



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

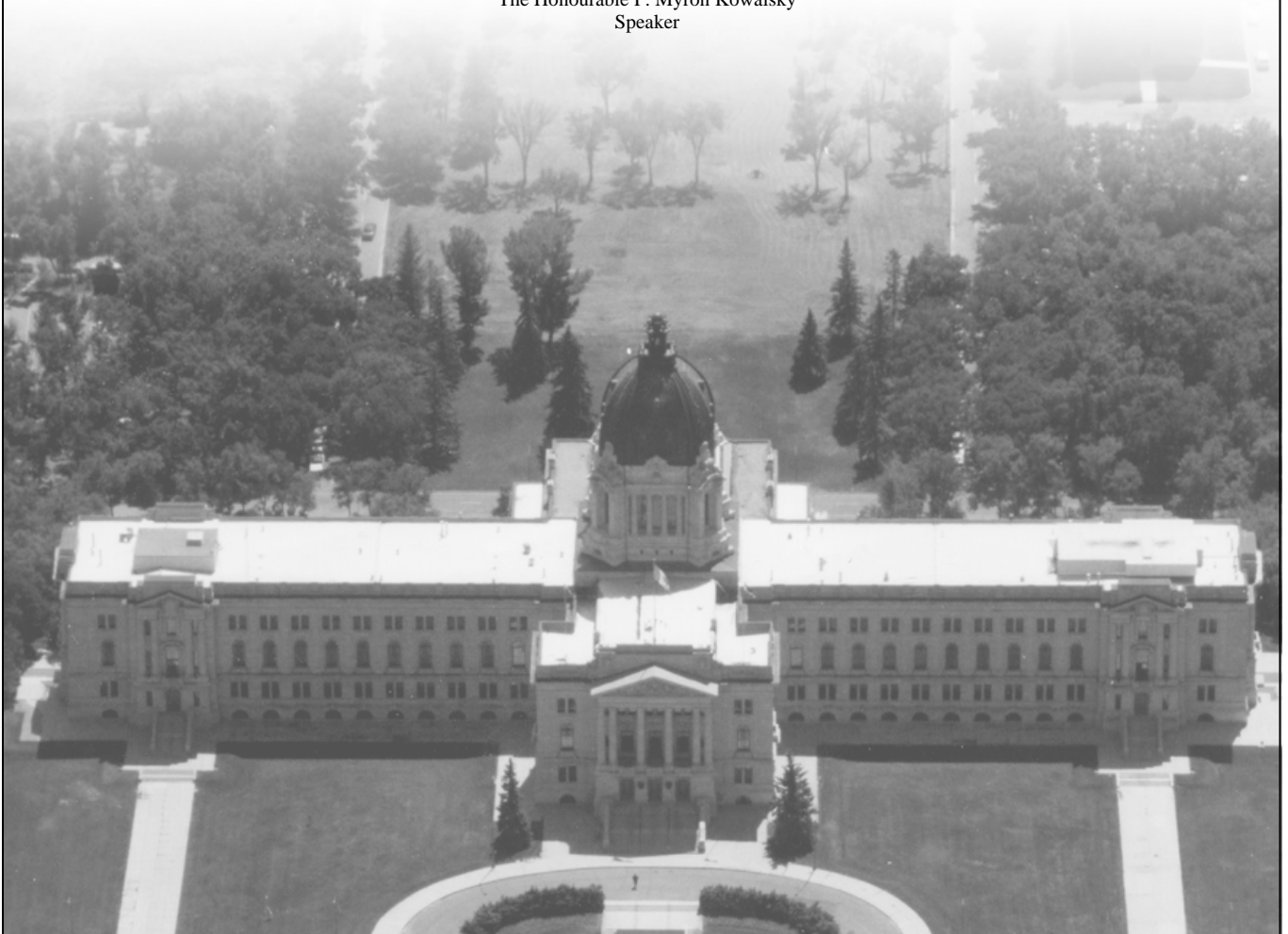
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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
Quennell, Hon. Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Serby, Hon. Clay	NDP	Yorkton
Sonntag, Hon. Maynard	NDP	Meadow Lake
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Hon. Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Thomson, Hon. Andrew	NDP	Regina South
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Hon. Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
Wakefield, Milton	SP	Lloydminster
Wall, Brad	SP	Swift Current
Wartman, Hon. Mark	NDP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney
Vacant		Martensville

[The Assembly met at 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 again my pleasure to present petitions on behalf of a renal dialysis unit at the Broadview Union Hospital. And 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 petitions I present are signed by the good folks from Broadview, Regina, and Whitewood. I so present.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The condition of Highway 18 remains a matter of concern for constituents of Cypress Hills. The prayer reads as follows:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, today's petition is signed by individuals once again from the community of Maple Creek. I so present.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to present today from a constituent in Carnduff. And the prayer reads:

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

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

These petitions come from the Fort Qu'Appelle, Lanigan, Storthoaks, Carnduff, Glen Ewen, a lot of them from Carnduff, Mr. Speaker. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for

Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to present a petition on behalf of residents concerned about highway structure in the province. The prayer reads as follows:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition come from the community of Preeceville. I so present on their behalf.

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

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

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

The people who have signed this petition are all from Preeceville. I so present on their behalf.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition that urges the government to repair Highway 36. Mr. Speaker, the highway has been allowed to deteriorate to the point that several clicks of Highway 36 need a fix. And the prayer of the petitions reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to invest the needed money to repair and maintain Highway 36 so it can return to being a safe and economical route for Saskatchewan families and businesses.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition come from the communities of Coronach, Calgary, and Willow Bunch. And I'm pleased to present them 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 Saskatchewan citizens who are very upset with this government's plan for gravel highways in our province. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and provide dust suppression on the gravel portion of Highway 99 between Junction 6 and Craven.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the city of Regina, Regina Beach, Lumsden, and Abbotsford, BC [British Columbia] I so present.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today with several petitions of citizens who are concerned about the safety on Highway No. 5. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

And to demonstrate just how much this highway is driven, Mr. Speaker, the signatures are from Invermay, Sturgis, Wadena, Osler, Annaheim, Norquay, Naicam, Humboldt, Saskatoon, Young, Englefeld, Colonsay, Canora; Swan River, Manitoba; and Bonnyville, Alberta. I so present.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again today I rise to present a petition on behalf of people from the Estevan area who are very concerned about the future of the Estevan Daycare Co-operative. And the prayer reads:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by people from Estevan, Carlyle, and Macoun. I so present. Thank you.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present another petition from citizens from Wilkie who are concerned about their reduction of health care services. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Wilkie Health Centre and special care home maintain at the very least the 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 Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to present on behalf of people from across Saskatchewan a petition of those who are concerned that Saskatchewan does not have a dedicated children's hospital, and increasingly parents are having to take their children to Alberta for the care that they need. The prayer of the petition reads as follows:

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

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

Petitioners today are from the Willowgrove and Erindale neighbourhoods of Saskatoon. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to upgrade the Bruno access road off Highway No. 5.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures of this petition are from Bruno, Dana, and Victoire. I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition from the citizens of the town of Jansen calling on the government 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.

As I said before, this particular petition is signed by good citizens from the town of Jansen. I so present.

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

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise

in the Assembly today and present a petition on behalf of citizens wishing to see Avastin, the cancer drug, funded. The prayer reads as follows:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, there are number of signatures on this particular petition and they're from Carievale. I so present.

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today that this is the first time in the province's history that the government has denied coverage of the cancer drug Avastin recommended by the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. The prayer reads:

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

And this is from the good people of all around Saskatchewan. I so present

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

Mr. Morgan: — I wish to rise in the House today to present a petition regarding the allocation of funding for a provincial children's hospital in Saskatoon. 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 implement an allocation of financial resources in this year's budget to build a provincial children's hospital in Saskatoon.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Saskatoon Southeast, Saskatoon Silver Springs, and elsewhere in the province. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, people in my constituency feel that it's time for the government to fix Highway 36 and I have a petition in that regards. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to invest the needed money to repair and maintain Highway 36 so it can be returned to being a safe and economical route for Saskatchewan families and businesses.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition today is signed by the good people of Coronach. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice I shall on day no. 12 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Regional Economic Development: what are the costs associated with creating, publishing, and distributing the *Communities at Work* magazine that is distributed by the Department of Regional Economic and Co-operative Development?

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

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 12 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SGI: to date how many accidents have been recorded on Saskatchewan highways with wildlife, and what was the cost to SGI in claims?

And I have similar questions, Mr. Speaker, for the years 2005 through to the year 2000.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you it's a pleasure to introduce 26 grade 11 students from Kelvington, my hometown.

I'm very pleased to be able to meet with these young people this morning. And I know that these young people love Saskatchewan, and I think the government opposite is fortunate that they don't have to answer the very tough questions these people have about why young people leave the province.

Please welcome them to their Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Saskatchewan Football Victories

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately we didn't get a chance to see our favourite gopher at McMahon Stadium yesterday, but you know what? I didn't see the Stampeders' horse in the second half either.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — The Stampeders were probably wishing they could have dressed the horse for the game because he was the only Stampeders who might have had a chance to catch Kenton Keith. So no gopher, Mr. Speaker, no horse — but I did see several ducks, all thrown by Henry Burris.

Fortunately our gopher's talents were still utilized by the University of Saskatchewan Huskies. I was happy to see Gainer join the Dogs on the sidelines at the Huskies game as they marched over the UBC [University of British Columbia] Thunderbirds at Griffiths Stadium.

Mr. Speaker, thank you to the thousands of fans who flocked to McMahon Stadium this weekend, both those who live in Calgary and those who made the trip from Saskatchewan. Your presence made the difference. I know travel agents will be busy this week booking flights to Vancouver for the Rider fans and to Winnipeg for the Huskie fans. I ask all members to join me in saying, go green; go Riders; go Huskies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Corner Gas

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to Brent Butt of *Corner Gas* and author Michele Sponagle, who for the last hour or so have been in the Cumberland Gallery here in the Legislative Building signing copies of *Tales of Dog River*, the just released official guide to this hit Canadian TV series.

Mr. Speaker, over 1 million fans from all across Canada tune in to *Corner Gas* to catch a little of what's going on in Dog River in any given week. The theme song says it's not a lot, but 1 million Canadians can't be wrong, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be able to say that this very popular, very intelligent, and a very funny television series calls Saskatchewan home and is shot out in Rouleau and here in Regina at the Canada-Saskatchewan Sound Stage. I'm proud of the fact three of the show's stars — Brent Butt, Janet Wright, and Eric Peterson — are from Saskatchewan. The quality and success of *Corner Gas* speaks very eloquently about all that Saskatchewan has to offer.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Cumberland Gallery is donating 10 per cent of today's book sales to Regina's food bank, and I want to acknowledge and thank those involved with the gallery for that.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate everyone associated with *Corner Gas* on their three Gemini nominations this year and on winning the Gemini Award for Canada's best comedy program or series just last Saturday night. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Swift Current.

Lessons Needed

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Thursday in this Assembly in an exchange between the minister of DCRE [Department of Community Resources and Employment] and the member for Saskatoon Northwest, the minister said, and I quote:

Mr. Speaker, the last lesson that I need of poverty is from that member, Mr. Speaker. I come from an area where I see poverty every day.

And he went on to cast some aspersions and talk about the need for some sort of a big, fat mirror.

Mr. Speaker, I disagree with the minister. I think he does need a lesson from members on this side of the House and specifically from the member from Northwest. I think he would be well served, Mr. Speaker, with a lesson from someone who grew up in Cabbage Town in Toronto whose family included eight kids. He was the fifth of eight kids. They lived in a house without a furnace, Mr. Speaker. They got their Christmas presents from the *Toronto Star* Christmas hamper program.

And despite that circumstance, that particular member has worked hard all of his life — much of it in the province of Saskatchewan — to create jobs for himself and for others. And yes, he has enjoyed now some success as a result of that, Mr. Speaker.

I think the member, that minister, would be well served to take some lessons from this minister for Northwest. I think the Premier would be well served to take lessons from the people of the province and fire that minister of DCRE for ignoring vulnerable kids in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Riders Win in Calgary

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Speaker, how about those Riders? And how about those Rider fans including, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps especially Gainer, everybody's favourite 7-foot gopher and Roughrider team mascot whose trials and tribulations over the days preceding the game provided inspiration and motivation to the Saskatchewan fans and players alike? Mr. Speaker, I watched the game along with Gainer and

several hundred others at the Casino Regina show lounge. And it was clear from the people in that room and from the Saskatchewan fans in the stands in Calgary that support for the Riders was even more vocal and more passionate than usual. And that's saying a lot.

As for the team, Mr. Speaker, the Roughriders played with an intensity and desire that simply wouldn't be denied. It was a brilliant come-from-behind victory with hard-nosed defensive play and an offence that just wouldn't quit. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Riders on their victory, and along with every other citizen of Riderville I hope they have a great game against the BC Lions next Sunday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Go Riders.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

World Junior A Game in Melfort

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, on Thursday night I had the occasion to attend an extremely exciting event. The Melfort Mustangs board and volunteers organized and played host to an exhibition game of the World Junior A Challenge at the Northern Lights Palace featuring Team Canada East versus Russia.

This was a tremendous opportunity for fans of our community to watch some of the strongest junior A hockey talent from around the world. With over 800 people in attendance this event was a great success, and the board and volunteers of the Melfort Mustangs should be proud of this accomplishment.

Hockey Canada and the Canadian Junior A Hockey League are bringing the World Junior A Challenge to Saskatchewan. They plan for it to be an annual event that will expose top Canadian junior age players to international competition.

The 2006 World Junior A Challenge will be 13 games featuring six teams that include Canada West, Russia and Belarus, Canada East, Slovakia, and Germany. The events games are to be held in Yorkton and Humboldt, two Saskatchewan communities with a long-standing junior A hockey tradition. I encourage everyone to attend some if not all these games as they are great fun for Saskatchewan residents.

Mr. Speaker, and members of the Assembly, please join me today in recognizing these well-deserving people from the city of Melfort for supporting this event.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

World Junior A Challenge in Yorkton

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yorkton is a world-class city, Mr. Speaker, and our new world-class facility, the Gallagher Centre, will be playing host to the people from around the globe beginning today, November 6, with our hockey challenge. That's right. Yorkton

will be hosting the first ever World Junior A Hockey Challenge, and Humboldt will be hosting a number of those games.

In the core of the tiger of the East, Mr. Speaker, right in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, the two Canadian teams will lock horns with Slovakia, Germany, Russia, and Belarus teams in a championship which will test the abilities of Canada's top junior A hockey players. And I'm confident, Mr. Speaker, that our Canadian players will showcase their outstanding hockey skills. Canada has put forward two teams — Team East and Team West.

And because Saskatchewan is such a major player in the West, we will be contributing several of our top players to Canada's west team: Weyburn's Kyle Haines on defence, Rosetown's Jordie Johnston on forward, Nipawin native Tyson Hobbins on forward, and Yorkton Terriers' own, Springside's Chad Nehring, a forward. The coaching staff will include Lashburn's Dwight McMillan as coach, Broadview's Ron Holloway as equipment manager, and Weyburn's Don Pindus as therapist.

Mr. Speaker, please join with me in congratulating all of the players that will be representing Canada West and all of the players that are coming here from all over the world to play in the very first international championship tournament in our city of Yorkton. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Suggested Names for Party

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, last week the Saskatchewan Party announced that our party was inviting Saskatchewan people to help rename the out-of-ideas NDP [New Democratic Party]. The Minister of Industry and Resources was complaining that our party utilized the word Saskatchewan and he didn't think that was fair. I was very surprised that on Friday he didn't go on an open line show to vent his feelings.

Well, Mr. Speaker, over the weekend our office has received over 100 submissions for a new name for this tired, worn-out New Democratic Party. Well, Mr. Speaker, I will read a few submissions for the pleasure of the Assembly: no darn principles, never did produce, no direction party, the out of touch party, the Saskatchewan depopulation party. And my favourite so far is, the you've got to be kidding me party.

Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that many of the names submitted cannot be read in the Assembly due to their content and graphic nature. That is a very clear indication about how the Saskatchewan people really feel about this NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party will gladly provide ideas for the government to steal, and name suggestions to the members opposite, as they hide from their record of mismanagement, incompetence, and stagnation.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member from Meadow Lake.

Improvements to Saskatchewan Court Houses

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last Friday I was extremely pleased to welcome my colleague, the Minister of Justice, to my constituency of Meadow Lake. And I was particularly pleased, Mr. Speaker, because the Justice minister was in Meadow Lake to announce a \$7 million investment the province is making to help ensure safety and security for the public and court staff by making significant improvements to court houses, including, Mr. Speaker, the funding required for detailed planning and design for the construction of new court houses in Meadow Lake and in La Ronge.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, airport-style, walk-through metal detectors will be installed in court houses in Saskatoon and Regina and as well Prince Albert Provincial Court. And of course a variety of other security upgrades will be completed in a number of court houses in the province.

Renovations to Yorkton Broadcast Place, which houses the Provincial Court, will be completed by 2007. As well, planning of renovations for Melfort Provincial Court will begin next year and for Lloydminster, the year after that.

Mr. Speaker, providing suitable court houses with appropriate security is a priority on this side of the Assembly. This investment will result in significant improvements in security and space for public, courtworkers, and those involved with the courts.

I want to as well thank Mayor Darwin Obrigewitsch and the rest of the town council from Meadow Lake for working so closely with our government on this important initiative. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Timely Access to Cancer Care

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Crystal Bonderud is in your gallery today. She is the recent widow 38-year-old Doug Bonderud who died of cancer on October 3 of this year.

In May of this year, Doug and Crystal went to the Mayo Clinic for a second opinion which they couldn't seem to get on a timely basis here in Saskatchewan. That second opinion came too late. What's disturbing is that the couple were told by doctors there that Doug could have been saved if surgery had been performed on him six to eight months earlier here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, how could have that happened in our province?

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite has indicated that Mrs. Bonderud and members of her family are present today. On behalf of the government, we would extend our condolences to her and to all of Doug's family on his recent passing.

We recognize any incident of cancer, Mr. Speaker, as very tragic. But when a member of your family or a friend or a neighbour is struck, passes away, that tragic message is multiplied many times over. That's why, Mr. Speaker, this government over a number of years has continued to devote ever-increasing resources, human and fiscal, to fight this disease through both research and treatment. And, Mr. Speaker, that's why in this current budget alone, Mr. Speaker, we have increased funding to the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency by more than \$10 million, a 16.5 per cent increase over last year.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Doctors at the Mayo Clinic had told Doug that early treatment could have prevented his death. For reasons unknown to us, he didn't get that treatment he needed here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, doctors in Rochester removed a tumour the size of a dinner plate from Doug's abdomen. It wasn't enough that Doug wasted a year of precious time when he was misdiagnosed with Crohn's disease, Mr. Speaker. When he finally was diagnosed with cancer, he couldn't receive the intervention he needed here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And the question is why.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a month since Doug's death. What has the minister done to review this most horrible situation?

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Again thank you very much for the question. And, Mr. Speaker, for a number of reasons relating to privacy, legal, and jurisdictional, Mr. Speaker, I can't speak to some of the specifics of the case that the member opposite can address questions about. But, Mr. Speaker, what I can do is say that since I learned about the event, both from the family and through the media, I've been reviewing matters on a regular basis. This is indeed an unfortunate circumstance.

But, Mr. Speaker, over the years, this government has recognized that incidents occur from time to time that either are most unfortunate or don't meet the public's expectations. We have put in place processes, Mr. Speaker, to address these issues, and these processes are available to Mrs. Bonderud and the family to proceed and to follow through on some of the questions that have been raised.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, the Mayo Clinic said that this death was preventable. Doug's last wish was that his death would not be in vain and that others would not have to suffer

the same fate.

Mr. Speaker, The Coroners Act states that the coroner inquest may be conducted if the coroner deems it necessary. And I quote from The Coroners Act, “bring dangerous practices or conditions to light and facilitate the making of recommendations to avoid preventable [preventable] deaths.” Under the Act, Mr. Speaker, the Justice minister can direct this request.

Mr. Speaker, Doug’s family would like to know what went wrong with our health care system that would cause a 38-year-old to die needlessly. Will the Justice minister today commit to ordering a coroner’s inquest to find out what went so horribly wrong in this case?

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, the member is correct. The coroner may direct an inquest in those circumstances that he describes. And if the coroner sees a value in holding such an inquest, the coroner may do so.

The opposition took the position when we introduced the first full-time coroner to this legislature and the first full-time . . . or the first forensic pathologist to this legislature . . . to the coroner’s office as part of our upgrading of the coroner’s office, the opposition took the position, through the Justice critic, on December 1, 2005, quote:

It’s absolutely essential that this process take place and . . . this office be treated with the appropriate professional respect that it deserves.

This government agrees the coroner’s office should be treated with respect. These decisions should be made by a professional coroner. And if the opposition wants to change their position, that’s the opposition’s right to do so, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, the Bonderuds had had serious reservations about the care options that were presented to them in here in Saskatchewan, so they took it upon themselves to do research. What they found, that surgical intervention was the first line of treatment for Doug’s cancer. They repeatedly asked for this in Saskatchewan but were denied the option, so they finally, out of desperation, went to the Mayo Clinic. They were told that surgery was required followed by drug intervention, but it was too late unfortunately, Mr. Speaker.

To the Minister of Health: why did they have to go to the Mayo Clinic to find out that it was the first intervention of care, not the last, which he was told here in Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And again, I simply preface my answer by indicating that for reasons

relating to privacy, legal, and jurisdictional, there are a number of matters specific to the member’s question that I can’t specifically answer in this place or any other.

But, Mr. Speaker, I can indicate that as far as policy is concerned with regards to this government, we have policy and processes in place to address these questions in a more formal manner. And, Mr. Speaker, questions specifically related to the quality of care provided by physicians are rightly handled by the professional organization charged with accreditation and competency of care. And, Mr. Speaker, we have directed the family to the College of Physicians and Surgeons to seek answers to some of the questions that have been raised by the member opposite.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s our understanding that the Bonderuds contacted Sask Health to request funding to go to the Mayo Clinic because treatment being prescribed here in Saskatchewan wasn’t working. Given the urgency of the request, the Bonderuds believe that they didn’t get a timely reply. And when they did get a reply, Mr. Speaker, the day before Doug’s surgery at the Mayo Clinic, they were given no guarantees for consultation and no guarantees that surgery would be performed here, anywhere in Canada. Doug was bleeding internally and had to undergo emergency surgery at the Mayo Clinic at a cost of approximately \$80,000 which Sask Health has now refused to pay.

Mr. Speaker, timely access to urgent cancer care in Canada was not available to the Bonderuds. Will the minister commit today to reviewing that decision by his department not to fund that surgery?

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I can say first of all generally I am constantly reviewing matters in the health care field. This is an evolving sector, and so it goes without saying that we would review these issues.

But, Mr. Speaker, I’ve also, up to this point, reviewed the policy of the department with respect to this case. And, Mr. Speaker, just to reiterate, the policy is very clear. Saskatchewan Health requires a written request from a patient’s specialist describing the nature of service required and verification that the service is not provided in Canada, anywhere in Canada, before prior approval is provided for out-of-country expenses.

Mr. Speaker, out of country in the last 12 months, this government has supported close to 1,500 Saskatchewan residents at a cost of ten and a half million dollars. Mr. Speaker, the policy clearly supports . . .

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, there are cases that are urgent. I’m asking this minister to look at that case which was urgent, when they couldn’t receive the care here in Saskatchewan, to

look at it because they couldn't wait for your department to make the decision, to go through all the hoops that your department made them go through, Mr. Speaker — his department, Mr. Speaker.

It's not just the Bonderud's family that are concerned about what happened here. We are getting emails and letters daily, and I'm sure the minister is as well about the treatment that some of our patients are receiving in Saskatchewan when it comes to cancer care.

Crystal brought with her a number of petitions which she brought with her today. In fact within five days, she received 950 signatures on these petitions. Crystal is here today. She's requesting a meeting with that minister to present her petitions and to have some of the questions that haven't been answered, answered. Will he see and meet with Crystal today?

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oyate Safe House

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in a government briefing note dated July 4, 2005, outlines a number of serious allegations involving the misappropriation of funds. These allegations were made by a former executive director of the Oyate Safe House. Can the minister please tell us what specific actions were taken by his NDP government to investigate these serious allegations?

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And as the member indicated, the information that he's making reference to was a department document. And obviously, as I've indicated time and time again, this department took the matters very seriously. They identified a number of problems at Oyate. They met with the Oyate board. And, Mr. Speaker, progress was being made.

What I'll point out is that we are going to continue moving forward with the recommendations of the advocate and the auditor. And I would point out, the last place, Mr. Speaker, that we're going to get any advice from is from the members opposite, because all they have done, Mr. Speaker, is they have ratcheted up the political pressure on this. They have created much discourse amongst many groups of people in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, we're not into cheap theatrical politics. We're into real programs and, Mr. Speaker, we intend to deliver. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, and all he's done is put 14 young Aboriginal women at risk.

Mr. Speaker, the former executive director alleges that an employee was paid five weeks salary even though this employee was not working at the safe house at the time. This payment was the result of another individual, whose name is blacked out, directing payment.

Mr. Speaker, what specific steps were taken by the NDP government and this minister to investigate those allegations? And what actions were taken as a result of that investigation?

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, once again, the children that are in care are in care of Ranch Ehrlo, and they're also in care of Dales House. I want to tell the people of Saskatchewan that the Oyate Safe House is no longer operational. They haven't taken any children and this has been going on for the last seven or eight months.

Mr. Speaker, these children are being cared for. And what's really, really important here is that the information that that member makes reference to, our department forwarded that information, and we've shared the information. And the whole purpose of us being very forthright and honest and open about this, Mr. Speaker, is we're trying to find some solutions.

Now what I'm going to say is it's clear as day is that they have a political agenda. We have a program in place, a plan in place, and we're going to implement it so the children that are out there being exploited right now do have options and as many options as possible, Mr. Speaker. That's our role.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. The minister says that he's been forthright and honest. We all know in this House and outside this House that they were dragged into this kicking and spitting.

Mr. Speaker, the former executive director makes a number of other allegations regarding the payment for services that were never actually performed, for example, payroll and accounting services that were never delivered. Mr. Speaker, these are coming from his own . . . documents from within DCRE.

Mr. Speaker, what specific steps were taken by this NDP government to investigate these allegations? What actions were taken as a result of those investigations?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the minister of community service.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated, once again I'll say to the people of Saskatchewan, that as we had concerns, we brought the concerns forward and the board certainly responded to them, Mr. Speaker. And as we continue

going down this path with the advocate and the auditor engaged, as we've said before we're going to follow the recommendations, and we're going to certainly listen to the advice of both the advocate and the auditor.

What we want to do, Mr. Speaker, is we want to fix this problem. What we want to do is we want to put some new programs in place to really help these children. And yes, we've been very forthright in saying there's been some hard lessons learned. But quite clearly the agenda here we have now is to move forward, all the while being aware of the hard lessons.

And what I'll point out, all we got from the opposition, Mr. Speaker, is cheap politics. And they want to continue moving that political agenda forward so they can grasp power, and it doesn't matter who they hurt in that process. And, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day they are going to wear that. They are going to wear that. And now I'll point out we want to find some solutions, and we will find those solutions, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was that minister who stood out in that foyer and said there are no problems, and now he's saying there are problems.

Mr. Speaker, the former executive director said that the process for accessing safe house funds consisted of some persons — whose name is blacked out — phoning another person — whose name is blacked out — and authorizing payments over the phone. The former executive director suggests there was no checks or balances, that the board of directors had pretty much ceased to function, that there was one board member who was pretty much running things. Mr. Speaker, what specific steps did this minister and this government do to investigate those allegations?

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, what we did was, as soon as more issues came forward, we shut down the Oyate house. Oyate house was shut down. And as the minister, we took the decisive step to shut down this facility. And unless and until the auditor and the advocate's recommendations are fulfilled, we don't plan on reopening Oyate, unless and until.

And I'll point out that since Oyate's been shut down . . . And the moment we have found that there is more problems, this place was shut down, and the children are being cared for somewhere else.

So in the meantime, we got some issues we have to work our way through, and we certainly will. Given the information at the time when I stood up in this Assembly said that things were moving forward and things were going well with Oyate, because they were, Mr. Speaker. There is issues that are being resolved as we brought it to the board's attention and things are moving in the right direction, and I stand by my answers. But quite clearly I'm going to take advice from many people, not

from that political party, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — I thank you, Mr. Speaker. He needs to read the reports from his own department. He obviously hasn't even read them yet. He's talking about things that he says aren't there. This report I'm talking about was in July 4, 2005, Mr. Speaker, almost a year before they shut it down.

Mr. Speaker, the former executive director also stated there were significant problems related to nepotism, and the department appeared to agree. On July 4, 2005, the memo says and I quote:

The absence of process and the instability that typically accompanies work environments where relatives are hired and favoured would suggest that delivery services to this very difficult client group is bound to suffer.

Mr. Speaker, that's an astonishing statement. The department is saying that hiring of relatives was taking precedence over the well-being of children. Mr. Speaker, whose relatives are being hired and favoured, and what did this NDP government do about it?

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, what is important for people of Saskatchewan to know is that this was an independent board. This board was operating the safe house and, Mr. Speaker, they're an autonomous board. And as issues were certainly brought forward by different people, the staff responded — my staff — by asking questions of the board and certainly the information flew back and forth.

What's really important, Mr. Speaker, is that we are going to stay the course. We are going to allow the advocate and the auditor and Oyate to do their work. And despite all the rhetoric and despite all the pressure and all the issues and all the allegations that may come from opposite, Mr. Speaker, we are going to stay the course. We're going to give the Oyate group until the 14th to come forward with their plan, Mr. Speaker, and at that time I will make a decision whether we're moving forward with Oyate or not, despite the political games being played at from across the way, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll remind the minister of two things. First of all this report is from his department, nobody else but his department. And now he's saying he's not listening to his own people. He's hiding behind the advocate report. He's hiding behind the auditor's report. He

is responsible for the kids. He is the father of those children.

Mr. Speaker, I am quoting from a document briefing note. Just let me repeat what the department told the minister in this briefing note:

The absence of process and the instability that typically accompanies work environments where relatives are hired and favoured would suggest that service delivery to this very difficult client group is bound to suffer.

That's what it is, Mr. Speaker. The children were suffering because somebody's relatives were being, quote, "hired and favoured." Mr. Speaker, whose relatives were being hired and favoured, and what did this NDP government and that minister do about it?

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, allow me to remind that member Oyate is shut down. And this minister, upon hearing more information that there are some challenges and problems, Mr. Speaker, we took the decisive step to shut down Oyate with the board's co-operation, Mr. Speaker. This is one of the issues. We went to the board with a problem and, Mr. Speaker — guess what? — Oyate's shut down. The children are being cared for. Oyate is shut down.

So now I'm . . . continue moving on that despite the fact that we have rhetoric and despite the fact that they have a political agenda over there, Mr. Speaker, we are going to stay the course. We're going to listen to the advocate. We're going to listen to the auditor. And come the 14th, we will make a decision, Mr. Speaker. We will make a choice as a minister as to whether we're going to move forward with Oyate or not.

Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. We care about those children. And despite the rhetoric coming from across the way, Mr. Speaker, they proposed a \$50 million cut to social services two years ago. Shame on them, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The rhetoric that he's talking about comes from his own department. I don't know why he's yelling at me about it.

Mr. Speaker, it gets worse. Let me read how the department summarized these allegations by the former executive director. Quote:

Taken in their entirety, these allegations paint a disturbing picture. At the same time that additional funding is being requested to offset staffing costs, the former executive director is alleging that money is being spent in a manner that is inconsistent in acceptable counting practices.

And I quote:

In the service agreement between the department and the safe house, the former executive director suggests that advocating for extra funding was becoming difficult given the inappropriate distribution of payments to relatives and board members.

Mr. Speaker, that's a very serious allegation — inappropriate disbursement of payment to relatives and board members. If that's true, the money should have been used to help these kids. What specific steps did that minister take to resolve these critical issues?

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, once again I'm going to point out that there's nothing new here, Mr. Speaker. The auditor and the advocate have seen all of this, Mr. Speaker. Our department has shared all the information, Mr. Speaker. These are departmental notes that that member's making a reference to, so we're fairly open and honest, Mr. Speaker, and we're also accountable. So there's nothing new here from what the advocate and the auditor have stated that there are problems within the safe house.

Let me reiterate. What we have done, Mr. Speaker, is we have shut the house down, Mr. Speaker. We have shut down Oyate. Oyate is no longer operating, Mr. Speaker. There's nothing new here. These are all departmental correspondence, Mr. Speaker. And that member wants to heighten the problem. He wants to create some division amongst our Saskatchewan community. And I say shame on them because, Mr. Speaker, they advocated cuts to this department — not more support for vulnerable kids — in the last election. That's why they lost, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, we continue to call on this minister just to do his job. You know, he needs to do a forensic audit on this, Mr. Speaker, and get to the bottom of it.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has repeated that the NDP government took action as soon as they became aware of the problems, but that's not true. I know it and he knows it. The former NDP minister received this briefing back on July 4, 2005. We also know it extends back to 2003. These were serious allegations of nepotism and financial irregularities. The department concluded that the children were suffering as a result of these activities. And what did the NDP do about this? Judging from today's answer by the minister, absolutely nothing.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier: did the former minister bring these attentions to cabinet and to the Premier? And why is this government doing nothing about these serious financial irregularities?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of

Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, once again I'll point out, as soon as we heard there was more problems at Oyate, this minister made a decision to shut it down. And what's really important, Mr. Speaker, is that every time an issue came up at the Oyate Safe House the board responded. But nonetheless, we're going to continue looking at this with the advocate and the auditor's advice, Mr. Speaker. It's very important to take that advice into consideration, Mr. Speaker.

And we're also going to give the Oyate board their due time. We said to the 14th of this month in which we're going to give them the opportunity to defend what they have done and to certainly answer the allegations, and to respond to some of the issues raised in our documents, Mr. Speaker. So I'll point out again, we are going to give them their due time, Mr. Speaker. On the 14th we will make a decision as a minister on the future of Oyate, what we can do to help these kids.

The last place to take advice from, Mr. Speaker, is that party who are so hungry for power they'll use anybody to get it, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Saskatchewan's New Water Conservation Plan

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to announce Saskatchewan's new water conservation plan.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, water is one of our most precious resources. A safe and secure water supply is essential to the long-term health and prosperity of our province and our citizens. Water is not only essential for life but it is also a . . .

The Speaker: — Order please, order please. Order please. The Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to announce Saskatchewan's new water conservation plan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — As you know, Mr. Speaker, water is one of our most precious resources. A safe and secure water supply is essential to the long-term health and prosperity of our province and our citizens. Water is not only essential for life, but is also a major factor driving the growth of our communities.

Mr. Speaker, we have an extraordinary opportunity to manage and develop water responsibly at a time when other jurisdictions have already overallocated their supply. A strategy to conserve water is an important component of Saskatchewan's green strategy which when fully developed will provide the vital framework for encouraging community growth while

ensuring the protection of our natural resources.

The water conservation plan I am tabling today is a result of extensive consultation with the Saskatchewan public. In addition to the distribution of a consultation guide, over 300 people attended eight public consultation meetings in early 2005, and 60 written submissions were received. Input critical to the development of the plan was also gathered from 21 meetings with industry and environmental stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, we thank all citizens and groups for their invaluable contributions to the plan. Mr. Speaker, I would also wish to acknowledge that I shared leadership in developing this plan with my colleague, the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Water Corporation, and the member for Saskatoon Greystone.

The water conservation plan is based on government leading by example partnerships with agriculture, industry, and communities, and public education. The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority will assume responsibility for overall water conservation policy direction, coordination, target setting, and reporting on results.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's water users are ready and willing to conserve our water sources, but factual, meaningful information is needed to make better choices in regards to water use. This will be achieved through public education and extension initiatives. A long-term water conservation awareness campaign will increase the knowledge base, reinforce support for water conservation, and encourage new patterns of water consumption.

Government will lead Saskatchewan's water conservation plan by setting appropriate allocation policies, compiling data and information, and demonstrating efficient water use at its own facilities. As well, we will work with industry, environmental groups, municipalities, and others to promote the use of water-efficient fixtures and appliances. As domestic use is the second largest use of water, the plan will provide information on water saving measures such as water-efficient appliances, ultra-low plumbing fixtures, and low water-use landscaping.

Mr. Speaker, we will also work with Saskatchewan Health to develop options for grey water use and effluent reuse in communities.

Mr. Speaker, considering that irrigation is a crucial factor in enabling and ensuring a stable and sustainable agricultural industry, the plan promotes irrigation research, education initiatives leading to more efficient water use, the development of industry standards, and the conversion to more efficient irrigation systems. As well, opportunities to reduce transmission losses within water delivery systems and irrigation districts will be reviewed.

In addition to issues surrounding irrigation of farm lands, Mr. Speaker, the plan also deals with the growing demands that intensive livestock production will have on our water supply. As expansion of these operations will continue, water saving strategies such as efficient animal watering systems and manure management techniques will be encouraged. As well, we will work with industry associations such as the Canadian

Association of Petroleum Producers to develop best management practices that address water conservation issues.

Mr. Speaker, becoming more efficient in our use of water is a long-term process. The recommendations contained in this plan will serve as blueprints for action in the years ahead.

I would like to close with a summary of benefits that water conservation will provide to Saskatchewan. Water conservation initiatives will help to maintain our water supplies, provide more opportunity for future development, reduce energy consumption, heal our ecosystems, prepare us for potential climatic changes, and reduce infrastructure costs for water supply and waste-water treatment. Conserving our water resources will also be part of a move toward a green economy which must be effective in its use of water.

Mr. Speaker, water conservation is the responsibility of us all. By working together, we can meet the goal of safe, reliable water supplies and ensure a prosperous future built on a healthy environment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I certainly would like to respond to the minister's statement dealing with his new water conservation plan. As the minister stated, Mr. Speaker, water is certainly a very precious and valuable commodity that we should all be aware of. And it will become even more so in the future as the increased demands for water within our province and within our country and around the globe grow, particularly, Mr. Speaker, when we look at this in the context of climate change and look at some of the models that are out there that predict more variance in our climate that could result in multi-year droughts and so on, Mr. Speaker.

The minister mentioned that some jurisdictions have overallocated their water supply. And, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that in this plan, in this government's plan, that we do an inventory of our current water resources that we have in this province so that we know what our supply is in a definitive way so that we can then deal with allocation issues from a knowledge base of inventory, Mr. Speaker.

The minister referred to Saskatchewan's green plan. And I find it rather interesting when he said that, when the green plan is fully developed. And that is an issue, Mr. Speaker, that citizens, particularly those that are in the environment area, that are following this issue as to when is this government going to unveil their full green plan We underwent a series of meetings and consultations and so on over a year ago, Mr. Speaker, and we still don't see the whole plan.

Overall, Mr. Speaker, I haven't . . . I've just received the minister's statement and I do thank him for that. We will have to review what the minister is proposing, Mr. Speaker. There's a couple of issues that come to mind as I listen to the minister, particularly when he talked about leading by example, Mr. Speaker.

I would hope that one of the examples that that government doesn't use, Mr. Speaker, is the SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] example and leadership in that whole area.

I would hope that we look at issues and conservation practices that are meaningful, Mr. Speaker, and we certainly would be . . . will view with interest and will certainly lend our support where it is required, but we will certainly also make suggestions and offer alternatives if we feel that it is required in this area. But we certainly feel that water is a very important and essential issue in this province, and we will be certainly looking forward to working with the government in the future to develop a plan that is in the best interests of all citizens of this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[14:30]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 9 — The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2006

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 9, The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 9, The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code 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. Quennell: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 12 — The Planning and Development Act, 2006

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 12, The Planning and Development Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 12, The Planning and Development 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 this Bill be read a second time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 15 — The Municipal Financing Corporation
Amendment Act, 2006**

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to move that Bill No. 15, The Municipal Financing Corporation Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 15, The Municipal Financing Corporation 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. Thomson: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 17 — The Miscellaneous Statutes (Municipal
Collection of Other Taxes) Amendment Act, 2006**

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 17, The Miscellaneous Statutes (Municipal Collection of Other Taxes) Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 17, The Miscellaneous Statutes (Municipal Collection of Other Taxes) 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 this Bill be read a second time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — The next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 18 — The Court Security Act

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 18, The Court Security Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 18, The Court Security Act be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 19 — The Securities Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2)

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 19, The Securities Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2) be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 19, The Securities Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2) 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 this Bill be read a second time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 20 — The Gunshot and Stab Wounds
Mandatory Reporting Act**

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 20, the gunshot and stab wounds Act, 2006 be introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 20, The Gunshot and Stab Wounds Mandatory Reporting Act be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 21 — The Evidence Amendment Act, 2006
/Loi de 2006 modifiant la Loi sur la preuve**

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 21, The Evidence Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 21, The Evidence 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 this Bill be read a second time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government I'd like to table responses to written questions 1 to 10 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 1 to 10 inclusive have been tabled.

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 Regina Elphinstone, the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to resume debates.

In 1992 when delivering his first full budget, the minister of Finance, Mr. Ed Tchorzewski, said, and I quote:

. . . last October Saskatchewan people turned from secrecy to openness, from conflict to co-operation, from inequity to fairness, from injustice to compassion. Today we begin rebuilding Saskatchewan together.

And rebuild Saskatchewan we have. We are still building and that brings me to the four cornerstones of this Throne Speech. The first cornerstone — our government is determined to make Saskatchewan the best place for young people to live, work, and build strong futures.

Our government is committed to nurturing lifelong learners, and success must begin early in life. We are trying to backfill the hole left by cuts caused by the federal cousins of the Saskatchewan Party for child care. Our government wants quality options for families with children.

This government has made investments in education. We are expanding the province's literacy program. We deliver Saskatchewan's early learning and child care program. The KidsFirst initiative employs the combined efforts of health districts, school divisions, Aboriginal organizations, and communities. I've seen the benefit of this program first-hand, Mr. Speaker, in my constituency. The people doing this work on the front lines—tremendous people, Mr. Speaker. These are people that will break the chains of poverty. And KidsFirst is an example of what can be accomplished by working together for a common cause. Families need help, and we are there for them.

Investments in education will continue to focus on meeting the needs of families and to ensure the children grow into healthy young adults. Young adults need assurance that they have a place and role in the future of this province. And this government is giving that through investments in training — by expanding training opportunities to meet market demand, by strengthening our regional training model, by bringing education closer to students with the mobile training lab and things like the partnership with the Kawacatoose First Nations and SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology], Mr. Speaker, in terms of nurse training. We'll be expanding those partnerships with First Nations and Métis

people. We'll be continuing the freeze on education. And we'll be continuing to make high levels of investment in business, training, and employment opportunities in the North.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to providing people with access to education and training, and the training required to become part of the workforce in Saskatchewan and to grow their careers right here at home.

It is my great honour to have been appointed by the Premier to conduct the post-secondary education accessibility and affordability review. The interim report will be completed by the end of January 2007, and final recommendations will be made in the fall of 2007. We had our first public consultation meeting, Mr. Speaker, this past week on Friday here in Regina and this work, this stage of the review, will build on the extensive literature review that is available on the website. And it will build on extensive consultations with the members of public, students, and interested groups and stakeholders.

We have the great pleasure of working in concert with the Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy. And everyone will benefit by building a stronger education and training system which will provide more opportunity for Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, this work is predicated on the notion that we believe access to post-secondary education should be based on the desire in your heart and the brains in your head — that willingness to learn — and not by the cash in your bank account.

It takes me to cornerstone no. 2, Mr. Speaker, strengthening Saskatchewan's leadership and improving public health care while reducing wait times and improving access to services. From the beginning Saskatchewan residents have recognized the value and advantage of working together and pooling their resources. Medicare continues to be the best example of what can be achieved working together.

Saskatchewan is the only have province which does not charge a health care premium to its citizens. And in this session the government is committed to reducing wait times and improving access to service, enhancing efforts to recruit health care providers with relocation incentives, expanding the Aboriginal health workforce, and continuing to work for the development of a children's hospital within a hospital.

Cornerstone no. 3, Mr. Speaker, advancing Saskatchewan as a leader in environmental protection and green economy of which we've heard more today from the Minister of the Environment. But this government is going to be researching the feasibility of the world's first utility-scale, clean-coal generating facility, a very exciting program, Mr. Speaker, that had a good memorandum of understanding signed last week.

We're going to continue to build a plan to develop biofuels, building on that good work we've done in the ethanol sector.

We're going to continue the work on safe water supply and water conservation policy developments.

This government is going to lead the way in organic food production, building on the excellent work that's currently

being conducted by the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

We're going to clean up abandoned uranium mine sites in northern Saskatchewan.

We're going to set and meet long-term goals to meet energy requirements through renewable resources. And to that end, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has appointed the member from Saskatoon Greystone to lead an examination into Saskatchewan's options for development of renewable resources, energy conservation programs, and to develop an action plan that will see us through not just the coming years but the coming decades, Mr. Speaker.

Cornerstone no. 4, ensuring that families benefit from our strong and prosperous economy. And, Mr. Speaker, I think this past weekend we noted in the *Leader-Post* the job numbers were out on Friday, and what do the latest numbers have to say but jobs, jobs, jobs. Mr. Speaker, there were 21,800 more jobs in October than a year before. This is the lowest unemployment rate of 3.3 per cent — the second lowest in Canada. But it's also, Mr. Speaker, it's the lowest unemployment rate since 1979.

And of course, Mr. Speaker, who was in power in 1979? It's the hero of this side and the person that the members opposite like to vilify, Mr. Allan Blakeney. And of course it's maybe taken us since 1979 to get back to that position, Mr. Speaker, but we're back there and we're going to keep rolling forward.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Full-time jobs up, 22,900. Youth employment up, 8,100, the second lowest youth unemployment in Canada. Manufacturing shipments are up; natural gas and oil production up; urban housing starts up; international exports up; value of building permits up; retail sales up. The only thing that's down is the mouth of the members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McCall: — So we're on a roll. We're one of three have provinces and we're one of only two provinces to exceed the national average GDP [gross domestic product] growth for the last five years.

Saskatchewan continues to be a good place in which to do business. The province scored well in the new 2006 KPMG survey of business costs. Saskatoon ranked first, first among 21 featured cities from the North American Midwest. All Saskatchewan cities in the study ranked higher than the Canadian average. That's solid evidence that our economy is steadily growing.

Mr. Speaker, this fourth cornerstone contributes to economic growth. It supports job creation so our young people can build strong futures right here. It builds real benefits for families. This government has introduced Family Day, Mr. Speaker.

We've continued to press the feds to honour their election promise to provide fair equalization. We've reduced the sales tax 2 per cent, Mr. Speaker. And, you know, some of the commentators have talked about desperation in the House. And the only desperation that I could see in the House when that

sales tax cut went in, Mr. Speaker, was the desperation that was plain on the faces of the members opposite as they saw that tax going down and their futures along with it.

Mr. Speaker, this government is building a communities fund for cultural and recreational facilities. We are making improvements to roads — heavy-haul, and access to First Nations communities. We are expanding high-speed Internet to rural and northern communities. Northern Saskatchewan natural gas — the announcement was made just this past week for the expansion to La Ronge.

We are building an urban agenda to support cities, communities, and regional economies. We're focusing on workplace safety, continuing to respond to the Occupational Health and Safety Council report. We are responding to The Workers' Compensation Act committee, and we are providing full funding for CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization], Mr. Speaker.

We are becoming a national leader in support to Voluntary Sector Initiative and we are improving safety and security in communities. This final point is very important to me as Minister Responsible for Public Safety. Moving towards the goals of safer communities, Mr. Speaker, we are creating more targeted crime reduction efforts, gang strategy, the HEAT [help end auto theft] program, the drug court, the break and enter strategy.

[14:45]

We are reviewing legislation to ensure that everyone in this province has an acceptable level of fire protection and fire prevention services. This point is also very important, Mr. Speaker. The last amendment was made to The Fire Prevention Act in 1992. Changes in technology, legislation, and procedures for the provision of fire services requires a review of the Act to ensure Saskatchewan maintains a comprehensive system of fire and public safety, and I very much look forward to undertaking that work and continuing the good work in that regard, Mr. Speaker.

That's a very brief, brief list of the priorities that fall under the four cornerstones that this province has committed to, that will bring real benefits to Saskatchewan families. And, Mr. Speaker, I think I'm going to close off my remarks. I'm going to reluctantly take my seat because there's a lot more to be said about this great Throne Speech.

But, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we've got a government that is working, working with Saskatchewan people. And on that side of the House we've got an operation that's working for the Saskatchewan Party. We've got an operation on this side that is working with people. We've got an operation on that side that is trying to divide people. We've got an operation on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, that's trying to build community. We've got an operation on that side of the House that tries to tear communities apart.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be voting against the amendments. I'm going to be voting with pride for the Throne Speech and the work of this government. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it's indeed a pleasure to join the debate today. There's a few acknowledgments that I want to make before I begin. And one of them is to join my colleagues on both sides of the House in welcoming our new member of Weyburn-Big Muddy. It's truly a pleasure. It's great to have him with us.

And as well I want to acknowledge someone else because I know that this other person plays a major role in the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy being able to join us, and that's his wife, Amanda, because I know she supported him. When he was just thinking about it, she was behind him all the way, so I really want to thank Amanda for that support.

I want to thank the constituents in Humboldt for their confidence in me now for a number of years and it's an honour to serve them. I have met some great people and worked with some very, very great people in Humboldt and it's an honour to be representing them.

I want to thank someone that has become a very, very important person in my life. She does far more work than I do at times. She is my constituency assistant, Susan Dunne. And without her I don't think I could do my job as well as I try to do it because Susan is the backbone to the Humboldt office.

I want to congratulate all the newly elected municipal leaders in the various municipal governments. I want to congratulate them and hope they do well. I want to congratulate the incumbents as well for agreeing to continue to serve. I'd like to make a special announcement or acknowledgement of Dennis Korte, the mayor of Humboldt, who has decided not to run again. But it's been great working with Dennis. He has done a very good job for Humboldt, the city of Humboldt, and I welcome the new mayor, Malcolm Eaton. I think Malcolm will be a great guy to work with and I'm looking forward to seeing what Malcolm would like to do for the city of Humboldt.

Lastly, I want to thank Ms. Ronyk for her years of hard work here in the Assembly. And she will be missed when she decides to retire.

You know it is always difficulty entering these debates when you're on the last day or almost the last day, because so much has already been said before you. But I would like to begin, Mr. Speaker, by just asking the question of, how do you know when a government's become old and tired? And it's with humour when I listen to the different members give their address within this debate. And I know one way that you don't do that is what the Deputy Premier tried to do which is, you know, he equated that to the average age of the members and he thought that's what's meant by being old and tired. And it's not. It's not what the term means.

It's interesting that he decided that the average age on this side of the House had to have been greater than that. He's never asked me my age. I don't think he has the courage to do that, Mr. Speaker, but at any rate he's decided. But that's not the

important thing here. It's just simply not what's meant by that term. But the Deputy Premier's response to it shows that they just don't get it. They don't get the fact that they're on the wrong track. They've become a tired, old government and the people of Saskatchewan are getting tired of them. They're getting very tired of them.

Another indicator that a government's becoming tired and old is when on the very first page of their Throne Speech, they have a title. It's underlined. It's bold. It's one of the titles within the very first page of their Throne Speech and it says, where we have come from. And it's an indicator that on the most important page of their Throne Speech, instead of looking forward, instead of laying out a vision, instead of starting with a vision, they're looking back. They're looking back. And in speech after speech that we've listened to, they have looked back — every, almost every single member. And I can't say I've listened to every speech, but every one that I have heard, they're looking back.

The member that spoke just before me, the member for Regina Elphinstone, I mean, he was talking about 1979. I was just out of school, Mr. Speaker, in 1979. He's looking back. I don't think he was out of school in 1979. And then he's making quotes from the early 1990s. We're going back 15 years. We keep looking back. We keep looking back. That's the sign we're a tired, old government — when we can't talk about what our plan is for the future. If we keep looking back, we become a tired, old government.

Our time's always limited, Mr. Speaker, so I want to address a little bit, touch on the four cornerstones. And again, I know the member that spoke just before me did that as well. And he talked about the four cornerstones. One, the first one being, make Saskatchewan the best place for young people to live, work, and build strong futures.

Now it's interesting, they've been in power for 15 years. They've been in power for 15 years; for 15 years our population is declining. And the population that we're losing is our young people. For 15 years they haven't addressed this problem, and now they want the people of Saskatchewan to believe that they're going to do something. They don't say what they're going to do, but they say they're going to do something, and it's a priority.

It's of particular interest to me, Mr. Speaker, because of course . . . And everyone in the Assembly knows I have three daughters, and they're of that age that we're losing. They're age 17 to 22. And so I'm very, very concerned and very interested as to what they have that's going to entice my daughters to want to stay, besides me asking them to, because, I mean, the mother only has an influence so far. And so far, yes, all three of my daughters are still here in this province. But I don't know that this is where their opportunity is going to be unless we make some major changes.

The Throne Speech talks about investments in training. And I've had a number of constituents that say their children are on incredible waiting lists to get into a training program. What are they going to do to address that problem? And again, I'll go back to my daughters, of whether or not they will stay. My one daughter applied for a program, and it was a medical program.

It was an area where we're saying there is, you know, dire shortages. And she was told that she was on a 10-year waiting list. She was 17 at that time. Ten years to a 17-year-old is a lifetime.

She did stay in the province. She trained for something else, but many don't. If they're told they have to wait 10 years to get into a training program when there's a shortage in that particular profession, what's wrong with the picture? And why has nothing been done about it? Absolutely nothing's been done about it.

The Throne Speech talks about abundant career opportunity. That is going to be essential to keep young people here and it's going to take more than just lip service; it's going to take some fundamental changes. It's going to take some major policy changes before that opportunity is there.

One of my daughters works for a company that she loves working for, but it's a sad scenario. She's in a subsidiary office. The main office is based out of Calgary. The owner, Mr. Speaker, the owner is from Saskatchewan. He owns the company; the main office is in Calgary. If she wants to be promoted within that company do you know where she's going to be sent — because I do. That's where the opportunity will be for her to advance within the career that she has chosen and that has to change. And I don't see where they have a vision to make those changes.

The second cornerstone that they talk about is to strengthen Saskatchewan's leadership in improving public health care while reducing wait times and improving access to services.

Well I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, you don't really want to get into health care in the Humboldt area. I know that the government's come out numerous times and made the announcement of the new Humboldt hospital. It's never happened. They no longer believe their announcements; they know that it is based on a political agenda more than actual intent. But what's happened — because it's been announced and announced and announced again over 10 years — is the cost of that facility has doubled and then tripled. And you know who has to pay for that, Mr. Speaker? Well the people in Humboldt and surrounding areas because there's a rural health tax. Whether they want to admit it or not, in rural communities for health care facilities, you are responsible to pay for 35 per cent of the capital cost. So all of the municipalities have to come up with more money. And they don't know. They don't know. They no longer believe that there really is going to be a hospital because they've been told so many times and nothing has truly happened.

They want to know why they have to pay higher taxes. Or in the case of the city of Humboldt, they decided that it was going to be \$100 a door for 10 years. It's a rural health tax; it's a rural premium. You can call it whatever you want but they have to pay extra money for health care in Humboldt and they still don't have the facility.

They want to know why they have to pay the capital cost of any other office or support service that's incorporated into the hospital. I do agree with integrated facilities. I think that they are very economic and efficient. But the minute you put health

care into a rural hospital then the rural community has to come up with 35 per cent of the cost. If the health care building was somewhere separate, they wouldn't. It just doesn't even make sense. What's going to change just because of this Throne Speech? I don't see anything that's going to change, quite frankly. They've said all these things before, and nothing changes.

The third cornerstone, advance Saskatchewan as a leader in environment protection and a green economy. Mr. Speaker, are they kidding me? Are they kidding me?

I want to talk about the community of Aberdeen. The community of Aberdeen is an amazing community, quite frankly. They built a facility that if anyone has a chance to see it, they should go to Aberdeen and take a look at this facility.

They have integrated almost everything that community will need all under one roof. There's a library, a skating rink, curling rink, dance studio, bowling alley, town offices. The list goes on and on and on as to what's incorporated into this building.

It's an architectural genius of a building. It's insulated well beyond regulation. They have geothermal heating and cooling systems and every possible energy-saving technology was incorporated into that facility.

And guess what happened when they approached the government to see what energy-saving programs were available, in particular for geothermal. And we found out there are none. The Premier keeps talking more and more and more about being green and prosperous, but there was nothing there available when they built the Aberdeen facility.

Other provinces have incentives for different geothermal projects, but not this province. Even though we acknowledge that it's an energy-saving system and we keep saying that we, you know, we support energy saving, but we don't actually put action behind our words.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to go for the last cornerstone which is, ensure that today's Saskatchewan families benefit from a strong economy. And we do think it was a very positive step in dropping the PST [provincial sales tax]. We do acknowledge that that is going to benefit all the families.

But does a drastic increase in the Premier's communication budget benefit Saskatchewan families? Does ensuring that every single NDP member receives extra pay for . . . if they're not in cabinet, they're going to have some other assignment which gives them the extra pay, every single one. Does that benefit Saskatchewan families? Does running taxpayer campaigns, running them over budget, just basically to feel good about the NDP government, does that help Saskatchewan families?

Again we're looking at words. We're looking at words with absolutely no action behind them. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, how do we know we have a tired, old government? We've all heard the jokes, you know, how do you . . . you know you're a redneck when . . . And we've heard the ones of, you know . . . oh there's a few out there, you know. So I want to say you know you're a tired, old government when you make decisions

and policies based on how you're doing in the polls rather than what's good for the people of Saskatchewan.

[15:00]

You know you're a tired, old government when you make decisions and policies based on how close you are to an election rather than what's best for the people of Saskatchewan.

You know you're a tired, old government when you defend a minister who is totally, absolutely incompetent and puts at risk the most vulnerable in society just so that you look politically correct.

You know that you're a tired, old government when even your own cabinet members are questioning the competency of the leader.

You know you're a tired, old government when you constantly mock the ideas of the opposition, have a good laugh over it, and then incorporate them.

You know that you are a tired, old government when you want to change your name, Madam Deputy Speaker, and you try to hide from that dismal record.

You know that you're a tired, old government when you have to continuously add more staff and funds to prop up your leader.

And you know you're a tired, old government when the best that you can do for a slogan is Imagine. But then again, Madam Deputy Speaker, this tired, old government, they are dreamers if they think for one minute they can win another election.

I'm going to support the amendment put forward by the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy, and I will not be supporting the motion.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Northern Affairs, the member from Cumberland.

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Madam Deputy Speaker, tansi. Good afternoon.

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.]

I would like to thank them for the good work that they continue to do for my office.

Madam Deputy Speaker, on October 26 the Speech from the Throne was delivered to Saskatchewan people. It was a proud moment for this Saskatchewan New Democratic government because it proves that our strategy is working. More importantly, it was a proud moment for the people of Saskatchewan who have worked so hard and have so much to look forward to. They love this province and they have chosen to make it their home. And it is indeed a great home.

Our government is committed to a Saskatchewan that is not just a good place to live but the best place to live. And our citizens have good reason to be hopeful. First, we enjoy a clean

environment, the envy of much of Canada and the world. From southern cities to northern lakes, Saskatchewan has been a leader in preserving our lands and our waters. Our elders tell us the land, the water, the trees are here for us to use and to protect for future generations. In this Throne Speech, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have committed to promoting cleaner fuels, harnessing renewable energy sources such as the wind, and cleaning up abandoned uranium-mine sites.

Secondly, we work in a bustling economy with hundreds of jobs and no signs of slowing down. We will take advantage not only of the resources of our lands and our waters but also our people by providing the best education and training for our youth. As young people look to make their careers here, our government will meet their needs and those of our changing labour market.

And finally, we enjoy a standard of living that is hard to match when it comes to value for your dollar. We live in a green, uncluttered space with homes and utilities among the most affordable in the nation. And it's okay to know your neighbours in Saskatchewan, which boasts the most vigorous volunteer sector in Canada, thanks to our caring citizens.

This government first took office with a crushing deficit. Today Saskatchewan can proudly point to 13 balanced budgets. We are investing more in health care than ever before with special attention to recruiting the professionals we need. And we reduced business taxes last year and income tax in 2000. We have provided relief for education and property taxes. Now we dropped the provincial sales tax down to 5 per cent, a saving of \$325 million for Saskatchewan residents.

Our record speaks of a commitment shared by our citizens to make Saskatchewan a fine place to live and work, not only now but into the future. Madam Deputy Speaker, we have celebrated one centennial but now we are building for the next 100 years. The Throne Speech furthers that commitment to the future.

There are four cornerstones as the foundation for our agenda. And they are: to make this province for young people to live, to strengthen our leadership in health care, to advance an economy that is both green and prosperous, and ensure that families benefit from that economy.

But in addition to speaking about our government's vision for the future, I wish to speak how northern Saskatchewan is reflected in that vision. Our government believes it is important to respond to the needs and aspirations of northerners and the Throne Speech illustrates our ongoing commitment.

The first cornerstone is to make Saskatchewan the best place for young people to live, work, and build strong futures. Madam Deputy Speaker, we are committed to expanding regional training in order to bring education closer to the students who need it in their chosen careers regardless of where they live. Many of those who need it most are First Nations and Métis youth, a group that faces the greatest obstacles but also poses the greatest opportunity.

In northern Saskatchewan we have long used regional training. Here are three examples. The northern teacher education program is in its 30th year of training northerners to teach in northern schools rather than relying on southern recruits. That's

30 years of helping northerners work and live in their home communities.

We have an excellent record of working with post-secondary schools to meet the needs of the mining industry. We are in the second decade of the multi-party training plan in which government, schools, and industry partners come together to prepare northerners for the jobs in their own backyards. Today more than half the labour force in the northern uranium mines is northerners. And the future of mining continues to be very bright, given mineral exploration which is expected to reach another record at \$208 million this year.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in the last five years the Northern Development Agreement has funded a wide variety of training programs from practical nursing to oil fuel safety. Thanks to agencies such as Northlands College, SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies], and SIAST, these courses have taken place in northern communities so that trainees don't have to be so far from home and family.

Just this fall SIAST unveiled its mobile training lab which will deliver trades classes in any community that wants it. It is important to know that although our training commitment is to the entire province, it is extra important for the North where the large majority of residents are Aboriginal people. They face higher unemployment rates than any other group.

The North also has a very young population. Nearly half are under the age of 20. Madam Deputy Speaker, trends suggest that by the year 2050, half of Saskatchewan's population will be Aboriginal. It is crucial that we continue to develop the Aboriginal workforce and our northern workforce. They are a big part of the solution to our provincial labour shortage.

We are already part of a northern labour market committee that shares news and plans about this thriving region. In the coming months we will unveil a new partnership between business, labour, and training institutions to advise the government on our entire province's changing labour market needs.

We are also making a brighter future for young people through investment in infrastructure — schools, health centres, the Internet, basic water and sewer, and of course roads.

A year ago our Premier unveiled the Roads to Prosperity plan, our commitment to spend \$6.5 million over five years on northern roads. This plan is also called the northern economic infrastructure strategy. This plan calls for upgrades to key economic corridors — the same corridors that support not only existing mines but the record investment in mineral exploration. This plan will also complete the road link from La Loche to Fort McMurray. It will open up jobs in the oil sands while letting our citizens continue to live in their homes in our beautiful North. This also opens up traffic in other direction allowing Albertans better access to the wonderful wilderness of our Northwest. Several Saskatchewan communities have already seen a big increase in property sales for recreational lots and the road isn't even done yet.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, as in most northern projects, there is indeed a training angle. A key part of Roads to Prosperity is to ensure that northerners have a chance at

training, at jobs, and at business opportunities related to this five-year project. In fact we have hired a project coordinator based in La Ronge whose job is to help link northerners to those opportunities. How we build a road is as important as the road itself. This will further our goals of giving young people a future, a future that they can build at home in Saskatchewan.

The second cornerstone of our government's agenda is to strengthen Saskatchewan's leadership in improving public health care. In recent years our government has funded new health facilities in Stony Rapids and Ile-a-la-Crosse — the latter a joint facility to be shared with a new school. Since year 2000 we have also committed more than \$34 million towards building basic water treatment plants and sewage services. In the North and elsewhere we continue our commitment to provide a safe water supply for communities.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we also continue to expand the Aboriginal workforce and health services. With our growing Aboriginal population, it is only right that a large number of First Nations and Métis people take their place as nurses, nutritionists, lab techs, and yes, as doctors.

We will continue to implement the Premier's Project Hope to prevent and treat the devastation caused by alcohol and drug abuse. Sadly the North is not immune to this issue, and our Project Hope will bring more resources to bear on this frustrating problem.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, we will work with First Nations and Métis leaders, including those in the North, and demand that the federal government live up to its commitment to First Nations communities — commitments made at a First Nations meeting. It is clear that the federal government must live up to its responsibilities for First Nations, but it seems to be failing as we continue to hear about more cuts including major cuts to Aboriginal languages that, you know, we've heard today. However it is equally clear that our provincial government will not ignore the needs of any community. We are all part of . . . unbreakable, social fabric.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the third cornerstone is to advance Saskatchewan as a leader in environmental protection and the green economy. A key part of this cornerstone is to move forward in our commitment to clean up abandoned uranium mines in the North. Fulfilling this promise will bring to an end a decade-old issue. It will be good for the environment and, again, it will create business and employment opportunities for northerners.

I am happy to say that the province has led the way in moving this issue forward. We were the first to commit money to the cleanup and we are pleased that the federal government in September signed an agreement to share the \$24 million cleanup. The next step is to complete the environmental assessment and design the cleanup plan, which may take two years. The actual cleanup work is expected to take another three to five years after that.

Last year, Madam Deputy Speaker, our province also drafted the policy and procedures for government's long-term management of decommissioned mines and mills on Crown land. We are now developing the regulations for the new

reclaimed industrial sites act, which will set out in detail a mining company's responsibility for a decommissioned site, under what conditions the land can later be transferred back to the province.

Saskatchewan citizens want to make sure that companies look after their sites. And the companies want their responsibilities set out clearly so they know what we expect of them. By working with the mining industry, everyone else's roles, we are leading the nation in environmental production.

Madam Deputy Speaker, looking into the current operations of uranium mines is another northern initiative. The environmental quality committee, the EQC, is made up of residents of 32 northern communities, largely First Nations and Métis, and it provides a way for communities to monitor the activities of uranium sites and ask questions of companies. It even influences decisions about the industry through presentations to provincial and federal regulators.

The EQC, I'm happy to say, has attracted the attention of other nations who are keenly interested in linking Aboriginal peoples to industrial development. It plays an important role in making our economy prosperous today while protecting our lands for future generations.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the fourth pillar is to ensure that today's Saskatchewan families benefit from our strong economy. To this end we are investing in infrastructure to improve the quality of life now and for the future. Two co-operative projects, CommunityNet and the northern broadband network, already have taken high-speed Internet into dozens of northern communities. Students from Beauval to Black Lake can now do research online and meet and work with students in North Battleford or New Brunswick or New Zealand for that matter.

We will continue to build on the success of the northern broadband network. In this Throne Speech we have committed to further expanding of high-speed Internet into more rural and northern communities.

Under the Roads to Prosperity plan, we have said that we'll not only fix roads but build them to communities like Fond-du-Lac and Wollaston. These communities rely on winter ice roads — communities that last year were running very short of supplies when the ice wasn't good enough for travel. New roads here and better roads to other communities will improve access to key public services and to essential goods — goods such as affordable, healthy food. Something as simple as buying a jug of milk and a bag of apples is not easy when you live in a fly-in community. By building roads we'll open up a new quality of life for many northerners.

[15:15]

Madam Deputy Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne we announced that we will establish a multi-year infrastructure fund to enhance family life including funding for cultural and recreational facilities. In the North we will give young people more ways to be involved in their community and to be proud of where they live and who they are. We will support Saskatchewan's many dynamic peoples and communities and in

this way as well, give young people another reason to make their place Saskatchewan.

Just recently I was very happy to be with my colleague, Minister Thomson, when he announced our government's \$7 million investment in a proposal to bring natural gas service to Weyakwin and La Ronge and area. This comes after years of hard work by SaskEnergy and members of the northern gas committee who have often said that natural gas would support more business development in this key northern town. Residents in the area will soon be able to enjoy an energy source that is clean, affordable, and reliable. They will share the benefits of our strong economy.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have touched on a number of the building blocks that our government has set out for the future of Saskatchewan. We want all citizens to benefit regardless of jurisdiction or where they live. In technology, in training, in water, health centres, and roads we are seeking partnerships that will serve all of our northern communities, municipal and First Nations alike. We are not letting jurisdiction stand in the way of doing what is right. We are committing our energy and our dollars to the places that need it most, and as a First Nations person, that makes me very proud to be able to say that today.

You know one of the greatest values we have as Aboriginal people is that everyone is valued and supported and we, as the Saskatchewan New Democratic government, say that no one will be left behind on the road to prosperity. And we mean it because we're doing it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, many of the things I have talked about not only have an impact on the North, we already see progress in the North. When it comes to developing an economy that is smart and sustainable, our focus is already on the North. When we talk about a plan to invest in our core transportation infrastructure, we have already started in the North. And when we talk about partnerships to deal with our labour needs and to train our young people, well the North already boasts a model or two.

So as pleased as I am to see the Throne Speech speak to the needs of the North, I am even more pleased to hear the voices of northern success stories reflected in the Throne Speech for the rest of the province to hear. And that too makes me very proud to be a northerner.

Madam Deputy Speaker, our vision is all about building a future for young people and families in Saskatchewan. That vision speaks very clearly to northerners as it does to all of the province whether you are a farmer or a trapper, a teacher or a construction worker, an accountant or a musician.

In our Saskatchewan, people will be able to pursue their goals and dreams regardless of their background. No one will lack for opportunity. No one will be left behind. People will be able to live in a safe and healthy community, in clean air, an uncluttered space with a quality of life unmatched anywhere. Our young people want and deserve a good future, and they want it close to home. They will find it in our Saskatchewan.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I will not be supporting the amendment, but indeed I will be supporting the Throne Speech.

Thank you very much. Ękosi.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today I appreciate having the opportunity to reply to the Throne Speech and speak to the amendment. But before doing so, I would be amiss if I didn't congratulate our newest member to the legislature — our Sask Party member from the Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Mr. Speaker, a very interesting by-election down there. And we were told by all the pundits that this was going to be a very close race throughout the by-election, in fact told by our colleagues on the other side of the House that they predicted a very easy win on that side. Now remembering, Madam Speaker, that in the 2003 election it was a very close seat. I think we'd won that seat by about 3 to 400 votes. So it was very close. So that wasn't to be unexpected.

But, Madam Speaker, what we saw out there through some very hard, diligent work by the candidate from the Weyburn-Big Muddy, we saw about a 15 to 1,600-vote margin out there. In fact the numbers, I think, were about 49 per cent for the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy, 27 per cent — now I'm not sure; these numbers must be right — 27 per cent for the Liberals, and 23 per cent for the NDP.

So what happened, Madam Speaker, to the close race in Weyburn-Big Muddy? But more surprising than that was what happened to the NDP in the by-election in Weyburn-Big Muddy. They not only lost the by-election to the Sask Party candidate and to the Sask Party, they came third.

And, Madam Speaker, I think what that shows you and shows us and shows the members on the government side, but more importantly, is showing the people of Saskatchewan that they're ready for change. They're going to make that change come the next election, should the Premier still be leader or the new leader — whoever he might be — finds the intestinal fortitude to finally call a provincial election, and let the voters start this province in the right direction with a new Saskatchewan Party government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Madam Speaker, a number of the members have talked in their Throne Speech replies about the labour shortage in this province. And again, the labour shortage in this province didn't just happen. The government, if they were watching to see what was going to happen with the age of many of the workers in this province, was preparing for it for the last 3, 4, 5 years. They knew it was coming, and then as usual stuck their head in the sand.

And guess what? We have employers all over this province, from my constituency, Melville-Saltcoats, go into Yorkton a lot — from the Deputy Premier's constituency — where businesses can't find people to work in their businesses because under this NDP government and the attitude that's grown in this province,

one out of every four young people are planning on leaving the province. But what's worse than that, I believe there's about two out of every four have already left, Madam Speaker. Our businesses cannot function without good people that they have, and they need more good people to make their businesses prosper and make this province go forward.

Madam Speaker, we hear so many great things. I think it was one of the members, could have been the Deputy Premier today, holding up a newspaper clipping of "Jobs, Jobs, Jobs . . ." The clippings that he didn't show up — and there was many of them on — is about the continuous drop in the population in the province of Saskatchewan. And you know, we're always told, as many have said on this side, you can't compare us to Alberta because that's not fair, because they've got Ralph Klein and we've got Lorne Calvert. And that's not a fair comparison. And I agree with them.

But Madam Speaker, let's take a look at Manitoba who have probably a quarter of the resources that we have in the province of Saskatchewan, and they're doing better than us when it comes to population and jobs. They're even growing the job rate faster. The population's not dropping. And when you do not have the resources, they're doing it with forward thinking and looking ahead and building their economy with what they have.

What we have in the province of Saskatchewan is an NDP government who has turned all the investors off worldwide to come into Saskatchewan. In fact they've actually gone as far as to scare investors out of this province. And here we sit. If it wasn't for oil and gas windfall and many millions of dollars which have turned into probably \$1 billion windfall last year and very close to it again this year — all thanks to the high price of oil and gas — this province would still be running the deficit budgets that they were for a number of years.

And a number of members on the government side, Madam Speaker, have talked about the 13 balanced budgets, Madam Speaker. Well I have a little problem with that, and I think the Provincial Auditor has a little problem with that. Let's take a look at what the Provincial Auditor actually had to say, Madam Speaker. What the Provincial Auditor talks about for those 13, 14 years, he talks about . . . And I counted the number of deficits in that period. And a number of them are under this Premier that we have today, Madam Deputy Speaker. Seven deficits and nine surpluses, now that's a far stretch from the 13 consecutive balanced budgets that they're talking about.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, some of these deficits are to the tune of . . . One according to the Provincial Auditor is 654 million. Another one's 483 million. And this is all under the watch of this current Premier, Madam Speaker. So that's kind of a myth that's trying to be spread by the members opposite, and it's about the farthest thing from the truth you could possibly realize.

A number of other areas that the government members don't like to espouse on is that the unfunded pensions in the province of Saskatchewan — and I don't know if some of these might be teachers' pensions, the health care professionals, where these pensions lie, Crown workers, things like that — but that unfunded liability has grown to \$4.3 billion.

Now how does it work out that these government members are standing in their place and say that we're paying down the debt? Well I would find that the debt is probably actually increasing under the NDP government as it did under the Blakeney government years ago, and then tried to blame the Devine era for all the debt when I think many of us know that Allan Blakeney probably hid billions of dollars in the Crowns in debt that the average public out there would not actually realize was there.

And then we talk . . . Let's spin that a little further, Madam Deputy Speaker, and talk about the debt for the province because I think all members have heard in the last few years about the debt being paid down. And the last two years, the debt should have been paid down, but what we're seeing as the debt today is exactly what it was in 1991. The provincial debt right now, today, the current general revenue debt is 7.8 billion and in 1991 was 7.9 billion. Absolutely nothing has changed — another deception for the members on the government side that I think the public of Saskatchewan is becoming very aware of.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to talk a little bit and take a few minutes to talk about agriculture because it's so important to the people of Saskatchewan and so important to rural Saskatchewan where many of the members, in fact most of the members on this side come from.

The Agriculture minister for the province has been running around and pounding his fist on the table and espousing the monopoly that the Canadian Wheat Board has. Possibly what he should be doing is paying attention of something that's actually under his jurisdiction, that he has input into, things like crop insurance that we saw the premium skyrocket. One year alone I think they increased the premiums by 52 per cent. Crop insurance is one thing that they have input into, Madam Deputy Speaker, and all we've seen from that is the coverage cut, the premiums raised. And what is happening out there is many farmers are actually going without crop insurance because it's got too expensive for the coverage they've got.

We've saw in the past that this government saw fit to close service centres. I believe there was 22 in the one budget alone that they closed in the province.

CAIS funding, every year we see the Minister of Agriculture get up and talk about . . . he's going to fully fund the CAIS program except that he's only putting the base amount in of \$99.8 million. But what we never see out of this minister when it's actually needed, that he will make the commitment that they will fully fund the CAIS program when the budget comes out and farmers can count on that. Farmers can go to the bank and actually borrow money with that thought in mind — that the CAIS program in the province of Saskatchewan is fully funded as it is in every other province. But at least they do it when their budgets come out.

Number of other areas, Madam Deputy Speaker, where the provincial government has input into and has saw fit to make cuts — soil conservation group. Now there was a group that were working very hard on the area that they were representing. And they had their funding cut. As I said before, we saw our service centres close. And now on top of the problems that we've had . . . We've been so wet up in the Porcupine area that

there's a number of the farmers up there that are finding it very hard to stay above board. They've had a number of years from the wet, wet area up there.

Now we're seeing in the Southwest, down in the Cypress area, all across the western side of the province and the South and also by the way in the southeastern part that we look . . . it's starting to look like it could be a tremendously dry year next year in that area, already has caused many effects to the farmers in the Southwest. And we hope, I would believe on both sides of the House, that that doesn't come full circle and actually we turn into some dry years in the near future.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I also want to talk about highways. And in my constituency nothing seems to change. And I guess that same situation lies in every constituency on this side of the House — in fact for every rural constituency in the province. The holes are bigger, and the amount of work done out there seems to be less and less every year.

But what I find, Madam Deputy Speaker, is what should be an embarrassment to this government and actually is an embarrassment to all of us. No. 16 Highway without a doubt used to be the best highway in the province. Manitoba border, down by Russell, Manitoba right through to Saskatoon was a very good highway at one point. And I know No. 1 was in bad shape and the twinning was going on out there. But we had one highway that it would have just took a little bit of time, money, and maintenance, we could have kept it in that condition.

This summer, by I believe it was Sheho, Madam Deputy Speaker, it should have been a total embarrassment for this NDP government. You had to weave all over the highway to get through. And then doing that, you had to watch if you got near the shoulder, because you were going to hit these orange signs that told you about every 30 feet that the next how many clicks were rough and in bad need of repair.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, it's things like this when the tourists travel through our province, they don't have to be reminded twice that they probably never will return to this province, spend their money in this province — where we would all win — because they have to travel highways like that. And we have the member for Estevan, the member for Weyburn, the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood, member for Humboldt, and you could just go down the list and through this entire caucus, that have brought issues about highways that are in just terrible, terrible condition in this province, Madam Deputy Speaker.

[15:30]

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, that infrastructure is part of the problem that's holding this province back. We have many businesses out in the Humboldt area. A number of areas, the oil patch down in the southeast part of the province and in fact the oil patch up near the Lloyd area that rely on these highways and rural roads to do their business, and it's hurting that whole industry everywhere you turn. And RM [rural municipality] councils and even urban councils are trying to get that point through to this government.

As we saw today in question period, Madam Deputy Speaker,

health care issues. It just doesn't go away. And another thing that should be an embarrassment to the government when they're sitting on the last two years of almost a \$1 billion windfall from oil and gas and they haven't got the knowledge to even know how to put that to good use for the people of Saskatchewan. And that's why we see cases like we saw today, and actually off and on all through session last spring and again this fall. That should be a real embarrassment to this provincial government.

Madam Deputy Speaker, infrastructure in this province as I said is deteriorating, and it cannot wait much longer for a change in government, as well as neither can the people of Saskatchewan wait for that change.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to talk for a minute on water systems. The Environment minister made an announcement today, and I was hoping he'd address some of these issues, but I think many of us, you know, on this side of the House represent villages in the province of Saskatchewan. And what we see out in those villages is where there's SaskWater and the Department of Environment . . . I'm not sure where these checks come from, but we have people go out and study their water systems even though their water is being checked on a regular basis. No fault found with the quality of water, and here we have a government department coming out and handing . . . I know I've got the village of Bangor out there. I've got the village of Yarbo. And I believe in both cases were handed a bill for 6 to \$7,000. That population of Bangor is under 70. How on earth do they survive and make payments like this to a government body when their water is fine? It's being tested on a regular basis, and there is no problem out there right now. And they have a government wing coming out and draining the last few resources that they have.

An Hon. Member: — One size fits all.

Mr. Bjornerud: — And one size fits all, the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood said, and that's exactly right. And what's happening in our small villages, they're deteriorating at a rate fast enough without the help of this NDP government. But they're starting to deteriorate, and the population drop is happening a lot quicker when you do things like that that they can't afford.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as I talked before . . . and I'm just going to take a minute to talk about crop insurance. When the government made all its funding cuts in the last few years, I didn't realize that crop insurance is one of the programs that could probably really help farmers out there, and every year we have a disaster. We have to run cap in hand. . . exactly with what's happening in the Southwest this summer and what happened up in the Porcupine area. They always have to run to the province or the federal government and say, we need help. If we had constructive crop insurance and CAIS programs in place, that wouldn't have to happen.

But some of the numbers . . . I noticed in 2003, provincial government put 99.8 in, million dollars; 2004, 86.2 million; 2005, 80.4; 2006, 64.4. Every time we turn around, this government sees fit to dump on agriculture, dump on rural Saskatchewan, and cut funding to programs that actually would help the people out there.

Another thing that is being brought to my attention an awful lot out in rural Saskatchewan right now is utility rates, something that the members opposite really like to brag about. And we have the lowest utility rate package in the country. Well I would question that a little bit.

And I would think if you asked the seniors in rural Saskatchewan what they think of that, they would have a few words for this government too because when you come out there to find out . . . seniors' halls or whether it's legions or whether it's skating rinks, curling clubs — any kind of meeting centres out there where it's a non-profit organization, and they're trying to survive in rural Saskatchewan — one of the biggest things they say, it's the natural gas. It's the power on those buildings. It's making it almost impossible to keep them open.

And again what that's doing is driving our seniors out of rural Saskatchewan. That, along with the lack of health care of course in rural Saskatchewan, is driving our seniors either out of small town Saskatchewan, rural Saskatchewan, into the larger centres. Or in many cases what we're actually seeing is it's driving them to the province of Alberta where the tax regime is a lot easier on them in their retirement.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, as you probably have realized by now, I will not be supporting the Throne Speech. But I certainly will be supporting the amendment and hoping that in the near future the Premier — should he survive the NDP convention — would call an election. And we would finally get the optimism in this province and the promise that we could probably provide — will provide — with the Saskatchewan Party government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Before I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont, I wasn't quite certain if the member had used in quotation marks a name of the member of the Assembly. But I would remind all members that if they're going to use a direct quote, that's allowable, but if you're going to be very loosely quoting, to remember not to name a member of the Assembly. Thank you. I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Ms. Crofford: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well you're not Mr. Speaker at all. You're Madam Deputy Speaker. There you go. I better get my glasses changed.

I want to start out just so people aren't waiting all the way through the speech to see what the punch line will be. I am not intending to support the amendment to the Throne Speech but I will be supporting the Throne Speech. That was for those of you with a short attention span. I thought I'd cut to the chase.

And I do want to start out, as others have, in thanking my family. Heaven knows, aside from the difficult questions in question period, we get the difficult questions about why we're not at home yet another evening or not feeling like going to watch a movie for the evening and — which was one of the more recent criticisms — but I still do manage to have dinner with the family every weekend. And to my father who's at home watching today, yes I am going to speak to the Throne Speech and here I am doing it so your reminder to me that that was important has been heard.

I also want to say how proud I am of my father and many people that he worked with over the past couple years in the completion of the labour book, *On the Side of the People*. This was an important part of Saskatchewan history and I understand that there's some recognition of this in terms of the book awards this year, at least in being nominated. So congratulations to the team who spent a lot of time at archives and wrote this history of both social activism in the province but also work on behalf of the individual well-being of workers in their individual workplaces.

In my constituency I want to honour all the hard-working people who send their kids to school every day, try to make sure they get positive activities after school, and work in the community on school events, on fairs. I want to particularly mention my Adopt-a-Family from community living. Robin Ganshorn was a young man who I met through the Adopt-a-Family program and he's now playing in the Best Buddies Band at LeBoldus High School. And I really want to commend the teachers at that school for making sure that an opportunity like that was available to Robin at school. And I hear they're getting probably more gigs than my band so I'm a little bit jealous at this point.

The other thing I want to mention is all the good people who got centennial awards in the constituency in 2005. We went through a process where I invited people in the community to nominate those they felt had served the community of Rosemont. And they did, and fortunately we had just the right number so we were able to nominate the people whose names were put forward. And congratulations again to those folks.

I just want to take a minute to mention the event we were at at the Legion fundraiser the other night — November 2, a night to remember. It was a very memorable event and it'll go a long way to helping the Legion redefine itself in the community and create a new partnership with the cultural community that will sustain the Legion's activities in support of remembering the importance of democracy and the sacrifices that people made — but also will help create a vibrant downtown by the use of a facility that was the first Legion in Canada — 001. So that was an interesting fact I learned the other night and am proud of.

I want to say that I particularly enjoyed the Throne Speech. I was very ill, so I had the perspective of watching it from home in a horizontal position. But I have to say it can be easily enjoyed that way as well.

And it was the story, Madam Deputy Speaker, of orderly progress on a plan. It was the story of a province that went from the depth of debt and despair to the huge success that we see today. Now people can argue about all aspects of that, but you can't argue with 14 credit upgrades. I know from years of dealing with the bank that you don't get credit upgrades unless you deserve them. And so I want to congratulate all the people in Finance and the various Finance ministers in cabinet for the work they've done in getting those 14 credit upgrades.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Crofford: — Also we know that the province went from 70 per cent debt ratio to GDP to a 20 per cent debt ratio to GDP. Again, if you were wanting to borrow money anywhere

in the world, I'm sure that bankers understand the difference that represents. And I suspect most people who have gone for a bank loan here understand that difference as well.

This is the story of responsible government making progress on a planned agenda for the well-being of the province and its citizens. And these were positive results that were possible both for and with the people of Saskatchewan. You saw it in this weekend's headlines: "... 22,900 more full-time jobs in October than ... the same month last year."

And the important detail was the decline in part-time work. Part-time work declined by 1,000, year-over-year figures. And in the words of Doug Elliott, "... involuntary part-time crowd has virtually disappeared." So this is very good news because it speaks not only to the quantity of work but the quality of work that's available in the province.

And this does all link to the province's brand. We went from debt-ridden and hopeless to futuristic, competitive, innovative, and collaborative, willing to do things in new ways, with tax breaks for business, tradespeople, consumers, and families.

And I just want to mention the foundation pieces of the Throne Speech, and then I'm going to emphasize some particular areas. Making Saskatchewan the best place for young people to live, work, and build a strong future. Well I've got some testimony to that with me today. Strengthening Saskatchewan's leadership and public health care while reducing wait times and improving access to service — always a challenge, but definitely with a strong commitment behind it. Advancing Saskatchewan as a leader in environmental protection and the green economy. I can't think of anyone today who doesn't understand the importance of that. And ensuring Saskatchewan families benefit from the province's strong, prosperous economy because after all that's what it's all about; it's about making life better every day for people.

I do want to speak for a moment to Oyate, and some of the dialogue that's been going on in the media and in this House over the last few days. You know, I understand and appreciate and agree with the need for accountability. And I also understand and appreciate 100 years of oppression and the difficulty that creates in the capacity that people build to serve their own community and look after their own children.

We are talking about a community of people who for many years had their children removed at the age of six, not to see them again. And most of the children for a long period of time were raised in residential schools. Parenting skills were not transferred on to the next generation. And today the destruction that's occurred because of the removal of people from their families, of the disintegration of family and community life that all stems back to the historical roots, suggests that we need to be very thoughtful in how we work with organizations who are trying to rebuild the community's capacity to provide services for itself in a culturally sensitive and appropriate way, and within a family context.

Now that's very difficult because you don't want to place any child at risk, but the very history of the situation has placed those families and children at risk and we can't overlook that when we're having this discussion.

I want to say that Oyate is one service and obviously with some work to do, and the minister will decide whether or not we proceed down that road. But I want to mention the other programs that have been set up to support similar types of challenges. There's the KidsFirst program, which is doing a lot of work with young parents and people who are trying to combine raising their children with their first job or their first chance at advanced education. We established special need child care centres, a commitment to universal child care, and expansion of pre-kindergarten in schools where the children were coming into kindergarten unprepared for school. We have family literacy programs, a lot more training opportunities for young families with children, Project Hope.

These are all examples of other services that complement the work that's being done to try to make sure that children aren't the victims of sexual abuse. And of course we need to continue to dedicate ourselves to helping our friends and neighbours in that particular situation.

[15:45]

But as I contemplate this question, I look at the party opposite. And I say, what is your brand? What do you believe in? Because our brand is to make sure that the first Aboriginal educational institutions in Canada were established in this province, whether it's Dumont Technical Institute, whether it's the Saskatchewan institute of Indian technologies, whether it's the First Nations University, the Aboriginal economic development fund. We are trying to walk with First Nations and Métis people in helping to create a new brand for them and their children and their families within an inclusive Saskatchewan where we all work together.

Today at the chamber of commerce luncheon there was a prayer given by a young Aboriginal man, and he talked about how much he appreciates the positive future that we're working on together. And I appreciated as much as his words his whole attitude towards the process of building together.

And it does have a little bit to do with your view of how you develop children and how you develop community. Some people have the view that if the child's not doing well, more discipline is required, more punishment, more retribution. Some people have the view that if a child's not doing well, more love is required, more support, more guidance.

And I think what we sometimes have here is a clash of philosophy about the way one develops children or communities. And it's obviously not black and white. It's neither all one way or the other. But it does require a thoughtful look at which of those elements are most likely to produce the results for children and families and communities that do well — and delivered, of course, in a professional context.

I think that part of the opposition brand is hiding in the weeds. We've had a number of important issues over the last while with their federal brothers in Ottawa and sisters, and some of those have been on issues like museums. I have not heard a single comment on what their position is on the removal of the funding for museums.

Child care. I haven't heard much about whether they think \$100

a month is enough to create a child care system any more than it creates a school system.

On literacy, surely, surely, given the pretend concern about the labour market, this would have been one where we expected the members opposite to say something, but they haven't said a darn thing. It's their brand of hiding in the weeds.

Equalization — well they were all for it before the election. And I don't know where that enthusiasm has gone to now, but certainly they're pretty quiet on the subject.

The issue of volunteers. We've got people like the United Way of Regina committed to improving lives. And, of course, one of their key tools is to work with volunteers in the community. Certainly no one knows that more than our own Legislative Secretary working on the volunteer sector. But again on September 25 the federal government eliminated the funding for the Canada volunteerism initiative, saying that the CVI was cut as a non-core program. Well what is more core to Saskatchewan and Canada than volunteers? I ask you, what is more core to our communities than volunteers? So I ask what the hiding-in-the-weeds brand over there has to say about that particular subject. A little bit of a lapse in the commitment to democracy.

What about the vote on the wheat board? What is the brand of the members opposite on farmers having the right to vote on something as important as the wheat board?

Then we got into some softer issues like the holiday. Well some people were for it. The member from Wood River said, well nobody in my constituency asked for a holiday. So I don't know. Are they for it or agin it? It's hard to tell sometimes.

The tax cut. I actually thought the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs did a pretty spirited defence of why a tax cut was a bad thing, but at the end of the day he didn't totally convince me. But the Premier did convince me today when he said, one tax cut at a time, because it has to be sustainable.

So I see, as the members opposite are not liking some of my comments, that they don't like hearing all this negativity. Well quite frankly we're not very fussy about it either. But it is their brand, and the more people who understand that's their brand, the better.

On climate change, what do they believe? We've had announcements recently — we've had the wind development, clean coal, CO₂, ethanol, biomass. I was at a wonderful housing project in Saskatoon when I was the minister responsible for Sask Housing where the whole complex was being heated by a new biomass development there.

We have biodiesel, hydrogen. Again I hear a little bit about ethanol from the members opposite, but not much about the climate change issues in the world. And I think it would be nice to have a little bit of idea of what they believe in when it comes to climate change issues related to corporate and government practices around the world.

The labour laws . . . It's interesting. I read an article in the paper the other day where one of the journalists postulated that the

Sask Party was speaking in code and talking about a positive environment for business and getting rid of regulation, which in a sense is the code for the removal of many of the labour laws and health and safety, occupational laws that right now support the well-being of workers in the province. So again, what do you believe in? I think there's a big empty space on the side of the list of what you believe in.

I want to talk for just a minute about our brand as it relates to the music industry in Saskatchewan. You know, as I've been going around doing this review as the Legislative Secretary for the music industry, I have been absolutely thrilled not only at the talent but at the fairly well-developed companies we have in this industry in Saskatchewan, which I didn't quite frankly know existed.

And I was particularly pleased about the people like Brad Johner and his agent, and Donny Parenteau who . . . they have choices. Both of them have been courted. In fact Donny was in Nashville for a long time, and they made a decision to come back to Saskatchewan because they felt Saskatchewan was the best place to do music from.

The other thing was with the . . . They mentioned specifically the reach of high-speed Internet in Saskatchewan and how that enables someone in the music industry today to operate from virtually anywhere in the world because when you're on tour, your location that you're coming from, one of the most important things is that it be affordable and that it serve the needs of your industry. And certainly there is huge untapped potential yet in the music industry in Saskatchewan. But we're working hard on tapping that.

We've heard comments from musicians around more venues, investment, education and information, mentorship, scholarship, the need for pay and recognition for the work they do — some of that linked to the status of the artist work.

I want to commend a couple of the organizations that the musicians and their agents and industry and recording people have recognized. And that's Rawlco for their efforts on the 10K20 where they actually provided \$300,000 to emerging bands in Saskatchewan to record their product and to provide airplay. And we want to commend Rawlco and hope that they challenge all the other private sector companies to do the same. They were very receptive of the work of SaskMusic, which is the former Saskatchewan Recording Industry Association, and all they've done to bring professional workshops to the province and to help people learn how to take the next step in the industry.

Creative Music Inc. who's bringing us the four projects in 2007: the Western Canada Music Awards in Moose Jaw which everybody is very excited about that, the Country Music Awards in Regina, the Junos in Saskatoon, and the Aboriginal award in Prince Albert. And I have to say that I was amazed at the amount of music activity going on P.A. and north. It's huge. It's just huge.

A lot of the musician groups are doing programs in the schools. I think we are just on the verge of some very big strides in the music industry in this province.

And how about those Rider fans, Mr. Speaker? You know this is the attitude we need across the board in Saskatchewan is to support the home team, whether those are teams of educators, business people, volunteers, public servants, creative people, or the science and technology community. And I say to the members opposite, change your brand. The nabobs of negativity need to take a look in the mirror and adopt that green and white attitude and support the home team.

You know, I went to an event which was kind of unusual over the weekend. It was a young man who creates music through a series of gongs and crystal bowls. And it's to create vibrations, musical vibrations which then create . . . It's not unlike some of the early scientists and early music people at the turn of the century who worked on the notions of the vibration of the spheres and the vibration of music.

But one of the things that was so interesting was here was a fellow involved in something that was almost a meditative pursuit and he came into the room wearing his Roughrider shirt that he had specially made a trip to the Roughrider store in the afternoon to pick out. Why? Because he was so impressed with Saskatchewan's ability to support the home team. He just thought . . . So this was a little unusual seeing all these gongs and crystal bowls and the Roughrider T-shirt right in the middle.

But he went on to talk about all the great things about Saskatchewan. He's from Hamilton, and he says that he's been on tour for 18 of the last 24 months, but he is now looking for a place to call home. And he's considering Saskatchewan very seriously because he thinks of all the places in Canada, it's got the most to offer to a young person. And I was just so impressed.

Then I look in the newspaper and I see this article. This ex-Torontonian thinks life is fantastic here. He says, when people ask me why:

My response to them is, "Why not?" Why do people here have such an inferiority complex? . . . You have so much going for you . . .

He said the cliché about friendly people is not a cliché.

. . . I'm touched by every person I meet. . . .

Your cultural scene is alive and vibrant. . . .

And don't get me going on the difference in house prices.

You have all the sports activities you'll ever need . . .

. . . think about how good you have it here. Think and talk about all the positives . . . [and] Appreciate what you have.

And that's a fellow from Toronto, but certainly not the only one. This young woman . . . No, the crystal bowl and gong fellow was from Hamilton. Okay now. A young person in the *Leader-Post*, young persons' article section, November 6, she says, "How do we stop our young people from leaving the province?" Well I'll skip all the negatives, and she says, "So, what's the solution?":

Some have said we need to create more job opportunities . . . Some have proposed more local training . . . [Some say more] immigrants?

I have a . . . simpler answer, one befitting a local girl who neither studies the statistics, nor understands . . . Stop telling our kids to go.

. . . in [an] . . . oft-repeated song . . . it's more than OK to return home . . .

So they decided to pack up the moving van and you know what people said when they moved back to Saskatchewan?

"Why did you move back here?"

"How could you live in a small town?"

"You're kidding."

So she says, "As long as our collective social definition of success is to live outside Saskatchewan, our young people will continue to leave." And she said:

When our son was born, we started a university fund. We didn't think much about it at the time . . .

[But we've] now changed our tune and we try to call it the future fund . . . realizing that our son may want to go to technical school close to home or he may want to use the money to start a small-town business.

[But] as a society, we're all guilty of contributing to the myth of living the good life outside Saskatchewan.

She says the land of opportunity is here and the finger for this problem points right back at us. Well I would maybe point it a little bit over across the way at the Sask Party who have never done a thing to encourage anybody to stay here for any reason any time. They are completely negative.

But there is a little bit of good news here too from the university. It says, this is from co-op program, Kevin Bolen, the University of Regina's co-op education program. The message that more and more university students are getting is to stay in Saskatchewan. "... placements in co-op programs skyrocketing, 'four out of five students who come into our office want to stay in Saskatchewan.'"

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[16:00]

Ms. Crofford: — Today at the chamber of commerce, the Premier was very well received. I looked around the room. Many people nodding and many thoughtful, and in contrast with the Leader of the Opposition who really had nothing to say when you read these eight points. They're either done or they're so vague you can't tell what they are.

But if you want a real primer, read John Conway's article in the September 14 *prairie dog* where he explains "Brad's Fiddle-Diddle." What did he say? He said:

In other words, the whole Devine regime was apparently

operating in a festering cesspool of widespread corruption — numbered companies, siphoned funds, safety deposit boxes under false names, false invoices, a variety of bank accounts around the province for money laundering, and envelopes of cash handed out on a regular basis.

The obvious question for Brad Wall is: how was it possible for you not to know something was amiss, especially given the fact that your boss was one of the key architects of the scheme?

Patronage was so rife in that government that we had to create a lottery for students to get jobs to prevent all the abuse that had taken place during the '80s.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm coming to a conclusion here, and our government's plan is to make life better for today's Saskatchewan families and build an even better future for our young people here. How? By supporting the home team and all the people that make up that team. The Sask Party members are running for their record. Their relentless negativity speaks for itself.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be from this province. I'm proud to be part of this government, and I will be speaking against the amendment and in favour of the Speech from the Throne.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to enter into the debate for the Speech from the Throne. It dawned on me yesterday that November 5, three years since I was elected to this House, and I must say that it has been a privilege to serve as the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

I'd like to talk a little bit about my constituency. It's a brand new constituency. I have the pleasure to serve as the first member of this House representing Saskatoon Silver Springs. It was created through redistribution. Saskatoon and the area that I represent is an area that is growing.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, it's an anomaly in Saskatchewan to have an area that is actually growing. But it's a pleasure, it's a pleasure to represent areas like Erindale and Arbor Creek and Sutherland and Forest Grove and University Heights and Willowgrove. It's a privilege to represent areas that have facilities like the new soccer centre that is in the heart of my constituency and congratulations to the soccer community for putting their hard-earned dollars behind that facility.

Every day it's a privilege to serve in this House. And, Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to serve with people like Ms. Ronyk who's had a great career serving this House. She's been kind to me and kind to my family, and I congratulate her on a great career, and I wish her well in the future.

I'd also like to thank those that are responsible for me being here, not only the constituents of Saskatoon Silver Springs but my family, my constituency assistant, and those that do the

things that they need to do to ensure that I am able to do my job in this House. I'm speaking about my wife Trish and the work that she does. She's a hockey mom. She can race across the city in 15 minutes or less and make sure that the kids get to all their activities. I know each and every member in this House knows that it is indeed a great job. I say each family needs at least one responsible parent, and I know that Trish is that parent.

I also want to pay tribute to my son and daughter. Carter, who is eight years old, my son, he's in grade 4 and in French immersion and doing very well. His ability to speak French surpassed his dad long ago. And my daughter Paige who's in grade 1, equally enthusiastic about school, about French immersion, about just being able to take part in all the activities that they are able to take. We are truly, truly blessed, Mr. Speaker, as a family.

I want to talk about my constituency assistant as well, Beth Epp. Her name has been mentioned many times. She's no stranger to this House or to members of the protocol because she volunteers so much of her time. Whenever there's an opportunity to volunteer in the legislature, whether it's a royal visit or something similar, she's there.

But she brings that same enthusiasm to the constituents of Saskatoon Silver Springs and into my office. She's there working weekends. She's there working late. She's there representing me when I'm away on business. She's attending meetings. She's even putting on parades, doing things like that that my office is involved in, and I can't always be there to do it. But I certainly couldn't imagine, Mr. Speaker, doing the job that I do without the assistance of my constituency assistant. And I might mention that it's her birthday tomorrow, so if anybody knows Beth Epp, give her a call. I'm not brave enough to tell you how old she is but . . . 21 and I'd say that that's pretty close, that's pretty close. My hon. colleague says that.

Mr. Speaker, I also had a great opportunity this summer to get out and — what we call in political circles — door knocking, going out and talking to people on their doorstep. And I had a chance to do a fair bit of that this summer. And I really enjoy going to people's homes, talking to them on their doorsteps, asking them about what the issues are because so often in this House we talk about issues that come up and we really wonder if they're resonating with people.

And I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that yes indeed they are. People are concerned about this government, about where it's going, about 15 years of inaction. They want more from a government than they're getting from here. I had a chance to go through Silverspring this summer. I very much enjoyed it and this . . . just before the House sat I had a chance to knock just about every door in Willowgrove. Willowgrove is a brand new area of Saskatoon — 400 new homes this year, hopefully three, 400 more next year. People who are choosing to make their home and make their living in Saskatchewan. And it takes a great courage for them to do that. They are positive about being here but they want the most that they can get from their government. And in knocking on their doors and talking to each one of them I could tell that they're just, they're just not feeling that they're getting it.

I must say that I have to pass on my thanks to the people that

have helped me when I was going around door to door and Mike Lynden and Mike Morrissey and others who are there to help me. And I could tell you a story, Mr. Speaker, that you know there was one day that it was so slippery I think we were sliding down driveways when we were doing that.

Another thing, Mr. Speaker, that I want to talk about in my constituency — and it's a way that I'm able to give a little bit back to those that elect me — it's called our picnic in the park in Saskatoon Silver Springs. And this year we had a fabulous turnout. The weather co-operated and we had a thousand individuals come out and partake in a fun time for families and it was a time to celebrate the centennial of Saskatoon, an important part of the city. And the centennial, again it's drawing to a close here very quickly in Saskatoon but I just want to talk about what a wonderful city that I have the opportunity to represent.

It is Saskatchewan's largest city. It's a city on the move. It's a city with some vibrancy. On November 10 this year it'll be celebrating at a gala the many cultures that make up the wonderful city of Saskatoon.

The other thing I like about Saskatoon is that the leadership in the city, they're not afraid to set goals, Mr. Speaker. That's something that I don't see enough of in this House. But they're not afraid to set goals. They want Saskatoon to be 400,000 people in 2050. That's a bold goal, Mr. Speaker. It's a bold goal. It'll take leadership. It'll take vision. That's what they have there and that's what they're going to achieve.

Another goal that the city of Saskatoon has is to ensure that every graduating student has a job in Saskatoon. Now they haven't been able to meet that goal yet, but it sends a signal to this provincial government the types of goals that they should be setting for themselves. We don't hear any of that from the members opposite but we do fortunately hear that from the leadership in Saskatoon.

I want to spend a fair amount of time talking about my constituency. My thanks go out to the many, many volunteers. Those that take their kids to hockey, those that coach every day. I'm somewhat upset by not being able to be there as much as I would like to be but I really send out my thanks to people that take it upon themselves, whether it's with the Redwings zone in Saskatoon that runs the hockey program or the Blue Jays baseball group as well. They're parents who go out and coach and coach and . . . all the time. The Aurora soccer group as well. They are very dedicated, very dedicated.

And also I'd like to pay tribute to the Neighbourhood Watch group in Erindale and Arbor Creek and the areas around the centre of my constituency. People, parents, residents who take it upon themselves to address the needs of their community to assist the police in ensuring that our communities are safe. I encourage the government to work with groups like that to ensure that our streets are safe, to keep promises that were made some seven years ago that haven't been achieved yet. Work hard on those.

I'd also like to congratulate the community associations in my constituency — Erindale, Arbor Creek, Silverspring, Sutherland, Forest Grove. Dedicated groups who work each and

every day to make sure that our communities are a better place to be.

Also this year is a special year for a group in my constituency — the Vanier Cup committee. It extends across Saskatoon but it's made up of many individuals who reside in my constituency. People like Hugh Vassos and Grant Kook and Mark Regier and John Grabowski and Jim Rhode, many who are my constituents. And I wish them well in taking on the large responsibility in hosting the first Vanier Cup ever held outside the province of Ontario.

I also, Mr. Speaker, in this municipal election year, want to pay tribute to those who let their names stand for public office. Congratulations to Bev Dubois and Patrick Bundrock who ran a spirited race for Ward 10 in my constituency. Also to Ray Morrison and C. D. McIver who ran for the public school board and many residents who ran for the separate school board. And to Bev Dubois and to Ray Morrison and Mayor Atchison and the city council I want to say I look forward to working with each and every one of you.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatoon Silver Springs is a vibrant constituency with people of all walks of life. Today we had the opportunity to meet Crystal Bonderud. Crystal and her late husband, Doug, were constituents of Saskatoon Silver Springs. As we heard today in question period, Doug passed away under tragic circumstances, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, his health care failed him. His government failed him, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker. And on this note this government will have to answer for it, Mr. Speaker.

I had a chance to meet with Crystal earlier today. I had a chance to talk to her on previous occasions. I just want to congratulate her for the way she's carrying herself and working in Doug's memory, but also working to make sure that no other family has to go through what the Bonderuds did in our province. And I know it's taken very seriously by members opposite. I know that certainly there's no politics in this. It's just something that we have to address quickly so no other families will ever have to go through this again.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatoon Silver Springs also has, I would think, probably more children than any other constituency in the province. And I'm not sure of that fact, but I would guess that that is the case. Mr. Speaker, to families with children, health care is so important.

Many, many of my constituents work closely, work hand in hand with the Children's Health and Hospital Foundation. They're working to get a children's hospital, a hospital within a hospital, in Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, they've been at it for years. Year in, year out, they go to dinners. They take money out of their own pocket and donate it to this foundation to ensure that they have a children's hospital in the province.

Mr. Speaker, just imagine, imagine what they thought when they heard in this Throne Speech . . . What did they hear? The expectations were high, largely because of what the government has said. The Saskatchewan Party has been talking about the need for a children's hospital. The government got on board a number of years ago.

But what have we seen so far from this government, Mr. Speaker? Well here it is. Imagine their elation. Imagine their joy when they heard the words, “continue the progress towards the development of a Children’s Hospital within a hospital,” Mr. Speaker — “continue the progress towards the development of a Children’s Hospital within a hospital.” Very empty words indeed, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know that 2007 will hopefully be an election year in Saskatchewan. And we know — and certainly those members on this side of the House know — that the NDP only do things in election years. You know, we’ve heard everything. Wait for 2007. Well 2007 is just around the corner, Mr. Speaker. Will there be announcement on this hospital? I think so, Mr. Speaker. I think so. I think this government will finally take it upon themselves to have a little bit of an announcement.

They’ll trickle out some money. They won’t put any targets. They won’t put any dates. But they’ll come out, and they’ll say, well we’ve announced the hospital. We’ll give you a little bit of money for a study or maybe, you know, something to . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . A little bit of lip service, my honourable colleague says. That’s what we’ll have here. Mr. Speaker, I would say that is not a way, with all due respect, to run a province. That is not the way to address the concern that Saskatchewan and PEI [Prince Edward Island] are the only provinces in Canada without a children’s hospital, Mr. Speaker.

[16:15]

Mr. Speaker, residents of my constituency — and I’ll be clear about this — many, many residents of my constituency will do anything for their kids. And if it means taking their kids to Alberta, which they’ve had to do . . . Many, many of my constituents have done that. They’ve gone, they’ve got in the car, pack up the family and go to the Alberta Stollery Children’s Hospital.

And, Mr. Speaker, what do they say . . . what happens when they get there? What happens when they see the specialist that they need, when they get the care that they need? What do the specialists say to them? They say, what’s going on in Saskatchewan? What is going on here? Who’s in charge? What’s your government doing for children? And those people, my constituents, Mr. Speaker, have very little that they can say in response to that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hear . . . I know I’ve struck a chord out there. I know many of their own members on the side, on the government’s side are disappointed with how long this is taking.

But I have a challenge, Mr. Speaker. I have a challenge for each member over there. Talk to the Minister of Health and tomorrow, tomorrow is the Champions Luncheon in Regina that will talk about the need for a children’s hospital in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. I challenge them. I challenge the Minister of Health, make the announcement tomorrow. What more appropriate time would there be than tomorrow to make that announcement, Mr. Speaker? Make the announcement and we will give you credit, just like we’ve done on the PST, on the Vicq commission. Whenever you’ve done the right thing we’ve

been the first to say it’s the right thing to do and it’s proper.

We know that you have a mountain of money that you’re sitting on, but I would suggest that building a children’s hospital within a hospital is something that needs to be done in Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it doesn’t just stop in health care. It’s also that same way with schools. The other area of prime importance is the need for school facilities to house our children. As I mentioned, you know, I have a growing constituency. The need is there. Arbor Creek has 600 kids under six years old with no school.

Now we know, Mr. Speaker, we know about the \$1.5 billion in unbudgeted revenue that this government has. What’s the plan? What’s the plan from this government with all that money? Well we have no capital priority list this year, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, not, not one word from this government and I’m disappointed. Mr. Speaker, I’m just disappointed that we haven’t heard any word from this government about it.

What we have, Mr. Speaker, is the 2005 list. That came from last year. Here it is, the 2005 list. What was the number one priority on that list that didn’t get funded? St. Paul’s Roman Catholic school. Northeast elementary school, the project didn’t get funded — just below the list. Now, Mr. Speaker, that came out in June of 2005.

Now I’ve been phoning every couple of weeks to the minister’s office, to the Department of Learning, and say, where’s the capital list this year? What’s happening? What are you doing with your millions of dollars and the billions of dollars? What are you doing for children in this province? And, Mr. Speaker, the answer is, it’s been approved that . . . it’s been created. The list is ready, but it needs to be approved by the minister.

Mr. Speaker, that’s a sad story about Saskatchewan. That’s a sad story about education and the way it works. You know, a cynic would say, what are they doing? Are they . . . Why the delay with this list? Are they waiting for an election next year? Well, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you that it’s not going to help. The residents of Saskatoon Silver Springs realize it’s too little too late. The expiry date, the best before date, has come and gone on this government. People in Arbor Creek and Willowgrove pay some of the highest property taxes in the country. And what do they get from this government? — delay, delay, delay.

Sure, we’ll see some announcements in 2007, hoping to give them a little bit of bounce from where they are in the polls. But, Mr. Speaker, again I would say that’s it’s too little too late. And I can speak definitively for the people of Arbor Creek and the people of Willowgrove that they’re tired of being ignored by this NDP government, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — And it just doesn’t stop there. It doesn’t just stop with schools. What about the academic health sciences centre? We’ve heard so much about that in a number of years. Where is it, Mr. Speaker? Where is it? That facility was suggested by the university. It was supported by the

Saskatchewan Party and then announced by the government in 2003, Mr. Speaker, and where is it? There's nothing to report. We know that the former minister of Finance from this House is now in charge of this facility.

But what happens, Mr. Speaker, when we have a government like this, that seems to do nothing for three years and then in the election year finally puts their agenda forward, Mr. Speaker. Well in this particular instance, we've seen the cost of this facility go from \$100 million to — and who knows, the government won't want to speculate on it now — \$160 million, \$200 million. Mr. Speaker, it's just a sad case of a government trying to govern by the polls. They're not going in their direction, and we just see some real concern, real concern, Mr. Speaker.

As I mentioned earlier, Saskatoon is successful in spite of this government, Mr. Speaker. Credit must go to this growth-orientated community. There's a visionary and decisive city council. And there's an increasingly co-operative . . . And members might take surprise at me saying that. There's an increasingly co-operative labour movement in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. Credit must go to the chamber of commerce and to Coni Evans, who's the president and to Kent Smith-Windsor. I just want to take a minute, Mr. Speaker, and read to you what they have to say.

Coni Evans, the first female president of the chamber of commerce, she says, and I quote:

“Saskatchewan investors large and small including homeowners, clearly need more confidence in Saskatchewan than the current government policy mix provides. Policy changes like the ones we outlined are obvious to anyone who wants to build a brighter future for our province and our youth. Our province has the fiscal capacity to . . . make changes . . . We need the political will.”

Words well spoken by Coni Evans, Mr. Speaker. And we go on, we go on to say, Mr. Speaker, we go on to hear from the Saskatoon Home Builders', a group that's working hard to make Saskatoon a better place to be. And what do they have to say? What does Alan Thomarat, the executive director of the Saskatoon & Region Home Builders', what does he have to say: Saskatchewan's consistently low level of performance shows that there are long term systemic problems in the Saskatchewan government policy mix and it's costing each and every citizen in terms of jobs opportunities for themselves and their children. The current policy mix has restricted Saskatchewan's tax base choices and has limited citizen choices in housing, Mr. Speaker.

And they back that up with statistics about housing starts in Saskatchewan. And don't get me wrong, Mr. Speaker. We're appreciative for every housing start that there is in this province. But, Mr. Speaker, as the information indicates, there is woefully few of them, Mr. Speaker.

We are dead last in the country when it comes to new housing starts, Mr. Speaker. On per 1,000 basis, we have 3.45, Mr. Speaker. And you know what the number is in say Prince Edward Island? 6.24 per 1,000, Mr. Speaker. In Ontario — 6.28. In Alberta, you know we can't . . . the members opposite

don't want us to compare ourselves to Alberta, but that number, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to throw out to you, is 12.54 per 1,000, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it just points to the changes that need to be made by this government, Mr. Speaker, that's for sure.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to attend the Saskatchewan Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs, and they're very interested in what the Throne Speech has to say. They're concerned about the future in Saskatchewan. And I was joined by the Minister of Industry at that event. And we saw . . . I congratulate people like Jerry Bode and Jill Sauter for the work that they are doing to ensure that Saskatchewan young people have a place to stay in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We heard a tremendous speech from Joel Teal and I think the minister opposite would agree that it's just a tremendous, tremendous thing.

Mr. Speaker, my time . . . when you're talking about your constituency, when you're talking about, you know, things that are close to your heart, it's really important, Mr. Speaker. And I haven't had a chance to talk on a lot of things that I want to talk about. I want to talk about the finances of this province. I want to talk about, I want to talk about a book that tells it like it is — the auditor's report, Mr. Speaker. It's great. Many of my colleagues have referenced this. Seven deficits, seven deficits, seven deficits in the last 16 years, Mr. Speaker. There you go.

You know, you wonder why when a Throne Speech begins with 13 consecutive budgets, you can't vote for it when the first line of the whole Throne Speech is erroneous, Mr. Speaker. They talk about the debt. They talk about where we're going as a province. And it's just really concerning when you see numbers like agriculture numbers — \$827 million from the government in 1991; 512 million, Mr. Speaker, in 2006. You know, it's just, it's just very, very concerning, Mr. Speaker.

I have many other things that I would like to speak about today. But, Mr. Speaker, I know that our time is limited today and I know I hear my colleagues saying that it's time to wind it up, Mr. Speaker. So I know I'll have other opportunities to debate the Finance minister, to debate members on the other side of the House, but I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are ready to finish this 15-year-old chapter of NDP mediocrity, Mr. Speaker. The people of Saskatchewan are ready to close the book on this tired and old NDP government, Mr. Speaker.

They're ready for a young, dynamic leader that has a vision for the future, Mr. Speaker. And with each new day they are excited, Mr. Speaker. They are excited because they know we are one day closer to a Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in light of time I just want to summarize that I will be supporting the amendment, voting against the motion. I thank you for this time to address this House and my constituents. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion for an address to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor and the amendment to that motion. And there being no further speakers at this time, we will vote off the amendment.

The motion . . . the amendment before the Assembly therefore is the one moved by the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy,

seconded by the member for Cannington which says that this government . . . that after the word “session” the following be added:

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

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt this amendment? Would those who favour the amendment say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Speaker: — Would those who are opposed to the amendment say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

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

[The division bells rang from 16:28 until 16:35.]

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the amendment to the motion for an address to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor which has been moved by the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy, seconded by the member for Cannington, and reads:

Moved that after the word “session” the following be added:

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

Those who favour the amendment please stand.

[Yeas — 26]

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

[Nays — 29]

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Clerk Assistant (Committees): — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 26; those against, 29.

The Speaker: — I declare the amendment defeated. The debate resumes on the main motion for the address to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Centre, the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, I’m pleased to enter into the Throne Speech today and, Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks I will conclude by saying I’m in full . . . I’m voting in favour of this Throne Speech because it is a plan of action that will ensure that Saskatchewan citizens and families are reaping the benefits of our strong economy.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Now, Mr. Speaker, before I start my formal remarks, I want to take a moment to thank several people who make my work, our work over here happen for the people of Saskatchewan and my constituents of Saskatoon Centre. Of course I need to thank my constituency assistant, Leslie Bennett, for her dedication and service for the people of Saskatoon Centre.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I need to recognize my office staff here in Regina: Lindsay, Dan, Rachel, Sherry, and Jeanine for all their hard work making sure that my minister’s office is accessible and responsive to the questions and needs of all Saskatchewan people. Thank you very much. I also want to take a moment and thank my family for their support as well.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I should talk a bit about my riding, Saskatoon Centre, the heart of Saskatoon, our largest city in this province. Of course this year we’re celebrating our centennial. It’s a pretty special year for Saskatoon.

Well, Mr. Speaker, Saskatoon Centre is a rich, diverse riding spanning from the condos and apartments downtown on the beautiful banks of the South Saskatchewan through the core communities of Caswell, Westmount, Riversdale, Pleasant Hill, to the west end of Mount Royal. All strong communities that live out the challenges of Saskatchewan families, communities every day. In many ways Saskatoon Centre really reflects what

might be called average or today's Saskatchewan family in all its forms. And I know they support our Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, as you know I am deeply interested in all we can do to support young people, especially through learning. Interestingly, Mr. Speaker, at this time all three west side high schools in Saskatoon are located in Saskatoon Centre. But not for long. Next fall Bethlehem and Tommy Douglas Collegiate will be opening their doors. This just demonstrates our government's commitment to our families and to our young people.

Now today in Saskatchewan our future looks brighter than at any time in recent past. We have one of the hottest economies in the nation, one of only two provinces that outperform the national economy in each of the past five years. Just last Friday we learned there are more people working in Saskatchewan than ever before — 21,800 jobs more in October than the year before. We have the lowest unemployment rate since 1979 and we have the second lowest unemployment rate in Canada at 3.3 per cent. Full-time jobs are up to 22,900 and, Mr. Speaker, youth employment is up 8,100 jobs this month, and Saskatchewan has the second lowest youth unemployment rate in this country.

Now what a stark difference from 15 years ago when this government came to power, when Saskatchewan was not doing well at all. The previous administration, of which the Leader of the Opposition was part of, had racked up a huge debt that nearly drove this province to bankruptcy. The NDP government has a vision of a strong and prosperous province where we can use our advantages to build a better future for all Saskatchewan families, a bright future where our young people can live, work, and raise their families.

Now we paid down this staggering debt that at one point totalled almost 70 per cent of the province's total economic output. Now our debt-to-GDP ratio is 17 per cent. Once the budget was balanced we invested in our province, in our people. We invested in tax cuts, in infrastructure, in research, and in the most important resource of all — people — to continue to seize the Saskatchewan advantage. We have fundamentally changed the Saskatchewan economy. Today we have an economy that again can fuel the social progress that we desire, that Saskatchewan people want and need.

Now, Mr. Speaker, our strategy is working. Saskatchewan is working. And I'm proud to stand in support of the Speech from the Throne that lays out a bold vision for how we will continue to work to ensure a better province for young people to live, work, and build strong futures and to ensure that all Saskatchewan families benefit from this strong economy.

And I am, Mr. Speaker, delightfully proud to be part of a government that cut the provincial sales tax from 7 per cent to 5 per cent so that people can have a few more extra dollars in their pockets to spend on their families.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be part of a government that has introduced legislation to proclaim a new statutory holiday in February, Family Day, to help Saskatchewan people maintain a healthy balance between work and family life.

As I've talked to my constituents, Mr. Speaker, they have told me they're excited about the vision put forward by this government. They're excited about the four cornerstones of our government's agenda: making sure that Saskatchewan is the best place for young people to live, work, and build strong futures; strength in Saskatchewan's leadership in improving public health care; advancing Saskatchewan as a leader in environmental protection and green economy; and ensuring that today's Saskatchewan family benefits from our strong economy.

[16:45]

Now, Mr. Speaker, these four cornerstones of our agenda reflect the priorities of the people of Saskatchewan. But those priorities — the priorities which Saskatchewan people support — are not shared by the members opposite. Rather they criticize and they whine. They complain and they attack. But while they're doing it, doing all that, while they're setting their time machine to the past rather than the future, Mr. Speaker, we're getting the job done.

This NDP government is bringing new investment into our province. And this NDP government is creating jobs for ordinary people and for our youth. Now, Mr. Speaker, this NDP government is ensuring a better province for young people to live, work, and build strong futures. We've launched in May 2006 an accessibility and affordability review of the post-secondary education, and this should be completed in mid-2007. We will receive the initial recommendations and I'm looking forward to seeing them.

Now we have a strong record of listening to the concerns of our institutions, students, and their families. We've extended the tuition freeze until 2008. And consistently we've provided increases and stable funding for our post-secondary institutions. We've expanded the graduate tax credit, Gradworks, seats in our institutions, capital projects, and we're even committed to doing more.

Now, Mr. Speaker, since the last budget and the budget before, we've increased the number of training spots by 3,900. And every member over there voted against it. Those members have also ignored how important it is to have our First Nations trained and full members of our labour force and growing economy. But we do, Mr. Speaker. And that is why we provided funding for the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies — funding they all voted against.

Now, Mr. Speaker, building the future here for young people is incredibly important for our province's future and our economy. After completing their training, graduates are eager to enter the workforce, apply the skills they've learned, and build their careers here in Saskatchewan. With this in mind, our government has engaged in a multi-faceted approach with more opportunities and more young people working than any time in the last decade. We are turning the corner on out-migration and building a future for young people here at home.

To sustain this level of growth and to ensure our level of development, we have put into place the following. The introduction of Youth Opportunities Unleashed will allow our youth to acquire loans of up to \$15,000 to be used to start or

expand existing businesses. We've also introduced Gradworks, a program offered to the commercial Crown corporations to give recent graduates positions and valuable experience with Saskatchewan Crown corporations.

In May this year we launched saskjobs.ca and promoted the site through billboards and newspaper ads. And, Mr. Speaker, between May and July of this year, saskjobs.ca posted over 11,000 jobs.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech stated and I quote:

Working people and working families are fundamental building blocks of a strong economy. The health and safety of, and benefits for, workers are important values of . . . [our] government.

And, Mr. Speaker, when you look at this government's record, you will see those reflected in our actions. We have made many significant advances in labour standards, occupational health and safety, and labour relations. In the past decade alone, we have increased the minimum wage several times with another increase planned for March of next year; expanded the list of compensable injuries and illnesses; required the use of safety engineered needles; and help in correctional facilities.

We've increased protection for whistle-blowers, updated both our radiation health and safety and mining regulations, provided increased protection for new parents who want parental leave. And, Mr. Speaker, we established a work and family unit in the Department of Labour, among numerous other initiatives, and we're going to do more. We're committed to focus on workplace safety through the response to the Occupational Health and Safety Council report and the Worker's Compensation Act committee of review.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we are committed to assisting vulnerable workers to overcome employment challenges by responding further to the recommendations of the commission on improving work opportunities for Saskatchewan residents. We've made progress on the issue for vulnerable workers. One of the areas that's very important affects vulnerable workers is marketable skills. Well this NDP government, as I have said, has created 3,900 new training spaces to provide both basic adult education and technical skills training through SIAST, regional colleges, and the apprenticeship and trade certification program.

We have committed to continue and indeed expand our efforts in education and training. We're going to expand training opportunities including a new partnership between labour, business, and training institutions to provide input on our evolving labour market needs so we can plan best how to meet the needs of labour demands of the future.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we're committed to expanding our partnerships with First Nations and Métis people and organizations to enhance education and skills training for Aboriginal youth and recognizing that improved child care is another way to make meaningful difference in the lives of people who are struggling to become self-sufficient. We've done a lot of good work in this area.

We've improved child care subsidies. These increases mean that low-income families now get subsidies that cover on average 85 per cent of child care fees based on 2005 child care rates. The increases also include new part-time subsidies for parents who require half time child care or less. In addition, Mr. Speaker, family income levels have been adjusted in some cases as much as 20 to 30 per cent so that more parents can qualify.

We're also continuing to build the best province for people to live and work and raise a family through continued investment in the innovative KidsFirst program that offers supports for families. And despite the federal Conservative government's withdrawal, the NDP government in Saskatchewan is continuing to deliver on the Early Learning and Child Care program.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the NDP government has done much for the working people and families in this province, and we are committed to do more. Now what a stark contrast from the days when those members opposite last held power. Those were the days of darkness and, in many cases, despair among working people. Now my colleague from Regina already mentioned a book, *Nine Lost Years*, and I want to refer to that as well. The labour history book *On the Side of the People* refers to those days when the members opposite were in control as the nine lost years. The Trade Union and Labour Standards Act were gutted. The Labour Relations and Workers' Compensation Boards were stacked with anti-labour reps, and let's not even get into what they did with the building trades. Crown assets were privatized, and social programs were seriously damaged, not to mention the financial misconduct that the people of this province, the people of Saskatchewan, are still paying for.

Now those members opposite think that legislation to protect workers is, and I quote, Mr. Speaker: hurtful, unfair, paternalistic, and needless. Those are the Leader of the Opposition's own words in this very Chamber, Mr. Speaker. But unlike the Sask Party members, this NDP government believes that occupational health and safety and basic labour standards for working people are absolutely essential.

An Hon. Member: — Fundamental.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — You bet. Mr. Speaker, I continue to be delighted the very good progress we are making here in Saskatchewan on our commitment to environmental protection and the green economy. These are exciting days, and we will need to double our efforts. Mr. Speaker, I was pleased today to be part of the water conservation strategy announcement, and now I look forward to the launching of the green strategy. I'm especially looking forward to the work of my colleague, the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] from Saskatoon Greystone, concerning renewable energy and conservation. His work will help our province tackle the real challenges of global climate change.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make a special remark about the clean coal project that we're undertaking because I believe that will form an integral part of our power needs for Saskatchewan, and yet it will serve the world as a model for proper use of coal while we transition to a more renewable source of energy in a post-carbon world.

Well, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, what a fall we have had here in Saskatchewan. Picture the Rolling Stones playing Taylor Field. Well they did. Picture a new family holiday in February next year. Picture new record employment, over 500,000 people working in this province. Well they are. Mr. Speaker, this is the picture we are building of our new Saskatchewan in our second century: every family a part of a prosperous economy that is well-grounded but only limited by the sky.

Mr. Speaker, of course I will be voting in favour of the Throne Speech and, Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, in light of the time I will move that this House do recess until 7 p.m.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that this House do now recess until 7 p.m. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried. This House stands recessed until 7 p.m.

[The Assembly recessed until 19:00.]

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Premier

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Minister Responsible for Seniors

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