



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

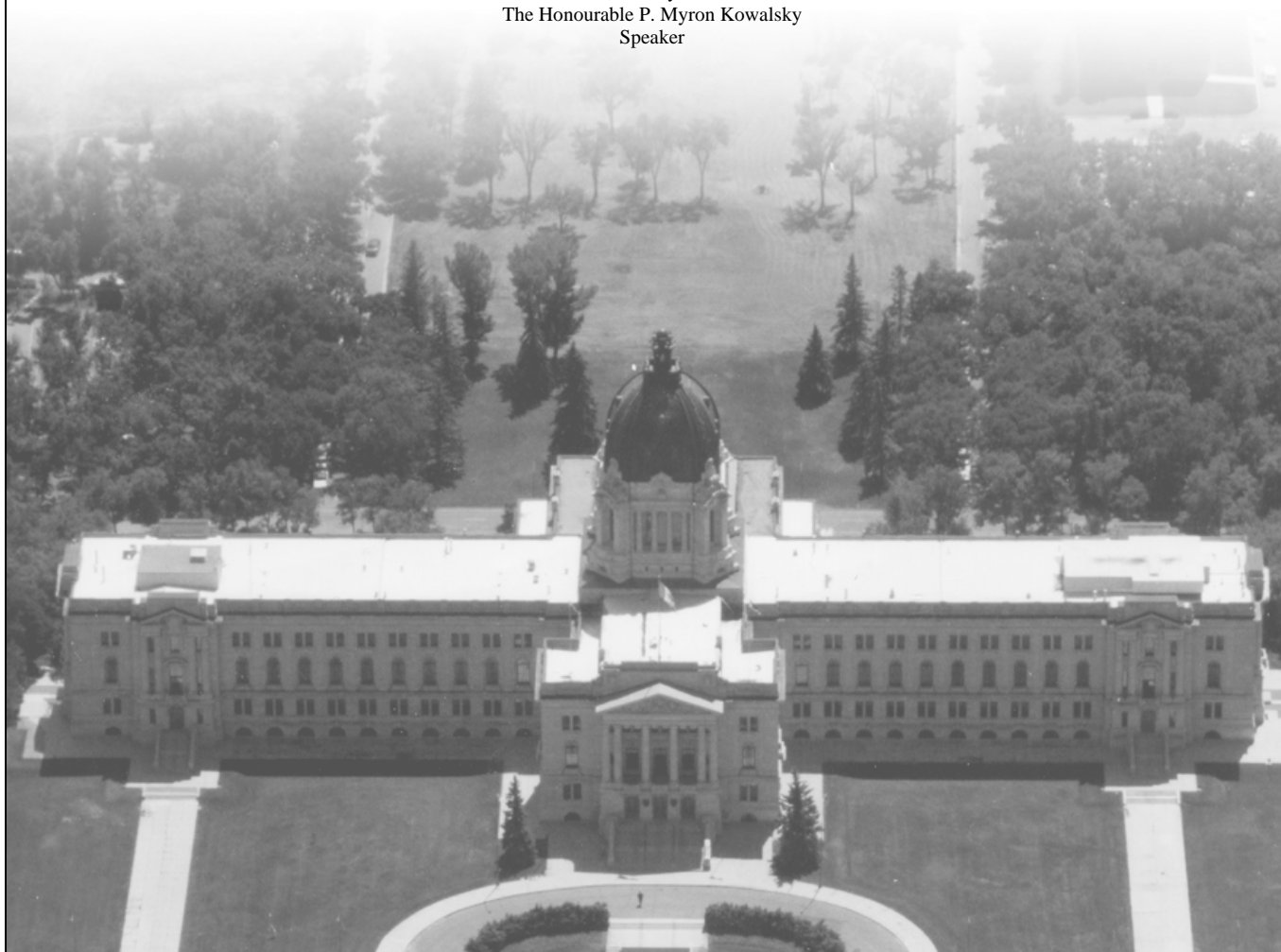
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
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The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Hon. Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Beatty, Hon. Joan	NDP	Cumberland
Belanger, Hon. Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
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Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Hermanson, Elwin	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Higgins, Hon. Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
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Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kerpan, Allan	SP	Carrot River Valley
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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
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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 13:30.]

[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 today to present a petition on behalf of the residents of the community of Grenfell, and it's in regards to a dialysis unit in Broadview. 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 implement a strategy that will see a dialysis unit placed in Broadview Union Hospital.

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

I so present.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, highways continue to be a pressing concern to the people of Cypress Hills constituency, as represented by this petition and the following prayer:

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, this page of petitions is once again signed by residents of the community of Maple Creek. 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 of Saskatchewan. This petition is regarding the drug Avastin and the fact that this government continues to not fund the cancer drug Avastin.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this 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 from Carnduff,

Gainsborough, Oxbow, and Edmonton. I so present.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was asked to present these petitions by a couple at Carnduff who are using 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.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These petitions come from Whitewood; Fort Macleod, Alberta; Regina, Quebec, Wolseley, and Carnduff. I so present.

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise again today on behalf of people who are concerned about Highway No. 310. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this government to repair Highway No. 310 in order to address safety concerns and to facilitate economic growth and tourism in the Foam Lake, Fishing Lake, Kuroki and surrounding areas.

The people that have signed this petition are from Kuroki and Foam Lake and Margo. I so present.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition dealing with a section of Highway 22 between Junction 6 and Junction 20, and I present the petition on behalf of citizens who are very upset with this government's move to turn a portion of that highway back to gravel. 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 it can return to being a safe and economical route for Earl Grey area families and businesses.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Earl Grey, Southey, Raymore, and Duval. I so present.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased today to present petitions on behalf of citizens who are

concerned about Highway No. 5 — in case anyone forgot while we had our summer recess. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from Colonsay, Saskatoon, Meacham, Humboldt, Bruno, and Lake Lenore. I so present.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have another petition from citizens of Biggar opposed to any reductions of health care services in their town. The prayer reads:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens of Biggar, Kenaston, Saskatoon, Perdue, and Asquith. I so present.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to present a petition on behalf of residents across Saskatchewan that are concerned that Saskatchewan and PEI [Prince Edward Island] are the only provinces that do not have a dedicated children's hospital. 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 in this budget year to build a provincial children's hospital in Saskatoon.

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

The petitioners today live in Erindale, Arbor Creek, and Silverspring areas of northeast Saskatoon. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan, and the 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 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 signatures to this petition are from Saskatoon and Whitewood. I so present.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to rise in the House today to present a petition regarding Highway No. 36, which is in the Coronach area.

Mr. Speaker, I will read from 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 invest the needed money to repair and maintain Highway 36 so it can return to being a safe and economical route for Saskatchewan families and businesses.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by good citizens from the community of Coronach. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I join my colleague in presenting a petition urging the government to repair Highway 36.

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 invest the needed money to repair and maintain Highway 36 so it can return to being a safe and economical route for Saskatchewan families and businesses.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people from the RM [rural municipality] of Hart Butte No. 11, and I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14(7) are hereby read and received:

A petition concerning Bruno access off Highway 5, sessional paper 5;

Department of Highways section shop in Watrous, that's sessional paper 6;

Biggar Hospital and ambulance services, sessional paper 7;

Highway 18, sessional paper 8;

And Estevan Daycare Co-operative, sessional paper no. 9.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 7 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Justice: did the department spend any money to provide offenders released from provincial correction facilities with a pass to a recreational facility in any municipality in the province in the year 2005-2006?

Mr. Speaker, I have a similar question to the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety on that same issue. And I'm happy to present them.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, through you and to you and through you to all members, I'd like to introduce, seated in your gallery, my wife, Amanda, who's here to watch today's proceedings. And I'd ask all members to welcome her today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Recognizing Achievements in the Aboriginal Community

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, today it gives me great pleasure on behalf of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition to congratulate the new chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, Lawrence Joseph; first vice-chief, Morley Watson; second vice-chief, Guy Lonechild; third vice-chief, Glen Pratt; and fourth vice-chief, Lyle Whitefish. These gentlemen have committed themselves to work with their people and the federal and provincial governments to better the lives of Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan.

We know that our provincial government must commit itself to working side by side with these leaders to co-operate on solutions to ensure that Aboriginal people enjoy a quality of life comparable to the rest of Canadian society.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to congratulate Derrick Big Eagle, president of Eagle Drilling Services Ltd. of Carlyle, and his partner and company Chair, Rob MacCuish, on their oil well company being chosen at the ABEX [Achievement in Business Excellence] Awards as Saskatchewan's Business of the Year in 2006.

These men's dream of owning a business and employing as many First Nations people as possible, as well as being a positive role model for Aboriginal entrepreneurs, has been recognized in the very short time frame of their company's life, 22 months. They are an inspiration to all people of

Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, for Saskatchewan to fully reach its potential there must be a commitment between all elected leaders to pursue the rights and quality-of-life issues that are currently hindering our progress. There must be an equal partnership with our Aboriginal counterparts to ensure economic opportunities and responsibilities for all. We have the powers to make dreams come true just as Derrick Big Eagle and Rob MacCuish. Let's use that power.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

2006 Achievement in Business Excellence Awards

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past Saturday evening, the Minister of Industry and Resources and I attended the 2006 Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce ABEX Awards. And I just want to take this opportunity to congratulate all the finalists and winners.

The ABEX awards recognize outstanding achievements in the Saskatchewan business community and reflect the diverse nature and spirit of innovation of Saskatchewan business.

Mr. Speaker, the winner of the TIA [Technology-in-Action] New Saskatchewan Product Award is Ground Effects Environmental Services of Regina; the Canadian Bankers Association Award for Community Involvement to the Bank of Montreal; the Job Creation Award, Doepker Industries of Anaheim; marketing, Regina's Partners in Motion; the Service Industry Award to Express Air of Saskatoon; the Investment Saskatchewan Award for Investment to Borderline Feeders of Ceylon. Ozonators Industry of Regina is winner of the Physical Environment Award; the STEP [Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership] Award for Exports went to Stewart Steel of Weyburn; the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Award for Business Leader of the Year to Shaun Semple of Brandt Tractor; the SaskWater Award winner for Young Entrepreneur of the Year is Shannon Sharpe of Curves Regina; and, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Industry and Resources Award for New Venture and the Saskatchewan Business of the Year Award went to Eagle Drilling Services of Carlyle.

Mr. Speaker, PCL Construction Management was inducted into the Saskatchewan Business Hall of Fame.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in recognizing the impressive accomplishments of the 2006 ABEX award nominees and winners. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Saskatoon Business Leader Retires

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, this past weekend Saskatoon business leader Stu Irvine celebrated his retirement

after 41 years at Mitchell's Gourmet Foods, the company formerly known as Intercontinental Packers.

Born and educated in Watrous, Stu started up as a plant labourer at Intercon in 1965. Working his way up, Stu was promoted to foreman, divisional superintendent of the processing area, plant superintendent, plant manager, and then vice-president of manufacturing operations. The board of directors wisely appointed this astute, visionary leader as president and chief operating officer in November of 1998.

Mitchell's Gourmet Foods was subsequently purchased by Schneider Foods, then Maple Leaf Foods purchased Schneider's operations in 2003. And Stu became vice-president, manufacturing for the western region overseeing the Saskatoon, North Battleford, and Surrey, British Columbia plants.

[13:45]

Stu Irvine's accomplishments are many. His commitment to the community is exemplary. He is one of the founding members of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Corporate Circle. Through this program, Stu has created an atmosphere of employment opportunity for First Nations people at Mitchell's.

Stu is Vice-Chair of the board of the Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority. He's also a member of the board of directors of Saskatchewan Blue Cross. Stu was recognized as one of Saskatchewan's men of influence by *Saskatchewan Business Magazine* in 2004.

Stu is married to Roxanne and will enjoy indulging in his hobbies of salmon fishing, downhill skiing, snowmobiling, and golfing in this new phase of life.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and all members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating Mr. Stu Irvine on his contribution to the Saskatchewan economy and his well-deserved retirement.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Aboriginal Women: The Journey Forward

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, October is Women's History Month. This year's theme, Aboriginal Women: The Journey Forward, is a welcome acknowledgement of the important role that Canada's First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women have played in our country's history. The contributions of women in general and Aboriginal women specifically have frequently been overlooked in celebrating the strength and accomplishments of our past.

Today in symbolic recognition of the contributions of all Aboriginal women, I want to profile six currently helping our province and Aboriginal people make the journey forward.

Ava Bear, a former council member for the Muskoday First Nation, who just recently completed a Bachelor of Social Work at the University of Saskatchewan. Bev Cardinal, a Métis woman who works right here in the legislature building as

assistant cabinet secretary. Cecile Asham, a Pasqua First Nations elder and pipe carrier and recipient of the Saskatchewan Centennial Medal.

Monica Goulet, a Métis woman who is currently on leave from her position as the cultural diversity coordinator for the city of Saskatoon to pursue a master's degree at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan]. Leah Dorian, a talented Métis teacher, painter, filmmaker, and writer in Prince Albert. And Falynn Baptiste, a young woman from Red Pheasant First Nations who is currently completing an Education degree while at the same time making a name for herself singing traditional hymns in Cree.

Mr. Speaker, these women provide a standard of excellence that future generations can strive to meet. I ask all members to join me in recognizing these special women and their contributions that they make to their families, their communities, and to our province as a whole. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Panther Industries Nominated for Award

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, this past weekend the annual ABEX Awards were held in Regina. Panther Industries of Davidson was in attendance and while they did not win in the category they were nominated in, they were very honoured to have been in the running for the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership Award for Exports.

Panther Industries is a growing and an innovative company located in the town of Davidson. They've been operating for over 25 years and become a major distributor for the oil and gas industry. Under the expert leadership of President Jack Schneider, they handle over 90,000 tonnes of product yearly. A major portion of the products they handle is potash, which is packaged and shipped to other countries — one of which is Cuba where it is used for the company's oil rigs and for agriculture.

The company has also developed a market exporting water softener to the US [United States]. The plant also packages, among many other chemicals, also potassium chloride which is loaded on to approximately 28 trucks each day for transport to the US. Assistant manager Clayton Schneider attributes much of Panther's success to its 48 employees who work various shifts to ensure that the plant operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The company has provided stable employment for the area, for Davidson and the area, with many new families moving into the community.

Please join me in offering congratulations to Panther Industries at Davidson for ABEX nomination.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Review of Headlines

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Wednesday, October 18, the Leader of the Opposition was on CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] Radio and he said the following. I quote:

I want to read the headlines about Saskatchewan's population growing again. I want to hear and see the media reports about businesses being built in our province.

Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition missed the headlines in *The StarPhoenix* in the month of October. I'll read a few of them in an attempt to jog his memory. On October 6, headline, "Unemployment rate down." On October 8, headline, "Business expects sales to increase." On October 12, headline, "Economic outlook optimistic for small business sector." On October 14, headline, "Sask to post 3.8 per cent economic growth."

I understand the Leader of the Opposition is a busy fellow and so he must have missed all the headlines from the *Leader-Post* in Regina, as well, in the month of October. So to help him catch up on his reading, here's a few more good news stories. On October 4, headline, "Sask farm land values rise." On October 7, headline, "Job growth resumed in September." On October 13, headline, "We're a lot better off than most of our neighbours."

If I didn't know better, Mr. Speaker, I would swear the Leader of the Opposition missed these stories on purpose. But I'm sure that's not the case, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition just has trouble reading. It's too bad his federal cousins have made all those cuts to the federal literacy programs.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Retaining Power

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Friday members of the opposition were subjected to a lengthy lecture from the principal. The Premier accused us of engaging in political diatribes. The member for Athabasca made the utterly false and preposterous suggestion that the primary focus of the opposition was to seek power. Mr. Speaker, the sheer hypocrisy did not go unnoticed. Here's what a prominent columnist had to say on Saturday. I quote:

[The government] could always spend the money on debt reduction and health care, [but] that really doesn't buy anyone any . . . votes. (Calvert was brutally honest . . . when he said politics always comes into play in such decisions.)

There you have it, Mr. Speaker. There in stark relief is the real motivation behind the Premier's action. Does he care about sick people? No, he cares about votes. Does he care about children at risk? He cares about votes.

The veneer of compassion this government and this Premier

have been so anxious to maintain is crumbling. The government is in a free fall. It's losing popularity. It's desperately trying to stop the inevitable. Instead of focusing on the fundamental problems facing Saskatchewan people, the Premier is looking for distractions that will allow him to stay in office at least until the NDP [New Democratic Party] convention. Mr. Speaker, that's fine. The Premier's motivations are transparent to all. But please do one thing — save the lectures.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Wait Times for Cancer Care

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Friday I informed this Assembly of the death of 57-year-old Emily Morley. Six months ago Emily's family came to their legislature after Emily was told that she would have to wait up to three months for her first visit with an oncologist. Three months, Mr. Speaker — that's three times the national average.

Emily did not want her death to be in vain. She launched a petition demanding this NDP government address the extremely long waits for cancer treatment. Her petition stated, "My life may not be saved, but you might be saving someone else's." Mr. Speaker, six months later, can the Minister of Health tell people of Saskatchewan how long they'll have to wait for a first visit to an oncologist?

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I remind the member opposite and all people in Saskatchewan of the very good and strong words conveyed to the people through the Lieutenant Governor on Thursday last week in the Throne Speech, in which the province has committed its thinking and resources this session to make life better for today's Saskatchewan families and build an even better future here for young people.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite was in his seat, as were almost all members of the Chamber, on Thursday when the Throne Speech was read, and it was clearly indicated that, as the birthplace of medicare, Saskatchewan retains its distinction. It is the only province in Canada that does not charge its people a health care premium and, Mr. Speaker, committed itself — as the second cornerstone of our agenda — to work with health care providers to strengthen the leadership in this province, to reduce wait times, and improve access to services.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, those are idle words to the Morley family who lost their mother because of a lack of oncologists in this province. In April of this year, we learned

that the Saskatoon cancer agency had a shortage of two oncologists. Since then we know that one of the oncologists that was working in Saskatoon has become ill, as well as another oncologist that was working in Regina has since left the province. Mr. Speaker, that leaves this province in a dire need for oncologists. We know that the longer the wait for a first visit to an oncologist and then treatment makes a huge difference to the prognosis of people that are suffering from cancer.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us today how many oncologists are practicing in the Saskatoon area?

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Every person in Saskatchewan is touched when a citizen in our province is faced with a disease like cancer. Mr. Speaker, people all across this province put in a lot of time, effort, fundraising, generosity, etc., to help find cures, provide research. And, Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to working with the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency and with the people of Saskatchewan to improve circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, just this morning as a matter of fact I met with the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency executive director. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that all of the positions in the Saskatoon region have now been recruited. We have a full complement of oncologists now recruited and will be reporting for duty in the Saskatoon region before the end of this year, Mr. Speaker. And secondly, the Regina Health Region has recruited for interviews two representatives and will be concluding those interviews next week.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, we know this NDP government continues to fail cancer patients in Saskatchewan. They are facing three times the average wait for first visit to oncologist. There's a shortage of oncologists in this province.

Now we know this minister has a real problem with setting targets and then meeting them. In the Regina Health District, they set a target. They say how many full-time equivalents we need to supply the service. But Saskatoon hasn't. So he says they've filled some vacancies.

But does that meet the demand for the Saskatoon area? What is the ideal complement which the Saskatoon Health District hasn't set out? What's the ideal complement for oncologists so we start seeing the three times the national average waiting list start to drop?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency has responsibility to ensure that the needs of cancer patients referred to the agency are

responded to and respected. Mr. Speaker, we have provided additional resources to the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency this year, as we did last year, to ensure that they have the capacity to do the work that needs to be done.

We cannot, Mr. Speaker, the opposition cannot question the goodwill, the desire, and the commitment and dedication of the members of the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency in this province, Mr. Speaker. We respect the work that they are doing.

They have concluded, Mr. Speaker, that the full complement of oncologists now to meet the needs out of the Saskatoon Health Region have now been met with their recruitment efforts. The member opposite is critical when there's an oncologist leaving, but when we bring two back, he hasn't got a compliment for anybody, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency does extremely good work being short-staffed as much as it is under this NDP government. Mr. Speaker, when people have to wait three times the national average, it's absolutely unacceptable. And, Mr. Speaker, there have been no improvements. Cases keep coming into our office with people having to wait far too long to receive proper treatment.

Doug Bonderud, who passed away earlier this month, had to wait up to four months to have a second opinion from a different oncologist, Mr. Speaker. That's unacceptable. Another family who doesn't want to go public was saying that their treatments were extremely delayed when the oncologist from Regina left the province, Mr. Speaker.

Can the minister tell me about the task force that was struck to deal with the long waits for cancer treatments, what they have found, and what recommendations were put forward?

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'm glad the member opposite has recognized that the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency has done a tremendous amount of work in this area and in fact did establish a wait times task force with representatives from all disciplines as well as the department with the goal of improving access to all agency services. Mr. Speaker, that task force is doing some incredible work not only within the province but, Mr. Speaker, across Canada.

[14:00]

Just a month ago, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan hosted a conference of all cancer agencies from all provinces right here in the capital city of Regina. What were they talking about, Mr. Speaker? They were talking about the need to improve access to cancer care right across Canada. Who is now the leader of the cancer agencies from across Canada, Mr. Speaker? It's the president of the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, Mr. Speaker, who is now leading the national group on improving access and

reducing wait times. Mr. Speaker, we should be very proud of the people who are working for us.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the Saskatchewan Surgical Care Network website was launched about four years ago, under much fanfare from this government, this is what the government had to say: we are making sure that everybody has the most up-to-date and accurate information possible. Improving communications for the public, health care providers, and the regional health authorities are a critical part of ensuring appropriate access to surgical care.

Four years later, Mr. Speaker, on the Surgical Care Network, there isn't a word about the cancer wait times in this province. For four years this government has promised that they're going to be putting the wait times and the issues around cancer care on their Surgical Care Network. But, Mr. Speaker, they have failed to do that. Once again cancer patients are waiting in this province. When is the minister and this government going to start addressing this issue on their much touted Surgical Care Network?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the member opposite listened carefully through the Throne Speech, but he didn't quite hear the commitment that this government has made to make life better for today's Saskatchewan families, Mr. Speaker. And support for cancer care, Mr. Speaker, is a critical component of all of this.

Mr. Speaker, the wait times initiatives that the cancer care agency . . . were very well reviewed recently by — and we welcomed the information from — the Health Quality Council, Mr. Speaker. In the recommendations, the Health Quality Council indicated that over the last year they've been working closely with a very receptive Saskatchewan Cancer Agency to deal with issues and challenges that we're faced with in the system. Mr. Speaker, the recommendations that have been made by the Health Quality Council are being acted upon by the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. Oncologists are being recruited and put to work. The wait times task force is hard at work, Mr. Speaker, and we've got new hires in the front end, Mr. Speaker, to . . .

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. For seven years, I have sat and listened to this government's throne speeches and the number of promises that have not been kept. The amount of propaganda that is spread through that Throne Speech is

absolutely astonishing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, patients aren't buying the fact that wait times are reducing for cancer care in this province, and neither are we. Mr. Speaker, case after case come before us, talking about the absolute devastating impact it has on people when they're waiting for their first visit to oncologists. He hasn't once stood in his place and said that that three-month wait — three times the national average — is reducing, Mr. Speaker. That's absolutely appalling.

If you can't give patients proper care in this province, if this minister cannot give patients proper care in this province because of a three-month wait for cancer treatment, will he start sending them out of province where they can get treatment?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very proud to stand on the record of this government not only in health care but cancer care, Mr. Speaker. And I'm glad I'm not on the other side where they're running from their record, Mr. Speaker.

On the subject of cancer care, Mr. Speaker, the cancer agency is very committed to the work that it's doing. And with new oncologists in place, with the wait times task force activity taking place, with the responses to the Health Quality Council report and, Mr. Speaker, with additional staff at the front end of the new patient registry office and the cancer care office, Mr. Speaker, we are going to provide better care for Saskatchewan residents. And, Mr. Speaker, we are reducing wait times for cancer care in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Oyate Safe House

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we discovered on Friday that the Minister of Community Resources was briefed about the problems at the Oyate Safe House on February 6 of this year. This was his first full day on the job, Mr. Speaker, so I'm sure it's something he would remember. Yet one month later, he stood outside this Assembly and told reporters, and I quote, "We have no evidence that there were any problems."

Again, Mr. Speaker, I ask the question — and I hope today the minister will answer the question — why did the minister say there was no evidence of any problems when it was obvious to everyone that there were serious problems?

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've got an article here on Wednesday of March 15, 2006, in which there was a specific assault allegation made

against one of the staff. And when this allegation was made, of course we investigated. And what I said on this article, Mr. Speaker, is I said we have no evidence there's been any problems; we have no evidence that they've not responded to the issue. And by they, I'm talking about the Oyate board.

And what did the Sask Party do and that member do just now, Mr. Speaker? They get up again, and they use the same quote that I have here, and they put it all over the advocate's report saying, this is what Minister Belanger said about the overall Oyate House. It's absolutely unbelievable that they would do this, and it's unethical. And once again, Mr. Speaker, they misinterpreted my quote, and they put the quote in the wrong place. And it was very, very deliberate. And, Mr. Speaker, this is what we expect from that party that has a political agenda, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The political agenda would be that if this hadn't have been exposed by CBC and questions asked by the Saskatchewan Party, that facility would still be open today and this minister would have done nothing.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Merriman: — Is the minister aware, and has he reviewed the package of documents prepared by his department in a response to the requests from the Public Accounts Committee?

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, we have been very open to the public, to the media, and also with the Public Accounts Committee. They've got a binder, a fairly thick binder of all the information that we had on Oyate. And I go back again and I stand by my answers, Mr. Speaker, because the answers we gave at that time were correct.

And, Mr. Speaker, what's really important is that my staff, a number of my staff worked very, very hard for the past three weeks putting that binder together to make sure that they're open and that they're accountable. And, Mr. Speaker, we'll continue doing that. But I'd point out to the people of Saskatchewan, we take the issue very seriously. We're going to work very hard. We're going to solve this problem. And what we're not going to do is continue following the political agenda of the opposition because we have work to do and we intend to get that work done.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, this government, this minister has known since July 2003 regarding the issues around Oyate. And now he's standing, saying that we're making political hay

of it. He should have done something long before these questions came to the House.

Is the minister aware that as of March 7, 2004, briefing note included in its package his department delivered on Friday?

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, we got some really good advice from the advocate, from the auditor, and from many groups out there that are really concerned about children involved in the sex trade — very good advice. And they gave us a really good road map as well, Mr. Speaker. We intend to follow that road map.

And again I point out to the people of Saskatchewan, we're going to work very hard. We're going to solve this problem because this government is committed to solving this problem.

What we're not going to do, Mr. Speaker, is we're not going to waste a lot of time following that political agenda because, as I mentioned time and time again to the people of Saskatchewan, we want to fix this problem. And unfortunately, what we have here is we've got to play a political game that those guys want to play over there, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I'll point out again that as far as I'm concerned, there's a good road map that we have in front of us. We intend to follow the advice and the recommendation of both the auditor and the advocate. I'd much rather take that advice, Mr. Speaker, as opposed to that advice from over there.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well if the political agenda of the Saskatchewan Party is to help children at risk, then I'm guilty and I'm sorry for it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Merriman: — And I will continue to ask the questions, and I will continue to get to the bottom until we have this issue resolved. The minister talks about the report from the advocate and from the auditor. Those reports would never have happened if it hadn't have been for the CBC report.

Can the minister explain to this Assembly why an event marking the official opening of the safe house was cancelled?

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, I believe it was the members on the committee from this side of the House that also agreed it was really important to bring the advocate and the auditor into the picture. It was this government that led, Mr. Speaker, and those people followed.

What's really important here, Mr. Speaker, as I've said time and

time again, we've asked the people of Saskatchewan to give us the opportunity to solve the problems when it comes to children involved in the sex trade. We've always asked that. And, Mr. Speaker, the problem we have here is that we've got to spend many, many hours researching stuff and giving that party opposite a lot of information. It takes a lot of work.

And when I look across the way, Mr. Speaker, I do not see one person out there that has a social degree, not one social worker across the way. There are people that work with these children — high risk children — and these are qualified people that have worked many, many years in this field. Mr. Speaker, let them do their work. Park the politics. Park your crocodile tears, and let us go to work. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, when he asks why we didn't know about it, I mean they've known since July 2003. Why wasn't there an auditor's report in the fall of that year? Why wasn't there a Children's Advocate report in the fall of that year?

Mr. Speaker, as the minister didn't ask the question, I'll refresh the minister's memory. The document provided to the Public Accounts Committee states and I quote:

The Regina safe house has experienced some internal growing pains and detracting events. The former minister Mr. Hagel has planned to participate with the vice-chief of the FSIN in a joint announcement official opening of the Regina safe house.

This was to have occurred at the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] legislative assembly in Saskatoon in July 2003. Unfortunately at the time, a senior person who has been involved in the development of the safe house proposal was arrested for sexual involvement with a minor. The joint announcement was cancelled.

Mr. Speaker, shouldn't that have been a clue to the government that there was something very wrong?

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned that particular case. I don't have any information on that case, and certainly I'd be pleased to hear on that from that member.

What's really important overall, Mr. Speaker, is that we tried and will continue trying to find some solutions for these children. We'll continue trying, Mr. Speaker. And what I pointed out earlier, what I pointed out earlier that's really, really important to the people of Saskatchewan is that we want to fix this problem. We want to work very hard to find some solutions to really support these children and get these children into a better lifestyle.

And what's really important is that at the end of the day that

message has to be told over and over and over again. And I'll tell the people of Saskatchewan this: we take that role very seriously. We're going to do something about it. But in the meantime, we have to go through some political games with the opposition, and we'll go through them. But we also have to do, Mr. Speaker, is make sure we work very hard, and that's exactly what my staff intend to do.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, it may be what his staff intends to do, but I want to know what he intends to do.

Mr. Speaker, he never answered the question. He said he hasn't seen the document. It was in a document provided to me by his department.

Mr. Speaker, when he says that we're just bringing these things up and we don't know about them, I've put two personal calls into his office with my home cell number on another issue that he doesn't return. So why is it that all of a sudden when we bring it up, we're making political hay?

Mr. Speaker, how is this matter that I just discussed resolved? And did an arrest occur or criminal charges from that event? Thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, I'll point out again on that particular incident, certainly if there's information that my department has on that particular incident, I'll certainly look into that, and I'll make sure that we find out exactly how that issue was resolved.

And I'll point out, yes, the member did call my office, but the member was told that I was away on holidays and that my staff offered to help him. And he turned down that offer for help. He said no. He said that's fine. And they offered him twice to help him, and twice he said, no. So, Mr. Speaker, what's really, really important here is you want to work to solve the problem; that's what you want to do. But in the meantime we say, okay let's work, and all of a sudden he gets a political agenda going.

Mr. Speaker, I'll point out again, we're going to follow the recommendations of the advocate and the auditor. We're going to put a good blueprint and a good plan in for the children, and we're going to work very hard. We want to fix this, and we intend to fix it, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, the questions I'm asking were in the briefing notes provided by his department that I took the

time on the weekend to review. I seem to have the questions; I would assume he would have some answers.

Mr. Speaker, clearly the incident points to serious problems with the people running the safe house, and this is now coming to light because the minister was forced to answer questions.

Mr. Speaker, why is the department still continuing with that same agency? Why isn't it out trying to contact or send out another RFP [request for proposal] to see if there are other people qualified in the region to provide those services?

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, what we pointed out is that — and we told this to the media and we told this to as many people that would listen to us — we said that Oyate would not get their funding unless and until the Children's Advocate recommendation and the auditor's plan was followed. We specifically said that, so I'll say it again really loud and clear for that member to hear. We are not going to reopen Oyate nor fund Oyate until and unless all the recommendations of both the advocate and the auditor are fulfilled. If they are not fulfilled, they will not be funded, and that's the bottom line.

And the second thing, the second thing that is really important, Mr. Speaker, is we're going to continue working with professional people to bring as many solutions to these children as possible. That work has begun, and it will not stop, Mr. Speaker. We have a plan. We have some good advice from the advocate and the auditor; that's what we intend to listen to, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, in the three years it was there, according to their own documentations, they never had one person on staff that was qualified and had a degree and the ability to do it. So what, all of a sudden, is going to change when there are maybe other organizations that could meet this specific need to the marketplace today . . . not until the auditor's and the advocate's report is done.

On Friday the Minister of Community Resources said the opposition wants to know what the minister knew about the Oyate Safe House and when we knew it. Well that's true. The minister also said he welcomes scrutiny, but I'm not sure about that. Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us then why he refuses to appear before the Public Accounts Committee and answer these important questions in the safety of children in this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, what's really important, as I'll say again, is that we want to fix this problem. We want to work with the children. When we talk about trying to find some

solutions, this government followed the all-party committee's recommendation on how to resolve this whole issue of children involved in the sex trade. There's an all-party committee put forward a lot of recommendations, and we followed those recommendations, Mr. Speaker. The most important thing is that we're trying to find some solution for these children now. And we have been working at this now for three years, and we're going to continue working to make sure that there are solutions and opportunities despite the political games from across the way, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

La Ronge and Area to get Natural Gas Services

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am obviously very pleased again today to be able to stand in the House to advise all members of some very good news for the province of Saskatchewan. I am particularly . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. I would invite the Minister of Finance to start again.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to rise in the House today to advise members of more good news for Saskatchewan families.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — This morning I was joined by the Minister of Northern Affairs, the member for Cumberland, in La Ronge, and we announced that there would be a \$14 million investment from the Government of Saskatchewan to help allow SaskEnergy to bring natural gas services to the businesses and residents of that community.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, our government is fulfilling a commitment made by the Premier to bring the economic and environmental benefits of natural gas to La Ronge, to Air Ronge, the Lac la Ronge First Nation, and Weyakwin. The introduction of natural gas will reduce energy costs, allowing businesses to diversify and to expand in the area. This in turn will lead to increased employment opportunities for northerners.

The total capital cost to extend SaskEnergy's network to La Ronge is \$20.1 million. The Government of Saskatchewan is contributing \$7 million in grant. Members of the Assembly will be asked to support this in supplementary estimates later this session. Additionally there will be a \$7 million investment from SaskEnergy. The remaining \$6.1 million will come as a result of residential and customer contributions. This investment overall allows SaskEnergy to make natural gas services that are of course affordable, also make them available to these communities.

Pending the results of customer interest — and I can say from

having met with the gas committee this morning that there is a strong support in these communities for this expansion — I can assure the members that construction of this natural gas pipeline from Montreal Lake to La Ronge should be complete by spring of 2008.

Mr. Speaker, once again by working together with Saskatchewan people, with northerners, our NDP government is making life better for Saskatchewan families and is ensuring that they experience the real benefits of a strong and growing economy. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the minister for sending me a ministerial statement to me in advance to take a look at. And I want to congratulate him on good news. It is good news. It's a great announcement, and I think it's extremely important to La Ronge and area.

La Ronge is the gateway to the North and so that this is a great announcement for that area. We recognize the incredible potential for northern Saskatchewan, and we know that infrastructure is a very, very important component to the potential. And so it's important for the province. It's important for the people in the North. And so it's a great announcement.

Infrastructure, we believe, is a government responsibility. Infrastructure for economic development, the Saskatchewan Party has always said, is a government responsibility. And as such we welcome this announcement.

I also would like to end with applauding the people in La Ronge for pushing for this. I know what it's like to be in a community where you push for a project and the government continuously announce it and announce it and announce it and announce it, and you wait and wait and wait. And you wonder if it's ever going to happen. So I know the people in La Ronge, the leaders in La Ronge have been asking for this for a number of years. The governments have promised it a number of times. So good work to the people of La Ronge, good work to the leaders in that area — I applaud the work that they've done and thank the government for this announcement.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order please.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The Speaker: — Order please. Order. Before orders of the day, on a point of order. There's been a long-standing practice of this Assembly that we not invoke the Lieutenant Governor into a debate. And I would ask the Minister of Health to take a look at his first response and make note of that.

Ruling on Point of Privilege

The Speaker: — Now I want to speak to the point of privilege that was raised last week. On Friday, October 27, the

Opposition House Leader raised a question of privilege concerning the disclosure by the Minister of Highways and Transportation during a media interview of an impending reduction in the provincial sales tax. I thank the member for his comments and for the written correspondence he provided to me later that afternoon, and I also thank the Government House Leader for his intervention.

The circumstance that gave rise to the question of privilege was an interview given by the Minister of Highways and Transportation to a radio station on the morning of October 27. During the interview the minister revealed that the provincial sales tax would be reduced. This interview was broadcast on the 27th prior to the Minister of Finance's announcement of the tax reduction in this Assembly later that same morning.

It is the position of the Opposition House Leader that the disclosure of a tax measure outside this Assembly violates a parliamentary principle that they be first introduced in the Assembly and further, that the violation of this principle constituted a contempt against the privileges of this Assembly.

In his rebuttal the Government House Leader asserted that the interview had been subject to an embargo agreement that would in the normal course of such arrangements have prevented the premature disclosure of the tax cut.

In determining whether a contempt against the privilege of the Assembly occurred, one must assess whether the actions of the Minister of Highways and Transportation disregarded, disrespected, or clearly challenged the authority and dignity of this House or whether they improperly interfered or impeded the parliamentary work of members.

The Opposition House Leader rested his case upon the March 19, 2001 ruling of the House of Commons. In that ruling Speaker Milliken found that the denial of members or their staff to an embargoed technical briefing for media on a Bill constituted a prima facie contempt of parliament. The House Leader's assertion that the principle outlined in this ruling is not limited to cases involving legislation but would be equally applicable to technical briefings on budgetary or taxation measures is well taken.

The impact of the Milliken ruling on the practices of this Assembly was considered in a ruling I delivered on April 11 of the year 2005. In that case, a prima facie breach of privilege was found when opposition members and their staff were denied access to a technical briefing on a Crown corporation annual report given for the media. Subsequently when the Standing Committee on Privileges was unable to come to a decision on how to resolve the matter, this Assembly adopted a motion directing that all technical briefings and news conferences that dealt with matters to be considered by the Assembly were to be made available to all members and their staff in advance of or concurrently with any media briefings. It is the terms of this motion that must now guide the consideration of privilege matters in this Assembly.

The challenges that this order creates in the present circumstances is the stipulation that its terms be directed to government officials and Crown corporations and that it encompassed technical briefings and news conferences. In the

absence of clear direction otherwise, I hesitate to interpret the order to include members themselves.

In the second instance, I would not characterize the communication of the Minister of Highways and Transportation as being a technical briefing or news conference, given that the scope of the interview was not known, that it involved only one media outlet, and that it addressed a matter, namely tax measures, outside his portfolio.

A further consideration in my decision is whether members were impeded from carrying out their duties. On many occasions I and my predecessors have underscored the importance of ensuring that nothing is done that disadvantages members from carrying out their parliamentary functions. That's the ruling of April 11, 2005.

The timely provision of information is but one facet of this principle. Indeed the Minister of Finance adhered to this principle by announcing the tax reduction in this Assembly as soon as the rules permitted — during ministerial statements — and by providing a copy of the statement to the opposition at the time.

On the basis of the current situation, I do not find that the premature disclosure was significant enough to impede members in their work. I also note that no one could have benefited in this specific instance from the early disclosure.

Accordingly I find that the actions of the Minister of Highways and Transportations do not technically meet the threshold required to establish a prima facie breach of privilege.

[14:30]

However I feel strongly that the granting of an embargoed interview could violate the spirit of the Assembly's 2005 motion. The motion was intended to protect parliament's pre-eminent role in the conduct of legislative matters by ensuring that it was informed first of significant initiatives. It is now apparent those provisions do not sufficiently clarify the practice governing the advance release of information.

For this reason, I strongly recommend this Assembly address this issue either by motion or by referral to the Standing Committee on Privileges to review and make recommendations on the advance release of information, the means by which it may take place, and the sources from which it may come. There ends my statement.

Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

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

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested a leave to advance a motion. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

MOTIONS

Implementation of Procedural Rules

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a brief comment and then introduce a motion, seconded by the House Leader from the opposition, Mr. Speaker, that follows up the adoption on Friday of rules guiding the procedures of the House.

We wanted to be realistic, Mr. Speaker, about the ability of the business of the legislature to be conducted in the spirit of the rules, also in the context of the ability of the administration in support of government to be able to ready the preparation of legislation such that it can be properly considered in the House.

And it has been recognized in discussions that we've had, Mr. Speaker, that what we're doing is shifting the emphasis on the introduction of important Bills to the fall session. I want to emphasize as well this does not mean that legislation cannot be introduced in the spring, but — in the spring sitting — but that in order to become a specified Bill that Bill must be introduced in the fall in order to acquire that kind of a characteristic and therefore have the privileges and obligations that are attached to it by the end of the session.

We're recognizing, Mr. Speaker, that the administration did not have the opportunity, sufficiently in advance of the adoption of the rules, in order to prepare all of what the government would consider to be its more significant legislation in time for introduction in the fall session.

And so accordingly, Mr. Speaker, in discussion we've come to a conclusion that it does make sense for the orderly conduct of business that for this session alone — and therefore the creation of a sessional order — it does make sense to permit the government to introduce up to three additional Bills which can be designated as specified Bills by March 22 or earlier.

And further, that in order to accommodate the requirements of specified Bills, if necessary, that either the Government or the Opposition House Leader would have the ability to extend the sitting beyond the standard completion date by up to seven additional sitting days in order to accommodate that.

So that's what this is intended to achieve and with that in mind then, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Opposition House Leader:

That the modifications and amendments to the rules and practices of the Legislative Assembly, as specified by the seventh report of the Standing Committee on House Services, be adopted and brought into force effective immediately, notwithstanding that the rules and procedures for the parliamentary calendar shall be varied on an interim basis for the duration of the third session of the twenty-fifth legislature as follows:

1. The Government House Leader may designate, on or before the sitting of the Assembly on March 22, 2007, the spring period of the parliamentary calendar, as many as three additional government Bills to be considered as specified Bills.

2. The additional specified Bills shall be designated orally in the Assembly by the Government House Leader or the minister of the Crown responsible for the Bill immediately upon the introduction and first reading of the said Bill.

3. If additional specified Bills are introduced on or before March 22, 2007, the completion date of the spring period of the parliamentary calendar may be postponed up to seven additional sitting days by order of either the Government House Leader or the Opposition House Leader.

4. An order to postpone the completion date shall be made orally on orders of the day on or before the sitting of the Assembly on May 3, 2007.

5. If there are two orders to postpone the completion day, the order with the greatest number of sitting days shall be observed.

6. The deadline for the passage of business under the rules for the parliamentary calendar shall be applied in accordance with the revised completion day.

7. The procedures outlined in this sessional order shall expire upon the adjournment of the Assembly on the completion day of the third session of the twenty-fifth legislature.

And further, Mr. Speaker:

That upon adoption of this motion, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly shall ensure the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan* are revised, printed, and republished in English and French as expeditiously as possible.

I so move, seconded by the House Leader of the opposition.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Moose Jaw North, the Government House Leader, seconded by the member from Melfort, the Opposition House Leader, that the rules and procedures for the parliamentary calendar should be varied on the interim basis with the seven points. Will the members take it as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Are there any further speakers to the motion, or is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Question has been called. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Mr. Trew.]

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for your ongoing service to this House. I particularly wish to acknowledge your patience and good judgment in fulfilling your duties as Speaker. I know first-hand that, while it's rewarding, it's not always easy to be a Speaker in this very lively and often very contentious Assembly.

And through you to our Clerk at the Table, Gwenn Ronyk, congratulations on your retirement at the end of this year. You have served this Assembly nobly for many years.

I also want to congratulate my esteemed colleague, the member for Regina Coronation Park, on his very eloquent remarks in moving the Speech from the Throne. I'm very pleased to have the privilege of seconding the motion he has presented. And I couldn't agree more with the sentiments he expressed regarding the pride that we on this side of the Assembly feel to be a part of Saskatchewan's social democratic tradition.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my caucus colleagues for their friendship and support, and I thank the Premier for his leadership and for providing me opportunity to play this special role in the Throne Speech debate.

I also want to thank my constituency executive who keep me energized and focused. Thank you to Tammy Watt who runs my constituency office and who serves the people of Regina Wascana Plains right along with me.

I'm ever grateful for the loving support of my family who stand behind me and support me in my energetic lifestyle. They have given much to allow me to serve in the Assembly. They know, though, the values and principles I fought for and have defended over the last 21 years of elected office.

For those rewarding years, I particularly thank today's families in Wascana Plains. They span a wide range of economic circumstance, urban and rural geography, and demographics — ever challenging me to make choices to benefit all people in our great province.

Mr. Speaker, as New Democrats we are inheritors of a progressive philosophy and political tradition that is characterized by clear vision, practical thinking, and innovative ideas. Ours is a uniquely Saskatchewan tradition, firmly rooted in Saskatchewan values and developed in direct response to Saskatchewan's needs. And above all, as New Democrats we are the inheritors of a forward-looking political tradition which believes unequivocally that good society and a good government works for the benefit of all of its citizens, not just a privileged few.

The search for Saskatchewan solutions to Saskatchewan problems gave rise to the CCF [Canadian Commonwealth Federation] and later the NDP and a philosophy and ideology that is Saskatchewan's own, which is half of the explanation for why social democrats have been in government in this province for 46 of the last 62 years.

The other half of the explanation is this. Unlike the members opposite, our ideology and our solutions are practical, and our solutions work. In search for practical solutions, the Premier approached me three and a half years ago to engage with the voluntary sector and work collaboratively to establish a Saskatchewan context for the Canadian volunteerism initiative. During the International Year of the Volunteer, Ed Broadbent was commissioned to do a report on volunteerism in Canada, and in that report he identified that a healthy voluntary sector is extremely important to a civil society and is also an economic engine to the economy.

Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan that is particularly true. Almost 8,000 organizations in Saskatchewan see volunteers donate 80.6 million hours, the equivalent of almost 42,000 jobs. They employ 13 per cent of the labour force and have revenues of nearly \$3.7 billion.

Mr. Speaker, in April 2002 in recognition of this valuable work undertaken by the voluntary sector across the province, the Premier's Voluntary Sector Initiative, or PVSI, was introduced. This recognition that solutions and challenges are best considered and tackled collaboratively through broad, shared ownership have been the defining feature of the PVSI.

Early on, a steering committee was established comprised of representatives from a range of voluntary sector organizations and a number of provincial government departments to direct the work and activities of the Premier's Voluntary Sector Initiative. And in the winter of 2002, the steering committee presented the Premier with a document that outlined a framework including principles and values for the continuing partnership between government and Saskatchewan's voluntary sector, as well as recommendations to guide succeeding phases of the initiative.

Since that time, the steering committee has been working toward building a formal relationship between the public sector and the voluntary sector, building capacity within Saskatchewan's voluntary sector — and this has been done in co-operation with the Canadian Volunteerism Initiative — and building awareness of the value of the voluntary sector and volunteers to our society, and of the ways in which voluntary sector organizations structure themselves and of the structure of the relationship between the public sector and the voluntary sectors.

Mr. Speaker, community-based and voluntary organizations are the backbone of the high quality of life Saskatchewan families enjoy. Saskatchewan people volunteer more than any other jurisdiction in Canada, and that's by no accident. Through the voluntary sector initiative, we have worked hard to achieve and maintain that distinction, and we're going to continue working hard to strengthen our position as a national leader in voluntary participation. And, Mr. Speaker, not only are we going to continue to support the Premier's Voluntary Sector Initiative;

we anticipate moving forward to forge a new structure that will strengthen the relationship and address issues important to both sectors.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I can't help but notice a deafening silence from the members opposite on the subject of the federal Conservative cuts, cuts that they must know adversely affect Saskatchewan people.

You know, Mr. Speaker, whether we're talking about cuts to volunteerism, literacy, early learning and child care, equalization, or the Canadian Wheat Board, the party opposite is lining up with the Harper Tories. The Saskatchewan Party position on these federal cuts is another clear indicator that they're far more interested in serving their right-wing ideology than they are in serving Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, we live in a global society where instant real-time communication is essential to our daily lives. Citizens are demanding that their governments keep pace with this rapidly expanding technology, and we need to stay in touch with the pulse of what our constituents are saying. Therefore the Premier has also appointed me the Legislative Secretary of integrated citizen service delivery or crossing boundaries to help the province and its citizens move effortlessly into the information age and find new and innovative ways for citizens to interact with government in a more timely and efficient manner. This is about promoting greater awareness of improved government services to the general public and will involve ongoing collaboration and dialogue between elected officials and public servants across Canada as well as the voluntary sector.

[14:45]

Mr. Speaker, most people shouldn't have to care which level of government provides which service. Rather than second-guess whether a service is provided municipally, provincially, or federally, citizens simply want this service to be provided from the government in a quick and efficient manner.

BizPal, a joint federal-provincial service providing online access to business permits and licences, is currently available to citizens living in the Saskatoon area and is one example of this approach. Another is ExpressAddress that allows residents to change their address once and is automatically updated with a number of cities, Crowns, and departments.

We believe the time is right for the province to formally recognize the important role of expanding and increasing awareness of citizen-centred services. We also believe it's extremely important and tremendous benefit to Saskatchewan people, and so I'm very pleased to take on this additional responsibility. Mr. Speaker, I want to go on record with the member from Coronation Park when he says that we are proud to be a part of Saskatchewan's social democratic tradition and to have the achievements of Premier Douglas, Lloyd, Blakeney, Romanow, and of course the current Premier, for inspiration and to build upon.

In a similar fashion to the Premier's Voluntary Sector Initiative and the citizen-centred services, the things we and the people of this province have accomplished together makes for a list of Saskatchewan firsts, a list that is long as it is impressive —

medicare, a Bill of rights, public auto insurance, minimum wage, rural electrification, The Trade Union Act, paid vacation, a 40-hour work week, the idea of statutory holiday, the provincial arts board, and Saskatchewan's Crown corporations just to name a few.

So now when I brag about these accomplishments, I know the members opposite won't consider this to be bragging because by their rhetoric in this Assembly, it's clear they don't consider any of these things I've just mentioned to be of value. But I do and Saskatchewan people do, and I'll continue to talk about Saskatchewan and what it has achieved to anyone and everyone who is willing to listen. And this year I'm going to join my colleague from Rosemont and be proud out loud.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — So while it's not in all of our natures to brag about what's been achieved for the benefit of Saskatchewan people and Saskatchewan families, we all do need to instill pride in what sets us apart.

Mr. Speaker, in this Throne Speech we're building on the foundations that have been laid over the last 16 years and on all the work that has been done since the early '90s to restore the province's finances and credit rating, and the last five years to establish a strong economic base.

Saskatchewan people will remember the last time the Leader of the Opposition was in government, when his party nearly bankrupted this province, which I assume why is . . . he could easily adopt the tune called "Don't Look Back" as his theme song. He's saying to Saskatchewan people, don't look back at my long history and sketchy activities as a Devine Conservative. Don't look back at my party's ideology to create extreme right wing positions. Don't look back at the Saskatchewan Party posturing and flip-flopping. Don't look back at who we really are. Look at who we are pretending to be now.

So do they actually believe that pulling the old switcheroo with a name change has fooled anyone? And even if we were willing to give them the benefit of the doubt, you know we could just suspend our disbelief and give them credit for being anything other than sad, old Tories. Well their record and their friends speak for themselves.

Mr. Speaker, if we're looking for a party that champions old ideas and an outdated Tory philosophy, we just need to look at the members opposite. And we remember. But we must also remember this province has come a long way in the last 15 years. Now we see 13 consecutive balanced budgets, 14 credit upgrades, and significant reduction in the old Tory debt.

In the last six years, we put in place measures to see record job numbers and economic growth. Moving back to old, failed Tory ideas the Saskatchewan Party's adopted would be a mistake for Saskatchewan. That's why they're saying don't look back, in the hope that people won't remember where they come from.

For our part, we're going to continue to move ahead. Last year we put before the people an inspired and bold vision for the future. A vision of a province where no one is left behind on the

road to opportunity; a province of healthy, diverse, and growing communities; and a province whose economy is both green and prosperous. I'm pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, there's already been much progress toward this vision. And with this Throne Speech we're accelerating our efforts, focusing on making life even better for today's Saskatchewan families, and building an even better future for young people right here at home. We've laid a solid foundation on which to build, Mr. Speaker, and on that foundation we're going to place these four cornerstones.

Foundation laid, cornerstone one. We're making Saskatchewan the best place for young people to live, work, and build strong futures.

As a mother of two young adults who've chosen to stay in Saskatchewan and that see many of their friends moving back, it's important for me that we are committed to addressing the changing needs of the labour market in helping young people create their futures right here at home.

We're expanding training opportunities to meet market demands. We're unveiling a new partnership between government, business, labour, and our training institutions to help meet Saskatchewan's evolving labour market needs. And we're going to bring education closer to students, better linking training with learners, job seekers, and employers, and we're going to link better apprenticeship and trades. I'm pleased we're continuing the freeze on university tuition.

The youth summit will give strong voice to youth and to building a bright future for young people here in this great province.

Mr. Speaker, I'm particularly interested in the review of access to post-secondary education, for this review will help address issues essential to students as well as promote the exceptional range of career opportunities at home. But, Mr. Speaker, you need only check out saskjobs.ca or career opportunities in the local papers or even just look around you to know Saskatchewan has abundant career opportunities. We are a province that is down to earth, but a province where the sky is the limit for jobs.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — Last year we launched a bold new initiative to attract 5,000 immigrants each year and we're on track to achieve that goal. We're providing services to foster strong beginnings for newcomers including a program at the College of Medicine to aid in the certification of international medical graduates living in Saskatchewan.

We're also reinvigorating our relationship with the Fransaskois community with particular emphasis on immigration and employment needs of Saskatchewan francophones.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan economy is diverse, robust, and fundamentally strong, and our doors are open with opportunities for workers here at home and from abroad. We're going to continue to spread the word that Saskatchewan is a great place to live, to work, and raise a family. All this in support of our efforts to make life better for today's families and build an even better future here for our youth.

As a member of the baby boom generation and someone who's been sandwiched between health care needs of a young and growing family and the caregiving responsibilities for aging parents, health care issues and wellness are extremely important. Our second cornerstone, Mr. Speaker, is to work with health care providers to strengthen Saskatchewan's leadership in public health care while reducing waiting times and improving access to services.

Not only are we leaders, Mr. Speaker, but as the birthplace of medicare we also have the distinction to be the only province that does not charge our people a health care premium.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — And we're strengthening the health care system — enhancing efforts to recruit health care providers, increasing opportunities for internationally educated professionals to work here now, and expanding the number of Aboriginal people working in health care. Our commitment to Saskatchewan families continues with progress toward a children's hospital within a hospital and providing support for children with mental, physical, or behavioural disabilities and disorders.

On the topic of health care, Mr. Speaker, I particularly want to note that we're introducing new measures to benefit our seniors and elders. Saskatchewan's achievements reflect their achievements and their dedication will be recognized.

As a global citizen and a wannabe grandma, I want to ensure that Saskatchewan continues as a leader in environmental protection and the green economy. The health and prosperity of both Saskatchewan families and the Saskatchewan economy depend on it.

Our third cornerstone is to advance Saskatchewan as a leader in environmental protection and the green economy. Saskatchewan will be a leader in the protection of the environment and the promotion of clean, renewable energy and will demonstrate national leadership in conserving, protecting, and restoring the health of our environment and our diverse ecosystems.

Mr. Speaker, we're already taking steps to achieve our long-term goal of meeting one-third of our energy requirements through renewable resources, and we'll be working in partnership to research the feasibility of the world's first Saskatchewan-designed, utility scale, clean coal generating facility. All of our efforts toward environmental protection will contribute to our goal of making life better for today's families and help build a better future here for our young people. With our connection to the land and our commitment to environmental stewardship, Saskatchewan demonstrates again it's down to earth but the sky is the limit.

As a social democrat, Mr. Speaker, I believe that economic progress should result in social progress and that prosperity should benefit the many and not just the privileged few.

The fourth and final cornerstone is to ensure today Saskatchewan families benefit from our strong and prosperous economy. This will take shape in many ways within our

communities, both rural and urban alike. Saskatchewan's business climate is one of the most competitive in the country, leading to more job creation and employment opportunities for Saskatchewan people. And I am extremely pleased to say that Aboriginal economic development has contributed significantly to the growing employment numbers among Saskatchewan's First Nation and Métis.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — And I'm confident that the national summit on Aboriginal economic development being held in partnership with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit will even further this progress much more in the coming months and years ahead.

So our fourth cornerstone, that all Saskatchewan people will benefit from economic growth, is why we're concerning ourselves with benefits that families and young people realize today from our strong economy. It's why we're standing up for Saskatchewan people on fair equalization and will be relentless in pursuing a fair deal for Saskatchewan's non-renewable resources from the federal government.

And we're going to continue our promise to provide the lowest-cost utility bundle in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the increased minimum wage is benefiting Saskatchewan people as we speak. And there will be an increase of \$7.95 on March 1.

We've taken the two points off the PST [provincial sales tax]. We have a multi-year road and rail strategy. There's the building communities fund, the improvements to access to First Nation communities in our Throne Speech, the urban agenda. Mr. Speaker, we're committed to Saskatchewan where families feel safe and secure in their communities, and we're creating more targeted crime reduction efforts in all our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I know from my travels through my constituency and speaking with farm families that there is tough times for many. We're committed to ensuring the benefits of the economy touch the lives of farm families as they did from the changes to the education tax on farm land, fighting and negotiating for a more effective national agriculture deal, fully funding CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization]. We're telling people loudly and clearly that the federal government should keep their mitts off the Canadian Wheat Board, and let farmers decide for themselves on that issue. You know, I would have thought the members opposite would have stood up for farmers on this issue but apparently not.

[15:00]

Family Day here in Saskatchewan will help build a healthy balance between work and family. This Throne Speech is about articulating how families will feel a real benefit from our strong economy. People know that they can trust an NDP government to be there for them.

What do people know about the Saskatchewan Party? They know the Saskatchewan Party now sides with their federal buddies against Saskatchewan people. They know the last time the Leader of the Opposition was in government his party

nearly bankrupted this province. They know that their record, the Saskatchewan Party can't be trusted with Crowns, health care, or labour standards. They know that the risk of privatization, the selling off of assets and cuts to labour standards is real, and would hurt working people. And they know that Saskatchewan Party would be bad for average families. They would end up paying more and getting less. They know our social fabric would be in jeopardy with stress on cuts to CBOs [community-based organizations] and the voluntary sector.

Mr. Speaker, that's a sharp contrast with our vision. We're building a province where children, regardless of race or culture, will be able to read the books they carry in their school bags. We are building a province where young people will establish their careers and raise their families in a healthy environment with a quality of life second to none. We're building a province where the contributions of our seniors and elders are celebrated with the utmost pride and respect. We're building a province where after work there is ample opportunity to enjoy our land, our lakes, our skies, our neighbours, and most importantly, our families. This is a province, Mr. Speaker, a province we are proud to call home, down to earth, with the sky as our limit. I am, Mr. Speaker, I am proud out loud.

It's with respect and pride I second the Speech from the Throne as moved by the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I wish to thank my colleagues on both sides of the House for their warm welcome. I, like my colleagues I am sure, consider it an honour to represent my fellow citizens in this historic Chamber. While only elected a couple of months ago, Mr. Speaker, this position has opened the door to some incredible experiences and I'd like to tell you about one of them.

I was able to sit in this Chamber with many of the members for the installation of our new Lieutenant Governor. And many who witnessed that event, either here in the Chamber or perhaps at home on television, may recall a young lady who sang a song during that ceremony. I believe her song was entitled "In My Wildest Dreams" and, Mr. Speaker, it's certainly appropriate for how I feel today.

And while I'm on the topic of music and song — and I heard that the member from Wascana Plains wanted to talk about songs — I have to say that at last week's Throne Speech, after the Throne Speech, I really enjoyed the performance given by the LeBoldus jazz choir. And you know when I heard them sing "Penny Lane", for a moment there I thought the Premier was maybe testing some new song titles to follow up on the Imagine campaign. And while I think of it, Mr. Speaker, they did sing another song. And I think it's appropriate for the message that the people of this province will deliver to that government after the next election when they sang "Ticket to Ride," Mr. Speaker, because the people of this province are going to give that

government a ticket to ride right out of office.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, before I get too far along with my comments I need to recognize some people for whom it would not be possible for me to be here — to my family for their unwavering support. Mr. Speaker, I can still remember the first time I ever visited this building. I was on a class trip in grade 3 with my classmates from Halbrite school. And I can't imagine what a mother thinks when her nine-year-old comes home from Regina and tells her that he wants to be a politician.

Mr. Speaker, from my mother I received nothing but support and encouragement. From my father I received a better life. He is to me the definition of work ethic. Each day as — and I think probably today, unless he drove into Weyburn to watch this speech at my office — but each day he can be found driving up and down the oil patch roads back home. He's done that for 30 years. And with little more than a grade 9 education he has given to his three children opportunities that were never available to him.

I would not be here today among you without the support of my parents, my brother and my sister, my grandparents, my entire family and friends, and many of my teachers, Mr. Speaker, who encouraged me along the way to be interested in the world around me.

As I am sure the hon. members can attest to, running for public office is not easy — perhaps more so on our spouses than us. This year has been a whirlwind for my wife Amanda and I, although if you ask her she'll probably you that about the seven years that we've been married. But she's been incredible throughout this whole process.

And to get an idea of how great she is, about a week or two after we won the by-election, we decided we should maybe take a bit of a holiday. So we took a road trip for about a week through North and South Dakota. And after a month of campaigning for a nomination and three months preparing and then campaigning in a by-election, the first place that her husband takes her to is the North Dakota state capital. The second was the South Dakota state capital, and the third was Mount Rushmore. And, Mr. Speaker, she didn't complain once. More than anyone else, I couldn't have done this without her support.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Duncan: — There are so many others that I need to thank, most notably the good people of Weyburn-Big Muddy. And I pledge to do all that I can to represent them with honour and respect.

Finally I'd like to thank my entire campaign staff, the volunteers that put in tireless hours, my assistants back in Weyburn — Marcie and Marilyn — the entire Legislative Assembly services staff, the Clerk's office, and the library staff for their help.

Mr. Speaker, as I was preparing for this, my first speech, I thought it would be a good idea to look back and read what

some of my colleagues have said in their first speeches just to get a sense of what was expected. So I went online — the library keeps a record of all the maiden speeches — so I went online, and I read a few that my colleagues had made, actually not all of them but most of them. I read what the Leader of the Opposition, member for Swift Current, had to say and the member from Indian Head-Milestone and Canora-Pelly and Melfort and Kelvington-Wadena, just to name a few. And I even, I went into the library, Mr. Speaker, and tracked down the printed version, high up on a shelf, and dusted it off and read what the member from Cannington had to say so many years ago.

Seriously, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues and the caucus staff for their support. It's a bit of a unique situation that I found myself in, going from staff to an elected member, and they've made that transition as smooth as possible and have made me feel very welcome. So I thank them.

I want to talk a bit about my constituency before I talk about the Throne Speech. I feel very honoured to represent Weyburn-Big Muddy. The people of Weyburn-Big Muddy have given so much to me, not only with electing me to this Chamber but also in educating me and helping me to become the person that I am today. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that can really be summarized in what people from the RM of Surprise Valley in my constituency what they had to say about themselves. They, like many RMs many years ago, wrote histories of the RMs, and they just recently updated it. And I think what they had to say is really appropriate for the constituency.

Surprise Valley, not surprisingly, it's a lot of rolling, hilly country and they said that . . . But it's not named Surprise Valley because of not only the surprises of what you get when you go past that next hill, but they said and I quote:

[The real] Surprises are the people, the sturdy pioneers who by the sweat of their brow helped open up the West, enduring countless hardships to take the rough edges off the prairies and make the land productive .

And I think, Mr. Speaker, that's really indicative of the people that I represent and the part of this province, a beautiful place that I represent.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to talk a bit about . . . I know I mentioned my family and I thank them. And I want to talk about my family and our background in the constituency and near by the constituency. And I'd start with my wife's family. Over 100 years ago, the Alexander family came to the Weyburn area where they homesteaded. In fact three years ago we celebrated, her family celebrated the 100th anniversary of the original homestead which Alexanders still farm to this day.

And as for my family, Mr. Speaker, while we haven't been in the Weyburn area for that long, the Duncans did begin farming in the Weyburn area near north of Midale in a place which was once known as Hunttoon. It's no longer there. They came in the late 1920s and, Mr. Speaker, we're still trying to farm that pile of rocks today. My great-grandfather on my mother's side came to Canada from the United States, first came to Hume, which is east of Weyburn, and then later he travelled to Willow Bunch and homesteaded at Willow Bunch, both places of which I have

the honour of representing today. And, Mr. Speaker, if the Premier ever decides to take a bus trip through the Halbrite and Midale areas of the southeast, he'd have trouble finding a municipal road to drive on that my grandfather didn't build.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm grateful for the support that I received — nearly, I guess, 50 per cent, 49 per cent of the popular vote.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Duncan: — But, Mr. Speaker, to think what would have happened in that by-election had I been the local candidate, I . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Duncan: — I can't imagine how well we would have done.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet today, I would be remiss if I didn't mention a word or two about my hometown of Halbrite, and I hope the member from Estevan doesn't mind me mentioning it because it does lie a mile or two outside of the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency. Like many communities in the Southeast, we actually celebrated our centennial celebrations a year before the rest of the province.

For many years Halbrite, which today is a small hamlet, but for many years it was a major trading area that had a number of shops — the Litschke General Merchandise, Comstock Hotel, Murphy's General Store, just to name a few — which, you know, haven't existed since I've been around. I don't remember these places.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think unofficially Toronto probably should be the sister city of Halbrite. And I know you're probably thinking: what does a prairie hamlet of 100 people have in common with the Ontario capital? And the answer's, nothing, except that when you're raised in Halbrite, you're raised to believe that you're living in the centre of the universe. And that's what it was like to grow up in Halbrite. It was a great, great place to grow up.

Today it's a quiet hamlet kept alive by the oil industry which we're very blessed to have. And we've gone through many changes, and like many small towns we've lost our elevator, and we've lost our school. But, Mr. Speaker, the people of Halbrite will never lose their spirit. And Halbrite . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Duncan: — Halbrite, Mr. Speaker, has been my home, and no matter where life's journey takes me I hope it will always remain my home.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words about the Throne Speech. I will be moving an amendment at the close of my remarks.

Mr. Speaker, it's often said these days of this NDP government that they're old and tired. Certainly we on this side believe it, and many people across the province do. And I noted during last Friday's proceedings, when a member from this side of the House said those words, I had to laugh a bit because I noticed

that the member from Moose Jaw North, he would reply, bold and inspired, which I don't normally associate with that party, but I guess if that's what he believes. But I do have to confess that this NDP government has done just that for me. They've inspired me, inspired me to do all I can to ensure that they don't return to government after the next election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Duncan: — And while I'm discussing this year's Throne Speech, it was actually last year's Throne Speech that ultimately led me to run for my party's nomination and to fight in the by-election. And it was one line in particular that I'd like to share with you, Mr. Speaker, that inspired me. And speaking of the children and youth of this province, that speech contained this phrase, and I'll quote: "Today we dream of the province in which they will live, grow and reach adulthood."

[15:15]

Mr. Speaker, that really struck me. That phrase really struck me because I think on this side of the House, we not only believe that, but we want to see a province where the young people can stay here, not only reach adulthood, reach 18 or 19 and maybe if they stay, that's great, and maybe if they go, you know, that might happen. That I think is a sentiment on the other side of the House. But we see a province where the young people can stay and raise a family and grow, build a career, build a business for themselves.

But the message from that party — from statistically impossible to grow at the national average or more for the rest of us or even that last line about reaching adulthood — it shows that they don't have a plan. They don't have a vision to make this a place where our young people want to stay and where they can stay and have an opportunity to stay.

That was then, Mr. Speaker. And then we had the Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election where the people of that constituency gave youth a chance. They obviously like what they hear from this party as evident in the increase in the popular vote and the increase in the margin of victory and an outright win in the city of Weyburn, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Duncan: — And just like that after the by-election, just like that, Mr. Speaker, overnight, all of a sudden that party and that Premier became concerned about population loss, where they weren't before in the past. And all of a sudden now they're concerned about population loss and our youth and out-migration, and this after watching some 18,000 people leave our province since he became Premier. But once again they've fallen short with this Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very grateful for the support that I received in the by-election, and I'm particularly happy with the support that I received from the young people of my constituency, the young people. And you know, it reminds me of the day before the by-election, the day of voting, my wife and I, we decided to go for supper and went to a local restaurant and our waitress — she's a few years younger than us — and she came up to us. She obviously recognized who I was, and she came up to me and

she was, you know, real excited, saying that she was going to be voting and all her and her friends were going to be voting for the first time.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, the young people really came out and volunteered and gave their time and, you know, really put in a strong effort for me, which I'm grateful for. Now I believe that the reason that these young people supported me and why they're coming over to this party in record numbers can be explained by . . . You don't have to go any further than listening to the speech given last Friday by the member for Regina Coronation Park and even some of the comments of the member from Wascana Plains today. That member and that party as a whole seem fixated, Mr. Speaker, seem more interested in what happened 15 years ago and 25 years ago and in 60 years ago, Mr. Speaker. The young people of this province, those who are students, who are starting careers, starting families are more concerned with five years from now. They're more concerned about 10 years from now of what their province and what their future will hold for them.

That party, Mr. Speaker, is stuck looking in the rear-view mirror as the people of this province are passing them by. And, Mr. Speaker, you don't have to go any further than last year's Throne Speech. The little that they did offer young people was a Saskatchewan Youth Award which I don't think we've seen a year later, just shows you that there's a lack of commitment.

Now, Mr. Speaker, these are interesting times for our province. We are I believe at a crossroads. We have some amazing potential in our people and in our resources, and Weyburn-Big Muddy is certainly indicative of that. But to use a phrase that the Environment minister likes to use, we have some challenges, and some of these challenges threaten our prosperity and our way of life.

Under this government, we continue to face out-migration. In the last year we've witnessed, in the middle of a resource boom, 4,500 people leave our province. In the last five, six years, we've seen 18,000 people leave. And, Mr. Speaker, we're on the verge, if not already knee-deep, in a serious labour shortage, one that will hamper our economy and put at risk everything which that supports — health care, education, highways, just to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, in our second century, now is not the time to be timid or meek or talk about the wee province as the Premier likes to do. Now is the time to be bold and to be inspiring. But what did we get? What did we get from this government in the Throne Speech? What did we get? We got a new holiday, Mr. Speaker, at a time when we need to be addressing these serious issues. And in order to save their political careers, they have to offer a new holiday, one which they named Family Day. And in honour of this government, I will be travelling to Alberta on Family Day to visit my brother who has had to leave because of, in large part, this government.

But, Mr. Speaker, they probably should have called it the Weyburn-Big Muddy holiday, Weyburn-Big Muddy day, or maybe the by-election tax cuts. Maybe that would have been more appropriate because, Mr. Speaker, we know what these moves are about. The people of the province and the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy know that this government is on its last

legs and change is going to come as soon as they have the courage to call the next election, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: — It might get called for them.

Mr. Duncan: — Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm towards the end of my time here, speaking. And I think I will, I will be moving an amendment and I'll read it now. I move:

That after the word "session" the following be added:

That this government no longer enjoys the confidence of this Assembly because of its lack of vision and initiative in finding solutions to the growing labour shortage, the out-migration of our youth and families, forcing Saskatchewan people to go out of province for health care, failing to deal with the agricultural crisis and its impact on rural Saskatchewan, failing to protect children who are at risk, and for being too focused on its internal partisan political problems.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy, seconded by the member for Cannington:

That after the word "session" the following be added:

That this government no longer enjoys the confidence of this Assembly because of its lack of vision and initiative in finding solutions to the growing labour shortage, the out-migration of our youth and families, forcing Saskatchewan people to go out of province for health care, failing to deal with the agricultural crisis and its impact on rural Saskatchewan, failing to protect children who are at risk, and for being too focused on its internal partisan political problems.

Is the Assembly ready for the question on the amendment? Debate continues on the amendment and the original motion concurrently. The Chair recognizes the member for Cannington.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to compliment the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy on a very excellent maiden speech. And just from the tenor and tone of his speech, I can tell that he is going to be at home in the Saskatchewan legislature.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pass on best wishes to Garrett Robinson and his family — the young hockey player for the Moose Jaw Warriors that was involved in a vehicle accident a week or so ago and has just come out of a coma. My family and I understand the circumstances that he and his family are facing, and we'd extend them our best wishes.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk a little bit about the Cannington constituency which extends from the US border in the Southeast across to almost Estevan, north to Corning and further west from the Manitoba border to just west of Fillmore, Mr. Speaker. And that whole area also includes three First Nations — White Bear, Pheasant Rump, and Ocean Man.

And Pheasant Rump is interesting, Mr. Speaker, that — no it's Ocean Man — Derrick Big Eagle who just won the ABEX award is from that First Nation, Mr. Speaker, and has built a very, very successful oil patch business, drilling rigs. He has three rigs up on the go now, and I know that he hadn't expected to be in that position quite as quickly as it turned out to be. But the job opportunities were there; he was ready to move ahead. And I know that him, his partners, and his employees are very much looking forward to the opportunities that are in the oil patch in southeast Saskatchewan.

I know that one of the difficulties that Derrick is facing is employees. It's hard to find employees, Mr. Speaker, in southeast Saskatchewan because the employees have all left and gone to Alberta . . . the young people I should say, not the employees. The young people have gone to Alberta for the jobs there in the oil patch. So while Derrick and the other oil patch businesses in the Cannington constituency fill in their job requirements, that puts pressure on the other businesses in that area to maintain their employees because they see the bigger dollars being offered in the oil patch. And you see quite a movement of employees, and that's a real problem, Mr. Speaker. It's a good problem to have in the sense that the economy is working well in that area. But it is still a serious problem for this province when we have out-migration like we have had over the last number of years because of this NDP government's policies, its philosophies, and its economic regime that have driven people out. It's a real problem, Mr. Speaker, and it's something that needs to be addressed. And we believe that the only way that is going to be addressed is with an election, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, one of the issues in Cannington over this past summer has been the lack of water. We haven't had rain since about June 10. Even this fall when there was rain in general across the province, we received very little water. And I've had a number of phone calls, Mr. Speaker, that if there wasn't going to be any water there was going to be a serious problem with the cattle operations this winter, that people were going to be forced to haul from great distances, from community wells, which in turn would have put pressure on the highway system or what is left of the highway system in our area. Because with agriculture and the oil patch our highway system has taken a real beating in that area, and the government fails to recognize the economic growth that is happening in Cannington, fails to recognize the pressure that puts on the infrastructure, and refuses to maintain that infrastructure, Mr. Speaker.

And that is a shame that this government's attitude towards that region of the province, the economics that are happening there

that are driving, in part, the provincial economy with the oil industry, and doesn't return any of those revenues back into maintaining that infrastructure, Mr. Speaker.

While agriculture, Mr. Speaker, in the Cannington area went without water this year, they still produced a very good crop, a decent quantity of grain, and a very good quality. Now the problem is to sell it, Mr. Speaker, which is always a problem because the prices for cereals, pulses, oil seeds remains historically low, Mr. Speaker. And this is a difficulty that this government, while it can't impact those prices directly, it can and does impact the net return to farmers through its support of crop insurance which it has been reducing its support for, and the CAIS program.

While the CAIS program is certainly a very flawed program, the Deputy Premier as the minister of Agriculture at the time, demanded of the federal government of the day that there be an expanded CAIS program. The Liberal government said, yes we'll do it. And then the NDP refused to fund their share of it. They said, we said \$99 million and that's it.

An Hon. Member: — I hate it when they call my bluff like that.

[15:30]

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes, the Liberals called their bluff and then the NDP refused to put in their dollars that needed to be put in. They do that, Mr. Speaker, they have put their dollars in six to eighteen months later so that the farmers never had any idea what the financial impact was going to be. So when you went to the bank then in the spring, as far as the banker was concerned it was \$99 million that was going into CAIS even though most of the past few years there has been a need for 130 to \$150 million and the NDP government refused to fund that until later, Mr. Speaker.

So when this government says we are fully funded in the CAIS program they mean they are fully funding their initial \$99 million commitment, not what the expanded CAIS program that they called for is supposed to deliver, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when you go to the coffee shop in Cannington, to the rink which is just starting up now, or the ball games over the summer there are three issues of discussion. First one is always the weather, Mr. Speaker. In any rural community first item of discussion is always the weather. The second item of discussion, Mr. Speaker, is farming. Prices are too low and there's no rain or there's too much rain or there's too much wind. It always eventually goes back to the weather, Mr. Speaker. And this past summer, this fall, and I'm sure extending into the winter there is a third item of discussion that you go . . . that you hear in all these communities. It's when can we have an election. They're desperate, Mr. Speaker, to have an election. They want to throw this government out. They only want the opportunity to do it and they want it as soon as possible, Mr. Speaker.

So when you see something like happened this week with the 2 per cent reduction in the PST you know there's a vote coming, Mr. Speaker. You know there's a vote coming. The problem with there's a vote though, Mr. Speaker, is it's not about a vote

in a provincial election directly — it is down the road ultimately — but it's a vote at the NDP convention about the leadership of this Premier, the member from Riversdale. That's the vote that the 2 per cent cut in the PST was about. Because when you take a look at what happened this summer, what happened this fall, the member from Regina Dewdney, the former Corrections minister, was turfed from his office by the Premier because he questioned the Premier's leadership.

So if you're looking at this 2 per cent reduction in the PST and wondering, why did it occur? It happened for two reasons. Most of the credit goes to the new member from Weyburn-Big Muddy for his overwhelming victory in Weyburn. The community that Tommy Douglas — the saint of the NDP — that's where he always ran and won, Mr. Speaker. And they lost. They came in third. That was the primary reason for the 2 per cent reduction.

The second part of it was the member from Regina Dewdney's challenge of the Premier's leadership. And now that Premier has to go to the NDP convention to prove that he is a bold and dynamic leader. His move was to cut the PST.

Only six months ago there was no money available to cut the PST even though oil prices in March and April were significantly higher than they are now. There was no money to cut the PST. But when the Premier's leadership is challenged, when they lost the riding, the vote in the riding of Weyburn-Big Muddy, all of a sudden there's money available for a PST reduction, Mr. Speaker. It has nothing to do with what is good for the people of Saskatchewan. Nothing to do with what is good for the economy of Saskatchewan. What's good about it is protecting the Premier's political hide. That's why this is happening, Mr. Speaker.

So the province is going to forego \$320 million to protect the Premier's hide. You know, when you take a look at this cut, a cut in the PST is good, Mr. Speaker. There is no doubt about it. It is a good move. But, but to make it sustainable you have to know where that replacement income is coming from and the Minister of Finance gave no explanation as to where that money was going to be made up. None whatsoever, Mr. Speaker. None whatsoever.

But they talk a lot though in their Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, about the financial position of Saskatchewan, you know, and they . . . and, fact is, the member from Regina Wascana Plains today was talking about 13 consecutive years of surpluses — 13 consecutive years.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — I'm glad that they respond. When you look at the Provincial Auditor's report, volume number 2 for 2006, on page number 7, Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor has a graph there so it makes it easier for the NDP to read, Mr. Speaker. And it has a line down it that says, this is the zero line. Above is surpluses for every year; below is deficits, Mr. Speaker, you know. And this line starts out below and gets lower and stays there for a total of four years from 1991 to 1994. So the first surplus year under this NDP government is 1995.

Mr. Speaker, it stays there and gets almost down to zero in 1999 — because it obviously was an election year, government was going to blow all the money they possibly could, Mr. Speaker — rises up a little bit, and then the current Premier becomes the Premier. In 2001 he became the Premier. In 2002, 2003, 2004 — not my numbers, Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor's numbers — is, there is a deficit, Mr. Speaker. All three of those years including the 2003 of \$654 million, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, so seven of those 15 years, Mr. Speaker, are deficit. So I don't know where the member from Wascana Plains can say that there is 13 consecutive years of surpluses because the Provincial Auditor directly counters that, Mr. Speaker. And anybody who wants to take a look at the numbers, they're right there in plain sight, in black and white, Mr. Speaker, black and white . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Some parts of the graph are blue.

Mr. Speaker, take a look at some other numbers. Both the member from Regina Wascana Plains and the member from Regina Coronation were busy fighting the 1991 election all over again. And I certainly understand why they want to do that; they won. So why wouldn't you want to fight that one over again? But when you look at the debt numbers, Mr. Speaker . . . And these are net debt right now — \$7.9 billion in 1991, \$7.8 billion in 2006, when the price of oil has been over \$70, Mr. Speaker, which is an unheard of record. And this government hasn't touched the debt, Mr. Speaker. The net debt remains the same. So I don't know what they're bragging about, Mr. Speaker, but they're bragging about the wrong things, Mr. Speaker.

When you take a look at some other numbers, Mr. Speaker, in 1991 there was zero income from gaming; 2006 — \$234 million. I remember the Premier when he represented Moose Jaw Wakamow, I believe it was, marched down the street, marched down the street in about 1986, opposing gaming, opposing gaming in Moose Jaw. And yet his government is relying on 234, \$234 million of income to prop up his government, Mr. Speaker. And there has been a lot, a lot of social impact — negative social impact because of that implementation of gaming. And I think I may have been referring to the Speaker as Deputy Speaker for a couple of times. I apologize for that if I did so . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, I didn't want to demote him.

Mr. Speaker, some more numbers that I think need to be taken a look at. Saskatchewan relies on agriculture. Cannington relies on agriculture, Mr. Speaker, and yet in 1991, the year the NDP took power, there was over \$800 million going into agricultural support programs from farmers themselves, from the federal government and the provincial government. In 2006 that number has dropped down to about \$450 million, Mr. Speaker. The provincial government's share has gone from 412 million to 277 million. And yet this government wants to brag about how well they are supporting agriculture.

Prices are worse today than they were in 1991. Farmers only continue to exist on the land, Mr. Speaker, because of how efficient they have become. Certainly not because the prices have improved and certainly not because this government has provided them with any further assistance, Mr. Speaker.

And I think when I listen to this government talk about 1991, when I hear this government talking about the provincial debt and how well they're doing it paying it down, Mr. Speaker, when you take a look at those numbers, 1991 total debt was 17.6. Today's total debt, according to the Provincial Auditor, 21 billion — three and a half billion dollars more in a time of record oil prices, at a time of record potash prices, at a time when the government is pulling in 234 extra million dollars out of gaming. Out of gaming, Mr. Speaker. So when the government says how well they're doing, the debt continues to increase under this Premier.

And fact is, you know, there's a lot of . . . this government relies on a lot of support from union membership across the province. One of the numbers that I'm sure most union members would find very interesting, especially those union members in the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, in the SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union], and other government employees, Mr. Speaker, is the unfunded pension liabilities — 1991, Mr. Speaker, \$2.7 billion of unfunded pension liability. And what is it today after 15 years of NDP government? Four point three billion, Mr. Speaker. Four point three billion. Any teacher out there under the old pension plan should be seriously questioning this government's commitment to those pension plans, Mr. Speaker, because they've gone up by over 50 per cent. The unfunded portion has increased by over 50 per cent, Mr. Speaker. And that's during the good economic times. Good economic times, Mr. Speaker. Not in difficult times.

So when you look at this, Mr. Speaker, this government is failing to meet its commitments. It's failing to provide for those people that it should be providing for. It should be covering the pension plans, Mr. Speaker. It should be providing agricultural supports that they have promised and have failed to deliver, Mr. Speaker. This government is failing the people of Saskatchewan.

But there is a group of people, Mr. Speaker, across this province that are not failing their constituents. And that's the new group of people that were elected last week to represent FSIN and the municipalities, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to congratulate all those leaders that were elected or re-elected in last week's elections. Chief Joseph with the FSIN and the FSIN vice-chiefs that were elected or re-elected, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to congratulate Mayor Pat Fiacco of Regina, Mayor Don Atchison of Saskatoon — both of those were re-elected — and new Mayor McBain from Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker, and a good many other mayors and councillors in towns and villages and cities across this province that are dedicated to their communities and trying to build this province and make it better for everyone, and trying to do their best to ensure that there are jobs and opportunities available for the youth of this province despite the efforts of this government.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say that the members of the Sask Party in forming a government are looking forward to working with all of these groups to retain youth and provide opportunities across this province, Mr. Speaker.

[15:45]

When you take a look at this Speech from the Throne, Mr.

Speaker, it's a recycled document for the last four or five years, rewording the same old promises that have not been delivered. You know the only new thing in this Speech from the Throne was a new stat holiday, Mr. Speaker. The only thing was a new stat holiday, Mr. Speaker. That was all that there was.

So there are many things that need to be changed in this province, Mr. Speaker. This government is failing in education. It's failing in health. And fact is, Mr. Speaker, in one of my communities of Carlyle they got 10 beds closed at the long-term care facility because they can't get enough staff, Mr. Speaker. Ten beds closed. That's the kind of history, that's the kind of service that this government is providing to the people of Saskatchewan.

Highways, they're turning No. 8 Highway back to gravel, going to re-tender it because it came in too high of a price and so they're proposing to build it to a lower quality. It didn't stand up before. It certainly won't stand up again.

Mr. Speaker, this Speech from the Throne, this 2 per cent reduction in the PST is all about saving the Premier's political hide. It's not about helping the people of Saskatchewan. I am pleased to be able to second that motion that was presented by my colleague, the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Addley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my great honour and privilege to enter into the Throne Speech debate. And of course at the end I will be indicating that I'll be supporting the main motion and be voting against the amendment.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the constituents of Saskatoon Sutherland for allowing me to serve them here in the Assembly. It's a great honour and a great privilege to be able to do that. And I take that honour and privilege very seriously. Mr. Speaker, Saskatoon Sutherland is a very unique constituency. I'm quite fortunate to be able to represent the University of Saskatchewan, Muskeg Lake First Nation; the synchrotron is within Saskatoon Sutherland; Royal University Hospital falls within those boundaries and as well Innovation Place is within Saskatoon Sutherland. So I'm very grateful and fortunate to be able to have relationships with each of those entities.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also very grateful to my constituency assistant. She's worked in that constituency since 1987 — three terms with the prior MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] and now into the second term with the current MLA. I also want to thank the ministerial staff that work very hard in this building in the last year since I've had the honour and the privilege to serve in the Premier's cabinet in this past 12 months.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure all members agree that we all wouldn't be here if it wasn't for our families. And I just want to thank my family, as other members I'm sure will want to thank their families, for the opportunity to be here and the

work that the families do at home enabling us to be here.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to congratulate our Premier for the excellent work that he is doing and for the vision and the leadership that he has provided in this Throne Speech. We're quite fortunate to have the type of individual leading this province and I'll be able to get into details as to why that is.

Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech contains four cornerstones with a number of information details beneath each of those cornerstones. And I'd just like to go over briefly some of those cornerstones.

The first cornerstone that we're building on is to make Saskatchewan the best place for young people to live, work, and build strong futures. Mr. Speaker, that's the main reason why most of us got into politics is to ensure that we're building a brighter future for Saskatchewan people. We plan on expanding Saskatchewan's literacy program. We're going to continue the freeze on university tuition — which is very important to constituents in Saskatoon Sutherland — and we're going to expand the training and strengthen regional training to bring education closer to students. And finally, Mr. Speaker, we're going to host a youth summit and engage young people and ensure that we hear their views and that we're working with them to help build a future for young people here in this province.

The second cornerstone, Mr. Speaker, of the Throne Speech, is to strengthen Saskatchewan's leadership in improving public health care while reducing wait times and improving access to services. Mr. Speaker, there's a number of planks that I want to touch on in that area. The first is to work with health care providers to further improve access to service and to reduce wait times and improve access to service. That's a very important element to this plan. We're going to consult with the health care workers, the health care professionals, and engage them to ensure that we listen to their good counsel in developing plans into the future.

The second point, Mr. Speaker, is we're going to expand the Aboriginal workforce within health care. That's an extremely important point to this whole plan. First Nations people are experiencing an echo boom not unlike Saskatchewan did and Canada did in the 1950s with the baby boomer generation. And we're very grateful and very fortunate to have Aboriginal young people in our society to be a part, and full members, of our society.

The third point, Mr. Speaker, is to enhance efforts to recruit health care providers using new relocation incentives in return for service commitments, among other initiatives. Mr. Speaker, I was born and raised in rural Saskatchewan and I know first-hand how challenging it is to attract people to live in small towns and have their careers there. We will work with people to ensure that that is done and provide a number of incentives.

Mr. Speaker, one of the areas that I'm responsible for is the Premier's Project Hope, and we're going to continue implementing the Premier's Project Hope. And over the past year there has been solid progress on a number of initiatives in Project Hope. It's a three-year program and we're well ahead on many of the initiatives — and this is a key, important part —

because the ultimate vision is to provide the children of Saskatchewan with the best possible chance to grow up free from addictions.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we've done is restrict the ingredients that are used to make crystal meth and ensure that they are restricted within drugstores and behind counters as well. And this Premier led that charge all across Canada and that's the standard in all of Canada right now. Mr. Speaker, we've opened a new youth detox centre, stabilization and treatment beds, and we've hired counsellors and community workers to help communities deal with addiction issues.

Mr. Speaker, I have also, as the minister, was able to participate in a new anti-tobacco initiative called the View and Vote, and that's directed largely at grades 6 to 12. And this was an interesting initiative where they've collected anti-tobacco ads and health ads from around the world, and between now and December they're showing these ads in groups within schools and they get to vote as to which ad is the most effective. And next spring we'll be releasing that ad and that will be the ad that we'll be supporting and that will be chosen by young people. Many of these ads are humorous, many of them are very serious. But we'll be choosing, the young people will be choosing the ad that they find most effective.

And finally, I'd also like to commend the city of Lloydminster for taking the positive step of banning smoking in bars, restaurants, and ensuring the health of their citizens is universal regardless of which side of the border people reside on.

Mr. Speaker, the other component of the health plank that I wanted to talk about is children and youth in mental health. This government takes very seriously the mental health of our Saskatchewan young people, and we will be consulting and have consulted various organizations throughout Saskatchewan, including the Children's Advocate, the Canadian Mental Health Association Saskatchewan division, as well as SASKFEAT, Saskatchewan Families for Effective Autism Treatment.

There are new initiatives — the cognitive disability strategy — new initiatives in children's mental health which will expand early identification and intervention, treatment, outreach, residential and respite services. And these initiatives will address the needs and barriers in mental health services for children, youth, and families in Saskatchewan.

The plan for children's mental health aims to build the capacity of children, youth, families, and communities as well as organizations and service providers to respond to the mental health needs of children and youth. Every child in our province deserves the opportunity to grow, develop, and unlock their potential, explore their dreams, and have hope for the future. Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech lays out the direction so that we are able to achieve that.

Mr. Speaker, we'll be providing support for children with mental, physical, behaviour disabilities and disorders. And we will continue to develop a children's hospital within a hospital.

Mr. Speaker, the third plank, the third cornerstone is to advance Saskatchewan as a leader in environment protection and the green economy. We'll be taking further steps to achieve our

long-term goal of one-third of our energy needs from renewable resources, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we'll be partnering to research the world's first Saskatchewan-designed, utility scale, clean coal generating facility. That's an extremely important aspect to meeting our commitment to climate change, because we have a 300-year supply of coal here in Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, not only is it important to use that resource in a way that doesn't damage the environment, but we'll be creating the technology here in Saskatchewan that can be exported to places like India and China which are using coal currently and can benefit from the clean coal technology. So not just the benefit here in Saskatchewan but also the technology as we expand and export it throughout the world.

Mr. Speaker, we'll be implementing measures to assist in energy conservation and, Mr. Speaker, we'll carry out a comprehensive plan to develop biofuels and as well implement a plan related to the mandated use of ethanol that will not only benefit the environment but it will also benefit farmers and those that want to use their crop in this way and save on a lot of shipping charges as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fourth plank in this Throne Speech is ensuring families benefit from our strong, prosperous economy. Probably the most important one to balancing work and family life is to introduce a new annual statutory holiday known as Family Day beginning in February of this upcoming year.

We'll continue to work to ensure that we have a fair deal for our non-renewable resources. We have the Prime Minister on record saying that that's worth, as a minimum, \$750 million each year, to a Member of Parliament in Saskatchewan on the Conservative side that it could be upwards of over \$2 billion each and every year, Mr. Speaker. So that's a very key and important part of the upcoming plan.

We'll be introducing legislation to dedicate every dollar of fuel tax collected by the province from motorists toward maintaining and building Saskatchewan's roads. And that's a very important part.

The other point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is to establish a multi-year infrastructure fund to enhance families and communities, including funding for cultural and recreational facilities.

Mr. Speaker, we have a strong economy but we're going to make it even stronger. We're going to work with municipalities on an urban agenda and we're going to partner with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit to host a national summit on Aboriginal economic development. And, Mr. Speaker, we're also going to continue to develop a provincial anti-racism strategy which I know many members in this House find very important and would support fully, Mr. Speaker, I being one of those.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, in the area of agriculture we're going to fully fund the CAIS program while we negotiate with the federal government to have an improved, more fair program. Mr. Speaker, we're also going to press the federal government to ensure that it honours its own legislation to enable farmers to

decide the future of the Canadian Wheat Board through an open and fair plebiscite. Mr. Speaker, it's only fair and that is what the federal government should be doing.

[16:00]

Mr. Speaker, I do want to join with colleagues that have mentioned earlier to congratulate the new mayors and councillors that were elected last year. And I also want to extend my personal congratulations to Chief Lawrence Joseph of the FSIN and also the vice-chiefs that were elected recently.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that we listen to the new member for Weyburn-Big Muddy. And I welcome the new member to the House. And I know that he will do his best to represent his constituents in the short time that he will serve here for the next 12 to 18 months, Mr. Speaker.

But I thought it was interesting that the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy moved the amendment and the member for Cannington seconded that motion. And it reminded me that, you know, we have something old; we have something new. When those members were supporting the government in the '80s, we had something borrowed, and we were all something blue, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the member for Cannington as he did not want to talk about what had gone on in the past. And I can understand why members on that side of the House don't want to talk about the 1980s and about what had happened and the debt and the deficit and bringing us to the area of bankruptcy. And, Mr. Speaker, I found it interesting, Mr. Speaker, that in 1991 that Saskatchewan people were pretty much united in throwing out the government that those members supported.

But it is interesting. The member from Swift Current, currently in the Assembly, what he decided to do in 1991 was seek a nomination for that party and for that government because obviously he thought that they were doing a fine job, Mr. Speaker.

I found it interesting that the member for Cannington — and I'll paraphrase that — said, the Minister of Finance reduced the PST by 2 per cent. But he said, and paraphrasing, doesn't know where the replacement money is going to come from. Well you know, that is interesting, Mr. Speaker, because just recently the opposition released a pamphlet in Saskatoon. And a couple of the planks there, Mr. Speaker, say that their guiding principles are, no. 2, smaller, less intrusive, more efficient government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Addley: — And they support that obviously. And no. 3, steady gradual reduction in government spending and taxation while maintaining a firm commitment to balanced budgets.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Addley: — And they support that as well. But I ask the members, please lay out, in accordance with what the member for Cannington say, where's the replacement money

going to come from? What are they going to cut?

We hear every day in this House, and I'm sure we'll hear in this session, that we should be spending more money in health care, more money in education, more money with SaskTel to put up towers in certain parts of their constituency. Well, Mr. Speaker, if their guiding principle is to gradually reduce government spending, well not only do they have to show where they're going to cut just to put the additional money in the priorities that they'll be laying out in the rest of this session, but they'll also have to point out where, if they're going to reduce the size of government, they'll have to lay that out.

So I'm waiting in bated breath and I'm sure the member for Cannington is as well — where are they going to cut, where are they going to reduce, Mr. Speaker? So I'm looking forward to those responses, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my grandfather was born in the 1880s here in Saskatchewan. My grandmother was born in the 1890s, and they met after serving in World War I. My grandfather lied about his age — he was 36 — served in World War I, met his bride, and brought her back from Scotland.

At that time, Mr. Speaker, there were no CCFers or New Democrats. And a story that they told was hitching up their wagon during a winter election to go in, and one of them voted Tory and one of them voted Liberal. And it took all day to move in from the farm to vote. Mr. Speaker, and I remember the story of him complaining that they're going to keep the roads open in the wintertime, Mr. Speaker, that he didn't think that the government should be investing in that area.

Think about in two generations from my grandparents' generation to what we have today. We have an improvement in the highway system. We have all the money dedicated to that area, the whole innovations in the health care area, innovations in education, and the innovations in the tax system.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to conclude with two points. *The StarPhoenix* says in an editorial, "Throne speech brings welcome wind of optimism." Mr. Speaker, they conclude with this quote. Quote:

It's time for optimism in this traditional "next year country," and the throne speech certainly reflects that.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be happy to be voting in support of the Throne Speech, along with my colleagues from Regina Coronation Park and Wascana Plains. And I will be voting against the amendment put forward by the new member for Weyburn-Big Muddy and the member for Cannington. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. I'm very pleased to rise today to speak on the Throne Speech. To me it's another speech that offers absolutely nothing but the same old rhetoric from a tired, worn-out government. How can people on

that side of the House get up and start talking about how good things are when we've lost 4,500 people in the last year and 18,000 people since this Premier became the Premier — 18,000?

I would like to just start out, just to comment about . . . The member from Sutherland was talking about his grandparents. Well it brings back memories for me also to talk about my grandparents, and I've done this in the House before. But I talk about . . . My grandparents came here in *circa* the 1912-1915 era, and they settled not too far from where I now live. And when they settled there, they had to go out by cart from Moose Jaw. When they arrived there, there was no roads. There was no school. There was no railroad, and there was no hospital.

Now we had an evolution of growth. We had an evolution of expansion in this province. I retired to the same area 80 years after my grandparents did and guess what? The hospital is closed. The school is closed. The railroad is pulled, and our highways are probably the same as they were when my grandparents moved there. Is that what the NDP call progress? Is that what they think is progress? That's NDP progress.

Mr. Deputy Chair, I do want to start going through the Throne Speech a bit by bit before I start talking about constituency problems and issues. First off . . . and I have to compliment my colleague from Cannington who brought this up, but it bears being repeated again because in the Throne Speech on page 1, it talks about 13 consecutive balanced budgets. And I know my colleague used the report of the Provincial Auditor and looking at . . . And he went through it very eloquently, but it bears repeating. There's seven, seven budgets in the last 15 years that have been deficit. Seven out of 15 have been deficit, and I can give you the years: '91, '92, '93, '94, 2002, 2003, 2004.

Now this, Mr. Deputy Chair, begs the question. On this particular document, it says 13 consecutive balanced budgets. The auditor says there are seven that aren't; they're deficit budgets. Who do you believe? Who do you believe? Who is telling the truth?

Do the people of this province, do the people of this province believe the auditor or do they believe the rhetoric from over there? I would let the people of this province decide because all they have to do is read the auditor's report where there's seven deficit budgets, and here unequivocally it states that there's 13 consecutive balanced budgets. How do people of this province believe and trust that government when they can't even say something honestly in their own Throne Speech document?

And, Mr. Deputy Chair, I hear some heckling over there, but I'll tell you it's very difficult to heckle the truth.

Now we want to go, we want to go ahead. Again my colleague from Cannington talked about the debt because in the Throne Speech again it talks about reduction, significant reduction in debt. I repeat that: significant reduction in debt, in the Throne Speech. And on page 8 of the auditor's report, it clearly states that it's the same — 1961, 7.9; and 2006, 7.8. So arguably from somebody on that side of the House, it's point one difference. Is that a significant amount?

But, but even more so than that, when you really get down to

looking at the details of the budget . . . And we start talking about liabilities. Now one can sit and debate the word liability vis-à-vis deficit or debt. But when you look at the liabilities of this government — again the auditor's report, page 34 — in 1991 the liabilities of this province were \$17.6 billion. And what are they today? 2006 auditor's report, \$21 billion.

Now, now, Mr. Deputy Chair, who do the people of this province want to believe? The auditor? Or do they actually want to believe the rhetoric of this NDP government? And this, and this is actually from the auditor's report. Again we have the Minister of Finance heckling. How do you heckle the truth?

Now, now we talk in the Throne Speech about more jobs, more jobs. Well, Mr. Deputy Chair, we've lost 18,000 people, and yet we have somebody over there that is talking about jobs. We know we got a labour shortage in this province. There's a labour shortage in other jurisdictions. But we are losing people. And here we are in an economic boom and losing people. How can anybody on that side of the House stand up and look themselves in the mirror and say that we're doing good, when we're losing people and we're in an economic boom?

Now in the Throne Speech, we're only one of three have provinces, and I applaud that. We're a have province. But we have a Premier that says our wee province is always going to be in and out of federal welfare. Well what kind of a message does that send to people in this province that, oh we're always going to be in and out of welfare? Well I would submit that we would be in and out of welfare if we would maintain that current government which the people of this province can see through, and we know that they're not going to be around for much longer.

Now we look at the cornerstones and I kind of, you know, there's some same old repeats in the cornerstones of this Throne Speech . . . but place for young people to live and work. What I would like to have seen then, how do we retain young people here? What do we do to have our young people stay in this province and make their careers and their lives here? And, Mr. Deputy Chair, I will assure you, a 25-cent phone call is not enough to keep the young people in this province.

Now we look at other issues that are in this document, and we talk about investment and training. Well this is quite interesting. We have the government out there now with this piece of whatever and talking about investment and training. How do we keep people in this province when we're not meeting the educational needs of our workforce? We've brought to light in the past number of months many, many situations where young people are on up to 15-year waiting lists for post-secondary education, up to 15 years. And yet say, well we're doing pretty good on that side of the House they figure. But 15 years waiting for post-secondary education, how can anybody sit around and wait that long? And yet people on that side of the House say we're doing good. We're doing something to address the labour market challenging needs.

Now attracting immigrants, last year, last year we launched a bold initiative to attract 5,000 immigrants. Well how are we doing? We're on track. What's the track? I talk to people that are trying to get into this province. I have people that have been sent out of this province that have migrated here because of

some form or somebody in the department that says no, the only way you can stay here . . . although you've got a job, although your family's here, although everything is good, sorry you have to leave. But then when you leave, you can reapply. Is that ever a nice way to have immigrants come into this province.

Now we keep saying . . . We talk about health care, the second cornerstone is health care. Well let's just look at health care. How are we making out in health care? How many times have we had to bring up in this House people that have no satisfaction with the health care system, and we bring it up in this House to get some results.

[16:15]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — Hon. members, I'm having difficulty hearing the member for Wood River. And members, I ask members on both sides of the House to please keep their voices down. The member for Wood River has the floor, and I recognize the hon. member for Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Well again I have to use that phrase; it's very difficult for them to heckle because it's hard to heckle the truth. So I don't know what they're heckling.

Now, now we talk about the health care and the waiting lists. How has it improved? How has the waiting list improved? The Minister of Health got up today in question period. He couldn't answer. He wouldn't, couldn't, didn't know, doesn't care. Who knows? But he didn't answer. So when we talk about the rhetoric of health care and how we've got the best health care, it was Tommy's great big thing, but how are we doing?

I talk to people on basically a daily basis that have problems with the health care system, people that are going outside of the province because they cannot get it here. I recently talked to somebody that can hardly move because of pain, and can he get in to see a specialist? No. Now what does a person like that do? Your quality of life is somewhere between zero and nothing, so in order to get some health care you're basically forced to go outside of the province. And what do that group of men and women say? We have the best health care system in the country. If they say that often enough, they tend to believe it. But again to the people of the province, you look at what our health care system is doing for you and now you decide.

It's the same old rhetoric, the same as the debt numbers. If they think it they say it, and they'll try and convince some of their own supporters, but they're not fooling the people of this province any, any longer.

Now we talk about environment. Now we're all environmentalists at heart. We want to see clean air. But what, what are they doing? They talk about it every year. They've talked about a green and prosperous economy. There's not one on that side of the House that can identify to anybody what a green and prosperous economy is. They can't do it because all it is is words.

Now we talk about Kyoto in the past and how the people over there supported Kyoto, and they did not really believe the fact that the Kyoto accord was basically a transfer of money from

richer nations to poorer nations. They couldn't see through that. And yet we already had one of our Crown corporations that was planning to buy something in the neighbourhood of \$35 million of credits from another country.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if you're buying credits from another country to support your emissions in the province, how is that helping the clean air of this province? Can anybody over there get up and explain that? You're buying credits from an African country or from Russia or from some other place so we can conform to Kyoto, but how is that helping our air in this province? It is not. It's not doing anything. So their talk about the green and prosperous economy is basically hollow words.

Now we talk also . . . they have talked about developing the biodiesel industry in this province and the biofuels. Well it was very interesting to hear the other day that 24 million tax dollars was going into the Belle Plaine ethanol plant — 24 million tax dollars. Was this anything more than to try and save face for the Premier? Was it anything other than that? Because of the blotched ethanol plant at Belle Plaine that was so highly touted before that really was . . . a lot of us felt it was another SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company]. So now to try and save a little face is to put 24 million tax dollars into an ethanol plant in Belle Plaine.

Now it bears talking about the investments that this government has done. Now they will argue, and I've heard one from Investment Saskatchewan say, well it's a good investment. Well don't they always say that? Don't they always say, when they go tinkering with tax dollars on wild investments that, oh, it's a good investment.

Well let me just talk about a couple of good investments of this NDP government — *tappedinto.com*, Mr. Speaker, a good investment, lost \$6.7 million. *Persona*, another good investment, lost 9.4. What's *Navigata* at now? It was 43, but it jumps on a regular basis. It's up to 60-some or 70-some million dollar loss — another good NDP investment. *Retx.com* — that was a really good investment. It only lost 26 million. How about *Craig Wireless*? That's a \$10 million loss. *NST* [NST Network Services of Chicago], \$16 million loss; *Clickabid*, \$1.9 million loss; *Soft Tracks*, \$2.2 million loss. *Ag Dealer*, competing with a local production in the province, and they're competing with that to the tune of an \$8.9 million loss. That's \$124.5 million loss from SaskTel alone.

Well SPUDCO. We know all about SPUDCO. I think there's some members over there that are still pretty proud about SPUDCO, but it was only a \$35 million loss. So the former minister of SPUDCO, he probably wants to reinvest in potatoes now because he's behind some of these others in losses.

We could go back a few years; members want to go back. How about *Channel Lake* for \$15 million loss and *Guyana* for a \$2 million loss? Now we look at *SGI* [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] — \$16.1 million loss in *Coachman Insurance*. But let's not forget one of the favourites here — *mega bingo*. Wasn't that a bright idea by this government? This NDP government had to get into the bingo business — \$8 million loss. *Pangaea*, 3.5 and counting.

Now if you add in some of the other ones, we're sitting over \$1

billion in losses. So a \$24 million investment into the — of tax dollars — into the Belle Plaine plant might seem pretty, pretty small compared to all of these other ones.

We've had members opposite who've got up and talked about equalization. I just want to make a couple of comments about equalization. When you're trying to deal with an individual or in this case government to government, how would you feel if somebody come along and kicked you in the shins and then say, oh by the way I want some money? And this is what this government is doing with the feds all the time. They're poking their finger in their eye with their right hand and their left hand is out for money. Now I'll tell you, if I was sitting there, I sure wouldn't be willing to deal with them on that basis. Look at the Minister of Agriculture. He's continually saying that he needs money from them, but he's continually running them down. I would just love to be at the other end and tell him where to go in a couple words or less.

Now you're going to do a multi-year strategy of roads. That's in the budget. Every fuel dollar collected, tax dollar from fuel is going to roads. That's good. That's a good initiative. We've been saying that for years. They keep saying, oh we've been doing that. Well they haven't. But now they want to deliver a multi-year strategy for the roads through the economy, a multi-year strategy. Well I'll tell you if they had any strategy at all it would be new because there's sure no strategy for the roads at all now in this province.

So I guess my time is running out . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes it's a shame. Mr. Speaker, we talked about the Family Day that was announced, another political ploy to try to buy voters off, I guess. But I just wanted to throw something out for consideration. When they announced, or pre-announced the Family Day, how much consultation was done? Did they consult with any of the . . . for an example the teachers? Now teachers have already talked to us and said, you know what? We have a set number of days in the calendar year that we must teach — 197. Now we have a holiday in February. Where are we going to make up that other teaching day? Will it be in June? July? August? So I'm wondering how much consultation was done by that government or if any consultation was done at all.

Mr. Speaker, I would sure like to talk about the 750,000 head of cattle that we ship out of the province. I talk about it in every one of our Throne Speeches and budget speeches. We ship 750,000 head of cattle out of the province to Alberta to be fed, along with our grains and our young people. What did this Throne Speech do to bring any of that back to this province? Absolutely nothing.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think my time is running out so I would just like to close by saying that I will be supporting the amendment to the motion. And I think it deserves being read again:

That this government no longer enjoys the confidence of this Assembly because of its lack of vision and initiative in finding solutions to the growing labour shortage, the out-migration of our youth and families, forcing Saskatchewan people to go out of province for health care, failing to deal with the agricultural crisis and its impact on rural Saskatchewan, failing to protect children who are at

risk, and for being too focused on its internal partisan political problems.

With that, Mr. Speaker, the only thing I could possibly close with, I just can't imagine how much money that the government is now going to spend on selling the Throne Speech to the Saskatchewan people. How much money is it going to cost? Just imagine. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for The Battlefords, the Minister of Health.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure today to rise and speak to the government's Throne Speech and vision for the future.

Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of confidence in this government's ability to understand and work with the Saskatchewan people. And I take a great deal of pride, Mr. Speaker, in being among this fine group of people on this side of the Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, I think we are all aware, all aware today that there are two groups of people in this Chamber. Mr. Speaker, there are those on this side of the House working for the Saskatchewan people, and there's those on that side of the House working for the Saskatchewan Party. Mr. Speaker, there's a huge amount of difference. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to represent people who continue to believe in and work for the people of Saskatchewan, and more importantly, Mr. Speaker, as this particular Throne Speech indicates, the families of Saskatchewan, today's Saskatchewan family.

Mr. Speaker, I think a lot can be said not only about this Throne Speech but about how well this government has responded to Saskatchewan people's needs over the last year, leading to the development of our plans for the coming year. Mr. Speaker, the interesting thing about Thursday of last week is that there were two speeches in this Chamber. The first was the prorogation speech which had a look at the year past, and the next one was the Throne Speech taking a look at the year coming forward.

Mr. Speaker, let's just have a look back a year ago in which this government committed to working with the children of our centennial, the youth of this province, and building a Saskatchewan that was built on an unbreakable social fabric and providing opportunities for young people and other Saskatchewan residents. Last year's Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, laid out a significant vision for the province, not only for a year but for the 20 years into the future.

What did we accomplish, Mr. Speaker, during the course of the last year? It's all in the prorogation speech. The public has access to it. Go to the website and take a look at that speech from Thursday of last week, October 26. Mr. Speaker, it indicated that in addition to the 4,000 events celebrating our centennial in communities right across this province, Mr. Speaker, individuals who were proud to be Saskatchewan people and proud of the history of the province and proud of the future of this province, Mr. Speaker, anyone who attended a centennial event last year knows that the doom and gloomers on

the other side do not represent the average Saskatchewan person and certainly don't represent today's Saskatchewan family, Mr. Speaker. They are proud of their heritage and their history. They are proud to be Saskatchewan residents.

[16:30]

Mr. Speaker, in the last year when we look back at what took place, we have seen again — just to quote a few things out of the prorogation speech — this government said it would and did freeze tuition for university students. We said we would create additional training spaces for young people at our community and regional colleges as well as our provincial training institutions. We did create, Mr. Speaker, 2,700 new spaces for training opportunities in the province.

In the Battlefords, we are particularly pleased that we expanded our pre-kindergarten program. Mr. Speaker, we've got new children in pre-kindergarten in North Battleford that two years ago wouldn't have been in this program. They are delighted, Mr. Speaker, at this single initiative outlined in the Throne Speech and delivered by this government over the course of the year.

Mr. Speaker, we said in the Throne Speech a year ago we would expand our wind power generation and we did that, Mr. Speaker. We said we would address the corporate capital tax and business tax in the province, Mr. Speaker, and we did, Mr. Speaker.

We said that we would have further commitments to health care and, over the course of the last year, Mr. Speaker, we have the largest single contribution to health care ever by a government in the history of this province. We delivered. And the result of that, Mr. Speaker, we've got lower waiting times, better access to care. And, Mr. Speaker, more diagnostic images and more surgeries were done in this province than ever before — Mr. Speaker, a record to be very proud of.

Mr. Speaker, we introduced additional, after saying we would do so, additional traffic safety measures. And, Mr. Speaker, anti-gang legislation and of course the safer communities work — all set out in the Throne Speech last year, all delivered by this government, Mr. Speaker.

Indeed today, Saskatchewan . . . Even though a year ago this was an excellent, wonderful province, today, Mr. Speaker, the province of Saskatchewan is an even better province. And as a result, Mr. Speaker, we are living in a province that indeed is looking after today's Saskatchewan family and building a province that's even better for the future of our young people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — So having achieved a significant amount of work in a single year's time, Mr. Speaker, what are we doing going forward for yet another year with a strong economy, Mr. Speaker? And I think the member who spoke before me, the Minister of Healthy Living Services, outlined very clearly some of our historical challenges and some of the incredible work of this government to overcome those challenges, to put us in a position today that we can do some of things that we're able to do.

Mr. Speaker, the focus of this year's Throne Speech indeed is to make life better for today's Saskatchewan families and build an even better future here for young people. Every activity that we engage in in the course of the coming year, Mr. Speaker, is aimed at addressing today's family and youth. Mr. Speaker, can there be a greater commitment to the people of Saskatchewan, a greater illustration of how we have listened carefully to what the people of Saskatchewan are interested in and delivering programs that are going to meet those needs as expressed by the people of Saskatchewan?

Mr. Speaker, how are we going to do this? The Throne Speech outlines four areas in which we will focus. I'm going to talk in my brief time available here today about one of those pieces. Four cornerstones that are set out for the government's agenda — no. 1, to make this the best place for young people to live, work, and build a strong future, Mr. Speaker. No. 2, strengthen Saskatchewan's leadership in improving public health care while reducing wait times and improving access to services. No. 3, advance Saskatchewan as a leader in environmental protection and a green economy. And no. 4, ensure that today's Saskatchewan families benefit from our strong economy.

The two big announcements made on Friday, the big announcement coming out of the Throne Speech and the big announcement that came on Friday — the day after the Throne Speech — specifically addressed the benefits to be received from building a strong economy.

Mr. Speaker, creating a new statutory holiday, Family Day, in the province of Saskatchewan, recognizing the good, hard work ethic of the people of Saskatchewan and rewarding them for the sacrifices that they had to make as we rebuilt this economy through the '90s and strengthening the economy today. Mr. Speaker, Family Day has the respect of Saskatchewan families, and we're able to do that, Mr. Speaker, because there's a stronger economy in place today built by policies that this government has put in place over the last five years.

And secondly, Mr. Speaker, we have been able to, from this strong economy, provide a direct tax benefit to Saskatchewan families, Saskatchewan businesses, Saskatchewan municipalities, institutions, and facilities. Mr. Speaker, 2 per cent reduction in provincial sales tax is a direct benefit from our growing economy. Mr. Speaker, is this a sustainable tax cut? Absolutely, Mr. Speaker, because it's coming from a growing economy, a growing tax base in this province, Mr. Speaker. And we have confidence that the Saskatchewan people have earned this.

Mr. Speaker, on top of the direct benefit there are the indirect benefits that come from that tax cut because the cost to business, Mr. Speaker, has been reduced as a result of this. And business people in this province are going to be able to create more jobs, deliver product at a lower cost, and provide Saskatchewan people with an indirect benefit.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, 15 per cent of this reduction is going to areas whereby there are additional taxes collected at the municipal level and at the school board levels. Mr. Speaker, our schools that pay provincial sales tax, our municipal governments that pay provincial sales tax, our hospital authorities that pay provincial sales tax, are all going to see a

benefit from this, Mr. Speaker, and that will indirectly further benefit today's Saskatchewan families.

I'm very proud to be able to stand on this side of the House and say to the people of Saskatchewan we've addressed issues that they've raised with us and we're pleased to be able to have done the work that's able to provide the benefits coming back.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have a particular interest in health care in this province and the members opposite continue to talk about all of the problems that exist in health care. And there's no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that there are challenges that we and people in other provinces right across this country, Mr. Speaker, face all the time. Recruitment and retention is a challenge in all of the provinces. Keeping up with increased drug costs, Mr. Speaker, dealing with operating room capacity and meeting waiting times, Mr. Speaker, these are all challenges. But when I take a look at what we've been able to achieve over the last year, Mr. Speaker, I'm just so impressed with what the people in our regional health authorities, with the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, have been able to do with the resources and the policies that this government's been able to provide to the Saskatchewan health care system.

Let's just have a look at what it represents, Mr. Speaker. First and foremost, the health care system employs 37,000 people in this province, Mr. Speaker. That includes 26 self-regulated health professions and, Mr. Speaker, the system operates 269 facilities across the province. Mr. Speaker, this is indeed by itself a tremendous benefit to Saskatchewan people. The scope and volume of service I don't think the members opposite fully understand. When they bring a case forward it is one of how many cases that are successfully dealt with within the system.

Mr. Speaker, in this province we have 2,100 people in hospital beds every single day. Mr. Speaker, this is 128,700 annual patient admissions for 2,100 patients a day in hospital care in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we do 257 surgeries every single day in this province — 257 surgeries, Mr. Speaker. And for those who understand some of the numbers they will know that in the Saskatoon and Regina Health Region alone, on hips and knees this is 1,000 more this year than done the previous year. We have made tremendous, tremendous progress in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, we contribute to and fund, through the physician payment plan, 4.6 million family physician visits every year or 12,600 family visits every day. Everyday in this province, Mr. Speaker, physicians are seeing 12,600 people.

So on occasion, Mr. Speaker, there are challenging cases in which individual's expectations or satisfactions or needs are not met. But, Mr. Speaker, 95 to 99 per cent of the cases dealt with in Saskatchewan provide the satisfaction of the people. The last exit poll from hospitals asked people, do you believe your care was good or excellent. Ninety five per cent of people said, my care I received in hospital was good or excellent.

So, Mr. Speaker, we still have challenges to meet. But by golly, Mr. Speaker, a system this large, dealing with this many people, with this many processes and procedures, by golly, Mr. Speaker, we can be proud of the people who are delivering that

care throughout the province.

And every time there is a challenge to the system on an individual or collective basis, we are going to address it, Mr. Speaker, through the regional health authorities, the quality care coordinators, the provincial quality care coordinators and of course Saskatchewan Health, Mr. Speaker. We will address those issues. We will learn from the challenges that are presented to us and, Mr. Speaker, we will put in place policies that are going to improve the quality of care, increase access, and indeed reduce our waiting lists.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I think that it should be known that significant progress has been made on several fronts over the course of the last year. I had mentioned some of them already. But there are some more that I should talk about.

We've increased capacity. We've provided system improvements, workforce planning, quality efficiency, workplace improvement, and program developments. This has resulted, Mr. Speaker, in reduction of our surgical wait-lists in this province. In fact the number of patients waiting last year has been reduced by over 1,600. Mr. Speaker, we've did, in the last year 3,500 more MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging] than we'd done the year prior to that. We have actually reduced . . . or we increased the MRIs in this province by 22 per cent and 16 per cent for CT [computerized tomography] scans.

We realize that we still haven't moved everybody on a waiting list through the system. But, Mr. Speaker, as this Throne Speech correctly identifies, we are going to put additional resources into the health care system. We are going to continue to improve access, and we're going to continue to reduce waiting lists. Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech and the commitment through health care will do absolutely everything to provide a better environment for Saskatchewan families and of course build an even better future in this province for youth.

Mr. Speaker, that speaks to our educational and recruitment and retention initiatives in health. Mr. Speaker, over the last year we contacted all of those nurses about to graduate from the nursing education program. We showed them the benefits of working in the province of Saskatchewan. We identified some bursary programs. And, Mr. Speaker, what was the response from nursing education program graduates in the province? When they talked to the . . . when the regional health authorities and they dealt with the bursaries, Mr. Speaker, today — last year's graduating class — 90 per cent is working in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, tremendous progress that has been made. And what does the Throne Speech indicate, Mr. Speaker — more commitment from the Saskatchewan government towards the health care field. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, we've identified additional training opportunities and additional recruitment and retention initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, there's just so much that the people of Saskatchewan will benefit from as a result of the commitments

that have been made in this Throne Speech. And, Mr. Speaker, I am so looking forward to additional announcements that are going to come out of this government over the course of the next few months leading up to and including the development and the announcement of the budget in the spring.

Mr. Speaker, we've come a long ways from the days when the Leader of the Opposition was playing in the backrooms of the Grant Devine government. We've come a long way, Mr. Speaker, from when the deficit and the debt was the driving force behind the policies from the members opposite. Mr. Speaker, we spent a decade trying to rebuild this province and we spent the last five years building an environment in which this economy can grow. Mr. Speaker, today we've got an environment that is able to provide benefits back to today's Saskatchewan family and provide a better future for Saskatchewan youth.

I'm very excited to be a part of this process, Mr. Speaker, and I thank all of my colleagues for all of the hard work and dedication that they've made.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the Throne Speech and not supporting the motions raised by the doom-and-gloomers on the other side of the chamber. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[16:45]

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

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to enter into the debate today. And following the Minister of Health's comments regarding the Speech from the Throne, I don't think many of us will have witnessed so little thought in so many words before or into the future.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne really has altered very little from the ones in the past. We had a campaign which went forth on a green and prosperous economy and since that last election I have yet to vote on a meaningful piece of environmental legislation, which leads me to believe that it is an open discussion. It is something that for political reasons may sound good but really has no intent beyond moving voters to hopefully stay with the agenda of the current government and absolutely not what is needed for the province of Saskatchewan today or going forward.

Mr. Speaker, today in question period we had a very concerning situation revolving around youth that are in harm's way. This House — this Legislative Assembly — has been trying to deal with children working in the sex trade, being forced into this. And all members of both sides of the House have tried to put forth legislation to deal with this. And it is with regret that we got this report back that stated that these very vulnerable individuals were in fact being possibly put into harm's way by the very people meant to care for them.

The minister didn't have answers for us today, which was very disconcerting. And I know that, I know that, Mr. Speaker, this is just demonstrative of our current government's lack of

actually getting results for the statements that they make. And it's very disconcerting to myself. I have said it before in this Assembly. I know the members on the opposite side. I know many of them to be very good and caring people. And yet, and yet we have a system which they are responsible for running, which allows for these tragedies to be perpetuated, and results play second place to political outcomes as far as the New Democratic Party is concerned.

Mr. Speaker, we can see from the mover of the Speech from the Throne, the member from Regina Coronation Park . . . I took great interest to listening to his speech and his discussion at length on the upcoming plebiscite, which may or may not occur, with regards to the Canadian Wheat Board. Myself, as a farmer and exiting public life after this term of government is up, as a farmer, this is an issue that greatly concerns myself and many of my constituents. What is amazing is the historical revision that the member puts forth.

He does raise that the Canadian Wheat Board was initially proposed after the First World War. What he forgot to mention was that at that time it was a voluntary institution. It was not a single-desk selling operation. And somehow it managed to, somehow it managed to survive into the Second World War.

During that time, the war effort demanded that all the grain from Western Canada be put under the single desk of the Canadian Wheat Board. And I don't think that there were any farmers at that time felt that this was a particular difficult situation, when we had young men and women from this nation giving their lives and blood on the battlefields in France and overseas for our freedoms.

However, following the Second World War that monopoly was never reversed. Interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, in the first few years and the heightening of the Cold War, the CWB [Canadian Wheat Board] actually performed fairly well with regards to the prices it garnished and the market share that it retained. At that point it had roughly 50 per cent of the world's market share for export wheat and barley. To date it has about 21 per cent of the world's export share of wheat and barley and hence cannot demand the type of premiums that it used to. At 20 per cent of the world export, it is largely ignored and at the cost of myself and my neighbours. And this is a fact that the member from Coronation Park absolutely failed to raise.

And so it leads us into the question regarding this. And this does define the philosophies of the party opposite and our party is, why does it make sense to the member opposite that property — because I honestly believe that the hard work that I put into my crops and that my neighbours put into their crops should be their property — that because a majority of 50 plus 1 would then limit your ability to dispose of your property as you see fit?

It's wrong, Mr. Speaker. What's even more wrong, Mr. Speaker, is the historical exploitation of the Canadian Wheat Board by members in eastern Canada. If you go through . . . The member from North Battleford is shaking his head. What the member from North Battleford should look at is who got the contracts to move that CWB grain. I'll tell you who it was.

It was Canadian steamship lines largely and Paul Martin

Liberals. It was the union members on the tugboats which were designated only for grain up and down the St. Lawrence River, and at minus 20 you needed a boat in front and behind. Where, Mr. Speaker, if you had that same freighter loaded with coal, none of that was responsible. And that came right out of my family's pockets and the pockets of my neighbours. And yet this is what these people would support, Mr. Speaker.

More than that, Mr. Speaker, the reality is at the end of the day the Canadian Wheat Board only represented the Prairie provinces under this monopoly. It should be a basic charter standard that I should have the same rights as a individual in British Columbia or Quebec, but this is not the case. The larger philosophical point which exists here is the members opposite believe that it is all right if people with property, if 51 per cent of them are to vote, that they have the right, in a tyranny of the majority, to suppress the rights of the other 49 per cent.

If you took, Mr. Speaker, the gas stations in Regina, if you took the gas stations in Regina and said, we are going to have a vote on what that price setting for the price of fuel is and if 51 per cent vote that this is the way it is, everybody is going to be forced to live with that.

Mr. Speaker, this aspect, this aspect of what the member for Regina Coronation Park spoke of in his response to the Speech from the Throne absolutely demonstrates the mindset which is preventing our province from moving forward and taking our rightful place in the Dominion of Canada. Mr. Speaker, if we look, if we look at the reality of the population of this province prior to the 1930s, prior to the socialist disease which infected this area, Mr. Speaker, we had the third highest population of any province in the Dominion of Canada. Where are we today, Mr. Speaker? At around 4 per cent of the overall population.

And how does that hurt my neighbours? Well, Mr. Speaker, one of the valuable aspects in agriculture over the past 20 years, profitable, has been the supply managed sector. We have more arable land in this province than any other province. And yet when it comes to being able to produce chickens, turkeys, or dairy in that supply managed section, we are allocated 3.9 per cent of the Canadian quota and that's because we don't have the population. And it costs my neighbours and it costs me, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this Speech from the Throne doesn't address for me one of the largest issues which should face all persons in Saskatchewan and that has to do with how the members of our First Nation and Aboriginal community are going to be bridged out of having to be participants in the economy where only 24 out of 100 have full-time jobs. If we don't address these issues, which I haven't found addressed by this New Democratic Party government, we end up having manifestations of violence, manifestations of children being exploited in the sex trade, we have horrible social circumstances which affect all of us, Mr. Speaker.

I don't know how this particular Speech from the Throne or any that I have had to address have tackled this problem. I find that it has been something that is danced around, that none of us have entered into this debate openly. And we find Mr. Speaker, at the end it is all of us who end up paying for this.

And I think that across the province, one of the cynicisms around politicians is that we seem to have a situation wherein serious problems, such as the one I just outlined here, remain moot.

And yet at the other side of the coin, we have a shortening of the work week for the actual elected members. I know that, Mr. Speaker, these situations make it difficult for the electorate sometimes to really believe that we're going to have answers coming from this Legislative Assembly. And I find that that is particularly problematic and I would firmly place the blame largely on what has been the governing party, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there are only a few minutes left before the clock winds down. I wanted to take this opportunity to, I wanted to take this opportunity to congratulate the new member of our Assembly — the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy — also to pass on my condolences to the Heppner family in the loss of Mr. Heppner, and his years of service to this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the constituents of Kindersley look forward to the next election. I know that they have faced a number of challenges but, in many ways in traditional west central style, have met these challenges head-on. And I would like to thank them for the opportunity to continue to serve on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, with those remarks, I'd like to close my response to the Speech from the Throne. I won't be supporting it, as I cannot see that what is inherent within it is going to actually solve our problems. I will be supporting the amendment as raised by the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy and seconded by the member for, now I'm going to say Assiniboia but it was Cannington, Mr. Speaker. And with that, I will take my leave and I thank you for your attention.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is for me a distinct privilege to enter into this Throne Speech debate — a debate about a speech, Mr. Speaker, which looks forward with a sense of optimism and confidence about the future of our province.

Mr. Speaker, I'm a little bit, I don't know if you say amused or confused by the speech from the twilight zone that we just heard here a few moments ago. But, Mr. Speaker, I see the hon. member for . . .

An Hon. Member: — Upper rubber boot.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Upper rubber boot, he said. Wood River. Upper . . . I think he's got it right. That's what he would call his constituency. But I'll tell you what his constituency will not be calling him after the next election. They will not be calling him MLA.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. It now being the hour of 5 o'clock, this

House stands recessed until 7 p.m. tonight.

[The Assembly recessed until 19:00.]

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