be in fact there, but the statistical evidence says that under this government, this NDP government, in the last two years we've had 18,000 young people leave this province. So if we've got 15,000 jobs right now, but we chased 18,000 out of the province in the previous two years, you know, what's up with that, Madam Deputy Speaker? If those students, those individuals who left, that compiled or made up that particular number of out-migration experience, then if they had been here, they would have filled those jobs. It's not whether or not there are jobs here. It is the issue now of why young people and others still find it necessary to leave the province.

I have, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Stats Canada report of 25- to 29-year-olds, 30- to 34-year-olds, and 35- to 39-year-olds. Between 1996 and 2006, the number is down on each occasion.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. My question is to the member from Regina Rosemont. They talk about being family friendly. Well in my constituency, we've had numbers of young people leaving. When I talk to young people, they have no confidence in this government at all.

So my question to them is, how can they actually believe that they're family friendly? When I go around my constituency, every young person out there, the only question they ask me is, when will the next election be, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I thank all members for their participation in the debate today. The time allocated for the 75-minute debate is now ended. We would go to priority in government orders.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 1 — Loss of Confidence in the Government

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. Elhard.]

The Deputy Speaker: — Recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a great pleasure to join in to the debate this Thursday afternoon. It seems to be a weekly tradition every Thursday afternoon — I'm sure people start turning their TVs off about now — but Thursday afternoon to discuss the province's confidence and the opposition's confidence in this government. Of course we put forward a motion, a motion that says:

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

Two Thursdays ago I know the member from Cypress Hills spoke for quite a while on the fact that there just is no confidence in the government, whether it's in this Assembly or throughout the province.

I had the opportunity to speak a little bit two Thursdays ago and for a little while last week. Since that time, I've also had the opportunity to look at what I had to say, read through the *Hansard*, and found that I had missed an awful lot of issues that I needed to talk about. So I'm certainly glad to be able to join in again today and fill in the some of the gaps, some of the areas that I missed over the last week and a half or two weeks when talking about the confidence or lack of confidence in this government. And we certainly see it over and over again.

And I think personally if there was ever a telling sign that I don't have confidence in this government or I believe most of the Assembly doesn't have confidence was in this past 75-minute debate when, for example, one of the members, Saskatoon Fairview, was asked a question. And where he wanted to start to answer the question was back in the '80s. That's 26 years ago, Madam Deputy Speaker.

This government has been in power for 16 years. You would think where you would start to answer a question after you've been in power for 16 years is, this is what we have done in the time that we have been in government. But instead what they do is they talk about what everybody else has done and all the problems that everybody else have caused for their government. And they don't address what they have done, or the problem is, what they haven't done. And that's the bigger issue. And for that very reason, the issue around what they haven't done are the reasons why we base our non-confidence motion in this government.

It'll be very interesting, Madam Deputy Speaker, when this motion comes to the floor to be voted on. I'm sure if members on that side of the House were to vote with their heart as opposed to being whipped to vote, as far as a Whip vote, many of them would say that yes, you know, over the 16 years we haven't maybe served this province as well as we should have. And in particular in the last couple years there have been some real major shortfalls in our government and in the way we have governed this province.

When we talk about lack of confidence, I wanted to make sure that I had it right, so I looked at the *Oxford Dictionary* to find out what the definition of confidence is, and why we wouldn't have it or many other people wouldn't have it in this government. It talks about firm trust.

Does a person have firm trust in this NDP government? And it certainly isn't the case. We heard it again today in many situations, but I can just talk about in health care whether people trust this government and what they say, if they have a firm trust in what the minister is saying regarding the health care system. And I truly believe most people in this province don't because what happens is, when the minister stands in the House and denies any of the reports that have come forward, saying they're not accurate; they haven't collected the data properly . . . But what those reports tell us is what people are facing on the streets and in their homes about health care, that in certain areas there is a hugely long waiting list, hugely long waits, and that certainly doesn't . . . When they look at the word confident, do they have firm trust in this government to deliver health care in this province? Absolutely not.

[12:30]

A sense of self-reliance is also, you know, a term or a definition of confidence, and I don't think people in this province, again, don't feel that . . . yes, they don't feel that they can rely on them. The government itself, I definitely, I think many of those members feel they have confidence within themselves. They feel that they are running a great program within the province. They're running, you know, a strong government.

But when you talk to the people of this province, over and over again when I'm out in the constituency of Indian Head-Milestone — which I'm in almost everyday, last night in Balgonie — and you talk to a number of people it is almost, without a person, the first question comes up is, when is the next election? I mean the member from Arm River certainly made that point at the end of the 75-minute debate that there's certainly people around the province are asking when is the next election because people are looking to change the

government. And why people look to change a government is because they don't have confidence in a government.

So I believe our motion is worded correctly. And I believe that . . . I would think that the majority of the members in this House would feel that they do not have confidence in the way this Premier and the way this government are running the affairs of this province.

I want to talk a little bit more about health care to begin with, and then we'll go on to some other subjects that deal with confidence and why people I feel don't have confidence in this government. But I think if it was ever more telling, it's in health care, and maybe because it's the area I seem to be dealing with more often than not, with questions, is around the issue of health care.

And the latest report that came out talking about the Wait Time Alliance interim report card, in other words, it's not the final report card. And that's certainly what the minister said today in the House, that this is only partial way through the time period that they have to implement the benchmarks that the Health ministers agreed on in 2004. So it's an interim report.

And I look at the report card . . . If we look at it as a normal report card, if we look at it as a normal report card, we're not doing very well. I certainly know — we have two sons; one's in elementary and one's in high school, grade nine and grade seven — that if they were to bring a report card home like this, what would we say? I mean if our kids brought a report card home that had out of five subjects, two incompletes, one failure, one D, and one A, we wouldn't be very happy. We wouldn't be very happy with the performance of our kids if that's the type of report card our kids brought home.

Now the government can have this report card presented about them. And I truly believe, I truly believe that because of the report card this government has been given through the Wait Time Alliance — this report card — people of the province will say that is a terribly poor performance. When you have, out of five subjects — let's call it a semester of five subjects — and you have two incomplete marks, you have one A, and a D, and an F on five priority areas, how could the people of this province have a confidence that this government is delivering health care properly? It doesn't matter whether it's in . . .

I mean, I'll certainly give the government credit where credit is due. And the minister talked about this in question period. In question period, he kind of shunned the report. He didn't think the report was accurate because it didn't collect the proper data. It didn't collect the proper data. But at the end of question period in his last answer, he did state that getting an A in cardiac care was a good thing. And it is an absolutely good thing.

So if you're going to accept an A in cardiac care, because we are doing fairly well in that area, you have to then accept the premise that we had an F in joint replacement. And we had a D in sight restoration and cataract surgery. If you are going to accept the A, you need to be able to accept the F and the D and the two incompletes. You can't have it both ways. You can't say that the data is incorrect, but we'll accept the A, but the data is incorrect, and we'll reject the rest.

And I would say that the report card is pretty close to what we hear as opposition MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly], and I'm sure the minister will hear many of the same concerns come to his office. I can tell you in our office we receive an awful lot of health care concerns.

And I can honestly say, do we receive a lot of cardiac care cases that they haven't had proper care within the system? And that's very seldom that we would receive any of those cases. We do receive some regarding wait times for angioplasties and issues like that. But overall we normally receive very little concern about cardiac care in the province.

I think that is very reflective in this report card. In the report card it shows that we receive an A in that area. And I'll give the government credit where credit is due. If you look at the rest of the provinces, all but about three provinces out of ten received an A. So it's being handled very well across Canada.

But where we really fall behind the rest of Canada behind the rest of the provinces is in joint replacement. And again that would be reflective in the calls that we receive in our offices. I would say that on a regular basis I receive phone calls from people that have been waiting for a knee replacement, that are waiting years and years and years.

We had in fact in my own family, extended family, whether it's my father-in-law or brother-in-law, they've both had both knees replaced. That's four knees in two people. But the amount of time that they had to wait was absolutely amazing and especially for my brother-in-law who had to wait years and years. In fact to see the deterioration that he went through in the time that he had to wait . . . he would be about, I think he would be about 50 years old, 45 to 50 years old, and he's received both knee replacements now. But literally he was on crutches at 47 years old for a year. He could not get around, and he was on crutches for a year because of the excruciatingly long wait and the excruciating pain that he had to suffer. It was truly amazing that in our health care system in Saskatchewan that somebody would have to wait that long.

I remember also one case that came to the legislature — well actually it was intersessionally just prior to myself becoming the Health critic — and his name was Everett Ritzco. And he had to have a hip replacement, and it had been for quite a long time he'd been waiting and waiting and waiting.

And his health was deteriorating so much so that he was having trouble living on his own. In fact if something didn't change, he was going to have to move from his apartment, he would have to give up the work that he was working at — I believe he was a commissionaire at the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], I could be wrong — give up that work because he just simply couldn't get around anymore.

And winter was setting in which was even worse for the pain. So he needed to, he needed to get something done. He was fortunate enough to have a brother that lived in Toronto that knew an orthopaedic surgeon. Everett then flew to Toronto and had the surgery done within two weeks. He had been waiting for years here in Saskatchewan and within two weeks he was able to get the surgery done in Toronto. And it changed his whole outlook on life. He was able to then recuperate and start

exercising again and certainly his quality of life had improved.

And I would say it would be . . . Well the member from Wood River mentions about two-tier health care system, and that's truly what it was in this situation. Everett had the money to be able to travel out of the province to receive health care which he couldn't receive here in Saskatchewan. And we're not necessarily arguing with the fact that, you know, travel expenses should be covered by the patient.

The point being is that he couldn't receive health care here, and the only way that he could receive health care in a timely manner was spending his own money by travelling to Toronto to get that done. You know, Everett is certainly. . . I don't know him real well but I'm sure he's managed his affairs very well. He had saved up some money and he was able to do that.

There are some people that haven't been as fortunate, many people that haven't been as fortunate and are left lingering on waiting lists — the longest waiting lists in Canada. And as a result of that, that's why we see in this report card that we're rated as an F, which would be one thing if other provinces were in the same area. If other provinces out of the 10 provinces that are cited here, if other provinces had Fs, then we would say, it's a national problem; every province is having the same. But it isn't that case.

You know, you can look at Newfoundland where they rate an A in joint replacements. You can look at Quebec which receives an A in joint replacements, Alberta a B, British Columbia a C. And no doubt they would like to be higher. But the only province in Canada, the only province in Canada that received an F was Saskatchewan . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. Newfoundland — even Newfoundland — they received an A. Well I mean, every province in Canada beat us actually because every province had a higher mark.

And I just know, I just know that, you know, if I look at our kids bringing home a report card and there was an F on it, there would have to be some immediate work done, some of the extracurricular activities that they would be involved in would be taken away.

Now I know myself, when I was in school, I would have never brought an F on my report card home. Maybe that report card wouldn't have got home, but I can say that I don't think my parents ever saw an F on a report card. That wasn't meaning that I didn't get an F on a report card, but they didn't see that report card.

But it really is an indictment; it is an indictment on this government. And you know, I think we could even, we could even understand that if . . . You know, again I'll use our kids. If they have trouble in a subject . . . You know, for me when I was going to school, I had trouble in the odd subject, you know. I wasn't the best reader or writer, and you can probably tell by my speeches. Not too many of them are written out because I'd have trouble reading them. But I always had a little trouble in that area. But certainly there is other areas that I did better in, and so my average in school was respectable. It certainly wasn't as good as some of my classmates, for sure, but it was respectable.

But when you look at the report card overall of the government in health care, and you look at two incompletes, two D's, an F, and an A, that isn't having trouble in one area and doing very well in all the rest. That's having trouble in most areas and doing very well in one. And that's where the concern comes in.

I know one of our sons, his report card just came home and he wasn't doing very good in French. And so I thought well maybe I should help him, but then I thought that won't help his mark very well. So he was having trouble in French. And so, I mean, yes, we're going to do some work on that. But if you look at the rest of his report card, he really does take after his mother because the report card is really quite good.

But he did well in most things and has trouble in one. And that's one area that we can work on and we can understand that. But when you have trouble in most areas and only have one good mark, you have to look at your whole program or what you're doing.

And that's certainly what we've been calling on this government to do for a very, very long time, is to start looking at the whole health care system. We've talked for many, many years. And the minister who made fun of me the other day, whether I said five years that we've been talking about recruitment of nurses or eight years, and you know what? You can pick however many years you want. You can pick whatever year. I mean I've only been here for seven years. You can pick whichever year you want. We have been talking about the issue of recruitment and retention of nurses and doctors, health care professionals of all sorts because what deals with waiting lists are having the professionals in place.

You know Alberta, if I go back to this report card again . . . I seem to be stuck up on this report card here. If I go back to this report card again and I look at Alberta, they received a B. And if you look back a couple, a year ago, or a year-and-a-half ago, they made a consolidated effort to work on joint replacement. They had a pilot project where they put, yes, more money, but they targeted a lot of their management and health care professionals to deal with the backlog on joint replacement. And as a result, they ended up with a B.

So you can raise your marks, that's for sure. And what we've been telling the government, in order to raise the marks for our health care report card, we need to take some certain steps. And those steps are increasing the number of health care professionals.

We had a debate in this House during question period the other day about endocrinologists and how many endocrinologists we had in the province. And there was some concern that our numbers were wrong or we were using numbers that were fictitious. But the numbers that we were using came right out of an advisory committee that was set up by the government. Those weren't the numbers . . . Because frankly I don't know how many endocrinologists we need. I don't know how many pediatric endocrinologists and I don't know how many endocrinologists for adults that we need. I don't know. But the two professional groups, the advisory committee and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, stated that we needed anywhere from eight to twelve endocrinologists to deal with the issue.

[12:45]

Well it was interesting because we got out into the rotunda and we got into a bit of a discussion back and forth. Do we have one in Saskatoon? Or do we have two or should we have three? But regardless of what the number we were arguing — whether it's two or three or one — it's a long ways from eight to twelve. So the point being is that we can argue whether we've got one or two or three. Then what we really need to deal with in this case, the issue of diabetes, is more health care professionals, more endocrinologists.

The same discussion happened when we talked about oncologists and how many oncologists we had and the fact that we needed more. The reason we need more is we've got the longest waiting list in Canada — three months to see . . . for first visit to an oncologist, which is three times the national average. And so we raised that issue. And what we were saying is, we need to have more oncologists on staff in the province.

And I will agree totally; they're tough to recruit. They're very tough to recruit. And so it's . . . I mean retention is even that more important but what we need . . . And so we got into a discussion and I forget — I think it was in Saskatoon — whether we had three or four. I forget the numbers and the numbers may not be accurate, whether it's three or four or whatever. And I said, well it should be four. And the minister said, no it should be three. The point being, what would be wrong if we had an extra one? What would be wrong if we had an extra oncologist so that we could start bringing the numbers down?

Because what he was arguing was in order to get back to a status quo where we are, we need three. And I happened to say four, so one more. And what that one more oncologist would've done was start bringing down the wait for first visit to oncologists. And I certainly know it's expensive and I know it's tough to recruit. They're tough to recruit. But the part being is that if we want to have what they . . . What the government has talked about in every campaign, what the government has talked about in every campaign is having the best health care system in Canada.

And it certainly is kind of their golden goose. I mean that's the one . . . That's their claim to fame. That's what they've always hung their hat on is the health care system in Saskatchewan. Because of course, because of course their idol, Tommy Douglas, you know is known across Canada as implementing the program. And so that's the area that they think is most important. So every campaign, they'll campaign on the fact that we have the best health care system in Canada.

But the facts simply don't always prove it out. The facts don't prove it out. The report cards don't prove it out. There are many examples unfortunately that come to us. And the minister will say how many procedures we do each day and over the year. And there are many, many procedures that are done.

But what is the true test of the system is how many people are falling through the cracks — how many people aren't getting the health care that this government expects them to have, that we expect them to have, that the people of Saskatchewan expect to have. And that's a true test. And I believe, I truly believe that

we have more people fall through the cracks here in Saskatchewan.

And we see them come to this Assembly and plead their case — whether it's Crystal Bonderud, whether it's Terry Rak, whether it's Bob Loeppky, those issues on Avastin, Crystal Bonderud on misdiagnosis and then being covered when her and her husband went down to the Mayo Clinic in the States, whether it's baby Paige, the list goes on.

Whether it's Emily Morley from up north who, you know, was one of these cases that had to wait three months to see an oncologist for the first time. The family came and complained. The date was moved up. Unfortunately after the date was moved up, they saw how serious the cancer was and how it had spread. But the point being is how they had peace of mind after that. They knew where they stood. And they made arrangements. And they dealt with the cards that were dealt. They played with the cards that were dealt to them.

The unfortunate part was had things not changed and had that appointment not been sped up, they would have been spending three months not knowing what the prognosis was. And that's very tough for a family to deal with. You're sitting there for three months. No doubt her health would have been deteriorating. They would have been wondering, what can we be doing to save our mom or, you know, or grandmother or whoever it is. What can we be doing? But until they got the diagnosis, they didn't know.

And by coming to the Assembly and pleading their case, it was moved ahead and within two weeks they had the diagnosis. And then they were able to deal with the situation in front of them. And I think that's only fair and humane for a family to know what the issue will be and how to deal with it.

So there are many, many situations where what we do need is more health care professionals. I've talked about endocrinologists. I've talked about oncologists. And there are many other specialty areas I could talk about.

There's also the area of nursing and how we've talked for many, many years — and you can pick the year again — that we need to start recruiting and retaining more nurses. I have a letter here that I'd just like to read into the record while I can, that was sent to the Leader of the Opposition. And we've talked to the lady that wrote this letter and she said it was perfectly fine if we used it in the Assembly. So I'd just like to . . . I guess here goes. We'll see how my reading skills are now. This is the area that I . . . We'll see how my reading skills are as I read this letter into the record.

I'm writing to you in regards to the nursing shortage in Saskatchewan. My son, who is originally from Saskatchewan, and his wife has recently decided to move back to Saskatchewan from Calgary.

That's a good story.

He works in broadcasting and has taken a job in Rosetown. My daughter in law is a Registered Nurse. She has been nursing in Alberta for over a year now. The day that Ryan received notice that he had his job was the day

[that] the NDP announced the incentive program to bring in nurses. That was great news until Melanie went to transfer her licence over to Saskatchewan. I am not sure if you are aware of the red tape that you have to go through to do this. I personally thought it would be a simple transfer over since she is a qualified Registered Nurse in Alberta. Saskatchewan has asked for marks that she does not have access to, so that had to be sent from Edmonton, then a letter was sent from her current employer, all [of] her pay stubs were . . . sent in . . . [and all] other . . . [document]. She has done all [of] this a month ago. Last week she phoned to see what was holding things up and they told her that they wanted her hours after she deducted her meal time and coffee break time. If my son had not taken a job in Saskatchewan, with all this hassle she would have never come here to nurse, no matter what the incentives were.

So I guess the point being, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that it's one thing to say that you're short of nurses. It's another thing to welcome them here. Yes, you have to make sure their credentials are right, but sometimes there is so much red tape — and in this case there is so much red tape — that people are frustrated and they say, that's enough, and they decide to look for work in other places.

It goes on to say that:

Maybe if Saskatchewan wants to bring in more nurses then I think the NDP needs a wakeup call, because all [of] their incentive programs are not enough incentive for nurses from other provinces to go through this hassle. As my daughter in law asks, I am an RN in Alberta why am I not good enough to be an RN in Saskatchewan. I guess that is a question for the NDP.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — Why she wouldn't be good enough to be an RN in Saskatchewan without having to go through all this red tape.

Last Friday I met with a physician in Indian Head who was a South African physician who had been in the province for about three or four years and the story was virtually the same as what this lady is describing her daughter-in-law had to go through. The story is virtually the same.

The fact that he had to go, and some of the red tape . . . And he wasn't knocking the fact that he had to meet standards in Saskatchewan before he was licensed. That wasn't the issue. The issue was around a lot of other issues that between the Department of Health, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and the health authorities had asked him.

He had said that many of his friends had been to Canada and had gone back to South Africa because after three or four years they were frustrated with the system that they had to go through here. He said, I don't believe that it could be that difficult. And so that's why he came. And he's spent three years here now, and honestly I think he's looking at other options of maybe moving back to South Africa. And it's sad because those are the type of people we need in our province.

We have a higher reliance on foreign-trained doctors than any other province in Saskatchewan. And if you're in that position, you better not be chasing them out. And I know I've heard from some people saying, well the South African doctors, they just come here for a couple of years and then they leave. As if they want to leave. But that isn't always the case.

I mentioned to this doctor, has anybody talked to you if you were to leave or the friends that you've had that have practised in Saskatchewan that have left, has anybody asked them what the problems are and why they're leaving? And not one person, not one of these physicians that has been so frustrated with the system, that has left, has been asked why they left.

There's reasons why these physicians are leaving. You know, they've come here to set up a new life and a new practice, and after three or four years they're frustrated. Does anybody know what those frustrations are? Does anybody in the department know what those frustrations are? I mean we hear on a daily basis, whether it's in Bengough, Canora, Kamsack, Preeceville; whether it's in Spiritwood, Vanguard, Broadview, Arcola — all over — they're really short of doctors.

And you know, in Broadview it was interesting to see in Broadview on the news the other day, they talked about putting in place nurse practitioners and how important that is. And we would agree totally that nurse practitioners will play a very, very important role in our health care system. But they will not, they will not replace a practising physician and that's what we need in our province.

And every one of these facilities can maybe get by for a short time with a nurse practitioner, like they're going to do in Broadview with two nurse practitioners. But it is dealing . . . it is trying to put a bandage over a much bigger injury. The bigger injury is the fact that we just don't have enough practising physicians to cover the spots that we need in rural Saskatchewan. And because of that we need to do extra due diligence when we are recruiting physicians from other countries, but when physicians are here, that we listen to the concerns that they have.

If they have concerns, let's listen to them. I know that we can't maybe cater to every concern. If it's a concern with the CAPE [clinicians' assessment and professional enhancement] exam, maybe we need to look at that, but there needs to be some sort of benchmark that they measure up to. We have absolutely no argument with that and neither do physicians. But when they have other problems that aren't listened to and they finally get frustrated and leave this province, we need to make sure we know what that is and take corrective measures, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Well that's just my first start on health care. I had a whole lot of other issues that I wanted to talk about. And what I really wanted to talk . . . Some of the other issues I wanted to talk about other than health care is why people don't have confidence in this government, are situations that . . . I was just reading in a newspaper article about the, and I quote here, "Calvert says jobs abound." And what it is, is a bit of a summary of his speech last night in Saskatoon which I think you might be very aware of.

And I thought it was very interesting when he was talking about youth and keeping youth in Saskatchewan, opportunities for youth. Young families abound in Saskatchewan; he goes on about that. But when we're talking about youth retention, he goes, "I could not have said, when I became premier of this great province (five years ago), in complete confidence to a young person, 'Your future can be here.'"

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:01.]

He goes on to say, well today now that future is here. But I think that's a very telling sign that if the Premier of this province when he took over from 10 years of NDP government, could not say to a young person, could not look that young person in the face and say with confidence that, your future is here in Saskatchewan, I believe that's a very telling sign of this government. And I believe that's a very telling sign as to why we've lost 17,000 people in the last two years because people will read off of whether the Premier has confidence in this province, whether he has confidence in the youth working in this province. If he doesn't, people read off of that and start making exit strategies. And that's exactly what has happened in this province.

Now the Premier's saying, we've got lots and lots of jobs. But it's too late. We've lost a generation. We're losing a generation of youth. We have the highest out-migration of any province because this Premier has finally admitted that he couldn't look somebody in the eye three years ago, and says he didn't have confidence that their future would be in Saskatchewan. I think that's a stinging indictment of this Premier and the whole attitude of this government. And that is exactly why young people in this province, older people in this province, do not have confidence in this province because the very Premier of this province didn't have confidence either.

The only reason why jobs are abounding now is because we have seen a real spike in commodity prices in oil and gas and there's jobs surrounding that. But what has happened is this government and this Premier have set up a climate in this province . . . and not the climate that's out there today because that's a little harsh, but a harsh climate in this province for people to stay. And they look for options and other provinces to go.

And, you know, they'll say, well you guys are all . . . you're so pessimistic. I don't want to be pessimistic. I would be so optimistic if those 17,000 people in the last two years stayed in Saskatchewan and we increased our population by 17,000 more people. That would give me confidence. That's why I would then support a government that could say they've done that. But this government cannot because the Premier himself couldn't have confidence in this province when we needed confidence in this province, Mr. Speaker.

So I tell you that I have absolutely no problem standing in my place and voting against . . . voting for the motion that shows that there is no confidence in this government, Mr. Speaker. And so I will be looking forward to the day . . .

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — I apologize to the hon. member but the time is now 1 o'clock, hon. members, and I declare the House to be adjourned for the day. We will come together again at 1:30 p.m. on Monday, so the House stands adjourned until then.

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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Premier

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

Hon. Pat Atkinson
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