

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

April 17, 1985

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. RYBCHUK: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly, 13 grade 12 students accompanied by their teacher, Vaughn McIntyre, from Miller High. Miller High is a school that my children attend and still are attending, and I dare say it's one of the best high schools in the city of Regina. I want to welcome them here this afternoon. I hope their stay is educational and entertaining, and I look forward to meeting them after question period. Thank you.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you. I just want to join with my colleague from Regina Victoria in welcoming these students from Miller High School. Miller High is immediately across the street, adjacent to Regina Centre, and a goodly number of those students in fact live in Regina Centre. Miller High is a proud high school with a great tradition. I'm sure the students are proud to be associated with it, as am I.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SWAN: — It's my privilege today to introduce to you a guest from Ottawa. We have in the Speaker's gallery Bill Bussiere, who comes to us from Ottawa, and he has worked for many years very closely with the organization of the prayer breakfast for members across Canada and, at times, in the United States. I know that he's been in our province a number of times, and was here this morning in connection with the Saskatchewan prayer breakfast. Bill Bussiere, would you stand and be recognized.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Gas Safety Inspections

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Labour and concerns the tragic death of Polly Redhot last spring.

The Ombudsman's report, Mr. Minister, reports that the gas safety unit of your department completed only 5,000 reinspections of residential and high occupancy buildings last year. That's down from 10,000 the year before — 5,000 down from 10,000. I should add for the benefit of the minister, who rarely knows what's going on in his department, that reinspections are where the gas inspectors check on the proper maintenance and servicing of existing gas equipment or installations. The work is crucial to public safety, because, as a report from your own department shows, in nearly half of all reinspections hazardous conditions are spotted and corrected. Given the high degree of risk attendant upon your department's change in policy and failure to inspect them, it's not surprising that a death occurred. It's just a miracle there hasn't been more tragedies. Since the gas safety unit's reinspection work is obviously important to public safety, why were the number of reinspections cut in half last year?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated the other day to the member, the tragic death of Polly Redhot, which we confirmed was a partial responsibility as far as the Department

of Labour was concerned, was strictly a procedural breakdown. The lack of inspectors that I'm hearing about from the members opposite was not the primary cause of this particular tragedy. There was inspectors in the office at the time that the reject or defect document was received, and if the procedural breakdown hadn't occurred, it would be 100 per cent assured that that particular furnace would have been inspected.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well, I would ask the minister for a comment on the obvious statement in the Ombudsman's report, that the risk of a procedural breakdown of the sort referred to above in his report is a great deal higher where one has a reduction in the number of staff available to do the work. Would the minister mind commenting on the obvious, that the risk of a procedural breakdown was greatly enhanced when your department was so badly understaffed?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, no. I don't agree with the member opposite whatsoever. The particular instance, the inspectors were there. If they had got the defect report, then that particular case would have been looked after.

On our policy changes, you suggest, the fact of the matter is that we were wanting to concentrate on the higher priority of the higher-risk priority items, and that's what we have been intending to do, and had been doing. The fact that . . . If you look at 1981, for example, and I look at the number of inspectors that your administration had in the safety services division. There was 102 person-years there. In 1985 we have 109.5. We have never been down to the 102 that you had under your administration. So don't tell me that we are lacking inspectors in our department.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister let me remind you, since it seems to be so painfully necessary, that the gas safety unit's job is to protect the public from loss of life and property by ensuring that gas fittings, appliances, and equipment throughout Saskatchewan are installed and operated in a safe manner. That is your responsibility, morally and legally, which you seem to want to shirk.

How can you claim, Mr. Minister, that you are protecting the public as well as ever when, in fact, you've cut the reinspection work of your gas safety unit in half? Mr. Minister, would you deal with the facts rather than your own fancy?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, our department is responsible for inspections for five different areas. We do the inspections for the electrical. We do the inspections for gas. We do the inspections for boiler and pressure vessels. We do the inspections for the elevators.

And we have to look at the total inspection area of our total province, and with the resources that we have, to maximize the inspection work that we have to do around the province, and also to maximize the public safety of the people of Saskatchewan.

And you can't tell me that my staff in the Department of Labour are not aware of the responsibilities that they are required to do. There are many areas that we have to look at, and it's not only the gas safety division. We have all the other areas as well.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Implicit within the minister's last question is a suggestion that it is the public's responsibility to protect themselves. I say to you, Mr. Minister that just doesn't wash.

As the Ombudsman pointed out, for decades the Department of Labour has offered Saskatchewan full protection by inspecting all natural gas and propane installations and replacements. Reinspection work has been an important part of that job, and you've cut that protection in half and never said a word to the public.

I want to quote to the minister, who does not seem to have read the report, what the

Ombudsman said about that. He said:

Surely the public has a right to know that the rules of the game have been changed. The public is also entitled to be informed in advance of changes that may affect personal safety.

The question, Mr. Minister, is: why did it take the Ombudsman to let the public know that your department had cut back on this important safety work? Why did you hide that fact from the public and from the Assembly last year during the extensive questioning of this issue?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we don't agree that there was a change in policy. There may have been a shift in policy. As I stated earlier, we wanted to concentrate 100 per cent on the high-risk areas, the areas that could cause the greater problems out there and that's what we were doing. We still have the number of . . . to try and reach, which is 100 per cent of our inspections. And I'd like to remind the member opposite to have a look at their backlog in gas safety back in 1981, with 102. There was 19,300 inspections that you were behind. In 1984, we have reduced that to 15,000. We've come down 4,300 inspections in the last three years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SHILLINGTON: — New question, Mr. Minister, last year in the Assembly, you were questioned about this, and you denied there had been any change in policy from the former administration, thereby misinforming the Assembly. There was clearly a deliberate policy change. There has been a departmental memo, a memo from the Department of Finance outlining for the benefit of the Department of Labour what was to be a new policy, that of targeting or spot checking. The Ombudsman's report also points out that the inspection staff in the gas safety unit dropped from 22 to 14 last year. The question, Mr. Minister is: why did you adopt a deliberate policy change which puts people's lives at risk?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, we have done an internal study of our own department. We determined in the death of Polly Redhot that there was a procedural breakdown. There was recommendations from our staff within the department. We didn't renege on our responsibility. We admitted to it. We didn't try to hide anything, and we also made some recommendations which we have followed, and put into place.

We have also got the Ombudsman's report, and we've got no quarrel with the Ombudsman on the recommendations that he has made and, in fact, have implemented a number of those recommendations.

We have also put a moratorium or a freeze on any further changes and, in fact, the gas inspector, the chief gas inspector, has said that the policy of the department will be to do 100 per cent of all the gas inspections in the province. So in our mind, we have met the Ombudsman's request and recommendations, and are carrying out the public safety requirements that the people of Saskatchewan want.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the Minister of Labour. I remind him that the Ombudsman said:

Surely the public has a right to know that the rules of the games have been changed. The public is also entitled to be informed in advance of changes that may affect personal safety.

I hope, therefore, you're not denying that there has been a change of policy. I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, and you have concede that you are targeting, that you are dealing with the high risk, as you would say. I ask you this question. What percentage of residential permits are being inspected under your policy? What percentage? And I want to know why you failed to tell the

people of Saskatchewan that a goodly number of residential permits were not being inspected.

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to remind the Hon. Leader of the Opposition that I would suspect that out of 19,300 inspections that were on the backlog list when you were in office, has never got inspected either.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The minister clearly doesn't want to address the issue. I ask you again, Mr. Minister: what percentage of residential permits are you not now inspecting? What is the nature of your new policy which leaves hundreds of permits uninspected?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, immediately following the Ombudsman's report, I advised the member from Regina Centre that a statement had gone out from our chief gas inspector that the goal of the department will be to inspect 100 per cent of all gas inspections.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Minister, supplementary. Are you saying that the policy reported by the Ombudsman, of targeting, which he found documentary evidence for, has now been abandoned and that you have adopted a new policy? And if so, would you state the new policy to the House?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, I advised the members also the last day that we are doing a study of the technical safety division by an outside consultant. We are expecting that report momentarily. We'll be taking the Ombudsman's report, and when that particular review is completed we will be coming with whatever new policy, if any, as far as our department is concerned.

But, in the meantime, our policy will be to endeavour to cover 100 per cent of all the gas inspections.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Minister. The Ombudsman makes clear that a contractor whose work was so defective that as much as 24 per cent of his work would be proven defective, would still, under the policy found by the Ombudsman to be in place, would still only be inspected as to 10 per cent of his installations. Do you agree with the Ombudsman's statement of your policy at that time, and will you tell me whether that policy is still in effect?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, I've advised the members opposite that we have put a moratorium on the policies until such time as we get our study completed, and also to have the opportunity of our new staff that I have in place to look at the whole policy of the technical safety division.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. I have no doubt that the minister has a moratorium on policy, since he has none. Would you then confirm that the policy which was in existence at the time you put the moratorium on is still there, and that the policy which you have (which the Ombudsman found, based upon the documents) was that contractors who have found 20 per cent of their work to be defective, are still only inspected as to 10 per cent of their installations? Will you concede that and will you say that that's still the policy?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, we will be inspecting 100 per cent of the high-risk areas, which to me makes good sense, and not tie up the residential inspections into the old global thing of the backlog. We want to do the high risk immediately with our resources that we have available. We'll work down and get the residential done, the same as it's happened in the past.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The Ombudsman found that in cases where contractors had as much as 20 per cent of their work shown to be defective, only 10 per cent of their installations would be inspected. My question is: is that high risk, and have you now changed the policy with respect to that or do you still claim that's a low-risk contractor?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, we will be inspecting the high-risk areas first, which will be the big commercials, the high schools, and so on. Then we'll be doing the medium. If the public phone us and want an inspection, we will look after that immediately. We don't have the inspectors around, and you never had the inspectors around, to catch upon on the 19,000 backlog that you had. We have got it down to 15,000 and we will continue to keep working to bring down that backlog. And we are doing it. We have seven and a half more people on staff than you had, and the job is getting done, and we will get it, 100 per cent of the inspections looked after.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister concede that he's just told the House that commercial risks are conceded to be the high risks, and that Polly Redhot died in a residence?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, the Polly Redhot tragedy, I told the opposition, happened because of a procedural breakdown, and if that breakdown hadn't occurred . . . And that procedure has been in place for the last eight years, and our study indicated that it was just a matter of time that something would happen, and it has happened. But it wasn't done due to the lack of inspectors. It was a procedural breakdown. There were inspectors in the office at the time that the report came in, and if that report had got to the inspector it would have been looked after.

It's not our responsibility to go and inspect these furnaces and that on an annual basis. It was done in 1977. When there's something new added to a house or a residence, that's when you do your inspections. If the defect report had got to the inspector, that would have been done the very day that it came in.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, it's obvious that the cut-back from 22 inspectors to 14 in the Ombudsman report that he refers to has something to do with the number of inspections that are being done.

What I'd like to ask you is: coming out of the report the Ombudsman says, I cannot believe that there is not a considerably greater risk to the public in this proposal, the one that you have introduced, than that which existed previously.

Now you stand here and try to make us believe that the Ombudsman is wrong. What I am asking you is whether you will consider rehiring the people who have been laid off so that the backlog can be done up and revert to the original policy.

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, who said anybody had been laid off? We just have an early retirement program, and people retired.

And right now we have already rehired two people in the fire safety, which is another one of our priorities. We have gas inspectors that we are getting into place. I need a boiler inspector, and that has already been advertised. We are looking at . . . We'll have the 109 people in place in our safety services.

You're making it sound like this has been happening for years, when in a few months we had some people retire. And we're in the process of filling those positions, and we already have started filling some of that. Check page 62 in the blue book — you'll see where we've got 109.5 positions, and that's what we had last year.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask the minister if he could outline for us, based on the document dated April 10th from the Public Service Commission to the people representing the government employees. This document outlines that six technical safety inspection positions — one in Prince Albert, three in Saskatoon, two in Regina — have been abolished as a result of the

budget. What do you say to that?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, all you have to do is look at the blue book. We've done away with six vacant positions. In its place we have added six new positions which will give us the flexibility of filling in where we want to all over the province of Saskatchewan, not just in Regina — but to do with electrical, to do with boiler, to do with elevators and so on. We need that flexibility to look after the priorities of our policy, which will be done when we get our study done.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I have here the document which is entitled, "Positions abolished '85-86, SGEU," which lists in the Department of Labour, Prince Albert — vacant, position number 14 0 225, technical safety inspector 1. Mr. Minister, it goes on to list out the six employees that I mentioned. What are you saying? That this document that has been sent out is inaccurate? Or are you wrong?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, we admit that there were six vacant positions abolished. But in its place we have added six more positions that we will . . . (inaudible) . . . in technical services division. Look at page 62. We'll decide when we look at the priorities that we need for our safety inspections in the province. We've already filled two of them. We're looking at the boiler now. We've got one inspector for Regina that we'll be advertising for. We're needing an inspector in Saskatoon. We're needing one, I believe it is, in Prince Albert. And we will be looking at all around the province, not just Regina. And we're bringing down the inspections in the province — 4,300 of them have been caught up on in the backlog.

Confiscation of Appeals

MR. SVEINSON: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier of Saskatchewan. Last fall the Attorney General and the Leader of the Opposition did a hatchet job on a Saskatchewan citizen, E. Robert Lee, in this Legislature.

Mr. Lee did the only thing he could do. He went to government members of the legislature with an information package on June 13th, 1984. The package consisted of an appeal letter, a federal cabinet report on the lack of independence of the judiciary and provincial administrations, and a binder containing much evidence and material to prove his own position. I could read that letter into the record, Mr. Speaker. If you'd like, I'll table it, to save some time for the House.

On June 26th the office of the Attorney General confiscated the material Mr. Lee sent to the MLAs on your side of the legislature. A letter from Mr. Len Exner, assistant to the Attorney General, demanded that the material be returned to his office.

On July 26th, the Attorney General himself gathered the courage to personally send a memo to all government MLAs instructing them to forward any further material, any further material from Mr. Lee to his office.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is: is this the policy of your administration, Mr. Premier, to confiscate the appeals of citizens to your own MLAs?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I believe the Attorney General is more familiar with this particular case and the details of it than I am, and I will ask him to respond to it.

HON. MR. LANE: — Mr. Speaker, if I may, I will bring the hon. member up to the debate that we went through last year — and I'm sorry he happened to miss it — when the matter was fully discussed. Mr. Speaker, he . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. When the member asks a question, give him an opportunity for an answer.

HON. MR. LANE: — As we went through . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. I have just asked the member to give an opportunity for an answer, and he's blurring out again. If you don't want an answer, we'll move on to the next item.

HON. MR. LANE: — Mr. Speaker, as I advised the Assembly and the opposition a year ago, the situation arose; the individual lost the court case. He had been offered a settlement, I understand, some years back, by the government in an action. He had turned it down. He subsequently went to court — he lost. Subsequently, went to the court of appeal —he lost.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there were allegations made against the judiciary, against previous attorney general, rather serious allegations made by the individual. And as I indicated and as we debated, I asked Mr. Justice Culliton to take a look at the matter again. Mr. Justice Culliton did so, and reported that the matter had been dealt with properly and fairly. The individual has had every single opportunity.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I just repeat that the individual lost his cases in court and seems not to accept that decision.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. Order, please.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms

HON. MR. LANE: — Mr. Speaker, if I may, and I beg the indulgence of the House, there are really two significant events today that I would like to acknowledge. And I will indicate that, one, I will be giving first reading of a particular Bill. But I will acknowledge the event rather than any debate on the Bill if that's . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . They will be distributed at first reading.

Today, Mr. Speaker, April 17th, is the date that section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms becomes the law of Canada. The subject of civil liberties and the protection of our rights has become a central issue in our society, and this was reflected in the public interest that has followed the proclamation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Today we mark the third anniversary of the signing of the charter. But, more importantly, we witness the implementation of section 15, the so-called equality section of the charter.

Mr. Speaker, there are apprehensions about what the charter equality rights mean. If we look south of the border, we have seen an American bill of rights being invoked to support causes that are too silly: for example, the right of the animals in the Los Angeles zoo to have their freedom, as an example of where people will take laws to an extreme on matters too serious to command the attention of the courts.

The point to be made about our charter of rights in section 15 is that section 15 has the potential to revolutionize our political and legal systems. Social and economic issues will now become legal issues as people begin to test the limits of the charter's powers.

The charter has already begun to change our laws. Last fall I released a discussion paper on compliance of Saskatchewan laws with the charter after a thorough review by my department. The department will also be reviewing the thousands of regulations which accompany those laws, once the regulations have been computerized.

Saskatchewan, as a province, has been a leader in preparing for the implementation of equality rights, and the results of this initiative will be introduced in the legislature this afternoon when I

will give first reading of an omnibus Bill requesting changes to legislation to bring Saskatchewan laws in line with section 15 of the charter.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very brief overview of the process involved in preparing for section 15. Undoubtedly this is an historic day for human rights in Canada, and all Canadians have begun a long journey into a new definition of rights, a new recognition of rights, and perhaps even a reinterpretation of rights previously held.

Those rights will be defined by our courts and those rights will be subject to definition from time to time. Mr. Speaker, as I say, today we begin an historic journey, one which will affect the rights of all Canadians.

Observation of Law Day

HON. MR. LANE: — Mr. Speaker, the second event that I would like to acknowledge is a further recognition that three years ago today the Constitution Act was proclaimed into law. That event led to the first ever observance of Law Day in Canada, due to the initiative of the Canadian Bar Association.

Today, in addition to being the third anniversary, is an opportunity to again recognize Law Day. In a very real sense a new era in history of the law in Canada begins today, as the equality provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms comes into force. Law Day is designed to increase the public's basic knowledge of our laws and the operation of our legal system. Our new constitution and the charter have increased public awareness of individual rights.

In a very complex society such as ours, the law is woven into the very fabric of our lives, and I expect this will continue as the people refer to the charter to define the limits of their rights in society. The next few years promise to be interesting ones as the courts fill in the outline created by the charter and the constitution.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, for many the law is something which intimidates them. They have a vague idea of the law as something that they can get into trouble with, if they are not careful. Making the law understandable to people represents one of the most urgent challenges in the legal profession today. The demystification of the law must be a priority for the future.

By observing Law Day, I hope the Saskatchewan public will become aware of its rights and duties through a greater understanding of the law, which protects individual freedoms and makes possible a free society.

Of course, public legal education is not the total solution for all of our problems in our legal system. But if Law Day helps to bring law back to the people, it is an important step.

I wish to take this opportunity to commend the Canadian Bar Association for initiating Law Day. Credit is also due to the Public Legal Education Association of Saskatchewan for the many ways in which it broadens public knowledge of the law throughout our province. Much good work has already been done in the area of public legal education in our province.

Through the observance of Law Day and many other events throughout the year, I believe the public, the legal profession, and those of us who make the law, will be able to meet the challenges of the future.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to reply to the two ministerial statements, or the ministerial statement dealing with two issues, made by the Minister of Justice.

With respect to the first item dealing with the coming into force of section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, this is indeed an historic day. And we are today seeing in our constitution, and becoming effective, a code outlawing discrimination on all grounds, including some enumerated grounds, which include sex and race and religion, and the familiar grounds.

It will be up to us in this province and in this legislature to see that our laws are consistent with section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. And I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that much work needs to be done to see that our laws do conform with section 15. Many major issues need to be addressed: whether or not pension legislation, for example, which provides a differing pension for men than women, is discrimination; whether or not compulsory retirement at age 65 (or any other age) is discrimination. These are two obvious issues which will need to be addressed. And, Mr. Speaker, there are many others.

So in the years ahead, these will be addressed either by us in the legislature, or by us requiring citizens to go through the long and expensive route of testing those issues in the courts.

But I want to make one further point, Mr. Speaker. It has been our experience in Saskatchewan, and I'm sure the same experience in other provinces, that merely enacting laws does not do much to widen civil rights, to extend them. Because where a citizen can rely only upon the law and his right to go to court, all the way to the Supreme Court, to enforce that right, that right is remote, perhaps one might say hollow. As I think it was Dean Frank Scott, the late dean of law at McGill University, said, all citizens are equal; they all have the right to pay the expenses necessary to take their case to the Supreme Court of Canada. And I think that we know from our experience in this province that unless a mechanism is provided to assist the citizen, the legal rights are, as I suggested, remote and hollow.

And accordingly a decade or more ago, we put in place a human rights commission and then consolidated the law into a human rights code. and there has been a great deal of activity to allow citizens to enforce their human rights, their civil rights. And this has carried on under the previous government and under this government. And I think this is effective, effective opportunity, an effective exercise of the citizen's right to have this human and civil rights protected. And therefore I would invite the government to consider widening the ambit of the human rights code to make it stand on all fours, to make it the same as the section 15 in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This will mean that any right which a citizen has under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms will be such that he can go to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission and ask the commission to assist him.

Our current situation is that some of the rights covered by section 15 are also covered by our human rights code, and the commission can deal directly with them. Some of the rights covered by section 15 effective today, are not covered by our human rights code, and the citizen may be forced to wend his way to the Supreme Court of Canada. So I invite the government to look at that.

Turning now to the question of Law Day and the importance of having citizens be aware of how much they owe to the system of law which we have in Canada, I agree heartily with the comments of the Minister of Justice and say that our obligation to this legislature is not only to demystify the law, but also to make the law available to all citizens to allow them to carry on through the courts and enforce their rights, and to have the wherewithal so to do. And this, Mr. Speaker, will involve us making available to citizens, through the legal aid commission or otherwise, the wherewithal to enforce their legal rights.

We will not demystify the law, we will not get respect for the law in the minds of the citizen without very much wealth if he sees that only the wealthy have the effective right to protect their human rights or the effective right to pursue their remedies in court. Accordingly, to the extent that we wish to have citizens respect our law and acknowledge that their rights and their well-being is defended by that body of law, we must make the processes and remedies of that

law available to them. And I invite the government to turn their attention to that major question of public policy which we will face over the next decade and longer.

Building and Accessibility Standards Act

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to announce a schedule for proclaiming The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act, for implementing building and accessibility standards.

Today the equality rights section, section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms comes into effect. One intent of this section is to reduce discrimination and help minority groups participate freely and fully in the mainstream of Canadian life.

One minority that has been a particular concern of mine is that portion of the population that is affected by one or more physical disabilities. Their ability to participate in general activities has been primarily restricted by lack of accessibility to and within buildings. Not only is the disabled person involved, but also their family and friends are affected by this limited mobility.

Some building owners have already accepted the responsibility of providing access to their buildings and to the inclusion of other facilities for use by the disabled, and I commend them for that.

Many of the items also make the buildings more accessible and convenient to the elderly and to persons with temporary disabilities arising from accidents and other injuries. However, there are still too few buildings accessible to the physically disabled.

(1445)

The 1985 edition of the *National Building Code of Canada* has just been published. It includes extensive revisions to the 1980 edition that specifically addressed the needs of physically disabled persons. Provisions include clear statements on accessibility to buildings and to spaces within buildings for wheelchair users, together with measures to ensure accessibility to and the use of washrooms.

The need of persons with visual or hearing impairments are being blended into the body of the code in acknowledgement of the fact that these persons are not restricted from entering buildings with steps as are wheelchair users, and so can be expected to be present in any building.

I intend to use the 1985 *National Building Code of Canada* as the base document for building and accessibility standards in Saskatchewan, and to have standards ready and in place by April 1, 1986. This date has been established in response to requests from owners, designers, and municipal authorities for sufficient lead time to complete projects started under current municipal building by-laws and to initiate project design to the new standards.

Because there are extensive changes in many parts of the 1985 National Building Code, major associations and groups in the construction industry will be invited to review this new addition on behalf of their members and suggest appropriate revisions to harmonize in with the Saskatchewan needs. Last year I presented The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act, and since then a committee representing the physically disabled has worked diligently to develop requirements for accessibility, and recently submitted their recommendations to me. Many items are already included in the 1985 National Building code and those that are not in the code will be blended in.

During the review process, there will be consultation with other provincial departments and agencies to reduce or eliminate requirements that they currently enforce that overlap or parallel similar items in the National Building Code. The intent is to simplify legislation affecting building construction, with the goal of having one set of building and accessibility standards under one Act. This will assure a building owner or designer that all building safety and accessibility requirements have been met, without the frustration and inefficient use of the time spent in searching through a multiplicity of regulations for their potential impact on a building design.

Application sections of The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act will be proclaimed on June 1, 1985. The other sections that are concerned with the standards and their enforcement will be proclaimed when the standards are implemented next April.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I'm surprised, Mr. Speaker, that anyone would actually applaud the statement we have just heard. The legislation should have been proclaimed last year. It should have been proclaimed in 1983. This minister is announcing that he is not going to proclaim it for yet one more year. Mr. Speaker, we have just heard a statement from the Attorney General on human rights. I say, Mr. Speaker, that that statement stands in sharp contrast to the record of this government on human rights, which is abysmal. Your record with respect to promoting accessibility of the disabled is abysmal. Your record with respect to promotion of other disadvantaged groups, natives, women, is abysmal. Your record, Mr. Minister, stands in sharp contrast to the words which we just heard. Mr. Minister, there is no reason why the legislation which your party introduced when in opposition, and which we have said we will support, both in government and opposition, should not have been proclaimed two years ago. For this minister to stand up and say that one year hence we will introduce the legislation, is an eloquent testimony to your inaction on the needs of virtually every disadvantaged group, Mr. Minister and you and your government should be ashamed.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 33 — An Act to amend The Wascana Centre Act, (No. 2)

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Wascana Centre Act, (No. 2).

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the Bill referred to the Non-Controversial Bills Committee.

Bill No. 34 — An Act to amend The Municipal Financing Corporations Act

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Municipal Financing Corporation Act.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the Bill referred to the Non-Controversial Bills Committee.

Bill No. 35 — An Act to amend The Agricultural Products Market Development Fund Act

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Agricultural Products Market Development Fund Act.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the Bill referred to the Non-Controversial Bills Committee.

Bill No. 36 — An Act to amend The Public Trustee Act

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the hon. member, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Public Trustee Act.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the Bill referred to the Non-Controversial Bills Committee.

Bill No. 37 — An Act to amend The Notaries Public Act

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the hon. member, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Notaries Public Act.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the Bill referred to the Non-Controversial Bills Committee.

Bill No. 38 — An Act to amend The Commissioners for Oaths Act

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the hon. member, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Commissioners for Oaths Act.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the Bill referred to the Non-Controversial Bills Committee.

Bill No. 39 — An Act to amend The Traffic Safety Court of Saskatchewan Act

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the hon. member, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Traffic Safety Court of Saskatchewan Act.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the Bill referred to the Non-Controversial Bills Committee.

Bill No. 40 — An Act to amend The Department of Supply and Services Act

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the hon. member, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Department of Supply and Services Act.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the Bill referred to the Non-Controversial Bills Committee.

Bill No. 41 — An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments to Certain Acts resulting from the Enactment of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

HON. MR. LANE: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill respecting the Consequential Amendments to Certain Acts resulting from the Enactment of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

MOTIONS

Request for Leave of Absence

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, before Orders of the Day, by leave of the Assembly, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance:

That a leave of absence be granted to Mr. Speaker on and from Wednesday, April 24,

1985 to Monday, the 6th day of May, 1985 to attend on behalf of this Assembly the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association executive committee meeting in Nicosia, Cyprus.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — In the interests of time, I would ask the Assembly to convert to motion for return, order for return, items nos. 691, 693, 697, 699, 701, 702 and 703, 710, 711, 712 and 713.

While I'm on my feet, I will inform the Assembly that several of them were answered late yesterday, and are no longer on the order paper. In addition, no 705 is answered today, and I would move that the following be converted to orders for return (debatable): nos. 700, 706, 707, 708, 709. And that is the bulk of the questions put by members, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: — I'd like to ask for clarification, what your motion was for the first ones. I know which numbers, but what was your request?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I'd be more than pleased to clarify for Mr. Speaker and all hon. members. The request for the first lot of numbers was to convert to order for return (not debatable).

MR. SPEAKER: — The House Leader has moved that 691, 693, 697, 699, 701, 702, 703, 710, 711, 712, 713 be converted to orders for return (not debatable); that questions 700, 706, 707, 708, 709 be converted to order for return (debatable); 705 to be answered today.

I believe the House Leader is trying to confuse me, and was successful. That first group he just ordered, not converted to orders for return, so they're just ordered, and they will be answered.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE (BUDGET DEBATE)

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. Andrew that the Assembly resolve itself into the committee of finance and the amendment thereto moved by Mr. Engel.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to enter into this debate. I believe, at the outset, one of the fundamental questions that needs to be addressed today when looking at the budget that the Minister of Finance for the province of Saskatchewan just brought down is: what makes Saskatchewan people leaders? What makes the people strong? Why do others across this country look on Saskatchewan people for leadership, for direction, and for some fundamental common sense?

(1500)

I believe Saskatchewan is an exciting place. I believe it always has been. I believe it is now, but I particularly believe that in the years ahead Saskatchewan will be the most exciting place in this nation.

I want to read to you, Mr. Speaker, something that a neighbouring newspaper said about the province of Saskatchewan, and about the people of Saskatchewan. I want to quote this because it talks about the strength of the Saskatchewan people which, I believe, is fundamentally evident in the kinds of things that have been going on in the province since 1982, but particularly in the budget hat has just been brought forward in the province of Saskatchewan.

I'm reading, Mr. Speaker, from the Edmonton *Sun* last Monday, talking about Saskatchewan, and the editorial says this:

Saskatchewan has a history of influencing national trends in government, in politics, out of all proportion to its share of this country's population. For whatever reason, good ideas often seem to take root first in the fertile soil of our sister province of Saskatchewan. Take the idea of a flat tax system. It's an idea whose time is fast approaching and has already partially arrived in Saskatchewan as a result of last weekend's budget. The Minister of Finance announced a flat 1 per cent surtax on income over 10,000 and a similar reduction in conventional income tax as the first stage of a move to single flat tax in the provincial income tax system in the province of Saskatchewan.

This article goes on to say:

Others are looking at it. The United States is studying it. Several nations in Europe are looking at it. And Ottawa has said that, somewhere down the road, it too will look at it. But only Saskatchewan has done something about it. The Devine government seems firmly committed to introducing a flat tax system before the end of the decade in the province of Saskatchewan. Despite the knee-jerk reactions of many, and the study by the federal revenue department, it seems specifically designed to prove the idea couldn't work. It was and is a good idea.

The article goes on to say, Mr. Speaker,

Although many fear to say so because of predictable criticism from those who favour the status quo, it's an idea that is taken seriously with the Mulroney government. But ideas go nowhere unless somebody has the guts to give them a try, and try they have in the province of Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan is going to give it a try and it's a bold and sensible experiment, sensible because our current tax system has become a multiheaded monster that giveth and taketh away, with little attention to simplicity, equity, or common sense. It's fundamental to democracy that citizens understand how and what and why they contribute to the running of the state. Very few people understand today any of those things about our present complicated tax system. No doubt it's going to cost taxpayers something in the short run. Doesn't it always? (It says.) But bravo to Saskatchewan for getting the ball rolling. Let's hope it's the first step on the road out of Canada's tax jungle.

Mr. Speaker, other provinces and other people across the country, and I will quote some later, are saying there's something about the tradition of Saskatchewan that makes it: one, very strong; and two, take a leadership role. And I believe it's important today that we recognize some of those characteristics.

Saskatchewan people have never been afraid of change. They've had the courage to change. They haven't been afraid of challenges; they haven't been afraid of new horizons. That's why, in fact, our grandparents came to this region. That's why Saskatchewan people have achieved so much over the decades despite adversity. Give Saskatchewan people an opportunity, they say, and give Saskatchewan people the tools, and you can count on Saskatchewan people getting the job done.

Saskatchewan people have never, ever given anyone any reason to doubt that assessment, and I believe they never will. The new budget, Mr. Speaker, initiates many things that Saskatchewan people believe have been long overdue. They provide both tools and opportunity to take advantage of one thing they hold precious — that is the future.

Today, as never before, Saskatchewan does stand at the crossroads of change and of challenge. Mr. Speaker, I believe, over the last three years and in the budget you've seen and brought down in this legislature, Saskatchewan people have been shown that we, indeed, have the courage to take the future in our hands.

I think our residents are ready to face up to, and take advantage of, those changes affecting society, and those very changes that are being put before us today. And that's what our budget is all about, Mr. Speaker, the courage to challenge the future; the courage to put aside our petty differences to build together — building on a partnership.

It's the very foundations of our community, Mr. Speaker, that make up the backbone of the budget that the Minister of Finance brought down. Indeed, any segment of our society is only as strong as its foundations. If you look across the province of Saskatchewan, what do you see? If you look at your family, if you look at your farm, if you look at small-business or local schools or hospitals, if you look at the community itself, and you see this to be true. It's only as strong as the people that are there. A family is only as strong as the leadership, the guidance and the love of the parents, and the love they put into it, and that the children absorb.

The farm is as only as strong and viable as the family that farms it and nurtures it with care and good technology, good quality livestock, attention and hard work that Saskatchewan farm families are well-known for.

The small business is only as strong as the drive and the dedication that good, old-fashioned common sense that the owner puts into it.

A large enterprise is only as strong as its workers and the management and the shareholders and the people who are prepared to work together to make sure that it's a successful endeavour.

And a school or a university is only as strong as the students, the teachers, and the dedicated people that are working within that institution to breathe life into those institutions for the people that they work for.

And a hospital and a nursing home — these institutions are only as strong as the patients, the residents, the nurses, and the doctors want them to be through their concern, their compassion, through their skills and their expertise.

I can remember recently, Mr. Speaker, being in Maple Creek at a hospital, and on the lapel of the people that worked there was a little button, and it said, "We care." Well, Mr. Speaker, that's indicative of the kinds of attitude and the strength and the dedication you see in the province of Saskatchewan. The staff at a hospital wearing a button, a small gold button provided by the management, that says, "We care."

Finally, Mr. Speaker, a government, any government, is only as strong as the voters that elect it and that they represent and the representatives that elect them.

In Saskatchewan, because we are a province of family farms, small business, individuals striving to do better for themselves and to improve the lot of others, in a province where we have successful governments, always being close to people, all our individual strengths are closely related and interdependent on each other.

Mr. Speaker, we are all very much a part of the families that live and work and live in the province

of Saskatchewan. None of us can forego the way we want to alone, nor do we want to. Saskatchewan folks would not want to advance their own interests to the detriment of somebody else, and particularly their legitimate concerns. We are not that kind of people.

Mr. Speaker, if you look at what other people are saying about the province of Saskatchewan today, you say this: there's something unique about the province of Saskatchewan, something special. We do things differently. If you look at the volunteers in the province of Saskatchewan, compared to any other place in Canada, we rank about 27 per cent of the population; the rest of the country about 14.

If you look at Telemiracle in the province of Saskatchewan, it's the largest fund raising event per capita in the world, raising over \$2 million. And just after that's finished, Mr. Speaker, Steve Fonyo comes into Saskatchewan and he raised something like \$900,000 all across Saskatchewan up into our border, and over three-quarters of a million in the province of Saskatchewan alone — just after we'd donated \$2 million to Telemiracle.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it says something unique about the soul of the people and the families in the province of Saskatchewan. It is these qualities, within our people and within our province, that have put our people and our province in the driver's seat when it comes to designing beneficial social and economic programs across Canada.

No wonder Saskatchewan people have achieved a reputation for initiative and innovation and strength and foresight. No wonder, Mr. Speaker, wherever they might be in Canada, or any place else in the world, our residents are proud to say, we're from Saskatchewan.

You want to see courage? You'll find it in spades in Saskatchewan. You'll find it in the children; you'll find it in the parents; you'll find it in the seniors; you'll find it in every walk of life in our province, Mr. Speaker, that's the foundation of our province.

That foundation is important to understand when we're looking at this budget, and it's important to understand what we have done in the last three years in the province of Saskatchewan. In 1982, Mr. Speaker, this government was elected to build on those foundations of courage, of sensitivity, of listening, and building that partnership that we've experienced in the past from our pioneering forefathers, and they wanted to build in the future.

When we were elected, Mr. Speaker, in 1982, there was a couple of things that people didn't recognize right off the bat, and I want to just remind them — three important facts. In 1982 we were at the peak of the recession in this country. In 1982 you had interest rates running 18 to 20 per cent, and in 1982 there was inflation hurting the people of Saskatchewan and, indeed, people all across Canada. Recession, high interest rates, and inflation. And nothing was done to help anybody with respect to interest rates. There wasn't one thin dime going to help people in the province of Saskatchewan with respect to high interest rates.

Mr. Speaker, we were asked to take these conditions — recession, high unemployment, high interest rates, and inflation —and deal with them to help build on those foundations of strength and foresight and courage, and give people something to believe in again.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we moved quickly. I'm not going to dwell on them, but I want to touch on a couple of them, because they're the foundation for the kinds of things that we've initiated and introduced in the budget that has been brought forward.

First, Mr. Speaker, we said, at no time during these difficult economic conditions should we ask people or have people lose their homes as a result of high interest rates. We said it wasn't their fault. It's international economic conditions. It's not in our heritage to let the family lose its home. And we helped over 43,000 home owners in the province of Saskatchewan by saying, in this province . . . and no other province is doing it, but in this province we'll take the lead again

and, for the next seven years, 1988, you will see, Mr. Speaker, 13 and a quarter per cent interest rates for every family in this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — I raise that, Mr. Speaker, I raise it because people ask. They said, it's part of our heritage to help when individuals and families are in trouble. They said, go out there. Rearrange the financial system if you have to, but don't be afraid. Don't be afraid to help if it makes sense for people. So we've got 13.25 in this province, and we've got it till 1988 on all the homes in the province regardless of income. We did that, Mr. Speaker. And other provinces said, oh, it couldn't be done. But they're doing it now.

Secondly, the farmers aid the same. This is the backbone of our community. We have to make sure that we got out and save those families from high interest rates. What did we do? We brought in an 8 per cent program to protect people from the very thing that was causing half of the problems in the recession; that is, high interest rates. We brought in a program, Mr. Speaker, that's now copied and looked at all across North America, 8 per cent money for young farmers in the province of Saskatchewan, and we now have over 4,000 new family farms being built as a result of a program that had never been introduced any place else in the country.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, it was new, and it was bold, and it had the signs of courage, because we said, I don't care if the interest rates are 25 per cent. For young family farms in the province of Saskatchewan, it's 8 per cent money. And we said that.

And we followed that, Mr. Speaker, with various kinds of activities to address employment and inflation. And inflation, I want opt touch on one. People said the cost of living is rising too fast, and we can't find any justification, particularly associated with taxes in the province of Saskatchewan. And as a result, we said we will fight high interest rates on one hand, and we'll turn around and we'll fight inflation on the other. And that's exactly what we did.

(1515)

And we made a commitment that we would remove all the sales tax on gasoline to fight inflation and put income into the hands of people and families. And as a result, we no longer collect something like \$140 million a year, and it goes right into the pockets, into the jeans, into the purses of men and women across the province of Saskatchewan.

That's the largest tax cut and extensive tax break in the history of this province, and one of the largest in the history of Canada, to do what? To go back to people and say, we believe in the families. And we will help you fight inflation, and we will do it in spades, and we'll take the burnt of it. The government will. We will not collect that tax, and we will provide you, indeed, increased assistance, which is government expenditure on high interest rates at the family level, the farm level, the home level, while we remove the tax on gasoline and pump out \$140 million a year.

Well, other jurisdictions said it couldn't be done. They wouldn't have the courage to do this, but we did.

Mr. Speaker, we went on to break records in health expenditures, in education, increased money in education year after year after year, breaking records in health. And in employment, Mr. Speaker, if you look at 1982 to 1984, there's nobody that can touch the province of Saskatchewan.

I was in Saskatoon the other day, Mr. Speaker, and I was talking with the mayor, and they were

announcing their brand-new, multipurpose facility, and the mayor of Saskatoon said the following: he said from March of last year to March of this year no other city in Canada has touched the city of Saskatoon in new job creation — over 6.9 per cent brand-new jobs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, the cities of Saskatoon and Regina, as a result of our protection of families, building on our heritage, reduction of the taxes, have become the most dynamic cities in western Canada — the most dynamic cities in western Canada — and rank third and fourth in all of Canada in the creation of economic activity and unemployment, Mr. Speaker.

So the province of Saskatchewan has the lowest unemployment in 1982 and 1983 and 1984, and our two major metropolitan areas were number one in job creation in western Canada, and ranked third and fourth in the country in the last three years.

Mr. Speaker, when we looked at the kinds of things that are possible, based on the heritage of what people believe and have done in the past, we extended it to one more area that I want to touch on, and that's energy and jobs.

We went out into the industry and we asked them, based on your experience over the last 50 years what is possible in this province? And they said to us, your royalty structure is fair enough except we got to get some of our money back into the businesses and the communities, so that we can invest more and more. And they said, you know what will happen? You will make more money for the province, and you'll make money for yourselves, and you'll employ more people, and we can show you in spades what will happen.

And, Mr. Speaker, we listened. We had the people help us design those programs, and every single, solitary thing that they said would happen in the province of Saskatchewan happened just as they said. Mr. Speaker, in '82 and '83 and '84, in some of the worst economic conditions in the history of the province since the great Depression of the '30s, we've broken every single record that you can find in oil and gas in the province of Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Now based on tradition, over 3,000 brand new oil wells broke drilling records, revenue records, and I will touch on revenue a bit, but, Mr. Speaker, if you go back and look at just revenue, the province of Saskatchewan is now \$200 million — and a minimum, \$200 million — better off, that is to the coffers of the people of Saskatchewan in health and education and transportation as a direct result of what we've done in the oil patch.

And that's not indirect. That's just direct \$200 million that we have now, that we wouldn't have, to date, as a result of what has gone on in the oil patch. That is not to count the jobs, the economic spin-offs, the multipliers and all the other things, not in counting oil upgraders, not taking into account any of these major projects. That's just money into the coffers of the public purse as a result of us putting confidence in the people — not confidence in the government, confidence in the people, so that they can run their own lives.

That goes back to the very fundamental foundation of the Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan, to people in this room, to people who elected us and have elected Progressive Conservative people all across this country, and will continue to elect them, because at base, it's on the very foundation of families, of individuals, of liberty and freedom and letting people run their own lives.

I won't dwell on the upgraders, but as a result, Mr. Speaker, of what we've done, and the bold nature and the courage to makes these changes, we announced and initiated what people have

been waiting decades for, absolutely decades — two upgraders in the province of Saskatchewan worth billions of dollars, 3 billion in one case, about a billion in another — the Co-op upgrader in the city of Regina with government, and the Co-op and the federal government; the Lloydminster upgrader associated with three governments and the private sector.

People have waited for years for these. In the worst economic times that you can remember, Mr. Speaker, we put them together here in the province of Saskatchewan and, in addition, made \$200 million to boot for health and education, the kinds of things you see in the budget today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, we have since '82, with the budgets that have brought forward, and the budgets and the various economic and social activities that we have initiated, we have broken no end of records that other Canadians are proud of.

We have population records, job creation records, health care records, potash marketing records, oil production records, and revenue records, a record number of towns and villages and farms receiving natural gas, record technical school capacity, record housing starts, Mr. Speaker, record tax reductions for ordinary people.

Families in this province said, “For the low income individuals, let’s increasingly make tax advantages for them.” And we have targeted tax incentives, and I will talk more on that in a bit.

We’ve got record reductions in government regulations, record reduction in the size of the bureaucracy, record numbers of people with protection, Mr. Speaker — protection against high interest rates.

We’ve never had thousands of people being protected against high interest rates for their homes, never before. We do now. Or young farmers at 8 per cent money . . . Record public investment in Crown corporations — it’s never happened in the province of Saskatchewan. It happens now.

Record tax increases for very large institutions like railroads and like banks, and the oil companies have never contributed so much to the coffers in the province of Saskatchewan as they do now.

Well, Mr. Speaker, those record highs are something that the ministers are proud of, the people of Saskatchewan are proud of, and members of this legislature. On top of that, we have the lowest unemployment, the lowest level of tax, the lowest gasoline prices, the lowest interest rates, the lowest utility rates; Mr. Speaker, the second lowest debt per capita in the entire country.

Mr. Speaker, during some of the most difficult times that you can find, this province, through bold initiatives and courage, have provided some of the greatest degree of excitement that you’ve seen in decades in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the kinds of activity that is necessary as you move into the ‘80s and on into the ‘90s and so forth, takes some courage. It means, Mr. Speaker, that we have to talk to people; we have to listen to them; and we have to listen hard enough to say: what are your priorities? What would they be?

In '82 we listened to them, and they said, look, we want you to help farmers and home owners fight inflation, bring in reforms. We want welfare reform, tax reform, industrial reform, educational and health reform, new technology. And we promised that, Mr. Speaker. And we delivered. We delivered in '82, and we delivered in '83, and we delivered in '84. We reduced sales taxes; we reduced income taxes; we targeted tax change. We brought in reforms that nobody had thought (they may have thought of), but nobody had the courage to bring in the

past, and for years and years and years hadn't.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that we made tough choices in 1982 and '83 and '84, and the record can stand for itself. We have a history in this province of making difficult choices, and we're not afraid of making difficult choices if we believe we're right. And that's what this budget, Mr. Speaker, is all about: believing that we're right and having the courage to make the changes necessary so Saskatchewan can show the leadership that we know we have.

This is what this budget is all about. We are prepared to choose and stand before the crowd, and before the country, and live by our convictions. And we will, Mr. Speaker, and we'll be proud of them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, we have shared the good times and the bad in the past, and we've always come through them. Good times have never made Saskatchewan people soft, and the tough times have never destroyed their basic honest-to-goodness faith in themselves and their neighbours. In good times and in bad times, Saskatchewan folks pitch in and help each other.

Well, now is the time, Mr. Speaker, that we must choose to build on the future. We live in changing times, and we must change with those times. We are committed to seeking the best for ourselves, our families, our relatives, our friends, and our neighbours and, indeed, communities in the province and the country at large. We know we must plan together for the short-run and the long-run. And we know from past experience that short-term solutions are no answers to long-term challenges.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what do the people of Saskatchewan want today? Well, I'll tell you what they want today. They want three important items. They want to build on our strengths. They want to make sure that we identify what those are and build on them. Two, they want to see the things that we do that are fair, and treat everybody in an equal and honest fashion; and three, they want to see us stand before everybody else and have the courage to put them on the table.

Well, when we've talked to people across this province, Mr. Speaker, and I have talked to thousands of them, and the ministers have, this is what they say that is important. First of all they said that one of the most important things that you have to do is look at the youth and the families of this province, and that means you've got to focus on education. The children are the backbone of the families, the parents, because in the children they see their future, and they see leadership for themselves, for the province, for the country and, indeed, for the world. And what they said to us is that make sure that you use education as a corner-stone. And I don't want to see six-month expenditures. I want to see a plan so we know that we can count on it for years to come. Education, Mr. Speaker.

The second thing that they said was important (and obviously is extremely important) . . . You do any survey in the province of Saskatchewan and you will find, or across the country, associated with young people again and families — find them a job. Create economic opportunities for them. Concerns about employment is something you'll see in rural Saskatchewan, urban Saskatchewan, right across this province and this country.

Third, Mr. Speaker, they said agriculture. The very backbone of this province is agriculture and farming and the kinds of things associated with that industry. It has been for years, and it will be for as long as we want to think about it in the future. We can't ever neglect agriculture. We've got to continue to build on it. And in the last three years, Mr. Speaker, we have, putting in something like \$150 million more money, new money, into agriculture; but they said, "Give us some long-term commitments — institutional commitments, research commitments," and so forth.

Fourth, Mr. Speaker, they said the fundamental thing associated with families in this province, whether they're children, whether they're seniors, or the people of any age, is health care. And they said if you're going to pick four areas of importance we can't think of four that are more meaningful to the foundation, the very essence of what Saskatchewan is all about: the education, job creation, agriculture, health care, and I'm going to add five — one more.

There's one sector, Mr. Speaker, that has been asking for strength, for encouragement, for some assistance, and, I suppose, some protection against the international flings and vagaries of high interest rates and others. There's one sector in this province that employs more people than anybody else, and that sector is small business.

So if you add then all up, Mr. Speaker, you've got education, you've got jobs, you've got agriculture, you've got health, and you've got small business. And the people in the province of Saskatchewan said, show me a long-run plan that puts those five right out in front of Canada, and show me how we can build on those. And that's exactly what we've done in the province, and that's exactly what's been done by the Minister of Finance. That's exactly what the people across this province told us to do: pick the five things that we are very strong on, and go for them. Have the courage to go out, set them on the table, put them before the country and say, those are the kinds of things that we're going to build that will be for Saskatchewan families, for our seniors, for our youth, for our children, for people of all ages.

All these are interrelated, Mr. Speaker, and they're extremely important for people, not only here, but across the country. Our new \$1.5 billion budget, our initiative called "Partnership for Progress," sets in operation these five related items for five years.

In education, Mr. Speaker, we have dedicated \$400 million — K to 12, advanced education, universities — to build. That's over \$6,000 for every student that attends university today in the province of Saskatchewan. I'll compare that to any province in the country.

Number two, an endowment fund, a brand new fund for job creation, over \$600 million — \$600 million on the line, and we're already number one. Saskatchewan has done better than any other province with respect to job creation and low unemployment, and we are committing \$600 million now for the next five years to make sure Saskatchewan not only stays number one, but will lead the rest of the country.

(1530)

Agriculture Development fund, another \$200 million for major agricultural thrusts.

Fourth, the health capital fund, brand new. And the Minister of Health has just announced the project is worth \$300 million. Major developments in Saskatoon and Regina, but not only in our major cities, but indeed right across the province of Saskatchewan.

And finally, and the Minister of Small Business will be announcing it tomorrow, a program that puts nine and five-eighths interest into the hands of small business in the province of Saskatchewan, and no place else in Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we know that we can't live without health — and particularly the health care that we've grown to be accustomed to in the province of Saskatchewan — or without sound education, or without opportunities, or without new technology in agriculture. The people of this province have told us that, and we agree. We are going to be pulling together to build on those five, Mr. Speaker, and they are extremely important. These plans are going to make Saskatchewan stronger and richer, and go back to the

very foundations that built us to start with.

And today, Mr. Speaker, I want to announce another one. Today I want to demonstrate, once again, just how the Saskatchewan government is prepared to help young people in the province to build, to construct an exciting new prosperous future for themselves. Today I want to show you how the people of Saskatchewan are reaching out to the people of the world in order to build security and prosperity in the future. Today I want, once again, to demonstrate to you Saskatchewan is ahead of the pack in leading reform and economic excitement in dealing with people and families.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan government is a youthful government. We're young, in a youthful province and, indeed, I suppose, in a youthful nation. We're a government and a province and a nation that must create jobs, particularly in the international market. We must do it with people. We must do it with hard work.

More than 40 per cent of Saskatchewan's gross domestic product comes from exports. Exports generate something like \$6 billion a year for the people of Saskatchewan. Some 80,000 Saskatchewan residents depend directly on export sales for their employment. We believe that they are only tapping a small percentage of the potential in the international market.

Because we think our province's role as a leading exporter is just beginning to be realized, and because we believe that our province's youth needs to share fully in our potential, I am pleased to announce here today the initiation of a new program that will put our youth, Saskatchewan youth, in the forefront of developing export markets for the Saskatchewan all over the world. The government is committing over \$1 million to this new initiative that will put young people in the province of Saskatchewan in every corner of the globe.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — In announcing this new Saskatchewan youth export jobs forum, under the Trade Opportunities Program, the Saskatchewan government will finance 50 per cent of the salary of a company's new employee to a maximum of \$10,000 for the first year, provided that employee's function is to find export markets for that company's products any place in the globe.

The Saskatchewan government will also fund any approved training, and training related costs, during the first year of employment.

During the second year, Mr. Speaker, of employment, the Saskatchewan government will fund legitimate costs of young people, employees and young employees' employment, including salary, based on the wage rates of the nation to which the employee will be located, and a marketing role on behalf of his employer here in the province of Saskatchewan.

We believe that this initiative will open up many exciting opportunities for young people across this province — for companies, for families, for businesses, but particularly for the youth that is concerned about reaching out into the world. Only in Saskatchewan will you find a brand-new bold program that challenges the young people to leave Saskatchewan to go out and to represent the world and secure some of those and many of those new markets.

The program will offer exciting challenges to both employees and employers, and should benefit all the people of Saskatchewan through export dollar sales and the enhancement of employment opportunities in Saskatchewan from all those sales.

The Saskatchewan youth export job corps will be a launching pad to the entire world for the people of Saskatchewan. It will provide employment opportunities, not only for direct participation but for future employees and for the company employees that will be there for years to come as a result of increased sales.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think there's a program like this in Canada. Saskatchewan is second to none in Canada with respect to export creation and job creation, business expansion and economic growth. We must plan to be able to capture the future, and that's what this represents.

Mr. Speaker, for the information of the public, in the last three years we have been involved in trade fairs. The province of Saskatchewan and people have been involved in trade fairs all over the world — trade fairs in the United States, Australia, South Africa, France, Egypt, various places in South America, France, Hong Kong, U.S.S.R., United Kingdom, and others. And these trade fairs are financed by the province of Saskatchewan to encourage export development. We've had trade missions that have come into the province of Saskatchewan as a result of this kind of activity.

I mention these, Mr. Speaker, because the young people in the province that want to be involved in international trade could work in two ways. For example, the Western Canada Farm Progress Show brings in delegations to meet people here — delegations from the United States, Mexico, France, Denmark, Hungary, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Nigeria, the People's Republic of China, and on and on and on.

As well, we are sending people to the following places because of the missions that we have financed: Germany, Italy, France, Netherlands, South America, China, United States, India, Japan, Austria, Switzerland, France, United Kingdom, and many other countries behind the Iron Curtain. These are the kinds of opportunities young people, Saskatchewan youth, can now participate in in the province of Saskatchewan as a result of the program that I just announced.

Mr. Speaker, I've gone back and I've said the foundation of Saskatchewan is based on the family, based on fundamental values of liberty and freedom and understanding, and the belief in themselves what they can build. They want the opportunities to build. We've talked to them for the last three years, and the last six months particularly, saying these are the things we want to see done.

Mr. Speaker, to make that happen we have looked at some reform in the province of Saskatchewan. As I started this presentation in this debate today, I read from another newspaper talking about Saskatchewan taking the lead with respect to reform — tax reform.

People have asked: why tax reform today? Why today? Why now? Why put rebates into health and education? What about low income people? What about seniors? Is this whole thing fair?

Well let's look at this reform package, Mr. Speaker. True, other Canadians are looking at it. They're looking at it today and saying, I'm glad to see somebody had the courage to change the system.

We have reformed the way governments look at interest rates in this country, and we're proud of that. We have reformed the way governments and other people have looked at the interest rate structure in Canada. We've done it right here in Saskatchewan.

We have reformed the way people look at welfare in this country. We've initiated welfare reform. We did it here because we said people believed in it. Families and children are more important than bureaucracies. And we did it and we're proud of it.

We have reformed the way people look at, and other people look at, the energy business and energy revenues and the energy industry. And we have set records there, Mr. Speaker, that people didn't even believe were possible. And we stuck our chin out and we said, we will believe in people, we're going to reform that tax structure, and we'll see if it happens. And it did.

Mr. Speaker, we have reformed the way people look at the tax system already, before this

budget was brought in. We changed the tax system. We allowed people to invest in venture capital corporations. We brought in some of the most significant tax changes in the livestock industry you've seen any place in Canada.

Nobody, anywhere, at any time, has ever been allowed to write off their income tax payable the feeding of livestock in any province — nowhere except in the province of Saskatchewan. In the case of cattle, that's \$25 a head, Mr. Speaker, and that's \$25 for every head that's fed in this province, write-off tax payable.

We've already got into the reform business. And that was even with another jurisdiction in Ottawa, or another administration. Mr. Speaker, we have already reformed the way people look at Crown corporations in Canada. I don't recall people being able to invest in them.

But what we've done to date has been reform. And again we stuck our chin out and said, I think and believe they'd like to invest in the Saskatchewan Power Corporation, or they'd like to invest in Saskoil — energy bonds or power bonds.

Well, when you go out and talk to Saskatchewan people today, they say, why stop now? I mean, you've got yourself on a roll. You're breaking records like we haven't seen before in some of the most difficult times the country has ever experienced. You've got drought, and recession, and high interest rates, and inflation, and grasshoppers, and flood, and every kind of thing that you can think of, and declining international prices in potash and wheat, and you've broke records, and you're on the forefront in this nation and, indeed across North America, with respect to reform on welfare, on taxation, on Crown corporations, on all kinds of things. Why stop now?

Well, -Mr. Speaker, that's the \$64,000 question. Why stop today? We've gone around to people in this province, and they said, here are the things you'd better on. And if you can build on those and provide fairness in the tax system, you just keep it up.

They asked us the following. Why should high income people not pay tax? Why shouldn't they pay tax? It's a very good question. The Minister of Finance points out there's something over 600 people making in excess of \$50,000 a year that don't pay tax. Why shouldn't they pay some tax? Why send rebates to large companies or to wealthy individuals? They do it all across the country and, particularly, in the former administration in the province of Saskatchewan. Why shouldn't low income people have a bit of a break and, particularly, the seniors? Those are the kinds of questions that they ask.

Well, the answer politically, Mr. Speaker, is this: an awful lot of folks wouldn't dare challenge the system. They wouldn't have the courage to go out there and say, I will reform that system even though I'm going to have to have some political moxie to get it done. No one thought anybody would have the courage to tackle a rebate system, or a tax system, or a reform system, particularly when you're looking at somewhere between a year and two years before an election. Why would you do that?

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's this: given the Saskatchewan tradition, either you believe in the people and you believe in their good judgement, or you don't. Mr. Speaker, I do. So we have shown the courage to have reform, and we will continue to have reform in this province so that the rest of the country sees Saskatchewan as a leader, and well it should.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Well, Mr. Speaker, there are charges, and charges particularly by the opposition and others across the province that say, well, this is the highest tax change in the history of the country, the largest tax increase. But, Mr. Speaker, that's not true. One thing is true. The largest tax decrease in the history of this province took place in 1982, and '83, and '84, when we removed the gas tax in the province of Saskatchewan.

The largest tax increase, single tax increase in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, was under the NDP administration in 1977. It was a 13.5 per cent increase with totalled \$169 million in one shot. And I want people to recognize, Mr. Speaker, when we're looking at tax changes, from 1971 to 1981 the income tax rate in the province of Saskatchewan went from 34 per cent to 58 per cent, or a 24 per cent increase.

I want to repeat that, Mr. Speaker. When you're talking about tax changes, I don't want anybody in the province or the country to make any mistake about what happened in the years 1971 to 1981. In 1971 the tax rate in the province of Saskatchewan was 34 per cent; in 1981 it was 58 per cent — a 24 per cent tax rate increase, or over \$200 million a year in constant '85 dollars — take today's dollars.

On top of that, Mr. Speaker, there was a gas tax increase of \$70 million a year. You put those two together, Mr. Speaker, that's \$270 million a year, constant dollars, for 10 years. Two hundred and seventy million dollars times 10 years, Mr. Speaker, and you've got — in fact 11 years — almost \$3 billion in tax increases in the last administration.

Now let's make sure that we've got the facts out, Mr. Speaker. We have taken over \$500 million off the tax rate in the province of Saskatchewan in '82, in '83, in '84 — off — the largest cuts you'll ever see in the province. And from the 10 years, 1971 to 1981 and on even into 1982, almost \$3 billion tax hike in the province of Saskatchewan under the NDP administration. That's why people turfed them out, and that's the reason. They like big bureaucracy. They like to nationalize farms. They like to take over companies. And you can't do it without taking over the entire tax system, and family income, and business income, and everybody else.

(1545)

Well, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the record of tax change in the province of Saskatchewan, 1971 to 1981, there was reform all right. Okay. There was reform. There was rebates going to big business, rebates going to the wealthy. There was tax increases on all the low in income. It added up to \$3 billion. And there was a pittance then on schools, and nursing homes, hospitals, education. And the record speaks for itself, and I won't go through it, because ministers have. We've broken all those records in terms of expenditures, plus significant tax cuts.

So what do they say today? They're bringing in a 1 per cent flat tax — 1 per cent. I just described a 24 per cent tax rate increase in 10 years, the largest in the history of the province, and the opposition complains about a 1 per cent flat tax rate to give the rich. Mr. Speaker, this is a 1 per cent tax change associated with reform to get people that don't pay any income tax and never have paid income tax contributed to health, education, nursing homes, or others.

Under the previous administration, the rich got rebates; big companies would get rebates. They designed that system so that they didn't have to pay, and we're bringing in, with courage, the ability to now say, we are going to reform that system so the wealthy now contribute to health and education in the province of Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we know what happened in '71 to '81, and we know what happened in 1982. We know, for example, Mr. Speaker, that the biggest single constraint to economic development, or excitement, or that pioneering spirit, or that Saskatchewan tradition that there is in the province today, the biggest single constraint to social and economic success in Saskatchewan today, is just the mere threat that the NDP might ever get back into power. Just the threat that they might have a chance to go back in and levy those kinds of tax increases, and those kinds of policies, and those kinds of bureaucracy, and that kind of nationalization on the people of Saskatchewan, that threat scares them enough to say, I'm still not sure whether I'm going to take that investment and put it in the province of Saskatchewan. Not because what's happened here. Not because of our budgets in '82 and '83 and '84. Nothing to do with those. In fact, that's brought increases, in spades, and we've shown it — records. But, Mr. Speaker, the

threat that those folks might get back in with their policies and their oil tax regime is enough to scare people half-way around the world. And they tell me that in Europe, and in Brazil, and other places.

Mr. Speaker, one other question is raised with respect to this budget, and it has to do with revenues coming in from oil companies and that we should have increased revenues. Well I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that we've never had so much oil revenue coming in from oil companies. And even despite the changes with respect to the export tax, and we've lost that because it's gone to world markets, you put them there, and we're still in excess of \$200 million more than we had before.

If you look at oil policy in the province of Alberta and then in the province of Manitoba, and I want to compare them both because I want the public to understand what's going on. This is what the NDP says in the province of Alberta about oil policy. This is what the NDP says, and I want everybody to understand it. This is what they say: according to the NDP, and this is at their convention, there will be no royalties if the NDP get into power in the province of Saskatchewan, there will be no royalties on new oil and gas wells until the investor gets his money back. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what we did in the province of Saskatchewan that caused this boom. That's exactly what we did.

The NDP in Alberta say there should be no royalties on new oil and gas wells until the investor gets his money back. That's the NDP to the party to the west, Mr. Speaker. They're in opposition. They said, the policies in the province of Saskatchewan have caused so much economic activity and so much revenue, the NDP now say they should copy the Saskatchewan oil policy, because it would work.

Well, Mr. Speaker, let's look at the NDP to the east of us. The NDP to the east of us have said the following, and they just went into their budget. "The Manitoba government raised taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel, (this is the NDP in Manitoba), but did not alter the province's oil and gas fiscal regime in its 1985-86 budget last week."

They raised taxes for people, on diesel fuel and gasoline. The NDP did that in Manitoba. And they didn't touch the royalty regime. Now their royalty structure is even lower than ours. And this is what a spokesman for the Manitoba NDP said:

The Manitoba's energy department said the existing incentives and royalty structure has successfully spurred oil and gas activity in the province, and the government does not want to tamper with a regime that is working.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, we found a regime that was not working, that wasn't working, and everybody knows it was half shut down and we weren't getting any oil revenues. We did exactly what the NDP in Manitoba or in Alberta have endorsed. We said, we've got to let them have a little bit of money so that they can put it back in there and pay for their investment. And Manitoba has copied it right down the line. They said, look, we don't want to touch this low royalty structure. We want to make sure these people work. And Manitoba even went out and taxed people and families. Well, we didn't follow that, obviously, because we took the tax off gasoline completely.

The NDP on both sides of us, Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba and Alberta, have endorsed the very things we said would work to generate revenue for the Minister of Finance and for health and education and people all over this country.

And in this province they say, some say, well, you're not collecting revenues. Well, why did the NDP on either side of us say it's the best program they've ever seen? You can't have it both

ways, Mr. Speaker. It's working. It was bold; it's working. It's providing revenues like you've never seen revenues; upgraders like you've never seen them; jobs like you've never seen them; records like you've never seen them during a recession; because we had the courage to go out there and say, that's what we believe; that's what will work. And it was right.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, when we look at the changes in taxes in this province, I believe that I has to be fair. It's important that it is fair, that it be perceived to be fair, and that it's good for families and businesses and all other kinds of people. When I look at the tax system and you hear people talk about it, they say, you bet individuals at all levels should contribute, and particularly high income levels should start to pay for health and education. It's fundamental. Somebody had to have the courage to start that process. That's number one.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, they said, I am tired of the rebate business. I talked to over 1,000 people in the last three days directly, personally, in down-town Regina, out in the country, in Saskatoon, and other places, and Mr. Speaker, they say the following: rather than you sending me money and me sending you money, and you sending me money back and us all filling out forms and spending it on stamps and a whole bunch of other things, if you think a \$230 rebate should go to education and nursing homes, why don't you just put it there and let's be happy with it? Eliminate all this shuffle back and forth, paper shuffle, rebates and the forms and all the rest of it, because of three things. One, the rich get it and they don't need it. Three, a good proportion of it is spent just on the process itself. Third, now it's even going to be taxed and, Mr. Speaker, it just doesn't make sense. It just doesn't make any sense at all.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — When you look at tax reform, 1 per cent increase. One per cent and we already deducted or reduced income tax 1 per cent. One per cent there and a reduction of 1 per cent, it's small but it is symbolic, Mr. Speaker. That's what it is. It shows courage to go out there and say we will reform that system. When we go out and stick our chin out and say, universities are important, health care's important, schools are important, and that rebate money should go directly, directly into schools and hospitals and nursing homes, it takes some courage.

And for seniors we said, we'd better look after the seniors, and that's exactly what we've done. Every senior in this province should apply for that rebate, and it's there and now it can be up to \$750, and that's much bigger than it ever was. But nor for rich, wealthy, individuals — for those that need it. We've designed so many systems in this country that keep feeding the wealthy, and feeding the rich. Well, we just ask that the wealthy contribute. Just contribute. That's all.

I want to quote something else. This is from the *Leader-Post*. I believe it's today. An article:

Saskatchewan sets the pace for nation-wide tax reform.

And Dian Cohen says this:

What seems to be clear is that the tax system is no longer working the way it once did. It needs to be reformed so that it will, in the future, provide revenues for public programs as it used to in the past. The Saskatchewan experiment will be watched with great interest across the country.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's the case. We have today, recently, with the finance minister's budget, announced we're prepared to take that step, not just for six months so that there might be an election, or the next 18 months, but we're prepared to do it in front of the entire country for the next five years. And to say that it's fair, it's honest, it's open, it's up front, and it shows that this province and, indeed, this country, needs that kind of courage that it had years ago, and it's

about time somebody took the bull by the horn. And we've done it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, this is on April 14. I'll read it again. This is the Williston daily *Herald*:

Just to show who is taking the leadership, President Reagan pledged to unveil a tax overhaul plan that will save money for most Americans, denounced the current tax system Saturday as a complicated, frustrating, unfair mystery of legalistic gobbledygook and loopholes. The President, who claimed \$33,000 in deductions for legal fees on his income tax, most of it for tax matters, said the current tax code system designed not to help everyday wage-earners, only those who could afford high-priced attorneys and accountants — the wealthy.

The President of the United States — he's a little late following our Minister of Finance — has been and is concerned about it, and is now looking at tax reform in North America, because he said it's unfair. Somebody's got to have the courage to go out there and say, by gosh, we've got to tackle it. We've got to begin someplace. Well, within the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, what you see is more reform and more leadership and more courage than you've seen in this province for decades.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, let me close this debate with just a little bit more on leadership. I believe that we have seen honest-to-goodness performance in the last three years in Saskatchewan, and it hasn't been good times. As I mentioned, we've seen high interest rates and recession and high unemployment — high interest rates, inflation, drought, floods: lots of problems. But people in Saskatchewan don't quit. They never have, and I don't believe they ever will. They have leadership in their blood and in their bones and in their heart and in their soul.

If you look back over the last three years at Saskatchewan's role in the country, it's been phenomenal. We've put together things like upgraders that never happened before, tax changes that never happened before, employment packages that never happened before, job creation things. The first for Canada, obviously first for Saskatchewan.

And we did it with a Liberal administration. And then when the government changed, we had firsts here as well. We entertained the Prime Minister and the premiers of this country for the first time in the entire history of the province, right here in this city, talking about trade and training and strengths and reform and taxes and systems.

We looked at the first ministers' conference with respect to native rights. And I believe Saskatchewan took a new and an honest approach. And we were fair, and we were open. And I've got and received letters from both sides saying the following: Saskatchewan brought more common sense to that meeting than they'd seen in years, from both sides.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — We've worked, Mr. Speaker, on new energy agreements, energy agreements that will change the face of western Canada and indeed the country for decades to come. And we were in the forefront.

National agricultural programs, where there's a crop insurance, Western Grains Stabilization Program, tax changes, involved in the charter of rights, tourism and trade, and on and on and on in the records. And I won't repeat them. In three years, Mr. Speaker, a young government with young people with young ideas, in a young province in a young country.

Well I forecast, Mr. Speaker, with the budget that we've seen today, that this is just the beginning. Not because we are eager just to hang on to power, but because the people of Saskatchewan have spoken to us in '82 and again they've spoken to us recently in a by-election and they will speak to us again in other elections, saying, the kinds of things that you're doing make sense.

The forecast shows Saskatchewan to lead all provinces in economic growth, not only in '85, but till 1989. Forecast after forecast. We're going to have 5.2 per cent unemployment by 1989 if the conference board is accurate. And that is head and shoulders below anybody else. We've been number one in performance; number one in ideas; and, Mr. Speaker, I believe we've been number one in courage, and this budget supports it.

Mr. Speaker, I am only too happy and only too proud to endorse the work that the Minister of Finance has done in the province of Saskatchewan. I wish him luck in the months, in the years ahead, because I believe the kinds of things that we've initiated in this budget will be talked about for decades to come.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

(1600)

MR. SWENSON: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I get into my address I would just like to compliment the Premier of the province on the fine address which he has just given this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SWENSON: — Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of awe and humility that I rise in this Assembly to give my maiden speech for the constituency of Thunder Creek. All my life I have been a follower of the political process in our province and our country. Any of you who are familiar with my family that, you sit around the kitchen table at the Swenson household, you talk politics. And for me now to take part in this process as a member of this Assembly is indeed and truly a great experience. The fact that I am speaking in support of such a fine budget, Mr. Speaker, also make sit much more of a tremendous experience.

Mr. Speaker, there were literally hundreds of people working in the recent by-election campaign in Thunder Creek on my behalf, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their efforts, for their faith and dedication to this fine government which we elected in 1982, and which the people of thunder Creek will help elect in the next general election.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SWENSON: — Mr. Speaker, Thunder Creek is a large and diverse constituency. The people who reside there basically make their living from agriculture. There are grain farmers there, ranchers, irrigators, mixed farmers, people in small business, and people in the farm supply industry — all making their livings and raising their families there. And these people, Mr. Speaker, are free enterprisers in thought and deed. The towns and villages of Thunder Creek prosper and thrive because of the vitality, the ingenuity of our agricultural sector.

Mr. Speaker, on March 27th, 1985, the people of Thunder Creek made a fundamental decision. They decided that the Progressive Conservative Government of Saskatchewan would continue to represent them in the Legislature and that I would be their representative. That choice, Mr. Speaker, was a very clear mandate and support for our Progressive Conservative government.

Mr. Speaker, during that election campaign, all the parties outlined their agricultural policies. The NDP and the Liberals were obviously found wanting by theirs. Mr. Speaker, the people of

Thunder Creek like the policies of this government. They like 8 per cent money for first-time and young farmers. They like the rural natural gas program which has cut farm heating costs by as much as 50 per cent. Mr. Speaker, they like our irrigation assistance program with its \$100 per acre subsidy. They liked our drought assistance program for cattlemen which save much of Saskatchewan's cowherd from being sold off. They like the elimination of the sales tax on electrical bills. And above all, Mr. Speaker, they like the biggest reduction of sales tax in our province's history, the elimination of the gasoline tax in 1982.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was proud to run on the record of achievement of our government in agriculture during the past three years, and I welcome the new initiatives in this budget for agriculture. Agriculture is my long odds the most important segment of our economy. The biggest challenge to our family farm is the rapid improvement in productivity amongst our competitors. The technology of growing food is fast spreading around the world. Our competitors now have many of the techniques that we invented and initiated. We must remain competitive. We must undertake major programs of research, innovation, and productivity improvement.

In that regard, we are setting up a \$200 million Agriculture Development fund to be used for agricultural research, development, and demonstration projects over the next five years, and I am sure that the farmers of Thunder Creek would be interested in contributing to such a fund.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, we'll be spending \$130 million in agriculture this year, and that's over \$2,000 per farmer and 54 per cent more than the government was spending in the previous administration.

Thunder Creek probably has the greatest potential for irrigation in this entire great province of ours. Eighty-six thousand acres have already been identified on the west side of my constituency where the farmers have signified that they are interested in pursuing an irrigation option in their farming operations.

Our government has shown a commitment to irrigation which was totally lacking by the previous administration. The cattle producers in this province shouldn't have to truck hay in by the thousands of tonnes from Manitoba and Alberta every time it doesn't rain in May.

Valuable secondary industry could be developed in Thunder Creek and surrounding areas by the expansion of irrigation in our province, Mr. Speaker, and it will be an area which I will pursue with interest and vigour as the member from Thunder Creek.

Although agriculture is so very important to Thunder Creek and surrounding areas by the expansion of irrigation in our province, Mr. Speaker, and it will be an area which I will pursue with interest and vigour as the member from Thunder Creek.

Although agriculture is so very important to Thunder Creek, other areas of our economy and lifestyles are of major importance to the people of my constituency. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the initiatives taken by the Minister of Finance in this budget will be welcomed by the people of Thunder Creek. By emphasizing the corner-stones of agriculture, education, health, and jobs, Saskatchewan will continue to lead the nation in so many areas.

Mr. Speaker, the people of my constituency want education and training for their children. They want jobs available for those children after ending their formal educations. They want the family farm protected and strengthened, and they want a first class health care system. This is what the Minister of Finance has set out to do, and I believe he has gone a long way to achieving those ends in this budget.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier and this government have refused to side-step the tough choices. They have done what any family must do in budgeting — set priorities and do some long-range planning, planning which will set a course of growth and prosperity for our province.

Mr. Speaker, March 27th was a significant day in my life. March 27th was a significant day for the Progressive Conservative government. On that day, Mr. Speaker, the people of Thunder Creek

elected me to represent them in this legislature. On that day, the people of Thunder Creek gave a vote of confidence to our Premier and our government, and I look forward in the months and years ahead to serving the people of Thunder Creek.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I serve notice that I am proud to support the budget.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to become involved in the budget debate that was delivered in this Assembly last Wednesday night.

Before I go into my remarks I would like to congratulate the member for Thunder Creek in what I think was an amazing feat, that in spite of what this government has done to keep their vote from dropping more than 20 per cent — and I want to say to the member from Thunder Creek that that is a personal victory. That is a personal victory for him, and I think that all members should applaud that member from Thunder Creek for keeping the vote from falling more than 20 per cent.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Because I think that if the member from Thunder Creek can continue to hold his vote from dropping below the mark that they had in 1982 by 20 per cent, there are members on the government benches in cabinet who should be watching over their shoulder for this member, in particular the Minister of Agriculture, because I can tell you that that member is in a very difficult fight in the constituency of Weyburn.

I want to say that when we read the budget, when we looked at what was in the budget on budget night, we were indeed surprised, as the people of the province were when they looked at the biggest tax grab in the history of the province. When we looked at the announcements that were made and the promises that were made before the last election; when we look at the sales tax removal that you went around the province promising everyone that you were going to remove — that you were going to copy Alberta; that you weren't going to be like the rest of Canada and have a sales tax in the province of Saskatchewan. And I well remember the member from Maple Creek out in Maple Creek in the area along the western border with Alberta, saying, "Wait till the election is over and we will remove the sales tax in Saskatchewan."

Well, believe it or not, people were not impressed when on election night, the sales tax wasn't removed. In fact, it was extended to used automobiles. It was extended to used half-tons, used grain trucks for farmers. Every auction sale that people are going to now, they have to pay, for example, on a \$10,000 used grain truck, \$500 to the provincial government. That is a very major tax increase for the people of the province.

And I say what was more outstanding was the promise to cut the income tax by 10 per cent. That was what they said before the last election. "Elect us and we will cut your income tax by 10 per cent." Well no one has seen any cut in their income tax. In fact, we are the first province in Canada to have two provincial income tax structures.

You can wonder and argue whether we should have a flat tax or a regular income tax structure, but I can tell you there isn't anyone who would believe that we should have two provincial income tax structures in the province at the same time. And I want to say that the reason for introducing the flat tax of 1 per cent is very simple. One per cent flat tax is equivalent to about 7 per cent on the old tax regime or the old tax schedule, and if they had increased the regular tax structure by 7 per cent, the uproar would have been even louder than what it is, given the increase that they have put into place.

And I want to say, as well, that there's another group of people who were being looked at who

weren't paying any income tax in the province of Saskatchewan. Those were the senior citizens'; those were the family people who had an income between \$10,000 and \$13,000. For a family of four who had a taxable income of \$13,000 before the budget, they didn't pay any income tax.

Now when Grant Devine, the Premier, and Bob Andrew, the Finance Minister, looked at the budget and who was getting away without paying any income tax in this province, they said that there was a group of people who were earning between 10,000 and 13,000. This group of people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the first time, will now be paying income tax in the province of Saskatchewan.

It's not an attempt to plug any loopholes at the top for the rich who aren't paying income tax. It's an attempt to take money out of that ever growing group of people at the bottom of the economic scale. And they're at the bottom of the economic scale through no fault of their own, but because their wages have been frozen, the minimum wage has been frozen, or they simply don't have the income from farming in order to put them above that level.

This group of people, the thousands of people between 10,000 and 13,000, will pay tax under the flat tax, for the first time. They haven't been paying it up till now, but that loophole as well has been plugged by the Devine government in their attempt to search out the victims who are most likely to be able to pay for the mistakes of this government.

But I'll tell you, it hasn't gone unnoticed by the people of the province, and it hasn't gone unnoticed by the press. I noticed the headlines that we have in the papers of the province: "Middle class will lose \$300 per family," "Regressive measures taken by the government," "Taxpayers taste some bitter pills," "Deficit will top \$1 billion," "Deficit interest (that's the interest on the deficit) \$143 million," "Provincial government cuts blamed for higher property taxes in Regina," "The rich can dodge tax (this is referring to the flat tax), Andrew admits." And the list goes on and on.

And the final response that I would like to read, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is titled: "Used car tax criticized." Now Bob Andrew, before the budget was brought down, tried to convince . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — I'd like to remind the member from Shaunavon to refer to the members in this legislature by their constituency, not by their name.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — The Minister of Finance, when he was announcing the budget, referred to it as an intelligent budget. Well, I think what the people of the province have been saying is summed up by what this article refers to. It says:

The sales manager of Browne Motor Company, Bill Goran, said, "It's one of the dumbest things they've ever done."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a salesman of cars. He says it's one of the dumbest things. Not the dumbest, but one of the dumbest things they've ever done, adding, "Those who dreamed up these schemes are mental midgets."

(1615)

Now this is the common people's opinion of this government and their tax increases that they put into place on budget night. They have made a major tax grab not at the rich, which the press and the public have picked up on, but a major tax grab at those who are elderly, those who are on low income, those who are buying used cars, farmers who can't afford to pay massive increases in property tax. And I would like to say that \$500 tax increase for every family in this province, and \$1,000 for every farmer is not going to go unnoticed by the people of the province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I want to say that if we were getting anything for our money, if people would look at the \$1.2 billion deficit and say in response to that: we are getting new programs; we are getting something reduced on our fuel to put in our tractors this spring; or we're getting a rebate on our fertilizer; or in Regina, we're getting some help with our housing costs — they may be able to say that this budget was a good thing.

But I'll tell you, what they're getting is a record high deficit. They're getting a cut in programs, and they're paying more taxes. Now somehow that doesn't add up. You would think if you were going to pay ever-increasing taxes in this province, you'd lower the deficit. You'd think if you were paying ever-increasing taxes, you would get more programs. But we're doing all three. We're getting less programs, we're paying more taxes, and we have a higher deficit.

Now what we should be talking about in this debate — and I wish members opposite would stand up and tell us — is how you do that. How do you increase the deficit, collect more taxes, and have less programs? Where is the money going to? And I think the members on this side have outlined very clearly where the money is going to. Why is it that the middle class has to pay more again? Where is the money going to?

Well yesterday in the Assembly we went over where one of their members was able to get out of the contracts with this government, \$355,000 while he was an MLA. The member, the former member from Regina North East, Russ Sutor, got \$355,000 from this government in contracts.

We have gone over the list of cabinet ministers' expense allowance. They stood in this Assembly and introduced a Bill to freeze their wages, and then doubled their expense accounts in order to offset that freeze, and I say to you, cabinet ministers, that that is dishonest, that it's unacceptable, and you will be judged by the voters of the province in the next election.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LINGENFELTER: — And I say to you that expense allowances by the Minister of Highways, for example, of \$62,000, should not be accepted and will not be accepted when the next election rolls around.

I mention it again, and I don't think we can mention it too often, that there are many people in this province who are doing well. And when I say many, it's a small percentage, but there are a number of people who are doing well under the present regime. Mr. Speaker. Those people are the banks who collect the interest on the deficit, \$143 million on the interest on the deficit; the oil companies who are announcing record profits each month. Imperial Oil, who announced an 84 per cent increase in their profit last year, have now been blessed with a continuation of the royalty holiday, and the federal Tories have now announced that they, too, will be helping the oil companies out to the tune of \$7 billion over the next three years.

And what I'm interested in, Mr. Speaker, is the concept of incentives. I agree with anyone who says that people need incentives, and companies need incentives, and business needs incentives. And I say to you that what is interesting is this: that the people on minimum wage, and the people who are on welfare, who had their welfare cut by 40 per cent, their incentive, or their reason to be, or their reason to continue on, is a club held over their head that if they don't do certain things they won't be getting it any more. For the oil companies, the incentive is more profit, more money.

Now what is the rationale that you people have in your mind when you say, poor people need less — that's their incentive — and people at the top need more? This is the irony and the conflict that I can't understand. If you were saying the people on minimum wage need a bit more — not a lot, they don't need a lot more — they're saying they want inflation, they want 5 per cent. If you were saying that the workers in this province need a little more — not a great deal, a

little more. If you were saying that teachers, and others who work in this society, nurses, need a little more, then we may agree that oil companies and other companies need a little more. But what is the philosophy that says the people at the bottom of the scale, the people in the middle class, need less, and those at the top need more? That is difficult for me, and it's difficult for the majority of the people in this province to comprehend.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LINGENFELTER: — In the area of farming, I can tell you that talking to the farmers in my area, as my colleague from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg has very articulately laid out, are simply not capable and not able to pay another \$1,000 in taxes given their present circumstances.

And they are amazed when you talk to them about the increase of 45 cents a gallon in diesel fuel since the last election. They can't understand why they should have to pay more for the oil that comes from under their farms to put in their tractors when they don't have any income, so that the oil companies can announce record profits. They just simply don't understand it. And they don't understand why they should pay \$1,000 more income tax so that the oil companies can have more royalty-free periods. And if the Minister of Finance would go out and help explain this to the farmers of the province why they need less, why 1,000 people going broke on our farms isn't enough, maybe he could come out and help send the message out (and the minister in charge of crop insurance maybe could join him), and they could go around and explain to the farmers and teach them why they should expect less, why they should pay \$1,000 more in income tax, and property tax, and sales tax on their used trucks. Maybe there's a reason for it. Maybe you could come out to Shaunavon and hold a public meeting and say, look, these oil companies north of Shaunavon who are announcing record profits need a little more incentive. They're not making enough money. And you farmers who farm the ground and are going broke should be paying a little more. Maybe there's a reason. But let's go out and explain it to them. I challenge the minister to come to Shaunavon to a public meeting and explain to the farmers there why they should be paying more taxes.

Now the people of the province and the farmers may agree that they should be paying more taxes, if they were getting a reduction in the price of their fuel, if you were to say to them (like the Alberta government), they would cut the price of fuel by 32 cents a gallon, or they would cut the price of fertilizer by \$50 a tonne, which the Alberta government in their last budget saw fit to do. But in this budget there was nothing. In this budget there was nothing for farmers. And the farmers cannot understand why they should pay more taxes, why the deficit should be higher, and why there is no programs for the farmers who are in deep trouble. They simply do not understand.

What you say to them, and I hear the Minister of Agriculture babbling from his seat, that they couldn't understand why they should pay more taxes, and why they should expect less programs, and why there should be a larger deficit. But I would challenge the Minister of Agriculture, as well, to come out and explain to the farmers why this is the case.

What we are looking at in agriculture, Mr. Minister and you will know, being from a rural area, as well as anyone — maybe with a crop in your area a little better than in some of the areas — that we are facing a crisis where many young farmers will not be able to make it through the next year, where they will not be able to seed their crop. And what we need is drastic measures. And what we need is a shifting in emphasis from the resource company breaks, which we see at the present time, where some of that money is funnelled into the farming economy.

I believe that if you were to go to some of the oil companies who have done very well over the last three years — and I agree they have done very well, and why wouldn't they when their taxes have been reduced considerably? — but why don't you shift the emphasis and cut the farmer's tax a bit? I don't even think the oil companies would complain. I think the oil companies are doing well enough that if you sat down and said, look, you've had three good years, we've

cut your tax for three years, you're now on your feet and booming, and we're going to take a bit of that incentive away and give it to the farming community, I think you could sell it even to the oil companies.

I think even the oil companies, if you were to take 100 million out of that resource pot and give it to the farmers who deserve it, that you could convince them. I think it's worth a try. I think it's worth going to the oil companies and saying, look, if we were to charge a little more royalty on that oil, would you be in favour of it in order to save the farming community?

And the member for Morse, I think, would agree that the farmers in his area are in tough shape. Many of the young farmers don't have money to put the seed in the ground. And what I can't understand is with the number of rural members that you have, why in caucus you don't stand up, make the arguments, and get some money for the farmers. That's what they sent you here for.

And how is it that the members from Saskatoon, for example — and I'm not complaining about them — are able to get millions of dollars for a skating rink, and you aren't able to get one red cent for a fuel rebate program or for cutting the fuel for farmers? You aren't able to do it. And I say that the people of Saskatchewan are judging each and every one of these rural members, and I'll tell you that many of you won't be back unless you do something for the farmers, because you can't continue to promise and promise, and do nothing.

In the area of health, Mr. Speaker, I want to spend a little time going over the record of the Conservative government. I was in the Assembly when the Minister of Health rose in his place and spent all of 15 minutes announcing his budget program for the coming five years — seven minutes of it haranguing what the NDP didn't do, and seven minutes or eight minutes outlining a five-year plan. Now that maybe appropriate and it may tell the people of the province the priority that health is at the present time.

But I think back to a day when we used to announce, in the budget, programs. And my colleague from the Quill Lakes will remember announcing new programs, programs like the hearing aid program, the dental program, the home care program, the shelter allowance, all of these programs, the SAIL program. Every year we would have new exciting programs in health to announce. But there are none. There are no new programs. There are no new programs.

We have announcements of nursing homes for the third and fourth time. There's been a nursing home freeze in Regina for the past three years. Not one nursing home has been built in Regina for three years. Not one new bed has been opened. Not one new bed has been announced until this budget, and the people of the province know that promises made a few months before an election simply are not to be believed.

And when they talk about a nursing home freeze, I want to tell you that this group of people, this government, put the freeze on nursing homes in Regina that's been in place for three years. And the minister rises in his place and he spends eight minutes, eight minutes outlining what he calls the biggest health budget in the history of the province. I say that he does a disservice to the people of the province in the Health department to spend eight or seven minutes outlining his program for the next five years.

And I refer to a different time and a different era when we had a government that announced new health programs. The dental care program I referred to, the dental care program which was one of the best programs anywhere in North America by anyone's analysis, by any study that was done, what it said to the people of the province is that a program that would allow the people of the province and allow their children to graduate from high school with very little problems with their teeth. And there was no one in the province who argued with that point.

And what we have seen in this legislature is another cut-back in the dental program of some 20

people in the staff of the dental program. And I say that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. I would caution the members who are sitting in the back row that you're not to participate in the debate from that position.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I appreciate the ruling by Mr. Speaker. I want to continue on with the cut-backs in the dental and health programs, where the large number of nurses who are being laid off, both in the dental program as well as in the major hospitals, as well as in many rural hospitals, is not understood by many people in the province. And what we are finding is that more and more nurses who are finding themselves without work, many of them who have trained for a number of years, many of them who have worked for a number of years, done a good job, cannot understand why they are being laid off and why they are being cut back.

(1630)

And here again I would challenge members who are going to speak this afternoon and tomorrow to stand up and explain to us why it is the position of this government to lay off people in the health care programs, to lay them off, and then have the Minister of Social Services announce that he's going to retrain them for some other jobs when they were doing a perfectly adequate and important job as nurses in the hospitals and in the dental program. There simply is no logic to what this government is doing.

Mr. Speaker, the other areas in the province that are having problems with their Medicare program and the hospital situation is long, and the list is growing every day.

We have a hospital in Melfort which has beds and rooms which have not been opened because they don't have enough staff, and they don't have enough equipment. We have places like Rosetown where certain numbers of people have been laid off because the deficit in the hospital now stands at \$200,000, and they are forced into making those kind of tough decisions. And I say to you that it's unfortunate, and it's not necessary, when you're running a deficit of \$1.2 billion, that you don't have enough money to take care of the health system in this province.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Regina Centre referred to a tour that members of our caucus were on, dealing with and listening to people who had stressful situations in their family, people who were care-givers, religious people who came out to these meetings. And there were many of them in the 11 centres we went to. And I want to say that in each and every case the most important issue that was raised over and over again was the problem with unemployment, or underemployment. And what we are finding is that the number of people on welfare in this province, Mr. Speaker, has sky-rocketed to a record number.

The last published numbers by the Minister of Social Services stood at 64,000 people, up considerably from 1982. And I say to the Minister of Social Services, who is sitting in his desk and saying he is doing a great job and arguing that we have no problem with the number of people on welfare, I say to him that your record is not an impressive one.

And at each of these hearings that we had around the province, each of these meetings, people would come to us, and talk about the problems they are having in dealing with the unemployment situation and the lack of work. And we had stories from farmers who were facing losing the farm, and, when they would go to the Department of Social Services for a bit of help, they were told to sell their farms.

We had young people in Moose Jaw who came out uninvited. They just came to the meeting because they were having difficulty dealing with the 40 per cent cut in their income that was announced by the Minister of Social Services. And they said that they were in his upgrading and training program, that they were trying to upgrade themselves to find employment, but they were have a great deal of difficulty because they didn't have enough money to feed their kids,

or themselves, or to have clothes so they could go to school. And they were very open about their discussion of the lack of textbooks in the upgrading course. They said for 30 students they had 2 or 3 textbooks to share between the 30 of them. And when they were asked what they did in order to survive, they told us that they lived in the streets, or that they committed some petty crime in order to keep the household going.

And the Minister of Social Services, when he goes to conferences on child abuse, which he attended last weekend, should not act as if he has no solutions to the problem. He knows, and people who work in the field know, that the unemployment rate and violent crime and suicide and alcoholism and family breakdown and child abuse track very closely with unemployment. He knows that this government, this government has a very important role in lowering the number of child abuse cases in this province.

There are social workers, and there are people who teach social work at this university in Regina who will tell you very clearly, Mr. Minister, that by lowering the unemployment rate in Regina and Saskatoon you would instantly lower the crime rate, you would lower the number of child abuses, you would lower the number of family breakdowns, and you would lower alcoholism. And for you to go to that conference and sanctimoniously say that the reason child abuse is increasing is because there's more cases being reported, is not being truthful, is not being truthful to the people of this province. You know very well, you know very well that by lowering the unemployment rate you would very seriously lower the crime rate, as I have mentioned earlier. It's not by coincidence that the violent crime rate in Saskatoon has increased 100 per cent since you people took office, and at the same time violent crime has gone up by 100 per cent as well.

What are the other explanations? Are you saying then that it's not associated with unemployment insurance, and since you guys took over they have finally, or ultimately, turned to crime because of the government, or what is it? What is causing it? If it isn't unemployment, what is causing the problem?

And I would ask you, Mr. Minister, to stand here and tell us why the suicide rate in Saskatchewan is at record proportions, why the family breakdown and child abuse, as you yourself admit, is at record proportions, if it isn't tied to unemployment rate. I believe it is, and if you believe it isn't I would challenge you to stand here and tell us why it is at record levels.

And I say for you to attack the people on welfare and cut their welfare by 40 per cent as their incentive to work, when at the same time you are giving more money to the oil companies as their incentive to work, is not understandable by the majority of people in this province. It's not the Saskatchewan way. It is not the Saskatchewan tradition, and it is not the heritage of this province.

You are right. The people of the province have always wanted to work. Mr. Speaker, the people of this province are some of the hardest working people in the world. They moved here from other countries so they would have that opportunity to farm and work, and they did. Up till 1982 for record of unemployment in this province stood at 4.5, 5 per cent.

And since that time in the major cities it has doubled. It has doubled, and it has doubled as a result of the government inaction in a number of areas. It has doubled because the government, when they got elected, believed very firmly that the way you created employment, and I believe that in their heart they believed that by going to foreign countries and getting multinationals to come to Saskatchewan, that you would create employment. I think they believed that.

I think they were misguided in the concept of how you create employment, and they looked to Vienna and the United States and Germany and France, and the minister from Regina South went to Europe and he was going to attract all this business to Saskatchewan in 1982. And I have yet to hear him stand in this House and announce one industry that has moved to Saskatchewan.

And I think the misguided and the belief that the large multinationals were going to come here has failed. I think the government sees it has failed and they are now standing around and milling and wondering what to do because their policies have utterly failed, and the unemployment proves that. The crime rate proves that. And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that we have to look to Saskatchewan people for our solution out of this one.

The people of Saskatchewan have a strong tradition, and it's not a tradition of socialism or capitalism. The people of Saskatchewan are unique, Mr. Speaker. When they came from all the countries around the world to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, they got together. They co-operated to build their farms, their barns, their houses, their schools, because that's the only way they could get things done. And when the grain exchange in Winnipeg tried to steal their wheat, they got together again to demand a Canadian Wheat Board and to set up the wheat pools. And when the banks tried to take their land in the 1930s, they set up credit unions, and worked together to solve their problems.

And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that those same people and that same spirit of co-operation exists in this province, as it always has. It's a unique province with unique solutions to its problems.

And I want to tell you as well, that in the 1930s when the politicians in the old-line parties, the Tories and Liberals, would not listen to the people of this province, they went another step and formed their own political party. And they formed a political party that was called the CCF, later to be known as the NDP.

And I say to members opposite who ridicule those pioneers who founded that original and unique Saskatchewan party, to try to say that that is not part of our heritage, flies in the face of reality. And I think the same people, the same beliefs that built this province, will after the next election once more come forward, from the government.

And I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, now, that I will be supporting the amendment put forward by my colleague from Assiniboia and voting against the main motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MYERS: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to debate the budget speech once again. I guess I would first like to recognize our new member from Thunder Creek who gave his maiden speech in the House today, and a very fine speech it was. He understands right from the very beginning, the common sense required it takes to run the province of Saskatchewan. And it would be a wise move on behalf of the opposition to have listened to some of his comments.

The budget set out last week the four corner-stones, namely, health, education, agriculture, and employment. I know that last week when I attended the STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation) spring council meeting in Saskatoon, they were very appreciative of the budget's highlights and the endeavours that we will be putting into education this year and for the next five years.

Finally, they know what the bottom line will be five years from now. The \$35 million that are going into education this year in this budget is a great improvement over any improvement the former government had ever made towards education. We know that by the lack of technical schools they didn't build. They certainly announced them, but they never built them.

We have a new technical school going up in Prince Albert right now. I know the members from Prince Albert are very excited about it. And I know the people in the North are very excited about it because no longer do the residents of Athabasca and Cumberland have to come to Saskatoon. It's much closer and much better for them to participate in a technical school in Prince Albert.

. . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I know the member from Regina Centre has some comments to make, as he usually does, but they're going flat, as they usually do.

Education is for the future, for our children. The \$17 million this year that will be going into — and that's over and above last year's — \$17 million to school boards, are greatly appreciated. The \$8 million going into debt retirement is appreciated. And the \$10 million going into new initiative programs is greatly appreciated.

But more than that, we have another corner-stone, and that is health. In the past few years, in past elections, we've heard from the opposition, small as it is right now. They said we would do away with health care for people. We would establish utilization fees. And now this year we see utilization fees, and we see it in Manitoba, and we see it from a government which is of the same nature as the opposition that sits over there — an NDP government. And they somehow expect to be respected for their care in health care. No compassion. Utilization fees. And no doubt if they were to come to power they would establish utilization fees as well.

But health, what does it mean to this province? Well, it's a significant amount. I will go over what it means to Saskatoon, in which my constituency resides.

Health. We have a major expansion at St. Paul's Hospital — a \$50 million expansion at St. Paul's Hospital.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MYERS: — And why? Well, we've dealt with health and the waiting lists as much as we could, but are now taking a long-term objective look at it. But not only a major expansion of \$50 million at St. Paul's Hospital, but a \$100 million new hospital to replace the existing City Hospital in Saskatoon.

. . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, that's great. You say two. We have a third hospital in Saskatoon, a \$24 million expansion at University Hospital. Two new floors, two new floors. The requirements at University Hospital are really the requirements of the province because it is a provincial hospital. We know that, because each and every one of those members over there have had constituents of theirs come to Saskatoon for treatment. Every one of them.

(1645)

And not only are we putting one new hospital and two major expansions into Saskatoon. We have a cancer clinic. We have \$14.3 million for a cancer clinic expansion this year. Not down the road. This year. And besides that, two new scan units for the province, one in Regina and one in Saskatoon. That doubles the amount we have right now.

. . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, my colleague from Saskatoon Fairview also says we have a 238-bed nursing home. Yes, we announced that last year. Tenders are out now, and construction will start this year on a 238-bed unit, or nursing home.

. . . (inaudible interjection) . . . the member from Lloydminster, my colleague, says, read their record. Read their record. Well their record was, in 1976 they cut out 400 positions in hospitals in this province. That's significant because in 1976 they were buying potash mines. Potash mines.

Here's what former NDP minister of finance Walter Smishek said in 1976:

In Saskatchewan we have the highest hospital utilization in Canada — 220 citizens per 1,000 population are admitted to hospitals as compared to the national average of 154 per thousand. There is no evidence that people of Saskatchewan are more

often ill than anywhere in Canada, but we are deeply concerned about hospital utilization. There has been discussion about reduction in approved hospital beds in the order of 5 per cent. That may not be necessary to represent a 5 per cent budgetary cut.

Well they did cut. That was 1976 Walter Smishek said that. In 1976 they cut 400 positions — 400 positions. And this is from a caring party, a caring government. Who was it? The NDP. And they have the nerve of coming into 1982 claiming we would cut. Cut what? They've done all the cutting under their government. That's why three hospitals, one nursing home, and one cancer clinic are being built today.

Not only did they cut positions in 1976 to buy potash mines, they went on in '77 and '78 to establish uranium mining. Well I shouldn't say establish it, because it was in the province. They took over 50 per cent control through SMDC or Saskatchewan Mining and Development Corporation, took 50 per cent control in the Key Lake project on a compulsory buy-in that the company was forced to sell them.

But what does it mean? Six hundred and thirty million dollars. Six hundred and thirty million dollars. Well, we'll tack that onto the \$415 million they put into potash, and \$54 million they threw at Saskoil, or what Saskoil is today. This is when they cut hospital positions. They put moratoriums on nursing home construction. Great government, caring government. No, no. It's out, and people know that it's out. They were more interested in taking over industry in Saskatchewan than they were for caring for the people of Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Smishek also said, until such time as needed for additional beds can clearly be identified and a suitable construction policy defined, a moratorium should be enforced. Well they identified their caring needs. But the funny thing about it is that they've done a flip-flop, a flip-flop. No more are they interested in uranium mining in the North, but they want to dissolve it. They don't want any uranium mining in the North. Ten thousand people rely on that industry in this province — 10,000 people. And they're doing a flip-flop. And it's interesting to note that the two members of their party from the northern part of the province do not support that policy.

As one of the members from the northern part of the province, in their party, has said, it has been the single greatest incentive for their people to get out and work and learn a trade. And without that, they would be working . . . I don't know if they'd be working, but we used to have a department called DNS, department of northern services.

Make work. No real skill learning, no real benefit to the economy, just a make work. And one of their members from the North has said this has been the single, greatest piece of industrial incentive for the North, and they want to do away with it. When they took money away from hospital construction and nursing home construction, now they want to go into that industry, and now they want to do away with it.

You know the party is a party of flip-flops. They come, they go, they decide. And I guess right now they're deciding whether they want a new leader.

One of my colleagues has mentioned Snow White, and I guess that goes along with Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. The member from Shaunavon referred to some of our members as mental midgets. Well, maybe that's why he uses that language and sits on the other side of the House.

But obviously we care, we care for the people . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Regina Centre says: what's our record? Well, Mr. Member from Regina Centre, what's our record? Fifty million dollars for St. Paul's Hospital. That's a record. One hundred million dollars for a new City Hospital; \$24 million for University Hospital; \$14 million for the cancer clinic; \$21 million for the nursing home.

. . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You know, the Leader of the Opposition says, three years. Yes, they announced that nursing home three years ago, just prior to the election. They announced it without plans, without property, and not knowing which direction they were going to go in. There wasn't one plan, there wasn't one definite plan for that nursing home.

The whole thing revolves around the fact that at the time of the election they also wanted to buy an airline company, and they were going to take equity out in CP Rail . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh yes, and they were going to go into another potash mine. I can remember going to a news conference when they were . . . that they announced they were doing a \$2.5 billion expansion in the potash industry — 2.5 billion.

. . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm getting a lot of advice from my colleagues here because they all remember these. I hope the Leader of the Opposition does. He'll need the help. And the Leader of the Opposition has said, "when are we going to build them?"

Well, okay, let's start off with University Hospital. This year, expansion. This year, St. Paul's, the same thing. This year. Cancer clinic — this year. The nursing home — within several months. And a new City Hospital within two years.

I can remember back in 1975 — he went into an election there and he didn't tell the people that he was going to take over the potash industry. Remember that June '75 election? There was no mention of takeover in the potash industry. He did it because he didn't care for the people. He got elected. He got what he wanted, his personal power, and then he went out and bought potash mines.

AN HON. MEMBER: — They don't care.

MR. MYERS: — That's right. They don't care. I have a little article here from the *Star-Phoenix*, Monday, page 6. It says, what you'll pay and what you'll lose. And it's got the picture of the member from Quill Lakes at the bottom, and he's saying, "Is it fair?"

AN HON. MEMBER: — That's not a very good picture.

MR. MYERS: — Yes, I've seen him look better.

He says we'll lose. We have a 1 per cent tax increase. Well that's not fair. We have a 1 per cent flat tax, but we reduced income tax from 51 per cent to 50 per cent. And we're taxing.

Let's tell them what we're taxing — the 630 people who never paid any provincial income tax. But over 3,200 people in this province have paid less than 5 per cent income tax. And both these categories were people who earned over \$50,000 last year — over 50,000.

So he says, make the rich pay. Well, we do. And we sort of have that belief ourselves that if you're making the money, you should deserve to pay some of it to cover the facilities provided by this government, and for the care of the people. It says . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Well, I'm not depressed about this budget. I will reassure the member from Regina Centre, I'm very happy about it.

The members of Saskatoon sat down in January and February and listened to the concerns of the hospital boards, all three hospital boards. That, they said, was the first time that a government took the time to listen to their concerns. And we've got the projects now in the budget and we're going ahead and building them.

We also sat down with the public school board in Saskatoon and listened to their concerns with

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education. And we see a major thrust in education in this province — not a short-term, not one before an election or after an election, but right now, five years, where they can budget, budget for the future.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take at this point in time, to ask to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:00 p.m.