

December 11, 1986

EVENING SITTING

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Mr. Martineau and the amendment thereto moved by the Hon. Mr. Blakeney.

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: -- Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Prior to calling it 5 o'clock I was just at the point where I wanted to describe to the hon. members some of the accomplishments of SGI in light of some of the comments made by the hon. member from Regina North in his comments. In his comments he chose to make sweeping criticisms of Saskatchewan Government Insurance. I'm afraid, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that he is fallen into the trap of making his charges before ascertaining the true facts, and I might caution him that those of us on this side of this House are used to this sort of inaccurate and uninformed negativism coming from the opposition members of the previous House. We are hopeful that the new members of the opposition might apply more diligence to their jobs and raise the standards of the opposition's performance in this legislature.

Let me say that if the hon. member had looked carefully at the record of SGI since the PC government came into power in 1982, he would have found that far from being "run into the ground," to quote him, SGI has turned around dramatically.

It's true that when we took power in 1982 we did indeed find that SGI faced some very serious problems. SGI had been receiving, Mr. Deputy Speaker, some \$20 million from the province's gasoline tax. And as you know, on taking office we ended that tax and the people of Saskatchewan will be eternally grateful to us for that. The fact is we found that SGI had a general business that was subsidized by provincial motorists through this gasoline tax to the tune of \$7 million a year.

We also found that the auto fund had an accumulated deficit of \$22.5 million even though the NDP government had increased auto insurance rates by 65 per cent over the previous three years. We also found that SGI had over \$32 million in unrecognized reinsurance losses and it was carrying unprofitable product lines. SGI also had a ponderous administrative structure with nearly 1,600 employees and there were many other problems, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Obviously our PC government moved quickly to change SGI's direction dramatically.

Our first move was to appoint a new board of directors, and we set about passing legislation creating Saskatchewan auto fund, which is a separate legal entity that can own its own assets and make its own investments. This, and a rigorously applied cost accounting system, ended the auto fund subsidization of the general business.

Under our government, SGI then refocused the entire operation back to the basics, noting that SGI exists to provide property and casualty insurance to the people of Saskatchewan. Any plans not relating to this were therefore cancelled.

Claim procedures were tightened and increased emphasis was placed on fighting fraudulent claims. SGI's product lines were reviewed, poor risks were weeded out, proper prices were set for high hazard exposures,

and loopholes in the vehicle and registration system were closed, nearly eliminating the fraudulent registration of stolen or fictitious cars.

Surplus property was also disposed of.

Then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, management went at the job of bringing the size of staff down to the needed numbers. An early retirement program was introduced as well as a corporate down-sizing plan. This reduced the staff size by 17 per cent. The number of management positions were slashed by 25 per cent.

A planning process was set up to establish common goals throughout the corporation, and a commitment to achieving them, and this was implemented in 1983.

SGI also set up a training program to offer in-house insurance courses, as well as management training courses, communications training, and customer service program.

In retrospect the government's program at SGI has paid off well.

Removing the gasoline tax reduced the auto fund revenue by \$20 million. The government also froze the rates on insurance for one year. In 1983, it allowed an average 3 per cent increase in premiums and increased the automobile deductible from 350 to \$500. In 1984, it was able to avoid an increase in auto insurance premiums. For 1985-86, insurance rates were again reduced on an average of 7 per cent.

As well, our farmers in Saskatchewan got a 10 per cent reduction on car premiums, and the cost of a driver's licence was dropped by \$15.

I could mention many other achievements of SGI but I just wanted to put this on the record, Mr. Speaker. The people of Saskatchewan have heard too many sweeping criticisms from the opposition in this legislature based on nothing more than wishful thinking and a total lack of knowledge, and I would trust that the hon. member will mend his ways and determine from here on to provide better service to the people of the province.

I must say also, Mr. Speaker, that in his comments the other night he also made some very sweeping accusations about my other department. But all in all, I am pleased that the hon. member from Regina North West will be undertaking the job of being a critic for some of the areas that are my responsibility, and I do congratulate him on that. However, as I said before, I was disappointed that before undertaking this job he did not see fit to research the areas thoroughly and thus be in a position to bring some accuracy to his first comments.

With regards to his December 9th comments on the Department of Co-operation and Co-operative Development, he is correct in saying that our government, this PC government, has reduced the size of the staff somewhat. Yes, we did find ways to cut the fat that existed under the NDP old government and to bring, Mr. Speaker, to bring great efficiencies into the department. But when he suggested, Mr. Speaker, that there is a resulting lack of accomplishments in the last four years, he is clearly indulging in wishful thinking.

For the enlightenment of all members, let me straighten the record. Under the old NDP administration the best years for incorporating co-operatives was 1981-82, when 41 new co-operatives were incorporated in the province. In the past four years under a Progressive Conservative government, we exceeded anything the former government did. To date in 1986-87, we have incorporated 64 new co-operatives and by the end of this year, Mr. Speaker, we expect to double the best year the NDP ever had.

I might add that agriculture is a priority of this government and over the past 30 months, Mr. Speaker, 41 per cent of all new co-operatives have been agricultural co-operatives. That will have a significant impact on the province. To achieve this record our staff had to work very efficiently. From April 1, 1985 to March 31, 1986, department field staff attended 6,353 meetings to develop or assist existing or potential co-operatives. Of course new legislation that was brought in by our government made this possible.

The previous administration procrastinated on updating co-operative and credit union legislation during its entire term of office. Now I can say that the government departments are meeting regularly and productivity is way up. We are having very good meetings with the major co-operatives, and this is a process that did not take place, Mr. Speaker, under the former administration. Twice annually we meet with the boards of the major co-operatives in the province and have a good exchange of ideas and thoughts.

And let me add that central co-operatives and credit union systems are working with government on several significant projects and programs. Just three examples are: the upgrader which we heard about today in question period; we are working together with the major co-operatives to find solutions to the farm debt; and we're also working with the wheat pool on rail line and elevator rationalization.

I think the story of co-ops under this administration is very bright indeed. And, Mr. Speaker, that is why it is a particular pleasure for me to be named Minister of the Department of Co-operation and Co-operative Development. And like so many people in the province, I was raised in a rural area. And I don't think anyone can be born and raised in Saskatchewan without knowing the vital impact that co-ops and the credit union systems have on all of us. Indeed it's a way of doing business in the province. And I believe that Premier Devine left no room for doubt of our government's goal to build Saskatchewan through the co-operative sector.

And when you look at the Speech from the Throne, when we talk about building, about diversifying, about protecting, I think that in my view no groups have a greater responsibility or greater opportunity in this than the co-operatives and the credit unions of the province.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, our government proclaimed the new Credit Union Act on January 1, 1986, and my department will continue to work with the credit union movement and other interested parties to ensure that the new Act serves the credit unions' members' needs and interests effectively.

In this province, Mr. Speaker, hundreds of thousands of people are members of co-operatives and the presence of co-operatives and credit unions is felt in our market-place on an ongoing, continual basis. In fact, Mr. Speaker, if you rank businesses or companies according to revenue, here in Saskatchewan co-operatives and credit unions lead the list.

Nine of Saskatchewan's top 25 companies are co-ops and 25 of the top 100 are also co-ops. And the two largest headquarters in our province are the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and Federated Co-ops Limited. I'm sure we all know about these two vital businesses.

Credit unions alone have total assets of close to \$4 billion here in Saskatchewan. So, as I can say, there is no doubt that co-operatives are going to respond to the challenges ahead. We all know that co-operatives were spawned out of mainly the Dirty Thirties when times were tough, but what the co-operative movement has shown us over the last 50, 60 years is they are a vital part of our business community even in good times.

I'm sure every person in Saskatchewan will be encouraged to have heard Saskatchewan Wheat Pool president Ted Turner's message at his recent annual meeting. Mr. Turner, Mr. Speaker, spoke forcefully on the need for that great organization to launch a new marketing initiative.

I believe Mr. Turner was expressing the thoughts of just about every Saskatchewan citizen when he looked to the future and he articulated the challenges facing all of us. He was referring to his own particular company, of course, but the challenge that he saw can apply to every one of us today.

Mr. Turner, for your information, told his annual meeting that the company should launch a bold and aggressive marketing campaign to sell its products throughout the world. He said that the Pool would be failing its members and owners if it did not become directly involved in trade at a time when new markets are harder to find and harder to crack. He said, if we fail to act, we will not achieve the potential growth opportunities that are available to us, and he said the Pool would fall short of doing its jobs on behalf of its members.

Mr. Turner's chief executive officer, Milt Fair, echoed that theme in his own speech at that annual meeting when he suggested that there must be more emphasis placed on special crops and livestock. He said:

It's crucial that market development become a way of life for the pool and for Canada. (He said) Farmers must look at a renewed emphasis on livestock production which is crucial to soil conservation and potentially important as a marketing alternative.

Mr. Fair also told of initiatives that his firm is taking along this line.

(1915)

And, Mr. Speaker, this is just one example of how our co-operatives work at its best. And I'm sure that everyone realizes that the initiatives showed by the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool are totally in line with our government's goal of building Saskatchewan.

Members may be interested to know of the impact of the co-ops and what they do for their members. Many central co-operatives with head offices in Saskatchewan are expected to return a total of approximately \$38 million in cash to Saskatchewan farm and urban members during the coming winter months. In addition to this cash pay-out, approximately \$11 million is expected to go out as a patronage refund which will include member equity in local co-operative organizations. And that's no small dollars, Mr. Speaker. And that just gives us an idea of how vibrant that segment of our society is.

And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I look forward to working with a large and vibrant co-operative industry and supporting it through my new department.

It is not news to say that the past four years have been difficult years because the terms of the market-place generally have been against us in Saskatchewan and because quite frankly the weather has been against us too. We have gone through drought and grasshoppers and we are still caught in the grip of desperately low grain prices.

But who can doubt that we have come around at least one crucial corner? A year ago our problem was drought and grasshoppers and poor crops. Now the bins of Saskatchewan are full as they have never been full before, and though it's true that the quality of the grain is not high and prices perhaps are still at depression levels, I'm sure that we can all say that hopefully the drought cycle has been broken and we will soon begin to see some price responses or price realization in the market-place.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that, who can doubt that Saskatchewan is a sleeping giant? We can just look at our agriculture resources alone. Our province has over half of the agricultural land in the Prairies, and nearly 40 per cent of Canada's total arable agricultural land.

When I look at the growing market on this continent and in the Pacific rim countries for grain, and meat, and other food products, I'm convinced of one thing: our problems, I'm sure, with agriculture are short term. Our government has already provided the greatest support package for farmers through the present difficulties. And now that the drought has been broken, the challenge facing us, I believe, is simple: we must marshal all the forces available in Saskatchewan to identify markets for the products we grow, and to get on with the business of growing and processing those products for which there are markets in this fast-growing and fast-changing world. To the extent we succeed in that, the future of Saskatchewan is assured.

We can take heart from the fact that our Premier is taking agriculture on to the national policy-making stage. He has brought it to federal conferences and in recent days federal and provincial leaders in this country endorsed wide-ranging farm sector strategies which they are confident will provide policy direction for the next century. It's an agreement that promises increased funding for research and continued income and marketing support for our agriculture producers. It is the strategy, Mr. Speaker, that was developed in the past year and was endorsed during the meeting of the first ministers.

In Premier Devine, Mr. Speaker, we have a leader who has the courage and the vision to take this province to its rightful place as a leader in Canadian confederation. And Saskatchewan, I'm sure, will be a force to be reckoned with in world markets. The Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, provided a blueprint for the next stage of the development in our province and in the creation of a better life-style for all of us.

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to endorse totally the document. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, before I begin my remarks in terms of talking about the contents of the throne speech, I would like to first of all reiterate my congratulations to yourself on your election to the Chair. And I might say that within the last week I've noticed myself a certain uptake in decorum and a much better function of question period. And I think a lot of that has to do with your . . .

An Hon. Member: -- : Let's not get carried away.

Mr. Lyons: -- Well, let's . . . The member from Regina North West says not to get carried away, but I think that we can thank the little smoother functioning of question period to your getting some experience on the job -- on-the-job training, as we all, new members here, are getting the on-the-job training.

I would also like to congratulate the other new members on this side of the House and also on the other side of the House to their election to this Assembly. I might say that I wish there weren't quite as many other members on that side of the House as there are -- in fact, that we would be changing places. However, that's that side. History has been prologued and we're here to get on with the job.

I would like to also, if I may, Mr. Speaker, refer to our spouses and companions. And I wonder if I could have leave of the Assembly, whether all of us could rise as a moment of acknowledgement for the role done by all our spouses and companions in helping us to get elected to this House. I am sure the members on the other side and on this side of the House certainly appreciate the role that they've done.

An Hon. Member: -- I'll tell her when I get home tonight.

Mr. Lyons: -- Okay. The member from Meadow Lake says he'll have that appreciation when he gets home tonight. Well I'm glad he will.

Mr. Speaker, there are some other people I'd like to thank as well. I'd like to thank and acknowledge the work done by some of the former members for the constituency of Regina Rosemont. I would like to thank the work done on my behalf by Ed Whelan, well-known parliamentarian to this House; to Mr. Bill Allen, the member for the New Democratic Party who immediately preceded myself.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, I would like to as well acknowledge the work done by the member that immediately preceded me, Mr. Gordon Dirks. And while Mr. Dirks and I certainly had a fairly large divergence in terms of political opinion, I won't fault him on the work that he did for the people of Regina Rosemont in putting forward what he thought was correct and what he thought was the correct political program. Mr. Dirks set a standard in terms of working and pouring resources into the constituency. He set a standard that I intend to aim for, and I hope to be able to meet over the next four years. However . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . As the member from North West says, I hope to be more successful at it, as well.

However, I'd like to touch, Mr. Speaker, on some of the substance of the matters that were raised in the throne speech debate. And in doing so I say it seems to be odd for me, as a first-time new member, to be rising in a debate such as this in which we talk of the important issues and problems which face the people of Saskatchewan. And I say it's odd because of the form in which it's presented.

In some ways, Mr. Speaker, it's as if there's two solitudes in this place: there's our side and their side, and the two never really talk to each other. We put forward our party lines; they put forward their party lines; and the words just seem to float out into an empty space.

You know, in some ways, it's . . . Someone referred to it today as when they come here to watch the throne speech debates it's like participating in the theatre of the absurd, you know, and that's unfortunate because of the fairly weighty matters that we deal with here.

I certainly don't have any answer to doing it other than, I think, the concept of respecting what each member says in a spirit of co-operation or just of mutual respect, the fact that we all are here and the fact that we all have something to say. And whether or not we agree with each other, at least we're saying it.

I'd refer members' attention to the speech made by the Minister of Economic Development earlier on today, in which he struck a tone which appeared to me as probably a productive tone, in terms of dealing with the problems that face us. I hope that over the next four years we can continue that kind of tone, despite the fact that we're going to have fairly robust differences of opinion in terms of the policies that are being presented before the people of Saskatchewan. At least we should try to talk to one another in a realistic fashion and try to deal with those problems.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to, if I could now for a few minutes, speak to the francophone members of the population of Saskatchewan and say a few words to them. I notice my colleague from Cumberland addressed the people in his native language, and while French is not my native language, I think it would add to the spirit of the House and to the debate to address the francophone people of Saskatchewan.

(The hon. member spoke in French.)

(1930)

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak for a few minutes on the substance, or the supposed substance, in the Speech from the Throne, and how it affects the constituents of Regina Rosemont in the following areas: in the terms of the unemployment rate in Regina Rosemont: how it affects the senior citizens; how it affects our urban Métis and Indian people who live in Regina Rosemont; how it affects the small-business people

of Regina Rosemont; how it affects the farmers of Regina Rosemont – and we do have farmers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who live in that constituency.

And I also want to speak and say a few words about something that is near and dear to my heart, and that's the whole question of the environment and how we should, I believe, approach environmental questions.

Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne there was a plan outlined – or the outlines of a plan outlined – to deal with what the government considered the major problems facing the people of Saskatchewan. But as our leader, the member from Regina Elphinstone said, the Speech from the Throne was more notable for what it didn't contain than what it did contain.

And that's unfortunate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when it comes to the question of those who are unemployed – those people, young and old, male and female, white, native, who don't have jobs and who are looking for gainful employment and jobs that are rewarding and satisfactory; those residents of Regina Rosemont who were working, or who are working, and who feel threatened by the increasing rate of unemployment, not only in Regina Rosemont but throughout Saskatchewan and throughout Canada, for they recognize that in fact it is a national and international problem.

But they are worried about it, and they are frightened by it, and they know that between 1982 and 1986 the government of the members opposite didn't do very much about it. And they're reassured with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when they look at the throne speech and see that that is not a priority of this government, that it doesn't rest uppermost in the minds of the members opposite and that in fact it's nothing more to this government than an urban problem, so to speak.

Mr. Speaker, I notice a number of our members on this side talked in the throne speech debate about the reasons they were put here, the reasons that they came here as opposed to other members – the members in the Progressive Conservative Party. And I don't want to talk, Mr. Speaker, about the reasons why I'm here as opposed to the former member representative from Regina Rosemont. But I would like to talk a little bit about why, when I look across this hall, I believe that there's a fair number of those members opposite who won't be there after the next election, unless and until they begin to pay attention to some of the real problems that face the real people of this province.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that it's a matter of any ill will, or even if it's a matter of will at all in regards to the members of the government opposite, in terms of dealing with the problems that face us. I think that their problem is a structural problem. It's a problem that faces them because they are members of a political party which puts the interests of one class of society ahead of the interests of another class of society. And, Mr. Speaker . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: -- Mr. Speaker, I want to deal with that a little later. But I want to deal with some of the structural realities. I want to deal with some of the structural realities that the government faces and why they won't be able to deal with the question, first of all, of unemployment.

To deal with unemployment requires a massive government intervention into the economy, an intervention to which the government opposite is philosophically opposed. They are philosophically opposed because they have said from the time they were elected here in 1982 and in 1986 that free enterprise is the way to go, that the free enterprise system is the one which will produce jobs, which will produce prosperity for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I think the facts of the free enterprise system and how it creates jobs in Saskatchewan speaks well enough for itself. Give-aways is not the word. Give-it-aways is not the word. Sell out; sell out to

foreign interests of our economy, is the method by which this government sees the free enterprise system operating.

What happens, Mr. Speaker? Let's take the example of the bacon plant, the famous bacon plant in North Battleford. Here we have a system in which the resources of the people of Saskatchewan are taken from the treasury and put into the hands of a multimillionaire robber baron. And that's the only word for Peter Pocklington – robber baron. And you can ask the workers at Gainers that. Putting our money into the hands of this robber baron to come to Saskatchewan to create jobs.

And I ask the members opposite: why couldn't you take that money, work with the city council of the city of North Battleford using the economic resources of the province and the brains and expertise of not necessarily the entrepreneurs but of local community people in North Battleford, and build that plant to service not just Gainers but Intercontinental and any other packers who wanted to slaughter hogs in this province?

But no, you're tied to the ideological chain that free enterprise must be served and those who must be put on the table are the free enterprisers, not the people of Saskatchewan. And that is why your reliance on outside forces, your reliance on outside capital will for ever doom you, for ever doom you in being able to deal with the question of unemployment.

I want to compare that with the previous administration, the approach of the previous administration, which marshalled and put together the resources and the strengths of the people of Saskatchewan to build businesses here in Saskatchewan, to expand the potash industry and expand jobs in the potash industry. And one only has to look at the mien expansion at Esterhazy and the mine expansion in Lanigan as examples of how we utilize, in a socialist manner, job creation strategies and the resources of the province.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, these people who are against welfare are the biggest welfare hand-outers in the world to their corporate buddies. Meanwhile the member from Maple Creek, the minister in charge of Saskatchewan Government Insurance, talks about cutting the fat – cutting the fat. Well cutting the fat, Mr. Speaker, is one nice way of saying, throwing people out of work. And that's what this government's job is all about – throwing people out of work.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: -- You're not interested in solving the unemployment problems and if you are you're going about it the wrong way, gentlemen, because the international pools of capital upon which you want to draw won't be coming here. They won't be coming here for a whole number of structural reasons, including market size and so on and so forth. And your dreams of diversifying and manufacturing and producing and so forth are the same as the paper projects that we've seen presented before us like the fertilizer plant for Regina, like the Husky upgrader, like the bacon plant going into production, etc., etc.

Mr. Speaker, between November of 1985 and November of 1986, Saskatchewan was the only province in Canada – the only province in Canada – to see a drop in the number of people employed. Two thousand people – 2,000 fewer people employed in Saskatchewan while the rest of Canada was going up. Every other province was going up.

And that translates, Mr. Speaker, into hardships for real people. They're not statistics and they're not fat to be cut. They're real people. And I just want to use an example of what I mean by real people. If every person of the 36,000 people in this province who are unemployed were put into the towns of Weyburn, and of Estevan, and of Lloydminster, and of Melfort, and of Melville, and the members were to take a walk through those towns, every man, woman, and child in those towns would be out of jobs, because that's what it really means. That's how many people are unemployed. And that's a waste. And that's a waste of

human potential. I don't believe any of the members opposite agree with wasting human potential. But I'm cautioning you and I'm warning you that your approach – your open for business, your sloganeering, your partners for progress, isn't worth the paper it's written on, unless you use the government to lead the way in creating jobs. For it's only the government in this province, as history has proven, which will create jobs.

And that, gentlemen, is a big difference between us; that's the dividing line. We think that the government is here to put people to work. You think that it's Peter Pocklington to rip off our resources, and that's the big difference, gentlemen.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: -- And we've answers. There are answers, you know. It's not magic. If you look, Mr. Speaker, if the government opposite would look to those good socialist countries of Europe, like Sweden and Norway and Austria, and take a look at the unemployment rates there: 2.1 per cent, 2.1 per cent in Norway; 3.8 per cent, 3.8 per cent in Sweden; three and a half per cent in Austria – and that's high because they've had a little bit of a recession – 3.8 per cent, Mr. Speaker; I think they would take a very serious look at some of the solutions that those socialist countries have used, that those countries have used in creating jobs and putting people to work.

For example, Austria has reduced the work week to 30 hours. They've reduced the work week to 30 hours. And why? Because they were partners. The working people and the government in Austria were partners and said, jobs come first, not profits.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Wolseley says to keep talking. You better believe it, Mr. Member, you better believe it.

One has to look at, for examples, solutions that the Swedes use. They used a very simple solution. One of the things they did was extend paternity and maternity leave and called it parenting leave. And so parents had a year off from work, and they could divide it up either way – mothers and fathers – so they could look after their children. But I suppose the members opposite aren't interested in looking after children. And they guaranteed those people the right to return to work. That provided a 25 per cent increase in the number of jobs available.

(1945)

And you know it doesn't take very much of a brain, Mr. Speaker, to think of something simple like that. But then the government and the members opposite wouldn't dream of doing something like that. Why? Because it would challenge the profits of their corporate friends, wouldn't it?

It would challenge their corporate profits and we wouldn't have, for example, a vote on that from the member from Yorkton. He certainly wouldn't want to vote for something like that. After all, the profits of Morris Rod-Weeder may go down. You know, we couldn't have that, could we? Despite the fact people would be working and we'd lower the unemployment rate in Yorkton, you wouldn't vote for something like that, would you, sir?

And there's a number of other . . . There are a whole number of issues in terms of economic development and unemployment that I could go into, but I won't. But I want to raise something that the Government of Saskatchewan is thinking about, and which I think has a fair bit of merit. And that's the whole question of community development corporations. Mr. Speaker, the community development corporations, if they are structured in the manner, for example, of the New Dawn Corporation in Cape Breton, or the Nanaimo Community Development Corporation, or a number of the other examples coming up, are good.

Let me just explain the difference, however, Mr. Speaker, between what the people of Nanaimo or the people of Cape Breton are doing in putting people back to work through their CDCs as opposed to those being proposed by the government of the members opposite.

Those community development corporations in other places are owned by the community, and the shares in them are owned by the community. And when people leave the community, they will sell their shares to other members in the community. And they raise capital to create jobs in industries and small enterprises in conjunction with the needs which are decided in consultation with things like city councils and the provincial governments of other communities. And I contrast that approach versus the VCC approach.

So the hon. member said the VDC approach, but I don't know if that's quite the correct way of placing it; but the venture capital corporation approach. And the problem with the venture capital corporation approach is the structural problem that you people face – that you're going to rely on outside venture capital, outside the needs of any individual community in terms of the line on economic development. And that's a real problem. But the whole notion – and I want to say this – the whole notion of community development corporations in principle is a good notion, and I think that you should take a look at the way in which you're implementing.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move to the question of seniors and how the Speech from the Throne will not address the needs of senior citizens. They didn't in the past and they won't in the future. And the reason is very simple. The reason is a very simple one, Mr. Speaker, and that is because of the fiscal crisis which presently faces the Government of Saskatchewan – the fiscal crisis which is their doing, which is their doing through, I would believe, a whole history of waste and mismanagement, four years of economic mismanagement in terms of wrong-headed investment. But it impacts on the senior citizens of Rosemont.

You know, I don't see any signs in the throne speech debate that that fiscal crisis will be alleviated by the actions of the government opposite. And I got a hint of that, Mr. Speaker, through the comments from the Minister of Finance, the member for Qu'Appelle-Lumsden, when very recently he opened an attack on the city council of Regina and one of its institutions, Pioneer Village, in which he said . . .

First of all he objected to the dismissal of one of the directors, one of the management people. And I don't know what role whatsoever that the member for Qu'Appelle-Lumsden has, and the Minister of Finance has, in terms of dealing with the city of Regina in that matter, other than trying to raise some political mischief. But the thing that worried me, Mr. Speaker, the thing that worried me and worried the senior citizens of Pioneer Village was the kind of blackmail, was the kind of blackmail that the Minister of Finance entered into.

The minister said, if you don't reassess your dismissal of that person, I'm going to go to cabinet and I'm going to demand the \$6.3 million which was committed to Pioneer Village and to the board by the former minister; I'm going to demand that cabinet reassess its position on that. And, Mr. Speaker, blackmail is a heavy word but I can't think of any other word that deals with that kind of threat hanging over the board of directors of Pioneer Village and hanging over the senior citizens of Pioneer Village.

What I want to know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I want to know: is this just a ruse? Is this just some ploy by the Minister of Finance to now withdraw the \$6.3 million commitment that he made to the senior citizens, and that was made to the senior citizens by the former member for the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, the former minister in charge? Is this a ruse to withdraw that money? The senior citizens of Rosemont would like to know that; the board of directors of Pioneer Village would like to know that; and I certainly would like to know that.

You know, Mr. Speaker – and the government recognizes it – the federal government recognizes it, the provincial government recognizes it, we recognize it, that it's senior citizens who are living in the most

abject poverty, senior single women in particular. And the government opposite could do something like that, could do something for senior citizens. And it wouldn't take vast, vast amounts of money in terms of being able to help senior citizens who are in financial distress.

For example, he could introduce a senior rate for government services, for SaskTel, for Sask Power, -- as an example, a government rate where senior citizens who lived on a fixed income could have a lower rate than those paid by citizens whose incomes keep rising because they're participating in the work-force. The government could do that.

The government could also provide totally free medical care to senior citizens -- totally free, not charge them for one thin dime if you're 65 or 60 or whatever the cut-off age was put forward. If they wanted glasses, if they needed hearing aids, orthodontic work, the government could say, we'll pick up the tab. And that will take some of the financial stress off senior citizens.

And they could also help themselves in the long term in terms of government financing of the health services by delivering health care to senior citizens through such delivery mechanisms as a senior citizen community clinics. Now I see the former minister of Health, it gives him great delight over there, taking great delight at that suggestion. And I would like to see the minister or the former minister of health stand up and say to me what is wrong with having community clinic services for seniors.

Mr. Speaker, if we look at the throne speech debate we see nothing in it in terms of the agenda for our Indian and Métis people that live in the urban areas. The member for Cumberland has already adequately dealt with the whole question of work and the ability to work and the need to work and in fact the potential for work of our native citizens and Indian citizens in the cities.

And I'm not going to go on at great length about how the lives they live in urban areas, of native people, marginalizes them to the sides of society, condemns them to a cycle of poverty, and which the government has not made any attempt -- not one attempt in Regina, not one attempt in Saskatoon, not one attempt in Prince Albert, nor Swift Current, nor North Battleford, nor Yorkton -- to break, not once have they tried to cut that chain, Mr. Speaker. But what they have tried to cut are programs -- programs administered by the native people for native people. And I refer for example to the native housing program done through Gabriel Housing.

Now while the member from Regina South may think that because he hadn't lived in a house with a garage, that is a luxury, I would submit that when housing corporations run by native people can get the best deal, better deals than he can get on his house for less money, then that's a good deal for the people of Saskatchewan and it's a good deal for native people. And I'm surprised to see that those in charge of Sask Housing Corporation are opposed to good housing for native people. And I say shame to that.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to speak a bit about small-business men in Rosemont and why small-business men supported myself in the recent election. And I can think of only one, gentlemen, one small-business man who is a prominent member of the Conservative Party, who didn't support me.

But I look upon the restaurant owners and I look upon the owners of the confectioneries and of the dry cleaning establishments and so forth in Rosemont, and you know, they thought in 1982 that you were their party. And they were disappointed by you. And they voted for me because they didn't think that in 1986 you were going to be their party, and they knew that very well. And they knew that very well because of your wrong-headed economic policies -- not directly related to small business, but your wrong-headed economic policies in terms of attempting to lower the standard of working people in Saskatchewan, lower their standard of living, lower the disposable income which they lived off in terms of providing their goods and services out there.

Some people say, Mr. Speaker, that that was a by-product of the government's economic policy; that the attack on working people, their living standards, was nothing more than the after-effects of their open-for business policy. Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't agree with that. I think that was an integral part of their economic strategy to lower the living standards of workers, to break the trade union movement, to put people out of work, to scare them into kowtowing to the bosses and the bankers that they represent.

That was their economic strategy, Mr. Speaker; that was their economic strategy and I see no change in the present throne speech to change my mind – not one inch on that at all, not one inch, not one inch. The small-business people of this province in the urban areas are saying to you gentlemen, stop the attack on the working people of this province because we're standing with them and we're standing with the New Democratic Party who speaks for them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: -- But, Mr. Speaker, I don't expect any abatement in that attack. And I don't expect that because when I look around the province and see what's happening . . . I look at Lanigan. And do we see the minister responsible for the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan attempting to intervene in a dispute which is ripping not only management-labour relations at Lanigan – which were no ball of fire in the past – but ripping it apart, tearing asunder not only the working relationship in the mine site, but in fact ripping and tearing asunder the communities of Lanigan and of Humboldt? And you know, Mr. Speaker, I attribute the fact that we have a member from Humboldt sitting here, and we have a member from Quill Lakes sitting here, because this dispute spreads into their area and because those two members took a side and supported the working people, as opposed to the government, in this dispute. They took the side of the working people and that's why they're sitting here today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: -- And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I see another sign, in terms of the length of dispute that's gone on at Nipawin, in the co-operative there. And I don't see, Mr. Speaker, the minister in charge of the co-operatives standing up here in this House and talking about trying to save the Pineland Co-op by trying to get the dispute settled up there. No, no, not at all. She's more concerned, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with cutting the fat. And I suppose that she considers the people who are walking the picket line in Nipawin in front of that co-op just part of the fat to be cut. Well we don't consider that, Mr. Speaker. That's not our fat, Mr. Speaker, that's not our fat. Those are our people. And we say that with pride, and we stand behind them.

Okay, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move on to a little bit about the whole question of the agricultural crisis. And we had, I think, the probably clearest and most concise and most effective presentation of the problems which confront us on the economic level in Saskatchewan by the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. And I've sat and watched the affairs of this House since 1982 from the galleries and never, ever, have I heard a more clear, precise, concise statement of how they see the real world out there, you know, and the minister must be complimented for that. I think he's wrong. I think he's wrong in . . . I think where the wrongness shows up most clearly is when he talks about the agricultural crisis and what the problems are in agriculture.

(2000)

And the Minister for Economic Development and Trade said, the major problem facing Saskatchewan agriculture today is the question of trade; it's a question of trade. Mr. Speaker, I don't think, and the members, I believe, of our party don't think that's the major question facing Saskatchewan agriculture today. I think the major problem in the rural areas of agriculture facing the people of Saskatchewan today is the whole question of rural depopulation – the loss of people from the farms; the loss of people from the

small towns and the villages and the hamlets out there. And that we see the denuding of Saskatchewan – turning into the fertile but barren plains.

And it's a very, very, very, very critical question that we face in this area. And in some ways it's not a question for partisan political rhetoric, although I suppose the members think that I'm not exactly a great one to talk about partisan political rhetoric. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we don't deal with the question of rural depopulation and if we don't deal with that question soon, and if we don't deal with it in a major and effective manner, we're not going to have a rural Saskatchewan.

And I want to just deal with some of the statistics because it's time we put an end to some of the myths – some of the myths out there about protection and saving and so on and so forth.

Between 1971 and 1982 Saskatchewan lost 11,000 farmers. Is there any member opposite who disagrees with that statistic? Eleven thousand farmers! Between 1982 and 1986 Saskatchewan lost 4,000 farmers. Now, Mr. Speaker, that averages to 1,000 farm families a year gone from Saskatchewan. The facts are pretty simple and they speak for themselves.

Now 11,000 farmers over 11 years isn't a great record. But I can tell you 4,000 farmers over four years isn't a great record either. So when you talk about saving and protecting and preserving and diversifying to manufacturing, I think the only thing you're manufacturing are myths. The only thing you're diversifying is the problems, both on the farm and in the rural area. The only thing that you're producing is the same thing that's being produced by the south end of a north-going cow because, Mr. Speaker, the facts of the matter are plain. My party didn't save the farmers from depopulation. Your party's not saving the farmers from depopulation – from depopulating rural Saskatchewan.

And we've got to come together, come to grips with that problem and deal with it because . . . What are they saying – 25 per cent? – 25 per cent of all Saskatchewan farmers are in danger of losing their farm in the next 10 years. Farm Credit Corporation – 25 per cent. That's 25 per cent of 50,000 gone unless we can develop some effective long-term solutions to agriculture.

And it's not just a question of trade. It's a part of it, but it's not just a question.

The Minister for Economic Development mentioned a GATT type of solution – a GATT type of solution in terms of dealing with part of the agricultural problem. And we're in favour of that.

We've called an international grains agreement – and we've called for that, and we've called for that. Do we hear you members calling for that now? Is that what you're saying? Is that what you're telling us? You're in favour of an international grains agreement? To bring an end to . . . And the word, Mr. Premier, isn't mine – pardon me, Mr. Speaker, -- isn't mine, but was the Premier's, to bring an end to the anarchy, the anarchy of the international grains market-place.

The Premier said it, Mr. Speaker. I agree, there's anarchy out there. And the only way you can do that is through a democratically planned and controlled trading arrangement on an international level. That's one part of the solution.

But the major problem facing Saskatchewan farmers is not the fact that they can't produce wheat, not the fact that they can't get it overseas. It's the fact that they're being squeezed by the credit crunch and by the bankers, the banks that these people represent. And one by one they're disappearing from the Saskatchewan landscape like the elevators.

And if you were serious, if you people were serious about stopping the erosion of Saskatchewan rural society, you'd put a moratorium on farm debt. You'd say, hold it, Mr. Banker, hold it; forego the interest

payments. And it's going to take a while, but we're going to help Saskatchewan people back on their feet out there on the farms. And we're going to develop programs which will build up the small towns of rural Saskatchewan and which will put people back into rural Saskatchewan to develop that kind of life-style that I believe the majority of people in Saskatchewan support.

You know, the question of agriculture just isn't an economic question. It's a social question.

And the people in Saskatchewan very soon are going to have to make a choice on what they want to have, a Saskatchewan populated by farms, including new types of farms and new types of farm ownership – between that type of Saskatchewan, a Saskatchewan where people live, or between the large corporate Saskatchewan which the gentlemen in the shadows opposite would like to see.

The question comes down in some parts in terms of intergenerational transfer, to be very simple. It's either land bank or it's bank land. It's either the land bank or it's bank land.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: -- And that's what's happening out there. It's coming down to five or 10 or 15,000 megafarms, corporate farms – or a limit to farm size. It's coming down to those kind of questions, Mr. Speaker. And those are the kind of questions that my colleague and I will be raising over the next four years, over and over and over again in rural Saskatchewan, because the people of this province are going to have to take that social choice.

I'll tell you why they're going to have to take the social choice from the point of view of the city workers. The working people in the city think they're getting a raw deal. They see money, dollar after dollar after dollar being poured in to the mire called the farm crisis with no solutions in sight. No results. A thousand farmers a year leaving the province, and the buckets keep going and the money gets poured down into the wine cellar, and it brings forth no fruit.

And the people in the cities, Mr. Speaker, are becoming . . . Let's just say they're becoming angry at the thought of their tax dollars put into a crisis situation in which the provincial government is seen not to be doing anything about. Because they don't see it as a solution. They don't see the band-aid approach to agriculture as a solution. And they don't want a band-aid approach to agriculture as being the solution.

They want long-term, long range economic planning for rural Saskatchewan and for urban Saskatchewan and they're prepared to pay their fair share. They're prepared to pay their fair share, but they're not going to keep throwing tax dollars after millions of tax dollars so that they can have government that gets elected, that turns around and kicks them in the teeth; kicks their trade unions in the teeth; lowers their living standards; freezes their minimum wage positions. They're not going to stand for it. And, Mr. Speaker, at some point in time we're not going to stand for it either.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: -- Mr. Speaker, earlier on the Minister for Economic Development talked about co-operation in the House and the need for that kind of co-operation. All I want to say is, in terms of dealing with co-operation, I think when we came here we had a sense that that co-operation could develop.

And when I was assigned my job as critic of the environment, I wrote to the Minister of the Environment and I asked him in the spirit of co-operation whether or not I could obtain a briefing from his department officials in terms of what his department saw as the major environmental issues of the day, and some of the solutions and some of the ideas that were being percolated in the department.

And what did I get, Mr. Speaker? Flat no. And not only did I get a flat no on this supposed co-operation, not only did I get a flat no – the minister turned around and put a gag order on his officials. He put a gag order on the officials of his department and said, don't talk to any of the MLAs or any of their staff people. He put a gag order on them. And, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that if there is one area, one area in the province where non-partisan co-operation could be possible, it's dealing with the air we breathe and the water we drink and the good productive land that we walk on.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: -- But, Mr. Speaker, between the reality – to quote or to paraphrase T.S. Elliott, “between the reality and the rhetoric falls the shadow.” And when I look across the hall, across this House, Mr. Speaker, it's like looking into the shadows where the shadow people live whose rhetoric is so fine and whose reality, for most of the people in my constituency, is less than fine. The shadow people. And they're shadow people, Mr. Speaker, for one very simple reason. That's because of whom they represent. These people, Mr. Speaker, do not represent the oppressed; they don't represent the workers; they don't represent the small and medium-sized farmers; they don't represent the small-business people of Saskatchewan. They represent an ideology and a class of people, large entrepreneurs: the Peter Pocklington, the bankers, the Weyerhaeusers, all those large, international capital pools which come into Saskatchewan not to create jobs, not to provide . . . (inaudible) . . . not to provide a better living for people, but only one thing, to prepare the profits of their corporations.

Mr. Speaker, that's not just rhetoric from this side of the House. I want to quote, Mr. Speaker, an eminent authority on the question of political power from Saskatchewan. “Politicians . . .” This eminent authority, Mr. Speaker, said, “Politicians by nature are power drunk.” “Politicians by nature are power drunk and owe their appointment to the society by the management of big corporations. Thus the possibility really exists for the politician to collude with corporate management in a bureaucratic symbiosis system. To assume one political power, and I'll be extremely considerate in regulating your operation, a counter-objective to corporate relation.” I want to repeat that. “Politicians by nature are power drunk and owe their appointment to the society including the management of big corporations.”

And I turn, Mr. Speaker, to the front page: “A Critique and Evaluation of the Report on the Canadian Royal Commission on Corporate Concentration,” by D.G. Devine. Premier Devine, Mr. Speaker. I would say we're dealing with an expert in this matter. Politicians are power drunk, Mr. Speaker; politicians are power drunk and I don't believe there's anybody any more qualified to speak on that subject than the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion . . .

An Hon. Member: -- Table that.

Mr. Lyons: -- Mr. Speaker, they're urging me to table the document. I'm not going to table the document. This is a collector's item for the museum. “Politicians by nature are power drunk.”

Mr. Speaker, I've gone over my time. I know the members opposite will be glad to see me sit down. I want to thank you for the opportunity and I want to thank the people of Regina Rosemont for the opportunity to speak out on their behalf. In the next four years I intend to speak on their behalf, and speak out as a voice of the oppressed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: -- Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Before I get into the main body of my remarks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to add my words of congratulations to those of the other members of the legislature who have offered congratulations to the Speaker on his election. And I must say it's with a great

deal of pride that I listened to an interview by the CBC radio with the member who became and is Speaker. And it was with that same great deal of pride that I listened to Mr. Speaker's remarks at the opening night banquet held just recently, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was impressed by this very distinguished gentleman – impressed by his sincerity and his genuineness and by his absolute feel for what this legislature and the Speakership represents in terms of the dignity and the integrity of this Chamber. And quite frankly, I'm very proud to sit as a member of this legislature under his Speakership.

(2015)

I also would like to congratulate all newly elected and re-elected members, and especially the member for Saskatoon Eastview and the member for Pelly for their excellent jobs of moving and seconding the address that's under consideration, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

After the last speech by the member from Regina Rosemont, a very good job I must say . . .

An Hon. Member: -- Entertaining.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: -- Entertaining too, yes. And we look forward to more of those. In fact it was so good I think I'll send out 1,000 or so copies in my riding.

More seriously, I'd like to spend some time in a couple areas tonight. I first want to spend a few moments on building opportunities for the people of this province, particularly the young people, Mr. Deputy Speaker – building opportunities as they face a world and are on the doorstep virtually of the 21st century; building opportunities really for our most valuable resource, our youth.

I also would like to spend a few minutes on a secondary, and that would be the constituency of Weyburn. And I thank them again for their support in this past election and for all their help over the past four years, and the direction and guidance that they have provided me. I'm very proud and humbled to represent these people and to share their hopes and aspirations.

And when I talk of my constituency, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that naturally leads me into a discussion really of farming and of the oil patch – two of the important businesses in my constituency.

And to do that and to engage in that discussion on my constituency as it relates to farming, I want to back up, and back up to the fall of 1985 – September specifically. And it was at that time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that . . . And I suppose a headline in the daily newspaper in this province's *Star-Phoenix* dated September 7, '85 said it all. And the headline went, Mr. Deputy Speaker, "Journey to national agriculture policy begins." And the first line of that story by Larry Johnsrude, the *Star-Phoenix* reporter, ran this way:

Premier Grant Devine started the process for a national agriculture policy Friday, but indications are he still has a considerable distance to go.

Mr. Speaker, that was in September of 1985: "Journey to national agriculture policy begins."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that fall marked the beginning of what was at times to be a difficult process, but as we all know now, has turned out to be a very, very rewarding process. It was shortly after this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and consistent with this government and our Premier's style, that a provincial conference was called where farm leaders, the cream of the crop if you like, from all over Saskatchewan came to a conference in Saskatoon to help draft this national agriculture policy. There was farm groups there of all sorts, Mr. Deputy Speaker, farmers of all stripes, political and otherwise.

They put together, through their ideas and efforts – and I must say there was a great deal of effort put into it by a lot of farmers and farm groups – they put together a document that our Premier carried to the first ministers' conference in 1985, later that same fall, where agriculture became an agenda item, which was a remarkable feat in itself. If you look at the history of a first ministers' conference, Mr. Speaker.

And not only did our Premier have agriculture on the agenda at that first ministers' conference, but with him at that conference he had a number of farm leaders. And I think specifically of people like Lynn Biggart who was then president of the Saskatchewan Stock Growers, and Ted Turner, today and then president of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. The grass roots were with them. They were there in developing this agriculture strategy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that was one year ago.

Well what happened since then? Not to drag the story on, Mr. Speaker, we've had our Premier at western premiers' conferences; we've had him carrying the ball, if you like, at ministers of agriculture's conferences on more than one occasion; we've had him at the mid-western governors' meeting. An editorial in the *Leader-Post* of June 25, '86: "Devine advice finds fertile ground," the headline reads. "... in the wake of Devine's visit to the Mid-western Governors' Conference last week in Columbus, Ohio ..."

So not only has the Premier been embarking and did embark on the strategy and consultation with people in this country, Mr. Speaker, but also in consultation with people in other countries. But it was at that first ministers' conference in the fall of '85, our Premier addressed agriculture on that agenda that, in my mind – and I've shared these statements, some of these statements, with the legislature before, but I want to share them again – because it was at that speech, and I happened to be there, Mr. Deputy Speaker that I think some of the clearest thinking and clearly enunciated thinking that I have ever seen relative to agriculture occurred at that meeting and, Mr. Speaker, there wasn't a first minister there that didn't agree with our Premier.

And in his remarks to those first ministers, and I quote some of what the Premier said:

The third thing I want to touch on, Mr. Prime Minister, is a central irony. We have so much production from our ability to produce, with surpluses in the United States and feeding butter to the livestock industry in Europe. At the same time we look at huge population growth and staggering amounts of starvation in other parts of the world. It bothers people to think that you have children and families in Africa or wherever without food, while we have the capacity to be so productive, and we are falling short.

And he went on to say, Mr. Speaker:

There is something a little haywire when we have that ability to produce and the wherewithal to put that kind of standard of living on tables of North America, yet at the same time we have got millions and millions of people without cash, in poverty, and empty stomachs. It seems to me, Mr. Prime Minister, that Canada is a natural to take a lead in that. We have to address all of these together because they are connected. I go through this exercise because I am not just talking about a farm problem, I am talking about a consumer problem, an industrial problem, a trade problem, a protectionism problem, and a humanitarian opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, that's why – these remarks are evidence for why our Premier is regarded as a statesman in Canada, when it comes to agriculture and the global view of agriculture, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: -- The haywire policies that he was talking about, Mr. Speaker, were things like the story in *The Globe and Mail* in September of this year. The headline was, "Europeans advised to burn surplus food."

I don't have the exact date on the story. It's out of Brussels.

Europe's food mountain will burn if the Europeans community headquarters in Brussels get the go-ahead for a plan to destroy the huge surpluses of butter, milk powder, beef and wheat.

And the story went on to say, Mr. Speaker, and I quote again:

This would probably involve burning 750,000 metric tonnes of butter and 500,000 tonnes of milk powder without the embarrassing surpluses which in the past have been sold cheaply to the Soviet Union and fed to pigs and calves . . .

And the story went on.

Mr. Speaker, there is something haywire in the world. There is something haywire in global agriculture policy when you're burning 750,000 tonnes of butter and feeding it to pigs. There is something wrong in the world, Mr. Speaker.

Our Premier was the man who sensed the problems globally, brought it to the attention of the first ministers, and embarked on a course in Canada of defining a new food and agriculture policy here.

This past fall, Mr. Speaker, I had occasion once again to accompany our Premier on a ministers of Agriculture meeting. And I don't think I'm talking out of school here, but in terms of dealing with the consequences of this trade war and bizarre global policy, our Premier this fall led the charge on the deficiency payment issue at the ministers of Agriculture meeting.

Now some opposite, Mr. Speaker, would argue that this was merely an election ploy. I would point out to them that this issue had been raised by our Premier long before the election. And the story I want to share with members of the legislature to show you the kind of leadership that our Premier, and respect our Premier enjoys across Canada, if not across the world, goes this way, Mr. Speaker.

We were into a discussion of a deficiency payment. Our Premier, leading the discussion, stated the case. Response by the federal Minister of Agriculture was not as specific as our Premier would have liked, and the Premier engaged the other ministers there again in a discussion of the need in a very specific way and in a very defined way what this deficiency payment should be, and what it was all about.

And I sat there listening to him at this place at the table. I'm telling you, Mr. Speaker, that was one of the proudest moments of my life because the man spoke from his heart. He knew of what he talked. And you could sit there and watch every other Minister of Agriculture from across Canada – Quebec, Ontario, Newfoundland, Manitoba – it didn't matter where, and their heads were nodding in agreement. And after he finished, Mr. Speaker, almost to a person they chimed in with one simple phrase: "I agree with Mr. Devine. I agree with Premier Devine. I agree with Premier Devine."

I'll tell you what. I was very, very, very proud to even be at the same table as our Premier, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: -- And I know the Premier can do this himself, but I as well want to acknowledge in my time as minister of Agriculture the great deal of effort that went into forging this national agriculture policy and deficiency payments that went in by some very, very competent officials.

The result of all of this, the most recent result was the 1986 first ministers' conference, Mr. Speaker. In between time, of course, we had the economic summit in Tokyo, the joint statement recognizing agriculture as a priority, and I would suggest to you that that would not have been addressed by those five nations had it not been for our Premier. I would suggest that to you. It most recently resulted at the last first ministers' conference of the long journey ending, really, one year later, and that's a short time in political time frames.

The direction for a national agricultural development strategy for Canada, Saskatchewan's partnership for agriculture, in one short year was endorsed by all premiers and the Prime Minister of this country. I would suggest to you that that is a fundamentally important step, perhaps the likes of which we haven't seen . . . I might even be so bold as to say that we may not have seen that kind of fundamentally important statement, maybe even so far back as 1879, when John A. Macdonald announced a national policy. Unfortunately, because of that, we've become, in the prairies, a bit "hewers of wood and drawers of water," and I've never really forgiven my venerable colleague for it. But it falls into that kind of category, Mr. Speaker. I was extremely proud of our Premier as he led the charge on this from day one.

I would make a prediction, Mr. Speaker . . . I make a prediction here tonight that just as our Premier has led the way on developing a new food and agriculture strategy in Canada for the farmers and the people and the consumers of this country, that you will hear more of this man on the global stage. Because he, like none other, understands the global problems that agriculture faces today.

I say that, Mr. Speaker, because what we are talking about here is the important two-pronged approach of this government. On the one hand we have to acknowledge the short-term realities, the need for things like deficiency payments so we can get our farmers, our society, through the ups and the downs and through the adjustments that change always bring. At the same time the national agriculture policy addresses how we will deal with global agriculture, national agriculture in the long run, and maybe, when all is said and done, that's the more important of the two. But by golly, Mr. Speaker, when the second phase of the two-pronged approach was announced just recently, I'll tell you what, our farmers were very, very heartened to see that not only does our Premier have the long-term vision, in terms of forging new food and agriculture policies, but that he recognizes that you have to protect them in the downturns.

(2030)

And that's why you saw -- and this is a rare event in Canada -- that's why you saw in *The Globe and Mail*, December 10, 1986, headline: "Ottawa gives farmers \$1 billion," Above that, "Cash to cushion trade war's impact." I say it's a rare event because it's not very often that the word "farmer" even appears in *The Globe and Mail*, let alone in the headlines, Mr. Speaker. But I have to commend *The Globe and Mail* for having it as a lead story. I was slightly disappointed that for example, the *Leader-Post*, our own daily newspaper, that it barely made the front page and was certainly viewed in their mind as something less sensational than their headline that day.

This, Mr. Speaker, this deficiency payment, this \$1 billion deficiency payment, I would suggest to you, ranks right up there with one of the major economic events that this province has ever witnessed, and it was because of our Premier that that billion dollars flows into the pockets of Canadian farmers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: -- During the last election, Mr. Speaker, I read a quotation in the *Star-Phoenix*, in the paper by Larry Johnsrude, March 31 '86, and he was quoting Mr. Blakeney as saying, "We have learned

from 1982.” And I raise that quote, Mr. Speaker, because I want to frame it in another perspective, and I put it this way: you learned from ’82; I ask when it comes to food and agriculture policy in Canada have the NDP learned from the 1986 election?

I want to make these next remarks in the most constructive way possible because the issue is so big, as the member for Rosemont has just said, that it should transcend partisan politics. And I hope he will convince his colleagues on that point.

I say this because what I’ve heard this afternoon in the legislature – and I’m not picking on or pointing at the member from Humboldt because it was his maiden speech, and I respect that. And I know as well he has had absolutely no help in the last four years with the NDP caucus that was here because there was never one shred, never one single shred of evidence that they had, in fact, an agriculture policy, Mr. Speaker. They were bankrupt of ideas when it came to agriculture policy.

And tonight in the legislature we heard references once again to land bank as if we can hang our hat onto that. And I raise this issue, Mr. Speaker, because I heard the hon. member talking about things like plant breeders’ rights, and I heard him talking about trade and his views on those issues. And quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, my disappointment was – and I don’t point at him because there has been no back-up there for the last four years, and some might argue the last decade when it comes to NDP farm politics – but these were sort of some classic ideological positions that might have been plucked from the NFU policy manual, quite frankly.

And I say that in not a disparaging way because the NFU policy manual has had some good options in it over the past, and I would suggest that this government has enacted some of them, and I think of things like The Farm Land Security Act, which enjoyed widespread approval of all farm bodies out there.

But why I address this tonight, Mr. Speaker, is when I listened to that hon. member discard the options and say, we’re not even prepared to look at the plant breeders’ rights, for example, or the free trade question, except in this narrow ideological strait-jacket, I said, what a tragedy – what a tragedy that this has just been dismissed so summarily. It’s a tragedy for all Saskatchewan farmers; they deserve better than that. In fact, I would argue that this issue is so big that we face, it behoves all of us to get behind our Premier as he takes the case to the international stage which it must be taken to.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: -- When I listened to those remarks this afternoon – and once again I’m not singling out this member because it could have been others – it was like a flashback to the ‘50s in so far as their picture of how farm policy should be. Quite frankly, how often have you heard the world “future” from across the way? But it was like a flashback to the ‘50s.

And you know, I loved that era too. I grew up and was raised and to this day still am involved in a family farm. I loved that era; I wish we could go back to it. I wish we could go back to the days when three or four hours ago on the farm at this time of the year we would have gone out, we would have gathered up 30 or 40 cows. At that time we still ran them into the barn, and we had the tie stalls. We threw a bit of chop. We chucked some hay down from the loft. The old ’44 Massey was run into the barn at night to keep it warmed up so it would start to haul out the manure stone boat in the morning. We fed a couple of pigs that were at the other corner of the barn. There was the 50 chickens.

It was a great time in rural Saskatchewan, but it was the ‘50s. We are in the ‘80s and we are headed to the 21st century. I say to you . . . I say, come with us. Come with us as the Premier leads in the development of new farm policy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: -- Do not shut out these options because of some narrow, ideological views. Come with us. Share this Premier's view of the vision of what this province can be. He understands the essence of this province. Add your voice of support to our Premier. The issue is that big, and if not for your sake, and if not for the sake of all the farmers in this province and all the consumers and all the people who work as a result of the farm economy – if not for any of those sakes, at least for your children's sake.

And I say that in a very serious and sincere way. And I would want the member from Humboldt to know that I'm not picking on his remarks personally or individually because I know that they are . . . It's been a classic sort of NDP view on farm policy.

And I want to close off this part about my constituency, because the farm part is so far important to my constituency, with an anecdote that I shared with some of my constituents during the election when the Premier came into Weyburn for a breakfast, a breakfast that was well attended by everybody from the oil patch to the small business sector to the people who work at Canada Wire and Cable, right on through to the farmers and the housewives and so on and so on.

And the story related was this: I had been campaigning just a day or two before this in the north rural part outside of Weyburn, and I walked up to a door, not knowing the farm house particularly, but walked up to a door and was met by an elderly lady probably in her 80s, and a younger fellow which I presumed to be her son, and introduced myself and – as I suspect many of you did in this last election – made a few casual comments and then sort of asked the key question, because we are always interested if that person at the door is going to support us. And I said that I hoped that I could count on your support in the upcoming election, to which she replied . . . She asked this question first of all: are you with Grant Devine? I said, I certainly am. She said, I want to tell you – and she might have added the word “sunny” parenthetically, but I can't remember for sure – I want to tell you that that man is the best Premier that this province has ever seen.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: -- And she went on to say that they had been there, they had homesteaded that land in 1898 – if my memory serves me correctly – and from that time forward that was the fourth or fifth generation on that land. And this lady could relate about droughts, and rusts, and grasshoppers, and frosts, and good prices, and bad prices, and she could relate to a man who understood and was prepared to stand up for farmers and farming. And ladies and gentlemen, the people in my constituency just happen to believe, as do I, that Premier Grant Devine is the best Premier this province ever had.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: -- Mr. Speaker, I'd like now to turn to the secondary I spoke of earlier, about building opportunity, and more specifically, as it relates to the throne speech, about our youth and their education. This speech, I believe, sets a direction for Saskatchewan that I agree with as a citizen of this province. And this speech makes a statement by the government that I am proud of as a member of that government.

I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that this speech sets an agenda for education and advanced education that I am excited about as the minister responsible for those portfolios. And I would also have to say, Mr. Speaker, and pay tribute to some of the former ministers that have held these portfolios. I think first of the member from Swift Current, though I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, was not only one of the best education ministers across Canada, but is one of the best women legislators in all of Canada this very day, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: -- Mr. Speaker, on the advanced education side I would also like to pay tribute to the hon. member from Meadow Lake, and as well the former minister, Gord Currie, who, Mr. Speaker, I think endeared himself to all in the educational and academic community for his sincerity and his genuineness in his approach to the work. So I, as well, would like to commend those people for what they have done before myself because it makes my job much easier.

And as well, I would like to pay special recognition to the officials that I worked with when I was minister of Energy in that portfolio. I know the member from Swift Current is in good hands with some very, very excellent officials in the department there, and I would like to make special mention of that, Mr. Speaker.

The Speech from the Throne confirms our government's commitment to education at all levels. And I emphasize confirms, because we have already demonstrated our commitment to education in our first term of office. Under our government Saskatchewan has become a leader in educating our young people, not only in Canada but in North America, Mr. Speaker. We have been one of the few to lay out a plan for the future, the future development and growth of an education system. In fact, when our government stated its priorities: agriculture, jobs, health care and economic diversification in education, education was clearly seen as the key to success in these other areas.

We have an excellent track record of backing up our commitments, Mr. Speaker, not just in words but rather in action. We established an educational development fund to finance new initiatives that will help our students in their pursuit of educational excellence.

Let me give you an example of what the education development fund is doing across Saskatchewan. Computers. We have already witnessed the advent of computers and the need for our children to become computer literate. Some say that the need for computer literacy is a foregone conclusion and an essential outcome of literacy education. Our government recognized students needed a commitment from government to give them a chance to become computer literate – a chance to prepared for the next decade, the 21st century. That's why we introduced the education fund, Mr. Speaker.

We also recognized that to prepare for the future we must look closely at the way we teach and the way we perceive education. To do that we asked some tough questions to define core curriculum. We want to emphasize basic skills and find a balance between compulsory and elective courses. We also opened our program policy development process to the public – asked people what they thought of education. It's a consultative process; it's a recipe that's worked for us well in the past as a government, and one that will work for us well in the future.

We have also spent four years catching up, fixing, building, repairing, renovating, and improving our schools after years of neglect under the former government, Mr. Speaker. This year capital construction alone is worth \$50 million.

In post-secondary education, Mr. Speaker, we had to begin to address 11 years of inadequate provision by the former government, and we made great progress. Between 1982 and '86 our government increased total funding to the post-secondary education sector by a greater percentage than any other province in Canada.

The five-year, 125 million university renewal and development fund is a forward-looking innovation that is now being copied by other provinces, and some say imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. It has initiated projects such as the agriculture college building at the University of Saskatchewan campus that is on the drawing boards and full steam ahead, Mr. Speaker.

Between 1982 and '86 our government increased funding to the technical institutes by 37 per cent, after taking account for inflation. The total training capacity in the technical institute system has risen 50 per cent since 1982. In the four years before 1982 it had not risen at all.

Between 1982 and '86 the number of training days delivered to the community colleges rose by 17 per cent. The improvements to the student aid package that we delivered mean that post-secondary education is more accessible to more people than it has ever been before. The increase in enrolments across the province bear testimony to that fact, Mr. Speaker.

So the record that we have established in education is a record of which we are proud. But we don't intend to rest on our laurels. The demands of the present and the future require us to do even more.

(2045)

I would like to take a little time to talk about what those demands are and how we intend to meet them. Quite simply, Mr. Speaker, let me talk about the government's agenda for education for the next four years.

Our education system has always had an important role in the economic, social and cultural development of Saskatchewan and in the personal development of its citizens. From its beginnings this system has provided a quality of education that powerfully increases the opportunities available to Saskatchewan people; the skilled personnel necessary to keep the Saskatchewan economy competitive in world markets; the research directed at solving particular Saskatchewan problems; the extension services that bring those solutions out to the field; the disinterested analysis of social issues necessary in a democratic society; and the base for a richer cultural life that is engendered by increased exposure to, and the ultimate love of, knowledge and the arts.

Today, more than ever, provision of these services is of critical importance to Saskatchewan. Historically, our rich endowment of natural resources has afforded the province a relatively high standard of living. Now we are into an era where maintenance and improvement of that standard of living will depend on how we develop and harness our human resources. The education system is moving from being an important but secondary element toward becoming the critical factor in the process of provincial development.

Mr. Speaker, that's an extremely important and powerful statement in my mind. And I repeat it. Now we are into an era where maintenance and improvement of that standard of living will depend on how we develop and harness our human resources. The education system is moving from being an important but secondary element toward becoming the critical factor in the process of provincial development.

The primary benefits of the education system are most readily apparent in the training function – the imparting of skills to individuals that allow them to be more valuable employees, benefiting themselves and their employers and thus society as a whole. The skills imparted can range from basic literacy to the latest techniques in brain surgery. Critical as the training function is, however, it is necessary for us to keep in mind what I might call the future benefits of our education system.

In an era where our major export industries, as we heard the Minister of Economic Development and Trade talk so eloquently about today – agriculture, oil, and potash – where these export industries face stiff international competition, our system must be capable of performing research directed towards more efficiently exploiting our resource and developing new uses for those resources.

Saskatchewan, as we all know, faces high transportation costs in getting its products to world markets. Consequently, if we are to be successful in finding non-resource based products to export to the rest of the world, they must be valuable relative to the cost of transporting them. These products will be knowledge-based or high-tech products. We must be capable of generating in Saskatchewan the ideas and the people

that form the bases for these types of products. And as Saskatchewan struggles with the reality of a new world economy, our system must develop the clear thinking that can inform society on how best to marshal what can be scarce resources.

I think it behoves us to think for a moment, Mr. Speaker, what all of this means. During the industrial revolution – the last great economical upheaval – firms, industries, whole countries won or lost the struggle to compete on the shop floor or on the assembly line.

In the new information economy we have to face the fact that firms, industries, and whole countries will win or lose the struggle to compete, not on the shop floors and not on the assembly line, but in the classroom and in the research laboratory. Now this is a sobering thought when one thinks about it. We've moved from the industrial economy to the information economy.

Consider what it means, hon. members of the legislature. In the past we could get by with having just a good education system. So long as natural resources were the principal determiner of our wealth, the difference in the standard of living we experienced, if our human resources were good, was only marginally lower than what we would have experienced if our human resources were excellent. As the education system becomes the critical factor in provincial development, good will be no longer good enough.

If our resource industries are unable to adapt to changing international markets, they may not merely become just slightly less profitable, they in fact may face total shut-down. If our high-tech products are merely good, while those of our competitors are excellent, we will sell none of them, not just fewer of them.

If our quality of life is obviously lower than elsewhere, Saskatchewan's population will shrink, not just remain static. If we cannot solve the basic problems of allocating resources, our social and political problems will become fatal, not just worrisome.

In short, the difference between our standard of living if our human resources are good, as opposed to excellent, may well be the difference between poverty and wealth. A sobering thought, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker.

If this is the situation, then I think the reasonable question that members of the public and the opposition might well want to put to our government then: if this is the situation, what then do we propose to do about it?

It's not good enough, Mr. Speaker, to just have endless recitations of what is wrong, as I have experienced here tonight somewhat in some of the speeches. We must have some propositions or some solutions about what we will do.

Let me begin with the K to 12 system. We have been actively reviewing the curriculum of studies. This is the key to the whole system. Consultations have been held across the province with every group who had a point of view. In its simplest form the message we received is clear. We must reinforce the provision of those basic skills that our children will require to deal with the new information age.

Those skills are: the ability to read and write well; a basic fluency with numbers; and above all – and I stress this – and above all the capacity for clear thought. In a world where the quantity of information is growing massively, an individual's ability to succeed will rest not on having and storing information, but in knowing where to find it and what to do with it. It is the capacity to reason that is important, not the capacity to store facts. We must emphasize logic rather than warehousing.

In the months ahead I will be announcing the measures we will take to implement this new curriculum.

Turning now for a moment again, Mr. Speaker, to the post-secondary education system, I believe that the impact of this new world economy will be, if anything, greater.

Our task is nothing less than to make adult education an integral part of our economic diversification strategy. I repeat. Our task is nothing less than to make adult education an integral part of our economic diversification strategy. This is our number one priority.

We must also do two other things. First, we must reinforce the role of post-secondary education in the social and cultural life of our communities. I want to recognize and pay tribute to the enormous and vital contribution made by our universities, colleges and institutes to the quality of life in our communities. Whether it is support for the arts, valuable library facilities, preservation of vital knowledge about our past, or just the tradition of open-minded inquiry, higher education helps sustain the characteristics that make our species unique: a love of knowledge, and a pursuit of understanding. I will be seeking advice on how to promote and reinforce this contribution in the months ahead.

Second, we must direct our adult education system towards a philosophy of education that is in keeping with the unique heritage that we have as a province and a people. I think perhaps I could elaborate for the members on this.

A few days ago our province, and I know many members here were probably at that banquet, our province paid tribute to five outstanding citizens who had made major contributions in their field of activity, to this province and to our country. One of those was a woman by the name of Sylvia Fedoruk. Incidentally, she helped calibrate and introduce the first cobalt radiation therapy for cancer in the world. Her contributions to medical physics, Mr. Speaker, are too long to list here and her achievements really too many. But the point I want to make is this: she began her education, as so many of our citizens do, in a small one room school -- I should say, as so many of our citizens have, in a small one room school in rural Saskatchewan. She went on to university, to the University of Saskatchewan, to study, and eventually, in a real sense when you think about it relative to her cancer work, has changed the world in a very fundamental sort of way. This achievement would be remarkable enough anywhere. What is more remarkable still, that it is not unique in our province. For a small rural province we have achieved an impact on national and international affairs well beyond what mere weight of numbers would suggest.

I believe the reason for this is in fact quite simple -- that it lies at the heart of our philosophy of education -- is that we are resolved as a people that we will have the best quality of education possible, the very highest quality possible, and we will have it in every corner of our province, Mr. Speaker. We are resolved not to let distance matter. We are resolved not to let the ups and downs of our economy matter. We are resolved not to let the relative isolation count for anything. This, then, is our philosophy of education. I can state our objective in a simple sentence. The best quality available, period.

And when I say this, Mr. Speaker, I am reminded of only two or three weeks ago, when I talk about the unique Saskatchewan cultural flavour and what it can mean for our youth, I'm reminded of an incident in Pelly. The hon. member spoke so well here in the throne speech debate about that constituency and its history. But our cabinet had occasion to be in Pelly for a cabinet meeting, and we had the opportunity as cabinet to spend a noon hour with the grade 11 and 12 students at the high school there. And just as I recounted about Sylvia Fedoruk and how she was schooled in a one-room school in rural Saskatchewan and went on to university and ultimately to establish herself at the world-class level, I sat there and I listened to our Premier answer questions from these students, these young people, these grade 11 and 12 students. For an hour or so I suppose, Mr. Speaker, that went on, and then our Premier wrapped up.

And as I was proud sitting with him at the agriculture ministers' conference a couple of months before, I was even more proud and humbled as I sat there at that table with him and I listened to what he said to

these children, because he said better than I ever could enunciate what we're really talking about when we talk about the unique cultural flavour in Saskatchewan.

What he told these children could well have been told to Mrs. Fedoruk some years ago. He said to those children there, and you could have heard a pin drop, Mr. Speaker – those sparkling eyes of his and this very, very sincere method that he has – he told those children, let nothing be beyond your grasp. Take on anything. Fear not of anything. The world really is yours. And the case example would be Mrs. Fedoruk. And he went on to enunciate more clearly than I ever could in sincerest terms possible about what a great future and opportunities that lie ahead for these young people.

Mr. Speaker, so I suppose one should know, then, that it is no mistake that in this throne speech, as in the past four years of this administration, that education is a priority with this government because our Premier, not only does he believe it, but he enunciates it. And more importantly than all of that, he transmits that view and that sense of vision and the essence of the greatness of this province to those young people because they are going to be our competitive edge in the 21st century.

This, then, is our philosophy of education – the best quality available, period. To achieve this we will have to find means, there is no question. We will have to find means to deal with geographic factors. We will also have to help individuals overcome financial barriers. We will have to come to grips with barriers based on discrimination. All of this is easy enough to say, but how is it to be achieved?

What I am talking about, Mr. Speaker, and members of the legislature, is nothing less than a new mandate, a new mandate for post-secondary education and training in Saskatchewan. And there is not much time, Mr. Speaker, if we are to beat the clock that is already running.

I propose to follow a schedule designed to produce results within the next six months. I will begin by holding a series of meetings with all the actors in the post-secondary system itself. Thus we will match the process begun a few years ago by my previous colleague in the K to 12 system. I will also be meeting with those who approach the system as users or beneficiaries.

I want to hear what business wants of the system, also what students want. I want to meet with parents, and teachers, and taxpayers, and employees, employers and labourers. In short, Mr. Speaker, I want to hear from everyone who has anything to say about the future for adult education in Saskatchewan, and I want to hear it soon.

Following those discussions, Mr. Speaker, our government will then chart the course that leads to the 21st century. And it's a sobering thought indeed to think that the students who enter the K to 12 system this next fall will graduate in the year 2000 – the 21st century. It's a pretty sobering thought, Mr. Speaker.

(2100)

I realize I spent some considerable time . . . I would like to talk even more about the role of libraries as minister responsible for the provincial library. I had a chance today to meet with the libraries trustees association. An excellent meeting with them. But much time has gone by already. But I would just say this relative to libraries. My goal is to have the young people in this province hooked on reading, not on drugs, Mr. Speaker. A simple goal – hooked on reading.

It fits right in with what I sense is the public mood out there, that much as we have to have the balance in our curriculum development –and I haven't met and visited with all those who I would like to as I frame a policy for the people and cabinet's consideration – there is in my view an overwhelming support that we must have the basics: reading and writing and arithmetic. It will take some convincing to convince me

otherwise because I believe those were important 20 years ago and 40 years ago, and they'll be important 20 years from now.

That doesn't mean to say that we don't address things like computers, Mr. Speaker, or that we don't address the languages of the future. But, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to reading, what better way than to have a strong library system and have our young people hooked on reading.

As I close the one final comment I would make – and I echo somewhat the words and the thoughts by the member for Kindersley earlier today – and that is the desire for all of us – and I think I alluded to it earlier when it comes to agriculture policy – to have substantive and real debate and not look at issues with the blinkers on, but for the betterment of all people, I think there's an expectation for that of us, Mr. Speaker.

And you weren't here when I started my remarks earlier tonight, and I think the dignity, as I said earlier, and the interview that I've heard of you on the CBC radio, you epitomize so well, you vocalize so well the dignity and the expectation of this Chamber. And I think part and parcel of that is how we approach issues here really in something less than the . . . It hasn't always been in the most dignified sense.

The other comment I would add to this, Mr. Speaker, I think I can take the liberty to do this as we start a new legislature, and I also say this in a constructive way, that those people who sit in the rows up there – the legislative press gallery – have a role to play here too. It's not going to be good enough any more as we move into the information economy, for the simplistic analysis of issues. Not only is it not going to be good enough for us, I don't believe it's going to be good enough for those, if that's all they're going to present on the evening news to the people of Saskatchewan or, for that matter, the people of Canada.

It's no longer going to be good enough to distil issues into right/wrong, them/us, either/or, this/that . . . The issues are too complex. It's a natural phenomenon, if you like, for a politician to want to reduce it to "we're right; they're wrong." It is no longer going to be good enough. It's no longer going to be good enough to just present drama and sensationalism, high drama if you like, as it appears in question period, whether it be here, in France or in Ottawa.

There was an article published in . . . called *National Affairs*, and I should have more information on where it is. It was April of '86. It was entitled "Looking for Answers Beyond Question Period." And that would be my hope a little bit, Mr. Speaker, as we enter a new legislative session, that there will be some looking for answers beyond question period. I think the people have some expectation of it. And I take the liberty of making those remarks in the throne speech debate in this, the first sort of floor speech for me in this new session, and I'm not likely to engage in them again, but I did want to put them on the record, Mr. Speaker.

I'll end with this. To all who, in the event that I don't have the chance to over the course of the next week or so before we have a Christmas recess, wish all members and their families a happy and blessed Christmas.

And the final comment, but of course I will support the main motion, and not the amendment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you, on behalf of myself and the constituents of Athabasca, on your appointment as Speaker of this legislature.

I now want to turn to the throne speech, and I'm not going to take a lot of time tonight, Mr. Speaker, as I see the document as being a general statement of how the government plans to proceed in the next 12 months, and one will probably have to wait until the winter unfolds and we get into the spring and just see

what the new budget contains and just see how tough this winter is going to be on the citizens of Saskatchewan.

I was quite encouraged when I heard the Premier's remarks that he wanted to tackle the problems of regionalism, and he indicated that the only way that we could really tackle the problems of regionalism would be through all members of the legislature working together and working co-operatively to solve these problems.

I was quite optimistic when I heard these words. I thought, well, maybe he's going to turn over a new leaf and we're going to tackle the problems that we have in the regions and then the problems that we have all throughout Saskatchewan.

But the, Mr. Speaker, I became a little bit suspicious when I started to take a look at the situation that we're in in Saskatchewan, especially financially. We go back to 1982 where we had, this province financially had \$139 million in the bank, to the good. And we take a look now, just five years later, and we have a deficit of well over \$2 billion, and I suspect that when the Minister of Finance brings down that budget this spring that you will see that the budget will be close to 2.5 billion, the deficit. I think that you will probably see that the accumulated deficit, which has gone up in five years from \$3 billion to close to \$10 billion, will probably be in the neighbourhood of \$10 billion.

Then I start to get a little bit suspicious and I think we've got some real problems. Not only have we got problems today, but we have problems for the future, for our children and our grandchildren and for generations to come, to pay back that type of debt. I get suspicious when I go back to the campaign and I see the Premier going around the province indicating that by Christmas time there would be payments going out to the farmers totalling \$1 billion. We know that that's how this government got elected – going around the province . . . And it's the farmers who put the Conservative government in power. And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, it's going to be the farmers who will get them out of power in the next election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: -- An farmers are starting to say that already. One of my colleagues was telling me today that he was out in the country and five farmers came up to him at one event and said: you're right; this is not true; there is no \$1 billion coming to the farmers. And I think that the farmers should have been suspicious when the Prime Minister of Canada brought out a program a few months ago – a \$34 million program – to train farmers to get them off of the farm. He was getting them prepared to get off of the farm. And that was a major program that he brought out. I think that farmers should have been suspicious at that time when that program was brought out. Train the farmers so they could leave the farms to go out in the labour force where there is no jobs and get onto unemployment insurance. And I think that . . . that most certainly got me very suspicious.

I got suspicious when I looked at the throne speech, Mr. Speaker, and I see that there was nothing in there for the North. The North wasn't even mentioned. And the Premier was talking about regionalism and co-operation and solving the problems that we have in certain areas of Canada. I think we have to look just right close to home and take a look at northern Saskatchewan, and that is where we really have problems and it wasn't mentioned in the throne speech.

I now want to turn and make a few remarks, Mr. Speaker, on the Weyerhaeuser deal. As we indicated this spring when it was announced that Weyerhaeuser was going to take over the Prince Albert pulp mill, we indicated at that time – we didn't have all the information before us – but with the information that we had at that time, we indicated that it was a bad deal for Saskatchewan. We now have a lot of information – this only being one volume of three volumes that has been put out on information. And as we go through it, we

find out that it really is a bad deal and it's the type of a deal that is going to come back to haunt us for many, many generations.

First of all, we see where Weyerhaeuser came into Saskatchewan and have taken over assets of the Prince Albert Pulp Mill, and the minister who was piloting this Bill through the House indicated that in order to make that pulp mill viable, we had to have a paper-mill. But I wonder, Mr. Speaker, when we take a look at the situation as it is now, why we had to throw in the chemical plant in Saskatoon; why we had to throw the sawmill in Big River in; and why did we have to throw in 8 million acres, approximately 8 million acres of prime forest land in Saskatchewan in the deal. And there was no money involved. They were given all these assets of Saskatchewan taxpayers and not one cent down. They have 30 years, 30 years to pay that back . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I will get to that, too.

They have 30 years to pay back the loan of \$248 million. I get suspicious when I wonder, you know, why was the Meadow Lake sawmill not thrown in there; and why was not the Carrot River sawmill or the Green Lake sawmill. And I think this is where the confusion is out in the constituencies and especially in the forest industry where individuals who are now saying that they are in real trouble because of the change-over from Sask Forest Products to Weyerhaeuser.

And we know, Mr. Speaker, that the losses in the first year, up to a total of \$73 million, will be written off against the original \$248 million, the debenture that was signed by the government. Now that's a large amount of money. When you take a look at the losses, and then when you get past that, you find out that they don't have to pay anything back on that debenture in the next 30 years if they don't make a profit, and by what we can find out in this document, that they have to make 20 per cent profit or more in order to repay any payments. So it's possible, and I think it's a reality, that they're going to have all these assets and never pay a cent to this province.

And I have been talking to individuals who are working in the forest industry. And you go up into Big River where that town relies on the forest industry. It's a sawmill town; it's a logging town. And that's where they survive. And they are really concerned because of the changes.

(2115)

And we take a look in this document, and we're not even too sure whether there's going to be a paper-mill added to Prince Albert. And it says very clearly in this document: under the agreements, construction of the paper-mill could be delayed by events beyond the control of Weyerhaeuser Canada . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Pardon? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's right. There's a strong possibility that there will not be a paper-mill. They're not really committed to building one. And it's hard to say what the events will be. But if the market drops out or something like that, or a decision that was brought down last night by the Canadian government who rejected the offer by the Americans in the softwood industry, we would get into some of these problems. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that we would have some real problems here because they really don't have that commitment to go ahead and build the project.

And then we take a look at some of the other agreements that are in there. I want to quote from the intercorporate arrangements that were made. We sign an agreement to . . . a debenture for \$248 million and the taxpayers of this province guarantee that money, and there's no pay-back period, plus there's no interest. We don't know what the interest is going to be.

But then we take a look at some of the items within this document. And I want to quote about intercorporate arrangements:

Weyerhaeuser Canada, either directly or through its affiliates including Weyerhaeuser Company, intends to provide marketing, administrative, management, and technical services in respect of the

integrated operations. Weyerhaeuser Company or its affiliates will be paid commissions for the marketing of lumber, pulp and paper, in the amount of 4%, 3%, and 5% of mill sale prices.

Now they know what they're going to get paid. They are going to use all their corporation affiliates to sell the material that they're getting out of Saskatchewan. And really they have no commitment. They know they're going to get paid. They know that the more expenses they can chalk up in the first three years that they could have \$73 million take off in the initial payment. And I think this is where we have to be very careful.

And they talk about a paper machine, of building a paper machine. And I think that this is where we have to be very careful too, because it's possible that the renovations that are going to take place at the pulp mill could turn out to be where that paper machine is going to go. And there will really be no new structure taking place.

I now want to turn to roads and transportation, Mr. Speaker. This is where it really gets interesting when we take a look at the document for roads and transpiration and agreement. And I just want to quote some of the things that are entailed in this document.

And I think it's interesting to note that Weyerhaeuser Canada will obtain over-dimensional permits from the province for the transportation purposes of its wood and its chips. And then, Mr. Speaker, they're going to fund and provide for construction and reconstruction of up to 20 miles of road annually.

Now when we take a look at that, that the province is going to pay for up to 20 miles of road per year, at the government's expense, they're either going to reconstruct these roads or they're going to build new roads. We take a look at what could happen – the province could be paying for up to 600 miles of roads and highways in this province for Weyerhaeuser Canada to haul their materials to the pulp mill. And that's what this says in here.

It also goes on, Mr. Speaker, to say that Weyerhaeuser Canada will have the right and the authority to transport wood chips, round timber and other raw forest products on the road system on a year round bases.

So really, Mr. Speaker, they don't have to apply for any permits for overweight permits or anything because they have the right, on a year-round basis, to haul their products on the Saskatchewan road system. So there's really no need for overweight permits.

And now they go down here, Mr. Speaker, and they're going to immediate upgrading of the road system – immediate upgrading of the road system for Weyerhaeuser. Saskatchewan will:

. . . construct the following structures and roads at its expense in order to accommodate (Weyerhaeuser Canada's) traffic . . . on the Roads System.

And that's at the expense of the citizens of Saskatchewan.

And I will get down to some of these roads here in just a few minute, Mr. Speaker. But when you take a look at what they're going to do, they're going to upgrade these roads immediately at the expense of the province of Saskatchewan. And that is their priorities.

The roads and bridge designs, that's all going to be done at the expense of the province of Saskatchewan. And they're going to do this at the expense of the province.

And I want to indicate that they've said that there's an emergency, and they have to reconstruct certain bridges which they have already undertaken to do, and that's the bridge north of Prince Albert.

And we know, Mr. Speaker, that all the moneys that are going to be put into the highway and road system – and if we take it 30 years or we could go 20 years, and then there would be 400 miles – and we know that the chips that are hauled are all hauled on a highway system. None of it's hauled on roads. It's on the major highway system.

They either come from Big River to Prince Albert, or the Candle Lake area to Prince Albert, or Carrot River to Prince Albert on our major highway.

And Weyerhaeuser Canada has the right, the full right, do not even have to ask permission, to haul on a year-round basis. And you can imagine what's going to happen to our road system and our highway system. It's just going to be a total mess.

And the immediate upgrading. And then we take a look at the road between – from Highway 155 to Canoe Narrows and Jans Bay and Cole Bay – a road system that is narrow and dangerous and has had many fatal accidents in the last few years. And petitions have come in to the Minister of Highways, and so far the Minister of Highways has not acted. Twice now I've approached him to go up there and take a look at that road system, but nothing has happened. But Weyerhaeuser Canada – immediately they start constructing. They are constructing south of Prince Albert on the major highways, north-west of Prince Albert, the new bridge – all for Weyerhaeuser Canada.

I say to you, Mr. Minister of Highways, come up to northern Saskatchewan and take a look at that piece of road from 155 to Jans Bay and Cole Bay, where all the school children are transported every day, and it's a dangerous road. And I say to you, Mr. Minister, that is a priority. That road is a priority. It's more of a priority than I think the Weyerhaeuser roads that you're doing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: -- We've had many fatal accidents on that road and it's serious. And I say, Mr. Minister of Highways, you should come up there and take a look and make that a priority.

I think you should come up to LaLoche and take a look at the road to McMurray which is a priority. And I know the Deputy Premier, he's going to rebuild that road, or he's going to construct that road from LaLoche to McMurray. And the member from Meadow Lake, he agrees with that. So we can expect to start at that and I suspect, Mr. Minister of Highways, that that will be in your budget. And if it's not, we will know where that money has gone. It's gone to Weyerhaeuser Canada to upgrade and to rebuild roads for Weyerhaeuser. So we'll just see where the priorities are when the highways budget comes out. Is it going to be for roads and highways that will benefit all of Saskatchewan, or will it be for roads and highways that will benefit only Weyerhaeuser Canada?

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to what I would like to see happen in this term and what I intend to work for and impress upon this government to do up in northern Saskatchewan.

First of all I want to turn to the food transportation subsidy that was taken off. Well I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that \$250,000 was taken away from the citizens of the far North in Saskatchewan, a food transportation subsidy that provides fresh food, vegetables and milk to the citizens up in that area – you took it off. And I'm going to insist that you put that \$250,000 back into that food transportation subsidy because . . . I just want to show you here, and I have a letter dated on November 7th, and this is some of the prices that the citizens up in that far North are paying.

Eighty-five dollars for 100 pounds of potatoes. That's what they pay up in Black Lake. They pay about \$3 a gallon for gasoline. Eggs. A dozen eggs, \$2.50. Milk, \$4.25 for 2 litres. This is what they're paying up in Black Lake.

And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to the Minister of Health, this is a program that should be immediately reinstated. It's important to them citizens up there, and I'll tell you it's a lot more important than the money that you gave . . . the \$10 million grant that you gave to Peter Pocklington.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: -- You can find money in the millions of dollars to give to Peter Pocklington. You can find \$250 million to give Weyerhaeuser Canada, and it didn't get you any members elected. We have the member from Battleford here. We have both the Prince Albert members.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the Minister of Health -- a member who comes from northern Saskatchewan and knows what it's like to live up there, and knows what it's like to pay 50 cents a litre for gasoline when you're getting it down here for 29 cents -- to immediately take . . . And it's only \$250,000, and you can reinstate that food transportation program. And I ask you to do that, and I intend to work for that.

I intend to work for better health up in my constituency. I've discussed it with the Minister of Health and I will continue to discuss that throughout the coming months to try and provide better health services. It's something that is badly needed, not only just in the immediate area of LaLoche and Buffalo Narrows, but in the far areas of Black Lake and Stony Rapids and Fond-du-Lac.

Another thing that I think that we have to get away from, Mr. Speaker, in this province is the part-time welfare jobs that we have by this government, that they're implemented by this government across -- jobs that encourage, they force young people to go onto the welfare rolls.

I'm going to give you some real examples. A grade 12 student coming out of school this year, graduating and wanting a job goes over. There's a program at 4.50 an hour; it's a welfare program for 20 weeks. The young grade 12 student goes and tries to get a job. And what is he told by the administrator of that program? "You go and get yourself on welfare. You get your first cheque, then you come back, and then you can work for 20 weeks on this job." You are forcing young men and women to go on the welfare rolls. You are forcing them to it -- you're forcing them to go out and work for \$.50 an hour. You're forcing them from welfare to unemployment insurance, and I think it's disgraceful and it's degrading.

And it's no wonder we have so many problems, Mr. Speaker, not only in Saskatchewan, but I tell you, in northern Saskatchewan it is really hard. When you take a look at the many problems that we have with alcohol and drugs, and breaking and entering; there's violence, violent crimes, and I think that this is where you have to take a serious look at your job creation. If you want to keep creating a welfare society, you just keep creating these 20-week jobs so individuals can get enough weeks to get UIC.

I urge through you, Mr. Speaker, to the members opposite, to take a serious look at what you're doing to the young men and women of this province and get away from that. What they need is good, long-term jobs with some security. They need the same kind of commitment and the same opportunities that you're willing to give to Dennis Ball or those fellows that you pay \$95,000 a year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: -- You just imagine what it's like to get up in the morning and you don't have no job to go to, and I tell you it's something that has to come to a stop here. There is just so many young people in this province, and not only young people, it's hitting other people now where they are on welfare; they are on unemployment insurance. And no wonder we are having problems, Mr. Speaker. You get up in the morning, you haven't got a job to go to, you've got no security. I tell you, she gets pretty bleak out there.

The housing is another area, Mr. Speaker, that I want to address. And I particularly want to address the \$3,000 home repair program. This is a program that I have asked the minister to change. It's a program that you spend \$3,000 and then you get \$1,500 back. Mr. Speaker, that totally eliminates the poor people in this province, because the people don't have the \$3,000 to start with, and there is no way they can take advantage of the \$1,500 grant until they have spent \$3,000 to repair a program . . . A repair program. And I say this has to be looked into – and the Deputy Premier is shaking his head. And I say that's a fact. It eliminates the poor people, because I tell you, there are many of my constituents who don't have the \$3,000 to put out first in order to get your \$1,500 rebate.

And I can tell the minister from Regina South, the new minister of housing, that your \$10,000 grant at 6 per cent is another thing that you should look into. I know individuals who are getting . . . they put in an application, the cheque comes in, and they're not going to build till the spring, and they've got a \$10,000 cheque sitting in there. And they're drawing interest, and I say that's a fact. You better believe it, it's a fact. And this is something, Mr. Speaker, that the new minister from Regina South, the new minister of Sask housing, he better take a serious look at it. You take a look at . . . and I've asked him to do that . . . I've written a letter and asked him to do it, and I sincerely hope that he has.

The senior citizens in northern Saskatchewan are another group that are living in dire poverty. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, you should come up North and just have a look at the way some of the senior citizens are living. They are living in houses without sewer and water, running right down the street. They are living in conditions where they have no power. And I think that this is something that has to be looked at very seriously. And I ask the minister of housing to come up North and I will take him around. And I will show you the type of poverty that some of the senior citizens are living in, in northern Saskatchewan, and most certainly shouldn't be living in those conditions.

Single parents is another area. And applications have come in, requests have come in for communities like Beauval. Thirty-four applications – most of them single parents. And this is another key area that we have to take a look at. I asked the minister of housing to take a look at what he's doing with some of the staff housing that he has in northern Saskatchewan and just who is using these houses. And you're going to find out that they're druggists who move in; you're going to find out some electrician moves in and immediately goes into a staff housing. And yet we have senior citizens and families with five children who can't get a house. But if you know this government and you move in, you can get in. And I would like to know if they're paying 25 per cent of their income on the staff housing.

And you go into Buffalo Narrows and take a look at who's living in staff housing. And you're going to find out, it's druggists, electricians. You're going to find out that pilots are living in them. And yet there's senior citizens . . . I have a senior citizen living 11 miles out of town in dire poverty and can't even get into a home in Buffalo Narrows. So I ask the minister, you take a serious look at that.

And you can come in, Mr. Minister . . . I'd be pleased to take you around and show you some of these situations. And they are bad.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: -- We have to take a look at the traditional industries that we have in northern Saskatchewan, fishing and trapping. And I think it goes without saying – I brought that up before – that we

have to start processing the fish that we produce in this province. We continually are taking these fish from northern Saskatchewan . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well that's fine. I say to the Deputy Premier that it's time now for you to put those fish plants in northern Saskatchewan. Put them in there. I say it's time for you to go and build that road to McMurray. And I say it's time to reconstruct that road to Canoe Narrows. Now is the time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: -- I would ask that we take a serious look at the fishing industry and the freshwater fish marketing corporation and how it's operating. I think we have to start processing at home and not sending our raw materials out to another province to be processed.

Mr. Speaker, I only have a few more comments to make before sitting down, but these are some of the items that I intend to work for. But I want to also continue to impress upon this government to implement the surface leases that we have in northern Saskatchewan. We have 50 per cent Northerners working at Cluff Lake, but let me tell you it's down close to 20 per cent at Key Lake. And I say to the ministers opposite: I ask you to implement and make sure that those surface leases are honoured and that we get 50 per cent at Key Lake and that we get 50 per cent at Wollaston Lake, the same as we have at Cluff Lake at the present time.

Mr. Speaker, Northerners should not be penalized for where they live. All they're asking for is a fair deal, and I say to you, Mr. Speaker, they're not getting a fair deal right now. All they're asking for is a fair deal. They want to be treated as equals. You go north of Meadow Lake – the banks, they will not issue a mortgage north of Meadow Lake. Just imagine, up there if somebody wants to buy a home and get a mortgage, they can't do it. Meadow Lake and north, that's the line. If you get an insurance policy, Meadow Lake and north it's 10 per cent more. I say that it's unfair and that Northerners should be treated as equals and given equal opportunities, and that's what I'll be working towards.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: -- I look forward, Mr. Speaker, to this term, and I intend to work hard on behalf of my constituents. And I sincerely hope that the problems that I have brought out tonight and other problems that I will bring to the attention of this government, that solutions will be worked out.

Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the main motion but I will be supporting the amendment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Klein: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, let me congratulate you as you assume your new, difficult role. I know that you will handle yourself with firmness and with dignity, but more importantly, with fairness.

I would like to welcome the new members to this Assembly. I hope that they understand that we are all here for the good of the people, to comply with their will to build this province. Unfortunately, some members so far after listening to the various debates – some new, some not so new – are using this forum already, Mr. Speaker, for their own personal gain. And I'll deal with some of this later on in my remarks.

It gives me great pride and pleasure to rise and speak today in favour of the Speech from the Throne. And this throne speech continues the tradition that our government started, that of building a solid foundation for growth in this province. And after again listening to the members opposite, I was hoping that at least the new MLA's opposite would understand building and business, but I see it's the same old thing, only more

of it. You just don't have the foggiest idea or understanding of business. You never have; you never will – lawyers included in that.

In the olden days of business I used to hire lawyers. They couldn't understand business, but rather tried to solve some problems later and were well paid for that; could never understand how business functioned, how business created jobs. None the less, before our term is done and a long, long, long, long, long time from now, hopefully you'll be getting the message. It's unfortunate too, because your former member from Pelly as he was beginning his leadership campaign was just starting to understand slightly.

But this evening does mark my first speech in this, the first session in the 21st Legislature, as the member of the legislature for the constituency of Regina South. The constituency of Regina South is made up of a large cross-section of hard-working individuals from varied and diverse backgrounds.

There are many professionals, self-employed and small-business people, wage earners, civil servants, teachers, senior citizens, and yes, farmers. Together these people elected me on October 20th to represent them for the Progressive Conservative government of Premier Grant Devine. It's my intention to give these people the kind of representation they want and to give them the kind of government that they want – responsible, yet compassionate; government that consults with the people and responds to their needs while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

For instance, for the young people of Regina South, we believe that everyone should have the opportunity for a equality education. In order to provide the best possible education to all Saskatchewan students, we must provide the necessary funding. Under the leadership of Grant Devine, this goal has become a reality. Our general education budget is higher now than ever before in our province's history.

And that's just the beginning. Our Progressive Conservative government removed unfair restrictions, increased loan limits, and reduced the interest rates on student loans to 6 per cent. Four hundred million dollars was established in the educational endowment fund that saw the upgrading of educational facilities province-wide. Our children are the future of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They must be given every advantage to succeed.

I would like to take this . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Lakeview speaking from her chair is already concerned about her future.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my constituents for the confidence that they have shown in me by helping to re-elect this Progressive Conservative government. The people have demonstrated to us that they believe we are the best choice to lead Saskatchewan into the future.

I would like to congratulate our Deputy Premier and Provincial Secretary. Unfortunately he's not here for the moment. There he is.

An Hon. Member: -- He's crossed the floor.

Hon. Mr. Klein: -- Not for real. But he did run an excellent campaign. Perhaps he's there sharing his ideas with you. That's how he got all of us here.

I am personally committed to serving the people of Regina South under this administration now and for many years to come. Four a half years ago Premier Grant Devine's government was first elected. I was proud to be a part of that team under his leadership. He had a vision for Saskatchewan. He saw that there were tremendous opportunities here in this province, but he also recognized the needs for protection of all our people.

It makes me proud to call Regina my home. I've lived in Regina most of my life, and yes, in all parts of it. Regina has been good to me – in my youth and later on as a family man and business man. Yes, I proudly represented Regina North. Now Regina South – perhaps some of the other members should be cautious because you might not be able to tell. But Regina has been good to me, Mr. Speaker, in my youth, and later on as a family man and a business man. Similarly for the last four years our government has been good to Regina.

One of the first and most obvious improvements that comes to mind is the carbon filtration plant at the Buffalo Pound project – and that has vastly improved the quality of our Regina water. And this we accomplished in our first term of office. The taste and odour problem in our city's water supply existed for many, many years. In fact, it was ignored by the previous government throughout three terms of office. But because of the efforts of our government, we can now all enjoy the very basic and necessary services of good water year-round.

Our health care system continues to be one of the finest in North America. Expansion at the General Hospital, at the Pasqua Hospital, have greatly improved the efficiency and operation of those facilities.

The construction of the Wascana rehabilitation centre again demonstrates the commitment of our government to health care. An additional \$300 million to the health capital fund is evidence of our long-term commitment to the health of the people of this province.

(2145)

This year 53 projects have been undertaken by the city of Regina through the provincial capital fund, a program of the Department of Urban Affairs. These projects total almost \$12 million of which our government will contribute over eight. The effect of these projects will be to improve the quality of everyday life for the citizens of Regina.

The 911 emergency telephone service is a prime example. Other major projects include upgrading of Arcola and Dewdney Avenues; upgrading of our storm sewers; replacement and refurbishing of city buses; construction of a much needed and much utilized south zone leisure centre.

I could go on and on just speaking about the benefits to the people of Regina over the last four years: \$40 million new school construction and renovations in Regina; more units of senior citizens' accommodation; the Western Canada Games all-purpose field house, which is presently taking place on 25th Avenue. But I'll resist the temptation, Mr. Speaker, to reiterate all of these accomplishments in too much detail. The record speaks for itself. And the record repeats itself in every community across this province.

To the constituents of Regina South I wish to emphasize my commitment to serve them and indicate that my door is always open and I am always ready to listen to their concerns, their suggestions, and their needs. I am committed to represent my constituents every day as we build a better Saskatchewan together.

Our government realized that to meet our common goals we must work together with the people in order to build Saskatchewan. It was and is a Partnership For Progress. Our record shows this: new business and investment opportunities; thousands of jobs created; and equally important, protection for Saskatchewan families – a better quality of life.

As minister responsible for urban affairs and the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, I believe that we must turn our attention to promoting stability and long-term security for all people. We must continue to create jobs and generate economic opportunity and activity in every community in this province. That's the message that I hear, Mr. Speaker, when I meet with people from all walks of life, from all across our province.

One of the accomplishments of this government that I am especially proud of is the Saskatchewan home program. Saskatchewan continues to lead the rest of the country in providing assistance to its residents for secure, comfortable, modest housing in some instances. In 1982 the concept of secure housing was foreign to people of our province. Many families were in jeopardy of losing their homes – their very basic need – when interest rates hit record highs. Our government responded to that need and introduced the mortgage interest reduction plan, the first plan of its kind in Canada. We ensured that no home owner would face mortgage rates higher than thirteen and a quarter per cent at a time when lending institutions were charging in excess of 20 per cent. Over 44,000 Saskatchewan home owners qualified for benefits during the life of that program, and recently this program was expanded and improved and reintroduced as the Saskatchewan home program.

The Saskatchewan home program will guarantee that mortgage rates will not exceed nine and three-quarters per cent for the next 10 years. This program guarantees Saskatchewan residents the kind of stability and long-term security that they need, what they want and deserve as they pursue their dream of owning their own home.

What is new and different to this program is the second component of the Saskatchewan home program that provides matched grants and low interest loans for home renovation projects.

Under this aspect of the program, Mr. Speaker, a home owner may apply for a matching grant of up to \$1,500 towards a home improvement of up to 3,000. And I would like to inform the member from Cumberland, at this point in time it is a five-year program.

It's not necessary to spend \$3,000 at once to get back \$1,500, but rather your northern communities can spend \$100 and get another \$100 to do a \$200 job, and it's a five-year program. They can encompass the \$1,500 matching grant over three years. I would suggest that you take that message back to your constituents. Do your job. Let them know what's available to them. They can qualify for those programs and improve those homes.

In addition to this grant assistance, home owners may finance the cost of repairs and improvements with a low interest government guaranteed home improvement loan of up to \$10,000 at a 6 per cent interest rate for up to 10 years.

The member from Cumberland is smiling at me at this time, and yet have you been fair to me? You spoke in your native language yesterday, and in fairness, you said that you would provide a translation immediately following. That never came. You referred to my constituency in English words that I could understand. I would like to respond to your comments but you don't allow me that opportunity. Where is that interpretation? I would like to debate those remarks now, at this time. You have something to hide? Why didn't you provide that interpretation so that I could address your concerns now, as I did with the member from Athabasca?

These programs, Mr. Speaker, not only improve the family home, thereby increasing its value while enhancing the quality of life, but will also create thousands of jobs in the home repair and renovation industry in every centre of this province. To the end of November, over 70,000 applications have been received for the matching grant program – 38,000 in Regina alone. In just three short months over 5,000 jobs have been created by the private sector. An additional 7,500 applications have been made for home improvement loans, for a total loan value of over \$54 million. The total value of the home improvements proposed under the matching grant program is almost \$172 million. We are looking at a total value of over \$226 million into this economy.

In the five-year duration of this program, Mr. Speaker, it is expected that 25,000 jobs will be created for our Saskatchewan people. However, that's just one aspect of it.

Over 75 per cent of all the work initiated is being done by Saskatchewan businesses. The modest forecast indicates that this province-wide economic activity as a result of this program could easily surpass \$2 billion.

These programs build on a strategy – a Partnership for Progress. They demonstrate our commitment to efficient and effective government, a government which recognizes the needs of all the people.

These benefits are being felt and appreciated not only by the individual home owners, but by the contractors and tradesmen whose phone are probably ringing right now with new business that might not have been there were it not for these programs. And as we sit here this very moment, Mr. Speaker, there are plumbers, electricians, and carpenters carrying out their trades in thousands of homes throughout this province as a direct result of the program.

A family home is the largest single investment that most Saskatchewan families will make. And this government is committed to seeing that as many residents as possible purchase their own home and enjoy it to the fullest.

Young families in Saskatchewan have benefited from the Build a Home, and the first-time home buyers' programs. These families have often faced difficulties in obtaining their first home. This program has given young people the necessary help so that they may realize the dream of home ownership.

Another way in which our government is again leading the nation is through recognizing one of the major outstanding social problems of the day – enabling its residents to retire with financial security and independence. We are meeting this need through the Saskatchewan Pension Plan.

The Saskatchewan Pension Plan is voluntary, and it's open to residents between the ages of 18 and 65. The plan features a built-in minimum pension and a government matching contribution for those workers who have previously been excluded from other pension programs, specifically home-makers, part-time workers, small-business people, and other self-employed persons. Again this is another example of a very basic right to our society, the right to a decent standard of living throughout retirement years. This is something the people of Saskatchewan want and we believe, deserve.

You know one of the quirks about human nature is that we sometimes take too many things in our everyday life for granted. One example that comes to mind is the price of gasoline. Just over four years ago when this government first took office the price of gasoline in this province was at record levels, thanks in a large part to a healthy provincial government tax. Again we responded to the needs of the people and removed that tax as our first official duty upon taking office. The removal of that tax has saved the drivers of this province and put into their pockets directly \$600 million – money that they can now spend freely the way they see fit in other areas of our society. And in Regina we now enjoy the lowest gasoline prices in the nation.

Another tax which the residents of this province wanted removed was the tax on clothing, Mr. Speaker, such a basic and elementary need. So in March of this year we removed the sales tax on clothing and footwear under \$300. This move has been applauded and enjoyed by the people throughout our province. On a day-to-day basis one might forget just what an impact these taxes had on our lives. But the best way I can think to remind each of you of that impact if you haven't had the chance to travel out of province lately: I had the opportunity this last summer to attend Expo in Vancouver, and one certainly can't help but notice paying up to 10 cents per litre more in gasoline or paying 7 per cent sales tax on not only clothing, but restaurant meals as well.

While I'm on the subject of Expo '86 I want to take the opportunity to review some of the outstanding accomplishments that were made by this province at one of the most successful world expositions ever. Saskatchewan was a presence to be proud of at Expo '86; 2.8 million people visited our pavilion during the 165 days of the fair. In addition to those 2.8 million who came through our doors, countless thousands enjoyed the exterior exhibitory of our pavilion, a feature which was unique to the Saskatchewan pavilion.

Among the exterior exhibits we displayed to Expo's 23 million visitors were sports kiosks. J.I. Case displays, the Western Development Museum steam calliope, and so on. Saskatchewan artists were featured throughout, and they have since had the opportunity to start new lives in the entertainment business – at least some of them. Our Harvest Restaurant became a legend even before its rating in the *Vancouver Sun* of five stars out of a possible four.

Yes, we made an impact at Expo and it was in the tourism industry. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, time does not permit me to start talking tourism now and explaining to the member of Cumberland exactly how those programs help his people. And he smirks there. As we try to help his people in the North, he smirks, Mr. Speaker. He doesn't understand how it works. The member from Athabasca, if he invites me to his constituency – and in all sincerity we can go and look at projects that he has difficulty with – I'd be delighted to do that.

There is much more I could say. But in view of the time, I will conclude my remarks for now by saying that on October 20th, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan had a choice. It was their decision that a Progressive Conservative government was the key to a secure and prosperous future. I believe they have made the right decision.

I look forward to working with our Premier, Grant Devine, and this government to ensure that their hopes for the future are realized. It gives me great satisfaction to have been a member of this government for the past four and one-half years and to be able to stand here today to affirm our record of promises made and promises kept.

I invite my constituents, for that matter all citizens of this province, to share with us what they want. Become part of the decision-making process. Give us your ideas. Tell us your needs. I feel that this government has gone a long way toward meeting the needs of the people it serves. The fact that we are here on this side of the House today is proof that we have given the people what they want, and that they want us to continue in that tradition, Mr. Speaker.

It is with pleasure and pride that I tell you that I will be supporting the throne speech and the Build Saskatchewan initiatives presented to this House.

Being near 10 o'clock, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:01 p.m.