

December 8, 1986

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Tusa: -- Today I will take the liberty to be the first. I'm very pleased to introduce to the Assembly a group of 17 grade 11 and 12 students from Dysart High School, seated in the Speaker's gallery. They are here with their teacher, Mr. Semie Parmar, and with their chaperon, Mr. John Konecsni.

I might say that Dysart is the net town to my own home town, so I know these people very well and I'm very, very pleased to have them here this afternoon. I trust they will enjoy question period, and I look forward to meeting with them at approximately 2:30 for drinks and pictures.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS Canada's Patent Drug Legislation

Hon. Mr. Blakeney : – Mr. Speaker, my question in to the Premier, and it deals with the Mulroney government's proposals to amend Canada's patent legislation which are about to be debated in parliament before a parliamentary committee for detailed study shortly.

Mr. Premier, as you know, these changes will increase the profits of multinational drug companies and will drive up the price of prescription drugs for low-income families and the sick and the elderly and for provincial government drug plans.

Can the Premier tell the Saskatchewan people whether his government is for or against the Mulroney government's proposed legislation?

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Speaker, from what I understand with respect to the legislation, it does a combination of things. One of the more important – and we've seen it here in our health care system – is that to a large extent Canadians have been packagers of health supplies and goods and services that go into the health care field, and we obviously spend a great deal of money in health care. In this province alone I believe it's \$1.2 billion on an annual basis.

If we can manufacture more of the supplies in this country, whether it's in Saskatchewan or whether it's in Canada, by building incentives for the manufacturing and process and delivery of those goods and services here, it means more jobs for us. In the long run it means lower costs for us because we're not importing it.

I've used the same argument with respect to supplies here in the health care field. I believe that there's new health care manufacturing near Indian Head or Wolseley, Swift Current, and other jurisdictions WE wouldn't have to pay the transportation costs from Ontario or from Germany or from other places.

So if we can encourage that manufacturing here, it means we have the jobs here and we cut the transportation costs. And in the long run the intent, obviously is to have better drugs. If we have the research going on here so that we can provide higher quality and better quality drugs and health care supplies to the public, then it's better than paying somebody else some place other than in Canada – say in the United States or Europe – to do the research, charge us for that research, bring it into this country, and then we have to pay the freight as well as not have the jobs with the manufacturing and the research that is here.

So I would like to think in the long haul, Mr. Speaker, the objective is to manufacture here, to process here, to have the jobs here, cut the costs for the consumers here, because you're building it in Canada as opposed to having it built in the United States or researched some place else.

Now the hon. member wants to know whether I'm for it or against it. I am for . . . I tell you what I'm for. I'm for more manufacturing here that would increase the jobs, that would cut the costs, and in the long run, provide better quality drugs and newer drugs at lower prices to consumers.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney : -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is clear that the Premier is supporting the Mulroney legislation. My question to you is this: why are you now supporting the Mulroney legislation when your Minister of Health, short months ago, did not support the legislation but in fact, in a communication to Mr. Epp, asked for a reconsideration of the entire issue by the federal government?

Why, Mr. Premier, when your minister in April made very clear that he was not in favour of the legislation; why are you now in favour of it?

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Speaker, my minister argued to have that legislation delayed and asked them to have a second look at modifying it to make sure that we could get the full benefits, or more benefits, to Canadians as we pass that legislation, and that's precisely what they've done.

So to the extent – and I'm sure the hon. member would not argue against having more manufacturing in the province of Saskatchewan, or more manufacturing of health care requirements in Canada. Now to do that you have to have some incentives to encourage people to do it here as opposed to New York or Chicago or Germany or some place else, and that's what we're looking at. We said, make the incentives as reasonable as possible to create that economic activity here because we're paying through the nose. Other research is going on in Paris or in London or in Minneapolis, and we're paying for that – not getting the jobs, paying the freight to get it here – when this province alone spends over a billion dollars in health care.

So we said, take a look at it to make sure it's as reasonable as possible so that we can capture most of the benefits here in this country, and that's precisely what they've done. As far as I know, when the minister was there under my instructions was to take another look at this; we're not satisfied; do it better. And I believe that's what they've done.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney : -- Mr. Premier, supplementary. Your minister said, and I quote:

(He had) serious reservations that the province of Saskatchewan holds towards proposed changes in (the) compulsory licensing provisions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Chairman, I can't give all the details, but I know that there's been changes with respect to how the program will be implemented. There will be cash involved in terms of some provinces that may not get as many jobs as some other jurisdictions. I believe most of the jobs that we're looking at initially were going to take place in central Canada. Obviously, we argued to have more of them here in the west, and if we're not going to get more of the jobs immediately, we want the benefits of this research and the jobs and the quality manufacturing to show up here one way or another. So that's some of the things that they're looking at with respect to the implementation of this program over some time.

Again I would be surprised if the hon. member is against – maybe I shouldn't be surprised – why most of the public in Canada would like to see more of the jobs, more of the manufacturing, here as opposed to offshore. Why not have it here? And at the same time I'm sure you have to recognize, Mr. Speaker, that to have it here you have to provide some encouragement to make sure the research takes place in Canada as opposed to some place else and us just paying the bill.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney : -- Final supplementary for me, Mr. Speaker. Do you not agree, Mr. Premier, that there has been a substantial increase in the manufacturing of drugs in Canada since the patent laws were changed, and that in fact there is no reason to believe that making patents more restrictive will get more manufacturing in Canada, because the experience indicates precisely the reverse?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Speaker, part of them making the changes is that there has to be the research money spent in Canada. And that's part of the legislation as I understand it and I haven't been through all the legislation in some detail. But they will invest in Canada doing the research or else . . . I mean, I think it's a 10-year protective plan that they have some part of that legislation.

So, Mr. Speaker, obviously we want to see the research money spent here. The members opposite, I mean, to be fair, I can understand. They don't believe that there will be bacon plants; they don't believe that there will be paper plants; they don't believe there will be upgraders; they don't believe that there will be all kinds of building. It's in the private sector. Well, I mean, obviously I have more confidence in Canadians building here rather than just depending on Americans or somebody else, I am proud to see Canadian manufacture.

Mr. Calvert: -- Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier about a policy position that was put forward by the federal Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Harvey André, who introduced the patent legislation in parliament. Mr. André defended the Mulroney government's position on prescription drugs in the *Toronto Star* by saying:
(both sides indented)

There is within the country a certain group of people who believe it's improper to have profit motives associated with the delivery of health services. That is not a point I share.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Speaker, I will only say that profit in Canada will help people invest money in manufacturing and processing to create economic activity and jobs and as a source of revenue for provinces and the federal government. If we can have more research in Canada on quality drugs – new drugs – whether it's in agriculture chemicals or is another area, Mr. Speaker, we don't manufacture

agriculture chemicals in Saskatchewan or in western Canada. If we can provide incentives for people to do that, or if we can manufacture new drugs or health care equipment in this province, I believe it's a good idea. And if we can provide economic incentives to have that manufacturing, then all the more power to them.

I believe that we could have more manufacturing and processing right here in Regina, in Moose Jaw, in Swift Current, in Prince Albert, not just in Ontario or Quebec, or not just in Germany, or not just in United States, but here. And if the profit system and private enterprise will help create that economic activity . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

They're calling order. I'm answering a question that is very, very significant for the Saskatchewan people, whether I believe that profit is important for building. And yes, it is. And profit is important for building new research and new manufacturing and new processing that can go into education and health and all kinds of other things, Mr. Speaker. Of course. That's what built so many of the things that we have in this great country of Canada.

People said, I will leave Europe and I will manufacture and I will process right here in Canada. And they did. And that's the reason for a great deal of our wealth today. So, Mr. Speaker, I believe in new research, new manufacturing, and new processing based on the profit system, of course. It keeps Canada healthy.

Mr. Calvert: -- Mr. Speaker, I take it the Premier does agree that profit should be a motive for the delivery of health care services.

But Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Premier: isn't the real reason for these changes simply the fact that the Mulroney government has caved in again to U.S. demands in free trade negotiations? I quote to you from Mr. Jack Kay, director of the Canadian drug administration. He says, "there is no net benefit in this Bill for Canadians. It's a sell-out to pressure from the U.S." Is this not the real reason for this legislation?

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Speaker, I can only say to the hon. member that he may want a bridge to the whole question of trade with the United States or with other countries. I obviously believe it's in our best interest to have the best trading relationships – without tariff – with the United States and other jurisdictions everywhere in the world, and he may not. If we can have more manufacturing and processing here, whether it's in the drug business, or whether it's in paper or in hogs, and we're trading those goods and services with the United States or with those around the world, I believe that's in our best interest because that's where we generate our income and protect our jobs.

Now if the hon. member, of course, who is entitled to his view, doesn't agree with that, fair enough. But I believe it's in Canada's best interest and Saskatchewan's best interest.

I'll quote the Leader of the Opposition who said (not verbatim, but something like that) that we believe – and he believes – in a free trade arrangement in potash between the United States and Canada. Well I would think that we have many sectors where we could do that right across the piece. And if he believes in it, what's the argument? Why don't we sit down and say, yes, if we can manufacture more drugs here, manufacture more supplies, more paper, more bacon, whatever, why don't we do it in Saskatchewan? Why don't we do it in Ontario and deal with Americans and the Chinese and the Japanese?

So he asked me what my views are on trade. I would say, manufacture and process in Canada and trade it globally around the world.

SaskTel Contracting Telephone Repairs to Alberta Firm

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Mr. Speaker, on Friday I took notice of a question from the member for Regina Rosemont. One of the questions was: are you shipping out jobs to your Tory friends in Alberta by virtue of a contract with a company called Palco out of Calgary?

Let me put it in perspective that the arrangements and contracts between SaskTel and Palco started in the year 1980 – 1980 Mr. Speaker – and they have continued each year since, and that includes 1981. It includes that portion of 1982 prior to the election of the Progressive Conservatives government.

Up until March of 1982, Northern Telecom assembled Contempra phones in the city of Regina. Three years ago the exclusive patent rights for the make-up of the Contempra mouldings was acquired by the company named Palco. They are the only such manufacturer of the mouldings in western Canada. Notwithstanding that Northern Telecom got out of the manufacturing of the Contempra phones, they are still a very popular phone among the Saskatchewan consumers, and in order to services them we must obtain the mouldings.

Secondly, the service contract with Palco only comes into play in terms of service when SaskTel cannot supply the service, it is fully booked, and secondly, when Northern Telecom repair in Regina is fully booked and the consumers are not getting the service.

As recently as this morning, for example, the SaskTel repair depot was unable to repair one Contempra phone during the course of the day. There is now a four-month backlog for the Saskatchewan consumer. To move it all, as the hon. member requests, to SaskTel would put the four-month backlog probably up in the range of eight to nine months for the Saskatchewan consumer. Frankly, I find that unacceptable to the Saskatchewan consumer. I suggest that the member's allegations and innuendoes of last Friday were totally unfounded.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Fitness Spa Closures

Ms. Smart: -- My question is to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Affairs, and it deals with the November 13th closure of the four Spa fitness clubs in Saskatchewan – two in Saskatoon and two in Regina. These closures left hundreds of Saskatchewan people – club members, suppliers, and creditors – out in the cold.

Can the minister give the Assembly a status report on this situation? Have the RCMP completed their investigation, and will charges of fraud be laid against those involved in the Spa fitness clubs?

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: -- Mr. Speaker, in response to the member's question, I have nothing to report on the status of the RCMP investigation and as to whether or not charges of fraud will be laid.

With regard to the closure of the Spa itself, both here in Saskatoon and in Regina, the bond on the two operations has been ceased by the department, and we are waiting people to come forward who may or may not have a claim

Ms. Smart: -- Supplementary. Can the minister tell us how many former club members, creditors and suppliers have contacted her department to register a claim, and can she give us an estimate of the value of the claims? Are we talking tens of thousands of dollars or hundreds of thousands of dollars?

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: -- Mr. Speaker, I don't have the number right at hand. We're still waiting to receive. We always give people ample time to notify the department. I don't think on the basis of what we know now that the claim will run into the tens of thousands or the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

I may indicate to the member that in an event like this, whether it's Spa Lady or any other direct seller that is bonded by the department, it does put a hardship on those consumers who are waiting for the bond because she may or may not know that it takes two years for a bond pay-out.

Ms. Smart: -- Another supplementary. This is another example of a company folding up its tent and disappearing into the middle of the night, and it's giving reputable businesses in the province concern that their image as business is being tarnished by this sort of activity. Does the provincial government have any proposals to tighten up controls on these fly-by-night operations, such as larger licensing bonds?

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: -- Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to inform the member that since taking on the responsibility of Consumer and Commercial Affairs some three and a half years ago, the department has become very aggressive in the area of consumer education, and we've put out numerous pamphlets on how the market-place works and what consumers should or should not do. I think that's quite a different stance than was employed by the previous government. We hold workshops for consumers and business people all over the province and it's being really well received.

Ms. Smart: -- That must be why the department folded its money management program that was giving so many people useful information. And that has to do with my third supplemental question. I want to know if the minister's office has taken every possible step to inform former club members of their rights. Have you sent out letters to these people urging them to file a claim?

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: -- Well, the member is wrong in her assumption that the money management has folded because the money management program is still in place. With regards to those consumers who have club memberships, we have not sent out a letter to them. We have issued a few press releases, and people are coming forward.

Ms. Smart: -- Is the minister aware that people have to have that information in order to be able to file a claim?

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: -- The department does not have a list of the consumers doing business with a now defunct company.

Review of Social Assistance and Income Support Programs

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Social Services, Mr. Speaker. the throne speech talks about a continuing review of social assistance and income support programs, and adds: "Special attention will be given to the methods of deliver."

My question is: does that mean that the provincial government is considering, among other options, does that mean the provincial government is considering shifting responsibility for social assistance programs to local governments? Is that one of the options?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: -- I've only been the minister responsible for that department for about three or four weeks. We are reviewing everything – I can assure the public of Saskatchewan that nothing will be untouched in our review – and we will deliver the most efficient method of serving the poor and all people of Saskatchewan

Mr. Hagel: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I point out that the options that are being considered are those initiated by the government, and I can only assume that deliver by local governments is one of the options being considered, Mr. Minister. Can the minister give us some assurance that, as you review the social assistance and income support programs, that you will be giving consideration to increasing social assistance payments?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: -- We will make fair increases wherever possible, weighing the ability of society to make the increases and the needs as required by society.

Mr. Hagel: — Further supplementary, Mr. Speaker. There are some 60,000 people as I'm sure the minister knows, who are dependent upon social assistance in Saskatchewan today, and this is a particular crisis time in these weeks preceding Christmas. Does the minister really think that \$115 per week for groceries, clothing, and household expenses for a family of four is too high? IS that your position? Do you believe that a family of four is living high off the hog with \$115 per week?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: -- Well I indicated to you that all programs would be reviewed. I want to point out to the public that at present each of these families can receive \$300 per child under the child tax credit advance. That will help them to the extent of \$300 per child before Christmas, and into the new year we will continue our review and make changes.

Mr. Hagel: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. By when can those people who are dependent upon social assistance expect a review to be completed and to have an increase in their allowances?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: -- Well the review will take place as it unfolds. We are reviewing everything. And there will be a new budget year in the spring, and all these things will be taken into account. We will deliver as much money to the poor as society can afford.

Crop Insurance Benefits

Mr. Goodale: -- Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier in his capacity as Minister of Agriculture. The Premier will recall an inquiry that I made last month, to which he replied, about crop insurance. And the problem that I raised had to do with many farmers' perceptions that they had, in the spring, acquired and paid for insurance coverage based upon a grain price in the order of \$4 a bushel. But instead, because of falling world markets and poor harvest conditions, the actual crop value turned out in many cases to be only more like \$2 a bushel, and all of that without triggering any crop insurance benefits.

I thank the Premier for his previous written reply. But I wonder if he has given any consideration to adjustments in the crop insurance program to somehow take into account that anomaly which is nobody's fault. It's just the way, unfortunately, 1986 turned out.

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- Yes, Mr. Speaker, I did receive a letter from the hon. member. And in my reply I pointed out . . . and I acknowledged that concern that was raised. What I said at that time is that if we had to make up the difference in crop insurance in one year, we would be looking at somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$400 to \$500 million bill. And I just pointed out that while the interesting situation developed this year, it would be a great deal of money to expect out of crop insurance.

At the same time, as I'm sure the hon. member knows, we may have to review the whole question of the money in stabilization and how it operates; the money in crop insurance and how it works; the money in deficiency payments or other mechanisms, disaster mechanisms, and look at the whole bailiwick to make sure that we have a system of support for production and price changes that would indeed protect Saskatchewan or western Canadian farmers. And I'm not above looking at any of those, and I would obviously look for suggestions from you or from other members in the House.

We know crop insurance is based on production, not on price. And we know stabilization is based on price, not on production. So those two insurance schemes work in tandem or in parallel, looking at different conditions. If we cross them, we could wreck one and hurt the other, and vice versa.

So what we're obviously concerned about, as I'm sure you are, is some sort of mechanism that protects us from these anomalies that come up from time to time. So I don't think it would be fair to ask crop insurance to come up with the money because it will be \$400 or \$500 million, I believe, in Saskatchewan alone if we did that.

But that isn't to say we shouldn't look at some other mechanisms that would help shore that up. I expect that we may hear information with respect to a deficiency payment this week or very soon which could be the largest cash payment in the history of Canada to western Canadian farmers. And if that's the case, I mean, obviously it addresses some of the problems you've raised as a result of the anomaly associated with prices.

But stabilization is well received because it's based on price, crop insurance on production. And I do believe we should be careful if we decide to combine them all of a sudden because people have confidence in how crop insurance works and how stabilization works.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS

Hon. Mr. McLeod: – Mr. Speaker, if I might, while it's entirely possible that several of these questions could well be ordered directly, I would just as the indulgence of the House, and I would ask the House to convert items 1 through 16 at this juncture in any case, 1 through 16, to motions for returns debatable.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATE

ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: – Mr. Speaker, when I spoke on Friday last, I had an opportunity to congratulate you on your election to the office of Speaker; I had an opportunity to congratulate the government on its re-election, and to congratulate new members on both sides of the House who are taking their place for the first time in this Chamber.

I commented on the fact that the Speech from the Throne had failed to deal with some key problems being faced by Saskatchewan people -- people in northern Saskatchewan and southern Saskatchewan. I spoke briefly about the particular problems faced by people in northern Saskatchewan. I spoke of the fact that the throne speech had not addressed the matter of job creation and the urgent need to create more employment in this province. I noted the fact that this province, alone among the ten provinces, had fewer jobs in November of 1986 than it did in November of 1985.

I talked about the fact that the throne speech did not deal with the matter of taxation and making our taxation system fairer, our system -- both federally and provincially -- a fairer system. And I indicated that I thought that was important because I believe that governments both federal and provincial were going to be under additional pressure, might well be forced to raise taxes, and under those circumstances the fairness of the tax system was fundamental to getting public acceptance to getting additional public revenues being raised.

And then I talked about the government talking in its Speech from the Throne about reorganization. The government has promised reorganization again and again and again. Each time it has said that somehow they were going to make government operations more efficient and more effective. The throne speech promised yet another round of this. In fact it promised legislation for reorganization.

Now members will know, or at least members who are not new members will know, that we don't need any legislation for reorganization. The provisions are there in The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act to create new departments. You don't need legislation. You could go right ahead with your reorganization. If you wanted at some later time to confirm it all by legislation, fine, but you certainly don't need to fill up a throne speech asking for legislative powers which you already have. And the only reason, Mr. Speaker, that the government does this is that it does not know what to do. In exchange or in lieu of having any policy, it proposes reorganization, and in lieu of doing anything about reorganization, it's talking about new legislation for reorganization which it does not need. We are here seeing a retreat, not only from any attempt to deal with the problems, but a retreat even from dealing with the need for reorganization which they have indicated in their Speech from the Throne.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to take time today to outline the general approach which the New Democratic Party takes to many of the problems and the challenges and the opportunities facing the people of Saskatchewan; talk a little bit about the mining and manufacturing and agriculture and financial management and secrecy disclosure, and some other matters of concern to Saskatchewan people.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is basically an agricultural province. Our greatest resource base is our agricultural land, and over any extended period of time, our greatest productive asset, and the amount that we produce is represented by agricultural land and agricultural production, respectively. But the issues facing agriculture in Saskatchewan today are many. I think most people would agree that as a province we want diversified agriculture. We have, over the decades, seen diversification. We have seen diversification from field crops to livestock, and we have seen a diversification within field crops from wheat to other crops -- canola, perhaps, most spectacularly -- but other crops as well. But this diversification in agriculture has been by no means uniform.

When grain prices are low or grain markets are plugged, cattle and hog numbers go up. When grain markets are open, livestock numbers go down. Cattle numbers, after rising from 1969 to 1975, have dropped every year since then. And while we talk about diversification, we're not able to sustain diversification; and that, I think, is illustrated by the fact that cattle numbers have gone down in every year since 1975.

Hog numbers reached their peak in the grain-glut days of 1971 when we had over a million hogs. When grain markets opened up, the number of hogs dropped sharply, and by 1975 we only had half a million. Numbers have begun to increase modestly since then, and I would guess that the number of hogs in 1986 might be 700,000. We have not yet regained, or anything like regained, the hog numbers we had in the early 1970's.

Sheep and lamb numbers have gone down consistently, and they're at their lowest in 60 years at 60,000 head.

New Democrats believe that we need a diversified agriculture, and that means that we need livestock production and we need a range of field crops -- not just wheat but a range of field crops.

Now some individual farmers won't want to diversify, specialized production will be the obvious course of action for them. You may ask, well surely this business of diversification and specialization, and the merits of each, are faced by other industries. What do they do?

Well, Mr. Speaker, agriculture has some unique features as an industry, and agriculture has some special problems in keeping its head above water in difficult times. First, there's the weather. For everybody the weather is uncontrollable. But for farmers the risks that flow from the fact that the weather is uncontrollable are much greater than for most other industries.

And second is markets. For many industries, markets are uncertain, but for many industries they are not. For many industries, much of their marketing is done locally, or at least in Canada, and therefore not subject to the sharp fluctuations that international markets usually represent. But much of our farm production is sold internationally, and that means that we have serious problems stemming from the fluctuations in that area.

Many industries have an advantage over agriculture in that they are able to introduce some form of supply management. They wouldn't call it that, but that's what it is. When their cars aren't selling, the car manufacturers don't keep churning out cars and piling them up. They shut down their plants, and unemployment insurance pays their work force.

These are not the happy conditions of Saskatchewan farmers. They are not able to control their production in that way. Much of the product they sell is on international markets. And the fact that there are many, many producers of agricultural products means that they can't introduce any form of formal or informal supply management, except in the specific areas that we are all familiar with, in dairy production, and poultry and egg production. We are all familiar with the phenomenon of a 5 per cent over-supply meaning at 25 per cent drop in prices.

So, Mr. Speaker, these are some of the risks faced by Saskatchewan agriculture, and some of the challenges which are faced by governments, if we are to bring stability to Saskatchewan agriculture. Now we need some policies.

We need some policies, federal and provincial, to support Saskatchewan and western farmers. Without these policies we will see farmers in this business of farming -- which is a cyclical business -- we will see the weaker ones go down when the agricultural cycle is at its bottom. And this is a more urgent and imminent threat than was true in past times. In previous times when farmers had relatively little capital out and had relatively lower input costs, when we were on the down cycle, the farmer simply tightened his belt and toughed it out through the low cycle. But that's not possible now; it's not possible now.

Other industries have the same problem. Other industries are cyclical, particularly resource industries, and when we see the down cycle in those resource industries, we see smaller and particularly financially weaker producers being absorbed by the large producers. And we see fewer and fewer producers in many of the resource industries -- that's particularly true in wood products; it's true, by and large, in mining.

That's what happens in a cyclical industry without support prices. We've got to ask ourselves: do we want that to happen to western farming? as surely it will if we don't act; just as surely as it's happened in wood production or other cyclical industries. When the cycle is at the bottom, the weak producers, the financially weak producers are absorbed by the financially strong producers, and we have a much smaller number of large producers.

It has happened in many industries; it will happen in agriculture. And that's one option, for us to stand by and watch this process go on. Or will we put into place programs which will protect farmers against the double jeopardy of weather and market fluctuations. Help the farmers survive the down cycle and keep a relatively large number of farms -- the largest possible number of viable family farms. Now that's the other option. And those are the ones that are facing us.

New Democrats favour the option of putting into place solid support programs and retaining a large number of farmers. Now that means, Mr. Speaker, stabilization programs, and what we need are not one-shot programs to deal with each crisis. What we need are programs that farmers can count on, on an ongoing basis.

Now huge strides have been made in the last 15 years; some forward-looking moves have been made by the federal government and by the provincial government and sometimes governments combined. And we all think of what's happened to farming to stabilize it in the last 15 years or so. We've had crop insurance protection -- that was nothing 15 years ago, it is now a major program and it's saved hundreds, and perhaps thousands of farmers, from being driven to the wall -- we've had western grain stabilization. This program was introduced perhaps 10 years ago, little more, and it's proving its worth in protecting farmers against some of the perils of market fluctuation. It has major flaws, as we know, because it's based upon the average price of grains over a period of time, and if we have low prices over a longish period, then stabilization payments will be low at the very time we need them to be high.

We have the hog stabilization program. This provincial program was set up 10 years ago or so, and it has assisted many, many hog farmers to stay in business. And the same is true of beef stabilization. These have helped farmers.

We need to pick up these programs and prove them. And we need to go ahead from where they have left off.

Now what needs to be done? Concerning hog stabilization, I think we need to know whether the new program, the tripartite program, is going to work. And I think it's fair to say the jury is still out on that. It's fair to say the jury is still out on that. New Democrats believe that this stabilization plan and plans like it should be based broadly on costs of production rather than on market price as the new hog plan is.

It's based on market price, and therefore we don't know whether it will provide support on a down cycle. The jury is still out. We would prefer a program based at least partly on costs of production.

Concerning beef stabilization, while we favour in principle a national plan, we do not wish to see Saskatchewan producers forced to accept the national plan which offers poor protection, as we believe the current national plan does. We urge the provincial government to press the federal government to improve the national beef plan to provide benefits at least equal to the current provincial plan, and to provide support based upon production costs.

(1445)

Now that's our position and we hope the government opposite has a similar position with respect to beef stabilization.

Concerning crop insurance, I think we all know that this is basically a good plan, but it needs constant monitoring as circumstances change.

We come now to the biggest immediate problems facing Saskatchewan farmers.

The first one is the disastrously low international grain prices due to the trade war between the United States and the European Common Market. We've all heard of that, perhaps heard of it many times.

The second is the great pressure on some farmers caused by record real interest rates extending now over several years, combined with low commodity prices. In short, the farm financing prices.

New Democrats believe that neither of these problems is capable of a quick solution, and I want to underline that. We don't believe either of the problems is capable of a quick solution. Therefore we believe that governments, federal and provincial, should put into place longer term programs in the same way that they did for crop insurance and for beef stabilization and hog stabilization and the rest.

With respect to international grain prices, I don't know anybody who believes that problem is going to go away in the next 12 months or 24 months. Therefore we need a longer term program. The most direct way is to provide for an ongoing program of deficiency payments to allow Saskatchewan farmers to compete. The United States and Europe both have similar programs. Canadian farmers need a program, not just for 1986, not just for 1987, but a program that when the farmers seed next spring they know what the situation is. They know approximately what they are going to get for their crop in the same way that U.S. farmers or European farmers know what they can get for their crop.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's what we need and I call upon the provincial government to press the federal government to institute an ongoing program so that farmers may know where they stand.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- Mr. Deputy Speaker, farmers are entitled to know where they stand and they're entitled to know where their governments stand. American farmers know where their government stands. European farmers know where their governments stand. It's not very convincing for the Government of Canada, the Mulroney government, to say -- as I've heard some of their ministers say -- Mr. Farmer, the federal government is not wealthy enough to fight the U.S. treasury or fight the European treasury. The

federal government is not wealthy enough to fight the U.S. treasury, so I'm sorry, Mr. Farmer, you're going to have to go out there and fight them yourself. That's what the Mulroney government is saying.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's not very convincing and it's not very fair. We need a long-term program that farmers can count on and we need it now. We need it announced now. Farmers want to know where they stand because they are making decisions which are going to affect their lives over the next two, three, four years, and they have to know the economic framework in which they are making those decisions.

With respect to farm financing, it's clear that a plan for providing long-term farm financing at lower interest rates than the 12 per cent and 13 per cent and 14 per cent that some farmers are now paying to the Farm Credit Corporation, is needed. We have to have plan that allows farmers to have a reasonable rate of interest extending over a longer period of time so that they can weather this period when interest rates are high and commodity prices are low. And I call upon the provincial government to press the federal government for a realistic long-term farm financing and refinancing program.

This program is . . . or a companion program will be needed to address the growing problem of land transfer -- the transfer of land from one generation to the next - and this has got to be addressed because the programs we have had in the past, for one reason or another, have dealt with only part of the problem -- only part of the problem -- and we need something which will address this problem. We need to know just where people are going to get money in order to pass a farm from one generation to the next.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've been speaking of the short-term and mid-term problems of agriculture, but there are other challenges, and I want to refer to a few of them. If we want diversified agriculture, and I say we d, then we've got to have more agricultural research. Again, there has been some progress in the last 15 years and we acknowledge that.

An Hon. Member: -- Where has it been?

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- Well, there's been the veterinary college, eight or 10 years old; the veterinary infectious disease organization, perhaps five or six years old; the protein oil and starch institute, six or seven years old. All of these that took place in the 1970's -- and I say that only because members opposite are suggesting that the world started in 1982. There's the plant biotechnology institute which was announced by the Trudeau government and which is, I guess, getting into place about now -- and much more. And I'm not suggesting that these are the only efforts at agricultural research. They're not. They're significant ones and we need more.

New Democrats are alarmed by the tendency in Ottawa to down play research except if it's done by the private sector. We need fundamental research for long-term purposes as well as applied research for market purposes. No one is denying the desirability of applied research for market purposes as well as applied research for market purposes. No one is denying the desirability of applied research for market purposes. We are asserting the need for fundamental research for long-term purposes. We're not likely to get that out of the private sector; we need extended research programs by governments and by the private sector.

One area that needs attention is soil and water degradation. Many of us have had an opportunity at least to skim Senator Sparrow's committee report and I think it's generally acknowledged to be a good piece of work. Now we need some follow-up action. We may have an opportunity now, not one we welcome, but there may be market conditions that force or make at least desirable, the lowering of grain production. I hope that won't be necessary but if it should be necessary, then we ought to seize the

opportunity to experiment with methods of soil reclamation. Some promising work on soil salinity in other areas is being done at the University of Saskatchewan and follow-up is needed.

Mr. Speaker, I've touched on a number of matters affecting agriculture. I'm sure what needs to be done in this troubled sector of our economy would be touched on by many speakers because there is general agreement, I believe, on the need for diversification in agriculture. I hope there will be agreement that this is not going to happen unless we provide some support for farmers, at least in dealing with the most pressing problems which they're now facing. And as I've tried to indicate to them, these must be addressed.

We need diversification within agriculture. We need diversification within field crops and I think we need diversification beyond agriculture into other areas of our economy. And with respect to agriculture, it is the belief of the New Democratic Party that the steps should be taken within the context of having an agriculture based upon the largest possible number of viable family farms -- the largest reasonable number of family farms.

We know that every farm that's out there now is not going to survive. We have seen the steady reduction in the number of farms from about 112,000 in 1951 to 65,000 -- or whatever number we say is today's number -- and we expect that that will continue. But we ought not to accelerate it; we ought to decelerate it with the programs of the kind which I have outlined.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've touched on agriculture, and I want now to turn to mining.

Petroleum and mineral production, I suggest, is going to continue in this province and it's going to continue to be cyclical in the future as it has been in the past. New Democrats believe that the soundest policy for the industry is to try to get the best possible return for the people of Saskatchewan when prices are high, and to assist the industries to weather the storm when prices are low.

In particular, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do not favour the policy of members opposite of saying when prices are high, well we'll leave the money with the mining companies because then they'll have it when prices are low. And I want in a moment to illustrate just how that's worked. Royalty schedules for both potash and uranium, which are in place now, reflect the view which I suggest that when prices are high, payments to the owners of the resource, the people of Saskatchewan should be high, and when prices are low, the payments should be low.

Concerning petroleum, New Democrats thought it was short-sighted when the government opposite slashed the effective rate of oil royalties when prices were at an all-time high and when profits of the oil companies were at an all-time high. We thought that was short-sighted. These policies have cost Saskatchewan taxpayers at least \$1 billion. I'm talking about effective royalties. I hear sometimes people say, oh the royalties haven't changed. That of course is nonsense.. Royalty levels at some points may not have changed, but when you permit wholesale royalty holidays, the effective royalty rate drops sharply -- and it has.

If effective royalty rates had remained at the level that the PC government itself charged in the first year, instead of having these wholesale cuts that they inaugurated between 1982 and 1986, Saskatchewan citizens would have received at least \$1 billion more.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- The government opposite claimed that the royalty holidays would allow the oil companies to create thousands of solid long-term jobs. And we heard that story. We heard it from many members opposite. We certainly heard it from the member for Saskatoon Sutherland as he then was. But we're not hearing that any more. The companies are gone; the jobs are gone; and so is the billion dollars. And Saskatchewan people will be paying for that folly of the government opposite for many decades to come.

Now Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about manufacturing because we hear a lot about manufacturing, and we hear the Premier talking about the need to manufacture. I don't know why he talks about the need to manufacture. I don't know why he doesn't talk about the expansion in manufacturing since 1982. But he doesn't talk about that. And on second thought, I know why he doesn't -- because there hasn't been any expansion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- But it's been the goal of every government in Saskatchewan to diversify our economy and particularly to increase manufacturing and processing. And everybody can give this speech. The general strategies have always been the same -- to process more of our raw products before they leave our province to manufacture in Saskatchewan more of the things we consume in Saskatchewan; to manufacture for general export to the prairie basin market; and to manufacture some things for a wider market where we may have a special advantage or where freight costs are only a small part of the final delivered price.

I am sure that I have given that speech and I have heard the Premier give that speech and I've heard members opposite give that speech. What is disappointing is that so little progress has been made in the last four and a half years compared with previous periods.

Let's take the processing of agricultural products. And how many times have we heard it said we need to process more of our agricultural products? Well no advances have been made in flour milling; none whatever in four and a half years. As for meat packing and processing, we have plant closures. Intercon in Regina was allowed to close without a whimper from members opposite. Fewer people are employed in meat packing today than was true five years ago. And that fact can't be denied. Oil seed crushing -- the same sorry tale. The CSB plant in Saskatoon is closed and fewer people are employed in oil seed crushing now than was true five years ago.

(1500)

As for manufacturing, many of our major sectors are withering. Far from growing, farm machinery manufacturing plants also employ fewer people now than five years ago. Metal fabrication has seen closures and partial closures. Ipsco is producing fitfully. Saskatoon Steel Fabricators is gone and Dominion Bridge is gone and Native Metal Industries are gone and many others. And so it goes.

While there have been some new jobs added, there have been more jobs lost. In the high-tech sector so promising five years ago, there's trouble. Here again the list of departures and closures and partial closures is long. There's been a heartening growth in some new small companies, and we'll acknowledge that, but the big employers -- Microtel and Northern Telecom and SED Systems and others -- have either closed or reduced their operations.

Now these facts are known and can't be denied. The facts are that there's been far too little investment in manufacturing. I invite members to look at the figures published by the Saskatchewan Bureau of Statistics. And if we correct for inflation, if we measure investment in constant dollars and using 1971 as the base, the best year of the last four years for investment was 1983; 1982 and 1984 and 1985 are lower. And 1983, the best year of the last four is lower than any one, the investment, any one of the years 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1979, 1980, and 1981. The best year under the PCS was lower than seven of the last eight years prior to 1982.

Is it any wonder that manufacturing is stagnating? Is it any wonder that when the government puts out its economic review it shows that manufacturing, labour, employment in 1985, or '84 -- the last figure I have here -- is well below the 1981 figure? It's no use talking about diversification unless one is going to take positive steps to get diversification, and we haven't seen those positive steps, we haven't seen the investment, and we don't see the employment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- There's no lack of entrepreneurs, no lack of energy. There is a lack of economic activity which will allow the larger firms to sustain a work-force and which will attract substantial investment capital.

StatsCan figures show that the number of people working in manufacturing in 1982 and '83 and '84 were in every year lower than in '81. And those are the ones published in the economic review. And I expect that if I had the 198 StatsCan figures, which will no doubt come out in the economic review to be published, I take it, in a week or so, then we would show once again lower employment than in 1981.

In the last four years we have seen bad news -- bad news for Saskatchewan manufacturing and particularly bad news for the people who have been working in the manufacturing sector . . . or rather have not been working when they would have liked to have worked. That is the record of the government opposite.

I, too, share with them the desire for diversification . I share the desire for diversification. And something happened in that regard in previous years, but not in the last four. We simply had not seen the investment of the jobs in manufacturing, and we need to see them because our people need some alternative to agriculture, which is simply too cyclical an industry on which to base a solid economy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- Now, Mr. Speaker, I've been saying that Saskatchewan needs to diversify. The West needs to diversify. What's true of Saskatchewan is true of Alberta and Manitoba to some extent. The West shouldn't always be subject to the boom and bust cycles of a resource economy. There are areas where we can be fully competitive, and we ought to have the opportunity to compete in those areas.

There are areas where we can be competitive. We don't ask for hothouse industries which have to be supported indefinitely by government subsidies. We do ask for the right to have manufacturing industry in sectors where we have natural advantages. Western Canadians have the right to expect that their governments, federal and provincial, will protect that right and pursue that goal. That's why so many people all across the West were dismayed and outraged by the Mulroney government's decision to take away a major contract from western Canada and give it to a central Canadian firm.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- The CF-18 contract in aircraft maintenance -- here's a sector where we can compete. We have been up front in aircraft maintenance. There's no reason why we couldn't have had this contract in western Canada. The western bid met every requirement of the federal government, every specification provided for, when the tenders were called. It was the low bid. Yet the position of the Prime Minister in his native province of Quebec, this contract was taken away from western Canada and given to central Canada. The low bid was ignored; the contract went to the native province of the Prime Minister.

And I expect that one or more of my colleagues will go into this in some more details. I want to talk about the reaction of the government opposite to this. The Prime Minister, when pressed -- and this is the point I want to emphasise -- said that the contract was given to Montreal because the unemployment level was higher in Quebec than it was in Manitoba. Now I looked at the figures and they indicated that the unemployment figure for Quebec was higher than the unemployment figure for Alberta and Saskatchewan and Manitoba in every single year since 1966 -- in every single year since 1966. And if the Prime Minister is to apply that logic, then I say, regardless of any economic advantage, no federal government contracts can come to the prairies while they can go to Quebec and while Mulroney is Prime Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- That's the logic, and that is simply not fair. We're Canadians. If a western bid wins a contract, fair and square, based on meeting the specifications of the bid, then the contract should come to the West.

You would say, well, that contract was going to go to Manitoba; what's that got to do with Saskatchewan? Well, there are two things I want to say to that. There's no doubt that economic activity in Manitoba or Alberta will provide much more stimulus to the Saskatchewan economy than it will if that economic activity is in the province of Quebec. There'll be some jobs for some of our people because they will go to Winnipeg.

But that's not my main point. My main point is this: the same logic which caused the Mulroney government to say no to Manitoba and yes to Quebec, would cause them to say no to Saskatchewan and yes to Quebec. The logic is the same. Our unemployment figures are lower than Quebec, as well. This would mean that Saskatchewan manufacturers would equally be shut out. Yet the Premier is on record as supporting the Mulroney decision. He's on record as saying, yes, that was all right to say no to western Canada, all right to say no to western Canada on the grounds that the unemployment rate was lower in Manitoba or Saskatchewan than it was in Quebec.

Westerners aren't asking for any special favours; they're asking for fair play on government contracts. They didn't get it from the Mulroney government. The contract was handled unfairly. Who can deny that? And yet the Premier says, keep up the good work, Brian.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- The position of the Prime Minister and the Premier is not acceptable to Saskatchewan and not acceptable to western Canada. And I suggest that members opposite are going to

find that out when they talk to their constituents.

Now the Premier has now compounded his support for the Mulroney government on this issue by issuing a press release calling for western diversification. Now that raises hypocrisy to an art form. That raises hypocrisy to an art form when you can say, it's perfectly all right not to have a contract to go to Winnipeg, but we want the federal government to introduce policies committed to diversification of the West.

I want to quote the Premier's November 20th press release. Here's what he said.

It is time for a federal economic policy clearly committed to the diversification of the West.

... within days of cheer-leading for Mulroney on the CF-18 contract.

I'd like to know how we can diversify the West without manufacturing and would like to know why manufacturing based upon federal government contracts is not important. The government opposite calls for diversification but supports the federal government policies, the very policies which prevent diversification.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- It's a call for diversification, but not if it might embarrass Mr. Mulroney. If Mr. Mulroney's political problems are more important than western diversification or fair play for western manufacturers, then Saskatchewan people can look for very little from those phrases in the Speech from the Throne that talked about diversification, or this call in the press release that the federal government should act to diversify the West. We can expect very little from that if it's all qualified by saying that, of course none of this must embarrass the Prime Minister or injure in any way his ability to gain seats in Quebec.

Saskatchewan people won't be content with these press releases or these phrases in the Speech from the Throne. They will expect federal action; they'll expect our federal government to support that action and not support the continuation of the very policies that led to the concentration of manufacturing power in central Canada.

On this issue, Mr. Speaker, the lines are clearly drawn. The government opposite favours action by the federal government to keep manufacturing concentrated in Ontario and Quebec, and New Democrats favour fair play for the West and for Saskatchewan in our efforts to diversify our economy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- Well, Mr. Speaker, I have been saying that Saskatchewan needs to diversify its economy, we need manufacturing to diversify, and what is true of Saskatchewan is true of western Canada.

There are areas where we can indeed be fully competitive, and I believe that governments at both levels should give every encouragement to our manufacturers so that they can take advantage of those areas and provide jobs for western Canada and provide additional economic activity, particularly to deal with the situation of our boom and bust economy when agriculture is in a down cycle.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to some other subjects. I want to turn particularly to the financial management of this province. Never in the history of this province and rarely, if ever, in the history of any other province, have we seen a collapse of financial management as we have seen in the last four and a half years.

I doubt very much, Mr. Speaker, whether any province has ever seen a drop in its credit rating of the kind, the magnitude, and the speed, which has happened with respect to the credit rating of Saskatchewan during the last couple of years.

(1515)

In 1982 the government opposite talked boldly about a new direction and new priorities. The member for Kindersley, in his budget speeches, spoke in those terms. They rushed into their first deficit, apparently believing it would somehow be temporary. IN 1982 they called it a minimized and manageable deficit. It might be manageable, Mr. Speaker, but it certainly wasn't manageable by the government opposite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- In 1983 the then minister of Finance talked of a manageable increase in the combined deficit. Now that's a good example of the semantics of the slippery slope -- a manageable increase in the deficit. And again, if it was manageable, it certainly wasn't manageable by members opposite.

Meanwhile they continued their platitudes about the evils of deficits. In 1984 the minister of Finance said sternly, we believe that all governments must work in concert to reduce budget deficits. Each budget after that had a bigger deficit than before, but never mind -- he said that sternly -- we believe that all governments must work in concert to reduce budget deficits.

The Premier in 1982 said, deficit budgeting in Canada has to end if the country is to be competitive in world markets -- and this was late 1982, when he was Premier -- they have to end if we're to be competitive. Now we have much talk about being competitive but no talk about ending government deficits. And again, the Premier: deficits are just a deferred tax; they must be paid by future generations.

These pronouncements were followed by the five largest deficits in the history of Saskatchewan, each one larger than the last.

Meanwhile, back at the Department of Finance, the mismanagement has proceeded apace. Last March 26 the Minister of Finance introduced a budget calling for a deficit of \$389 million. Now that document was a strong candidate for the Governor General's Award for fiction.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- Few people believed it then. I doubt whether the Minister of Finance believed it then; I don't know anybody who believes it now. During the election campaign the Premier is quoted as saying that the deficit this year will be \$500 million. That statement too is a strong effort in the realm of creative fiction. I think it's time the Minister of Finance levelled with the public, and I call upon the Minister of Finance during the course of this debate to give the Saskatchewan people an update on where we stand.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- I call upon him to tell us what he now projects the end of the fiscal year deficit to be and what major program additions or cuts, what cuts in services or what increases in services, he has built into his services or what increases in services, he has built into his prediction. Legislature needs and deserves a statement so that this debate can proceed on the basis of reality -- no point in talking about what we should be doing in the next year and in the next few years if we have no idea what our current financial situation is.

And I suspect the facts are these: that the accumulated deficit will be well over \$2 billion; that the income of the government for this fiscal year will be less than they had budgeted; that their spending will be more than they have budgeted; and the total debt of the province, direct and indirect, will have continued to skyrocket.

New Democrats say that the government owes the public a full and frank disclosure of where we stand in our financial affairs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- Now, Mr. Speaker, I've talked about the debt. A word on what has happened to the debt in this province. What has happened? Well, what has happened to the debt, to what we owe, and to what we have guaranteed, is almost beyond belief.

The Government of Saskatchewan has always borrowed money. In the early years it borrowed money to build roads and do the things which a pioneer society needed. After World War II a new policy was adopted; in general, borrowed money was not used to build the things which would ordinarily be paid for by provincial taxes, wasn't used to build university buildings or highways. Money was borrowed for things like Saskatchewan telecommunication, SaskTel, and Sask Power Corporation, that would be paid back by utility rates. In this regard the public utilities operated like any other public utilities in Canada. There were minor exceptions, but these were the general policies.

And as a result, in 1982 there was a debt load of about \$3.5 billion, and 90 per cent of that was owed in respect of Sask Power and SaskTel, some more of it was owed in respect of other self-liquidating projects, and virtually none of it was owed in respect of things which were going to have to be paid for out of taxes.

Now that was the situation in 1982. A total of \$3.5 billion accumulated since 1905 in the course of building a province-wide power utility, a province-wide telephone utility, a highway system, two universities, schools, hospitals, grid roads. Since 1982 that debt has soared from \$3.5 billion to \$8.7 billion last March, and I predict that it will be just about \$10 billion by coming March -- a far greater increase -- almost triple the debt which was accumulated from 1905 until 1982.

And what have we got to show for it? Do we have a doubled power system? Of course, we don't. Do we have a greatly-expanded telephone system? Modest expansion. Do we have our university campuses doubled in size or anything like it? Well, of course we don't. Is our highway system improved and rebuilt? No. Our few account for the major sell-offs of coal mines and potash machinery and pulp mills and highway equipment. We don't own much more than we did in 1982, but we owe 5 or \$6 billion more in for and one half years and not many more assets.

And the figures I use are cautious figures. I was going to say they are conservative figures, but when you say conservative figures with respect to debt, you mean sky-rocketing figures; you don't mean any sort of caution at all. Now that's the legacy of the monumental mismanagement that this government opposite has created. It's created a financial burden for the people of Saskatchewan which I predict will become all too apparent in the coming year.

And I ask the government again to tell the public where we stand. Tell us what we own. Tell us what we owe. Tell us what our situation is now so that we can proceed with a debate based upon the facts and not on the hyperbole contained in the Speech from the Throne.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, here!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- I said, Mr. Speaker, that if we're to have an intelligent debate we need disclosure on where we stand financially. There are other facts that we need to know if we're to debate the situation which this province finds itself in and what we ought to do about it. I refer to the major industrial projects in which the government is involved, but I want to ask the government to tell us where we stand with respect to some of these major industrial projects.

Take the NewGrade upgrader -- I believe the public are entitled to know what the deal is between the government opposite and the federal government. I'm not talking about a general statement -- I'm talking about a copy of the agreement. I saw a recent cabinet decision the other day which provided for an additional \$20 million to be loaned to NewGrade.

My question to the Premier and the government opposite are this. Will you, or the appropriate minister, outline the financial deal with respect to NewGrade? Will you, within the next seven days, table in this House a copy of the agreement with the federal government?

My understanding is, and it's only an understanding, that the Government of Canada and Saskatchewan are assuming 100 per cent of the financial risk of the upgrader and that they are providing, by way of loan or guarantee, 100 per cent of the cash which is being used to build this upgrader.

We're talking about a great deal of money, Mr. Speaker -- hundreds of million of dollars. The project is under way. There should be no reason for withholding from the public the financial details with respect to this upgrader, and I call upon the minister to give them to the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- With respect to the Prince Albert Pulp Mill, we have now had some details laid before the House -- three months after they were promised.

In June the minister, the member from Meadow Lake, gave a firm and solid commitment to this House, saying that at the date of closing, when the final deal is signed, you will get the facts. The date of closing was September 8th of 9th. We did not get the documents at the date of closing. We did not get the documents when the final deal was signed. We got the documents only three months later, after a provincial election had intervened.

And when I see these documents -- and I have just had an opportunity to review them in a cursory way -- but what I see in these documents it makes it very clear to me why they didn't release them before the

election, because they wouldn't defend that deal and didn't want to have to defend that deal prior to the election. And that's why they withheld those facts from the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- And it's time the government levelled with the people with respect to Gainers and Peter Pocklington. What are Peter Pocklington and Gainers committed to do? Are they committed by binding agreement to open a plant in North Battleford? And if so, starting when?

It's a year since this deal was announced, or I suppose it was a deal. I don't know whether it was a deal. We had public announcements about start-ups. Yes, we have all read these:

Gainers aiming at July start-up for bacon plant. The building is complete, but hiring won't begin until the operation is almost ready to open its doors, possibly by September or early October.

Here's one in late August:

Previous reports indicate the plant is expected to be in operation by the end of September.

Bacon plant opening behind schedule. Doug Ford, Gainers' executive director, says the constructed plant will be producing bacon before the end of 1986. We were reluctant to provide an exact date.

Well this has been going on now for six months anyway. We have been promised. . . Any time an election looked like it was on the offing we had another announcement that Gainers was going to commence production. I think it's time the government levelled with us on that project.

I say this to the Premier -- I could read clippings which say that hundreds of people have applied for jobs at Gainers, and I don't doubt it. Thousands of people are out of work in this province looking for jobs, and they have been shabbily dealt with by this government who has promised that there would be an early opening of a major plant in North Battleford, and then kept saying, no, not now, maybe a few months, couple of months, maybe the end of the year. Does anyone believe the end of the year? Surely not.

Thousands have trusted the word of the government opposite and applied for jobs. They believed they had a deal because the deal was announced; yet I don't know anybody outside the government who has ever seen any document bearing the signature of Pocklington or Gainers. And I say that these people opposite, if there is a deal, have an obligation to tell the people of Saskatchewan and those hundreds of people who are lined up for jobs, tell them whether there is a deal, and if so, what it is.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- I call upon the government opposite to tell us what the deal is, if there is a deal with Peter Pocklington, show us a copy. Then we'll all know, not just the people who might profit from inside information, but we'll all know, and we all have a right to know because we're all paying for it. And I don't know why the government opposite doesn't tell us what their deal is with Peter Pocklington.

I turn now to SaskTel. And I ask: can the government provide the public with a statement on the government's intentions in respect to the ownership of SaskTel? And that's a fair question to ask. And if the story is the one that you used during the campaign, that SaskTel will continue to be owned by all of

the people of Saskatchewan through their government, if that's your story, then will somebody give us an explanation, that any one would be expected to believe, on just what the Pemberton Houston Willoughby report was all about.

Others of my colleagues will be dealing with this on other occasions during this legislature, but the facts are pretty simple and pretty clear. By a letter of agreement dated April 3, 1985, 18 months ago, SaskTel engaged Pemberton Houston Willoughby, a national investment firm, to examine into and report on what would be involved in the government of Saskatchewan divesting itself of some or all of its equity in SaskTel. Note carefully that we're talking about equity, not debt. Pemberton was not asked to talk about bonds, but about equity-ownership, and that's exactly what they did talk about in their report. The report provided financial plans to make SaskTel comparable with other investor-owned utilities, other investment-owned telephone companies. And elsewhere in the report it's clear that they are identifying these as Bell Canada, B.C. Tel, Maritime Tel, and New Brunswick Tel.

This report is known about on the streets. I hear people jokingly saying we don't call it SaskTel now, we call it Sask Bell. But what the public is entitled to know is: who arranged for the Pemberton report, for what purpose, and on whose instructions.

I call upon the Premier to tell the public of the facts about what they intend to do with this public asset which was built up by the people of **Saskatchewan** over a period of 75 years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- So, Mr. Premier, the time has come for you to level with the public, not only about the financial condition of this province, but about these major financial transactions which you are proposing to enter into, or have entered into. We're entitled to know what the deal is with respect to the NewGrade upgrader and what the federal government commitments are. We're entitled to know what the deal is with Peter Pocklington and Gainers, entitled to know what you have in mind with respect to SaskTel and many other proposals you have announced.

No reasonable discussion of what this province should do over the next year, or the next four years, can proceed without the facts being on the table. The public wants to know; the opposition on their behalf wants to know. In times like these when we are facing difficult times, there should be public discussion and there should be informed public discussion of where our province stands, and there cannot be that informed public discussion unless we have the facts laid before the public. . . not facts which are going to injure anybody's commercial operations, but facts in respect of which there can be no justifiable reason for withholding them from the public.

I want to touch on a few other items in the Speech from the Throne. I was pleased to hear that the government proposes to provide the resources to ensure that excellence is the hallmark in our educational system. I would have been even more pleased if the government's past record gave very much evidence of that concern.

The government has reduced – not increased – its per student commitment to our universities consistently over the last four years. The per student contribution of the government has gone down. This neglect must be corrected. Money to allow the universities to add some more permanent staff, especially in the core arts and science areas is urgent. Classes, especially first year classes, are crowded to an extent never seen in the history of our Saskatchewan universities. And this crowding and inability

of professors and teaching staff to give any personal attention to students is affecting the quality of the education offering, and is the reverse of any pursuit of excellence.

And I think we need to get from the government some commitment that they are going to remedy those problems, and we certainly haven't got them to date.

Turning to health care, one would be more reassured if after the more than four and one-half years of PC administration, waiting lists at the major hospitals were not the longest that they've been in history. But they are. They're at an all-time high, with a consequent deterioration of the quality of health care as seen from the patient's point of view.

Just over the weekend I had a constituent talk to me about the conditions in Pasco Hospital and she told me that she had to go over there and look after an aunt who was in that hospital because the aunt was not getting sufficient care from the ward staff, care of the tender, loving care variety – seeing that her water was changed and wasn't stale, and that her bed was fluffed, and those sorts of things which one does to make a patient comfortable. Neither she nor her aunt, the patient, laid any of the blame on the ward staff. Far from it. They were rushed off their feet. And we've heard those stories, and you can hear them any day of the week in Regina, and I suspect you can hear them in Saskatoon.

These problems and others like them – hospital waiting lists of record highs, and university classes crowded as never before, and nursing home waiting lists the longest in history, and line-ups at the welfare offices, and at our new food banks which weren't around four and one-half years ago – all these are indications of a government unable or unwilling to deal with the pressing needs of the less fortunate. A government which, for whatever reason, is failing to uphold the most fundamental tenet of Saskatchewan history – that we are a people who help those who need help.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to touch on another subject briefly which I believe is relevant, although members opposite, or at least members who used to be opposite, suggested that this was inappropriate when it was raised in a previous debate in this Chamber. And I'm talking about the concern which many of my constituents and many people of Saskatchewan have with respect to the nuclear arms race.

During World War II mankind developed the atom bomb, and in August of 1945 in Hiroshima, Japan, one small bomb killed 100,000 people outright. Another 100,000 people died from ruptured organs and massive burns and radiation disease and the like, and a further 200,000 are dying a lingering death. It's estimated that the nuclear devices which are now in the world, in the hands of the Soviet Union and the United States, have an explosive power of 1,250,000 times the Hiroshima bomb.

The world has built up this arsenal at very great costs to achieve security. And yet there has never been a time when the human race was in greater danger of being extinguished by a war among the major powers. Now what can be done? Suspensions are such in the world that unilateral nuclear disarmament is not possible, and I think we should acknowledge that. One would hope, I suppose, that that might change, but one cannot look for that sort of a change in the immediate future.

But some things are possible. A halt to the build-up should be possible. A step-by-step dismantling should be possible. And with the huge overkill in the hands of both the East and the West, there's no large risk if any one of these steps in the step-by-step dismantling was not exactly equal to the

dismantling on the other side. And that's an important point because if we get into an argument about whether or not this dismantling exactly equals that dismantling, we are not going to get effective dismantling. But if we realize that there is tremendous overkill on either side and we can have some step-by-step dismantling without anyone feeling that they had stolen a march on the other side, then perhaps we can make some progress.

And then there is also widespread agreement that the fewer nations that have nuclear weapons, the less likelihood there is of an accidental war, so to speak. So that there's a positive benefit for countries in the world to declare themselves to be nuclear weapons free.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- And I say, Mr. Speaker, this can be done without having any measurable effect on the effectiveness of a nuclear deterrent on either side. It's not easy to understand the consequences of nuclear war. It's estimated that a single one-megaton bomb -- and that's a sort of a normal bomb these days: that's 50 times the Hiroshima bomb -- detonated over Toronto, would kill 600,000 people, seriously injure another 600,000 people. All possibility of medical care would vanish. The seriously injured needing intensive care would be greater than all the intensive care beds in the world.

So this issue concerns us all. As Canadians, we look primarily to our federal government to deal with matters of this kind. But when we're considering the survival of the human species, this is no time to deal in niceties of constitutional jurisdiction. Therefore provincial legislatures, municipal governments, non-government groups, have a role to play in pressing the case for having Canada declared a nuclear weapons free zone and for having the countries of the world work hand and earnestly at reducing the arms buildup, and one would hope, dismantling the existing stockpile of arms.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- This is not to embrace unilateral or total disarmament; it is to accept the idea that all-out nuclear war in defence of anything, human or otherwise, is a contradiction in terms. But it's up to us, along with the other people of the world, to recognize the truth of that conclusion and to act on it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in our days, change is inevitable but progress is not. As we review what kind of Saskatchewan we want and what kind of changes we call progress, it's useful to recall what should be our aim. A wise legislator, I believe President Roosevelt, said:

The true test of progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who already have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.

New Democrats believe that that is a true test of progress and is a proper test for progress in Saskatchewan, and that if cuts and slashes in services fall on the backs of people who have too little, at a time when the well-to-do are prospering at taxpayers' expense, such cuts are unfair and unjustified. If there are to be cuts in publicly financed education and publicly financed health, let there first be cuts in publicly financed hot tubs and publicly financed jaccuzis.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: -- The public will accept the fact that financial mismanagement in the past has produced a crisis. No one can deny that; they have to accept it. They will not accept any plan to deal with

this crisis that is not fair, that does not distribute the burden fairly, that does not acknowledge that those who have prospered from the mismanagement and still prosper, must bear their full share of the burden.

(1545)

The public will also expect the government to level with them, to tell the public what deals have been made and with whom; to tell the public in a timely way what money has been spent and by whom; to disclose the facts so that all who are asked to pay know where we are now and what plans the government has to deal with the crises facing us.

Because the Speech from the Throne gives no indication that the government proposes to lay the facts before the public and invite the full discussion of what our options are, because it fails even to recognize some of the major problems being faced by the people of Saskatchewan, and accordingly totally fails to offer any solutions, because of that, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by my colleague, the member for Saskatoon Riversdale, that the following words be added to the motion:

but regrets that the government has failed to commit itself to jobs and fair taxation for Saskatchewan people, long-term financial security for Saskatchewan farm families, compassionate consideration for those most in need, and failed to correct the wasteful mismanagement which has produced a provincial deficit of more than \$2 billion.

Mr. Speaker, I so move.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: -- The debate continues concurrently on the motion and the amendment.

Mr. Petersen: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker,, and I would also extend my thanks to the Leader of the Opposition for those kind words and the history lesson. We now have the Will Rogers of the Saskatchewan legislature present right here with us. The past is always very interesting, but as with many old historians, it's viewed through rose-coloured glasses. But I thank him for his thoughts anyhow.

I'd just like to perhaps include some of the points that he missed out. Agriculture was the main focal point of his comments to start with. So what is the NDP concept of agriculture in Saskatchewan? What was it in the past? Land bank. And today we had a number of those items revisited upon us.

But I find it very interesting, Mr. Speaker, that suddenly we have the Leader of the Opposition very, very interested in agriculture, for when they were in government for 11 years agriculture suffered badly. We lost 11,000 farmers during their reign in our fair province. We talk about programs. We talk about support for the farm economy. Well, Mr. Speaker, in short-term programs and assistance for farmers, I don't think there has ever been another government in this province who has done as much as the government of the present Premier.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Petersen: -- The records speaks for itself. the Leader of the Opposition spoke of interest rates. Well, Mr. Speaker, where was he when I was paying 21 and 22 and 23 percent interest rates? He didn't care. He said, its not a provincial problem. It's not a provincial problem. Don't worry about it young farmers. We'll buy your farms if you can't make it. He was happy to see young farmers go down. It meant the

government could grab their land from them. That's where he was, and if he would care to stick around for a little longer, I'd love to continue. Thank you very much.

We talked about diversification in the province, and unfortunately the Leader of the Opposition is under the misconception that the province was once upon a time nothing but wheat, wall-to-wall, and suddenly diversification came upon us in the '70's.

I mean, let's take a look at the history in Saskatchewan. The mixed farm, the family farm that the Leader of the Opposition is so fond of referring to, is the basis of agriculture in Saskatchewan. We speak of diversification; it's always been here. We speak of diversification in many fields, processing of our products.

Well, the Leader of the Opposition would have us believe under their particular government it happened all over the place. There was diversification, there was new meat packing plants going up all over the place regularly. That's not true, Mr. Speaker. Burns closed down in Prince Albert; I could name several others. They deride the programs that we've tried to put into place trying to improve the processing industry.

He went on about Gainers in North Battleford. Well what's wrong with a processing plant in North Battleford? Just because they don't like Peter Pocklington, they're against it.

We spoke of another area of diversification in our forestry industry. The pulp-mill in Prince Albert, the Weyerhaeuser deal, which would provide a paper-mill in this province, Mr. Speaker, hundreds of new jobs – a paper-mill. And not only that, it would provide the infrastructure so that both could be viable. A pulp-mill cannot stand alone; it just cannot. You put the paper-mill with it, and you're off and running. but they didn't like that idea. And they spent many, many hours in this legislature and many, many taxpayers' dollars telling us why they didn't like it.

You talk about building, manufacturing. For years, we've had the Co-op Refinery in Regina. It's been here. It's been a fact. It's been a part of our lives, and it's provided many jobs. We were the first government to recognize the potential if coupled with an upgrader and in co-operation with the federal government. That upgrader is now being built. But what did the opposition do? they didn't look to this particular location. They were off courting the big multinationals trying to set up an upgrader, those big multinationals whom they hated. But we, in conjunction and in co-operation with Co-op and the federal government, have brought it into being. It's a reality; it's being built. And yet the members of the opposition laugh and scoff at the record of our particular government.

When we talk about a deficit and credit ratings, the Leader of the Opposition said it's bad, it's terrible, it's awful. And then he says we should have programs to support people. We've got to have more programs to support people. Well, Mr. Speaker, many of the programs that we have put in place have supported people, have supported agriculture, have supported our home owners, have supported our working people in the province, and it's had to be done with a deficit. We've had to borrow the money. And the program that the Leader of the Opposition refers to as a deficit is really being put in place to support the very people that he supposedly is championing.

Our credit rating was brought into question. Well, Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons that our credit rating has been brought into question is because of many of these programs being put in there and a deficit that was created by it. What should we do? Should we do away with these programs so that we can improve our credit rating with the big multinationals in New York? The opposition only refers to whatever suits

their particular point of reasoning. The big multinationals are fine. They're wonderful people and they know everything there is to know when it comes to the credit rating of the province of Saskatchewan. but the big multinationals are nasty, vicious, cruel organisations when it comes to dealing with the labour unions. It's most amazing - -most amazing.

Agriculture, Mr. Speaker, is important, and I'd like to get back to that for a moment. When we look at some of the policies that this government has implemented and worked with the federal government in implementing, we look at the national ag policy, the national ag strategy. There hasn't been one in 26 years, and this sudden interest by the Leader of the Opposition in agriculture is very heart-warming because I'm sure he'll endorse that because it is a long-term plan. It does have some long-term ramifications and addresses many of the issues that he spoke of today.

He spoke of the national tripartite programs, hogs and in beef. Well, Mr. Speaker, I feel that we did the right thing in dealing with the national tripartite programs. We went to the producers and said, well, do you think we should get involved in this? And they said, well, we've got to look at both sides of the story here. And they took their time and they went out to their members and they held meetings and they came back and said, yes, we think that you should endorse this program. And so we did.

We consult with people. We don't just slap a program in there because we've had a brilliant little brainwave in the back room. We don't just suddenly institute a land bank program or go buy a potash mine because it's something that we want to do. we consult with the people of the province. We listen to them and we talk to them. And the pork producers of this province agreed with us. We signed the program and we are not part of it.

Crop insurance was referred to and it was referred to in what I would consider to be favourable terms. And crop insurance had been a good program and it still is a good program, and we've worked with the federal government trying to make it better, many times having to listen to the opposition members deride us for our efforts. And whenever something happened, it was always: too little, too late. They never took the time to say, well, that was pretty fair. No matter what this government does, the opposition says, oh, too little, too late; or it's bad; or it's wrong. Mr. Speaker, they're the party of doom and gloom and the past – and they're doing it again.

And if you want to speak about the past, the nuclear arms race was brought up. I've heard a number of people speak against nuclear arms build-ups and I'm one of the people who is definitely against the build-up of nuclear arms. And we talk about a nuclear-free zone.

Well, Mr. Speaker, in a nuclear war there is no such thing as a nuclear-free zone. Should it ever come to pass, we will be the battleground. And I would like to see Canada retain its place in NATO and be one of the countries at the table when disarmament talks are going on, instead of hiding in some back room and saying, disarm, disarm; we aren't going to be involved. We are involved, Mr. Speaker, and we should be at that table.

But that's not what I came here to talk to you about today, Mr. Speaker. I just couldn't resist having a couple of comments about the Leader of the Opposition. I came here, Mr. Speaker, to talk to you and to the people in this Assembly about my constituency, about the major industry, agriculture, and how this government has helped us and how this government will continue to make agriculture its priority.

The throne speech mentioned manufacture of agriculture chemicals, fertilizers, biotechnology. Those will help create jobs and reduce costs for farmers. In the past, all of our chemicals have been manufactured outside of the province, and we've had to spend 200 or \$300 million in any given year for

the chemical inputs that we need for our farms – for the herbicides and pesticides to fight the grasshoppers and the wheat midge, wild oats, and for the fertilizers to help us grow our crops that the world needs. And that money all goes out of our province, Mr. Speaker. It's generated here, but none of it stays here. It leaves. And today in question period the Premier spoke briefly about that very thing.

The chemical manufacturing that he spoke of is quite possible, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of people who say it isn't, and there are a number of people who make comments on the subject without understanding it, among them the Leader of the Opposition. And not to mention leaders of opposition parties, the federal members for Yorkton-Melville also talks about patent rights and speaks about chemical manufacturing, chemical use, and so on and so forth, without understanding the whole process of rules and regulations involved. It's a very complicated thing.

(1600)

We have product specific registration which is in place, and I have never heard of any of the members opposite mention that. The Leader of the Opposition certainly did not. He does not understand how the chemical industry works; he does not understand the rules and regulations, and yet he stands here and makes comments on it. And his counterpart, or his successor from Yorkton-Melville, does the same in Ottawa. He stands in front of the cameras and yells and screams and holds press conferences without really understanding the issues.

Neither of those gentlemen have ever been a farmer. I find it difficult to understand how they felt that they know what is best for farmers.

If you're looking at our rural areas, and the Leader of the Opposition has suddenly become aware that the rural areas are very important, we've looked at establishing rural development corporations to help mobilize their local initiative, capital, and talent that we have out in the rural areas. I don't believe everything should be centered in Regina or Saskatoon. I think it should be out in the rural areas. They've got lots of small towns with good supplies of water, good highways, good rail access – no end of them. So why shouldn't we diversify? I think it's a good idea.

We've gone that way, Mr. Speaker, in moving the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance headquarters to Melville; Saskatchewan Water Corporation was moved to Moose Jaw. . . We believe in decentralization and moving out to those rural areas. And I think that's a very important thing to look at.

Among our other programs that we've put out into the countryside in the areas of agriculture and research are programs in conjunction with our ag development fund and our Saskatchewan ag research fund. A number of those programs have led to major gains in biotechnology, in utilization of much of the research that has been done in our universities over the years.

Sclerotinia in rapeseed, for example, has become a great problem, and we have now got the leading research experts on that very subject here in the province of Saskatchewan, and I know some of the members opposite won't know that is, but I'm sure they'll be able to look it up.

When we talk about . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh yes, I'm sorry there is a farmer over there, there is one. I apologize for that.

When you look at the educational system that we have in our province, it is one that I went through, my children are presently involved in, and I'd like to see it made better. I'd like to see it be more

comprehensive, and if we have to review it and make some changes, we will. We'll make it more comprehensive, bring it into line with today's very, very rapidly changing world.

We've got people in Saskatchewan who've got access to excellent training facilities and that will allow them to compete nationally and internationally in the future; it'll allow them to help this province compete nationally and internationally, and I think we should give them the best that we possibly can.

We've talked about protecting people, a lot. Well, I don't think that there's anyone in Saskatchewan who hasn't heard about our mortgage interest protection program. In 1982, it was one of our major platforms and we brought it into being - 13 and one-quarter at the time. The opposition, or pardon me, the government of the day, who is now the opposition with regards to home owners said, yes, we don't care what happens to interest rates; let them go through the ceiling. We don't care if you don't have a home, we'll buy it from you and start a house bank. No problem. We've got land bank, and house bank, and I don't know what other banks they wanted to have.

But that's what their answer to those high interest problems were. That was their idea of protection - nothing. We have now introduced - or will be shortly introducing - legislation to hold mortgage interest rates at nine and three-quarter per cent. We said we'd do it, and we will do it. We deliver.

We talk about senior citizens and protecting the pioneers. I think we've gone much, much further in that regard than the previous government ever did. Let's take a look at our nursing home situation. There was a moratorium on nursing homes in this province when we took office in 1982. And since then we've rectified that to a great extent - over 1,500 new beds. I've got 111 in my constituency, and they were badly needed. The people in that particular area of Kelvington-Wadena had been neglected for a number of years.

And I'll take you back to a personal story to just show you how it can affect families. In 1978 my grandfather was unable to continue looking after himself. My grandmother was not in good health and couldn't look after him either, and his condition deteriorated to the point where he required level 4 care. We looked around and there was none. Then we looked a little further and there was none. Finally, 85 miles away, there was a place for my grandfather, a man who had come to this country in 1910, worked and slaved his whole life trying to make it a better place for his children and their children; and my grandmother had worked alongside of him. And that dear, sweet, little old lady, for the next five years until my grandfather's death, had to drive 85 miles, or get someone to drive her 85 miles to visit my grandfather at least once a week. Now, Mr. Speaker, that's a crime. That's a crime that we couldn't have had our seniors treated better than that.

And the members opposite sit there and say that they were the only people who ever cared about the elderly; they were the only people who ever cared about the common working person; they were the only people that ever cared about anybody. Well, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that that's merely rhetoric. We put our money where our mouth is, Mr. Speaker, and we do it because we care about people. We care about people like my grandmother. She's 91 years old; her birthday was on Sunday. We care about the people who are working today. We care about the people who, unfortunately, are unemployed. We care about our students. We care about our university people. I even care about the opposition, Mr. Speaker

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Peterson: - And we will do our best, Mr. Speaker, to listen to their positive suggestions, to listen to the good ideas that they may have. And I will work with them, Mr. Speaker; I will, if they'll only give

me something to work with instead of merely criticism. It makes it a bit tough, Mr. Speaker, when you stand here and you look at the programs that we've brought into place and have nothing but doom and gloom preached at you from across the floor. It makes it a bit difficult.

And you want to talk about other problems we have in society, drug and alcohol abuse. We have just instituted programs to have drug and alcohol abuse centres in place – help for those people who need it. And that those people who need help didn't just suddenly appear on the scene. They've been here for years. I'm sure we can all think of someone in our own families who has a problem with alcohol or drugs, legal or otherwise. These people need some help. But the previous government did nothing for them - did nothing at all. Instead, they made alcohol more accessible. In my constituency I have there monuments to the previous government. We call them liquor board stores. They cost \$500,000 each and, while we didn't have nursing homes, we had liquor boards stores. Well, thank you very much. I really appreciate it, and my people all appreciate it too. But they appreciate even more that since I've been in office we've had 111 new nursing home beds build.

Some Hon. Members: – Hear, hear!

Mr. Peterson: – I mentioned schools earlier and our education system. Well in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to list a few of the things we've done. The Robert Melrose School in Kelvington, \$360,000 worth of renovations; The rose Valley School, \$221,000 worth of renovations; Elfros Elementary, \$1,100; Kelvington high School, 92,000; Invermay School, 27,000; Wadena Elementary School, 1.47 million.

Those programs, Mr. Speaker, those particular centres that have been built and upgraded are there for the people in my constituency to use. They're there for their children to get a good education. Those are the types of things that we believe in – help for people, the elderly; interest rate reductions for farmers and home owners; education facilities and upgrading of educational programs for our students. And those have been done, and will continue to be done.

Mr. Speaker, this Progressive Conservative government is continuing its commitment to agriculture, to jobs, as education, economic diversification, government efficiency. I mean, what's wrong with government efficiency? Nothing. I don't think there is. We should work towards it – we should work towards it. Yet members opposite seem to think it's a big joke. They seem to think that more is always better. Their answer to any problem was, oh, hire some more people. Put some more people in. Big government. The bigger the better.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I believe that efficiency is the proper thing to do. We have had some fairly difficult times over the past four and one-half years, and we may have during the next four and one-half years, Mr. Speaker. But I think that we will continue to do our best to work with the people of Saskatchewan to make sure that they've got the support they need in these difficult times.

Mr. Speaker, job creation was an issue that was brought up. Well Saskatchewan's job creation record, Mr. Speaker, has been among the best in Canada. And our unemployment rate has been the lowest, and consistently so, since 1982. We've either been number one or number two. We've been holding our own.

It's kind of difficult then for me to understand why the Leader of the Opposition would say there's been no new jobs, there's been nothing created here, nobody's done anything, nobody's built anything. On the contrary, Mr. Speaker, the figures speak for themselves. We have built; we have more people working

today than there were in 1982. We've had an increase in our population, and we've still managed to keep the lowest unemployment figures in the countryside.

Well, Mr. Speaker, simple mathematics will tell you that those other people have got to be doing something, and they're working – they've got jobs. And Mr. Speaker, jobs don't just come out of thin air. They come from the manufacturing fields. They come from the diversification in agriculture and our mining industry and our forestry industries. They come from our service industries.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just can't accept the arguments of the Leader of the Opposition. I just can't accept them at all. And again, I would suggest that they are merely rhetoric. And I would say that with his years and years and years of experience in here, he's become rather good at it, except he doesn't quite give all of the facts when he speaks.

Mr. Speaker, before I conclude, I would just like to say that I look forward to the next four and a half years in serving the people of Saskatchewan. I look forward to working with yourself as the new Speaker of the Assembly. And I look forward to working with the members of the opposition in trying to work our way through the difficult problems we face today. And I wish all the people in Saskatchewan a very, very prosperous new year that's coming up. And I hope that every member in this House takes very seriously the role that they now play. It's not just a place to stand up and hear yourself speak, make little points one way or the other. You serve the people of Saskatchewan, and I think that we should all continue to keep that in mind. Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the Speech from the Throne.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1615)

Ms. Simard: – Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of my constituents in Regina Lakeview to address some concerns respecting the Speech from the Throne.

I had an opportunity last week, Mr. Speaker, to congratulate you on your appointment. And I'd also like to congratulate all the members in this Assembly on their appointment to the legislature. And I would like to thank the mover of the motion and the seconder – the motion with respect to the throne speech. Their task was particularly difficult because the Speech from the Throne itself failed to deal with many of the problems that are facing us today. And I will respond very directly to some of those problems and concerns I believe my constituents have with the Speech from the Throne.

The last two-year period, Mr. Speaker, has been the longest election campaign in the history of Saskatchewan, I'm sure. But I've used this time to spend a great deal of time taking with the people of Regina Lakeview at their doorsteps and in their homes. They have repeatedly told me about their disappointment with the policies of the PC government – the same old policies we see in this new Speech from the Throne.

I want to take a moment in this debate to thank the people of Regina Lakeview for sharing their concern with me. I want to thank them for their warmth and their friendliness. I want to thank them for their support, I also wish to acknowledge the other candidates in Regina Lakeview who conducted excellent campaigns and put the issues before the people in Regina Lakeview who worked with me during the campaign. The people of Regina Lakeview who worked for and supported me have my admiration as well. They worked and participated out of a fundamental commitment to democracy. Their commitment

and the commitment of those who worked in every campaign for the candidate of their choice is commendable.

It's a very disturbing fact, however, Mr. Speaker, that not all my constituents felt free to exercise their democratic rights. I am referring, Mr. Speaker, to the individuals and families who told me that they were afraid to participate in the campaign; they were afraid to indicate a preference for any political party, and they were even afraid to discuss politics at the coffee break or over the lunch hour.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech talks about protecting Saskatchewan citizens. Well where is the protection for our fundamental democratic rights when people are afraid to take part in the democratic process because of the intimidation this government has inflicted on our citizens since 1982 – inflicted on the public service and on the citizens of Regina.

Many people lost their livelihood because they were suspected of the crime of failing to be a supporter of the government in power, and where many lost their jobs, many more were afraid.

Mr. Speaker, the constituency of Regina Lakeview is made up of individuals and families from many walks of lives. There are nurses and labourers, home-makers and lawyer, tradespeople, teachers and retired people; many of the voters in Regina Lakeview have made careers in the public service. They clean our hospitals, clean our teeth, care for our elderly, keep our public accounts, and so on.

These individuals are no more or no less honourable, as a group, than any other citizens. They pay their taxes, they volunteer their time in their community and make their contributions to society, but since 1982 these citizens have experienced an erosion of their democratic rights which has no precedents in this province or in this country.

Some Hon. Members: – Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: – No precedents, Mr. Speaker. And I want to make that point because the members opposite have tried to pretend that their actions are no different than any other government in power, and although the throne speech talks about putting the interests and needs of people foremost, the actions of the government since 1982 indicate otherwise.

And it's not only public servants that we're talking about here, not only public servants who are affected by the intimidation of which I speak, it is people in small business. People who work in the private sector whose agencies receive grants from the government, and people whose brothers -in-law, or great aunts worked in any of the situations I've mentioned, Mr. Speaker. And that's a lot of people. A lot of people who live in fear of this government.

But I cannot believe . . . I can't believe that the government wishes to be feared. I can't believe that they wish to have their programs implemented by a public service that is demoralized. And I don't believe that the government can be pleased with this situation, yet the throne speech offers no alternatives, and they do not seem to be changing their ways. The firing of a long-time public servant, Mr. Don Moroz, without explanation from the Saskatchewan Power Corporation is the most recent example. This type of thing not only damages the effectiveness of government, but it breeds fear and distrust. I urge this government, Mr. Speaker, to demonstrate their commitment to political freedom in a democracy; to demonstrate their appreciation for, and trust of their employees; to demonstrate their accountability to all the people of Saskatchewan.

I urge this government to consider their overwhelming defeat in Regina seats and consider what this means. The people closest to the seat of government, the people who know you best, have overwhelmingly spoken out against the practices of this government, and they've elected representatives who believe in the rights and value of all citizens.

Some Hon. Members: – Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: – It is frustrating indeed to respond to a throne speech which does not address the many concerns that the people of Regina Lakeview shared with me during the campaign. I cannot help but think that the members opposite heard some of the same concerns, but why have they not responded?

Let me ask the two women who are members of this Assembly on the government side – the member for Swift Current and the member for Maple Creek – how they feel about a throne speech that makes only one direct reference to women. The one reference to women is the statement that the government will work to assure women in business have equal access to credit. And this is good. We should do that. I've heard these concerns and I'm pleased to see this response.

But the fact of the matter is this initiative is meaningless to the majority of women in this province. There are many concerns to women which are not addressed in this throne speech, and I suggest that the government add the following to its proposals. Let them add a real commitment to an umbrella affirmative action program in the public service – a demonstrated commitment with an agency to put it into place.

It's time to put the talents of women to work outside the job ghettos to which women are still confined. Where are the women in management, the women in trades, the women in professions in your government? Where is the commitment to equality for women, disabled persons, and native people? Add to this a commitment to equal pay for work of equal value and the government then would provide leadership to employers across the province.

Women are also looking for a commitment to quality and accessible day care. They are looking for the help that was promised to provide services for battered wives. They are looking to a commitment from this government. And I ask the member from Swift Current and the member from Maple Creek to urge your colleagues to listen and respond.

Another addition to the throne speech which I urge you to make is a commitment to accessibility legislation which disabled people have been working for. When I spoke to disabled people during the election, they wanted to know when the promises of this government would be honoured. When they ask for no more than the ability to open a door or to get on an elevator to be able to compete for a job, how can they be denied? Every day that goes by without adequate accessibility legislation simply adds to the problem because more and more buildings are built that are not accessible. More buildings are built that provide a barrier to those with physical disabilities. And I urge you to get on with it without more delay.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: – Mr. Speaker, the Premier of this province is head in the media time and time again saying that he is listening to the people, and he says he's listening and he will act. Well, I've been listening to the people too, and I have heard things he apparently has not heard.

If this government is listening to the people, then how can he have brought forward a throne speech which does not propose a major initiative to deal with the crises of unemployment. I know the standard answer, Mr. Speaker, that is trotted out by this government time and time again. They don't see a problem. We heard it here this afternoon. In fact, they brag about their success in job creation.

Mr. Speaker, there are many people who question that success; people who are in despair and take no comfort in statistics. I have had people coming to me in tears because they cannot find work.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear the members opposite brag of their success in employment to these individuals. I would like them to brag to the young people who are 20 or 25 and have never found a steady job, and try talking to the young native person, the disabled person, and ask them how you're doing. I can tell you, they're not so impressed. Talk to the 55-year-old who's not ready or able to retire but has been laid off work. Ask them what it's like looking for work.

These people will tell you that all the platitudes and boosterism of this government has not increased their ability to build a career in this province. These people have heard all the talk about building and they've heard all the excuses – problems in foreign markets, low commodity prices, and so on.

These people don't expect miracles from the government, but they do expect action. They expect a commitment to keeping Saskatchewan jobs for Saskatchewan people and not contracting out to Alberta. They expect a commitment to doing the jobs that need to be done and putting people's skills to work. They expect an opportunity to teach in schools where there are too few teachers and to nurse in hospitals where there are too few nurses. They expect you to plant trees for our future forest industries and to rebuild our crumbling highways. They expect to see what they do not see - a commitment to full employment in the throne speech. They expect this to be a priority, and I urge you to listen and respond.

Mr. Speaker, the constituents of Regina Lakeview repeatedly told me they are overburdened with unfair taxation and increases in utility rates. They see their dollars dwindling while huge give-aways to big business continues. They cannot take any more of these heavy tax burdens and utility increases. Indeed, they would like to see some of these increases folded back. And it's time for this government to show some leadership and to provide some relief to ordinary citizens.

Mr. Speaker, there are many omissions in this Speech from the Throne, but I will single out one last subject; one last need which is not addressed in this speech. No where do I see a commitment to address the problems of poverty. Indeed it could be argued that the throne speech is a forewarning of worse to come for our citizens in greatest need. The members opposite would prefer to turn their backs on this subject. They would prefer to ignore the fact that this province, which was once the heartland of social progress, has become the food bank capital of Canada.

The record of this government in responding to poverty has been denounced by the voters of the urban areas, Mr. Speaker. They do not wish to see the victims of poverty pushed deeper into distress and they do not agree that people should be blamed for their own misfortune.

But I do not wish to dwell on the record of this administration. I wish to address the future and I am afraid, Mr. Speaker, that the future of poor people in this province will not be improved by any measures announced in the throne speech. There is no mention of improvement in the minimum wage, and yes I know any increase in the minimum wage must be done in consultation with small business and must not be an undue hardship to small business. But, Mr. Speaker, we must also remember that the minimum wage is a poverty wage and it's below the poverty line.

(1630)

Women make up approximately 70 per cent of those who receive minimum wage, and most minimum wage earners with dependants are women. This becomes a serious problem, not just for women but for society as a whole because this means that all these children are living below the poverty line – Saskatchewan's future living below the poverty line. Also, did you know, Mr. Speaker, that most women 65 years of age and over are single, divorced or widowed, and that more than 60 per cent of them live below the poverty line?

When I hear this government talking about the need for restraint and the need for cutting back and the need for reassessment of social assistance plans, I am concerned that their thought may be to impose restraint on the poor as they have done in the past. And I ask your government to assure this House that this is not the case; assure us that it will not reduce assistance to those in need while handing out millions to Peter Pocklington; assure us that it will not impose restraints on those on minimum wage; it will not ask them to tighten their belts while their own budgets continue to increase. I urge you when you practise restraint to spare those who are already carrying the burden of poverty and unemployment. Do not cut back on help for those in need. These people are your constituents and mine, and please listen to them and respond.

Mr. Speaker, this throne speech is a disappointment to many, many Saskatchewan people and I urge your government to enlarge its horizons and to respond to the needs of all citizens in this province. And because the throne speech fails to respond to the problems of the unemployed, to the problems of women and of ordinary taxpayers, of natives, of disabled persons and of the poor, and because it fails to reach toward a better future for all the people of the province, I must support the amendment which does deal with those matters and speak against the main motion if the amendment is not passed. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Martens: – Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a distinct pleasure for me to rise in this Assembly to join with my colleagues and those on this side of the House in recognition of the support for the Speech from the Throne. It is a document that I believe is both substantial and is also timely. It demonstrates the forward-looking attitude that everyone has come to expect from our Progressive Conservative government while still dealing in a responsible fashion with the concerns we are facing today.

Before I continue I want to add my personal congratulations to the long list regarding your election as Speaker. I believe that your efforts and our disciplines are necessary to make the Assembly work well and operate well, and you can rest assured that from my position I will facilitate that for you.

I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Premier for an outstanding re-election this past October. I believe it demonstrated more than anything else the commitment that the people who are, for example, in my constituency, have to the Premier. They felt that he had contributed in a way that far exceeded any other person who has led this province in the capacity to deal with agriculture problems and to deal with the things that were most important to them. I believe that he has a belief in the strengths of this province, and I believe that those are very, very important to him, and they are very important to me. And they reward that initiative on his part by re-electing me and him to the government side of the House.

As well, Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to thank the people of the Morse constituency for their trust and their loyalty. I want to thank the people who worked so hard to gain my re-election, and I am very

pleased to represent them here today. The constituency is not unique. I think it's relative to those around about it, but for me it is very special because that is where I live, that's where my home is, and these people are part of who I am and what I am.

I also want to pay tribute to the campaign managers that we had in this election. They demonstrated, I believe, that an election can be won on a positive note. And I think that that is extremely important when we rationalize the types of advertising that can be done in an election. I believe that we demonstrated that we can win with a voice that is positive, that has a direction of growth and diversification and stimulating the economy.

Mr. Speaker, the constituency of Morse lies in the south-west part of the province, and I believe that is one of the best places to live in Saskatchewan, and that's basically because I have a bias.

We in the Morse constituency completely surround the city of Swift current. My constituency is 75 miles square, and we have a lot of people who use the centre of the constituency as a trading area, and that is the city of Swift Current. So we have many people who focus their attention in that area, on Swift Current and the surrounding area, and deal in many of the shopping facilities that they have there, the service centres that they have there, and they are largely focused in there.

The city has demonstrated a vitality that I believe is probably second to none. It has grown in business and strength, and I think that is largely due to the kind of people that live in that area, the rural area around, and also in the city centre.

One of those reasons is the energy development that has taken place over the last four and a half years. And as I was looking through the statistics that showed what has happened in the south-west over the last year. I would like to say that even in spite of the kinds of things that have been happening in the energy sector, the south-west part of the province has still demonstrated a fair amount of activity in the oil and gas sector, especially in the gas, and I think that's extremely important as it relates to our capability of manufacturing in this province, our capability of providing energy to rural Saskatchewan.

The people in the south-west have probably in the last two years, outside of 1986, gone through probably the toughest years of their farming existence for the last 50 years. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that that has caused a good deal of concentration on various aspects as it relates to the financial areas in their homes and in their farming practices and their ranching practices, and I think that that's focuses an attention on giving to them a commitment to what their chosen work has become. And it has also been an opportunity for me, Mr. Speaker, to show some compassion.

We just had indicated to us that our government is not one of compassion. And I can recall, Mr. Speaker, through the late '70s when farmers were mortgaging their interest against their farms and they couldn't meet them, and the people over on the other side, when they were in government said, so what? It's not my responsibility. And they demonstrated their callous attitude towards it. And those members who were re-elected who headed that government are sitting here today and are able to hear again that they had a responsibility, and how did they react? They reacted negatively to those inputs that were given by the rural people in this province, and that's why. Mr. Speaker, they only have one person on that side of this House who's from rural Saskatchewan – or two. I'm sorry the member from Quill Lakes just spoke up – woke up. But anyway, that's the kind of thing, Mr. Speaker, that they never really cared about and they were never prepared to act on.

And I would say, Mr. Speaker, that that is the key to the kinds of things that were told me in the last four and a half years that said the Premier of this province knows and understands and can react positively; can also motivate positively. And I want to just tell the members opposite that during the time from 1982 to 1984 this government also worked with the federal government, which was not of the same stripe as this government is. And that also demonstrates to me, Mr. Speaker, the kinds of possibilities that our Premier, led by the executive of this government, can do for the people of Saskatchewan. It can work together with them.

There are a number of things that I wanted to just briefly go through as an indication of the kinds of things that I think are really important to the people of Saskatchewan. And I noticed a bit of sarcasm on the other side of the House regarding our agricultural policies. And I do believe, Mr. Speaker, that fundamentally we must maintain that sector of our society or we are all going to be losers in this province, every one of us. I just want to say that when you put money into the hands of a primary producer. . . and I don't believe that there is anybody more at the base level than agriculture. The people who are in energy – primary producers; people who are in exploration, oil, gas, gold, whatever it is – uranium; those kinds of people providing a base of entry into that by government assistance gives benefits to the very sector of society as it relates to the involvement and the moving of the money through the system. And they never believed that, because they never gave anything for that kind of assistance.

I, Mr. Speaker, have been involved in municipal things, and also in agriculture, and I have dealt with those people in a time. . . And I found how difficult it really was. That's why they scorn and scoff at it. I don't believe that that is necessary to be done. For example, when agriculture was in need of operating money last spring, who went out on a limb? The Premier of Saskatchewan recognized that it was better as a corporate society that we deal with giving an opportunity for farmers to plant their grain than for them to do it individually, and with that we introduced a \$25 an acre at 6 per cent. And what did that do? That had spin-offs throughout my constituency. That had spin-offs in providing benefits to my small business. Small businesses just thrived on the kinds of things that they could do with chemicals and with fertilizers, with small short-line equipment. Those are the kinds of things that really intensified during the summer, and it never quit as it went through.

And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, for my constituency the \$50 million that was put into my constituency, most assuredly, was well received by the people there. The demonstration of confidence that the people had also was increased when the Premier said he would make that roll over so that the farmers there could get some breathing room. And I want to just compliment the Premier and his staff for the kinds of things that they have done in that area.

How do you maintain a certain level of confidence within the framework of rural Saskatchewan? We found out a number of those things, Mr. Speaker, as we toured the province last year in dealing with the agriculture input costs.

An Hon. Member: – What became of it?

(1645)

Mr. Martens: – He wants to know, on the other side, what became of it. I was going to come to that, because it represents the kinds of things that we are prepared to do: number one, listen; and number two, respond in a positive way.

When we started that the federal government was only contribution 4.5 cents a litre on the gas. And what are they doing now? They're rebating all of the tax that they collect to rural farmers, and the farmers in his constituency get the same benefit as everyone else.

Then on top of that, Mr. Speaker, we initiated a program where we were prepared to return to the farm customers \$42 million, roughly, in total, of the royalty collected on the oil and gas. . . the oil that they were going to use. And that, Mr. Speaker, is going to benefit many, many people in all of Saskatchewan. And it not only focuses in the rural part but it focuses in to the kinds of things that can be done through, for example, the upgrader and the oil, and that relates directly to my constituency where the west half of it is the oil patch in the South-west.

When we ran in '82, the benefits that we saw that would accrue to young people beginning farming was specifically focused on an area that dealt with young people being able to buy land – own their own land, not rent it from big government. And we decided that that's what we would do. And Mr. Speaker, on the average, the people in the Morse constituency have benefited at about \$4,500 a year on that one program. And I think that is an extremely important feature in determining that the kinds of things that happen for young people to start is very important.

It also, Mr. Speaker, did a couple of other things. It transferred some of the indebtedness that fathers had so that sons could take it over at a far better rate, and they took it over and they applied for that. And that's why you will find, Mr. Speaker, that bankruptcies in Alberta and bankruptcies in Manitoba are far higher than in Saskatchewan. And number-wise they are far higher when we have a lot more farmers. More than 50 per cent of all western Canada farmers come from Saskatchewan. And I think that that's a credit to the kind of programs we put into place in this government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: – I believe that comes, Mr. Speaker, from listening. We initiated another one that I believe is very vital, and I've talked about the farmer's side, and we'll just address the livestock industry just a little bit. One of the things that we did, we involved ourselves in the livestock industry. We listened to the problems that were being dealt with with the drought in the south, with providing transportation, alleviating costs to them so that they could transport the hay from the north. Buy the stuff in the north and move it south. That, together with co-operating with the federal government, we provided \$48 a head plus 60.

We set up a livestock cash advance. The grain farmers in western Canada and the Canadian Wheat board area have at their disposal a cash advance system at no interest. And we felt that as a livestock industry it would be an extremely important feature to put into place in relation to the livestock industry. And the livestock producers in my constituency really feel that this is a very important feature, and I want to say especially to those in the dairy industry this has become a very important part of their program, and I believe that that's also an important thing.

The other area that focuses specifically on, and I think is a benefit, is the livestock feeding area in the province, and that area has got a lot of benefits from the kinds of things that can be done in expanding that program.

Another thing our government did and we're building on these things. And I just want you to understand, Mr. Speaker, that the focus is on building and growth and assigning things so that people can understand that.

What are we going to be doing tomorrow? Have we got a stability in the kinds of things that we are doing? I believe that we have. We have put into place some venture capital programs relating to livestock, livestock investment tax credits, feeder loan association guarantees.

Some of these things, Mr. Speaker, for instance, like the feeder associations loan guarantee program has been in existence since the 1930's in Alberta. How come they never ever thought of putting it into place in Saskatchewan? They didn't understand it? They didn't understand the agriculture side and the beef side or the other side. And as the member from Weyburn says, they still don't, and I doubt whether they ever will. And that's the very key to the kinds of things that we have to do.

We have to be expressive of the kinds of direction we have to take, and we also have to be prepared to listen and then show some leadership in giving direction.

Not only did we provide an area of growth for the livestock industry as it relates to the beef and the dairy, but we also did it to the pork. We initiated a pork board. The people voted on a board to set it up and they did. Not only that, we said the pork industry in this province has to go and last spring. . . I just want to use an example of a Premier that knows what he's doing.

Last spring in the United States in the mid-west, what happened? The bankers would not give their pork producers any money for operating. What did our government do? We gave them operating loans, interest free. And do you know what happened? Their pork producers went out of business. And if you look at the pork market in the United States in spring, it just went right down. And when it went down it demonstrated, Mr. Speaker, the fact that the people of the province. . . or of that area, could not afford to have the pork industry continue. The pork went down. They sold everything out and from midsummer and on it just kept climbing and climbing and climbing. And what did that do for our producers? What did that do? It set a market for our producers to market into the United States and to the midwest and throughout the whole western side of the United States; and that is extremely important when we talk about these things.

The areas that we have in dealing with the kinds of things that we have done as it relates to the grain, the pork, the beef, the dairy, can all come under a number of areas and one of those areas is the Agricultural Credit Corporation, and we have done a number of things in that area that are very important. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that time is pushing here, so I'll move along.

I want to mention a couple of things about the home repair program that I think are important for me. I noticed in early September, when we initiated this program, we were just bombarded in our constituency office with calls as to what to do, how to do it, where to get it done, and people just really responded favourably to it. And what it did, is it gave people an opportunity to work. That, I believe, outstrips the kinds of things that we were anticipating that it would do. It gave people an opportunity to work. The home repair at \$10,000 at 6 per cent. I think, is also a very important thing.

I want to just compliment the government on its moving the head office to Swift Current of the Ag Credit Corporation. Spreading some of the tax dollars around the province, I believe, is an extremely important thing. . . moving Sask Water to Moose Jaw, moving the crop insurance to Melville -- I believe that is very important.

I want to touch on one little detail yet, and that is the highways . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I will. And I have, in the four years that I was a member of this Legislative Assembly, had \$30 million come into my constituency, and the four years previous to that you gentlemen on the other side of the House only gave

that representative from your government \$13 million. And I think that, number one, that demonstrates not only what you thought of the member, but it also demonstrates what you thought of the area. And I believe – I firmly believe – that the kinds of things that were done by this government for that area are an example of the things that can continue to happen there.

I could go on and on about the kinds of things this government is committed to do, is planning to do, and is comfortable in doing. But, Mr. Speaker, I haven't the time, and we are about the ceases, so I would like to ask you to give leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:57p.m.