

May 10, 1988

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Public Accounts

Deputy Clerk: – Mr. Van Mulligen, from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, presents the second report of the said committee which is hereby tabled as Sessional Paper No. 81.

Mr. Van Mulligen: – Mr. Speaker, moved by myself and seconded by the member for Shellbrook-Torch River:

That the second report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be now concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Saxinger: – Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, some guests sitting in your gallery. They are their worship, Mayor Wilbert Schulze, from our fair town of Cudworth, and the administrator, Judy Trischuk.

They tell me it's the first time they visit this building, and it's the first time they're sitting in on the question period. I hope they find it enjoyable. I would like to ask everybody to help me welcome these people.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: – Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden is unable to be with us, so it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and the members of the Assembly, 39 students – grade 4 students. They are sitting in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker, and they're from White City Elementary School, from White City, Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, they're also accompanied by their teachers, Mrs. Marjorie Gross and Mrs. Brenda Edwards. I'll be joining them afterwards for drinks and questions and pictures, and I ask all members of the Assembly to join with me in welcoming these here students and teachers here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: – Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Legislative Assembly, some guests sitting in your gallery. They are Mr. And Mrs. Jack Mattimore from Port Charles, Florida, and they are being hosted in Weyburn, while they are here on holidays, by Mr. And Mrs. Harold Rodine from Weyburn.

Our guests from Florida are originally Canadians, and in fact Mr. Mattimore serve with the Canadian Armed Forces and as well with Ford Motor Company for some 38 years. His wife was born and raised in Moose Jaw.

Harold Rodine, who is more affectionately known on the streets of Weyburn as Bud Rodine, and who are hosting the Mattimores, worked for the Saskatchewan Hospital – what was the Saskatchewan Hospital, more recently the Souris Valley extended care hospital – in Weyburn for some 32 years, Mr. Speaker, and he just retired this past spring. And I must say, Mr. Speaker, after 32 years of service to the province of Saskatchewan and the people of Weyburn and area, the kinds of words that come to mind when people think of Bud Rodine in Weyburn are words like these: dedicated, loyal, faithful, hard-working, and he was loved and respected by all who knew him at work and those who knew him outside of work.

So I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, and all members of the legislature to join with me in welcoming these guests here today, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: – Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the legislature, 36 grades 7 and 8 students who are sitting in your Speaker's gallery. They are accompanied by their teachers, Ms. Dawn Patola and Mr. Jim Longstaff.

I will be meeting with the students and their teachers after question period at 3 o'clock for pictures and drinks, and I would ask all members of the legislature to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: – Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Legislative Assembly, 17 students from the Regina Christian School, seated in the east gallery. These students are in grades 7 and 8. They're accompanied by their teach, John Harris, Reverend Ed Visser and Mrs. Adele Barnes.

It will by my pleasure to meet with this group shortly after question period. Please join me in welcoming them to our Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: – Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and the other members of this House, a couple of special guests sitting in the west gallery today. Pastor Walter Boldt and delegation from the Circle Drive Alliance Church in Saskatoon. We trust that you find the proceedings informative and interesting this afternoon.

So I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming them.

Hon. Members: – Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: – Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to share with my colleague, the member from Saskatoon Mayfair, in welcoming Pastor Boldt and his guests. It's a very active, important church community in the province of Saskatchewan and in Saskatoon, and we hope that he enjoys question period as well.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Cross-Subsidization of Government Utilities

Mr. Romanow: – Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Deputy Premier, the minister in charge of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation and it has to do with yesterday's confirmation of the splitting of Saskatchewan Power Corporation and today's newspaper report in the *Leader-Post* where the Deputy Premier seeks to justify the splitting on the basis that the old PURC (public utilities review commission) spoke against cross-subsidization.

My question to the Deputy Premier and the minister in charge of SPC (Saskatchewan Power Corporation) is as follows: are you telling the people of Saskatchewan, by this press statement, that no longer will the Saskatchewan Power Corporation follow the principle of cross-subsidization, and therefore in the consequence, our family farmers, our families who have residences or small business are going to be paying more because cross-subsidization has been eliminated; in other words, that it's user pay all the way. Is that now the policy of your government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: – Mr. Speaker, what we are saying is that there will be a splitting of the utilities. The gas utility will have one administrative line, the electrical utility will have another administrative line.

We are not saying that there will be increases beyond the rate of inflation in electricity or gas; in fact, the opposite is true. We have said that, projected out over the next 10 years, electrical increases will be at or below the rate of inflation.

It's true that PURC told us that cross-subsidization ought not to take place. We of course have taken that into account in our deliberations as it relates to the splitting of the utilities. And that is one, Mr. Speaker, of several reasons that we have come to the conclusion that it is appropriate at this time to separate the two utilities.

Mr. Romanow: – Well, Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Deputy Premier. The *Leader-Post* story that I have in front of me, today's date, under the headline, "SaskPower to be split," quotes you quoting the public utilities review commission – which I need not remind you or the members of the House, was done away by your government, and presumably having no confidence in it – quotes you as saying as follows . . .

Mr. Speaker: – Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. I'm afraid I must draw to the member's attention – I'm sure he forgot – that we don't have quotes in supplementaries.

Mr. Romanow: – Well, Mr. Speaker, I will ask a new question of the Hon. Deputy Premier. And I suspect that that's probably the best way to go – every question to be a new question in this question period, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: – Order. Order. Order. Order, order. I was just reminding the hon. Member that we have made a rule some time ago that we do not use quotations in supplementary questions. It's a rule, as I indicated, that I'm sure the member probably didn't think about as he rose to speak on a supplementary. I'm just drawing that rule to his attention.

Mr. Romanow: – Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that rule. As the rules are unfolding, I have a new question to the Deputy Premier. I say to the Deputy Premier that in today's *Leader-Post* you quote approvingly the public utilities review commission in these terms:

. . . cross-subsidization between competing forms of utilities is a sin, that we ought to separate the two utilities and administer them separately . . .

That's what you say. According to the last PURC report in 1987, January, there was a benefit of \$53 million to the residences and the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan as a result of cross-subsidization. You have stated today that's the reason why you're splitting SPC. Why don't you admit it? The result is going to be user pay and higher rates for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: – Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member ought not to use the *Leader-Post* as his sole source for research material. The words, Mr. Speaker . . . and by the way, I haven't read the *Leader-Post*, and nor have I for a couple of years.

But, Mr. Speaker, if what you have attributed to me was attributed to me by the *Leader-Post*, it is simply not accurate. What I said when I was interviewed in the scrum right out by this pillar in the concourse out here, was the PURC had suggested – and I was paraphrasing and perhaps taking some literary licence with PURC's ruling – but PURC had said that gas and electricity are competing forms of energy and that cross-subsidization, one to the other, ought to be eliminated because gas customers who opt for gas, for whatever reason, ought not to have to subsidize the electrical customer. I think that there's some good and valid reasons why they came to that particular conclusion.

Now having said that, Mr. Speaker – having said that, Mr. Speaker – those same farmers in rural Saskatchewan that the minister purports to stand behind four-square, I will remind him that it was this government that put in thousands of miles of rural gas distribution to thousands and thousands of farm customers so that they can get the benefit of what is today a cheaper form of energy for farmers that those people denied them for many, many years – refused even to develop the gas resource we had in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: – Mr. Speaker, I have a new question for the Deputy Premier. I want to tell the Deputy Premier that all of those words do not cover up the fact that you and your own Saskatchewan Power Corporation, in a study that you have of 1987, shows that electrical rates ought to go up by five times for residential owners, up to three times for farm people; that they haven't done so because of cross-subsidization, and I again refer to the *Leader-Post* article which quotes you as saying that the arguments of PURC that cross-subsidization should be eliminated have merit.

How can you, Mr. Deputy Premier, in the face of those facts – not my statements but your documents – how can you get up here and tell the people of Saskatchewan that it does not mean anything more, other than higher rates right across the piece because of this silly attempt to split SPC? How do you deny that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: – Mr. Speaker, he may call it silly and he may call it an attempt, but the reality is, Mr. Speaker, that there will be a split in the utilities – power and electricity and gas. I understand that from time to time there are studies done by various people in various places, and from time to time, Mr. Speaker, they are agreed with by management, and from time to time they're not.

I take you back, Mr. Speaker, to the seven years preceding 1982, when power rates under that administration increased a total of 100 per cent – 98 point-something per cent. A comparable period since 1982, Mr. Speaker, they have increased, and I'm going from memory, but let's say less than half of that – less than half of that. And, Mr. Speaker, that was at time when they were arguing that SaskPower, the electrical utility, was in the black, Mr. Speaker.

Well this year, this year the electrical utility is in the black. There is no cross-subsidization this year, Mr. Speaker, and we tabled an annual report that reflected a \$46 million turn-around, a \$36 million profit.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: – Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Deputy Premier. The Deputy Premier points out in his last answer that the electrical portion of SPC ran in the black this year for the first time in a long time. Since that time it's been cross-subsidized because power corporation has been working as a whole unit, natural gas subsidizing electrical rates.

I refer you, sir, to this PURC report that I have in front of me here, dated January 29, 1987, where your own agency at that time said that, because of cross-subsidization, \$53 million less in rates were being paid by farmers and home owners. It says also that you've got an internal study advocating a five times increase and a three times increase. Do you deny the existence of that internal SPC study?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: – Mr. Speaker, I don't deny, I don't deny the existence of the study, although I want everybody to be clear that I haven't seen it, and I don't know that it does exist. But when you're talking about what is recommended in this study that he alleges exists and what has happened, Mr. Speaker, compare what he is suggesting should happen and what has happened.

Mr. Speaker, we went to PURC and we said, rather than have a rate shock that just goes right up like that to pay for Coronach and Nipawin and Shand and things that weren't on the balance sheet when we got there, Mr. Speaker, but in the case of Coronach, and to a large extent in the case of Nipawin, were committed to by a previous government – and we're not critical of them for that because demands had been increasing, we had to have the capacity, and so we built them and now we're paying for them – but rather than have a rate shock that just went straight up, we said, Mr. PURC, please tell us that we can go out there and have a three-year financial recovery program at 7.5 per cent over each of those three years. Last January was the last 7.5 per cent increase.

It worked, Mr. Speaker, because we have now an electrical utility in the black, a power utility that showed a \$35 million profit in the last annual report, and one that all of Saskatchewan can be proud of, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: – Mr. Speaker, I have a new question to the Deputy Premier. I might say that about the only thing with respect to PURCs and SPC that this government knows about are the perks that George Hill, your buddy in SPC is getting.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: – And it's little wonder that we're in such a mess, by the way, with SPC when you have political people running a corporation of this value.

I want to put the question to the Deputy Premier if he'd care to listen for the moment. My question to him is this: you repudiate the bald words printed down here in black and white by the *Leader-Post* as to one reason why you're splitting the corporation. You repudiated them. If it isn't because you want to do a cross-subsidization, what then is the reason for splitting up and weakening Saskatchewan Power Corporation? What is it?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: – Mr. Speaker, a couple of things I should respond to: number one, I think that George Hill and his perks are no more than those of Bob Moncur, who was your friend. The difference, of course, is George Hill has turned the company around and has ... and coupled, Mr. Speaker, with the policies of this government that have allowed the natural gas industry to grow and expand and find new gas and develop the resources, we're to a position now, Mr. Speaker, where about 20 per cent ... about, yes, I'm guessing, about 20 per cent of gas that's delivered by SaskPower is not delivered to SaskPower customers, but it's direct-sourcing contracts, Mr. Speaker.

So the nature of the business is changing. About a hundred billion cubic feet of natural gas, Mr. Speaker, will be going into the export market and that's today – that's today. Mr. Speaker, it's estimated that in the very near future that will double to maybe 170 or 180 billion cubic feet going into the export market.

So the system has changed, Mr. Speaker, the nature of the business has changed. In addition, I have never ever said, never said that I disagreed with PURC's suggestion that there ought not to be cross-subsidization, nor have I read the article in the *Leader-Post* – that one or any other for the last couple of years – so I don't know what the *Leader-Post* said that I said, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: – Order. I'd just like to draw to the member's attention that it seems that we're entering debate here between the members. Perhaps we should keep that in mind.

Mr. Romanow: – With the greatest of respect to you, sir, I intend to ask this question until I get, and the people of the province of Saskatchewan get, an answer. This minister has been quoted – in a new question – directly by the *Leader-Post*, so you can't slough it off as a misquote, as they do in all other statements. He has said, that it's been ... that cross-subsidization is the reasons for splitting SPC. He denies it today.

If it isn't cross-subsidization, then answer this question: what will be the reason for splitting off the power corporation? Why did you do it then, if you didn't do it for that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: – Mr. Speaker, this has been the subject of some discussion yesterday and today. And I'm a little disappointed, Mr. Speaker, that it became the discussion here in question period because I had planned, Mr. Speaker, to make an announcement at the end of this month. And unfortunately, since it is now public, I intend to make an announcement later today by way of ministerial statement, Mr. Speaker. So if the hon. member will be patient, I'd be happy to deal with it during the course of a ministerial statement.

Mr. Romanow: – Mr. Speaker, for the life of me I don't know how an opposition could try and get some answers from this government. You can ask them specifically any question that you want ... I'm going to ask the Deputy Premier this question. You have given this legislature ...

This is a new question, Mr. Speaker. You have denied that cross-subsidization is a factor. You're quoting something about deregulation ... (inaudible interjection) ... Well, you denied the story. In the Leader-Post story you referred to deregulation which you did not refer to today. You are talking no reason for splitting except some generalized concept of efficiency.

How in the world does the Deputy Premier expect the people of the province of Saskatchewan to believe that splitting one working, running corporation even under George Hill and your government – how is that being efficient by now splitting it up into two? Give us the explanation for that – two bureaucracies and two costs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: – Maybe, Mr. Speaker, when I'm finished explaining this, that member will explain why he split the potash corporation into the mining company, into the transportation company, into international and so on. I know why he did it, but perhaps other people would want to know that it was ... yes, I'm going to answer the question, Mr. Speaker, but I know that he's going to tell the world that it was to bring efficiencies to the organization.

The nature of the business has changed, Mr. Speaker, with deregulation, with new policies of this government, with yes, indeed ...

An Hon. Member: – Free trade.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: – No. not free trade, not free trade. Although, Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity for Saskatchewan gas to get into the export market finally, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: – He spent a lot of time, Mr. Speaker, trying to convince everybody here that I said that I disagreed with PURC's idea as it relates to the concept of cross-subsidization. This is the fourth time that I've stood up and said that I didn't disagree with PURC in their arguments as it relates to cross-subsidization between competing forms of energy that makes eminent good sense to thinking people, Mr. Speaker. And so let me just put on the record that I don't support the concepts.

Some Hon. Members: – Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: – Order. Order.

Mr. Romanow: – Mr. Speaker, I have one last question of the Deputy Premier. I have this new question to the Premier. Obviously your questions ... the answers to these questions are becoming more muddled and more confused as this question period goes along, without a doubt. One time you accept the statement, then you reject the statement in the *Leader-Post*. You give us all kinds of confusing statements.

Look, I want to ask you a specific, simple question: will you tell the people of the province of Saskatchewan in clear, no uncertain terms, that the splitting of power corporation into the two utilities will not mean any further privatization from here on in of Saskatchewan Power Corporation, either on natural gas or on electrical side? Will you give us that clear-cut assurance?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: – What will be the next bogymen? The first one was cross-subsidization; the next one was free trade; now it's privatization, Mr. Speaker.

What we have done, Mr. Speaker, is we have taken an undeveloped resource for \$325 million ...

An Hon. Member: – Given it away.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: – He says, gave it away. Three hundred and twenty-five million dollars – that means \$30 million on the bottom line for Sask Power. That's not insignificant. That's not insignificant, Mr. Speaker.

That's ... Number one, the sale of that resource, Mr. Speaker, is not a privatization of a utility, nor is the splitting, administratively, of the electrical from the gas, or vice versa, to make the gas a wholly owned subsidiary of the electrical utility or privatization, Mr. Speaker.

We are talking about separating utilities, separating utilities, because of the nature of the business of natural gas changing radically over the last several years, and, Mr. Speaker, for all of the reasons that I've talked about – cross-subsidization, the changing nature of gas, exports, direct sourcing.

And, Mr. Speaker, the farmers will be very, very happy to continue to get natural gas through the rural gas distribution program that was brought in by this government, that was denied to them by that government for 11 long years for two reasons: they didn't have the foresight to either put in the system or develop the resource.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Production of Telephone Directory

Mr. Hagel: – Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the minister responsible for Saskatchewan telephones, I'll direct my question to the Deputy Premier.

Mr. Deputy Premier, we're given to understand that, along with your plans for privatization of telephone books, that you're giving serious thought to producing one huge book for the entire province of Saskatchewan. Quite frankly, Mr. Deputy Premier, that would mean that we would be saddled with one great big sucker of a phone book.

And I ask you, I ask you, Mr. Deputy Premier: have you given any thought to the logistics involved, or is this yet another half-baked PC idea that has become so characteristic of your government?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: – Mr. Speaker, I want to be completely candid. I haven't given it any thought. I think, further, that it's the dumbest idea that I've ever heard of. And I don't believe that my colleague, the minister responsible for telephones, would think that it was a brilliant idea either. And if he does, I'm going to have a chat with him about it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: – Well, Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting and concur ... and the minister of telephones who floated that idea in this Assembly some days ago will be interested to know that you consider his to be one of the dumbest ideas you've ever heard.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: – Quite frankly, you're in line with the majority this time, Mr. Deputy Premier.

Mr. Deputy Premier, you folks were unable to do something as simple as to publish the Saskatoon phone book. And quite frankly, if you proceed with this dumb idea, as you call it, the supplement to encompass the corrections will be as large as our entire phone book for the city of Moose Jaw.

And I ask you, Mr. Minister, instead of botching one great big phone book, will you set aside your privatization ideas and concentrate next time on doing the little phone books right? Will you do that next time, Mr. Deputy Premier?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: – Mr. Speaker, to the extent that I can give those kinds of assurances, the phone books will be done right, Mr. Speaker. I give you that commitment. I don't know why we would want them done any other way. I guess I just don't understand why. The question's almost as dumb as the concept, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hagel: – Well, Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Deputy Premier. Mr. Deputy Premier, you say it's a dumb idea. The minister responsible for SaskTel says it's an idea that he's considering.

I ask you, Mr. Deputy Premier: who over there is in charge of SaskTel, and who will be in charge of implementing the dumb ideas for the Government of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: – The minister and my friend and colleague, the Minister of Finance, is responsible for the SaskTel corporation, and I might add, Mr. Speaker, does an excellent job and enjoys the

confidence of his colleagues. And, Mr. Speaker, I shouldn't do this, but I wonder if I could ask the member if that story came out of the *Leader-Post* or the *Star-Phoenix*?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Designation of Saskatchewan's Provincial Tree

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: – Mr. Speaker, on Friday, May 6, during National Forestry Week, I announced the government's intentions to proceed with designation of the white birch as Saskatchewan's provincial tree. As members of the Assembly will be aware, there was extensive public consultation earlier this spring to determine which species of tree the people of Saskatchewan would like to see representing Saskatchewan.

I may say, Mr. Speaker, that there were some entries received out with the normal guide-lines, probably the most unique of which was the one I received from my good friend and colleague, the member from Moose Jaw North. And I assure him it was received with the same good humour with which it was sent to me.

Fifty-nine per cent of all the respondents chose white birch. The white birch, Mr. Speaker, is native to our province. It is widely distributed, commercially valuable, historically significant, and above all, beautiful and stately.

I am pleased today to present each member of the Assembly with a white birch to commemorate this historic occasion, the designation of Saskatchewan's provincial tree. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: – Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of myself and my colleagues I want to join with the minister with his announcement today, and I assure you that we agree with that. And I want to thank you for the small sapling that you have given to each one of us. We appreciate that.

I also want to add that when you talk about the white birch being a stately and a beautiful tree, that is correct. I think anyone who has flown over northern Saskatchewan in the early weeks of September will notice that the birch is the first tree in the forest to ripen and they stand out so dominant in the beautiful forests that we have. I think, Mr. Speaker, in joining with the minister, it is a wise choice by the 59 per cent of the population, and I might add that I'm among the 59 per cent. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Mr. Speaker: – Order, order. Order. Order. Motion under rule 16.

An Hon. Member: – Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: – What is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Mr. Berntson: – Mr. Speaker, the point of order is this: in rules under rule 16 in the Saskatchewan ... in proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, I think it says that the notice has to be filed no later than 11 o'clock on the preceding Friday. And I think the record will show that this rule 16 was not filed prior to the 11 o'clock on Friday, Mr. Speaker, and it is therefore, in my view, out of order.

Mr. Tchorzewski: – Mr. Speaker, speaking to the point of order, rule 16 allows private members to put on the order paper, on every second Tuesday, a motion for debate. It has been the tradition, and in fact I think it is in the rule that those days alternate between government and opposition sides of the House. I point out to you, Mr. Speaker, that on last Friday, for today, this private members' day, it was the turn of the government to put on the motion. They forgot to do so, Mr. Speaker ...

An Hon. Member: – No, we didn't want to.

Mr. Tchorzewski: – Or for whatever the reason, I will say that. So therefore the members on this side, Mr. Speaker, put on a motion for rule 16 for debate. I think it was quite appropriate to do so. What I would like, therefore, because there is now a motion speaking to the point of order, because there is a motion on the order paper, I think it would be quite appropriate of the House to provide leave in order for that motion to be debated.

Mr. Speaker: – I have listened to the point of order and to the response from the member from Regina North East. Rule 16(3) reads as follows:

Notice of motion may be given orally in the Legislative Assembly under Routine Proceedings on the preceding Friday and the written notice shall be Tabled no later than 11:00 a.m. on the preceding Friday.

I have been informed that these conditions were not met, therefore the point of order is well taken and the motion may not proceed.

PRIVATE BILLS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 01 – An Act to incorporate the Stephen and Michelene Worobetz Foundation

Mr. Goodale: – Mr. Speaker, on second reading of Bill 01, I want to take just a moment of the House's time to commend this Bill to all hon. members. I trust it will receive speedy and unanimous approval.

The petitioners, Mr. Speaker, who are seeking this legislation are of course very well-known friends of the Saskatchewan legislature. Dr. Worobetz served this institution and the people of Saskatchewan as our distinguished lieutenant governor from 1970 until 1976. He and his wife Michelene, are proud residents of the city of Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, typical of them, typical of their compassion, their humanity, and their concern for their society and the people around them, Dr. and Mrs. Worobetz are seeking, by this Bill 01, the authority to establish a foundation to support and assist charitable and non-profit activities in relation to religion,

health, education, and culture in Saskatchewan. By this means they wish to continue to contribute to the fabric of Saskatchewan life, enhancing the quality of that life for the benefit of us all.

I trust all hon. members, Mr. Speaker, will find Bill 01 to be in order from a technical point of view. But more than that, I trust all members will wish to support the Bill because of the fine humanitarian objectives which it embodies and because of the noble and worthy citizens of our province, Stephen and Michelene Worobetz, who are the Bill's sponsors.

And accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to move that Bill No. 01, An Act to incorporate the Stephen and Michelene Worobetz Foundation be now read a second time and be referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Mr. Tchorzewski: – Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few brief comments on this Act to incorporate the Stephen and Michelene Worobetz Foundation. I want to concur with the remarks made by the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg and add some of my own about the great and distinguished contribution made by Dr. Worobetz to Saskatchewan throughout the years that he has worked in this province and lived here, and particularly through the years that he served as the lieutenant governor in Saskatchewan, which is the time when I learned to know him and his family well.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that Dr. Worobetz at that time made a contribution in many ways, but the one that stands out in my mind, because I was very much involved in that area as well, was the contribution that Dr. Worobetz made to the development, the promotion, and the growth of the multicultural nature of Saskatchewan.

Dr. Worobetz had a very great and strong interest in the composition of this province, how it originated, the nature of the people here, and one many occasions, went out of his way to assist the development of the multicultural heritage and richness that we know and appreciate so very much in this province.

I think to establish this foundation under the names of the Worobetzes, I think is a very appropriate thing to do. Certainly members of this side of the House find the objectives of the foundation to be worthwhile, and we are certainly most happy to have it referred to the committee.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Bill No. 02 – An Act to amend An Act to incorporate Full Gospel Bible Institute

Mr. Toth: – Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 02, An act to amend An Act to incorporate Full Gospel Bible Institute, be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

(1445)

Mr. Tchorzewski: – Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate that we will also be agreeing to forward the Bill to the Committee on Private Members' Bills. The implication of this Bill is to extend tax exemption status to particular holdings of the Full Gospel Bible Institute located in Eston.

I want to point out to the House that members in the opposition, we have made a point of contacting the town council of Eston to see whether they were aware of the Bill and what their position was, and that

we are informed that the town council of Eston has by resolution approved of this Bill. And we will consider the Bill more fully in the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills, and therefore at this time concur that it ought to be forwarded to the committee.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Bill No. 03 – An Act to incorporate the Circle Drive Alliance Church

Mr. Neudorf: – Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure at this time to rise in my place and to make the motion for the Circle Drive Alliance Church incorporation.

I think all members during the introductions this afternoon recognized, as did the Minister of Science and Technology, and indeed the Leader of the Opposition, the important role that this church is playing in Saskatoon and surrounding community under the stewardship of Pastor Walter Boldt. And recognizing that, Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure at this time to move that Bill No. 03, An Act to incorporate the Circle Drive Alliance Church, be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Mr. Tchorzewski: – A brief comment, as usual, Mr. Speaker. This Bill would incorporate the Circle Drive Alliance Church, as the member has indicated opposite. Members of the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills, I'm sure will be examining carefully the various powers that are conferred by this corporation, as the committee always does, and what implications are involved.

I might point out that we have yet not received – have not been able to get the information because we have not followed it up adequately – the implications as seen by the city of Saskatoon. Our members on the committee will want to do that, and I'm sure that we don't anticipate any difficulty. But I think it's only fair that the city fathers of the city of Saskatoon and officials have an opportunity to state what their views are on the Bill, and we shall be looking forward to that as well.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

MOTIONS

Mr. Tchorzewski: – To facilitate the business of the House, Mr. Speaker, we're prepared to stand all of the motions until motion no. 11, item 7 in the blues, the motion by Ms. Atkinson to move the resolution (No. 11).

Leave granted.

Resolution No. 11 – Privatization as it Affects Government Services

Ms. Atkinson: – Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that this resolution come before the House today. It's important because we have not yet had the opportunity to debate in this legislature the government's latest economic fad, and that's the fad of privatization.

I will be interested to see whether the minister for privatization decides to enter the debate because I think it's important that the people of this province hear from the minister as to why his government is going ahead with all of these privatizations.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the minister of privatization released in March of 1988 a paper that set out the goals and objectives for the Department of Public Participation – we call it the department of privatization – and in this document, Mr. Speaker, he said that the department would evaluate all the privatizations with the objective of ensuring that the people of Saskatchewan would receive the following. One, full benefit from the use of public assets to increase employment and create economic and investment opportunity; two, increased opportunities for personal and employee ownership; and three, more effective and efficient public services at good value for money.

Well I think it's important that we do a little evaluation of whether or not the minister of privatization, and the PC government opposite, have met those objectives in terms of the privatizations that have already occurred. Now the minister of privatization says he intends to ensure that Saskatchewan people get full benefit from the use of public assets to increase employment and create economic and investment opportunity. Well let's take a look.

When the government chose to sell off the Highways equipment and send the Highways workers to the private sector, did this increase employment? Did this create economic and investment opportunities for the people of this province? It did not. More than 155 employees of the Department of Highways lost their jobs.

And did that business go to Saskatchewan contractors? We understand that much of the road work that has occurred in this province in the last several years has been done by out-of-province contractors. So in this case, Mr. Speaker, this privatization of the Department of Highways and the lay-off of all of these workers has not meant increased employment opportunities for the people of this province.

Now let's take a look at the dental plan. You will recall that the Minister of Health fired 411 dental workers last June. Did the firing of these dental workers, did that lead to more increased opportunities in this province for people? Did that lead to more economic and investment opportunities for the people of this province? No, it did not. In fact, many, many, many of those workers have not received any kind of employment opportunities in this province. We understand that some 30 people have got jobs; the rest do not.

Now let's talk about the drag-line, the sell-off of the drag-line to Manalta Coal. Here was a cosy little business deal. We sell a drag-line to Manalta Coal for \$45 million. We guarantee the note on the Toronto Stock Exchange, from Manalta Coal. Did this create more economic and investment opportunities for the people in Saskatchewan? Remember, Mr. Speaker, we've sold it to an Alberta company. Did this increase employment for the people of Saskatchewan? No, it did not.

And then we have Saskatchewan Minerals. Here's a fine example of increasing employment and increasing economic and investment opportunities. Here we had a company, made millions and millions and millions of dollars for the people of this province over the years, created a lot of jobs in the communities in which Saskatchewan Minerals was located. Did this sell-off to two out-of-province companies, one in Ontario and one in Quebec, did this create more economic and investment opportunities for the people of this province? No, it did not.

And the same goes for SED Systems in Saskatoon. We sell our 12 per cent shares in SED System to a company in Ontario. The Minister who sold the shares said that this company coming in would ensure that employees kept their jobs and would ensure that this company would be capitalized. What happened? Seventy employees lost their jobs in the city of Saskatoon this past winter. Now clearly the minister and his government have failed to meet their first objective of privatization, the objective being employment opportunities and economic and investment opportunities.

Then the Minister says he wants to ensure that Saskatchewan receives increased opportunities for personal and employee ownership. Well once again, let's examine the record.

Did the people who work at Weyerhaeuser, did they get to participate in the sell-off of Weyerhaeuser? Did the people who work at SED Systems, did they get to participate in the sell-off of SED Systems? Did the people that work at the mine, Poplar River mine, did they get to participate? No. Did the people at Saskatchewan Minerals, did they get to participate in a Saskatchewan sell-off, this government sell-off of this natural resource company? No!

And what about the dental workers? Did they get to participate in the sell-off of the equipment and the privatization of the best school-based dental program in all of North America? No. The only way they got to participate was going on to unemployment insurance. That's how they got to participate.

Clearly, once again, Mr. Speaker, this government has failed to meet its second objective of privatization. In every one of these examples that I've spoken of, not one share was publicly available to Saskatchewan people – not one share.

And then, Mr. Speaker, this government says that they want to ensure that public services are effective and efficient and that they provide a good value for our money. Well let's look at that.

Highways – the annual amount of money that we spend on highways in this province has not decreased significantly at all. And everybody knows what privatization has meant for highways. It has meant the worst roads in the history of this province. It is almost unbearable to try and drive between Saskatoon to Regina in terms of that highway and how that highway has deteriorated. We've got worse highways, and we've got a worse service. And, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to note that the truckers are complaining about that stretch of road, and that road is indicative of the kinds of highways that can be found all over Saskatchewan.

And then we have the dental plan. Did this privatization of the dental plan mean more efficient and effective use of the public money? No, it did not. The privatization of the school-based children's dental plan has meant worse service for the parents of the children in this province, particularly those in rural Saskatchewan ... (inaudible interjection) ... And the member from Weyburn says, bull. Well I'd like to suggest to the member of Weyburn that we will soon have you back as a veterinarian in the constituency of Weyburn, and you can take care of all the bulls that you want.

Now, Mr. Speaker ...

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: – Mr. Speaker, it is clear ...

Mr. Speaker: – Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: – Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the hon. member referred to myself as the MLA for Weyburn and I think she said that I said ... I used the word in the Assembly “bull,” and I would ... I want you to know and all members of the legislature, Mr. Speaker, to know that I used no such word, although I will say I do know that term when I see it, from my past experience, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: – The member has not really made a point of order. It’s a dispute between two members. The debate will continue.

Ms. Atkinson: – Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would ask the member from Weyburn that if he’s interested in entering this debate that he can get up on his feet after I have sat down and taken my seat and be involved and participate in this latest economic fad and justify this latest economic fad of privatization.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what I have simply gone through here is that it’s clear to all that the government has failed in its attempt to meet its privatization objectives. It has set three objectives, and in every case they have failed to meet any one of these three objectives.

Now let me turn for a moment, Mr. Speaker, to another aspect of the PC government’s privatization plan – another aspect that is determined and driven by their privatization ideology. Now they talk about privatization, and I can see why they use that word, because it describes exactly the way they go about it, in private, secretly, behind closed doors, privately with the PC friends, and privately with their big-business friends.

But Saskatchewan people have begun to ask, Mr. Speaker, what does the PC government have to hide? Why won’t they make these deals public? Why are they hiding? Let’s consider, Mr. Speaker, some of the private information that they’re hiding. Some of the privatization deals that this government has gone ahead with have not been released to the public.

Now last year, as every family knows, and as every community knows in this province, they privatized the children’s school-based dental program. Did they release the secret deal? Did they release the secret deal to the people of this province? No, they did not. Did the government release to the public the secret privatization deal negotiated with the dentists? No, they did not.

(1500)

What are you hiding? Why are you continuing to hide these privatization deals? And what about the privatization deal and the privatization of SaskCOMP, Secore, and parts of SaskTel? These publicly-owned companies, these publicly-owned services became part of WESTBRIDGE. And have they released any part of the deal to the public? No. Have they released any one of the secretly private deals that they negotiated with Mercury printers and others? The answer is no, they have not.

By now, even the PC back-benchers must be wondering just what sort of privatization deals are your front benches, your cabinet ministers, hiding. And if these deals are such a good deal, why are you afraid to show them to the public of Saskatchewan?

I want to talk about the privatization deal that’s occurred between Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation and Eldorado Nuclear. This is another one of their little privatization schemes or scam. And have they released that signed privatization deal to the people of this province? No!

And, Mr. Speaker, it begs the question again: why do they have to keep this kind of information in private; why can't they release this information to the people; and what do they have to hide?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: – I apologize for interrupting the hon. member in the midst of the debate, Mr. Speaker, but I wonder if I could have leave of the Assembly to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: – Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you, some guests sitting in your gallery, the Speaker's gallery, Mr. Speaker. These are some business people from Ontario who are looking at a business investment here in Saskatchewan, indeed in Weyburn, Saskatchewan. They are Doug MacDonald, his wife Heather, and Sonny Anderson as well, who is seated with them. And I would ask all members to join me in welcoming them to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MOTIONS

Resolution No. 11 – Privatization as it Affects Government Services (continued)

Ms. Atkinson: – Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now this privatization deal that I was referring to, the privatization deal of Sask Minerals – this privatization has occurred in two companies, one in Quebec and one in Ontario.

Once again the members opposite have failed to release to the people of Saskatchewan the signed agreements, and I'd like to know why. Why are you people so afraid of letting the people of this province know what's in those deals? You people are the servants of the public. You have been elected to look after the public purse, and if you were doing a good job of looking after the public purse, then you won't be afraid to release to the people of this province those business deals that you've negotiated.

You are selling off the publicly owned assets of this province, and we have a right to know what's involved in those sell-offs, members opposite. These have been cosy little private deals. The investors in Quebec know what the deal is – they know what the deal is before the people of Saskatchewan know.

Mr. Speaker, just a few days ago this government announced the sale of Saskatchewan Power Corporation's natural gas reserves – some 510 billion cubic feet. This is another privatization, a PC privatization of our future, Mr. Speaker. But has the government released the contents of this deal to the people of Saskatchewan? Have they released one signed document between the Saskatchewan Potash Corporation and another privatized Crown corporation, Saskoil? They have not. And it begs the question: what are you hiding and why are you trying to hide?

And the list goes on and on and on. All of the PC privatizations, with the exception of one, have been kept in the dark – the people of this province have been kept in the dark. They are private deals; they are secret deals. And no wonder, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan people have come to realize that these secret deals are benefitting only the PC Party members and only the PC corporate friends.

And I will be listening with some interest today, Mr. Speaker, to see who enters the debate on the government side of the House. I will want to know, just as the people of Saskatchewan want to know, how do the PC members opposite justify the secret deals that have occurred? How do they justify and explain the PC privatization?

The PC privatization means private deals, secret deals. That's what it means – kept in secret, never released to the public. And I will be particularly interested in seeing whether many of the PC members will even try to answer this question: what are you ashamed of? Why are you trying to hide? Why are you trying to hide all of the privatization deals that have occurred in this province in the last year and a half?

Now I just want to talk about some of the privatizations that have occurred. Now we will all remember that the PC members opposite sold off the Poplar river mine to Manalta Coal of Alberta. Here we have it: the Poplar River coal mine is sold off to Manalta Coal from Alberta, and the Saskatchewan Potash Corporation buys the coal back. Some business deal – we sell off something we already own and then we buy the coal back.

And then we have the SPC drag-line, once again sold to Manalta Coal. The interesting thing about this privatization is that we were to receive \$45 million for the drag-line. Now you would think that Fred Mannix – who's the construction magnate in Alberta who owns Manalta Coal – you would think that he would be able to go to the bank himself and get the loan to pay the people of Saskatchewan for this public asset, the drag-line. But that doesn't occur, for some wonderful reason.

Instead what happens is the Government of Saskatchewan, through Saskatchewan Power Corporation, guarantees a \$45 million loan to the Government of Saskatchewan. So here we are: we have Manalta Coal, that's got quite a bit of money, I understand – they've been very successful in Alberta. They, for some reason, can't go to the bank and get their own loan. They have to have the Government of Saskatchewan guarantee the note.

And then we have Saskoil. This privatization took place in late 1985. We received \$75 million for this company, but what happens? They fire 25 per cent of the workers; they buy a \$66 million Alberta oil company; 75 per cent of the privately held shares are held by people and institutions outside of Saskatchewan. So we've gone from a wholly owned Saskatchewan company, owned by all of us, all 1 million people, to a company that is owned by people, for the most part, who reside outside of our province. Now that really is public participation, members opposite. We used to publicly participate in Saskoil by each and every one of us having a share of that company through the public ... or through the Crown corporation, and now that no longer occurs.

And we also have a situation where not one dividend's been paid to the Government of Saskatchewan, although dividends have been paid to the private shareholders in each of the first two years of operation. And I will be interested to have the members opposite explain why it is that Saskoil has not yet paid any dividend to the people of this province or the government of this province.

And then we have the sell-off of one of our assets. That's when the government sold \$40 million worth of equipment for some \$6 million and privatized 157 Highways workers.

And then we have WESTBRIDGE – that's the privatization of SaskCOMP and Secore and part of SaskTel. Now no details of that deal have been released; no documents or agreements have been released, even though I have written to the minister of privatization requesting that information. But

there is some interesting things that we're able to glean out of the annual report, and the interesting thing to note is that here we have a company that apparently has been sold for \$16.75 million. This consists of a \$5.2 million note which is payable on July 1, 1988. It looks as though this note is going to come out of general revenue of WESTBRIDGE.

And then we also have ... the people of this province have got class B common shares in WESTBRIDGE, valued at \$11.55 million. But we have no guarantees that those shares, three or four months down the road, will be worth \$11.5 million. We have no guarantees that we will have any dividends on those shares.

We look at what's happened in Saskoil. Saskoil hasn't paid one cent in dividends to the people of this province, because we own many of those shares – not one cent. So we have no guarantees. And it will be interesting to ask the minister responsible for SaskCOMP and the minister of privatization about this little sweetheart deal that's taken place over at SaskCOMP.

Because here we have a company, a very, very important company in terms of the future of our province, in terms of high technology, that returned, in the last 10 years, over \$21 million in dividends to the people of this province.

We have just sold off this company for \$16.75 million. We get a promissory note for \$5.2 million and some class B shares in this new WESTBRIDGE – no guarantees that we'll ever get 1 cent in dividends, even though we have had dividend after dividend after dividend paid by this Saskatchewan computer corporation to the people of this province.

And let's look at Sask Minerals. Saskatchewan Minerals was an important little company in the province of Saskatchewan. It had facilities in Carrot River and Chaplin and Fox Valley. This was a company that returned to the people of this province over \$60 million. It was sold for less than \$16 million to two eastern companies. Once again we have no details of the deal. We have no documents. The documents have never been released.

And then we have the privatization of parks. There's only one lease agreement that I've had the opportunity to see, and that's the Blackstrap lease agreement. And if the people opposite are so sure about their privatization, then they will not be afraid to release to the people of this province all of the documents that go along with the deals that have been struck between the public and the private sector.

Now I can understand if this was a private enterprise operation that we were running here, we would have no right to see those business deals. But we do, because you, sir – you, sir are responsible to the people of this province for their tax dollars and for the public assets that have been accumulated on their behalf. You are responsible and you ultimately will be accountable. We deserve, we deserve to see the details of that deal. And if you have nothing to hide, if you have absolutely nothing to hide, then you will make those deals available to the people of Saskatchewan.

And finally I want to talk about two other privatizations. You will recall that the government of Saskatchewan sold the 12 per cent shares to Fleet Aerospace of Ontario. In fact we never received any money. We exchanged our shares for some shares in Fleet Aerospace. The minister from Kindersley told the people of this province that those jobs would be guaranteed and that that company, SED Systems, would be capitalized by this Ontario company, and that has not occurred.

Seventy working people in the city of Saskatoon lost their job, and Fleet Aerospace told the people of this province that unless the government bought a \$10 million building, that they were going to pull out of this province; they were going to take the technology, developed and paid for by the people of this province, back to Ontario. Once again, some business deal.

We have no guarantees that those jobs in Saskatoon will be safe. We have no guarantees that Fleet Aerospace won't pull the technology out of this province, and we have no guarantees that we'll be left with anything other than a \$10 million building in Innovation centre in Saskatoon, the bricks and mortar.

Now I want to talk about the PC privatization ideology. By now, Mr. Speaker, it's become quite clear, even to some of the PC back-benchers, that these privatization deals have not been good business deals. They've not been undertaken for sound business purposes. And instead, these PC privatization plans appear to be pure right-wing ideology – not common sense, not practical, not good business deals, but privatization ideology only.

And it's an old ideology, Mr. Speaker, one we have all seen before – big business and right-wing politicians have tried it before. They have tried it elsewhere, It's failed in the past, and it will fail again, and it's failing today. But these right-wing PC politicians, these ideologues, keep on trying. They are at least consistent on that score, both feet planted in the past, facing backwards.

(1515)

They seem to base their privatization ideology on a few basic principles, Mr. Speaker, and they won't dare admit it, but I suspect that the basic principles are the following: private benefit, not public good; corporate power, not community power; balance sheet profits, but not services to people; money, the ultimate goal, and greed is their ultimate motivation; competition, not co-operation; and capitalism, Mr. Speaker, not compassion. Those are the fundamentals principles of this PC privatization ideology. That is what guides them.

Taken together, Mr. Speaker, these principles define their backward, narrow, and selfish ideology that they are determined to pursue blindly and at any cost. But this right-wing ideology stands condemned before human history and before human experience here in Saskatchewan and in the rest of the world. It is based on their philosophy of greed, selfishness, mean-spiritedness, and on that old Tory maxim, "beggar thy neighbour."

Now these shallow and narrow-minded Saskatchewan Tories have had their right-wind privatization ideology reinforced by their inspiration from outside, people like Margaret Thatcher from Britain, Vander Zalm from British Columbia, and of course their favourite ideological theorist at the Fraser Institute.

Now they have developed not only their privatize ideology but their secret plan for developing it as well. And we know who's in this province advising you people. We know who's here. We know you've had Oliver Letwin here. We know that you've had Mr. Walker from the Fraser Institute. We know that public dollars are paying for these consultant fees so you can sell off the public assets of the people of this province. We know that, but you've never publicly explained it. You've never publicly admitted it. It's been cooked up in secret, planned in private – closed doors – that's what your privatization plan is all about.

Now they think that their privatization plan is simple, and it is also transparent – a few easy PC steps to the privatization of Saskatchewan, to the transformation of Saskatchewan to the PC goal of the late ... or of the great leap backwards.

Their strategy and their plan entails a few simple steps, they believe. Gradually weaken workers, workers' rights and workers' unions. Divide the working people. Gradually drive a wedge between urban people and rural people. Gradually divide Saskatchewan people from one another – farmers and working people. Gradually break down community solidarity and community co-operation. Transform Saskatchewan from a community of co-operators to individual capitalists. Stimulate interest in greed and selfishness and speculative investment. Use soothing, mellow, reassuring Tory doublespeak, the slow PC seduction into selfishness. PC power bonds, Saskoil bonds, and one small step further, Saskoil shares. And finally, ladies and gentlemen of the government opposite, the outright sell-off of all of Saskatchewan assets commonly owned by all of us.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's clear that we have here not only a secret privatization ideology, but also a secret PC privatization plan. And I will be listening with some care later today, and the people of this province will be listening with some care when the PC members opposite enter this debate.

Will the minister of privatization speak on this motion now before us? After all, it's his issue, privatization, it's his portfolio. Or will only the PC back-benchers enter the debate? And will even one of them stand here in this Assembly and confirm what Saskatchewan people know, that PC privatization is based on the right-wing ideology of greed and the PC privatization strategy to destroy the province of Saskatchewan.

Now it has become clear, Mr. Speaker, that what we are seeing is this hard right-wing PC privatization ideology of the PC government members opposite. That's their ideology and that's their approach.

But there is another way, there's a Saskatchewan way, Mr. Speaker. And I submit to you that it is a better way, it is a better approach, and it is a more sound approach for the future of our province, for the future of our people. Not the hard right-wing PC ideology – narrow, selfish, and backward – but the Saskatchewan tradition of a mixed economy addressing Saskatchewan issues with made-in-Saskatchewan solutions. It's practical, it's pragmatic and it's positive – a mixed economy.

The full scope and opportunity for Saskatchewan business and Saskatchewan co-operatives and the Saskatchewan public sector working together to develop this province, to develop Saskatchewan's opportunities, to develop Saskatchewan's future. That's the history of this province – not their history. The history of this province is people working together – small-business people, co-operatives, and the public sector. That is our tradition. Those are the values of our people, not the right-wing, selfish ideology of the members opposite.

A mixed economy that respects and supports our unique Saskatchewan experience with community and co-operatives – the co-operative approach adopted by our pioneers and that remains strong and vibrant today, the co-operative tradition that built the wheat pool, the credit union, and the other producer co-ops, and the many, many successful consumer co-ops across Saskatchewan.

A mixed economy that recognizes and supports the contribution of Saskatchewan business, that allows small Saskatchewan business to thrive and to flourish and to innovate and to grow. And a mixed economy that is not afraid to use, when and where necessary, the common public instruments of the public sector or the Crown corporations.

And in Saskatchewan we have been bold enough, we have been far-sighted enough, we have, Mr. Speaker, been self-confident enough to use the public sector and Crown corporations to serve the needs of Saskatchewan people and to develop the future of our province. Over the years this has happened in a number of different ways, for different reasons, and in a number of different times, but always in the firm belief – by working together, Saskatchewan people can develop our future.

Now there's the case of the natural monopolies; for example, the provision of basic power and telephone services to a vast and sparsely settled province. Saskatchewan people did not wait for foreign capitalists to develop these utilities for their profit. We did it ourselves, for our own common benefit. And together the people of Saskatchewan built up a strong SaskTel and strong Saskatchewan Power Corporation. And thank goodness for that, Mr. Speaker.

Today, however, these natural monopolies ... even though Saskatchewan public utilities are being attacked and undermined by the PC privatization ideology. In other cases, Mr. Speaker, there were important public services which were needed by Saskatchewan communities and needed by Saskatchewan families. These could have been developed by private commercial interests, but they were not. Of if they were, they were out-of-province corporations exploiting Saskatchewan people. And I cite, for example, SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) and the Saskatchewan Transportation Company.

Saskatchewan people know that the provision of affordable and comprehensive insurance services, as well as affordable and practical bus services were not developed in this province by the big business corporations, but they were developed here in Saskatchewan by Saskatchewan people and for Saskatchewan people. These are further good examples, Mr. Speaker, of a positive, pragmatic and successful approach to the mixed economy of Saskatchewan. And it's something, Mr. Speaker, that these members opposite know nothing about because they don't know our history.

In other cases, Mr. Speaker, a major issue was the provision of a public good, or a public service in a natural monopoly environment. The Saskatchewan water supply board, now the water corporation, is such an example, another example of the mixed economy of public enterprise established to serve the needs of Saskatchewan people.

Now let me turn for a moment, Mr. Speaker, to the area's resources. For decades Saskatchewan people have felt blessed by our abundant natural resources, resources that belong to all of us, for the benefits of all of us, for the future of all of us – not just a few, but for the future of all of us.

Outside corporate interests from Toronto and New York and Dallas or South Africa, or wherever, have often looked on Saskatchewan as a place where they could exploit these resources and make private corporate profits for themselves. While their willingness to invest was sometimes welcomed, their refusal to establish Saskatchewan-based corporations was resented and rejected, and rightly so.

We had sodium sulphate, but not one single private corporation was willing to establish a major Saskatchewan-based company. And so Saskatchewan people established their own Saskatchewan Minerals, owned and controlled in Saskatchewan. But today, Mr. Speaker, the PC government's privatization ideology has just sold off Saskatchewan Minerals, and it's now 100 per cent owned and controlled by corporations in Ontario and Quebec.

And we've had hard rock mining, we've had potash, and we've had oil. But not one single private corporation was prepared to establish a Saskatchewan-based company in any one of these resource areas – not one. And so Saskatchewan people put up our money, and they established it for all of us now – Saskatchewan potash company, Saskatchewan oil company and Saskatchewan hard rock mining companies – to help develop Saskatchewan's resources for Saskatchewan people for Saskatchewan's future.

But the PC members opposite, Mr. Speaker, don't want to recognize and acknowledge the Saskatchewan tradition. Instead their privatization play involves their welcome to big business. They say open for big business. And they turn their backs on Saskatchewan working people and Saskatchewan small businesses and Saskatchewan's future. That's what you've just done.

They've sold off Saskatchewan oil and now 75 per cent of the shares are owned by people outside of our province. That's your policy. That's your PC policy. That's PC privatization.

For Saskatchewan people it means lost jobs, lost services and lost control over our future. But I remind the members opposite that there is indeed another way, there's indeed another approach. The made-in-Saskatchewan approach, our tradition of a mixed economy, full opportunities for the three sectors working together – Saskatchewan business, Saskatchewan co-operatives, and where it makes sense, public enterprise.

We have had a history of a practical common sense approach in contrast to the right-wing PC privatization ideology.

Now in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I will wait with some anticipation. I want to see the members opposite stand in their place – I want them to stand in their place and explain to the people of this province why you're selling us out. Explain to the people of the province why it is that you're tampering and you're playing with our future. Those companies, those public assets belong to all of us – all of us.

You won't release any of the details of those private deals, not one. None one detail, with the exception of Weyerhaeuser. Release the SaskCOMP deal. Release the SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation) deal. Release the dental deal, the Highways deal. Release SED Systems deal, release them all.

An Hon. Member: – The deal, the deal, the deal, the deal ...

Ms. Atkinson: – Release the deals.

But you're afraid to do that. If you're such good business people, if you can enter into such hot business deals, release it. Show the people of this province that you are in fact looking after the resources and the assets of the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Moose Jaw South, the following motion:

That this Assembly condemn the Government of Saskatchewan for its present course of privatizing government assets and services such as the school-based children's dental plan and elements of the Department of Highways, when it is clear that these measures will produce neither cost savings to the public nor an improvement in the services provided.

Some Hon. Members: – Hear, hear!

(1530)

Mr. Calvert: – Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I say I'm pleased to rise in the Assembly today to second and to speak in support of the motion just made by the member for Saskatoon Nutana, a motion that calls upon this Assembly to condemn the government opposite for its present course of privatization, or perhaps better said, the selling off of Saskatchewan – selling off of the assets of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to you today that this government has no mandate and no right to be engaged in this sell-off of Saskatchewan. We heard hints of privatization before 1986. But in the campaign of 1986, Mr. Speaker, we did not hear this government, this party opposite, indicate that if returned to office they would begin this plunge into privatization. They have no mandate, and I say no right to be selling off the assets of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this motion deserves the support of members in this House. I believe this present course of privatization deserves to be condemned. But whether this motion passes or fails in this House, this government already stands condemned, already stands condemned by the people of Saskatchewan for the sell-off of our province, Mr. Speaker.

I want to focus my remarks this afternoon around two very specific examples that we've seen of privatization. Two example that clearly indicate the folly of this course and the tragic results of what this government is undertaking.

First I wish to focus on, Mr. Speaker, is the privatization, the sell-off, the sell-out of Saskatchewan Minerals. Now, Mr. Speaker, because Saskatchewan Minerals has been a relatively small corporation in our province, because Saskatchewan Minerals is involved in only a limited number of Saskatchewan communities and has employed a limited number of Saskatchewan people, the sell-off, the sell-out, the give-away of Sask Minerals has not really generated a lot of public attention, which is of course what this government hoped would happen, Mr. Speaker. And yet in many ways the sell-off of Sask Minerals in Chaplin and Fox Valley and Carrot River, in many ways this sell-off tells the whole tale of privatization, Mr. Speaker.

Sask Minerals was founded in this province in the last 1940s. The would make it one of, if not the oldest of the corporations owned by the people of Saskatchewan – by the people of Saskatchewan including the minister opposite, including yourself, Mr. Speaker, myself, our families, our neighbours, our parents. Sask Minerals was owned by we, the people, of this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, with the exception of one of those 40 years of operation in this province, our company, Sask Minerals, demonstrated and showed a profit in every one of its 40 years with the exception of one. Year after year after year, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan Minerals showed a profit and returned that profit to its owners, returned that profit in dividends to the people of Saskatchewan, year after year after year.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you and I and our families and all of the people of this province shared in those dividends. We saw those dividends in better hospitals and better schools and better roads. We saw those dividends in balanced provincial budgets. We saw those dividends in lower taxes in this province.

For 40 years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan Minerals, year after year after year, showed a profit, and we, the people of Saskatchewan, benefitted. We received the dividends.

And not incidentally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over that course of time this small corporation paid its fair share of royalties to the provincial treasury. Not incidentally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this corporation provided long-term, stable employment in those communities where it's located. Not incidentally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over those 40 years this small corporation was the life-blood of the community of Chaplin and Fox Valley, and contributed to those local economies and those local treasuries with grants in lieu of taxes. And in addition to all of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this corporation provided millions and millions and millions of dollars of dividends to the people of Saskatchewan.

Let me just say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this success story in Sask Minerals is due in large part to the men and women who have served on those boards of Sask Minerals, due in part to the men and women who have served in management of Sask Minerals, and due in large part to the men and women who have given of their labour in years and years of work for Sask Minerals.

Then along came this government – along came this government with its friends from the Fraser Institute and its advisers from Margaret Thatcher in Great Britain. Along came this government with its ideology of privatization, and they turned their gaze on Sask Minerals. And I'll tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was a sad day for Sask Minerals and a sad day for the people of this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government promised, promised there would be consultation before privatization, This government says there's going to be public participation. And this government says these moves will be in the public interest.

Well it's obvious now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, looking at the privatization, the sell-off of Sask Minerals, that their commitment to consultation is simply bogus. It's obvious now after we see the sell-off of Sask Minerals that their euphemism of public participation is nothing but a sad joke. And it's obvious now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with the sell-off of Sask Minerals that those who are benefitting are not the people of Saskatchewan but their corporate friends from eastern Canada.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when it comes to privatization, this government promised us consultation. Well I'll tell you, they have no more interest in consultation with the people of Saskatchewan than fly through the air.

And that sell-off of Saskatchewan Minerals is the perfect example. On March 19, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on March 19 the minister responsible for privatization over there says to the province, we want to consult. He wants to consult. He's quoted in the press of this province as saying that the sale of Sask Minerals is being considered but that no final decision has been made. He wants to consult with the people of Saskatchewan. He's quoted as having said, "We want to see an adequate opportunity for consultation and discussion with the people affected." That was on March 19.

March 24 this same minister flies out to Chaplin, spends about two hours with the workers and the townspeople of Chaplin. Was he there to consult? No. He was there to announce that the sale, the sell-off of Sask Minerals was imminent.

Did he invite the workers at Sask Minerals to participate? What do you think, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Did he invite them? He said he would. No. No invitation to participate. Did he ask the workers in Sask

Minerals and the townspeople gathered that day, did he ask them if they thought this was a good idea? No, just flew in and announced, the sale is imminent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's this government's definition of consultation. Four days later, the sale of Sask Minerals is announced. While this government was busy promising consultation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the ink was drying on the deal.

This government doesn't consult with the people of Saskatchewan; it insults the people of Saskatchewan; it insults the communities of Saskatchewan; it insults the workers of Saskatchewan; it insults the wishes of the people of Saskatchewan; it insults the creativity and the ability of Saskatchewan people. Without a mandate, without the right, it signs a secret deal with its corporate friends from eastern Canada to sell off assets that belong to all of us – that belong to all us.

And what did they ... Why? Why, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Why would they do this? They do it for a quick bit of cash. This cash-starved government will sell off anything for a quick bit of cash. I'll tell you, this is PC privatization, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is PC privatization: the privileged, they prosper, and the people, they pay. They pay, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

You might be interested, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on just how much we got for Sask Minerals, just how much we received, just how much their corporate friends from eastern Canada were willing to put up for our corporation. Well I'll tell you how much we got, Mr. Speaker. For the sale of Sask Minerals, we received just enough money to pay the interest on the public debt this government created; just enough money to pay the interest payments alone on the public debt for about two and a half weeks. For about two and a half weeks.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we took the money that – and I hope we received the money; I'm not sure of that – but if we took that money and started on March 28, the day the sale was announced, if we took that money on March 28 and started applying it to the interest payments and the public debt, that money was all gone about the middle of April. Forty years of building, 40 years of contributing dividends to the economy and the people of Saskatchewan gone in about two and a half weeks.

And where are those dividends going now, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Where are they going now? Well they're no longer coming to the treasury of the province of Saskatchewan. They're going straight out of the pocket-books of Saskatchewan people and into the corporate bank accounts in Montreal and Toronto. They're going right out of the hospital budgets and the school budgets and the road budgets and grants to towns and villages, right into the bank accounts of the corporate shareholders, and this government calls that public participation. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I call it the sell-off of Saskatchewan, the sell-off of our children's heritage for a quick bit of cash to feed a cash-starved government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: – And that's PC privatization in a nutshell, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's PC privatization in a nutshell. You see, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, and the prosperous, they prosper more, and the people, the people of this province, get the tab. The people are asked to pay.

And so is it any wonder I ask, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is it any wonder that the people of Saskatchewan want rid of Margaret Thatcher's advisers, and they want rid of the Fraser Institute in this province, but most of all, they want rid of this government with their priority in privatization.

Mr. Speaker, the other area that I would like to address today affects a much larger number of people in our province, thousands of Saskatchewan residents, if not hundreds of thousands of Saskatchewan people, and Saskatchewan families are being affected by this government's decision to privatize our parks, the privatization of our parks. And this one for me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, comes very close to home and very close to the community that I'm privileged to represent in this House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we in this province have believed, and many of us still do believe, that our park lands and our public parks are a heritage. We have believed, and many of us still believe, that our parks are a heritage, in many cases a heritage which we have received from those who have gone before us, from the pioneers of this land; and in every case, a heritage that we hold in trust for our children and grandchildren and generations yet unborn.

We have believed that our parks are a heritage to both preserve and to show-case the natural beauty of this province, to both preserve and to show-case the natural resources of this province, including its wildlife and its water-fowl.

We've believed that the parks in our province should be an oasis, an oasis of recreation and re-creation and relaxation; a place for individuals and families to go and to holiday and to enjoy and to experience the natural beauty of our province, and to come away refreshed.

We have believed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that parks are for people, first of all ...

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1545)

Mr. Calvert: – And then along came this government – along came this government, Mr. Speaker, this government for whom the almighty dollar is king, for whom the almighty dollar is supreme, this government for whom profit matters above all – and so they bring that philosophy to our parks, they bring the philosophy that the parks must pay.

And I guess we shouldn't have been surprised to see their privatization philosophy turned onto our parks. It's been a little bit insidious, I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this privatization of our parks. There's been a little bit here and a little bit there, a little bit here and a little bit there, but it's beginning to pile up. It's beginning to pile up, and we're beginning to see the results, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So what has the privatization of our parks meant? What has the privatization of our parks meant? Well first of all, it's meant whether we, the people of Saskatchewan, desire it or not, our parks are becoming more and more and more commercialized, more in the line of amusement parks than natural parks.

Secondly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's meant very clearly that environmental concerns and environmental protection within our parks now plays second fiddle to the desire for profit to the private developers. It has meant, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that some of the profitable operations contained in our parks – and here I refer to the things like golf courses and rental accommodation – we've seen almost all of those now turned over to the private sector. And what that has meant, in every case, are increased fees – increased green fees, increased fees for rental accommodation, increased ski slope fees – they've all taken dramatic jumps, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The privatization of our parks has meant the firing, the termination, or in other cases the demotion of skilled and experienced park workers, and they're being replaced by the friends of the private developers. And what it's meant, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that we've seen literally millions and millions of dollars of public assets placed into the hands of a few for the profit of the few. That's what the privatization of our parks has meant.

And while this privatization has been going on, we know what's happened to gate fees in our provincial parks – up 30 per cent last year. We've seen the camping fees in our provincial parks go up 80 per cent in the last year. We've seen the fees for swimming lessons go up 150 per cent in the last year, and we've seen entry fees to the swimming pools go up 300 per cent in the last year.

That's PC privatization, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So the privileged, you see, they prosper, and the people they pay. And we're seeing the parks, the natural and beautiful parks of Saskatchewan, turned into parks for profit.

You know, I'm just a little bit reminded, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of the Joni Mitchell, the Saskatchewan artist, and her song "Big Yellow Taxi." Do you remember that? Do you remember that song? You don't remember it? Maybe you're too young, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Well let me quote Joni Mitchell. I think this quote ought to be heard in Saskatchewan these days when we look at what's happening to our parks. She sang:

Don't it always seem to go, that you don't know
what you've got till it's gone;
They paved paradise and put up a parking lot ...

And that's what we're seeing done to the parks of Saskatchewan. This past week, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the privatization of our provincial parks came very close to home for me with the turning over of the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park to private interests.

And I'll tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I observe with a certain amount of sadness the fact that that proud wheat sheaf symbol that until a week ago was on the entry gate to the Moose Jaw Wild animal Park, that symbol of our province, it saddens me to say that symbol has been painted over – obliterated. That symbol for me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, represented the years and the years of building that has gone into that park. It represented for me the family who initially donated the land for the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park. It symbolized for me the hours and hours of volunteer, individual labour put into that park by individuals I could name, who did it not for profit, but who did it for the love of the park, for the love of the animals, and for the love of the community I represent, and the love of this province.

That wheat sheaf symbol represented for me all the years of volunteer labour put into that park by service club members, primarily the Lions club. It represented for me the contribution made to that park by the people of Moose Jaw through the city of Moose Jaw. It represented for me the contribution we made to that park as a people of Saskatchewan throughout the 1970s, when substantial amounts of public moneys were expended there to make that park first class, a first-class park of its kind, a first-class attraction for Moose Jaw and for this province.

And now all of that, all of that labour and all of that love ha been put into the hands of a few so that they might make a profit. You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, now the dollar is king in this province. And I know the people in my community, and I'm sure people across the province, are asking themselves, well, now

what might be sacrificed in search of that almighty dollar? What might be sacrificed in search of a profit?

Well we know already that workers have been sacrificed. We know already that workers who have given years and years of their lives to that park have been terminated and offered vague promises of other jobs elsewhere.

We wonder, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about accessibility. And the headline that I read in the local newspaper says that wildlife park is opening but prices are going to be higher. The first thing that's happened are higher gate fees. Are we creating here, and in other parks in our province, playgrounds for the middle class and the rich?

In the search for profit, in the search for that almighty dollar, are we going to turn our provincial parks, and this park in Moose Jaw, from an oasis of natural beauty into some kind of an amusement park? And what about the animals? Will this park remain a refuge for the injured bird, the injured animal?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government didn't even consider the options when it came to the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park. It turned up its nose at public opinion in the city of Moose Jaw. It didn't look seriously, in my judgement, at the offer that was put forward by the city of Moose Jaw. And now, for whatever reason, it doesn't want to release the details of the lease that it has signed. It's PC privatization, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The dollar reigns supreme.

And so just to come to a conclusion, I would like to read to the House a few sentences from a letter that was sent to the minister responsible for Parks, with a copy to me, a letter sent actually by a good friend of mine who happens to be a medical doctor of long standing in the city of Moose Jaw, and I may say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the few members of my constituency who had a Progressive Conservative sign on his lawn in the last election.

He wrote this letter to the Minister of Parks, some quotes. He said:

However, I have been concerned about recent trends to privatize the provincial parks and tourist camps and, in particular, the Moose Jaw Wild Animal Park. I personally feel that the park system in this province is second to none. I've had the opportunity over the years to visit several of our parks and campgrounds, as well as in our neighbouring provinces and states, and found that ours do not need to take a back set to any.

When referring to privatization, parks and campgrounds come in a similar category as art centres, auditoriums, areas, football and baseball parks, requiring municipal and government financial backing. They do not operate without this kind of support. I realize that the economic situation in our province is tight, like everywhere else. However, to promote tourism on one hand, and to suggest privatizing our parks on the other, is not logical thinking. (And he says) There is more to living than making the almighty dollar.

There's more to living, Mr. Deputy Speaker, than making the almighty dollar. And yet for that almighty dollar, this government will do almost anything; they will sell off almost anything – perhaps everything, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

They've bankrupted this province in their six-to-seven years. They refuse to listen to the will of Saskatchewan people, and they're selling off our future. They're selling off the assets that rightfully belong to our children and grandchildren and generations yet unborn.

And so I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this motion deserves to be passed in this House because it reflects the will of Saskatchewan people. But I say again, even if it is not, even if this motion which would condemn this government for its moves in privatization is not passed today, I tell you, this government already does stand condemned in the public eye.

And some day, some day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of this province will have their opportunity to express that condemnation as did the people of Elphinstone and Eastview short days ago. And then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will begin the process of rebuilding this province and re-creating a society where people, and not profit, comes first.

So I'm pleased, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to second the motion made by the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muller: – Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I enter this debate with a great deal of interest. I find it rather ironic that the NDP opposition in this Assembly would oppose public participation. In Australia, the Labour government has brought about some very successful privatization, or public participation ventures. France, where they've just re-elected their Socialist president, Mitterrand, in that nation they, too, have success with public participation.

The NDP opposition has failed to realize that public participation cuts across all political boundaries. Liberal, Socialist, Communist, and Conservative governments in all parts of the world are engaged in public participation. Yet here in Saskatchewan, the NDP opposition remains out of touch with reality, and we'll get into that a little later in my comments. That is proven by the negative resolution opposing public participation that has been introduced by the member from Saskatoon Nutana. Obviously the opposition is against economic diversification and prosperity for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's Progressive Conservative government has the foresight and leadership to bring about public participation in our province.

I wish to commend the government for establishing a Department of Public Participation, the first of its kind in North America. I believe that public participation has many potential economic benefits for the people of our province. The public participation program will offer all Saskatchewan people the opportunity to share in the growth of the province and the economy by investing directly in Saskatchewan.

The sale of SaskPower bonds is a good example of the positive benefits of public participation. SaskPower bonds provided a new innovative way of raising capital. For the record, I would like to point out that these bonds raised a total of \$297.5 million for the corporation to fund and expand their operations. And I'll just stop there for a minute.

When the former government built power dams or expanded their family of Crown corporations, where did they go for their money? They went to New York and borrowed the money and sent the interest over there. Why not borrow the money here at home from our people right here and pay the interest back, pay the interest back to the people of Saskatchewan, and they pay tax on that interest. It's an income for

them. So we might as well borrow the money in Saskatchewan rather than New York. I mean, they've borrowed money from major banks for years. And I'm going to comment a little further on that and give the member from Saskatoon Nutana a little lesson in finance. And she certainly needs it.

Yet the opposition wants to criticize and oppose public participation. Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the people of Saskatchewan the SaskPower bonds provided a new avenue of investment. The same can be said of the public share offering of Saskoil which raised \$110 million. I would like to note that at the time of issuing, 89 per cent of the common shares and 87 per cent of the preferred shares were held by Saskatchewan residents. Yes, public participation is working and it's working for the benefit of Saskatchewan people.

Take a look at the example of WESTBRIDGE, and SaskCOMP union favoured the merger. All the jobs are secure, It is now the largest computer service company in western Canada. It's based right here in Regina. That merger is expected to create 250 more jobs, mostly in Saskatchewan. Yet the NDP opposition is against this. They, the NDP, do not want to see any public participation initiatives in this province.

(1600)

Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear that the public participation is more than privatization. Public participation is the Saskatchewan way of building, protecting, and diversifying our economy. It's based on a broad public consultation that will provide greater opportunity and financial flexibility for the public and our Crown corporations.

An Hon. Member: – You're digging a hole, boy.

Mr. Muller: – I'll talk to the member from Saskatoon Nutana about the hole she dug about profits in our Crown corporations, in just a few moments.

It will renew accountability in the public sector, which in turn will motivate a more productive delivery of public services. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a known fact that Saskatchewan has the highest personal savings rate per capita in Canada, a total personal savings in excess of \$2.6 billion. Public participation will allow Saskatchewan men and women to invest their savings here in Saskatchewan, as they did in the Power bonds, rather than borrowing the money from New York.

This will work toward the growth of the Saskatchewan economy. Greater financial flexibility for the Crown corporations will mean that they no longer will only have taxpayers and the banks to draw upon to raise capital. In other words, public participation will place less of a burden on the Saskatchewan taxpayers.

And I have to stop there for a moment and talk about mandates. The member from Moose Jaw talked about, we had no mandate for public participation. Prior to the purchase, or the forced purchase of the Saskatchewan potash mines, what kind of a mandate did the former Blakeney government have?

They went to the people, they got elected, and then they told them that they were going to buy ... forced purchase of the potash mines. That's the kind of way ... They never released any information. They talk about holding back information. Well they waited till right after the election, never said anything about the forced purchase of the potash mines and ... (inaudible interjection) ... Yes, I know a little bit about history, too. And my family background, some of my history ... I come from a CCF background, but

when the NDP ... when they changed to the NDP, our family walked away from them because ... actually the NDP walked away from us, we didn't walk away from them. They just tried to ram everything down our throats. Everything that looked good, they wanted to make it into a public Crown corporation.

An Hon. Member: – Did you give up your card?

Mr. Muller: – No, I was fortunate enough that I was young enough that I never really did buy an NDP card. My folks smartened up long before I was old enough to vote. But anyway, I guess I'm getting off of the motion a bit, but ... and I see the Deputy Speaker kind of looking at me.

The family of Crown corporations – state control, state ownership was the order of the day during the NDP years. Land bank was a classic, for example, the state controlled by the NDP – land bank. It reached the point in Saskatchewan under the NDP where we could not even go to a movie theatre without seeing the propaganda of the family of Crown corporations.

The NDP still cling to that concept, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is why they are so opposed to public participation. The NDP wants the Saskatchewan public to believe that public participation is an ideology, is ideological. This is not the case.

As I stated in my opening remarks, throughout the world governments of all political stripes have developed new approaches towards the delivery of public services and the ownership of Crown assets. Over a hundred countries as diverse as China and Australia, Great Britain, France, Sweden, New Zealand, have all moved to public participation of one sort or another.

Mr. Speaker, Canadian provinces such as Quebec, Manitoba, British Columbia, Newfoundland, Alberta, as well as the federal government, are examining public policy options in this area. I will be a leader again.

Mr. Speaker, to date, Saskatchewan's public participation program has brought substantial new investment and economic activity into our province. I've talked about the WESTBRIDGE Computer Corporation. Let's take a look at another successful example of public participation. Let's look at Weyerhaeuser. Weyerhaeuser – this is where I want to give the member from Saskatoon Nutana and the member from Moose Jaw a little lesson in finances.

They talked about the 1981 profit that PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp Company) made. PAPCO put \$24 million – \$24 million – into general fund in 1981. I mean, that sounds like a pretty substantial profit, you know. But they talk about not telling the people everything, or not opening up the books for the people to look at. So anyway, when they bought 70 per cent of PAPCO from Parsons & Whittemore, they did what they called bridge financing. Have you ever heard of bridge financing? They borrowed the money from two banks, from two banks, at 17 per cent interest – 17 per cent interest.

An Hon. Member: – Unprotected.

Mr. Muller: –Unprotected – totally unprotected. The interest payments in 19 ... if they would have made them – they never made any interest or principal payments on the pulp mill – but the interest payments for 1981 alone would have been \$36 million ... (inaudible interjection) ... Well you didn't pay them. You never paid any interest or principal ... (inaudible interjection) ... Well when we finally got elected we had to pay it. You people hadn't.

But this is a \$12 million loss. They called it a \$24 million profit. And, you know, my banker won't accept that kind of balance sheet when I go to borrow money for my farm. It's funny that they can call it \$24 million profit when there's a \$36 million interest payment due, and they feel that that's a profit. How can a \$24 million return on a \$36 million debt be a – it's a \$12 million loss in my books. And they never told the people about it, never told anybody about where they borrowed the money to buy the pulp mill. They borrowed it from the Bank of Montreal and the Bank of Commerce. They borrowed it from those two banks.

So the member from Saskatoon Nutana was saying that we're selling off profitable Crown corporations. And there's a \$12 million loss in one year alone, and they're trying to say that that was a \$24 million profit. I mean, that's real NDP bookkeeping. My banker won't accept it, but those people over there accept it.

Now, here's another lesson that I'd like to ... Since the sale of the Prince Albert Pulp Company to Weyerhaeuser Canada, the people of Saskatchewan have earned \$63 million, compared to a loss in previous years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: – Order. Order. I would ask the member from Saskatoon Nutana who has an opportunity to speak on this subject to not have a constant, running commentary. I do not mind dialogue on an occasional basis, but not a constant commentary please.

Some Hon. Members: – Hear, hear!

Mr. Muller: – Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wish to remind this Assembly that recently Weyerhaeuser Canada presented a cheque for \$30.5 million to the Government of Saskatchewan as the first instalment resulting from the sale of 70 per cent or ... no, we sold 100 per cent of the mill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are two very important points I wish to emphasize with respect to this. One, the 30-point million is new money for Saskatchewan that will be used to build schools and hospitals and roads. This money ... like the member from Moose Jaw was saying that we're selling off things and we won't be able to supply schools and hospitals and roads. Well when you're losing money on something, you're not going to spend much money in schools and hospitals and roads. But this is money that's new money paid to the province of Saskatchewan.

And two, a government corporation that was once a drain on the public treasury is now reaping benefits for our province. And once again I want to remind the Assembly, the NDP opposes public participation.

And the other thing about this pulp mill – and I'm very familiar with the pulp and paper mill because it's located in the seat of Shellbrook-Torch River. I tell you, when you go by there now and see that new paper mill coming up and all the new activity and the new jobs and the way Prince Albert is going ahead, it's really a great thing to see.

If the government had a \$12 million loss every year or \$90,000 a day – it was different losses every year – it certainly would have had a lot of trouble building a paper mill and refining our products here, and that's what this paper is going to do ... (inaudible interjection) ... Oh, we're shipping the paper right out of Prince Albert ... (inaudible interjection) ... The profits, well the profits are going to the people that are working there. We've created – the jobs are there. People of Saskatchewan are working there.

We've certainly got a reforestation program that Weyerhaeuser is looking after, and we're going to have some of the best reforestation that we've had for years and years – better than the NDP ever had over on the east side of our province when they overbuilt that with saw mills and plywood mills and everything else and never did any reforestation over there. And now we're getting into a reforestation program with Weyerhaeuser that will certainly build our forests, not tear them down.

They opposed the sale of PAPCO to Weyerhaeuser. The NDP is against building Saskatchewan's economy. They opposed the new investment and new jobs. The public of Saskatchewan has a right to know that the NDP does not want them to have these economic benefits.

The two members from Prince Albert – one from P.A. and one from P.A.-Duck Lake – said that paper mill will never be built. They were against it. They were opposed to it, and the rumour that they had in the 1986 election campaign – the paper mill won't be built; it's all a sham; fear mongering amongst the people – but now they have been proven wrong, and the paper mill is there. It's going to open, I understand, in June or July, and I wonder if they will attend the opening. I'll probably given them an invitation, I may even given them a ride.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said earlier, public participation is the Saskatchewan way of building our economy. I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I didn't realize you were back. I was so involved in my speech and the interesting part of the financial aspects of Weyerhaeuser that I never noticed the switch in the chair.

By designing programs to meet the individual needs of our province, public participation is our own unique way of building, protecting and diversifying our economy. Mr. Speaker, the role of the Department of Public Participation is to administer the program to ensure that all initiatives respect and protect the interest of the public, government employees, and the economy of the province. Third party, private sector, volunteer, and employee interests, and the ideas, can all contribute toward improved public service and are welcome in the new program.

Mr. Speaker, what we have heard in this Assembly today from the NDP opposition is the rhetoric of doom and gloom. The NDP is locked in a time warp, sadly clinging to the ideas of state control and state ownership. That is why they're so opposed to public participation. I want the public to know that the opposition has no credible alternative to public participation – none whatsoever. It is one thing for them to oppose public participation; it is another for them to have no alternative. It shows the NDP is bankrupt of ideas and policies for building Saskatchewan economy.

Mr. Speaker, public participation is a legitimate and a positive way to build our province's economy. The government sector in Saskatchewan owns billions of dollars in wealth in the form of Crown corporations and other assets. Public participation will utilize these assets more effectively to diversify the economy and to build for the future.

(1615)

I can say with confidence that public participation will provide new investment and ownership opportunities to all Saskatchewan people through widespread bond and share offers, and that's certainly been proven. Every bond issue we've had from SaskPower, we've had to cut them off. People are so interested in investing, they're all over subscribed. They were only open for a few weeks and we had to shut them down. This proves that the people are interested in investing in their own province. They don't want to invest out-of-province. They don't want us to borrow money from New York. They want ...

they've got an interest here. Their roots are here and they want to invest here and that's what they're doing.

We will see new forms of public service delivery involving third-party delivery, contracting out of services on employee companies will all provide new opportunities for growth. The sale of some public assets will create new jobs and new investment.

Mr. Speaker, in continuing our fine tradition of co-operation and co-operative ownership, public participation will place ownership and control of our public services back in the hands of Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to support a government that has the leadership and vision to embark on a program of public participation. I commend the government for establishing a Department of Public Participation. I have every confidence that public participation will build a stronger economy the Saskatchewan way.

Mr. Speaker, I challenge the member for Saskatoon Nutana to withdraw her motion. I invite the NDP to put aside political considerations and support public participation for the future good of Saskatchewan. Join with us in working to secure a prosperous future for all of Saskatchewan men and women.

I say to this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, that public participation is a new turning point for the history of Saskatchewan. Public participation is the new wave of the future. This government, Saskatchewan's Progressive Conservative government is proud of our commitment to public participation.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I remind you, for the public record, that the NDP motion is opposed to public participation and its many benefits for Saskatchewan people.

The record will show that it's the PC government that is strongly leading the way in the field of public participation. And we're proving this by having the first department in Canada. Other provinces, will follow our lead. We're showing them the way, and this isn't the only area we're showing them the way in. They followed our lead in other things, and they'll follow our lead now.

As we all know, we have the strongest Premier in Canada sitting in our front benches right here, and other premiers look toward him for guidance, and this is a very important thing for Saskatchewan.

We have no choice but to reject the motion before us. We must reject the motion because it is against economic growth and progress for our province. It's totally negative.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I once again wish to congratulate and commend the Government of Saskatchewan for all that it's doing to enhance our province through public participation.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to wait for the comments from members opposite, and hopefully they've changed their minds, and they may decide that they're not going to support this motion by the member from Saskatoon Nutana. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: –Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I was going to give the members opposite a chance to speak before I just stood, but ... Being the member's new in the Assembly, I thought I'd give him the

opportunity to bring some of those new ideas that he thought he carried with him. He at least indicated that the other day in the House. But I do congratulate him for being here and I do look forward to those new ideas.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I'm kind of not surprised that we're speaking on this particular motion here this afternoon, the motion of what they so say is, and refer to as, a privatization and a minister of privatization.

Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to you that I find no joke whatsoever of the fact that this government has moved to, and created, an office of Public Participation. I absolutely find no joke or sense of ha-ha, if you will, to the member from Saskatoon Nutana in the way they ... her or even the Leader of the NDP, member from Riversdale, or any of those members over there indicate as to the minister of privatization or the department of privatization. For the public out there, it is public participation, and I think that is exactly the focus of this government.

Mr. Speaker, I have listened to a couple of the members opposite, and they indicated that we did not have the mandate or the right to get into the public participation in this province. Well I have not ever heard anything so ludicrous in my life. Mr. Speaker, I think it was high time in the indication and the trail that we've been cutting in this province has been just exactly that; allowing people in this province to finally be able to participate and help mould this province – help mould it on their initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, I think when we look at the public participation, and look at our youth, and look at the future in this province, I think, Mr. Speaker, you and I can agree that the province of Saskatchewan is unique, is unique and is fruitful with not only human resource but the natural resource – the abundance of human resource and natural resource.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, if we take a look at what we've got around us, and appreciate what we've got around us, we can draw from the personal, that youthfulness, the intellectual being out there that is just waiting and wanting to get into the private sector and work and be successful at it.

What I say to you, Mr. Speaker, is basically when we look at the youth in this province, we only have one alternative, and that is to open this province to everyone.

And as the children come through the school system, those job opportunities have to be there. It is not to set up a wall, a concrete wall, on each side of the east or the west borders or the north or the south borders, Mr. Speaker. We must welcome Canadians to come into the province of Saskatchewan to invest. We must also allow Saskatchewan people to go outside the province of Saskatchewan to invest if that's so their desire. I don't believe in saying, well no, you can't go there, you can't come here, you can't go there, and you can't come here. That's not life, that's not freedom, that's not right at all.

I think, Mr. Speaker, when I hear the members opposite say they don't have a chance to debate public participation in this province, I call them wrong. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, they have all the right in the world to debate this in the public. And I invite those people out in my riding, in Cut Knife-Lloydminster, and I would challenge them to any public debate, Mr. Speaker, in regard to public participation. I would also love to challenge them ...

An Hon. Member: – Do you want to debate, Mike?

Mr. Hopfner: – And the member from Saskatoon Nutana asks: do I want to debate? I say to the member from Saskatoon Nutana that, yes, I will have a debate any time, any place, any where, with you on the particular subject.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that I would like to carry on. I would like to say that, Mr. Speaker, we have a trail that we want to design for the people in this province, a trail that will encourage people to invest here, a trail to encourage people to expand in their businesses, not only large corporate businesses, some kind of swear word or something that the NDP seem to insinuate towards large corporation of some sort.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that this province is made up of small business. Mr. Speaker, as far as I'm concerned in this province, in the province of Saskatchewan big business is small business. It's made up of a horrendous amount of small business. And by us being able to maybe invite one or two larger corporations into this province, well so be it, because maybe some of these smaller businesses cannot cope with the investment that is needed to get into some of this. Like for instance, could a business such as myself as Hopfner Holdings Ltd., be able to invest in an oil field and develop oil? No, I can't afford it and neither can a lot of my businesses down the street from myself.

And I go to North Battleford or anywhere else. Who else in North Battleford would have put in a hog processing plant, bacon processing plan? Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know of anybody who wanted to. The opportunity was there for anybody to do it, but Mr. Pocklington from Gainers came in and invested in Saskatchewan. He has some faith in Saskatchewan. He developed there. He's created 400-plus jobs, and then look at the spin-offs from those jobs.

Public participation: it means the employees can have jobs; employees can participate; employees can feel assured that they have a long-term security in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just indicate to you that when I see across all economies, right across the world, when jobs choose people, that's when there is problems – when jobs choose people. You know when I was a young fellow, Mr. Speaker, I can remember that we could choose the job. We could. It wasn't too hard for me to choose a job when I was a young fella.

But things got more automated and there was a lot more farm help. There was maybe two or three of us would work on the farm, where now with the machinery that the farmers have and stuff like that, they don't need those two, three people; they may need one. So you see that makes people want to move off and move towards the cities or the larger centres and expect to get a job.

But, Mr. Speaker, the member from Saskatoon Nutana mentioned about, oh, that mean, terrible, ugly government that did away with highways and we have poor roads and all this kind of thing. Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to you that her rhetoric is totally wrong. In this province, in the province of Saskatchewan ... (inaudible interjection) ... The member from Saskatoon Nutana is mumbling from her chair again. I sat and listened to you, ma'am, and I would hope and appreciate you would sit and listen to me.

She says that we lost 155 jobs in the public sector. Well maybe 155 jobs that a government didn't have to write a cheque on, but now those people are participating, are competing in the public sector. They're happy, they're content. I'd wish they'd leave them alone, because they are building our roads, Mr. Speaker, they are happy out there. They're happy to be able to know that they're being appreciated.

And she says that the roads are in terrible shape. Well, Mr. Speaker, I must admit there are some roads in terrible shape out there. I'm not going to say every road out there is okay. But I want to tell you why, I want to tell you why. And the member ... and the NDP member at that time, the guy that I happened to beat in the last two elections, was their minister of Highways – was their minister of Highways. And I want to indicate to you that he built a piece of highway, he built a piece of highway the year before an election call – and the members can check this out, the NDP members can check it out – they went down Highway 40, built this highway. And I'll tell you, after the election was over I was called to a meeting, a Highway 40 meeting, and they were asking me to rebuild that portion of the highway again because it was a quick built piece of road that didn't stand up to nothing.

When we build a highway, Mr. Speaker, we're building quality road. It doesn't have to mean miles and miles and miles, but quality, quality, quality, that it'll last and last and last.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say, I want to say without a doubt that when I look and listen at the members opposite, they wish not, they wish not to be reasonable and I don't know why. They wish not to bring into this Assembly some decorum and some ideas. If they say, well, participation if not the ... public participation is not the way, then why don't they tell us what is the way.

You know what, Mr. Speaker, do you know what, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you they don't have nay ideas and they're upset because they never thought of the idea of public participation because it's so well accepted out there you see. So I think if they'd have realized that it was going to be that well accepted that they would have, if they were government at that particular time and they would have come up with the idea, they would have found out how popular it was. But may we all be helped that they won't get there, at least too fast.

The member from Saskatoon Nutana mentioned the dental plan. Well, Mr. Speaker, she can mention the dental plan and the public participation regarding dental plan. I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that in my particular riding, health care has been an ongoing concern from whether it's NDP people or whether it's Liberal people or whether it's Progressive Conservative people. And I think we all agree in health care, and I think we all agree that there's never enough can be done. I think that's right across the board. I don't believe for one moment that one person out there is trying to overdo the other person and whatever. But, Mr. Speaker, when I hear these people coming in and saying well, we did away with dental care, we did not do away with dental care, Mr. Speaker.

I want to indicate to you that in my own riding, in the community of Cut Knife, for instance, if the member from Saskatoon Nutana would just like to travel to Cut Knife, she would see a dentist office in Cut Knife, Saskatchewan now. There's never been a dentist in Cut Knife, Saskatchewan before. Or I should back that up a little bit, I think back about the '20s or the '30s I think one tried to set up there, something like that, but it didn't last. But anyway, beside that, now this guy is here.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to indicate that there's so much that can be said. And I've got much more to say on this topic and would ask to adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

Resolution No. 12 – Plans Needed for Youth Employment and Job Creation

Mr. Goulet: –Mr. Speaker, I will be moving the following motion, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Eastview, at the end of my statement. This is the following motion that I will be moving:

That this Assembly regrets the failure of the Government of Saskatchewan to adequately address the tragic problem of youth unemployment; and further, that this Assembly condemn the provincial government for spending precious money on needless programs like advertising, that should be diverted to job creation and stimulating the economy.

Mr. Speaker, I will be making a short statement on of course the impact of unemployment to the general public and also the youth. I will also then be outlining the factual basis of the statement and also look at not only the facts of unemployment but the facts of job creation, you know, by the PC government in this province. I will then make a summary statement in regards to the motion.

First of all, I would like to start out by looking at the general message that I hear from the PC government every time we stand up for youth or every time we stand up for seniors or we stand up for other people in this province. Every time we stand up beside the people in fighting for jobs or for many other issues, the PC government always says, oh, they're preaching doom and gloom.

I must say at the outset that I'm extremely proud to stand beside the youth. I do not treat it as something negative. I treat it as something extremely positive. When I stand up here and look at the negative policies of this government, it's in a positive way that I stand beside the youth of this province.

I guess the first thing in relation to unemployment is the degree of its effect. Most of the seniors in this province, as they watch their grandchildren growing up, know the meaning of unemployment. They know what it means in regards to the fact that they've experienced it in their own families. They know that unemployment creates tremendous hardships, and it also presents a lot of stress on families. When we hear the PC government talk about families, we know that it is just rhetoric, because as the unemployment rises it has a tremendous impact, a negative impact on families. It leads in many cases to instability at the family level and break-ups. And when we look at that impact, it impacts on the youth and it impacts on the children.

We also know that unemployment from the 1920s period, from the 1915s period – the period during the war, the First World War – getting on to just prior to the Second World War in the great Depression, people knew what unemployment was about. When we look at the modern day phase of unemployment, we know that it not only puts stress on the family, puts stress on the community level, puts stress on the province and the country, but it also puts tremendous stress on the individual.

On a government that talks about individual rights and individual living, it puts tremendous stress; that you know that all the research points that for every 1 per cent rise in unemployment, there's a 4 per cent rise in suicides. There's a 4 per cent rise in suicides for every 1 per cent rise in unemployment. And that's what the research shows. That's what the seniors of this province know. That's what a lot of the people already know in regards to unemployment.

So not only does it wreck families, it also contributes to the issues that face a lot of our youth today. When there is no hope for the future and there is no motivation for getting a job, a lot of people will take their lives. And that suicide question is linked to the question of unemployment.

As I look to this issue, I know that unemployment with the youth is generally a large scale problem in this province. But I want to emphasize a point here, Mr. Speaker. I come from northern Saskatchewan where the unemployment rate is 60 to 80 per cent in a lot of the communities.

And I look at the youth unemployment there, and it goes about 80, 90 per cent. And it's a tremendous stress, not only on the actual youth who can't find a job, but it puts a lot of stress between them and their parents who are at least able to go back to traditional livelihood and be able to find temporary jobs that went from time to time. But there is no jobs for the youth, and it is a very disturbing and devastating experience for a lot of them.

They try and work with their grandparents so that they could have some insight on how to deal with this issue. But the facts of the matter are these: the policies of this government seem to be such that it doesn't have impact on them. It appears that this government does not have the compassion and the caring to be able to listen, to listen to the seniors who know about what unemployment is, and to be able to listen to the youth now that have to face it on a daily basis, those youth that trying to find jobs right now so that they can pay for their education.

Their parents and their grandparents know that education is an important toe-hold to get a job, but they know that only a few of them will get it. There's so many students going looking for jobs, and so few jobs that are out there.

What were the facts of Saskatchewan unemployment? I look at it ... In 1976, when the NDP was in power, we had a 3.9 per cent unemployment rate in Saskatchewan. Today, 10 years later, it was 7.7. Today it is now 9 per cent. Over 45,000 people are out of work in Saskatchewan. We look at a city like Saskatoon – it's 10 to 12 per cent.

When we look at the youth of which this motion points to, we now look that the March figures show that 16 per cent of the youth were unemployed – 16,000. When I look at the long-term period of the past six of ... since 1982 when the PCs got in, 10,000 less jobs for the youth in the province of Saskatchewan, and that's the fact. When I mentioned ... when you look at this in relation to the North – and I talk about the 89 per cent of the unemployment rate – you know the great destruction and the hurt that it causes to our youth. And you know that when they are told to be motivated and to be positive and to be excited about the future, that they know the reality – the reality is that there are not enough jobs for them. The reality is this, that there has been 10,000 less jobs in this province for the youth since the PC government has come in.

(1645)

The question arises, when I talk to the youth, but they say, where is the money going? I say, well it goes to the oil companies, \$1.7 billion. But also, I said, it's spent foolishly, lavishly; it's spent on advertising.

When we look at the advertising budget we know that even in 1984 we already had over a \$15 million budget. Today we are looking at a budget around \$20 million on advertising.

And not only is there a tremendous amount spent on advertising, there is also the point that I made a few weeks ago. There is questionable advertising. Four hundred thousand has been spent on creating a situation in regards to the Sitting Bull ad that I have raised in the legislature before.

When I raised it I recall the minister said, well we made money off it, we made 200,000 off that ad; there is 200,000 more money, advertising dollars coming in. And the point that I related back to the minister was this: well if you look at the ad, there was Al Capone in the ad and there was the issue of another bank robber and so on, and I mentioned to the minister at that point. I said, making money is extremely important. Our Youth are looking for money for these jobs throughout this province, but there are ways of making money that are good for the province and the youth and ways that are not. And I raised the point: I said, Al Capone made a lot of money; he made it out of prostitution; he made it out of robbing banks. But the point that I made, it doesn't make it right.

The advertising dollars that are related into this motion have to be relayed in a positive way, and that was the point that I made. The point that I made is that these advertising dollars could be used elsewhere. We could use it for jobs, for northern youth, jobs for the youth all over Saskatchewan. We could create hundreds and hundreds of jobs. We could create hospitals, jobs in the hospitals, money that could be used to pay for the drug costs that a lot of our youth and our seniors cannot pay for. We could have jobs, you know, to build different sections of the university. We could buy more seats at the university and technical institute levels. We could have money for to build our roads, and so on.

I guess, Mr. Speaker, in summation I would say I would like to condemn the government for its lack of action in the area of job creation for our youth. I would like to say that we stand here positively in support of the youth in their fight for jobs, and I would like the province to start their fight for jobs, and I would like the province to start diverting some of this money for the creation of jobs for our youth, and I will now pass it on to the seconder of the motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: – Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am proud to rise in this Assembly today to second and support the motion of my colleague, the member from Cumberland. I would like to compliment him for his comments on this motion.

I am particularly proud, Mr. Speaker, that my first address in this Assembly should be an issue of such great importance to my constituents, the people of Saskatoon Eastview.

I would like to take a moment, if I might, to thank the people of Eastview for the confidence and trust that they have shown in me, and I will do my best to serve them. And I would also like to compliment the other candidates for their hard work and commitment to their ideals. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: –Mr. Speaker, along with health care ... cuts to health care and education, increased taxes, and government waste and mismanagement, the lack of meaningful job creation came up the most in this by-election. As all members well know, Mr. Speaker, over the past several months I've had the opportunity to note with particular interest and detail the views and concerns of constituents of Saskatoon Eastview.

My constituents have spoken very clearly. Prior to the election campaign and during that campaign, the people of Saskatoon Eastview told me over and over again that they were concerned about the inadequate job opportunities for Saskatchewan young people. For example, there were 6,000 fewer summer jobs in 1987 than there were in 1986. There are 10,000 fewer jobs for youth since 1982 – that is, from 110,000 down to 100,000 today, Mr. Speaker.

This is cause for concern, Mr. Speaker – deep concern. Wherever I went in the constituency, whomever I talked to, whether they were single people, families, students, young people, and even seniors, they were all concerned, Mr. Speaker, about the PC government's failure to provide jobs and opportunities for our young people. The member for Cumberland very ably documented and presented the impact of unemployment on individuals and families.

Small business is concerned about the lack of leadership and predictability from this government. They are telling me, Mr. Speaker, they are telling the PC government opposite, that they feel more than just concern; they feel betrayed. This was confirmed on May 4 loud and clear, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: –Betrayed, Mr. Speaker, by a government that will not even acknowledge the problem, as evidenced by the Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment yesterday. Betrayed by the PC government that may be open for big business, but that has closed the door on Saskatchewan young people.

I look forward, Mr. Speaker, to hearing the remarks of PC members opposite when they enter this debate on the motion before us today. I would hope that their remarks would spare us the rhetoric and stick to the facts, for the facts are clear and plain to see, and they are alarming.

Statistics Canada reports that over the past 12 months, April to April, the number of jobs for Saskatchewan young people has gone down by 1,000. The number of Saskatchewan young people unemployed has increased by 1,000. I hope the members opposite will address that fact.

Statistics Canada also reports that the unemployment rate for Saskatchewan young people now stands at 14.8 per cent, and we know it's 80 or 90 per cent in northern Saskatchewan. Youth unemployment in Saskatchewan, 14.8 per cent; that means that one out of every seven young people in Saskatchewan is unemployed and looking for work. The members opposite may not wish to recognize that, but those are the facts, Mr. Speaker.

It is particularly troubling when we see the PC government's own published statistics showing how Saskatchewan young people are being forced to leave the province. Over the first four months of the last year, the number of young people age 20 to 24 leaving Saskatchewan was more than twice the number of those coming into the province.

In summary, the net out-migration in that 20 to 24 age group of 961 people – 961 young people forced to leave the province, forced to see job opportunities elsewhere, Mr. Speaker, forced out by the failure of the PC policies and the failure of the PC government opposite, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: – Mr. Speaker, the figures I have used here today, these statistics are troubling and alarming. But far more alarming, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that these are not just cold statistics. These are people's lives. For the young people of Saskatchewan it is a question of their lives, their dreams and hopes, their chance to make their contribution to this great province.

But the PC government opposite has offered them neither hope nor help. And I find it particularly distressing, Mr. Speaker, that the provincial government should choose such a time as this, with youth unemployment already tragically high, to actually cut job program funding from the budget. A budget cut last year, a further budget cut this year, altogether a 60 per cent cut in funding for summer jobs in the past two years – another in a string of broken promises, Mr. Speaker.

The members opposite may try and tell us, Mr. Speaker, that these are rough times and they call for tough decisions, tough choices. Well the government has certainly made its choices – the wrong ones, in our view.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: – It is clear to the residents of Saskatoon Eastview, Mr. Speaker, that this government is insensitive, it's arrogant, and it's out of touch with the people of the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: – This government has made a choice to spend millions of dollars on PC government advertising and the choice to cut back on summer jobs programs. They have made the choice to spend \$34,000 a day on empty vacant office space, and a choice to deny hope and opportunity for our young people.

Members opposite call that being negative. I'm not negative, Mr. Speaker, but this government's record does make me angry, believe me – angry about their record on jobs, on health care, on education cuts, on starving children and youth unemployment. Any caring and compassionate person has got to be upset at seeing starving children and youth losing hope, Mr. Speaker.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I say this is a government that has made the wrong choices. In the recent election in Saskatoon Eastview, the voters took the opportunity to send the PC government a message. They sent me here to deliver that message, and I intend to do that. We've been waiting for 10 months, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: – Another record by this government, Mr. Speaker. Voters said that they are disappointed with the government's record. The promise of jobs and prosperity for all has been badly broken. Saskatchewan residents feel betrayed by their government's economic performance, betrayed by its failure to provide jobs and job opportunities for our young people. That message was loud and clear and unequivocal in a Saskatoon Eastview by-election, and in Regina Elphinstone as well, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: – New Democrats have heard that message; I have heard that message. I have been elected to convey that message from the people of Saskatchewan to the PC government. My question remains, Mr. Speaker: will this government listen?

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support the motion put forward by my colleague from Cumberland, and I would urge all members to support it. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: – I have more to say, Mr. Speaker, but I'd like to adjourn the debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:59 p.m.