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| ***Province*** | ***Législature*** | ***Session*** | ***Type de discours*** | ***Date du discours*** | ***Locuteur*** | ***Fonction du locuteur*** | ***Parti politique*** |
| Saskatchewan | 23e | 3e | Discours sur le budget | 19 mars 1998 | Eric Cline | Ministre des Finances | Saskatchewan New Democratic Party |

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Firstly it is my pleasure to table a message from His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, the estimates and supplementary estimates.

Mr. Speaker, and through you, members of the Legislative

Assembly, ladies and gentlemen, and friends, I am very glad to see so many people here today and I’d like to welcome everyone. If I may be permitted, Mr. Speaker, I’d like to acknowledge just a few who are very special to me and I would ask each of them to stand.

Firstly, my wife, Pauline Melis, who is an administrative assistant at the University of Saskatchewan. And beside her are lifelong friends and neighbours, Bill Magill and Jean Magill from Saskatoon. And I’d like to say thank you for being here.

Mr. Speaker, it has been my privilege these last several months to consult with Saskatchewan people and to work with my colleagues to put a budget together. This has been a first such task for me and I want to say how much better that task is because of the good work of my two predecessors, namely the member from Regina Dewdney and the member for Saskatoon Idylwyld, and I want to acknowledge that and to thank them.

Mr. Speaker, the motto of our great province is “from many peoples, strength.” We are stronger together.

Pulling together, we balanced the budget, paid down debt, protected our quality of life, and most important, restored hope and confidence to our province.

Today I am presenting another budget that invests in people: in jobs and the economy; education and training; health; highways; families and communities — a budget that builds opportunity, security, and strength.

Mr. Speaker, this is Saskatchewan’s fifth consecutive balanced budget.

It includes plans for three more balanced budgets, and we are seeing the benefits. Our economy is growing and diversifying. Incomes are going up. Taxes are coming down. Once again, the future is ours to decide.

Mr. Speaker, over the past several months as I travelled our province talking with Saskatchewan people, I found a great deal of common ground. People agree that the number one priority is jobs. We are working on jobs and economic growth with the same determination that went into balancing the budget.

We’re working with business, labour, farmers, cooperatives, and communities to strengthen agriculture, to promote trade and tourism, to develop our resources, to expand manufacturing and processing, and to create opportunities for new businesses in our province.

And I believe, Mr. Speaker, our approach is paying off. The simple fact is there are more people working in Saskatchewan than ever before, Mr. Speaker.

There are more full-time jobs, more jobs for women, and more jobs for young people. The economy is strong. Last year, oil drilling set a new record. Retail sales were up 9 per cent. Manufacturing shipments rose 15 per cent. And wholesale trade soared 26 per cent, the highest in Canada. And last year 13,000 new jobs were created across our province. And, Mr. Speaker, we’re well on our way to meeting the job target we set for the turn of the century.

This year, as a result of this budget, we will replace or upgrade 10 health facilities, upgrade over 100 elementary and high schools, improve universities, regional colleges, and SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) facilities around the province, and invest in highways, roads, provincial parks, and dozens of other capital projects.

This budget will focus on four elements vital to jobs and growth — community economic development, targeted tax incentives, a strong transportation system, and education and training.

Let me begin with community economic development. Through regional economic development authorities and other organizations, people mobilize local resources to build on local strengths. REDAs (regional economic development authority) provide everything from business counselling to skills training programs. And they are making excellent progress.

And I’m pleased to announce that this budget doubles our investment in regional economic development authorities to continue to create jobs and opportunities at the community level. This includes support for new neighbourhood development organizations to revitalize inner-city communities.

And we’re also increasing support for locally based cooperatives.

And we’re working with people in the North, Mr. Speaker, to tap into the unique potential of their communities. This budget will more than double investment in the northern development fund to help diversity our resource-based northern economy.

And I’m pleased to report, Mr. Speaker, that since 1991, operating contracts between northern mining companies and their joint venture partners increased from less than $20 million to about $65 million in 1996. And this increased funding, Mr. Speaker, will do more to help

Northerners attract and obtain such contracts. Last year we made a three-year agreement with logging companies to share the cost of protecting our forests. This year we will add $1.2 million to expand the spruce budworm spraying program, safeguarding the valuable forest resources northern communities depend on for jobs and growth.

Today’s budget also helps SARCAN recycling and its member organizations create jobs while protecting our environment. To help SARCAN fulfil its mission, we are expanding our recycling program to include juice boxes and other cardboard beverage containers.

We’re taking other steps too, to create a March 19, 1998 Saskatchewan Hansard 207 climate for business and industry to invest and grow. A targeted tax strategy can encourage more investment in particular sectors. We have pursued such a strategy in the oil patch, mining, and manufacturing and processing sectors.

For example, Saskatchewan has one of the most competitive structures for manufacturing and processing in Canada. These industries are exporting Saskatchewan-made products around the world. Last year alone, they created 3,200 jobs. And sales of machinery, such as farm implements, reached $563 million in 1997 — a $50 million increase over 1996.

We are hopeful that a targeted tax strategy can work in our farm sector as well. Saskatchewan farmers are responding to the world’s growing more competitive food markets. Last year we introduced a sales tax rebate to encourage investment in livestock and horticultural facilities. I am pleased to announce this year we are lowering the annual deductible from $500 to $100 so even more farmers can compete in these and other fast-growing global markets.

Mr. Speaker, our farmers can compete with the best. We know that the future of agriculture will be shaped by research and development. Modern dry land farming methods, new animal vaccines, and agricultural biotechnology have put Saskatchewan farmers at the leading edge of innovation.

This year in addition to initiatives supported by the agri-food equity fund, we will invest $14 million to encourage more innovation and move new technologies from the labs to the fields.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan’s mining sector is strong and this budget will make it stronger. Effective midnight tonight, exploration equipment purchased for use in the mining sector will be exempt from the provincial sales tax.

This new incentive will promote more exploration in jobs, especially in the North. The oil and gas sector too is a driving force in the Saskatchewan economy. It has created wealth and jobs in communities like Estevan, Weyburn, Swift Current, and Lloydminster. I’m pleased to announce a new petroleum research tax incentive to encourage innovation in our oil and gas industry to create even more jobs.

Mr. Speaker, across the industrial spectrum a broadly based research and development tax incentive will help companies stay competitive and invest for the future. I’m therefore pleased to announce, effective midnight tonight, a 15 per cent income tax credit for research and development in Saskatchewan.

This tax credit will benefit industries like engineering, biotechnology, and information technology to name a few. It will also benefit our universities where much of this research activity takes place.

Saskatchewan’s film industry is also flourishing. It offers some of the skilled, well-paid jobs we want for our youth and our future. I’m pleased to announce, effective January 1, 1998, a film employment tax credit equal to 35 per cent of the costs of employing Saskatchewan people in this dynamic industry.

This tax credit will be increased by an additional 5 per cent of eligible expenditures for productions in rural Saskatchewan, bringing more film activity and jobs to rural communities.

Mr. Speaker, targeted tax incentives work. In addition to these incentives we will continue to cut red tape for business.

Beginning in April, 4,400 small businesses will be able to save time and money by filing their sales tax returns quarterly or annually rather than monthly.

We’re also launching a one-stop business registration pilot project to simplify the process for entrepreneurs. And we’re streamlining licensing requirements for business including the resource sector while continuing to safeguard the environment.

Community economic development and a climate for business investment and growth — that is our approach to creating jobs and opportunities for Saskatchewan people in the 21st century.

Mr. Speaker, a strong transportation system is vital to our growing economy, particularly to our rural and farming communities. But there are challenges. The federal government eliminated the Crow benefit. It deregulated the rails. Rail lines have been abandoned, offloading more traffic to the roads and increasing the burden on Saskatchewan highways, communities, and taxpayers.

Now more than ever we have to draw on our spirit of partnership and innovation to meet our transportation challenges. That’s why we’re working with local governments, businesses, and communities. Together we’re setting priorities.

We’re investing our limited resources wisely, and we’re exploring options like short-line railways and alternative trade routes.

We have also committed $2.5 billion over 10 years to upgrade and modernize our roads and highways.

Last year we resurfaced, repaired, or graded thousands of kilometres of Saskatchewan highways; we worked on twinning the Yellowhead Highway; and we pushed construction into the fall. This year we will repair or resurface 3,600 kilometres of roads and highways, more than the distance from Saskatoon to Quebec City.

People across the province will see construction and repair crews working on their roads and 208 Saskatchewan Hansard March 19, 1998 highways in their communities.

Mr. Speaker, these efforts do not lessen the federal government’s responsibility to work with the provinces towards a national transportation strategy. This is especially crucial to major projects like twinning the Trans-Canada Highway, so we will keep the pressure on but we’re also forging ahead. This year, work will start on the sections of Highway 1 connecting Gull Lake to Tompkins, and Indian Head to Wolseley. And twinning will be completed on Highway 12 between Saskatoon and Martensville.

Mr. Speaker, even in the absence of a federal commitment to transportation, this year’s budget provides $219 million — 10 per cent more than last year — to build a safe, reliable, modern highway system for the 21st century.

Mr. Speaker, our growing economy also requires skilled, knowledgeable workers. Last year our Made in Saskatchewan training strategy invested in people through a wide range of programs including apprenticeship, JobStart, and Future Skills. Thousands of graduates of these programs are working in good-paying, full-time jobs in Saskatchewan cities and towns, in rural areas, and in the North.

This year, working with our partners in SIAST, regional colleges, business, and industry, we will support 7,100 people in adult basic education — 4 per cent more than last year. We will train 2,800 apprentices — 10 per cent more than last year. And we will bring 4,600 people into JobStart, Future Skills, Quick Skills, and other programs — 8 per cent more than last year.

And this year, Mr. Speaker, some 23,000 Saskatchewan people will have a chance to participate in training, education, and skill development programs. This means more jobs and good lives, Mr. Speaker, and I am pleased to announce that this budget invests $136 million, 7 per cent more than last year, to prepare more Saskatchewan people, especially youth, for opportunities now and in the future.

Another aspect of preparing our youth for opportunities tomorrow is a strong, world-class system of post-secondary education. Saskatchewan people take pride in their universities. We are committed to helping them provide high academic standards, up-to-date equipment and facilities, and affordable tuition.

Our universities are making solid progress to revitalize and modernize for the new century. For example, a fibre-optic link allows students at one campus to join classes being taught at the other. The universities are sharing supplies, services, and a new library link to reduce duplication, and they are directing the savings to students in the classroom.

Last year, we provided $3 million for these and other joint initiatives. This year we will do so again. Last year we provided $14 million for post-secondary institutions to upgrade buildings, equipment, and laboratories. This year we are increasing capital funding by 66 per cent to $23 million in 1998-99.

This capital investment will address immediate challenges and begin the process of modernizing and upgrading Saskatchewan’s post-secondary institutions. And, Mr. Speaker, today I have the pleasure of announcing even more positive news for post-secondary students and institutions.

In 1998-99, we will increase operating grants for universities and federated colleges to $181 million — $9 million more than last year. We are doing our part to keep tuition down and I am confident this budget will help the universities and colleges do their part as well.

We are also improving Saskatchewan’s student assistance program, already one of the best in Canada. This year we are increasing student aid for 2,200 students with children by raising the assistance limits to reflect today’s costs. We are also joining with the federal government to provide tax relief for interest paid on student loans. Some 29,000 Saskatchewan people will benefit from this change. And beginning August 1 we are refocusing our loan forgiveness program to provide upfront debt relief in the form of bursaries.

Approximately 6,000 students per year will benefit from this change and many will begin their careers with significantly less debt. For example, single students may qualify for bursaries of up to $3,230 each year; those with dependants, up to $6,120.

And we will do so this year, not in the new century, Mr. Speaker.

Overall, this budget will improve the quality and accessibility of post-secondary education and reduce debt for thousands of Saskatchewan students. Mr. Speaker, a solid education starts in our elementary and high schools. Teachers, school boards, parents, and students are working together to ensure the best education possible.

Saskatchewan people know that the best investment we can make in our future is in education for our children. Our task is to equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed and prosper. That is why we will continue to build excellence and opportunity into our kindergarten to grade 12 education system. And that is why I am pleased to announce this budget invests $21 million more this year in foundation operating grants to schools, bringing our total 1998-99 investment to $384 million.

And, Mr. Speaker, students everywhere need a safe and healthy learning environment. Last year, we invested $17 million to upgrade, renovate and build schools across the province. Today’s budget increases our investment in school capital by 43 per cent to $24 million in 1998-99.

This year we will upgrade or renovate more than 100 schools in communities across the province including Central Butte, Estevan, Lloydminster, North Battleford, Biggar, and Yorkton. This budget makes a major investment in our children and our future and we will do even more as our financial situation continues to improve.

By investing in our young people, we will build the skills and academic excellence they need to fulfil their potential for satisfying and prosperous lives here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people depend on this province’s solid education and health systems; on compassionate, progressive social programs; and safe, vibrant communities.

These are the cornerstones of our quality of life. Saskatchewan people want their local governments and the province to work together to provide services that are affordable and dependable.

Last fall we promised to review the issue of paying grants in lieu of property taxes. We said we would start to phase in these grants as our fiscal situation improved. I am pleased to announce today that in 1998-99 we will pay $3.1 million to municipalities, school boards, and libraries. This investment will increase to $12.5 million a year as we work with our partners to fully phase in the grants in lieu over four years.

This budget also adds $3 million to the rural revenue sharing program, an increase of 14 per cent to help rural communities build and maintain their roads.

Mr. Speaker, many communities asked us to change the way RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) policing costs are paid. I am pleased to announce that a new cost-sharing formula will be introduced January 1, 1999. This new formula will reduce policing costs for almost 100 municipalities.

At the same time, we will contribute $1 million in this fiscal year and $4 million the following year to cover the added expense for hundreds of other communities and rural municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, volunteer fire-fighters across Saskatchewan work hard to keep their villages, towns, and rural areas safe. This budget will support their efforts and help all communities contain their costs by removing the provincial sales tax from the purchase of fire trucks and attached equipment.

Strong, vibrant communities are the foundation of a strong province and we will continue to work with our partners at the local level to strengthen Saskatchewan communities for the 21st century.

We’re also working to make our communities safer. The best way to ensure safe communities is to give our children and families the best possible health care, education, social services, and job opportunities. The evidence is right here in Saskatchewan in our ambitious, enthusiastic, and community-minded young people.

All of us agree however, that those very few who do not respect the law must be held accountable for their actions. That is why this budget provides more resources to track and deal with repeat young offenders; expand secure custody facilities for youth who commit serious crimes; enhance screening and reintegration methods for offenders prior to release; and improve supervision of those serving their sentences in the community.

We’re also making our communities safer by bringing 911 emergency telephone service to every home, business, and farm in the province.

In 1995 we introduced the first legislation in Canada focused on meeting the needs of victims of family abuse. This unique legislation protects victims by allowing them exclusive rights to their homes. This budget provides further protection by giving police faster access to information in cases of family abuse.

In addition, we’re promoting a safe and healthy workplace with more investment in training, inspections, and enforcement of workplace safety standards.

Mr. Speaker, our Saskatchewan values dictate that we should do all we can to foster safe, healthy communities and families.

These values of cooperation, compassion and common sense guided the creation of medicare, Saskatchewan’s gift to Canada. In 1991 we began working with Saskatchewan people to build a modern, secure health system to carry medicare forward into the next century.

Today we provide a wider range of services to Saskatchewan people than ever before, including province-wide screening for breast cancer, nutritional supplements, education and counselling for expectant mothers, treatment for people with eating disorders, new health and safety programs for farm families; in-home renal dialysis for over 100 Saskatchewan residents; and specialized teams to support and transport children needing specialty services to any location in Saskatchewan.

Our emphasis on wellness and prevention has brought many other new services to people, including fitness programs, injury prevention clinics, and teen wellness centres. Health districts continue to introduce programs to meet local needs. For example, services for people with acquired brain injuries are offered in 14 communities.

More than ever we are focusing on the needs of seniors. Over the past six years we doubled our investment in home care. And Saskatchewan continues to provide one of the best home care programs in Canada. Services like nursing care and intravenous therapy, once available only in hospitals, can now be delivered in people’s homes.

Compared with 1991, we’re now doing 80 per cent more cataract operations a year. We’re doing 30 per cent more hip and knee replacements, and twice as many angioplasty procedures.

Dedicated teams of nurses, physicians, and other professionals work hard to provide all Saskatchewan people with the best health care available.

The federal government is telling these dedicated workers, and telling all of us, that it has no more money for medicare. There was not one extra dollar for health care in the federal budget. It simply does not make the federal government’s priority list.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that is not good enough. Continued neglect by the federal government threatens our national health system. Saskatchewan, the home of medicare, will continue to advance the cause of medicare to ensure its future for all Canadians.

Our commitment to medicare is stronger today than ever. And I’m pleased to announce that our budget today invests $1.7 billion in our health system — the largest investment in health in Saskatchewan’s history.

That is over one-third of our entire budget and $88 million higher than last year.

This significant investment will strengthen the health system and bring more services to Saskatchewan people.

In rural areas, health districts can recruit and retain more physicians. Physicians can provide better emergency coverage. People will receive improved emergency services with more and better-trained first responders and paramedics, and the expansion of renal dialysis sites will continue with two new sites this year.

Saskatchewan people will also see upgraded, modern, base hospitals in Saskatoon and Regina with a full range of quality services for all Saskatchewan residents; increased specialist services such as kidney and cancer treatments, and CT (computerized axial tomography) scanning and a new MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) operating in Regina to improve access to this service in southern Saskatchewan.

Across the province people will see new or upgraded health facilities, expanded immunization programs, and advanced clinical nurses bringing more health services to

more communities. And, Mr. Speaker, new technologies are the wave of the future.

We’re starting now to lay the groundwork for our new

Saskatchewan Health Information Network. This new system will allow physicians and other health professionals to share vital health information instantly. It will give people faster access to important information and test results, and reduce duplication of medical tests. And it will give health professionals advance warning of potential drug interactions to ensure the safety of Saskatchewan people.

We’re also using new technologies to provide video links between specialists in larger cities and health professionals in smaller communities. The telehealth pilot project will bring advanced medical skills and services into several northern communities.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people today have access to a broader range of fully insured health services than ever before, and we will continue to work with health districts and health professionals to build a secure, publicly funded, modern health system for our children and grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, the values that led to medicare also underlie our other social programs. Saskatchewan people continue to lead the way with new solutions to child and family poverty. Saskatchewan’s action plan for children, launched in 1994, showed the world there is a better way of doing things. This award-winning plan brought together government and community resources to give children the support they need to grow and succeed.

School- and community-based programs now serve hot meals and snacks to thousands of children to improve health and learning, and they provide extra resources for children with special needs.

This year even more children will receive extra help learning to read and write. Some 25,000 children will receive needed school supplies. More parents will get support in caring for disabled children at home. And more families will benefit from affordable housing initiatives across the province.

I’m pleased to announce that for 1998-99 we are doubling our investment in Saskatchewan’s action plan for children.

We will invest over $53 million, and this significant new investment heralds a bold, innovative approach to meeting the needs of children. It builds on efforts, led by Saskatchewan, at the national level.

We urged the federal government to work with the provinces to introduce a national plan to combat child poverty. When the National Child Benefit is implemented this July, it will be Canada’s first new social program in 30 years.

It will bring the federal and provincial governments together to focus directly on improving the lives of millions of Canadian children.

But in Saskatchewan we are going even further by providing a bridge to opportunity and independence for families on welfare.

Mr. Speaker, existing social assistance plans have too many barriers to people who want to work and get ahead. When parents on welfare want to get a job, they are faced with a real dilemma. When they start to work they encounter day care costs and other work-related expenses. They lose health benefits for their children and often find their family worse off than before. The result is too many families trapped in a cycle of assistance and dependence.

This budget invests in three new initiatives to help families get off and stay off welfare. First, a new Saskatchewan Child Benefit for some 80,000 Saskatchewan children will extend support to low income families and encourage future independence by removing children from the welfare rolls entirely.

Second, a Saskatchewan employment supplement — unique to our province — will provide low income, working families with the extra support they need to stay in the workplace.

It will make sure families are better off working than they would be on welfare. And third, family health benefits for children in low income, working families will ensure the health needs of Saskatchewan children can be met.

These bold new initiatives target assistance to children and low income, working families. They begin to break the cycle of dependence and build bridges to jobs and independence.

Mr. Speaker, this budget puts people first, with significant investment in jobs, education and training, highways, health, families and communities. These major investments reflect our growing financial freedom. They are possible because of responsible, sound financial management.

Recent events in Asia, uncertain resource prices and changing weather patterns, underscore the importance of continued careful management. We are committed to this course. That includes containing administrative costs so we can invest in more services for Saskatchewan people.

We are also committed to maintaining a balanced approach towards enhancing services, reducing taxes, and paying down debt.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people know that the “buy now pay later” philosophy does not work. We are determined to keep paying down the mortgage on our children’s future.

When we took office in 1991, we inherited a provincial debt of over $14 billion — an amount equal to nearly 70 per cent of Saskatchewan’s gross domestic product or GDP. Today the debt is down to 45 per cent.

By the year 2002, the provincial debt as a percentage of GDP will be reduced to less than 35 per cent — half of what it was in 1991 — giving us greater security and confidence as we head into a new century.

In 1997-98, we paid over $700 million toward reducing the debt. In 1998-99, this upcoming year, we will reduce the debt by almost $500 million more. Mr. Speaker, that’s $1.2 billion gone from the debt in just two years.

And the net proceeds from the recent sale of our interest in the Bi-Provincial upgrader will be used exclusively to pay down debt and reduce interest costs for Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, just five years ago, nearly 19 cents out of every dollar collected in revenue went to pay interest on the public debt. This year we will pay 14 cents on the dollar. By the year 2002, we’ll pay about 12 cents. That means more money to invest in people for jobs, education, health, highways, and lower taxes.

And most important, it provides financial freedom our children will need to prosper in the new century.

Mr. Speaker, on the road to turning the province’s finances around, we promised to reduce taxes for Saskatchewan families on an affordable, sustainable basis. We balanced the budget in 1994-95 and we have reduced taxes in every budget since. That includes a $55 million-a-year income tax reduction introduced in 1995. It was fully implemented in 1996, taking 6,000 lower income people off the tax rolls and benefiting all Saskatchewan taxpayers.

Last year we cut the provincial sales tax from 9 per cent to 7 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, these tax cuts are here to stay.

We should also remember that our sales tax base is the narrowest of any sales tax base in Canada. Saskatchewan families pay no sales tax on electricity, home heating fuel, children’s clothes, books, restaurant meals, prescription drugs, and many other goods and services. We have no provincial payroll taxes and we pay no health premiums.

This budget continues to lower taxes for Saskatchewan families. It introduces another responsible, sustainable tax cut. I am pleased to announce that effective July 1, 1998, Saskatchewan’s personal income tax rate will be reduced from 50 per cent to 48 per cent of basic federal tax.

In 1998-99 this will put over $28 million back into the household accounts of families across the province. In 1999-2000, this tax cut will return $45 million a year to Saskatchewan people.

In addition, provincial income taxes will be reduced by nearly $13 million a year as part of our contribution to recent federal tax changes.

In total, income taxes for Saskatchewan families will be reduced by $58 million a year.

Combined with the tax cuts introduced since 1995, this means families earning $50,000 a year will be better off by about $600 a year. Families earning $20,000 a year and receiving the Saskatchewan Child Benefit and the Saskatchewan employment supplement will be better off by over $1,500 a year.

Mr. Speaker, we promised Saskatchewan people lower taxes and fairer taxes. We promised credible, responsible tax cuts that would not lead us back to deficits and debt. We promised tax reductions that would be here to stay.

That is what we said we would do; that is what we have done; and that is what we will continue to do.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people can feel very proud of their accomplishments in the 1990s. Together we turned the province’s misfortunes around with sound financial management and a commitment to economic growth and jobs.

Together we secured the important services that enhance our quality of life. These efforts establish the momentum towards the future of prosperity and promise.

Today’s budget builds on that momentum with significant investments in the priorities of Saskatchewan people — in jobs and the economy; in training and education; in highways, health, communities, and families. It keeps us on the path to financial freedom by paying down debt and lowering taxes for Saskatchewan people.

The history and tradition of our province is one of people pulling together in difficult circumstances and turning obstacles into opportunities. At the beginning of this century people joined together and created a province whose motto became: “from many peoples, strength.”

The same spirit of hope and determination which prevailed then allows us to approach the new century with confidence. That is what this budget is about; that is what Saskatchewan is about; that is what our future is about.