



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

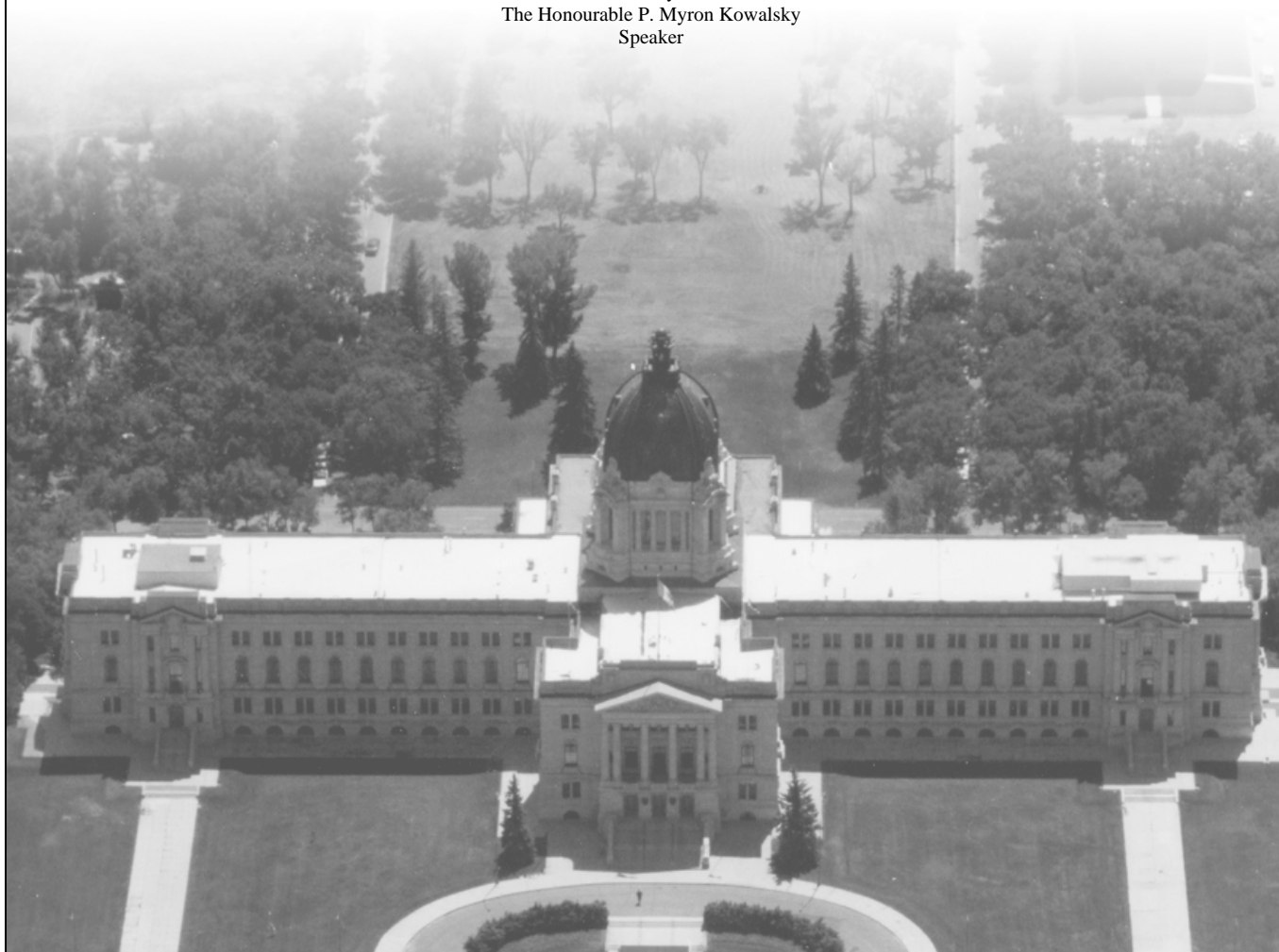
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

[The Assembly met at 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 again to present a petition in regards to dialysis in the Broadview Union Hospital. I read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to 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 petition I present today is signed by folks from the community of Grenfell. I so present.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The people of southwest Saskatchewan have been waiting for repairs to their highway for a considerable time. The prayer reads as follows:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this page of petition once again is signed by residents of the community of Maple Creek. I so present.

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased today to rise on behalf of people who are concerned about highways in my constituency, and today is Highway No. 49.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this government to repair Highway No. 49 in order to address safety concerns and to facilitate economic growth and tourism in Kelvington, Lintlaw, Preeceville, and surrounding areas.

The people who have signed this petition are all from Preeceville.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition by Saskatchewan people to fund Avastin. Mr. Speaker, these people are concerned that this is the first time in the province's history that the government has denied coverage of a cancer drug recommended by the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. The prayer of the petition reads:

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

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, a number of signatures on this petition come from the communities of Regina, Balgonie, McLean, Swift Current, and Kronau. And I am pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

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 on behalf of citizens who are very upset with this government's move to turn a portion of Highway 22 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 Strasbourg, Pilot Butte, Earl Grey, Markinch, and Southey and Craven. I so present.

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

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

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

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from Archerwill, Annaheim, Humboldt, Watson, Vanscoy, Saskatoon, Kelvington, and Viscount. I so present.

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

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

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

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

And this is signed by people from Estevan, Oxbow, and Regina. I so present. Thank you.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again to present a petition opposed to possible reductions of health care services in Wilkie. 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 Wilkie Health Centre and special care home maintain at the very least their current level of services.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to upgrade Highway 20 to primary weight status.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that Highway 20 be upgraded to primary weight status to ensure the economic viability in the surrounding areas.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This particular petition is signed by many citizens from the towns of Craven, Nokomis, and Govan and Jansen. I so present.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise again to present a petition regarding funding of the cancer drug Avastin. I will read the prayer for relief:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from throughout the province. I so present on their behalf. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again I'm honoured to rise today and present a petition urging the government to repair Highway 36. And I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to 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 people of Coronach and RM [rural municipality] 11, Hart Butte. Thank you. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier, the member for Saskatoon Riversdale.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have the privilege today of welcoming to our legislature a number of men and women each of whom have, at one time or another, occupied a seat in this legislature, former colleagues. What distinguishes, Mr. Speaker, this group of men and women is that today we have held somewhat of a reunion of this group of former members, each of whom were sworn into government exactly 15 years ago today on November 1, 1991, Mr. Speaker — which many will recall then as a group of caucus members on the government side formed that government which was left to deal with the financial mess that had been created in the 1980s in this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, if I may say before I introduce them by name, that work that we are able to do in the legislature today — whether it be in new diagnostic equipment in health care or whether, Mr. Speaker, it be in tax relief for Saskatchewan families — is work that we can do built upon the work

completed by this group of men and women those years ago. So, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to welcome this group and I would like to welcome them.

Many of them are seated on the floor of the Chamber, a couple in the gallery. And I'll first start with those who are seated on the floor. I would ask members today to welcome Judy Bradley, Carol Carson, Carolyn Jones, Reg Knezacek, Serge Kujawa, Jack Langford, Pat Lorjé, Janice MacKinnon, Andrew Renaud, Lorne Scott, John Solomon, Vi Stanger, Ed Tchorzewski, Eric Upshall, Bernie Wiens.

And, Mr. Speaker, in the gallery joined by their spouses, Carol and Dan Teichrob, Ron and Joanne Wormsbecker. I would ask all members to welcome these former members of our legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I'll join with the Premier, if I may, and welcome these former NDP [New Democratic Party] members back to the Legislative Assembly. It looks like they're having an enjoyable reunion. And I want to assure them that soon and very soon, their numbers are to grow, Mr. Speaker. Welcome to this Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you some very special students sitting in the west gallery. This is a group of young boys who are known as the Canada sports friendship exchange programs.

The Canada sports friendship exchange program is a program that connects athletes from French speaking parts of the country with English speaking parts of the country by using the common language of sports and physical activity. Today we have with us 14 grade 7 boys from the city of Cowansville, Quebec; Phillippe Cote-Jaques, teacher and coach. And from Saskatoon, we have 14 grade 7 boys from the city and they're here with Kavita Britton, assistant coach and exchange organizer. So I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming them to our legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to introduce 14 grade 12 students from the great school of Viscount Central High. It's great to see them here today and they've travelled this far to join with us. Along with them is their teacher, Maureen Vossen, and their chaperones, Richard Kirkwood and Myles Mann. I would ask everyone to

welcome them to their legislature here today. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to all members of the legislature, 12 people in the Speaker's gallery. They are all employees of SaskPower and they're over here visiting the legislature, coming to question period, and getting a better understanding of how this place works.

And so I'm very pleased to introduce Cecile Matysio, Joanne Laslo, Elaine Kivisto, Beryl Procyshyn, Donna Corley, Pam Klein, Jackie Kashuba, Barb Beltrami, Dawn Agar, Lana Schneider, Wanda Perfect, and Lisa Marsh. I ask all members to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I would, on behalf of the opposition, like to welcome the SaskPower workers. For a very brief period time as a temporary worker, my daughter worked for SaskPower. She found it a great place to work and had hoped to get on permanently. It didn't work out so, but welcome to your Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all of my colleagues here in the Assembly two folks sitting in the west gallery. Crandall Hrynkiw . . . Crandall is the regional director for region 4, which includes Saskatoon and the surrounding area which actually goes all the way out — Sunwest, Horizon, Prairie Spirit school divisions as well as St. Paul's and Englefeld.

Mr. Hrynkiw is here doing work today and with him is his son, Matthew. Crandall has brought Matthew to work with him today. He has been through a visit of the office on College Street, has done a great number of, been introduced to a great number of employees over at 2220 College, and he said it's been a bit of a bogging experience just seeing what his dad does.

I'm very pleased to have Crandall and Matthew come over today for a quick visit in my office. I hope they have a very good day and a safe journey back to Saskatoon this afternoon. But I would ask all my colleagues to please welcome Crandall and Matthew here to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's always a pleasure to introduce family members. And today is one of those days that gives me great pleasure to reintroduce to the Assembly my dad, Peter Krawetz, sitting up in the far east gallery; and my stepmother, Sophie. I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming them. But also, since today is November 1, I'd also like to ask all members in joining with me to wish my dad a happy 89th birthday.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Saskatchewan's Family Doctor of the Year

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, recently a 40-year-old doctor, Dr. Ross Kerkhoff, was recognized as Saskatchewan's Family Doctor of the Year by the College of Family Physicians of Canada. Dr. Kerkhoff received his award at the college's annual family medicine forum held in Quebec City.

A graduate of the University of Stellenbosch, Cape Province, South Africa, Dr. Kerkhoff was working in England when he received an invitation in 1996 from a Moosomin doctor — an old school rugby opponent — to do a locum in that community. Dr. Kerkhoff spent a year there before heading to Australia, but returned a year later to put down permanent roots.

As a foreign-trained graduate growing up in a large city I didn't see myself settling in a small community on the Canadian prairie. But it wasn't long before we were embraced by the community and with a thriving practice came to realize what a good fit it was . . . [says Dr. Kerkhoff].

He was one of 10 recipients of the College of Family Physicians award this year. Dr. Kerkhoff continues to work in a group practice in Moosomin with four other doctors who share on-call duties and clinics including travelling to six satellite clinics that service 13 outlying communities. Dr Kerkhoff says:

Therein lies our strength, in that we have been able to work together and support each other. It certainly makes for an interesting practice and provides us with the life-balance between work and home life . . .

Congratulations, Dr. Kerkhoff.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Constituent Training Youth to Run Marathons

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Ben

Hernando is the marketing director for the North Central Family Centre here in Regina. He has run in more than 20 marathons and he is now using his experience to help the youth of our community.

Mr. Speaker, since July Mr. Hernando has been offering training to north central Regina youth, in marathon training, in order to give them a goal and a chance for a better life.

In exchange for five months of training, Ben Hernando is offering his students — dubbed the dirty dozen though there are now 15 of them, Mr. Speaker — the opportunity to run at the Las Vegas International Marathon in December. And though he has received some sponsorship, Mr. Hernando has purchased proper shoes and t-shirts for his runners out of his own pocket. Ben Hernando simply told his runners, if you give me your commitments, I'll take you there. Even if I have to pay out of my own pockets, I'm taking you there.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to invite all members to join with me in thanking Ben Hernando for his selfless commitment to the youth of north central Regina. People like Ben and Sandy and Ivan and all the folks at the North Central Family Centre help make Saskatchewan a great place to live and raise a family. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Weyburn Inventors Receive Awards

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this year has been an impressive one for the young people of Weyburn-Big Muddy and I wish to tell you about two of them today. Mr. Speaker, earlier this year two grade 12 students at the Weyburn Comprehensive won a gold medal at the Southeast Regional Science Fair in March. These students, Colby Mainil and Mike Ehman, invented a wheelchair capable of climbing a step or curb.

In May they took their invention to Quebec City, taking gold again in engineering at the Canada Wide Science Fair. In addition to the prestige of winning a national award, both young men were awarded scholarships. And the recognition doesn't stop there. Just this past September, Colby and Mike were invited to Calgary to receive the Manning Innovation's young innovators award.

Inspired by the fact that Weyburn has little in the way of wheelchair accessibility, the two developed an affordable manual chair attachment that can safely climb a curb or step in just 30 seconds. The two have patented the invention and are looking to manufacture it.

These two young men are very humble, Mr. Speaker, giving praise to their families and to two of their high school teachers, Leo Carteri and Wade Oberg. Congratulations to Colby and Mike and best of luck in moving this worthwhile invention forward and with their studies at the University of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Family Doctor Week

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, this is Family Doctor Week in Canada. Mr. Speaker, each and every day in this country, family doctors diagnose and treat illness and injury, promote disease prevention and good health, coordinate care, and advocate on behalf of their patients. Family doctors not only provide primary medical care but also a substantial portion of secondary and tertiary care in many communities, working from their offices as well as hospitals, their patients' homes, nursing homes, and other community facilities.

Public surveys repeatedly show that Canadians hold family doctors in high regard for the quality of care that they provide. And, Mr. Speaker, in addition to patient care, family doctors are involved in teaching students and residents in our 17 Canadian medical schools, and in conducting research.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to acknowledge the work that family doctors do each and every day on behalf of their patients and for their ongoing contributions to our health care system in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to take this opportunity to add my congratulations to Dr. Ross Kerkhoff of Moosomin, who was recently named Saskatchewan Family Physician of the Year. I ask all members to join me in supporting Family Doctor Week in Canada. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Javelin Gold for Saskatchewan Athlete

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to congratulate Kirstie Redlick of Biggar. Kirstie brought home gold as the Canadian champion for the 15 and under for javelin at the Legion National Track and Field Championships in Burnaby, British Columbia, August 12 and 13. Her top throw of 40.52 metres beat out her closest rival from British Columbia who threw a 39.13 metres.

This achievement goes along with her other staggering accomplishments. In 2005 she broke the bantam record. This year the midget record fell to Kirstie's javelin. In the last two years she has gone undefeated at the Western Canadian championships.

Kirstie has put a lot of hard work into her achievements, training with some of the best throwing coaches beginning as early as grade 5. And beginning at only 13 years old, she is looking forward to many more record-breaking years ahead of her. She is now turning her sights on her other love, hockey.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to invite the Assembly to join me in congratulating Kirstie for her achievements in track and field and wishing her good luck with her hockey season.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Share the Warmth

Mr. Borgerson: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Energy Share program is helping Saskatchewan people better manage their energy costs. One of its major initiatives is the Share the Warmth home energy efficiency project where community volunteers will help 2,500 families over the next five years.

Mr. Speaker, this year's project began September 7 in Regina and ended in Estevan on October 11 with retrofits to over 400 homes in 19 communities. SaskEnergy, along with its partners, the Salvation Army, SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology], and hundreds of community volunteers from hockey players to local bank employees to town councillors to MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly], helped these families improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

Mr. Speaker, I was honoured to be one of 108 volunteers in Prince Albert where 49 homes were visited. Each family benefited from \$200 worth of home improvement supplies which included weatherstripping, window shrink film, a furnace filter, a programmable thermostat, a low flow shower head, and my favourite, Mr. Speaker, a water wizard.

Mr. Speaker, these families can now see savings of up to \$150 per year, and I know that the volunteers as well learned what they can do to make their homes more energy efficient. And as the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre will attest, Mr. Speaker, we did find out first-hand how many politicians it takes to screw in an energy efficient 60 watt florescent light bulb.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the staff at SaskEnergy and its many volunteers for sharing the warmth across our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Pressures on Rural Hospitals

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the people of rural Saskatchewan have a new definition for cavalier. When they look in their dictionaries, they will see a picture of the Minister of Health, Saskatchewan's Minister of Health.

Yesterday my colleagues raised serious concerns about the Spiritwood hospital. Spiritwood's services were shut down indefinitely because of the shortage of doctors. When asked by reporters how frequently this occurs, the minister said it happens on occasion.

Mr. Speaker, the people of rural Saskatchewan know all too well how frequently it happens. We've had examples in Kamsack. It has happened in Big River. It takes place on a

frequently routine basis across the province. Now it appears the minister is completely uncertain about whether or not his new recruitment program will actually relieve the pressures now being experienced. The situation in Spiritwood is serious. Lives are put at risk. Problems in Spiritwood will only make matters worse in nearby institutions already suffering from their own shortages.

The people of Saskatchewan deserve something more than the Minister of Health. They want to see something more than, oh well, or maybe they'll shrug their shoulders. They deserve more, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Labour Shortage

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well anyone in this House will recognize there is just significant potential for Saskatchewan's economy. Now and into the near term, we have a challenge. The challenge in the province's economy right now is a labour shortage, a labour shortage in no small part caused by the NDP's record of driving people from the province of Saskatchewan. Our province has lost 4,500 people last year alone since the Premier took office as Premier of the province. We've now lost another 18,000 people, Mr. Speaker.

And what has the government done about it? Well they've done nothing about it. The minister is chirping from his seat. He says don't worry when people leave; there's more left for the rest of us. The sum and the total of their plan in the Throne Speech was to appoint another committee, Mr. Speaker.

Today the Saskatchewan Party released a plan to deal with the labour shortage that includes 39 points, Mr. Speaker — some of them short term, some of them medium, some of them long term. Will the Premier do what he usually does? Will he simply adopt some or all of the Saskatchewan Party plan so we can deal with this issue, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, in a moment I'm going to ask the Minister of Advanced Education to address some of these issues.

But let me say this to the Leader of the Opposition. Where has he been? Where has the Leader of the Opposition been? I've had a cursory glance at this so-called plan which he released at the Regina Chamber of Commerce today. There was some expectation there, Mr. Speaker, that they were going to hear something new. I'm told by people who were there, there's some real disappointment. There's nothing new here, Mr. Speaker, nothing new.

And in fact, Mr. Speaker, when I look at what he's proposing, I say what he wants to invest in — people, Mr. Speaker. We're doing that. He wants to enhance access to opportunity, Mr. Speaker. We're doing that. He wants to improve immigration, increase immigration. We're doing that. He wants to create opportunities for education. We're doing that.

Mr. Speaker, here's the difference. While they're talking about stuff, we're getting stuff done, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Oh they're getting stuff done on the labour shortage issue, Mr. Speaker. Last year, last year under that government's leadership, the population of Saskatchewan dropped 4,500 people. He drove 4,500 people from the province. He's doing something. Since he became the Premier, he has driven 18,000 people out of the province. He's doing something.

Not too long ago, the Minister of Industry said that there are 10 to 15,000 jobs unfilled in the province of Saskatchewan. Oh they're doing something all right, Mr. Speaker. They're contributing to the problem, Mr. Speaker. That's what the NDP government is doing.

The Premier just stood up and said, well these are terrible ideas. If it sounds familiar, it should. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the NDP said lowering the income tax was a terrible idea. When we raised it, they adopted it. They said lowering business taxes was a terrible idea. When we raised it, they adopted it. They did the same thing with the PST [provincial sales tax] and the basic food allowance. Mr. Speaker, when we said dedicate all the gas taxes to highways, they said it's a terrible idea. Now they've done it.

Will the Premier just save us all time and commit to adopt some or all of the Saskatchewan Party plan on the labour shortage?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, well I find it very curious listening to the Leader of the Opposition because when Alberta has a labour shortage, he says that's what we need to have, Mr. Speaker.

But I do have an interesting email here. It's an email from a 23-year-old young woman from Edmonton, Alberta, who wants to move to Saskatchewan. And I quote:

I love Saskatchewan. I love the lakes, prairies, towns, and the people . . . Is there any sort of recruitment program, or opportunities that I should be made aware of?

That email was sent to the Leader of the Opposition. And did the Leader of the Opposition talk about all of the jobs that are available in the city of Swift Current? Did the Leader of the

Opposition encourage that young woman to move to Saskatchewan? Did the Leader of the Opposition tell that young person that we had 105,000 young people working in Saskatchewan in July 2006? Not once did the Leader of the Opposition encourage that young woman to come to Saskatchewan. All he did was dump on the Premier of Saskatchewan and that . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

The Speaker: — Order please. It seems that old habits die hard. I would remind our guests that while former members have the opportunity and are welcome into the legislature, I would ask them to resist all urges to get in there and participate in this debate. The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Although, I'm not sure I . . . Frankly the NDP opposite need all the help they can get, even from members who have already lost, I'd say.

The Speaker: — I think the hon. member knows that he ought not to comment on rulings of the Speaker. The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The mistake I made in that email — if the minister read the entire email — the mistake I made was referring that young person, who we do want to move to the province of Saskatchewan, I referred her to the minister opposite, Mr. Speaker. That's the mistake we made because her record, the NDP government's record, is to drive people from this province in a boom. Forty-five hundred people last year; 18,000 since the Premier got his job. Just 58 per cent of Saskatchewan people are between the ages of 20 and 64. That's 5 per cent below the national average, Mr. Speaker. What's 5 per cent below the national average? Fifty thousand people. That would have dealt with the labour shortage, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately this government has done nothing on the issue.

Here are 39 ideas for them to consider. Will they skip all the rhetoric and do what they usually do and steal the ideas from the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well it's interesting that the opposition has just discovered there's a labour shortage in Saskatchewan because last spring, last spring and during the discussion on the budget several members of the opposition said in terms of our commitment to bring 5,000 immigrants to the province they said and I quote:

. . . their commitment was to bring in 5,000 immigrants into Saskatchewan on an annual basis . . . In other words, they want to bring people into Saskatchewan to be unemployed . . .

That's what they said. The second thing that they said:

And the Minister of Immigration wants to bring 5,000 immigrants, and that's wonderful. But what are these people going to do when they get here . . .

That's what they said. Then they issued in, I believe, April and May six press releases on the economy, and not once did they mention labour shortages. Well, Mr. Speaker, we've got an agenda. It's going to be released shortly. I'm interested in seeing what the opposition . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, psychologists talk about the five stages of grief. Here we see the five stages of NDP grief. We've seen it on a number of issues when we present a challenge and then an idea from this side of the House.

First there is denial. That's where they say the problem doesn't exist, Mr. Speaker. Then there's anger. That's when the Minister of Industry phones an open-line show host, Mr. Speaker. Then there's scoffing. That's what we're seeing now today from the NDP. And then of course follows plagiarism, Mr. Speaker. That's the second-last stage. The actual last stage in this process, mercifully, Mr. Speaker, is an election when the grieving will be over in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — The minister talks about having a plan. They've set up another department. They've set up another committee. They haven't addressed any of the specific issues and questions today that we've raised. I wonder if she has the time to do that. And will she commit to this Assembly that they're going to look at this document, as they have our plan on income tax and on business tax, as they have our plan on the national biofuel strategy? Will they review the plan and move to immediately implement it for the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I do have the Sask Party's little document. I note that when we release documents, they always talk about targets. There isn't one target, not one.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me tell you, let me tell you what we've done, what we've done in the last two years. Thirty-nine . . . Three thousand . . .

The Speaker: — Order please, members. Order. Order. The Minister of Advanced Education and Employment.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Oh I know they don't want to hear

about targets. But they're quite prepared to talk about targets when it comes to health care. They want to talk about targets when it comes to the government. But not once do they talk about targets when it comes to themselves.

Anyway, 3,904 new training opportunities in the last two years — 3,904. Five thousand youth apprenticeship positions for young people in high school as of September of this fall, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, there's a mid-year coming shortly by the Minister of Finance, and we'll have more to say about more training opportunities and jobs for young people in this province.

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, the question is directed to the Minister of Community Resources. At any time did he receive a recommendation from anyone to end the contract with the Oyate Safe House?

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, as we've indicated time and time again, we got advice from numerous folks, and certainly one of the persons whose opinion we highly value is that of the Children's Advocate. And I'd ask the member to turn to page 37 of the Children's Advocate report dated September 2006, under recommendation SYS.14(06):

That the Department of Community Resources and Oyate establish a collaborative partnership process within 60 days of the date of issue of this report, to develop a shared vision and common service delivery principles for Oyate [Mr. Speaker].

We've indicated time and time again that the Children's Advocate has always advocated for us to continue to partnership, if possible, and we're working down that path, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — You know, Mr. Speaker, we heard in the rotunda yesterday about the reports when you give only one page of a two-page report, where the actual information was contained on the second report of what the Children's Advocate really said. Does the minister recall a briefing note that he got from the regional manager, southwest region of his department, on April 10 of this year?

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, when we spoke of the

effort of this government to try and respond to the issue of children being exploited on the street, what we wanted to do was set up the capacity of Saskatchewan to really respond to the issue. And in the process of trying to develop that capacity, the all-party committee recommended that we deal with First Nations, and in partnership with First Nations, to ensure that there was a connection with First Nations children, of whom many were involved with the sex trade, the target that we're looking at. And obviously as we grew along and as we moved along in this capacity-building stage, there was challenges which we indicated. And as the challenges arose, we addressed them, and things were moving in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, we're at that stage now. The Children's Advocate gave us the time frame for an update. Very quickly here we intend to meet with the Children's Advocate. And secondly, Mr. Speaker, he also indicated that at the end of this year that a full report be submitted to him, which we intend to do.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure we're talking about the same subject here half the time. He has never answered the question. I'd like to refresh his memory, of the minister, of the report that came to him from his own department. And I quote:

The department has three options to consider in response to these incidents. The region is recommending option no. 1. Option no. 1: do not enter into a future service agreement with the Oyate board. The department service agreement expires March 31, 2006.

It goes on, Mr. Speaker, "removal of children effective immediately, a new RFP process would be required."

This is the minister's own department that's recommending it to him, but he hasn't brought that forward. Mr. Speaker, will the minister ... why did he reject the advice of his own department?

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, again I'll point out that the department did not run Oyate. And let me be perfectly clear to the people of Saskatchewan that we have shut down Oyate at the request of the board of Oyate. We have no children there, no staff, and no costs at Oyate at this time, Mr. Speaker.

Obviously when we looked at the involvement of the auditor and the advocate, what we said, we would take the advice of the auditor and the advocate, and we take that advice very seriously. And I'll point out again, if you go back to page 37 of the Children's Advocate report where it states, and I quote:

It is the hope of the Children's Advocate that the recommendations contained within this report will assist the Department of Community Resources and Oyate in moving forward in a positive, collaborative manner ...

[which] will most effectively serve the best interests, well-being and safety of sexually exploited children in this province [Mr. Speaker].

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, obviously I'm going to get the same answer to every question. But his own department recommended that he stop this agreement, not the Children's Advocate. Both of them have recommended it. And if he'd have given the press both pages of the information yesterday that would have showed up.

Yesterday the minister repeated over and over again he was sticking with the current safe house board because that's what the Children's Advocate is demanding. Imagine my surprise, Mr. Speaker, when I turned on the radio this morning and there was the Children's Advocate, Marvin Bernstein, being quoted; and I quote, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Bernstein said that the minister doesn't understand his report on the safe house. Mr. Bernstein said his report identifies many problems at the safe house, and if the government shut down Oyate permanently, he wouldn't object.

Mr. Speaker, when will this minister quit playing his personal politics? When will he stand up to his responsibility? He is ultimately responsible for the children in this province, not the board of Oyate. He is, and he should do his job and stop playing politics.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, what is important is that we're trying to provide solutions and leadership. We're following the children's . . . [inaudible] . . . We have a good blueprint in my hand here that we intend to follow. And if anybody's playing politics, Mr. Speaker, that party has misquoted me on many occasions. They have talked about DCR [Department of Community Resources] staff conduct which was not called for. And now of course he knows better than the Children's Advocate.

Mr. Speaker, we're not going to take our advice from a politically motivated party whose only role right now is to create doom, fear, and to try and get power, Mr. Speaker. And they'll use anybody to try and achieve that goal.

On this side we have a plan; we have an agenda. And we plan on putting in solutions as per the advice of the Children's Advocate. And further, Mr. Speaker, I'll go to page 47 of the report where it says under recommendation SYS.06(06), "That Oyate and DCR develop a comprehensive programming model, having regard to the following elements . . ."

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for

Saskatoon Northwest.

Mr. Merriman: — You know, Mr. Speaker, how he can say I have an agenda when we prove concrete that he has an agenda, and it's a political agenda. Four days ago, Mr. Speaker, the minister told this Assembly he would rather listen to the Children's Advocate instead of the members opposite. Yesterday he said the same thing. Mr. Speaker, the minister should do as he promised. Will he listen to the Children's Advocate who has told him today on CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] radio he should shut down the safe house permanently? This would be fine with him.

Mr. Speaker, his political agenda is putting children at risk. He knows it. I know it, and the people of Saskatchewan know it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, let me say again to the people of Saskatchewan that the Oyate Safe House is closed. It has been closed for six months. The Oyate Safe House is closed. And who closed it was the Oyate board, Mr. Speaker. So I'll say it again that the Oyate house has been closed for six months. The board made a decision.

Now we're trying to get advice from the Children's Advocate. And I go onto recommendation — that's page 47 for that member opposite — and again you misquoted the Children's Advocate and I quote:

That Oyate and DCR develop a comprehensive programming model having regard to the following elements:

Effective admission criteria and screening processes . . .

Individual case planning and management . . .

Safety and security concerns . . .

Effective communication protocol . . .

[14:15]

And second, Mr. Speaker, another recommendation:

That DCR and Oyate develop an operational protocol, having regard to the following elements:

And I'll continue:

Clearly defined roles and responsibilities . . .

Job descriptions for all staff members;

Clearly outlined reporting responsibilities and processes;

And, Mr. Speaker, I have more.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, today the minister says the facility's closed. Yesterday he said they were doing criminal checks on the staff. So it's either closed, or it isn't closed.

Mr. Speaker, this minister has a choice. He could accept the advice of his own department. He could accept the advice of the Children's Advocate — stop jeopardizing the children who are at risk. But no, this minister refuses to listen to the advice of the Children's Advocate, his own department who recommends it.

Mr. Speaker, why did the minister make such a reckless choice months ago? Why is he stubbornly sticking to that advice? Why is he playing politics, Mr. Speaker? Why doesn't he get on . . . there is another group more capable in this city of providing it? And why won't he go back out to RFP [request for proposal] and give other people an opportunity to provide this service?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, once again that member is massively confused. I am not going to take advice over that member over that party when it comes to this issue. I am going to take advice from the Children's Advocate, Mr. Speaker, even the Provincial Auditor. And I'll go on to recommendations again on page 48, and I'll continue on. Recommendation SYS.09(06) that, and I quote:

That all recommendations of the Children's Advocate and Provincial Auditor be implemented prior to the resumption of operations at the Oyate Safe House.

We're going to follow that directive. Mr. Speaker, again page 48, no. 5 recommendation, SYS.10(06). And again I quote:

That Oyate Safe House staff be permanent and that Oyate Safe House staff include appropriate gender role models and be reflective of the children's culture and life experiences.

Mr. Speaker, to me that suggests from the advocate that we continue working away. And he has given us the time frame of 60 days which we fully intend to comply with, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to refresh the minister's recollection of events, this was broken on CBC. The Saskatchewan Party took this and asked for the audit, asked for the Children's Advocate to get involved because that minister would have left it open, and it'd still be that way today, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the minister has shown a reckless regard for the children of this province. He has taken political expediency over the safety of children. He's callously rejected recommendations both by his own top regional manager

involved in this where the no. 1 issue was close it down, by his own staff.

Mr. Speaker, when is he going to sever ties with this organization, put this back out to tender? When is he going to allow these children to be looked after immediately, not in six months from now?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, as I've said time and time again, the children are being looked after. We have our own staff. We have resources and facilities. And I've indicated to the press that the children are being looked after.

There are no children at Oyate Safe House. That board made that decision. So I'll say it again loud and clear for that member. There are no children at Oyate. Oyate is shut down. All the children that were at Oyate are now being taken care of by DCR staff, and certainly, Mr. Speaker, we'll continue that work.

But as I've indicated to that member, we are going to work very closely with the auditor and especially with the advocate. He's given us a November 14 timeline to try and find some resolution to our differences between Oyate and ourselves. And if we can't, guess what? It ends there. But in the meantime, we said we'd follow the recommendations. We fully intend to do that, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, in the minister's own words, if these children are being looked after carefully now, then why do we need the Oyate Safe House? He just said they're being looked after. Maybe he'd like to explain.

You know this government's handling of this safe house matter is inexcusable. You know we have a record of mismanagement, reprehensible conduct stretching over three separate ministers — the former minister from Moose Jaw North who started this project, the minister from Regina Rosemont who was involved in project, and the current minister. And they all have mismanaged this file. Each and every member opposite should be ashamed of this government's record. They failed these children. They put lives at risk.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister, a former minister of Social Services: will he today commit to cancelling the safe house agreement, re-tendering the contract, and starting over with a new board and hopefully a new minister?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, just to remind that member it was the all-party committee of which I'm sure some of his members of his party had participated in and had certainly shared some advice with them. And, Mr. Speaker, it is quite strange that that member doesn't get it.

One of the things we're trying to do on this side of the House is trying to find some solutions, resolutions, and some opportunities for these children to exit that particular trade, Mr. Speaker. We're trying to find some solutions, and in trying to develop those solutions, Mr. Speaker, we're trying to reach out to the First Nations which that party agreed to. And the all-party committee was important. And now they're changing their mind, Mr. Speaker.

On this side of the House, we're going to continue working with those people that don't have a political agenda, Mr. Speaker, and that is the Children's Advocate, the auditor, and many First Nations that want to make a difference in these children's lives. And that's exactly where we're going and shame on them.

Once again, the Oyate house has been closed for six months. It'll stay closed unless all the recommendations are met, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 1 — The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2006

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

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 1, The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Labour that Bill No. 1, The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 5 — The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 2006

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 5, The

Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Industry and Resources that Bill No. 5, The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 2006 . . . Order please. Order. Order. It has been moved by the Minister of Industry and Resources that Bill No. 5, The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 6 — The Youth Drug Detoxification and Stabilization Amendment Act, 2006

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

Hon. Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 6, The Youth Drug Detoxification and Stabilization Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Healthy Living Services that Bill No. 6, The Youth Drug Detoxification and Stabilization Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Addley: — Next sitting.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 7 — The Public Health Amendment Act, 2006

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 7, The Public Health Amendment Act be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 7, The Public Health Amendment Act, 2006 be

now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, at the next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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, seconded by Ms. Hamilton, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Duncan.]

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

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to begin by saying how pleased I am to be able to have been joined today by many of my former colleagues who are behind the rail today. It was in the past great to work with them. They've served their province well. They did a lot for our province and obviously helped to set the base for the things that we're able to do today, and I want to thank them for that in a very public way.

As well I'd like to thank, in speaking to the Throne Speech, my constituents from P.A. [Prince Albert] Northcote for giving me again the opportunity to represent them here. And I want to just briefly congratulate . . . As you will know, we've had civic elections around this province. We in Prince Albert now have a new mayor and I want to congratulate on your behalf I think as well, our new mayor, Jim Scarrow, in his new role. And I really do look forward to working with him. He's been a very important part of the Premier's task force on forestry. I think the people of Prince Albert recognized his work, and it's no small wonder that he was victorious with the largest majority that I've seen in that city for a very, very long time.

Mr. Speaker, having our colleagues here today, our former colleagues here today, brings me back to 1991, 15 years ago today, 15 years ago today as an old — and what ended up being a somewhat corrupt — administration was replaced by a new government with a new vision and new dreams, and established the base for a new future for our province.

And it is with pride that I am able to support this Throne Speech

today, Mr. Speaker, because of the work that was done by that administration. And, you know, I remember that day some 15 years ago, being fortunate enough to have been elected in '86 and worked for five years in opposition to replace that administration fuelled by free liquor from the Liquor Board. And so it was a good day for many of us.

And I can remember I walked in, Mr. Speaker, I walked in the back door and, lo and behold, who do I meet at the door? Fifteen years ago today I met a former employee of that administration walking out the back door, Mr. Speaker. It was an important day.

And it was 15 years ago today that the Leader of the Opposition was cleaning out his desk in room 348. He was moving on. His minister had been defeated along with many of the other ministers. He'd served up his last drop of free liquor to his political masters. He'd collected his four months of severance for serving as a political adviser to one of those ministers. He gathered up government grant money to establish a new career for himself, a Country Music Hall of Fame business, in Swift Current. A business, I might add, that went broke some very few months later. Very short, short ending to that particular one.

And, Mr. Speaker, I suppose that employee of that administration decided that we needed more Progressive Conservative government and so he subsequently ran — after the museum closed — as a Progressive Conservative party candidate in that riding. Members of that party didn't choose to accept him but, Mr. Speaker, I want to say in hearkening back, it really was an important day.

And it was a day of change. And people will remember the challenges that that administration had in the 1990s, Mr. Speaker. People of this province understand that this Throne Speech is able to be presented in the way that it was because of the 10 years that people of the New Democratic Party government spent re-establishing and rebuilding the base for our province. And, Mr. Speaker, we have former cabinet ministers who served in the Treasury Board of that administration in those years here with us and they know only too well the challenges that were faced in putting our fiscal house in order. And so we spent those 10 years paying down some debt. We spent those years attempting to balance our budget and finally we did.

And we were able to restore pride in the province for the people of this province which they hadn't had for a number of years, the embarrassment of the 1980s still fresh in their minds. And, Mr. Speaker, subsequent to those 10 years we were able to spend the next five years rebuilding — rebuilding and reorganizing, re-energizing this province.

[14:30]

Mr. Speaker, so what have we been able to achieve in the last 15 years? Well we got rid of a lot of that horrible, horrible Progressive Conservative, Tory, Saskatchewan Party debt. And, Mr. Speaker, we were able to re-establish the trust of the bond rating agencies and the bankers who financed the highest per capita debt that any province in this country at one time had. And, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the initiatives of the last five years we've been able to fuel what is one of the hottest

economies in this country.

And so what have we been able to do? Mr. Speaker, in the last five years this administration I would say has been able to reduce the taxes of this province in an unparalleled and an unprecedented amount. Mr. Speaker, we know that we have made life better for our businesses. We've made them more competitive. And the people of this province know that they've got more money in their jeans because we've been reducing the personal income tax. Fifty thousand people, Mr. Speaker, no longer even pay provincial income tax as a result of the initiatives of this administration.

And, Mr. Speaker, are we able to make life better for Saskatchewan's young people and Saskatchewan's families? Yes we are. We've been able to recognize because of a hot economy and develop in the establishment of a Family Day, a statutory holiday in February to serve our families and give them that break in our long, long winter.

Mr. Speaker, we are so many firsts and have done and have created so many firsts. You know, I hearken back to 15 years ago and the subsequent budgets and I remember the joy in this province and I remember the joy in this government when we were able to deliver the first balanced budget of any province in this country. What an achievement. What a record. How proud the Saskatchewan people can be of themselves.

And we haven't let up. Thirteen consecutive balanced budgets now. Our provincial government debt is the lowest that we have had in 15 years. The bond rating agencies have seen that good management should be rewarded. We've had 14 consecutive credit rating upgrades.

Mr. Speaker, our people have the lowest utility rates of all of these Western provinces. And how have we been able to do that, Mr. Speaker? Because we protected those Crown corporations that deliver the lowest utility bundle from the privatization of the Leader of the Opposition and the gang of cabinet ministers that he fuelled with free whisky in the 1980s, and we protected the people of Saskatchewan from a wholesale sell-off of their Crowns. And well, Mr. Speaker, I remember the SaskEnergy debate. And well, Mr. Speaker, I remember the tenacity of those privatizing, right wing, money-squandering Progressive Conservatives in the 1980s. I remember it all too well.

And, Mr. Speaker, members of the Saskatchewan Party who hide under a new name, taunt government members. And they tell us, oh we're going to change this government and we're going to be over there and we're going to make things better. And these were the same taunts that we heard prior to 2003, Mr. Speaker.

And I tell you what. When it comes to decision-making time, the million people of this province do not forget who they are. They won't forget. They can't forget. They don't dare to forget. And I tell you, Mr. Speaker, there will never be, there will never be a Chair of the Treasury Board sitting in government from that side of the House because people remember who they are and people know them for what they are, Mr. Speaker.

And so what about our future? And what about our children's

future? The number of jobs that have been created in this province — unparalleled, unprecedented. The Leader of the Opposition's own riding, if you'll check, check on the web page, you'll find there's about 150 jobs open in his community. And he knows what the economy of Swift Current is like. And he knows that this province because of the tax changes that we've made and because we've got a growing economy is able to afford to build the citizens of Swift Current and that area a brand new hospital.

And, Mr. Speaker, had we continued to do what the Conservative government of the 1980s did, we would have no money for hospitals. We'd have no money for roads. Mr. Speaker, we would have no future for the young people of this province. I tell you that all has changed and the young people of this province know it and they are filling those jobs. They're going to continue to fill those jobs and I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that we're going to continue to work with them to ensure that there are jobs for that to be able to happen.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — You know, and how out of touch can these folks be? You know, yesterday I hear the member from Arm River-Watrous. And I'm glad he's here today because I want to respond to his comments. He was complaining about the conditions of roads. And he was complaining about young people. He was complaining about everything you could possibly think of. But of course that's the mantra of the Saskatchewan Party. That's who they are.

And he happened to mention Highway 219. And I was so glad that he did, Mr. Speaker, because what it did was gave me an opportunity to stand in my place and tell him that this government has committed \$24 million to upgrading, paving, straightening, and widening that road in partnership with three RMs and the Dakota First Nations, Mr. Speaker. And if he didn't know it, he should have known it.

But, Mr. Speaker, it won't be enough. Not for them, not for them. You know, we've got \$2 billion worth of upgrades to pave standard or thin membranes in this province. And they go around this province and they're promising to commit to anyone who will listen that they're going to upgrade them all. They're going to pave every road, Mr. Speaker. There's going to be a monorail in every city according to the Saskatchewan Party.

But I tell you it all wears thin, Mr. Speaker. People know there are limits to what even this prosperous economy can afford. And I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that member can chirp and he can harp and he can be all embarrassed that there's \$24 million coming in to that area to rebuild that road . . . to \$100 million of economic development. But, Mr. Speaker, I will stand with the chief and I'll stand with the reeves and I'll stand with the people in his backyard, and we'll build that road in spite of him. In spite of him.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Now, Mr. Speaker, this is an interesting place. It truly is. This is a place where decisions are made that impact on people's daily lives and obviously impact

on their future. And so have we recognized young people? Sure we have. Have we recognized the need for places of higher learning to have the capacity to train our young folks? Yes, we have. And all of that was outlined in the Throne Speech. And, Mr. Speaker, are we welcoming immigrants to this province? Yes, we are. And, Mr. Speaker, are we going to be building on the incredible base that the people of Saskatchewan have built for themselves? I say again, yes, we are.

And so what to the future? Mr. Speaker, I will make a prediction — that you are going to see an in-migration of young people to this province because it is a province of opportunity.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — We have affordable housing. We have the lowest of utility costs. We have the lowest or the second lowest tax base and tax rates. We are competitive. And it's a good place to start a business, Mr. Speaker. It's a good place to make money. And it's a good place to raise your family.

And, Mr. Speaker, we haven't, by the way, squandered our lakes and our trees and our fisheries. We have a tourism industry that's growing and has yet more opportunity. But what's most important, Mr. Speaker, we have a quality of life that's unparalleled in any province, in any province in Western Canada. And I want to say that people are looking for that kind of a lifestyle. But they're also looking for the ability to make a bottom line in business or a good wage if they are working for a business.

And I say, Mr. Speaker, they're not willing to trade that kind of a future and that kind of a base for some hyped-up political promises by retread Tories. Mr. Speaker, they are not going to go back to that. They've been there. They've had a taste of that, and it didn't taste like applesauce, Mr. Speaker.

I'm suggesting that you're going to see more and more people build their base and build their roots here in this province. And I'm suggesting that these job numbers are going to change our population figures because the population is obviously going to follow the creation of jobs that our businesses have created here in Saskatchewan.

And we are going to be doing new things and different things. And some of our industries are going to change. Agriculture has gone through an incredible transition and some difficult times, and we know that. And the urban people have worked alongside with our farmers and our rural communities as those changes have taken place. And it has been some painful in some communities.

And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, in spite of what members on that side of the House say, there are people who see opportunity in rural Saskatchewan, and that's why we're seeing manufacturing and processing going. That's why we're seeing new cattle ranchers come into this province. And that's why one of my colleagues now involved in real estate tells me over lunch that he has people from British Columbia and Alberta and from Europe looking at agricultural land because they see an opportunity here. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, I agree with them and I agree with him.

There is more, Mr. Speaker, to public life than just criticizing. There needs to be. There has to be. You have to, you have to be able to offer an alternative. But more importantly what you have to do is offer promise for our young people. And that's a deficiency that the Saskatchewan Party has. And, Mr. Speaker, that's why they won't be supporting this Throne Speech which is a document of vision. And it's a document of promise. And it's a document of optimism. And it's a document of hope.

And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that's why I'll be supporting this Throne Speech, as I will be supporting the budget that it leads up to because it's going to mean money for kids, money for students. It's going to mean a better lifestyle for Saskatchewan families. It's a document I think that we need to be proud of. And I want to say quite publicly, it's a document that I'm proud to be part of.

When the Premier brought this document to cabinet and we first looked at it, obviously there are some comments here and there. And we do little amendments, and we do some changes. But I want to tell you, overall it's a document created very much by his vision.

He said early on when he took this leadership that it was his role to create economic prosperity to make families' lives better. That's what this Throne Speech is about. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, he's been successful along with all of the million people of this province in creating an environment where it can and where it will happen. Mr. Speaker, that's why I'll be supporting this Throne Speech along with my colleagues. I'll be voting against the amendment that calls for a motion of non-confidence because this Throne Speech is the right direction.

This government is headed in the right direction, and, Mr. Speaker, it will lead to a better province. It'll lead to a better quality of life for my family and for your family, for all the families in this province. So I'll be voting for the Throne Speech and be very, very proud to do so. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise to participate in this debate today. I want to state right off the start that I'm going to be supporting the amendment, but I will not be supporting the main motion which probably comes as no surprise to the members opposite.

I would like to start, Mr. Speaker, by taking this opportunity to recognize a few people and thank some folks. First off, I would like to thank the constituents of Saskatoon Southeast for their ongoing support over the last few years since November 5, 2003. I look forward to continuing to support them both up to and after the next election. They're a good constituency and have been very supportive, and they deserve a new government, and I plan to be part of that new government.

[14:45]

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank my hard-working and

dedicated constituency assistant, Rita Flaman Jarrett, who regularly works evenings and weekends meeting with constituents and arranging for things when I'm in Regina, and works tirelessly at seeing that phone calls get answered, correspondence gets dealt with, and I have nothing but praise and high regard for her.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important as well that we recognize all of our family members, and I would like to thank my spouse, Sandy, who has been very supportive throughout this. As you're likely aware, she worked for the law office where our current Minister of Justice was and I think her life is considerably easier when both of us are in Regina. But having said that, I continue to thank her for her ongoing support.

I would like to comment briefly on my constituency, Mr. Speaker. It's a rapidly growing constituency. We have some areas of the city that are incurring substantial growth in the area of Stonebridge, Willows, Briarwood, and the acreages south of Saskatoon. It's an interesting constituency. It has six golf courses and no high schools. So perhaps that's an indication that when you play a lot of golf, you don't have time for family making.

We currently are getting a new Wal-Mart which is under construction on the south side of the city. They are building an overpass across the Circle Drive to access that and my constituents are looking forward to the construction work that's being done.

I'd also like to thank and congratulate all of the successful people that ran in the city council election — Mayor Pat Fiacco in Regina, Mayor Don Atchinson in Saskatoon, and the city councillors that I'm sure I will be looking forward to working with over the next few years, next months.

I would, Mr. Speaker, like to recognize and thank our newest MLA, the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy. I think the members opposite had a taste of what kind of an MLA this person is when they heard his speech earlier this week and I think that's typical of what the Sask Party crop of MLAs is going to be like after the next election. These are going to be not just formidable MLAs, Mr. Speaker, but some of them are going to be very formidable and very skilful cabinet ministers and I look forward to working with them.

I enjoyed campaigning in that by-election, Mr. Speaker. Like most MLAs, we made a number of trips down to knock doors and I was frankly overwhelmed by the amount of support that was there. To receive 49 per cent of the vote in what's typically referred to as Tommy-town is overwhelming and certainly gratifying. I wonder what it would be like if we would have had a local candidate, whether we would have got 59 or 69 per cent.

I knocked on one door, Mr. Speaker, and I asked the person where their support was. And the person said, well I can't support the New Democratic Party because they're misnamed — they're not new; they're not democratic; and I don't think they're having much of a party any more. Well I have to say I agreed with that.

And I think if Tommy Douglas was still alive, he would have probably watched the goings-on in that by-election and

probably would have said, yes it's time to support the Saskatchewan Party; the Saskatchewan Party candidate is the right person. And I'm sure that Tommy Douglas would have voted for us if that was the case.

Another thing I did, Mr. Speaker, during the course of the summer, was I had the opportunity to go out and do some door knocking in some other constituencies as well. I knocked doors for a while in Yorkton. And I noticed the same sense of excitement and the same sense of a desire for change in Yorkton. I'm not saying that there's an election coming any time soon, but I could certainly comment on what likely will happen in the election when that does come to pass. So, Mr. Speaker, I think that perhaps all MLAs should be getting ready and gearing up.

I'd like to go back just to civic politics briefly. I want to welcome Robin Bellamy back to the Saskatoon Public School Board. Mr. Bellamy has been a good friend for a lot of years during my time on the board. And I also want to congratulate my neighbour, Kevin Waugh, who's going to be on the Saskatoon public board as well.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go back a little bit to what's taken place over the last few months. And I want to make some reference to when I was growing up, which is some years ago.

My brothers and I used to sit around, and we used to play a game called let's imagine what it would be like to have a new bike, or let's imagine what it would be like to take a trip to Disneyland. And we would plan those things in great detail. And we'd talk about where we were going to go on the new bike or what rides we were going to go on. And we'd just spend all this time with a colourful imagination and we focused on it. But then reality set in, and we realized my dad had to work full-time. We didn't have any money for a new bike; we weren't going to Disneyland. And reality set in, and I guess that's what it's like when you grow up.

But unfortunately we have some folks over there that the best they can do, the best they can come up with is they can come up with what they call an Imagine campaign — what we would do if we had a whole bunch of money that we got from somebody else. Not how we're going to go out and negotiate; how we're going to go out and deal with the federal government. No. This is a government that goes around the province in a bus during the summer playing horsie or I spy with my little eye or whatever foolish games they play on the bus.

It's high time, Mr. Speaker, that those people over there grew up and started to realize what they were elected for, what they were elected to do, and why they're being paid by the people of this province. They are being paid by taxpayer dollars. They are supposed to come up with a plan, a vision, and they are supposed to be able to negotiate effectively with the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, it's the role of the Premier to be a visionary and to craft a plan and a direction that citizens can get behind and be proud of. The Premier is supposed to do that kind of thing. And we have a Premier over there that instead of that goes around on the bus tour and plays the childhood games.

Well, Mr. Speaker, my advice to them is that they should grow up, quit daydreaming, and start negotiating with the federal government. That's what they were elected to do. That's what they are paid to and the best advice, Mr. Speaker, that I can give to that party is lead, follow, or get out of the way. The Saskatchewan Party is ready to govern. The people of Saskatchewan know it's ready to govern, and they are ready for an election so that they can replace the people over there because they know the people over there have been there 15 years and 15 years is too long for any government like that.

Mr. Speaker, there's some specifics in this Speech from the Throne and some specifics I would like to talk about briefly. Mr. Speaker, health care is one of the things that's most important to the people of this province. What we've done right now is we have to get a government that will focus on recruitment, retention, and deal with the staffing issues that we have in health care. We need a long-term plan to deal with staffing health care.

I am one of the aging baby boomers in this province. We have parents that are elderly. We have people that need medical help and medical assistance. We are all aging baby boomers on this side of the House, with the exception of my colleague, and what we have to do right now is get a plan to get out and understand when and where people will retire, what our needs are going to be in the future, plan the education requirements, and plan around that.

It's very expensive to educate health care professionals in this province. And what we're doing right now, we have had whole classes of nurses graduate partway during a fiscal year. When the government has ran out of money, the entire class goes and finds jobs out of province because this government can't plan more than a month or two in advance.

What we need to do is we need to develop a plan where we work through the budget cycle, we've got some multi-year planning. We need to do something to attract and develop the professionals that we need. We want to retain these people. We need to work with what they need for facilities, resources, research support. We need to ensure that they've got recognition and a chance to develop their careers and develop their careers within this province — not in the province next to us, not in the country to the south of us, but here.

We need, Mr. Speaker, targeted incentives and a comprehensive plan, not a series of quick band-aid fixes which is what we are seeing from this government right now. Mr. Speaker, health care workers are our front line. We ourselves, our parents, grandparents, we owe it to the seniors of this province who built this province to ensure that our parents, our grandparents, and the seniors are well taken care of in their retirement. They deserve better.

We need to have a plan that will look after the people that need it the most and frankly, Mr. Speaker, the people that deserve it the most. And this is what we're getting instead from the government over there. And I'm going to give them the example of Terry Rak, which is somebody that we raise regularly in this House. Mr. Rak has paid out tens of thousands of dollars of his own money for the drug Avastin to try and prolong and try and save his life. This is a man who is critically

and seriously ill and is getting no support whatever from that government over there.

And, Mr. Speaker, last week they started the ultimate insult. Mr. Rak was retaining and keeping his own records when he would get his blood tests done after each Avastin treatment. He was told by his health care professionals that if he wanted to get those records he would have to go to the administration office — not just a photocopy that they used to give him on it — he would have to go to the administration office, sign all the application forms, pay a \$25 fee, plus \$25 a page, to get his own blood test.

I can't believe the indignity that they're heaping on a man who is critically ill. I don't know what they're going to do to him next. And he asks them why they're doing this. And the health care professionals that dealt with this — it's a directive that we've received from our superiors; it has something to do with privacy.

Mr. Speaker, these are Mr. Rak's own records. They used to run next door to the next office and photocopy them for him and they're not any more. They're charging him \$25 plus 25 cents a page each time he goes for a treatment to try and take his records home so that he can follow what's happening with his health.

I can't imagine anything more . . . You know, you charge a person tens of thousands of dollars and I can't imagine what they're doing. Unfortunately in this province health care has become a political football. It should never, ever become that in Saskatchewan or in any other jurisdiction. But not in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan is the birthplace of medicare. Our citizens expect more, they deserve more, and frankly, Mr. Speaker, after the next election they will receive more.

Mr. Speaker, we saw and we continue to hear from the government members that they're planning to have a green and prosperous economy. We heard some of the media make fun of it and talk about it being a mean and preposterous plan. Actually we haven't seen very much of anything that they plan to do and the only thing that's green on their ideas is the fact that they're old enough, they're growing mould and they're not doing anything productive. So we've got these mouldy, green ideas that nothing has happened with.

The reality of our environment we live in is we live in a cold and inhospitable province in January and February of this year. Our Saskatchewan residents pay several hundred dollars per month for utilities. They pay nearly as much in utilities as they do in food, and in some families probably even more. They need to have a sustainable, reliable system of electrical generation and natural gas. We need to look further than just next month or next year. We need to look at what the long-term growth plans are for energy consumption and what we're going to do to prevent climate change. Mr. Speaker, natural gas and electricity are provided by Crowns in this province. We look to them for good service and for being served into the future.

The two largest sources of global warming are automobiles and electrical generation, and we haven't seen this government do anything to deal with those issues. They've done virtually nothing. There's a myriad of things that they could look at or

they should be having discussion about. What are they doing to promote the use of hybrid cars? Are they looking at reducing or eliminating PST? Are they looking at cheaper licences for those cars? Are they looking at cheaper insurance for those vehicles? Are they doing anything for that whatsoever?

Are they doing anything for electrical generation? They talk about clean coal. They talk about, do they want to remove particulate matter from coal. That might be a start but what about carbon dioxide? What about other energy options that they should be looking at? What about looking at hydro? What about looking at nuclear? What about looking at solar energy? What about wind energy? What about cogeneration? What about geothermal? What about allowing people to sell electricity back to the grid when they've got a wind charger? What about allowing private users to participate in energy production in this province?

There is no overall plan. There isn't even a bunch of band-aids. What we have them is running around saying green and prosperous, green and prosperous. Well let's find out what they've got. Let's talk about what they plan to do if they have a plan whatsoever. And right now they have no plan and no vision.

They talk about conservation and they talk about conservation, Mr. Speaker, as if it is the only answer to this problem. Well, Mr. Speaker, it makes sense to talk about conservation but it's not a very inspired idea. You know that if you use less energy, you're going to pay less. You need an IQ [intelligence quotient] of about room temperature to realize it makes sense to use smaller light bulbs and turn your thermostat down, keep your doors and windows closed. You don't need any more than an IQ of room temperature to try and do that. Conservation is good practice but it's not a solution.

We know that the members opposite talk about Kyoto. They know that Kyoto means a 10 per cent reduction in the 1990 consumption and to what was going into our environment in 1990. What they haven't looked at is what our changing needs and what our requirements are. And for most of them, 1990 doesn't seem like a very long time ago. But the reality of it is, Mr. Speaker, a lot has happened since 1990, and our consumption has gone up substantially. It's not a matter of saying, reduce 10 per cent from what we're using in 2006 or 2007.

[15:00]

Right now, right now most homes have computers. Most homes have several computers. One or more of those computers are left on 24 hours a day to receive or send emails, even when the people aren't home. There was no computers in homes in 1990. Many homes now have fax machines.

It used to be in 1990 you may have had a colour television in a house. Now a lot of homes have home theatre systems with multiple speakers, large screen TV that use several times as much electricity. Most homes now have a deep freeze. A lot of homes have got a second refrigerator in the basement or somewhere else to keep soft drinks or whatever else.

New areas of the city have got homes that . . . The outside light

used to be one light that would be left on. Now there's lights under the eaves. And I've counted in my constituency homes with 10, 12, and 14 lights on the outside of the house.

We also have developed an affinity to use clothes dryers, Mr. Speaker. We don't talk about going back and using clotheslines like our parents and our grandparents did. We use dryers.

It used to be when homes were built in the 1930s and 1940s, they were built with a 60-amp service. During the 1950s and 1960s they went up to 100-amp services. Now homes are being built with 200-amp services.

The reality, Mr. Speaker, is simply this. Our per capita consumption has grown and will continue to grow. We may use smaller light bulbs, and we may do things that are good energy practice, but the reality of it is our energy needs are going to continue to grow.

And we need to look to that government for some plans and some direction. And if not, they will come from this side of the House and once again the ideas will get plagiarized. And we'll live with that, and we'll accept it. It's a little difficult governing when you're on this side of the House, but we've done a not bad job in the last while. And we're going to continue to do it.

While I'm talking about the environment, Mr. Speaker, I recently saw Al Gore's movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm not particularly an Al Gore fan, and I'm not a Democrat — either the American variety or the new Saskatchewan variety of Democrat. And I may not agree with all that Mr. Gore has to say, but I certainly agree with some of the problems that he's identified and some of the conclusions and some of the things that we know we have to deal with there.

What I'd like to do is suggest over there, is that the members listen to the member from Saskatoon Greystone. He is one of the few over there that understand some of the issues there. I certainly don't agree with some of his issues with regard to uranium and a number of other issues, but he has some understanding of what the needs are to look at alternate energy sources. And it's an unfortunate loss to those members that he's not going to be there.

And I suspect the reason he's not going to be there is he wants to distance himself from those people so that he can be open and frank in his criticism of that party and that government. And I think, come the next election, we're going to hear a lot from the member of Greystone — and it's not going to be directed to the members over here. It's going to be directed to the members over there for not having any sense of direction or anywhere else they're going.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to the environment, there is no silver bullet. There is no one solution. There are many steps. We need to work hard. We need to provide incentives. We need to look at wind. We need to look at geothermal. We need to look at solar. We need to look at a variety of other things. Mr. Speaker, I want to encourage that government to take some steps to deal with that.

Mr. Speaker, we saw in the Speech from the Throne reference to KidsFirst and pre-natal planning and dealing with FAS [fetal

alcohol syndrome] and it's nothing more than paying a lip service to some previous ideas that they'd had before. Mr. Speaker, we don't need to talk about those things. What we need to do is put some ideas and some resources in place to try and deal with the needs of our children and our youngest and most vulnerable members of society.

Right now in this province we're told that we have some 5,000 children that are not in school. That's 5,000 people, 5,000 lives that are being wasted. That's roughly a community the size of Rosetown that is being wasted because the children are not being educated. They have no hope of becoming meaningful, participating members of this society. Mr. Speaker, those are lost lives, lost futures. Those children will have nothing but problems with justice from here on in. We have to develop a method of tracking them.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude by referencing the 15 years that are there. It's too long and what I'd like to do in closing is quote Oliver Cromwell when he said to the Rump Parliament:

You have . . . sat [here] to long . . . for any good you . . . [can do]. Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God, go!

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Borgerson: — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to add my voice to this debate on the Speech from the Throne. I would like to begin by paying tribute to the good people of Saskatchewan Rivers. From farmers to foresters, from ranchers to diamond drillers, from service providers to tourist operators, from francophone communities like Debden to the Big River, Wahpeton, Little Red, and Sturgeon Lake First Nations, there is a rich diversity of people and occupations in Saskatchewan Rivers, and nearly every sector of the provincial economy. And a rich diversity of landscape as well — prairie, forest, and many, many lakes.

This is lake country, Mr. Speaker. Every summer, and this summer was no exception, we welcome visitors from all over the province and all over the country. Mr. Speaker, we've also had visits from members of the opposition and indeed from the Leader of the Opposition, and I would expect more and more of these visits in the months ahead. I welcome the interest of the Sask Party MLAs in Saskatchewan Rivers and I invite them to stop in and visit my constituency office any time before and after the next election.

In short, Mr. Speaker, I love the constituency for the same reason that I love this province — for the diversity of its people, of its landscape, and of its opportunities for both work and recreation. I am proud to be its representative here in this Assembly.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the community of close friends and family that keep me energized, my wife Val, daughters Kristin and Erika, my excellent executive and my constituency assistants, Barbara Terfloth and Caroline Bendig.

And I would like here to state my pleasure at the new sessional calendar. I thank those who have worked hard to put it together. I will still have a total of eight hours of driving time every week, but I will now have one day every week with my constituents and I am thankful for that.

Mr. Speaker, this Speech from the Throne is good news for Saskatchewan and good news for Saskatchewan Rivers. Madam Deputy Speaker, to do any kind of meaningful work you have to begin with a philosophy, a set of beliefs, and the Throne Speech begins exactly here. Our goal for this session is to make life better for the people of this province, for families, for seniors and elders, for young people. This is all about quality of life. It's about building on the advantage that we have here in Saskatchewan, an advantage that has been created by successive governments of Saskatchewan New Democrats.

There are four cornerstones: that we will make Saskatchewan the best place for young people to live, work, and play, the best place to build a future; that we will continue to lead the way in public health care, and this means further reduction in wait times and access to services; that we will respond to climate change and global warming with a strong green agenda; that Saskatchewan families will benefit from the strength of our economy.

Madam Deputy Speaker, cornerstones are traditionally used to provide a foundation, usually for a building of some sort. So it is with these four cornerstones. They provide a foundation for this home of ours, this Saskatchewan, as we begin this session and look to the future ahead.

Other members have spoken about each of these cornerstones with eloquence and passion. It will be no surprise that I would like to focus on our green agenda, particularly the future of organic agriculture.

The Speech from the Throne promises to introduce initiatives that will expand the production, processing, and marketing of local and organic food. Madam Deputy Speaker, one-third of the organic farmers in Canada are here in this province — about 1,300 in all. And in Canada, 60 per cent of the land under organic production is here in our province. We lead the nation in organic production.

In farm country, there is more and more interest by conventional farmers in making the difficult transition to organic farming. For economic reasons, yes, to escape from the cost-price squeeze that is at the root of the present farm crisis. But for other reasons as well; for environmental, health, and social reasons.

At the consumer level, you only need to visit the nearest grocery store to see what's happening. The organic section and selection is growing, with organic food sales increasing by as much as 20 per cent annually. Consumers are more and more interested in organic produce, especially if it is local organic produce.

We are of course an export economy, but we are an import economy as well. We export most of the food we grow but we import most of the food we eat. For a province of 43 million acres with 45 per cent of the arable land in this country, we

have an opportunity to expand the range of food that we grow and export, as well as an incredible opportunity to grow more of our own food and process it here in Saskatchewan.

So there are great opportunities and challenges that I am exploring through my appointment as Legislative Secretary for organic farming. And I thank the Premier for engaging me in this exciting and rewarding work.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Borgerson: — At meetings and forums, in kitchens and community halls, at field days and AGMs [annual general meeting], I am meeting organic farmers and processors and will soon be weaving their ideas into a report for the consideration of this government. All I will say now is that there is a spirit of excitement and creativity, of breaking new ground in the organic sector that I hope to convey in my report.

It will build on the wisdom of long-time organic farmers like Elmer Laird of Davidson and will build on the optimism and energy of young farmers like Kalissa Regier of Laird, who see rural Saskatchewan as a great place for young people to live, work, and build a future. And I hope my work can contribute to this future. Mr. Speaker, our Speech from the Throne sends a clear signal of confidence in the future of organic farming in this province.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, with regard to all family farmers, the Throne Speech ensures that we will continue to fully fund the CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization] program. Madam Deputy Speaker, last weekend at one of my constituency's fowl suppers I ended up in a discussion with a farmer from Shipman who summed CAIS up well. I don't want to depend on farm support programs, he said, but if I need to, I want them to be fair.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we still don't know the final fate of the CAIS program but right now it's all the federal government can offer, warts and all, and we will fully fund our 40 per cent, knowing full well that our proportion is not fair. It is not fair to farmers and is not fair to the taxpayers of this province who pay three and four times as much as other Canadians on a per capita average.

As stated in the Throne Speech, we need the federal government to cover its fair share of the CAIS program, to commit to an effective new disaster program, and to stand firmly in support of our farmers at the WTO [World Trade Organization]. And we call on the federal government to stand by its own legislation and let farmers decide the future of the Canadian Wheat Board.

We will debate this further in this Assembly because, and I say this to the Agriculture critic of the Saskatchewan Party, the member from Melville-Saltcoats, who has said publicly that this is none of our business. And I say this to the member from Kelvington-Wadena who yesterday said essentially the same thing. I say to those members that the fate of the Canadian Wheat Board most certainly is the business, not only of our provincial Minister of Agriculture. It had better be the business of the Agriculture critic and of every rural MLA and of every member of this Assembly because it will remove 3 to \$400

million from our farm economy every year. And this matters to every citizen of this province.

The Canadian Wheat Board was created in 1935 in the middle of the depression when farmers were in survival mode. There was the drought, of course, but there was also the injustice of a futures market that played farmers against each other and drove grain prices down. In those days, with farmers at the mercy of big business, of banks and railways and farm machinery companies and grain companies, it was blatantly clear to our grandparents and even to successive Conservative and Liberal governments that farmers could only survive if they had some form of market power. And so along with the formation of co-operatives, wheat pools, and credit unions, the Canadian Wheat Board was created to empower farmers in the marketplace, and in 1943 it was made a single-desk seller of our grain.

[15:15]

Now over 60 years later we need the wheat board more than ever. Farmers are once again in survival mode. Once again nature has played its part with drought, early frost, too much rain, but once again we have a market economy that puts farmers at the mercy of railways, chemical and fertilizer companies, huge retailers, and the casino-like vagaries of the grain exchange — a cost-price squeeze that has decimated rural Saskatchewan. As corporations merge into monopolies, the Canadian Wheat Board is the last stand, the last hope for farmer power in the marketplace. And its future should be decided by farmers, in the words of our Throne Speech, in a open and fair plebiscite.

Instead the federal government has said they will not hold a plebiscite, although from the news today they seem to be trying to save face. They have planned an end to the Canadian Wheat Board at closed-door meetings like the one held July 27 in Saskatoon. They have muzzled the Canadian Wheat Board from promoting its own work and they have, halfway through the election of its directors, removed I believe it is 16,000 farmers from the voting list. It is clear that the federal Conservative government is intent to destroying the wheat board and it won't allow democracy, it won't allow farmers to get in the way. And, Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Saskatchewan Party endorses — in fact celebrates — this action.

Now I may surprise the members opposite by saying this. I wish to commend the members opposite for their position on the wheat board. I commend them and I'll tell you why: because it is true to their beliefs. This party, the Saskatchewan Party has bent over backwards to hide its right-wing agenda. For this party, every day is Halloween. And they're going door to door in this province wearing a middle-of-the-road disguise trying to convince people that they are no longer the ghouls they once were. But on this issue, on this issue, they show their true colours.

You see, what we have here is a clear signal of what would happen should the Saskatchewan Party ever, ever gain office in this province. In the wheat board we have an organization created and protected by federal legislation, operating arm's length from government with a mandate that is supported by the majority of farmers.

Well in this province we have a number of organizations created and protected by provincial legislation operating at arm's length from government and supported by the vast majority of citizens and they are, of course, our Crown corporations.

I say to the people of this province, you have a Saskatchewan Party that essentially wants to see the work of the Canadian Wheat Board privatized and deregulated. What makes you believe that they will do anything different with our provincial Crown corporations? Under their kinder, gentler costume is the same old right wing ideology that devastated this province in the 1980s. Trick or treat, Madam Deputy Speaker.

By the way, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would assume the Saskatchewan Party also supports the federal Conservative position on the Kelowna accord and the cancellation of the early learning child care agreement. And the cancellation of literacy programs and of the EnerGuide program and of funding to the museum existence program. And status of women, as one of the members points out.

And to the Canadian volunteerism initiative. And to the Saskatchewan forestry centre. And I would assume that the Saskatchewan Party supports the softwood lumber agreement which disadvantages this province. And I would assume the Saskatchewan Party also supports the federal government's reluctance to keep their promise on equalization.

Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne, in stark contrast to federal and provincial Conservatives, this government pledges to deliver our own learning and child care program, to expand literacy programs, to support the arts with status of the artist legislation, and celebrate the arts through music in 2007.

We will continue to support the Premier's Voluntary Sector Initiative and we will continue the EnerGuide program on our own. We will work with local communities to develop a viable, sustainable forest industry in this province and we will, drawing on that Saskatchewan sense of determination and fair play, force the federal Conservatives to keep their word on equalization.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to close by speaking briefly about the cornerstone that most defines the future of this province — our young people.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I've worked with young people all my life. And so the first person I talked to when we walked out of this Assembly, after the Speech from the Throne, was a 16-year-old boy from Prince Albert. Then in a recent discussion with me he gave his impressions of the Throne Speech and I quote, "I find it encouraging for us," he said, "because I've been here long enough to appreciate what's beautiful here in this province and I like it here."

This young man took note of the continued freeze on university tuition, but the first thing he mentioned was the new statutory holiday. With both of his parents working, he sees Saskatchewan's new Family Day as a valuable time for his family to be together.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Borgerson: — In speaking with a young, Aboriginal woman and mother of two children after the Throne Speech, I heard the same message. And this is what I've heard everywhere, Madam Deputy Speaker. People welcome pocketbook gains, and so they certainly welcome the 2 per cent drop in the PST. But they are more and more interested in quality of life, especially young people. I hear more and more young people talking about the high cost of living to the west of us — the health premiums, the cost of housing. And I also hear more and more young people talking about the pace of life, lack of community, and the crime rate that accompanies the boom next door. On the news a couple of nights ago, we hear that Edmonton has the highest homicide rate in the country — higher than Vancouver, almost twice Toronto's.

Madam Deputy Speaker, at a recent graduation of regional college students in Melfort, a young woman from the welding program ended her speech by saying and I quote:

I would like to encourage other graduates to make a future here in Saskatchewan. I can tell you Alberta is not all it's cracked up to be.

And I think that's why our new Family Day has resonated so strongly with the people of this province. It is after all just one day, but it is more than that. It is symbolic. It makes a statement that we as a government not only wants Saskatchewan families to gain materially from our strong economy; we want Saskatchewan families to gain qualitatively from our strong economy. This is what a Saskatchewan New Democratic government is all about.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Borgerson: — So it's about time for families. It's about a clean, green environment; food that is safe, healthy, and nutritious; communities that are safe; support of the arts, of culture, of volunteerism. The Speech from the Throne says and I quote:

All of our efforts are toward the goal of making life better for Saskatchewan families and contributing to a . . . life . . . [that is better than none.]

In a province that is down to earth but the where the sky is the limit, we all know that, like the sky, our future is limitless. And Connie Kaldor's words, this is a place, quote, "where the sky is bigger than anywhere else, as far as the eye can see."

And that, Madam Deputy Speaker, is why I will not be supporting the amendment but will support the positive vision that the Speech from the Throne presented to this Assembly. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, I am proud and honoured to stand today and take part in the Throne Speech and represent my constituents, the constituents of Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Before I get into the Throne Speech, Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to say some thank yous, as most members have done already. And the first one I want to say thank you to is to my wife and my family. Without them I wouldn't be able to do the job I'm doing here. Without them I wouldn't be able to have the support to do the job here. And I can honestly say that going to a four-day week — that the government and the opposition have got together on — going to a four-day week, for me to go home on four days and having another day at home is great news. And I welcomed it.

In regards to my wife and family, this summer has been a trying summer. As you know, my home town is Spiritwood. And of course Spiritwood was in the news for most of summer — at least for a couple months — but not in a good way, Madam Deputy Speaker. And my constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook also suffered losses in my constituency that people in my constituency have great losses now. And it will affect them in time to come.

For the members that don't know, it all started out as after the session was over. I went home. It was very busy in June as all rural areas are busy. You've got parades. You've got functions to go to. So it's always busy. Then July 7 hit. July 7 hit, and that's when I woke up the next morning and found out that two police officers in my town of Spiritwood were murdered. And it sent shockwaves across the town, the community, and all of Saskatchewan, and Canada.

Unfortunately, Madam Deputy Speaker, I knew both RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police]. I knew them very well. To have their losses in the community of Spiritwood was unbelievable. The first person, the first media person that phoned me the next day referred to Spiritwood as another Mayerthorpe — Mayerthorpe, Alberta. And everybody knows what happened at Mayerthorpe. But to be related to Mayerthorpe in that manner, in that way, it's tough.

The ironic thing about that, Madam Deputy Speaker, is when the Mayerthorpe tragedy happened, the mayor of Mayerthorpe was originally from Spiritwood. He's a very close colleague and a friend of mine. When the Mayerthorpe tragedy happened, I phoned him first to give him support. Madam Deputy Speaker, Saturday at dinnertime, the first person to phone me to give me support — because I'm a politician and I was originally a mayor of Spiritwood — was the same gentleman from Mayerthorpe. So that's the connection between Mayerthorpe and Spiritwood.

That went on, Madam Deputy Speaker, for about two weeks until the gentleman accused of murdering the two RCMP turned himself in. But it did not end there, Madam Deputy Speaker. The town of Spiritwood and of Mildred and of Shell Lake, they're still hurting, and it's going to take a long time to heal those wounds if they ever do.

Everybody in small-town Saskatchewan, Deputy Speaker, knows everybody. We know the people involved, not only the RCMP, but the people that were accused of this tragedy. And it will go on for a long time. But the people of Spiritwood are good people. The people of Shell Lake and Mildred are good people. And banding together, we will get through this as did the people in Mayerthorpe did.

After that, Madam Deputy Speaker, or during that period of time, I had my nomination and I was seeking for the third term. And through a lot of hard work that my wife and my family and myself did, I was victorious again, and I will be carrying the banners for the Saskatchewan Party in the next upcoming election whenever it is called, next time it's called, for the Saskatchewan Party.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, after that happened, then there was a great loss to the town of Rosthern and a great loss to this Assembly. And that is the passing of a friend to us all here in the Assembly in the name of Ben Heppner. Ben Heppner was an honourable gentleman everybody knew and everybody respected. And personally, as myself, he was a very, very close friend.

And when I was first elected in 1999, Ben Heppner was my buddy constituency. And I went to him many, many times, and he taught me the rules of this place, the rules of this place, the dos and don'ts of this place. He even tried to get me to point the finger, but I'm not good at that. But we will miss him here. We really will. But I will miss him because of the experience he had and what he taught me of how the role of being a politician could be. And I'm going to miss him.

I now, Madam Deputy Speaker, want to say congratulations to the newest member of the Saskatchewan Party, the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy, and I want to welcome him here. He's young, aggressive, and he will carry on the tradition of the Saskatchewan Party for years to come. And after the next election, I know we will be on that side and with the experience that we have that he will gain, he will be on that side in government for many years to come. So congratulations to the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[15:30]

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I also want to say thank you to the members of the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] who were just appointed here in a week past. I want to say a special congratulations to Chief Lawrence Joseph, as the chief of FSIN. I also want to say a special congratulations to first Vice-chief Morley Watson, second Vice-chief Guy Lonechild, third Vice-chief Glen Pratt. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to say a special congratulations to fourth Vice-chief Lyle Whitefish who is from Whitefish First Nations outside of Big River but works in Spiritwood at the ATCT building in Spiritwood. And I've know him for many years, and he's a good person, and I say to FSIN, you've gained a valuable source in Lyle Whitefish.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Throne Speech, we've got to get to the Throne Speech. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, this is the same old, same old, worn out NDP government that has been here for — what? — 15 years. And actually when I look at the Throne Speech, Madam Deputy Speaker, God, I have to wonder if the paper was worth this Throne Speech to be written on. You know we have a lot of problems in the forest industry, and when you look and see what this paper went to to present a Throne Speech that had nothing in it. But there again, it's from the same old NDP government.

Madam Deputy Speaker, here in the Assembly today we had question period, and I remember the Leader of the Opposition and the member from Saskatoon was arguing about what was in our policy and what they've taken from their policy and in the Throne Speech, Madam Deputy Speaker, there is a section and I will quote:

In this Session, legislation will be passed to dedicate every dollar of fuel tax collected by the province from motorists toward the maintenance and building of Saskatchewan's road network.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, if you refer to the 2005 Saskatchewan Party policy guide and what does it read there on HT05-5: investing all provincial sales tax and transportation infrastructure. It says, I quote:

Be it resolved that a Saskatchewan Party government . . . [would] commit, as a . . . [minimal], all provincial fuel taxes collected to fund provincial and municipal transportation infrastructure construction and renewal in Saskatchewan.

Well where'd they get that from? They say they don't take anything from the Saskatchewan Party, and it's written right here that they did. And that's only one of the many, many resolutions that we have put forth in papers previous that the NDP have taken from us.

So it begs the fact, Madam Deputy Speaker, who is running the province? We on this side here, Madam Deputy Speaker, have come up with resolutions when they've asked. We'll come up with resolutions. But you know something? The NDP are taking them. So it begs the question, who's running the province? It looks more and more like the Saskatchewan Party is running the province, not the government in power — the NDP.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I also want to bring to light a comment made in his Speech from the Throne, the member from Regina Coronation. And in it he says, and I quote:

Fifteen years ago the deficit, the annual deficit in Saskatchewan, was \$1.1 . . . [million] and the total debt was fifteen and a half billion dollars. Such huge debt, Mr. Speaker, and one million people left with the mortgage.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I also look at the report from the Provincial Auditor. And I can honestly say, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm no accountant, but I do know that running a business for myself for many years I've gained some aspect as to how the books are run. And when I look at the report from the Provincial Auditor, I look on page 34. And on page 34 it says, understanding the finances of government. It says that ". . . amounts owed . . . [by] unfunded pension liability has increased to \$4.3 billion." But that we can't control— either side — but it's increased.

But on the chart that's prepared for us, it starts off with the Crown debt, and it also talks about the debt of the province. Well if you look at 1991, the Crown debt in 1991 was 2.8 billion. You add that to the debt of the province, as far as the operating debt, was 12.1. And you add them together — and I believe that my addition is right and when I went to school and

finished my grade 12 — it came to 14.9. If you go to 2006, Madam Deputy Speaker, and you look at the Crown debt, you don't look at the liability, pension liability, but you look at the debt of the province which, according to the NDP, has gone down . . . And rightfully so. It says 11.1; from 12.1 down to 11.1 from '91 to 2006. You add that together, Madam Deputy Speaker, and that is 16.7 billion, 16.7 billion.

Remember in 1991 we only had 14.9 billion. So in my figures I would say it went up. And the member from Northcote agrees with me. And I'm glad you agree because that's what the Provincial Auditor says. So who are you going to argue with? I mean I don't know, Madam Deputy Speaker, but I can honestly say by looking at this paper and understanding the finances of government, I will believe the Provincial Auditor before I believe the government. I can guarantee you that.

Secondly, Madam Deputy Speaker, I noticed that everyone from the government side stands up and they talk about the 13 consecutive balanced budgets, 13 consecutive budgets. Well again, Madam Deputy Speaker, I look at the Provincial Auditor on page no. 7 — and remember I'm not one that is an accountant or anything — but I look at the chart on page 7 and out of those 15 years I believe there is . . . Let's see, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 that are deficit budgets. Seven are deficit budgets. Not 13 consecutive balanced budgets. Only eight balanced budgets.

So who do we believe again, Madam Deputy Speaker? I can guarantee you the people of Saskatchewan will believe the Provincial Auditor because I can guarantee you the members on this side of the House, that's who we put our faith in to running the books, is the Provincial Auditor. And he gives a very, very clear view of what is in this book, and it is the actual truth. And I guarantee you that next time around, the next election, when we bring these reports out to the people, they will believe us and not the NDP.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in the Throne Speech under the four cornerstones it talks about, and I quote, "Make Saskatchewan . . . [a better] place for young people to live, work and build strong futures."

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I had the privilege two weeks ago of going to a school. I was invited to a school — and it was the Leask school — to talk to the high school kids. And as the member before me from Saskatchewan Rivers talked about talking to kids and loved doing that, I also love doing that. I enjoy going to kids.

So I went to the Leask school, and I talked about my role as a politician, my role as an opposition politician, somewhat the role of the government — and I had never been there, so I can't really comment on that a lot. But I talked to them about what it is like to be a politician and how would a guy get there.

Madam Deputy Speaker, after I finished, I allowed them to ask questions. And I can guarantee you, Madam Deputy Speaker, the kids in rural Saskatchewan have a very good idea of politics. And they asked me some good questions. Some were hard.

But after the questions I asked them . . . And there was roughly 18 kids in the school, a split between First Nations and white

people. I said to them, of the 18 students that are here today, how many students plan on leaving the province if and when they finish their high school? And, Madam Deputy Speaker, 16 hands went up. Two did not. So I asked them, are you planning on staying in Saskatchewan? And they said, yes, we are. One wants to go to university, and he is going to the University of Saskatchewan. Then he plans on going to Alberta. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, out of that class, 90 per cent of the students there plan on going to Alberta.

So what does that say for this government? How are they going to recruit and stay students in this province when at a very young age in school, they are already talking about going out of province. They are going to Alberta.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I noticed that the member from North Battleford was chirping from his chair. And I also know that he is also the Minister for Health. And in the last couple of days I have raised questions in this House regarding the Spiritwood Hospital. And it's not just the Spiritwood Hospital that I'm worried about. It's all rural hospitals, and that is in recruiting and retention of rural doctors.

And I know that the minister from North Battleford, the Minister of Health, has a challenge. but this is the same challenge that has been going on and on and on. And we haven't heard anything that's going to change that other than an oh well, and this happens from time to time. Well that's not good enough for rural Saskatchewan. These people that live in rural Saskatchewan rely on the services of health. We have a right to that.

But now when you look at the town of Spiritwood and the communities surrounding Spiritwood, they will look at going to Shellbrook which is only about . . . well not quite an hour, very close to an hour drive. But, Madam Deputy Speaker, Shellbrook is in the same crisis as what Spiritwood is. They have a five-doctor situation. They've lost one doctor, and the fourth doctor that they have has to write an exam here very shortly within the next couple weeks and if he does not pass that exam, he will have to leave. They will be down to three doctors.

I agree with the minister from North Battleford. I hope he passes his exam. We need him here in Saskatchewan. Yes, we need him here in the town of Shellbrook.

North of Shellbrook is Big River. It's out of my constituency but it is also having a doctor problem. They have a two-doctor system and there's only one doctor there. The doctors from Shellbrook, from Spiritwood, and from Big River have been relying on locums to come in and fulfill that need. There is a shortage of locums. That is what happened in the Spiritwood case when they had to shut it down for a weekend. They could not retain or bring in a locum to fulfill that weekend.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I say to the NDP government that we need changes and we need to do more in rural Saskatchewan because we can't keep funnelling our people, our patients from rural Saskatchewan into the big centres who are already overworked. They're busting at the seams already, and we can't keep doing it to the people because what about the people that live in the big centres like Saskatoon, Regina, and Prince Albert? Where are they going to go for their health services if

those spots are taken by rural people? We need changes and I hope the Minister of Health, the member from North Battleford, takes this into account because we need changes and we need them now.

Madam Deputy Speaker, if it's not bad enough in the town of Shellbrook that they're having some doctor problems, last year it was announced that there's going to be some rural maintenance shops closed down and Shellbrook was slated for closure. We know it's closed because the members working out of Shellbrook are coming to Spiritwood. The question I have for the Minister of Highways, the member from Northcote is, in Spiritwood there's a new building attached to the old building. That building is a cost of \$515,000. Madam Deputy Speaker, that building is only a 40 by 50 garage. How in the world can you spend \$515,000 on that building? It just blows me away.

[15:45]

Furthermore, Madam Deputy Speaker, the building that's still in Shellbrook today is perfectly good. There's nothing wrong with it. Why didn't the minister at that time look at moving the building from Shellbrook to Spiritwood and attaching it? It would have been a heck of a lot cheaper — a heck of a lot cheaper, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I see my time has run out. I feel I just got into it. And so, Madam Deputy Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment put forth by the member from Weyburn and seconded by the member from Cannington, but I will not be supporting the budget . . . or the Throne Speech.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Recognize the member from Athabasca, the Minister for Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Chair. First of all, I want to stand up today and proudly support the Speech from the Throne. I think the Speech from the Throne certainly sets the tempo, Madam Deputy Speaker. I think it's important that people of Saskatchewan know that this is certainly an opportunity for them to share the wealth and share the opportunities that we enjoy as a province.

And it was really a tremendous opportunity today, Madam Deputy Chair . . . or Speaker, when we seen a number of MLAs that served with this government in the early years, and I'm talking 1991 of course to 1995 and 1999. And as I sat there and I was thinking, as a number of them helped us celebrate our 15 years in government today, one of them made a comment today that I think really had a profound effect on me. And that comment spoke of the fact that they had to clean up an incredible mess, Madam Deputy Speaker — an incredible mess.

And Saskatchewan was on the verge of bankruptcy. And as they spoke, as they spoke, some of the members spoke of the really tough times that they had when they took over in 1991 from the then premier, Grant Devine. There was incredible sacrifices that they had to make and many, many meetings, sometimes three or four o'clock in the morning. But as they went on, Madam Deputy Chair . . . Speaker, as they went on about some of the meetings and some of the experiences, some of their stories and

some of the comments that other people had to do and some of the work they had to do and the comments they had, it really had a profound effect on me because one individual wrapped it up and said, had we not done the work then, we would not be enjoying what we have today.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, that is absolutely, absolutely true. We owe to those individuals who came here and sat in the back and watched from a distance because they're no longer elected. We had to show them appreciation for the work that they did and the sacrifices that they made and the amount of communication and the amount of meetings and the amount of trips that they had to take to make sure people understood the mess that we were in, and the work that they had to do to bring this province back from the brink of bankruptcy, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And who do we thank? Right over there. And every one of them when they get up to speak about a Family Day, oh they don't support the Speech from the Throne. So they're speaking against the Family Day. Oh they don't support the whole notion of a 2 per cent PST cut. Because they don't support that, so we're going to vote against that. Well you know, the other thing they can say is, oh it was our idea. It was our idea that the NDP government had all these ideas. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, those guys are only four years old and they act like four-year-olds.

But the problem that we have here is that, who done the work? Who made all the sacrifices? Who showed all that commitment? And certainly who showed all the discipline, Madam Deputy Speaker? Well certainly from my perspective it was a group of ladies and gentlemen across the back row here, that we pay tribute to today. They're the ones that should be recognized, and of course the many others that served in this party long before I arrived.

And as I sat here and listened to the doom and gloom and, oh my goodness, the world is falling . . . Why is it that every time a good announcement comes out — like the Speech from the Throne speaks about a Family Day — oh, they cringe, Madam Deputy Speaker. They cringe at good news. And they talk about the 2 per cent PST cut. Oh, they were really sad that day.

And you know what, Madam Deputy Speaker? When you look at the difference between Saskatchewan and Alberta, we only look at . . . no need to look further than what they pay in a health premium, the cost of living in Alberta and, Madam Deputy Speaker, what it costs to buy supplies, food, and the list goes on and on and on. And when you incorporate those costs, you can see that Saskatchewan — as the Throne Speech suggests — is the best place to raise a family and to bring young people to start careers.

And it's going to be done in a sustainable, green economy, Madam Deputy Speaker. And that really speaks well of what this government's intention is. And I think it pays tribute to those people that came here today and all the sacrifices that they made. And all they can say to him across the way is oh, you know, that was our idea. Yes. Well you know what they say — whatever.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, I listened to the member from

Arm River. You know, he was going on and on about what the problems are, and oh my goodness, this is happening; the world is falling. And I looked at the election results of his. He lost every major centre in his riding last time. And it makes it sound like he's this great messiah from his region, Arm River. The fact of the matter is I think he lost Davidson by a substantial amount. I think he lost Craik by a substantial amount. I think he lost every major town in his riding. Every major town, he lost.

And I think, I think when he makes a statement, when he makes a statement, he says to the people, well I believe that's what happened. Well he believes what he wants to believe.

The bottom line on this side of the Assembly — we are going to make a significant difference with this Speech from the Throne. And we're not going to sit back and listen to the bafflelegab that comes from that member from Arm River or any member from across the way because it's exactly what people of Saskatchewan said to them in 1991, 1999, 1995, and 2003 — we don't buy your rhetoric; we don't buy your agenda. And we know who you guys are and what you represent.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — The other day, Madam Deputy Speaker, the member from . . . I'm not sure where the riding is. She spoke of how we need to help the children. I think it's Kelvington-Wadena, I think. And anyway she spoke about trying to help the children. Well wasn't it that same party that was proposing a \$50 million cut to social services? That was the same party. And now they're here again crying crocodile tears — oh the poor children; why don't you help families? And that's exactly what the Speech from Throne does. It talks about raising families, in helping families.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this government has done a tremendous amount not only for bringing back this province from the brink of bankruptcy that that party was a part of but really trying to build a future here for young people and for families. And I say that's a tremendous accomplishment on our part, and this government should be commended full well knowing that many pioneers of our party and many people that served in early years, they're also to be commended and recognized, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I will point out again that the other critical part of that party opposite, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that when it comes to Saskatchewan they do not have one good word to say about Saskatchewan. Not one good word. Their vision is non-existent. Their plan is just a bunch of words; it has no targets. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, every time somebody speaks glowingly of Saskatchewan they become offended and they certainly become depressed. Why is that?

And the other thing that's amazing, I think, to people of the North is they talk to people, they say, oh we need less government. We need less government, less government in your face, less rules and regulations, less government. Well I tell people back home, they talk about less government. Well why do you want to be government? Because the bottom line is you want to diminish this province to a point where the work that you began in the '80s, you want to come along in 2007 or 2008 when we next call the election, you want to finish that job. You

want to finish this province off so end up being nothing. That's exactly what that party opposite wants to do, Madam Deputy Speaker.

But our Speech from the Throne talks about a number of fantastic things for the North and I want to spend a bit of time on that, all the while knowing no matter what is being said across the way, we just don't buy it, Madam Deputy Speaker, and we will never buy it. We know what they are. We know what they represent. And they know what they're going to do to this province if they ever form government which I know will never happen, Madam Deputy Speaker.

First of all I want to point out that this party and this government, through the Speech from the Throne, spoke about a Family Day beginning February 2007, which is a fantastic opportunity for families to get together. They are going to expand partnerships for First Nations and Métis people, to enhance education and skills training for Aboriginal youth, which makes it a good place for this province to live for young people because many young people are of Aboriginal ancestry.

It's going to talk about providing support for children with mental, physical or behavioural disabilities and disorders because they're part of Saskatchewan. It's an opportunity for them as well, Madam Deputy Speaker.

We want to talk about a national summit on Aboriginal economic development in partnership with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. We're going to hold that. This province is going to host that. That event will be held and what it gives us an opportunity to do is to hear from Aboriginal people and to showcase the power and the might they have when it comes to the economy. And you don't need to look further than some of the examples in SIGA [Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority]. Some of the other examples I noticed in the ABEX [Achievement in Business Excellence] award that there was a gentleman who had an oil well company that was doing quite well, won Business of the Year. I don't have his name handy. I also notice that people like Chief Darcy Bear out at Whitecap, he's doing a tremendous amount of good work for his people. And those are the kind of people we need to showcase.

And what does this government want to do in the Speech from the Throne? They want to recognize them. They want to put them on a pedestal. They want to learn from them so they can have a more powerful Aboriginal population in this province to become a true and equal partner in Saskatchewan as a whole, Madam Deputy Speaker.

We're also doing the commitment to make sure that families in Saskatchewan have the lowest bundle — whether you're paying for your power, your telephone, insurance, and the list goes on. I believe we have met our target and again we made that commitment in our Throne Speech. And I think that's something that people in Saskatchewan appreciate, because all you got to do is go to Alberta for a day and you see what people are paying there in insurance and I can tell you it is an astronomical amount.

There are many, many young people with one or two accidents that are paying two or three times more for insurance on their vehicle or their licence as opposed to here. And I think that's

something that the whole world should know and that should be spread out throughout all of our speeches. But not one kind word from the members opposite, because they don't want to show people how great Saskatchewan is.

And if Saskatchewan was so bad, why do we have so many people buying land and buying homes and buying buildings all throughout Saskatchewan? And they're buying them from Ontario. They're buying them from Alberta. They're buying them from Manitoba. We've got a lot of people showing a lot of interest in Saskatchewan because this is a good province. And that party opposite has got to get with the program.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think the other thing that's really important to me in the North is working on the abandoned mine strategy. As we know, we enjoy the uranium mining industry in Saskatchewan. I'm a strong proponent of that. And we have agreed to work with the federal government and the mining sector to look at the abandoned mines issue and to clean up all those northern mines. And northern people love a clean environment and that, Madam Deputy Speaker, also is noted in the Throne Speech.

We're also examining the impact of the overtime exemption that currently exists in northern Saskatchewan. And my colleague from Regina — I'm not sure of the constituency — he's travelled . . . Northeast, Regina Northeast. He's travelled throughout the North. And I made a comment on the radio that Ron Harper's not just another guy from the South trying to tell us what to do. He's really a guy trying to help out many workers in the North. And that's my quote, Madam Deputy Speaker.

We want to maximize business training and employment opportunities. We want to continue the tuition freeze for an additional year. We want to legislate passing every dollar collected for fuel tax towards the maintenance and the building of Saskatchewan's roads. And northern people will benefit from that. And the list goes on.

And all this great fantastic news, all the great fantastic news, and what happens across the way? Oh we want to do something different. Well the people of Saskatchewan are just tired. They're tired of the negativity, the doom and the gloom. And every time something great happens in Saskatchewan, people celebrate. You know, they celebrate. Right on. PST cut — perfect. That's what we need to do.

[16:00]

And we see the costs of living in Alberta are high, but we're getting our taxes reduced. Oh Saskatchewan's a great place to live, work, and raise a family. It's a great place to have an opportunity, whether it's education or a career for young people. It's going to be done in a sustainable green economy. And all these great, great initiatives and great accomplishments, and who's the unhappy bunch, Madam Deputy Speaker? Right across the way. Right across the way. You know why they're unhappy? Because it's the right thing to do for Saskatchewan.

We're here to build up Saskatchewan, not Alberta and not any other province in the world except our home and our home province. And those guys don't like it. And so they don't like

Saskatchewan. They don't like Saskatchewan. They don't like us owning the utilities. They don't like us paying down debt. They don't like us investing in Indian and Métis opportunities. They don't like us pushing health care and building up educational opportunities for everybody. They don't like the tuition freeze.

Well every time we do something fantastic, their job is to knock it down. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, they knock Saskatchewan down every single day. And they use the words that government, but really they mean that province. And that's exactly their agenda. And they do not, Madam Deputy Speaker, they do not have any plans — no plans, no experience, so no way will they ever form government.

And that's why today I'll speak proud and loud against the amendment that they have foolishly thrown up. And I'll stand in full support of this Throne Speech that has vision, dedication, discipline, and a history of support from many of our former colleagues and really paves the way to the brand new century, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you much, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a privilege and honour to get up to speak today on the Throne Speech. I listened to the member opposite's speech, and I'll certainly have to check *Hansard*. I know in his last response he had 12 words on his portfolio. I think he even underdid that this time with less words.

You know, he'd mentioned about Chief Darcy Bear and their involvement. I would like to bring to his attention, when there was an announcement at Dakota Dunes for the opening of the casino, that there were three members of government there — my colleague from Cannington, my colleague from Saskatoon Southeast, and myself. Nobody from the government showed up, not even the Minister of Industry and Resources. You know they had a shovel there for him. I'm sure they knew where to tell him for the shovel. He never even showed up out of courtesy to that organization.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I'd like to give a little background on myself and coming to Saskatchewan. I came from Toronto — which most of us jokingly say the centre of the universe — and when we arrived here in Regina in 1988 we made a quick decision, a family decision, that we really liked this province and that we wanted to stay here and make it home. We were coming on a short-term package, but we made the decision that we would continue on while we were looking at where we wanted to form life. We knew it was here. We knew it was here in Saskatchewan right away.

We moved to Saskatoon in 1991, 1992. And I just want to tell you that we fell in love with the city. We fell in love with the people. Saskatoon Northwest is where I ran, where I made my home, where I own my business. And it was so great to be out and meet the people in that region and understand what their concerns were. It was also very good at that time and had the opportunity to run against the former minister of Finance. And

it was a pleasure on election day to know that the people chose a different vision.

You know, one of the things that we noticed when we came to Regina and came to Saskatchewan was that the first impact you get is that — and this was long before I even thought of politics — was that the government continually wanted to bring this province down to a common denominator. It was about everything of being mediocre. It was nothing about growing the province, nothing about things for children to stay here long term.

You know, this government always tries to belittle this province. You know we have a Premier who calls it the wee province. And I've noticed that the government always wants to bring things to an equilibrium. You know the Premier's canoe story I think is a prime example of that as to when we always want things to be together and that everybody in the province finished last. And that's not with the people.

I think my member from Weyburn said it correctly when the young people, they want to know something about the future of this province. This government traditionally lives in the past.

You know they talked about balanced budgets. And yet when you read the auditor's report, you have to ask what document they're reading. You know, they haven't had 15 or 13 balanced budgets. Read the report.

You know, it was interesting just a little while ago when Mitchell's Foods announced in Saskatoon that they were no longer coming to this province. What happened? You know, the Premier was asked a question by the press. You know, would you respond to this? And the Premier said no, I'll have the Minister of Resources respond to it; he knows more about this file. Well ironically Mitchell's is located in the Premier's riding. You think he would want to speak to the issue. You think he would want to tell the employees. You think he would want to tell the people of his own constituency. You think he would want to respond to that. But no, he pushed it off. He didn't want to talk about it.

You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, you know, what's new for this Throne Speech? You know, we have more promises. When I first came here and first got involved in politics I thought the two issues that the NDP had over the Saskatchewan Party were health issues and social services. Well I certainly got a rude awakening to both of those areas. You know, I thought that the strength of them was in those areas. When I became involved in social services I found out that that wasn't correct.

You know, let's take a look at a list in hospital care: longest waiting lists of anywhere in Canada; lack of doctors and nurses; lack of front-line workers. I listened to the debate with my colleague the other day and the Minister of Health about oncologists, whether it should be seven, eight, or nine. And I was sitting there thinking to myself, God forbid we would want to have one more and have eight, nine, or ten, so that we could clean up the waiting list. God forbid that we would have an extra one in case one left, so that we would be ahead of the program.

But you see, that is not living in the past; that's living in the

future and that's planning ahead. That's looking to what needs to be done and doing it and not saying we are always going to set levels at the bare minimum, that that's all we need. You know, in this minister . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, he's beaking now about different kinds of oncologists. He knows exactly what I'm talking about and he can beak on all he wants. You know the number is that he needs one more than we need. And he can't even fulfill them. The ones he's talking about are not even here and working. What about the people that are waiting in the interim between those times and those wait lists? And what happens if another leaves?

You know, future-thinking people would look ahead and say, what we need in this province is 11 because we know there'll be attrition. We know there'll be changes in demographics. And for us we would look at it and say, we know we're going to grow this province so we need more.

You know, when you look at social services . . . and we had some fine examples of that in the last few days. You know what really, what really got to me was the fact . . . the number of cases that I get in my office on a weekly basis. And the ironic part is the majority of these cases come from the Premier's riding. And you have to ask yourself, why are they coming to my office? Why are they coming and asking for assistance from this government, which isn't doing their job? Why can't they come and why can't they go to the Premier's office — it's right there on 22nd Street — and get assistance? Why do they have to come all the way to the north end of the city?

I'll tell you why. Because they know we'll do something about it. They know we'll take their case forward. They know we have an interest level in it. They know it's not a political decision. It's a decision of looking after the people's needs.

And the minister that was just up prior to me, how much did he want to talk about social services? Very little. He wanted to talk in the past. I would think he would be proud to get up and talk about his file and what he's doing and the changes he is going to make to these people's lives on a daily basis.

You know, foster families was an issue that we debated in this House. And the minister had a situation where he went out and tried to increase the number of foster families in this province — very laudable goal. But what he didn't do was consult with Foster Families Association, the people that deal with it, to get their input into the situation.

And ironically I thought he would've wanted to stand up today and say we've grown it by 50 families or 100 families or 200 families. No, he didn't want to talk about that. He didn't want to tell about what his advertising did to increase the number of foster families in this province and help with children.

We know that in Saskatoon for instance, we know there are five foster families that well exceed the government minimums, the mandates. And I would think he would've been proud to get up today and to say, we've resolved that issue. I would think as his portfolio, he would want to tell this House and the people of Saskatchewan the job he's done to solve that problem. But not a word. Haven't heard one word from him about that.

You know, we have a lot of serious issues that are going on. I

met with some families from Alvin Buckwold Centre about a week ago with a couple of my colleagues. I just want to go on on this subject for a couple of minutes if you will. These people at Alvin Buckwold Centre deal with the most needy of our children — children that have disabilities. Interestingly enough, listening to them, they haven't had an increase in staffing since 1980 — 1980. They are handling families all across this province. You know they deal with 4,000 families in that centre and no increase in staffing.

You know, I would think that the minister would want to get up and say he's going to resolve that issue. He's going to look into it. He's going to help these people. He's going to double their staff. He's going to deal with it — 4,000 families using this facility that need help, need care for their children, that haven't had an increase since 1980.

I would think that would be a major issue for this government, a government that founds itself on social services. It's ironic. You know, they got an increase of \$250,000 — 4,000 families. Regina, which has 1,000 families, got an increase of \$250,000. That's very interesting. We have the same amount so that we keep in this government's mind everything being even. We sure wouldn't want anybody getting ahead.

You know, the mothers that were there were asking me, we need respite. When we looked at respite forms, an educated mother from the university said, Mr. Merriman I got to the second page and gave up. She said, I don't have the time or the emotional ability to deal with this. She said that report is so thick, to get help, I can't get through it. Four thousand children needing help, needing their budget doubled, need an increased staff. Where are the plans to educate these people so that we have a lot of these people that can become therapists? Where is the government's vision on how to deal with this? When is the minister going to speak to his portfolio instead of historical rhetoric?

You know, I'd like to go on about the need of many people in the community with the Project Hope. You know this is something that I'm obviously very familiar with. You know it's interesting that all of the plans we have and all of the things we've seen which are the critical mass of what we need, everything is coming in 2008. That's an interesting aspect. You know, not today when the kids need it today, when kids are dying today and yesterday — 2008. And what are we building? We're building, at \$3 million, 15 beds for detox.

Well let me tell you about another group in this province that did something about it; the group that that government doesn't want to talk about because it's a group called Teen Challenge. And they don't want to talk about it because it's a faith-based organization, and God forbid we were to say that.

Except what they don't understand, that every organization that deals with addicted kids is a faith-based organization. Their own program runs on faith-based. It's run to a 12-step program, and one of the steps in that program are to a higher power. Aboriginal programs are run on faith-based, so why can't this program run on faith-based? I have seen the results of this program. Has anyone from that side been there to see these young people that have come from despair back into society? No, they won't because it's a bad word — that Teen Challenge

with faith-based organization.

Well, you know, I heard on the news that the new government detox centre is going to be \$3 million. I just want to report that prior to Christmas, Teen Challenge will be opening 25 new beds, with a kitchen, a dormitories, a chapel facility, for a half a million dollars. Now isn't that ironic how that can be done?

[16:15]

I also want to report that Teen Challenge is now out fundraising to put a women's facility . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh so now we can hear the minister from Yorkton beak because he doesn't take this seriously. He can beak all he wants about it. He doesn't take drug issues with children seriously. He wants to get into a debate about what we're going to cut. I want to get into a debate about what they're going to do, not what they're going to cut. When are they going to take this seriously and get on with it?

You know, who closed Whitespruce? The Premier of this province closed Whitespruce. He closed a facility that was state of the art. And yet in the last session, the minister tried to tell me it's still open. What a . . . still open.

You know, it's interesting that we have these requirements in our communities, that this government gets up and — I've heard it in speech after speech — say, our children are our future. They continually say, our children are our future, and yet everything they do doesn't demonstrate that. We saw that in the House today. We saw that in the House for the last four days when we talk about Oyate and children at risk on the inner streets of Regina. You know, the organization that we . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. The member of Saskatoon Northwest has the floor, and I'd ask members to respect that and let him continue.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. You know, the member from Yorkton says, Whitespruce never got cut. Well that's a revelation to the million people that live here because all of us know it has been cut. And how he could make that statement is just ironic, you know. I guess that's like the pathologist that they have up in Yorkton that really they don't have yet.

You know, it's talking about futures. What we're trying to say, and what we've been saying all along from this side of the House, is that we need to plan for the future, not the past. They want to deal in the past. They want to deal from 60 years ago, 30 years ago. And as my colleague from Weyburn states, the young people want to hear about the future. They want to know where we're going. They want to know what we're creating in this province.

And I can tell you that the parents that are dealing with these at-risk children, the parents that are dealing from Alvin Buckwold, they want this government to step up and do the job that it's doing and fund these programs properly.

You know, this government has \$50 million sitting in a fund for business investment, something that can certainly be proven that they don't have a lot of expertise in. Can you imagine what

that \$50 million can do? Two point five million doubles Alvin Buckwold's budget — \$2.5 million, \$2.5 million. We can now get more therapists, respite care for . . . There's 4,000 families that use that facility. Two point five million dollars in Regina, if that's what it is, will help those thousand families in there that need the help.

So where do we want to put our money? They talk about the future. They talk about the great Throne Speech, but what they haven't talked about is the kids in this province. They haven't talked about investing where they need to invest, in places like Alvin Buckwold Centre, in places like Teen Challenge, in long-term addiction treatment centres.

I was at a drug court convention in Edmonton a few weeks ago when the head of the drug court was there, that we have set up in October. And it was quite interesting that he had said it started in October 4, and they were just getting organized. And there was the chief of drug squads from Saskatoon and the RCMP drug squad from Regina — the head of that — and I went over and said, well what do you know about this? And both of them said, that's the first we've ever heard of it. Can you imagine that? We open a drug squad and the two . . . drug court, and the two people that should be intimately familiar with that heard about it at a conference.

What does that tell you? That tells me about consultation. It tells me about consultation with foster families. It tells me about consultation with people at Alvin Buckwold Centre. It tells me a lot. It tells me about a minister that isn't doing his file.

You know I would thought he would want to get up today and be proud of what he's doing in this department. But I know, I know because I deal with these people every day coming into my office, these people with family issues, that they don't want to deal with. You know, he says when I called him twice, he didn't return my call because his staff didn't want to talk.

Well the two cases I wanted to talk to him privately, because he needed his intervention, are both before the courts now. Both of these could have been solved if he'd have picked up the phone like his colleagues does and be courteous enough to call me back.

I don't use his office lightly. When I call him, it's an emergency. And yet he says he was on holidays. That was four months ago. So he's either getting more holidays than I am or whatever.

You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, Throne Speech should be about the future. But more importantly, it should be implementing things of the future. It should be dealing with our children. It should be dealing with the serious issues that this province is dealing with, with the 78,000 people that are on some form of social assistance.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I'll wind up by saying that I will not be supporting the Throne Speech.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Recognize the member for Regina Northeast.

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to enter into this debate, the debate on the Throne Speech. First I want to take this opportunity to congratulate my good friend and colleague, the member from Regina Coronation Park, for his eloquent job in moving the Throne Speech. He did I'm sure challenge Hansard in describing all of the terms that he used during his speech but I'm sure Hansard would be up to meeting that challenge.

I did review the content of his Throne Speech and I compared it to the content of the mover of the Throne Speech from last year and I must admit he came close — did not surpass the bar — but he did come close to meeting the bar that was set by the hon. member and my seatmate from last year's Throne Speech.

I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate the member from . . . my former seatmate, the member from Regina Wascana Plains, for her seconding of the Throne Speech. Likewise I did the same. I compared the content of her Throne Speech to the content of the seconder of the Throne Speech from last year. And I can assure all my colleagues that she far surpassed the bar that was set by that member.

I also want to take this opportunity to welcome the new member from Weyburn-Big Muddy to this legislature. I want to congratulate him on his election, congratulate him on taking his seat here. I hope he enjoys his time here. It is truly an honour — as he has already mentioned in his speech — it's truly an honour to have the privilege of serving the people of Saskatchewan in your constituency in this great forum. It's truly an honour and I'm sure he appreciates that.

It is, as I said earlier, truly a pleasure for me to enter into this Throne Speech on behalf of the fine people of Regina Northeast. There's no doubt, Madam Speaker, that all Saskatchewan people are fine people, but there are no finer people than the people in Regina Northeast. And this summer as in past summers I spent some time out canvassing in my constituency. I enjoy doing that. I enjoy getting out and meeting folks at the doorstep and talking to them about the issues that they face each and every day. I like getting their feedback. I like hearing what they have to say. I usually set a goal for myself of 14 polls and I try to canvass those 14 polls in the summer months, preferably in the early part of the summer and the springtime when the weather is more conducive to being out door-knocking and so on.

Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, I was unable to meet my goal of 14 polls this year because of other duties that was asked of me. I was only able to get 13 polls done. But during that time I set a standard question and I took a bit of a . . . I took a bit of a page from my colleague from Greystone who also likes to canvass and we've talked about this many times. I can do a poll in about five to six hours but this year I decided to go a little slower at it and spend a little more time talking to my constituents and getting a little more in-depth feedback from them.

So I developed a standard question I would ask them. The question was quite simple. What do you expect from your government? The answer was loud and clear. They wanted a government with a vision, a vision of the future, a vision that included making Saskatchewan a better place for young people

to live, work, and raise their families.

In order to achieve this we must give our children the tools to meet the challenges of the future by giving them the educational opportunities so they will be able to take part in tomorrow's economy.

Education is an essential building block of the province's social and economic well-being. An example, Saskatchewan will invest in the groundbreaking KidsFirst initiative which blends the efforts of the health districts, school divisions, Aboriginal organizations, and communities, and provides home visiting programs, community supports, early development programs, prenatal care, and family support.

My constituents told me that they wanted a government to invest in education and training opportunities for Saskatchewan people. They said as young people grow and look to their futures in whatever walk of life they chose, government must be committed to addressing the labour markets changing needs and will expand training opportunities to meet the market demands; unveil new partnerships between business, labour, and our training institutions to provide counsel to government to meet Saskatchewan's evolving labour market needs; and strengthen and expand our regional training models bringing education closer to the students and better linking training to learners, job seekers to employers. As well, expanding partnerships with First Nations and Métis people to enhance the educational skills training for our Aboriginal youth, continuing the freeze on university tuitions and hosting a youth summit to link young people, business, employers, and government in building a brighter future for the youth of our province.

Our province has an abundance of career opportunities, a province that is down-to-earth, of where the sky is the limit for jobs in every corner.

Mr. Speaker, this summer while I was canvassing I asked: what do you expect from your government? The answer was loud and clear. They wanted a government with a vision, a vision that included strengthening Saskatchewan's public health care while reducing waiting lists. Saskatchewan remains the distinction . . . retains the distinction as the only have province in Canada that does not charge its people a health care premium. My constituents told me to strengthen the best health care system for families by enhancing efforts to recruit health care providers using new relocation incentives in return for service commitments, increasing opportunities for internationally educated professionals to work right here, right now, and expand Aboriginal health work force and continue the process toward the development of a children's hospital within a hospital.

Mr. Speaker, our seniors, elders worked, fought, and sacrificed to build our health care system. We today can honour their efforts by continuing the fight to ensure that Saskatchewan's people are served by the best health care system anywhere in North America.

Mr. Speaker, this summer when I was door-knocking in my constituency I asked: what do you expect from your government? The answer was loud and clear. They said they wanted a government with a vision, a vision that included

making Saskatchewan a leader in environmental protection and a green economy for our families to remain healthy and our economy to remain prosperous.

Saskatchewan will be a leader in the protection of the environment and the promotion of clean and renewable energy. Saskatchewan will demonstrate national leadership in the conservation, protection, and restoring the health care of our environment. With our connection to the land and our commitment to environmental stewardship, Saskatchewan clearly demonstrates it's down-to earth with only the skies as a limit.

Mr. Speaker, this summer when I was visiting with my constituents I asked: what do you expect from your government? The answer was loud and clear. They wanted a government with a vision, a vision that included ensuring Saskatchewan people and families benefited in our strong and prosperous economy.

Mr. Speaker, our province has caught the eye of the world. Major investors are making investments from national and international companies including oil and gas, diamonds, uranium, value-added agriculture, ethanol, and potash. Our external trade missions and promotions and the work of the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership are bearing fruit.

Saskatchewan's co-operative, financial, manufacturing, tourism, film and video, music, small business, and retail sectors are expanding and providing even greater opportunity for Saskatchewan young people. In support of our growing economy and increasing the demand for skilled tradespeople, as well as righting a long-time wrong in our taxation system, the employee tool tax credit program that was introduced by our Minister of Finance in the 2005 budget was greatly, greatly appreciated by over 15,000 working men and women in our province. For the first time ever anywhere tradespeople who have to provide tools as a condition of their employment can now write those costs off against their income tax.

[16:30]

Mr. Speaker, when I look at this Throne Speech I see that it addresses all of the wishes of my constituents and more. This Throne Speech clearly demonstrates the vision that this government has for Saskatchewan. It continues with the commitment of providing the lowest-cost utility bundle in Canada. It continues to provide growing opportunities for educational and training opportunities for our youth. It continues providing employment and career opportunities for Saskatchewan people. It continues to provide speedy access to top quality health care when it is needed by Saskatchewan people. It continues to ensure that we today and future generations will be exposed to a clean and healthy environment.

Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech has the vision Saskatchewan people are looking for and — with the announcement made by our Minister of Finance on October 27, 2006, that the PST will be reduced from 7 per cent to 5 per cent — was warmly received by all people in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it was the people of Saskatchewan that worked with this NDP government to move our province from the edge

of bankruptcy to a have-province status. It was the people of Saskatchewan who worked with this NDP government to accomplish 13 consecutive, balanced budgets, 14 credit upgrades in just 15 years.

Mr. Speaker, when the people of Saskatchewan look back they say it was the NDP that had the vision to bring us forward. Mr. Speaker, today the people of Saskatchewan say it is only the NDP that can guide us into the future if that future is to be continued, filled with the opportunity and prosperity. Mr. Speaker, that is why I have been instructed by the fine people of Regina Northeast to support the Throne Speech with such a bright future in it for Saskatchewan people. Thank you.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to rise today to speak in response to the Throne Speech. But before I do, I would just like to thank my family, my husband Vic, my kids and my grandkids for all their love and support, and my caucus.

It would pretty hard to do my job without the support of my family, their patience and understanding. And, Mr. Speaker, people on both sides of this House recognize the sacrifices that our families do make. So I truly thank mine. And as you are aware, Mr. Speaker, my family has been dealing with some serious health issues this past year, and I would like to thank the members of this Assembly and also my constituents for their concern. I am happy to say that things have turned out well, and my husband is on the mend. But he and I are both very appreciative of the support shown.

And I would also like to take a minute to pay tribute to my colleague Ben Heppner. He was also a friend. Ben was an honourable man, and he was a true gentleman and a mentor to me and I'm sure many others in this Assembly. From Ben, I learnt a lot of things, but the two that come to mind are how a quiet presence can speak volumes and how to always stand up for what you believe in and never waver. But Ben will sincerely be missed, and our thoughts and our prayers are certainly with Arlene and the family.

I would also like to thank my constituency assistant, Mr. Speaker, Leanne Fox. The first impressions people have of us are those that are left by our constituency assistants: the way they're treated when they make phone calls, the treatment they get when they walk through that door. And I would just like to thank Leanne for treating my constituents with courtesy, the professionalism, and the respect that they deserve.

I would also like to thank the people of my constituency for allowing me this privilege to serve them in this Hon. Assembly. It's been seven years. That time has went fast. But through their continued encouragement and support, that enables me to do my job.

And I too would like to join my colleagues in congratulating the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy on his outstanding victory. As you know, Mr. Speaker, my constituency borders his, and I run into people from his constituency all the time, and they are so proud to have this bright young man represent them in this

Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, with a couple of exceptions, this Throne Speech was just a duplicate of previous ones. The first thing that got my attention in the Throne Speech was that this NDP government said that they were going to earmark all fuel taxes to go back into highways. Highways are a big issue in my constituency, and to earmark this money for highways is really nothing new.

In my constituency there are three highways that are major links to the USA [United States of America] — Highway No. 35, Highway No. 39, and Highway No. 47. And granted there has been some work done on Highway 39, but that was mainly through the program that the federal government had with their border infrastructure program. But Highways 35 and 47 are an absolute disgrace. Smashed windshields and damage to vehicles are constantly being reported to my office.

And in fact one of my constituents just recently went to trade in his vehicle. It had 70,000 clicks on it, and this vehicle is never on the gravel roads. It's mainly on Highway 47, south of Estevan. And when he took this vehicle into the dealer, they thought he turned the odometer back because they had never seen a vehicle in such rough shape with that few kilometres on it. And this was just from driving on these highways.

At the end of September, Mr. Speaker, I went for a drive on Highway 47 South. And when I stopped along the highway, a safety officer from the department came and told me that I couldn't be out in that area without a hard hat on, as workers were out there sand sealing it. And I want to emphasize that when this gentleman told me this that he was just doing his job. But the first thing that came to my mind is perhaps the minister should give an order that everyone that travels on that highway should be issued hard hats before they go down that section because, you know, the potholes are so deep when you hit the bumps that I think it would save everyone a few injuries.

This Highway 47 South, Mr. Speaker, was sand sealed last summer, and the government has chosen to go that route this year. And there are so many semis on this stretch of highway that what they really need is a thick layer of asphalt. Let's fix it once and for all, and with the proper maintenance we'd be in good shape out there.

Highway 18 West is a major route in the Torquay, Oungre, and Lake Alma area. And I recently travelled on this road, and it too is in deplorable condition. I wrote the minister concerning it in, I believe, it was late July or early August and two weeks ago I finally got a response from him. And he said that this section of the highway between Oungre and Lake Alma was being turned back to gravel and the reason given was that gravel was much safer than broken pavement. But I guess that begs the question, how did the highway get in such rough shape that it, you know, it's all broken pavement? And the answer is simple. It's through 15 years of neglect by this NDP government.

And with the oil revenues that are coming in from my corner of the province, that is an absolute slap in the face to the constituents out there that this government doesn't see fit to put more money back in that area in infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, we also hear in the Throne Speech how the

government will shorten the waiting lists, and that's basically the same old, same old. We've heard that before. I think that promise has been made in every Throne Speech. And the Minister of Health boasts that those on lengthy waiting lists, the number is very small. But what he doesn't realize, that each person that brings their case here to this Assembly is just representative of hundreds of others that are affected by this government's mismanagement of the health care system. I have people in my province who have gone out of the province or out of the country to have medical attention and hip surgeries, knee surgeries. And this is really sad that they have to do this because their tax dollars here are going to their health care, and yet they have to pay for their care out of their own pocket.

Mr. Speaker, this government also claims ownership to social issues. And through the neglect of the Premier and his minister, the Oyate Safe House is no longer operational. Recommendations and inquiries that should have been dealt with were ignored. And now the children have been abandoned by this government.

And, Mr. Speaker, in my constituency — and as you will remember I have been presenting petitions regarding this situation — the Estevan Daycare Co-operative has been denied the requested spaces. There are about 80 children on the waiting list for licensed care, but the government, who are so quick to blame everyone else, doesn't see fit to provide any extra spaces for these people. In the letter they received it's got, priorities reflect, and included in the reflections of the priorities were rural development. So the people of Estevan are very upset with this government, and they will continue to be that way unless there's some drastic changes made.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has always been very quick to point out the promises that the federal government has made and did make during their campaign — the election campaign — and how he is going to pressure them to keep their word. Mr. Speaker, the feds should live up to their commitments, up to their promises. No question. But what about the promises this Premier made?

Remember the 2003 campaign? There were to be no tax increases. He said, read my lips, no tax increases. What happened? The PST went up 1 per cent. And when questioned about this, the Minister of Finance said that it wasn't politically popular to discuss tax hikes during an election campaign. So now in the eleventh hour, they see fit to give the people of this province a cut in the PST. While the citizens of this province are happy about any tax reduction, they realize that this is a last ditch effort by this government to retain power.

The people of Weyburn-Big Muddy gave this Premier and this government a wake-up call in the June by-election, but apparently the Premier hit the snooze button and went back to sleep. Remember, Mr. Speaker, the desperate measures that the government used in dealing with the Souris Valley Hospital issue in Weyburn during the campaign. The Deputy Premier and the NDP candidate were out in full force for their photo ops in a desperate attempt to win that by-election. But the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy weren't fooled.

The Sask Party candidate, the new member from Weyburn-Big Muddy went on to soundly trounce the NDP, forcing them to

wind up in last place in Tommy Douglas's hometown. And, Mr. Speaker, the people of this province won't be fooled either by the political manoeuvres of this desperate fatigued government. So, Mr. Speaker, one has to question the motives of this government.

As I said earlier, people are happy and of course they are very deserving of this PST reduction. But they view it as a distraction from what's really happening on that side — a desperate, cynical, political move by a government in panic mode.

Many from the government side have stood and repeatedly touted 14 balanced budgets. Yet look at the 2006 volume of the Provincial Auditor's report, page 7 says:

. . . the Government has lived within its means for nine of the last sixteen years (that is the Government [has] raised more revenues than it spent in each of these years).

Simple math states, Mr. Speaker, the conclusion that there were seven deficit budgets.

[16:45]

And the speaker from the government side that preceded me just went on to say about the '80s . . . And of course I dedicate The Beatles tune "Yesterday" to them all over there. But they have very selective memories because they always mention the '80s and they do not mention the debt that was left when the government took over in 1982. And that was a \$6.4 billion debt left by Allan Blakeney, and I believe the interest rates were 22 or 23 per cent at that time. So you figure out how many years it takes for that debt to double.

On page 39 of the Provincial Auditor's report, Mr. Speaker, you will see that the money focused for agriculture has been slashed from \$837 million in 2002 to \$512 million in 2006, this from a government who repeatedly proclaims their support of the agriculture industry. And, Mr. Speaker, that is simply shameful. Crop insurance premiums have increased. The coverage has been reduced. They've shut down rural service centres. They have simply not been there for those in the agriculture industry. They put their noses in places where they shouldn't be, and where their attention should be focused they ignore. And that is the legacy of this government.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier is basically the author of a book of broken promises. And for the last while he's been reliving the days of The Beatles. And I really liked The Beatles in the '60s, Mr. Speaker. I was a big Beatles fan . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I liked him too. And so now he has his Imagine campaign. And that Imagine campaign is at a cost to taxpayers of \$300,000. But you know what? I can think of another Beatles tune that the Premier will probably have for his next campaign, and it's a song The Beatles had out. It was very popular — movie of the same name — simply titled "Help!" And another one, a good one is "Yellow Submarine," I think of when I hear about this government because they are doing what submarines do, Mr. Speaker, and that is sinking.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment put forward by the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy, but I

will not be supporting the motion. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into this Throne Speech debate, and I'll say right from the start that I'm going to support the Speech from the Throne and the government plan that is there. It sets out a very clear message to the people of Saskatchewan and of Canada as to what this government is going to do.

I'd like to congratulate the members who presented this motion and seconded it, and I'd also like to welcome the new member from Weyburn. We acknowledge that he is here in his new role and that we look forward to working together with him as the years develop. I'm sure he'll enjoy many years on that side of the House, and that will be very interesting for all of us.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech tries to set out in a very clear way what the government intends to do to make sure that our people in this province are going to be able to build their futures here. And that applies to the parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren — all of the people in this province.

And I think that no matter how we look at that, the whole issue of what we do with our air and our land and our soil and our water makes a huge difference in where the plans go in the long term. I think we're at a very interesting point in the history of the earth where people are concerned on a broad basis as it relates to all of these things.

Many of us have grown up in a time where it seemed like there was unlimited amounts of water. Air was always going to be clean. We didn't have to worry about protecting the land. That has changed very dramatically, and the message has come home to all of us that we need to work on those particular issues. In this Throne Speech, there are some very clear messages around what we can do as citizens of Saskatchewan to contribute to this particular role, and we are going to be using our people, our ingenuity, our ideas. We're going to be using the resources that we have. We're going to be using our space on this earth.

I often try to describe Saskatchewan, when I travel other parts of North America or the world, to people who have never been here before. And one of the messages that I give to people is that we have a very large space or share of the earth but we only have a million people who live here. And that those people who live in Saskatchewan have a very interesting or unique role as park wardens or game preserve wardens or as conservation officers for what I would call one of the largest green spaces on earth. And we as Saskatchewan people, and especially us who are on the government side as leaders in the government, have a very strong role in providing guidance and assistance to make sure that our role as a green space on the earth is preserved.

What we know is that many parts of the earth have such tremendous pressures of population and human activity that they don't have the opportunities that we have to preserve a space on the earth. And we have to then be very, very careful how we plan for the economic development of our province and

for our people, while at the same time taking on our role as world citizens.

Mr. Speaker, we'll be working on a number of these issues and have been for many years with that bigger picture in mind of what happens in Saskatchewan. The announcement earlier this week about how we use our coal resource, where we have 300 years worth of energy in coal, we're going to use new technology gathered from within Saskatchewan, from within Canada, from around the world, to use the coal in a way that causes as little impact on the environment as possible. And this SaskPower clean coal project and all the related issues is something that we are extremely proud of.

In the same light we know, and I think one of the members opposite was referring to this earlier today, that our use of energy will increase. It's just how we end up living in this world. And we're going to respond to that by conservation methods and using other things that we can do, but we're also going to respond to it by totally renewing how we provide energy to people in Saskatchewan. And that's one of the very interesting and exciting discussions that's taking place over the next couple of years here in Saskatchewan. What do we do with our energy requirements? How do we respond in what we do in making the most efficient use of that energy, but more importantly how do we respond in finding new sources of energy.

Right now in Canada we're the leaders on a per capita basis of use of wind energy in our regular power system. That's a great achievement. It's a dramatic change from what it was just five years ago. And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to look at that.

We've got our stable of hydroelectric power but we don't have quite the same opportunity as some of our neighbours in that area. But we are making sure that we can do that in a way that's environmentally sustainable in the long term.

We have our small power producer programs that we have used and have had in place since 1999. We're reviewing those in light of all of the things that we've learned about what's happened across the country. We don't have the same incentives that Ontario has around solar power but clearly we have more sun than they do in many parts of our province and that's something that we're continuing to look at as well.

Mr. Speaker, what the Throne Speech recognizes is that as Saskatchewan citizens we have a responsibility and a role to live in a new green way. And we need to capture that sense and we're going to do that. Also, Mr. Speaker, what we're going to be doing in this next year is continue to develop some of the things that we've been working on.

One of the areas that I'm especially proud of and pleased to work on relates to work around the parks system. And this is something previous ministers of Environment and the government in general have been working at, but I sense a renewed interest in our provincial parks or regional parks or urban parks and the municipal parks in a way that allows us to rejuvenate a lot of infrastructure but also develop more preserved places in the province. So we have a parks legacy program which is part of our agenda in this next year which will

be looking at all of those things. And what it will do, it provides an array of opportunities for outdoor recreation, learning, personal renewal, at the same time as preserving some areas as wild areas or protected areas. But we'll be doing that in conjunction with the local communities.

We're also going to be modelling collaborative management with the local communities, and some green and environmentally sustainable practices, so that we can understand and build on what we already know.

Now, Mr. Speaker, our parks system this year had an estimated 2.5 million visits. This is up 5 per cent from our record year last year when we had the centennial year. What we know from talking to people is that over 90 per cent of Saskatchewan residents have used our parks in the last five years. And, Mr. Speaker, the economic impact of the parks has a huge part in what happens.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of other areas that I would like to deal with tomorrow, as I see that the time is getting late. And so at this point I would move to adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Regina Lakeview that debate be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:58.]

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Premier

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Minister Responsible for Seniors

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