

March 20/90

EVENING SITTING

MOTION UNDER RULE 39 (continued)

Help for Saskatchewan Farmers

Hon. Mr. Swenson: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to continue with my remarks which I started before the supper break. As I was saying earlier, Mr. Speaker, I think that the gravity of this situation has meant that all things which have happened in the past, as other members in here have said, are not necessarily the answers of the future. But I would like to bring to the attention of members in this House that I and other members of our government have been involved in a long, ongoing process as far as the agricultural sector goes.

You will know well enough, Mr. Speaker, having been part of the agricultural caucus for some period of time, as other members here have been for a number of years, that it has been a very involved process, and not one which, as the Leader of the Opposition would say, that we haven't tried to accomplish certain things.

Rather than go into the numbers as a whole over the entire province, I just thought it would be wise to relate my own constituency over this period of time, and talk about some of these programs that have been in place that have been worked on for various sectors.

In my particular constituency -- and I don't think it's much different than a lot of other large rural ridings in our province -- we've had a number of programs which have been applicable over the last five years. The ACS (Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan) capital loans program in my constituency from 1985 until present has been involved with nearly \$5 million in subsidized loans to farmers to either establish or expand livestock operations or irrigation. I'm fortunate, Mr. Speaker, in that I do have access to water in my riding along Lake Diefenbaker. The ACS cash advance for livestock until present has been 4,867,515 and those are interest-free loans to livestock producers in my riding.

The production loan program, which everyone in this province is familiar with, injected over \$28 million into my particular riding, some of that at 6 per cent. Since, people had the ability to restructure their loans, Mr. Speaker, at nine and three-quarters. In a riding such as mine, that is a very significant amount of money that was applied to the cash input side of farming. My entire riding, when you combine those four particular areas together, had over \$33 million injected into it.

As an aside, the counselling and assistance for farmers which was an initiative of this government, which has provided operating money to farmers in this province of ours when no one else would look at them, between April of 1986 and March of 1989 has put over a million dollars through the hands of farmers in my riding.

So obviously, Mr. Speaker, given the amount of money that's been involved

in this ongoing process, and the fact that the farmers in Thunder Creek are still under a tremendous amount of pressure, tells you and tells members in this legislature and people in the province of Saskatchewan that those other pressures out there, weather-related, and international grain subsidies, have obviously got a lot to do with the situation that agriculture is in today. Because with that kind of money, normally you would have thought many of the agricultural programs would have assisted people into getting their operations on a paying basis, and that is not the case, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's imperative as we talk about this motion that was presented today that we do, as a legislature and as people from all walks of life, farm organizations, put as much pressure as we can on the federal government.

I don't believe that as far as the response to agriculture in western Canada and to western Canada in general that the interest rate policy in this country of ours has been fair and equitable. I don't believe, because inflationary pressures are resulting in downtown Toronto, that the farmer, the business man, and the public at general in Saskatchewan needs to suffer the consequences of those high interest rates.

We had that lesson proven to us in that 1979 through '82 period when interest rates sky-rocketed in this country. We all know the hurt that entailed the people in this province when government failed to address the interest rate question. Much of the hurt that we have seen out there in the last decade resulted from that period of time. I think it's absolutely folly for our federal government . . .

The Speaker: -- Order. It seems that there are a couple of members anxious to get into the debate. They will have the opportunity. At this moment, the Minister of Energy and Mines has the floor. Let us allow him to continue . . .

Hon. Mr. Swenson: -- Mr. Speaker, one of my colleagues has got some guests to introduce, so I would ask leave that he be allowed to do so.

The Speaker: -- Is that the request . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You may proceed.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Martin: -- Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the other members of the House, the 48th Hillside Cub Pack. They are with their two leaders, Dave Black and Shaun Harrison. These are seven Cubs, age eight and nine. We welcome you to the House this evening. I hope you enjoy it for a while.

I'll at the same time congratulate your two leaders who are no doubt teaching you the various ways that Cubs get along in the world. So enjoy yourself here tonight. I ask all members to join me in welcoming you here, and I'll see you out there for pictures.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MOTION UNDER RULE 39 (continued)

Hon. Mr. Swenson: -- I'd like to welcome the Cubs to the legislature, and we're in the midst of an agriculture debate. It's good that all people in our province . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. I'd like to draw to the hon. member's attention that last sitting we had asked all members not to involve our guests in the gallery any way in the debate. I'd like to draw that to your attention, sir.

Hon. Mr. Swenson: -- Thank you for reminding me, Mr. Speaker.

As I was saying earlier, Mr. Speaker, I think it's incumbent that our federal government understand some of the issues that are before us. Wheat has traditionally been a very valuable commodity to Canada. It's been a valuable export commodity which has contributed significantly to the economy of our country. It's one of those products that always gains hard currency for our country, it contributes to the balance of payment deficit that is so important to the economic stability of a particular country, and I think wheat, over the long haul, has been a very significant factor in contributing.

Therefore I think it's incumbent on the federal government, Mr. Speaker, as been identified in the motion presented by the Premier, that issues such as long-term lending policy of the Farm Credit Corporation and the chartered banks is something that definitely should be addressed, and addressing those issues, Mr. Speaker, are better done when everyone in the province puts their shoulder to the wheel.

Obviously the amount of lending that Farm Credit Corporation has done in this province over the last quarter century has been very significant. It has helped many people in the past get their start in agriculture. I believe that it's incumbent that that particular institution has some restructuring and some debt adjustment ability written into it, because our province, with nearly half the farm land in Canada, needs an institution like the Farm Credit Corporation; needs an institution like FCC (Farm Credit Corporation) that will be sensitive to the changes in the world market-place and changes in land prices and the changes that will result in different economic conditions here.

I think that's one reason, Mr. Speaker, that I have a bit of difficulty with the amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition. I don't want to be negative, Mr. Speaker, in addressing that question, but it does set some very stringent time lines that I think might be a little bit, a little bit tough to achieve. And when I see the Leader of the Opposition say that the national farm income stabilization plan must be in place by July 1, I really wonder the seriousness of that particular line, Mr. Speaker, when we realize here in Saskatchewan that there are nine other provinces with agricultural economies in Canada that must work together in designing such a program. Obviously a program such as this will not strictly apply to

Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan is primarily a grain and livestock producing area in Canada with certain needs, wants, of its producers. Other areas in Canada are heavily involved with other types of agriculture. They are basically supply-managed types of agriculture, and I'm sure that the farmers in the rest of Canada would want to have significant input, as they have through their ministerial negotiations, on a national income stabilization plan. And I don't think, in all seriousness, that we here in Saskatchewan could impose such a deadline upon them while those negotiations are ongoing.

And point number eight as proposed in the amendment with the Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan, and a moratorium -- I believe that this issue has been addressed by the Premier in other forms. I think he has said, as he did to SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) recently, that he believes that they should have a significant input into the restructuring which would occur in ACS.

I think it's been said to groups of agricultural producers around this province that, yes, ACS will have to take a leading role in some of the initiatives that you are going to see coming down the road. I think that ACS is one that, because it is a public institution in Saskatchewan, deserves scrutiny by the public of this province. And I think that's why the invitation was extended to SARM to participate in that particular process.

These are farmers, producers in our province who are also elected officials and have a responsibility to the people who elect them to their position. And I think it's a credit that they would be involved in this ACS procedure.

Mr. Speaker, I think that's why it troubled me somewhat, in listening to the Leader of the Opposition in this debate today, that the level of debate was lowered. The fact that when offers are made to people like SARM to participate in this process that they aren't given that opportunity by members opposite. And I would hate to think that the sole reason for what I heard here in this legislature earlier in the day was simply a reversion back to some of the tactics that the members in the past have used when talking about agriculture.

And I think back to the Crow debate in 1982 that so many of us are familiar with, where it was simply a tactic of spreading fear and depression amongst the farm community to try and achieve political ends. And I thought, Mr. Speaker, that the process that was begun in this legislature today was above that type of process. And obviously what I thought I heard coming from members opposite and the fact that this particular amendment came through with these stringent guide-lines attached to it makes me wonder if members opposite are truly serious.

And I would hope that other members opposite, as they get up in their place and enter into this particular debate on something that obviously has a great impact on our province, that they would raise that level of debate, back up, get away from the fear, the tactics that we've known in the past,

and promote the ideas that they as a political party must hear from people around our province that are new, that are innovative, and that can join with us in dealing with the federal government. We as a province, as people, can join together in achieving the things that are outlined in this motion.

(1915)

I believe this motion is responsible, Mr. Speaker. It touches all the bases of the agricultural community in our province. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of pleasure in supporting it. I think it is a very responsible attitude to take, and the Premier has certainly put his best foot forward.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I enter in this debate tonight . . . I just want to follow up first of all by telling this House and the people of Saskatchewan, the farmers, just how incredible it is to see the drivel coming from the members opposite with regards to the spirit of co-operation and being political, when everyone in this province knows that every move this government makes is political -- trying to save their political hide. I mean that's fact. It's been proven over and over again in the last eight years.

And they talk about being non-partisan. Well I tell you, Mr. Speaker, I will be partisan, because I don't want to be part of anything that can be hooked to supporting a government that has let farmers down so badly in the last few years.

And if rhetoric . . . they say we should cut the rhetoric. If rhetoric is me continuing to say that we must have debt restructuring in the forum using ACS to provide long-term low interest rates; if rhetoric is continuing to say that we must have income security programs that are to provide safety nets for agricultural people in this province, then yes, I will continue to use rhetoric, because we have been saying that over and over and over again on this side of the House, and it's not just this side of the House. If you look at the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool policy or any of the policies of the major farm organizations, what are they asking for? They're asking for debt restructuring, a stability program, and a land transfer program -- the three corner-posts of good agricultural policy.

I'm amazed, in light of what the members opposite are saying about consensus co-operation, that they continue, and although they must know that there is a severe problem in rural Saskatchewan, they continue to stand in their places and read what they think is a litany of prosperity given to the people of Saskatchewan by this government, and continue to brag about it.

But, Mr. Speaker, I ask the members: where have they been? Are they closing their eyes and their ears to the problem out there? Are they not aware of the crisis, the stress, the family violence that has been brought upon the farmers of this province simply through government policy? Oh

sure, contributing factors like low grain prices, drought -- those all contribute, but the challenge and the test for a good government is to be able to manage crisis situations. But what we have seen here is a government that not only does not manage the situation but, in fact, promotes destruction of rural farms in this country, in this province. I think that is the biggest hypocrisy that I have ever seen.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, had we not last week written a letter to the Premier asking him to accept the motion from us to ensure the delivery of \$500 million to the hands of the Saskatchewan farmers prior to seeding if we even would be in this debate. I think it's highly possible that this debate simply is a response. They talk about being non-partisan, non-political, and if they were so keen on that, why did they not accept our motion? One step at a time, you attack the problem one step at a time, getting the short-term work done first, and then concluding with long-term policy.

I heard the previous speaker talking about the amendment that we had put forward, and he said one of the problems with the amendment was the time constraints. Can you imagine the time constraints when five years ago the Premier of this province and the Prime Minister were talking about long-term agricultural policy to enable farmers to have a safety net, to enable them to be able to continue farming through difficult times. Five years ago -- and he talks about time restraints in this policy -- well I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House are going to continue to push as long and as hard as we have to in order to jolt these people into realizing that they have to do something different, and that is be honest with the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: -- I also heard the Premier say in his remarks that he was asking us to co-operate, he said, pleading for co-operation from the opposition. Well, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that if you pick up any policy manual from any of the organizations who have been asking for, as I said a few minutes ago, for a long-term policy, safety nets, and restructuring, I think the reverse is quite true. I think it's about time the Premier of this province started co-operating with the people of this province and delivering on very important policies in order that the farmers may be maintained.

I mean, all this rhetoric, it's actually quite funny. I mean, when you're out in the coffee shops in rural Saskatchewan and you hear the response from people . . . I can just imagine what they're saying, you know. And that's just what they will be saying, co-operate. Co-operate? This is the guy that has been bucking the system, telling us that he's going to deliver another amount of money at election time. But he hasn't co-operated one iota with the need and the request of Saskatchewan farmers to have a policy that sustains their way of life on the farm. He hasn't co-operated with debt restructuring, as I said, or income stabilization.

Ask yourself, have there been any moves in the last years of this government -- have there been any moves to use Farm Credit Corporation or

ACS as prime lenders? Have you heard this Premier talk about that? And that is the wish of the majority of the people. Have there been any moves to improve the mandate of the Farm Debt Review Board or the Farm Land Security Board to give them some power; to give them a mandate so that they have some influence to decisions being made in the rural communities? No such moves at all.

Ask yourself if there's been any moves for the repeated calls for income stability, long-term safety net programs where farmers can contribute to a program to ensure themselves a return that will give them the opportunity to continue farming in the years to come.

Ask yourself if there's been any move to facilitate a land transfer program -- and this one I find quite amusing -- because the farm purchase program which the Tory government said was going to be the saviour of land transfer was in for a few years and then done away with. And they really didn't do away with it. They just kind of put it in storage. So actually that program has not been eliminated. It's simply sitting there, and if they want to do something they could reimplement it. I'm not promoting that because there were some problems with that program, but I mean, what I'm saying is they are making no attempt, no attempt to restructure or to help farmers transfer land.

The motion that the government put forward, Mr. Speaker, is a motion that calls upon the federal government to deliver, and that is very important. But what the motion does not consider is the important role the provincial government has to play -- and we have seen year after year in this legislature.

I can recall two or three years ago when The Saskatchewan Farm Land Security Bill came forward and the Minister of Agriculture and other ministers standing up and saying this was going to be the piece of legislation that was going to save Saskatchewan farmers. And there's still clippings from that time where the reporters were saying, well, the Premier says this is going to help farmers to stay on the land. It's going to help them to be able to continue farming. Well that was one let down; it did absolutely nothing to maintain the rural way of life.

Another example I use, Mr. Speaker, is last year. Last year in this legislature we actually forced the government to bring forward agricultural legislation. And when they were cornered and their backs were against the wall . . .

An Hon. Member: -- Oh, give it up.

Mr. Upshall: -- And somebody says, give it up. Check the records. Check the records how in one question period we turned it around and forced this government into bringing forward the legislation.

What did we do? They brought forward the legislation and there was an . . . One of those pieces of legislation was an amendment to the agricultural credit corporation. The amendment to the agricultural credit corporation was again pronounced by this government as being a program that was going

to restructure farm debt, allow farmers to consolidate and to rearrange their finances so that they could continue farming.

I challenge the members opposite to tell me how successful that was. Because I know that program, despite the fact the rhetoric, coming from the Tories, was saying that it was a good program -- farmers now, and I know from my phone calls, to say, what a useless effort; what a useless attempt at trying to restructure debt.

And they want people now to believe they're going to try again this year, because I listened to the throne speech and they said, we're going to review the mandate of ag credit corporation. Well ask yourself why they would do it this year when they didn't do it last year. And ask yourself how serious this government is -- how serious this government is, when after eight years we see farm families still in crisis, and not even an attempt.

Oh yes, every four years, when there's an election coming around federally or provincially, then they make an attempt to pump some money out. When farmers are down on their knees, the money is needed. But what a cruel way to manage a government. And that's the word that I will use often: cruel, cruel government, when it inflicts war on the people of this province. And that's what they're doing.

They've let farmers down on several occasions. The drought payment -- the money was needed, the farmers were expecting it, and what happened? The delivery of that program was so bad that farmers could not believe that any person in government could botch it up so bad.

Oh they were happy to have the money. But they said, how can we continue to support a government who can't even deliver a program? I ask you, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if this government will let Cargill down. I wonder if this government will let Cargill down after they made a deal with them.

An Hon. Member: -- I don't think so.

Mr. Upshall: -- Well they've let down the farmers on several occasions, but I have this funny feeling that Cargill will not be let down. And maybe one of the reasons is that when you look at the 1988 contributions to the Tory party, the top of the list is Cargill, putting in \$15,000. You know, I wonder, I wouldn't want to be presumptuous, but I wonder if that has anything to do with not letting Cargill down, but letting the farmers of Saskatchewan down.

Of course there's a direct relationship, Mr. Speaker, a direct relationship because this government is the friend of big business, and I will get into that in my comments a little later on.

The minister asked for consensus. Now he's going to put together a panel of 100 people called Consensus Saskatchewan. But the question comes over and over and over again: how do you believe this government? How do you trust them, with the history that they have behind them?

And I ask you how they can be trusted, because one example is the method of payment of the transportation subsidies. Now if they're looking for consensus, and the assumption is -- big assumption -- that they're going to act on that consensus, then they could start right now. Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, both agree -- two major bodies of farm groups in this province -- they both agree the method of payment should be continued to be paid to the railroads. Now that's consensus, and if they wanted to prove that they were serious about this consensus business, I challenge the Premier to tomorrow morning make a statement saying that yes, he agrees the method of payment should go to the railways. Do you think that will happen? I somehow doubt it. That's why you can't trust them because the hypocrisy is there. They say, oh, we want consensus because we want to do things right. The one issue they have total consensus on, they will not do things right.

(1930)

The Premier, if he was listening in this province, had consensus on the opposition to the free trade agreement; unanimous, almost, consensus in this province, or a large majority consensus, and that was reflected in the 1988 federal election when very few Tories were elected in this province. The free trade agreement was an issue on which the Premier, if he would have been thinking about consensus in the past, would have acted on it. As we see now, there's a problem with hogs, a problem with the Canadian Wheat Board and durum, but he will not change his mind.

And then there's two-price wheat. There was a large consensus in this province that two-price wheat should be maintained. But no, free trade agreement comes along and two-price wheat has to go. And what does that do? It cuts out \$240 million to the farmers of Saskatchewan every year. Oh, but this kind and gracious Tory government, it put in about \$62 million last year into the pool to replace the 240 million that we didn't get -- very generous. That's why people don't trust you. The members over there know that they're not trusted, and that's why they're trying to push the consensus thing.

And just on the two-price wheat, if you look at your little list of contributors to the Tory party, you find that Nabisco -- and you'll know who Nabisco is; they're into the breakfast cereal business, amongst other things. Nabisco contributed \$102,000 to the Tory party -- \$102,000. Do you think Nabisco is going to get any gain from removal of the two-price wheat system? Probably about 10- or 20- or 100-fold, who knows, but it's very lucrative. So the farmers lost 240 million and Nabisco gains by contributing \$102,000 to the Tory party. That's why people of this province don't trust you. They simply don't trust you.

And the issues go on, Mr. Speaker. The issue of votes in the Canadian Wheat Board -- the poll showed 90 per cent of the people want the Canadian Wheat (Board) as the instrument to sell their grain. The Premier knew that. We continued to push him on the issue. Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and other farm groups continued to push him on the issue. He had consensus. What's happened, all of a sudden? He says now we want consensus, after he has taken the money out of your pockets.

Cash advances are another issue. I was around this province and people in . . . last fall just when the rains came and the quality of the grain was going down in some areas . . . were telling me, well isn't this ironic, just the year we really need cash advances, interest-free cash advances. This government is going to tack some interest on it, and I not only have a poor quality, poor priced grain, but now I'm going to have to pay the interest on the cash advance as well. Some friend of the farmer, some friend of Nabisco, and some friend of Cargill.

Now you line them up. If you just make a little list, draw a line down the middle, and on this side put friends of the Conservative Party and the Premier of this province, and on this side put people who we oppose. Well it's quite a funny little list because on this side you have people like Cargill, James Richardson, Continental, Agra Industries, Nabisco -- those people are all on the list of friends. But the people who he's taking money from are the grain farmers, the dairy farmers, the hog farmers, the feather industry, and all the other farmers of this province. That's a pretty easy list to make. Who are the friends of Grant Devine?

Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: -- I would like to remind the hon. member that -- and I'm sure he's aware and he probably made a mistake with -- we don't use members' names in the House.

Mr. Upshall: -- Yes I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. I apologize for saying the name of the Premier.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is a long, long, long list including fuel rebates, which the Premier and his government went against the wishes of the farmers, where he had consensus to fight Ottawa to retain those fuel rebates; the 30 per cent increase in grain transportation costs last year, where there was full consensus from the people of Saskatchewan, where the Premier went against that consensus.

You know, sometimes you think about the only thing standing behind this Premier and his government are the shadows on the wall, and I wonder why. Because in instance after instance they have let people down. And they stand here in their place -- and this is what really annoys me . . . You know, I don't get annoyed very often but when I'm out in rural Saskatchewan and I see fear on the faces of children when I walk into a farm home in crisis, I'll tell you, I get annoyed because these guys over here stand up in their place and spout the garbage, the rhetorical garbage that they put forward when farm families are suffering in this province. I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, that is hypocrisy of the highest degree.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Premier had consensus and now he comes crying to the people: well I need consensus because I've got myself into such a mess I don't know what to do, so you people have to come and bail me out, so I'm going to listen to you. Didn't listen to them for years and years, thought that government was moving too fast for the people, like we know best, we know best. The Premier was thinking that the farmers out there, they're

just a bunch of farmers and they don't know any different. Well he was wrong and he's being proven wrong right now.

I guess what I say, Mr. Speaker, is the Premier should ask the people. If he wants to build a consensus, the first thing that he must do is ask the people whether they want him in a position to govern and build a consensus. That's the first question. And what he's doing is, he's reading his polls and he's saying that he's so far out of touch with the people of Saskatchewan that he's in big trouble. And so what does he do? He's going to build consensus. He pleads to the people. Well, Mr. Speaker, that simply does not work.

It doesn't work any more because the people have caught on to this game because they know their lives are not improving, their financial situations are not improving. And the biggest thing they know is that this government is trying to save their own political bacon and not trying to solve the agricultural crisis. So farmers are concerned, and it is quite warranted by all the examples that I have given tonight.

In this legislature, when we as an opposition party give the benefit of the doubt to the Premier and his government time after time after time by passing legislation, by passing motions, after a while it just gets to the point where it's laughable.

Now, Mr. Speaker, farmers in this province have received money from the federal government, there's no doubt about that. It was needed and it was appreciated; I have said that often. But while this government now is standing up with its list of demands from Ottawa, shirking its responsibilities in Saskatchewan, if you just look at the issues that this government has not stood up for us on, you'll find that every one of those issues cost Saskatchewan farmers money.

There are several: there's the At and East freight rates, \$40 million; branch line rehab, \$48 million -- these are all cuts; commodity-based loans, \$6 million; Canadian Dairy Commission, \$7 million; crop insurance, \$90 million -- these are federal cuts to agriculture; cash advance, \$27 million -- this is for 1989-90; western grain stabilization levies jumping up, taking \$91 million. Anyway, and the list goes on and on, but if you add them up, you will see a grand total in three years of over a billion dollars -- over a billion dollars that farmers are going to have to come up with because of federal government cuts. Does this Premier stand up and protest? Not one word. Maybe Nabisco told him not to.

And that is not including all the increases from last year -- transportation increases, two-price wheat, fuel rebate coming off this year. Mr. Speaker, the government has a situation they've created whereby they talk about consensus and removing politics from agriculture, but every step of the way they continue to become more political and having more control in the agriculture industry.

Just think of the scenario whereby instead of giving the farmers a decent price for their grain or some security of income so that they could farm and make management decisions on the basis of what they will be getting

projected income, instead of that we have ad hoc programs coming politically timed. We have our policy in Canada whereby it's a cheap food policy if you're on the higher end of the pay scale, but a very expensive food policy if you're on the lower end.

So they give farmers money before an election. They have people starving in some instances; in other instances paying very few dollars for their food. And they're controlling the electorate, or they think they are. Well that game only goes on so long, Mr. Speaker, only goes on so long, because the people are wise to this government. And I think they will, if the government asks them to give them another mandate, I think they'll be very disappointed.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to end up tonight by just supporting this amendment. This amendment, Mr. Speaker, is just an addition to the government's motion, but putting some responsibility on the Government of Saskatchewan. I mean it's fine for them to try to divert the issue saying, well this is a federal problem; it's all federal problem. But it just doesn't work. This government has responsibility and the responsibility is to, as this motion says, that this government, along with the federal government, must execute its responsibility to Saskatchewan farmers -- income stability program, a freeze on foreclosures -- because the situation is so desperate.

I just want to end, Mr. Speaker, by saying that in this session of the legislature, we on this side of the House will continue to keep the people of Saskatchewan aware as they are right now, I believe, but keep reminding them that this government simply cannot be trusted. And if it means rhetoric, as I said, or being partisan, then I will continue to do so. Because there is no way that these guys can get away with what they're doing to the farm families of this province, waging war on their own people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: -- And they have no commitment. And there's a saying that never before has there been so few produce so much for so many for so little. And this government does not support them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Neudorf: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I stand in this legislature this evening to speak about a very important topic; an important topic for all of the people of Saskatchewan, not just the farmers, but everyone that is in this great province of ours. In fact, we as a government feel that this topic is so important that we have pre-empted the traditional throne speech so that this emergency debate could be carried on.

However, Mr. Speaker, I find it just a little bit disconcerting and disappointing that the tone of the two members of the opposition that have spoken so far have opted to become so blatantly political that it is

turning this into a political partisanship kind of a debate. I do think that because of the significance of the topic to the people of Saskatchewan, and that we are in a sense united as a province because of the great demand that is being placed upon the resources of this province, that for this one time we could continue on in at least recognizing the role of the opposition, but at least have a semblance of co-operativeness where we could stand united on such an important issue as this. So from that sense, I guess, Mr. Speaker, it is disappointing.

(1945)

We recognize that as far as the farmers in our province so far have weathered international trade wars and drought, and a whole host of problems, but I would suggest to you that never before have our farmers faced such an accumulation of problems, one upon another upon another so that we are having a triple and a quadruple whammy all at one time as it is.

So on top of the drought, on top of the subsidy wars, they are now also facing interest rates, sky-rocketing interest rates once more which are rising and increasing the costs of production. And it's unfortunate, I think, Mr. Speaker, that the cause of the interest rates are out of the hands of our farmers, they are out of the hands of the provincial government, and I must say, Mr. Speaker, they are direct responsibility of the federal government.

And as a farmer in Saskatchewan, as a local politician in Saskatchewan, I would object to that. I object to having to pay for the inflation rate that is being caused in the East, particularly, let's say, in the area of Toronto or 70 miles around Toronto. That's where the inflation basically is centred in this country of ours, and maybe a little bit in B.C. and Alberta. But basically we are paying a price for the inflation in Ontario, and our farmers, our economy, is being asked to bear the brunt of that. And it is something that, as our Premier suggested during his eloquent address this afternoon, that this is one of the reasons why so many, too many, of our farmers are on that economic slippery slope. So we on the government side of the House will not, will not merely stand by and wait for interest rates to go down. We want to aid our farmers in these tenuous times that we are facing.

We stood by our farmers in the past, and I am glad to say that we will continue to stand by them. And I would simply point to our record to show that our resolve has not been shaken, and that we will be there when the time comes once more. Because we must protect our farmers, Mr. Speaker, as we did in '86 when we established the production loan program, a program which virtually every farmer in Saskatchewan took advantage of, a program announced late in '85 to ensure that producers had access to operating funds to plant their crop. Loans given at 6 per cent -- 6 per cent money, Mr. Speaker -- were made to at least 57,000 farmers in the province . . . 70,000 separate loans actually because very often one loan would go for . . . One farmer would have more than one loan, let's put it that way, because of different lands that they farm. So we provided over 1 billion, \$1.2 billion in low interest loans for our farmers.

Some of our farmers, farm families, found it difficult to make payments on these loans as times did not improve as rapidly as we would have liked to have seen, and so we said, all right, if you cannot make your three-year loan pay-back at 6 per cent, how would 10 years be, 10 years at nine and three-quarters per cent. So we did this and the farmers appreciated it. We were fair, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when we realized the production loan program wasn't enough, we initiated another program through the Government of Canada, and I'm referring to the special grains program, a \$1.1 billion deficiency payment for 1987. Well today, unfortunately we have found ourselves in the position where we are asking for another immediate announcement, an announcement of a minimum of \$900 million to our farm families -- \$500 million to be paid out before spring seeding, and another \$400 million to be paid out later this fall. Because, Mr. Speaker, without cash assistance our province's farmers face a devastating situation. By seeding time, acute shortages will be felt with the cash flow with many, many farmers.

Mr. Speaker, current projections, based upon a normal crop in 1990 -- and this is scary, Mr. Speaker -- based on projections for a normal crop in 1990, we are now expecting that the realized net income will be a negative \$9 million in 1990. An injection of cash is desperately needed before damage to farm operations and rural and urban economies and businesses will continue to take its devastating toll.

Mr. Speaker, the federal and provincial governments have a joint responsibility for Canada's agricultural sector. But the federal government must take responsibility to protect our farmers from the problems created from the international market-place, that were also described very eloquently this afternoon. And that is why we're calling on the federal government to establish a \$1 billion contingency fund to counteract the devastating effect on grain prices caused by those international subsidy wars.

Subsidy wars are creating artificially low prices in the world market, prices at which Saskatchewan is currently competing. When the Premier was in Europe on our trade mission, he addressed this problem with British officials, GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) officials, in an effort to end these insane subsidy wars.

And once again we are reaching out, this time to our federal counterparts. We must apply all possible pressure in our power to the United States, to Europe, to solve this international subsidy war.

We've just heard not too long ago that the United States is again bent on an enhancement program for their export grains, and they're looking at putting on another \$500 million on top of their regular 400, as it were. So they're going to be looking at a \$900 million subsidy to their grain exports, and this is something, Mr. Speaker, that the Saskatchewan farmer has to compete against.

So we're finding that the Saskatchewan treasury is fighting against the

European treasuries, the American treasuries, where we have massive populations with relatively small exports competing against a province like Saskatchewan where we have a relatively small population, and we are -- let us face it, Mr. Speaker -- an exporting province. When you take a look at it, it becomes quite obvious to anyone who wants to take a serious look at it that we are in dire straits as a province if we're going to be thinking that we can compete against these international treasuries. So the federal government has that responsibility. The federal government must come through for us once more.

But the federal government mustn't stop there; it must put on as much pressure as it can right here in Canada as far as our banking situation and our lending institutions are concerned so that they too will take part of the responsibility in the agricultural crisis. Because when you take a look at any mortgage that has been signed over the years, you will find that there are two signatures there: the farmer's signature and the bank's signature. It always takes two to tango, and we're saying it will also take a hit, as it were, by all of those parties involved in order to come to some kind of a resolution.

So for the loans that the banks allowed with interest rates at 20 per cent and 20 per cent plus, they are now going to also have to take some of that responsibility. Because the farmers were stuck at that 20 per cent interest rate. The administration of that time saw fit not to do anything as far as relieving interest rate pressure on the farmers. And many, many farmers tell me as I go around in my constituency and say that period of time, 1979 to '81, was the time when their financial situation began to deteriorate and it was at the root cause of most of their problems that they're facing today. So, Mr. Speaker, we are saying now that the federal government has that responsibility as well to help alleviate that situation.

Saskatchewan farmers, it has been estimated, right now owe a total of \$5.25 billion in debt. I'm not suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that that debt is all bad debt, that it's all in arrears, but it's a tremendous burden that the farmer of Saskatchewan is carrying right now. What appals me the most is the fact that the interest bill for that debt that the Saskatchewan farmer is facing is approximately \$473 million a year -- \$473 million a year just to service that debt, to pay the interest.

The federal government's policy of high interest rates cannot help but aggravate the farm debt problem. The number of lending foreclosure actions against farm land today is five times as high as it was in the 1980s. Many of those . . . Those are statistics, Mr. Speaker, but the statistics begin to hit home when you start putting faces to those statistics, and it's many of them are the farmers in my own area, friends of mine that are being hit, and many of those are in great, grave jeopardy of losing their life's works, losing their farms.

Agricultural lenders today, Mr. Speaker, hold over 850,000 acres of Saskatchewan farm land compared to 121,000 acres just three years ago. In other words, in over a relatively short period of time of seven years . . . or three years, pardon me, those institutions now own seven times as much

land as they did previously, land received by lenders through foreclosures action and other debt settlement negotiations.

So what I'm saying to you, Mr. Speaker, is that we must protect our farmers in tough times, and that is what the resolution that the Premier laid on the table this afternoon is all about.

No other government has done as much for agriculture as this government. That goes without a shadow of doubt. That goes without saying, and I think that statement is something that I would challenge the opposition to go out in rural Saskatchewan and say otherwise.

And I say that because an example of what this government has done is The Farm Land Security Act -- an Act that did provide a moratorium on farm foreclosures; an Act that provided producers with the opportunity for a fair review of their financial status. We provided guarantees for debt consolidation, and operating loans for viable producers through counselling and assistance for farmers program.

Last year our budget approved over \$147 million for the Department of Agriculture and Food. The mandate of the agricultural credit corporation was extended to include a number of initiatives, including refinancing to cover viable farm operations, financing for the home quarter, and necessary farm-related activities. It was extended to include long-term financing to cover the first year's start-up cost.

Last year's budget included \$22 million for agricultural research and development as well as \$7.7 million for irrigation grants to farmers, agriculture biotechnology, food processing, and commercialization. And that was not enough. Our government has extended programs and expanded mandates.

But now, Mr. Speaker, we need the help of the federal government. Without government programs, realized net income has been negative in every year since 1985, with 1990 expected to be the lowest yet. That is a sad commentary on our situation.

This year, the need for special assistance has actually increased. It would be absolutely unreasonable for the federal government to take the position that assistance is not necessary or that it is not forthcoming this year. Our total provincial economy will be affected. It will have a dramatic impact on the remainder of our provincial economy.

The financial crisis in agriculture is felt throughout Saskatchewan, particularly our small businesses, by the small rural communities. Each one of us comes in general, on this side of the House at least, from small rural communities, and I know whereof I speak when I think of the nine or 10 communities in my own constituency and the problems and the troubles that they are experiencing because of general downturn in our economy.

Mr. Speaker, if the federal government comes through this year, it will help our producers, but short-term solutions are not the answer. They address only the immediate crisis, and that is why the federal government

must make a greater commitment -- a commitment to allocate a greater portion of federal resources to the current review and implementation of long-term stability programs in agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, the members on this side of the House understand the agricultural situation in this province. The majority of us are from rural backgrounds. Many of us are active participating farmers. We know what is needed if our farmers are to survive another year of drought, high interest rates, and subsidy wars.

(2000)

And, Mr. Speaker, that is why we are debating this motion. That is why this motion is a central thought, the central theme, the core of what our problem is about and its solution, its immediate solution. And I would hope that the opposition members, in spite of their rhetoric that we hear coming from them, when the time comes to take a look at the central core of this motion, that they will find it in themselves to vote in favour of the motion, never mind the red herrings thrown into the debate by their amendments.

But I hope that they will see to it that yes, sincerely, that this legislature will send a concise definite message to the federal government to assume the responsibility that is rightfully theirs, and indeed inject that cash that is so desperately needed before seeding and also for fall.

And so with that, Mr. Speaker, I will inform you that I cannot support the amendment to the motion, but certainly I will be voting in favour of the motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to add a few words in respect to the motion that has been put forward, and to speak generally on the major crisis that is facing agriculture here in Saskatchewan.

You know, I'm rather amazed that the Premier here in a press release in the March 17 Leader-Post, the Premier suddenly realizes that he has a crisis. He noted that 20,000 farmers, one-third of the entire province, are faced with financial ruin unless they receive immediate cash bail-out of \$500 million.

Well I want to say that the only reason that the Premier is suddenly starting to focus on the problem is that there is the election in the offering. I want to indicate to this House and to the people of Saskatchewan the seriousness of this problem was known many, many months, in fact years ago, because the Premier commissioned a road show of his cabinet ministers and MLA's to take a tour in respect to farm financing. And they did that in the fall of 1987. And they came back and they filed in this legislature a report. And Mr. Speaker, you know what it said? It said that at that time 11 per cent of our farmers were insolvent, 28 per cent were in serious financial problems . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, that's what their report indicated. They also indicated in their

report that one-third of the farmers had or held three-quarters of all farm debt. Now this was in 1987, and suddenly the members across the way are saying, we have a crisis in agriculture. Well I'm going to tell you, the crisis started when you got elected, and it's been proceeding ever since.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: -- Do you remember last year, Mr. Speaker, in the House . . . Many members will be aware. We had a document which was filed, was from the federal farm debt review, and it indicated the plight of farmers throughout Saskatchewan. And it went by RM after RM -- 299 RMs -- and the total number of notices of foreclosure at the bottom, the grand total, out of 62,270 farmers, was 10,132.

Now that's last year. This information was brought to the attention of the members opposite. You know what they did? They followed us around the province as we gave press conferences trying to indicate the seriousness of the agricultural problems in Saskatchewan, and they said, that document isn't accurate because some of the farmers got two notices, and therefore there's not really 10,000 that are going to be foreclosed, there's only 6,000. That is the situation.

So this problem -- let's face it -- is not a problem that came and surfaced this spring. This is a problem that has started as early as 1984-85. And I say to the members opposite, you'll never get away again trying to portray that you're the saviour of agriculture, because if you had any seriousness about you, you would have been acting on it not this year, but last year and the year before, and setting up a long-term stabilization income program for the farmers so that they could make plans.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: -- I want to say this is a very serious crisis. There's no doubt about it -- the social cost to our province, the marital breakdowns, the suicides that are taking place throughout this province as a result of the strain and the stress -- and this government sits idly by with ad hoc programs after ad hoc programs.

And now they say, well there's an election. Boy, we better start saying we're going to save the farmers again. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that ad hoc programs that have been used in the past, while appreciated by the agricultural community, did not address the problem that was there.

And look at the contradiction of the approach that this government is taking. In 1985, when the problem was not nearly as serious, the Premier came forward with \$1.2 billion and some of the members mentioned it: production loan, universal program. And you know what he said? We're going to give it to every farmer, whether he needs it or not, because we're going to reward success. That's what he said.

But what are the farmers going to think about the Premier now? Now he has changed his mind. And I read from the February 27 Leader-Post, farmers most in need must have aid, the Premier indicates. He says the farmers

carrying more than a hundred thousand debt, who make up about one-third of the total farm population that carry 75 per cent of the total farm debt, will be first in line for help.

So I guess that we're asking, could he put forward his figures here? Is that his intention, to take that \$500 million and direct it to those most in need? Or is it going to be a universal program? Which? Farmers would like to know.

You know, I think if the truth were known, that the government opposite are not interested in saving the small farmers. I think the Premier has indicated that when he was at the university, as was referred to by the Leader of the Opposition. Some 80 per cent, he said, were uneconomic, obviously should go -- inefficient.

And I'll tell you, the Royal Bank . . . I read in the article here by the Royal Bank of Canada -- RoyFarm. It's the December 1989 edition, and it says in respect, farmers differ, this article says. And this, in all fairness, is a report that is in the -- refers to a report done by a Dr. Thomas Funk and a J. Hudon of the University of Guelph, but is quoted in this RoyFarm Business Review.

They separate farmers into four groups. First of all, there are the farmers who are on the leading edge of entrepreneurs. There are the progressives, there are the traditionalists, and there are the marginal majority.

It goes on to say here, by contrast, it describes here what the leading edge entrepreneurs are, and what the progressives are, and it says:

By contrast, the marginal majority, which represents 40 per cent of today's farmers, do not use many information services, and are poor managers.

That's what the Royal Bank article indicates.

And that's the position of the government opposite. They are convinced that there are farmers out there that must be driven off because they claim that they're poor managers. And all of a sudden they're concerned about agriculture.

Well I wonder, where was the Premier, and where was the associate minister, where were those farmers on the other side that they claim to be, when the federal government were making massive cuts on agriculture? Where were they when they took off the interest-free cash advances when that was eliminated with farmers in a crisis? Was the Premier standing up and saying to the Prime Minister, the farmers can't afford to be paying interest on cash advances under these economic times? Not a word.

What about taking off the fuel rebate? Was there an outcry here from you farmers, so-called, saying that farmers can't afford to lose the rebate on fuel? Not a word. Crop insurance -- the federal government has cut its share of crop insurance from one-half of the total cost to one-third. Was

there any cry saying that the province . . . under these economic conditions the taxpayers cannot afford to take on that burden? Not a word. Was there anything said when the two-price wheat system was taken out of operation? Not a word. Was there anything said when the transportation subsidy to the west coast for canola was removed? Oh no, we have to do that because of free trade. And now a further imposition is coming on January 1, 1991 with the GST (goods and services tax) and not a word again, not a squeak, from the Minister of Agriculture.

And so I'm saying to you, Mr. Speaker, that what they're doing in here is just an act. Trying once more, they think the farmers are foolish enough to believe them again. They think because they were able to buy the election in 1986 with a \$1.2 billion production loan handed out to everyone, not addressing the problem, but thrown out there . . .

An Hon. Member: -- Hassle-free cash, remember?

Mr. Koskie: -- Right. Hassle-free cash, that's right. And they couldn't win it on that.

Then the Premier got on the telephone in desperation and he said to the Prime Minister, bail me out, I need a billion dollars. That's why that came into effect. It had nothing to do with trying to solve the problem of agriculture. That was a total political move without any consideration of the agricultural scene in Saskatchewan.

Then we saw the biggest farce of any last year. They came into this legislature and they indicate, boy, are we going to help agriculture! And the Premier came in and he refused to bring his legislation forward because the Leader of the Opposition said he was hooked on privatization. And we embarrassed him into bringing his legislation before the House. It was far beyond September before he even brought in the regulations that the farmers knew what was going to be.

(2015)

I'll tell you, this is what they promised last year. Oh, they said, we'll amend ACS, and we're going to restructure loans for farmers. But I'll tell you, if you go out and talk to the farmers, they restructured loans all right. You have to prove that you're not viable in order to go through the debt review, but then when you go to get the loan from ACS for restructuring, you've got to prove that you're viable . As a consequence, nobody is getting the loans for restructuring, or very few -- just rhetoric, just advertising, just image without substance.

And I say, what else did they say they'd do? Oh, they were going to set up a special fund at a low interest rate so that people could purchase their home quarters. Boy, that was a booming success too. It really hit the problem right in the head. And he also promised, in spite of the people's refusal or rejection of the program, he was going to put in an equity financing on a model project. Well he's dropped that -- that's gone -- intergenerational transfer, and nothing has come of that.

All we see here primarily is a desperate Premier now with no real direction, no real intention of saving the family farm and the rural way of life. We see a province who is losing it's population, whose farmers are being driven off the land, and here is a Premier pretending again that he's going to save agriculture.

Well I'll tell you, the people of Saskatchewan won't be fooled twice, because they say, Mr. Premier, you've got money if you wanted to help. Because you found \$390 million for Cargill Grain, the largest corporation in the United States. You found \$20 million for Peter Pocklington; you had no problems. You got a pulp mill that you're building in Meadow Lake -- and I'm not opposed to a pulp mill, but I'll tell you there's a priority and that's our agriculture -- 150 million or more going to be put into it. There's an upgrader in Lloydminster where the federal and the two provincial governments have put in close to a billion dollars, if not more. And I'll tell you the farmers deserve support, not Cargill.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: -- The farmers of Saskatchewan deserve support, not Pocklington. The farmers who built this province need support, not financial barons from Hong Kong in building upgraders.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: -- I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Premier puts into this resolution of \$500 million dollars to be paid out prior to spring. Spring is here. The head of the wheat pool has said the farmers have to know now. How can you make any plans in getting your inputs? How can you make any plans whatsoever? And the Premier refuses today to say that he's got 500 million, or how it's going to be paid out, or when it's likely to come. So what he's doing is seeing how this will ride with the public, if he can buy a shift in the vote. And I'll tell you, this money is going to be put out when the Premier of this province and the cabinet decide that they want to call an election, and that's what it's about.

And then he says, oh, there'll be another \$400 million dollars in the fall. Now is that new money from the federal government, separate and apart from any of the programs which the farmers are contributing to, or are they going to trigger the Western Grain Stabilization program and make money available in that regard?

The farmers want the truth. The farmers want the truth, and they want honesty, and they want direction. No longer can you deceive the people of this province as you have in the past.

I'll tell you that there was going to be no payment in the fall of 1988, no payment whatsoever. But in the desperation they announced that there was going to be a deficiency payment and they needed it, they thought, to win some seats here in Saskatchewan, federally. Well, I'll tell you what the farmers did. The farmers accepted their deficiency payment in '88, but they voted for the New Democratic Party because they believe that the New Democratic Party will fight to bring some stability to agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: -- Yes, there is a crisis and we need to turn our minds to the resolution of it. And if you look at a few of the municipalities, you will see the number or the percentage of farms that are under foreclosure. I just want, for the record, two or three of them: Fillmore 34.8; Moosomin 50 per cent have received notices; west of Regina, 66.4 per cent have received notices of foreclosure. You go to Kamsack area, 48 per cent. You go to Star City, it's 60 per cent. This was the information last year, and now he says there is suddenly . . . just came to his knowledge that there is a crisis.

I say, Mr. Speaker, what we have here again is public relations, and they'll pay a lot of money to package it right to try to deceive the public. But I say again that the people of Saskatchewan will not be fooled again.

I say to the members opposite who will not agree with our amendment, I challenge them to say why the Government of Saskatchewan shouldn't be called upon to contribute in the way in which they can, at least in respect to ACS. I challenge them why we should not include in the resolution that what we want is a long-term income stabilizing program, because without that, these ad hoc programs will not fix the problem in agriculture.

So I say, Mr. Premier, you can try your gamesmanship, you can pretend that you're a friend of the farmers, but I'll tell you, your deception game is over. No one believes you. That's the problem, Mr. Premier, no credibility. Out of touch, incompetent, can't manage the province, and now, you know, he's down on his knees begging financial institutions. Oh, that's the ones that helped to finance his campaign. He's begging them to give him another six months, you know. Be easy on the farmers, you know, because when I get back in I govern for you boys, so he says. That's the story, Mr. Premier.

So I say, Mr. Speaker, I would ask and encourage members opposite, in fact the smiling one there from Weyburn, the one that goes out and listens to people, yes, listens to people. Yes, getting consensus; yes, consensus. Certainly getting consensus all right. I'll tell you the consensus that the people of Saskatchewan have . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: -- I want to close my remarks, Mr. Speaker, and I want to say that there is a growing consensus in this province, and the consensus that is building throughout Saskatchewan is a consensus to get rid of that government, that Premier, that Minister of Agriculture, because they have failed the agricultural community of Saskatchewan, the like of which we have never seen before.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I listened with great interest to the Premier of Saskatchewan this afternoon, along with the Associate Minister of Agriculture, the member from Morse, and our Minister of Energy, the member from Thunder Creek. And the comments that I found most interesting were the comments that came from the Associate Minister of Agriculture and the member from Thunder Creek.

During the Associate Minister of Agriculture's presentation, he posed a number of questions, and obviously those are questions that have been posed in the past. They, no doubt, according to the government, will continue to be posed in the future: questions like, what's going to happen to various financial institutions; is this going to dry up farm credit? -- those kinds of questions.

But, for me, the real question is this: do we want people to continue to live in rural Saskatchewan, or do we not? Do we want farm families in rural Saskatchewan, or do we not? Because if we look at the statistics, the people who are most affected by the farm debt crisis, the farm income crisis, are those farmers that are under the age of 42; those farmers with young children; those farmers whose children go to rural schools; those farmers who support rural businesses, rural services, etc.

Now I know that there are people in Saskatchewan -- and obviously, from some of the remarks that were coming from the three government members that spoke today -- believe that this crisis that has developed in terms of farm debt is something that is the farmers' fault; that somehow they were poor managers; somehow they got into farming at the wrong time; somehow they are the masters of their own misfortune.

And the member from Morse, I believe, talked about those farmers in the 1930s who recall what happened to farmers who had 90 per cent of their debt set aside, and how those farmers resent that fact. Well the economic reality is this, that if we do not do something to restructure farm debt in this province, there will simply be no young farmers living in rural Saskatchewan. We will simply not have farm families running the family farm, but we will move to the corporatization of rural Saskatchewan.

If that is to occur, Mr. Speaker, if that is to occur, we might as well forget rural schools, rural services, because there simply won't be people living in communities to support each other.

Now I was at a nominating meeting the other night in Biggar, a very large nominating meeting, and one of the things that one candidate referred to was the whole area of community and neighbours -- neighbours. Neighbours are very important in this province. Neighbours support each other; neighbours socialize with each other; neighbours come together to build barns that have burned down, houses that have burned down; neighbours rally when there's a problem. That has been the tradition of this province. Those are the values of this province. And one of the things that is starting to happen is that neighbours are starting to get together, because it's not just one farmer that's in difficulty in Saskatchewan, it's not just two farmers, it's many farmers.

The Premier the other night when he spoke on television talked about his own personal situation where some of his family had had to give their land back to the lending institutions. The Premier of Saskatchewan is not the only person that has family members that have had to do that.

In my own particular family, my great-grandfather came to this province in 1903. I am from Irish descent. My family moved to Ontario, then to Minnesota, to the North Dakota's, back to Brandon, Manitoba, and to the family farm which is now farmed by my brother, who's fourth generation. He has three sons; we hope to have a fifth generation family farm. People in my community where I grew up are fourth and fifth generation farmers. Their families came when my family came. They came from the United States via Ontario.

Who are we talking about that's in difficulty in rural Saskatchewan? We're talking about young people, young farmers. And we have two resolutions before us -- or a resolution and an amendment -- and the amendment tries to get at the responsibility of Saskatchewan people, through their Saskatchewan government, that this just isn't a crisis that is the responsibility of the federal government, but this is a crisis that is the responsibility of two levels of government -- the federal government and the provincial government.

(2030)

My family has been talking about a national agricultural strategy in this country for over 25 years. Successive Liberal and Conservative governments have never come to grips for the need for a national agricultural strategy. We have never had a national agricultural policy in this country. And why has that been? Because we have had governments, successive governments in Ottawa and across this country that believe in unbridled capitalism. They believe in the forces of the market-place. Unfortunately, what's happening to Saskatchewan farm families isn't caused by the market-place; it's caused by the intervention of various governments in Europe and the United States who are subsidizing their farmers.

And what do we do? What do we do? We don't come to grips and have a national agricultural strategy to deal with that problem of the Americans and the Europeans, but what we have are governments that will devise programs at appropriate moments to serve their own political purposes, not serve the needs of Saskatchewan farm families or Canadian farmers.

It seems to me that what's important here -- and the Premier today talked about politics; the Minister of Energy talked about politics; the associate minister talked about politics and getting rid of the political rhetoric. Well it seems to me what's needed here is a genuine commitment to Saskatchewan farm families and not a genuine commitment to save the political hides of the present government. That's what's needed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: -- You know, Saskatchewan farmers don't really care who's the

government, Mr. Premier, not . . . I suppose at an intellectual basis they care, but what they care about is whether or not they're going to survive. One of the members talked about 22,000 farmers who have sought off-farm employment because of the economic crises. Those are 22,000 farmers that are replacing 22,000 workers in this province at a time when we have an extremely high unemployment rate.

It seems to me what's needed is not only the contents of the government's resolution that they've put forward today, but the resolution, the amendment that was put forward by my colleagues: a national farm income stabilization program by July 1, 1990.

It's something that people have been asking for, producers have been asking for, for over 30 years. It's something that the Premier of Saskatchewan has talked about for the last five years. It seems to me, in view of the crises that we could have, if there was a political will, that kind of program could be in place by July 1, 1990.

It seems to me that all of the items that have been referred to could be in place by the summer of 1990. It seems to me that we could stop foreclosures of farm land in this province until these measures were put in place, otherwise we will continue to see thousands of Saskatchewan farm families leave their land, or leave their occupation, that being a family farmer.

Now there are some interesting statistics that I think are important to refer to. Farm debt in Saskatchewan has risen from \$3.9 billion in 1982 to \$6 billion. The member from Morse said that it's \$5.5 billion, but I will say it's \$6 billion. The number of farmers that are in legal proceedings with various creditors have increased dramatically. Twenty-five hundred farm families have legal proceedings that have been launched against them by their own provincial lending institution, the agricultural credit corporation -- 2,500.

The amount of farm land that is now not owned by Saskatchewan farmers is phenomenal. The banks are taking possession of farm land at a record pace, Mr. Speaker. In January of 1987, lending institutions had acquired title to 121,000 acres of farm land by way of foreclosures and quitclaims. In February of 1989 that figure had jumped to 628,000 acres with the Farm Credit Corporation accounting for 400,000 acres of Saskatchewan farm land. Over 2.5 million acres of land has changed from the status of owned to rented.

One of the things that has happened that we have to come to grips with is the fact that thousands and thousands of acres of land have been turned back to lending institutions, farmers have entered into short lease arrangements with those lending institutions, and that land is now being sold out from under them. That is land that has been in their family for literally tens and tens of years, dating back to the early 1900s.

Does anybody here have any idea what it's like to have land that belonged to your great-grandfather and your grandfather and your father taken away from you and given back to the lending institutions, and then have that

land sold out from under you? Does anybody understand that? And this government talks about, let's not make this political -- let's not make this political.

Land in this province is something; it is a tradition; it is a value that people have. And this government continues to play politics. They don't want to support the opposition's amendment; they don't want to support a resolution that was brought in here yesterday because of some nebulous reason. And at the same time literally, literally hundreds of farm families are going down the tubes because these people want to get re-elected.

They want to have resolutions introduced at the appropriate moment; they want to have bail-outs introduced at the appropriate moment, but only their appropriate moment when it means that they think they're poised to win the next general election.

Well farm families have had enough of you people. They've had enough of politicians playing games with their lives, and their land, and their work, and their future, and their families. They've had enough of that. They've had eight years of you people -- eight years. We have more people going broke in this province than ever before. We have more land owned by the banks in this province than ever before. We have more farm families leaving the land than ever before.

And these people talk about the policies of the NDP, 10 or 15 or 20 years ago. It is the policies of successive federal Liberal and Conservative governments that have gotten us into this situation. It is the policies of the present Conservative government, here in Saskatchewan, that continues the plight of Saskatchewan farm families, and all I can say is that Saskatchewan people won't forget this.

Five hundred million dollars isn't going to buy them the next provincial election. Five hundred million isn't going to do it because the people of Saskatchewan have decided that it's time for a change. It's time to elect a government that has a genuine commitment to Saskatchewan people, both rural and urban, and it's time to elect a government that has a vision of what rural Saskatchewan should look like, and will look like, once we win the next provincial election.

Those are my comments, Mr. Speaker. I would urge the members opposite not to play silly politics. Vote for the amendment. It is the responsibility of both governments, federal and provincial. We will vote for their amendment, and we would encourage the members opposite to really engage in genuine consensus and let's send this message to Ottawa.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The division bells rang from 8:40 p.m. until 8:44 p.m.

Amendment negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas

Romanow  
Rolfes  
Shillington  
Lingenfelter  
Tchorzewski  
Koskie  
Thompson  
Brockelbank  
Mitchell  
Upshall  
Simard  
Solomon t

Atkinson t  
Anguish t  
Goulet t  
Hagel t  
Pringle t  
Calvert t  
Lautermilch t  
Trew t  
Smart t  
Van Mulligen t  
Koenker t

-- 23 R

Nays

Devine  
Muller  
McLeod  
Hodgins  
Smith  
Lane  
Hepworth  
Hardy  
Kopelchuk  
Martens  
Meiklejohn  
Martin  
Hopfner  
Swenson  
Neudorf

Gerich t  
Klein t  
Pickering t  
Sauder t  
Toth t  
Petersen t  
Wolfe t  
McLaren t  
Baker t  
Swan t  
Johnson t  
Gleim t  
Britton t  
Gardner t  
Saxinger t

-- 30 R

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas

Devine  
Muller  
McLeod  
Hodgins  
Smith  
Lane  
Hepworth  
Hardy  
Kopelchuk  
Martens  
Meiklejohn  
Martin  
Hopfner  
Swenson  
Neudorf  
Gerich  
Klein  
Pickering

Britton t  
Gardner t  
Saxinger t  
Romanow t  
Rolfes t  
Shillington t  
Lingenfelter t  
Tchorzewski t  
Koskie t  
Thompson t  
Brockelbank t  
Mitchell t  
Upshall t  
Simard t  
Solomon t  
Atkinson t  
Anguish t  
Goulet t

Sauder  
Toth  
Petersen  
Wolfe  
McLaren  
Baker  
Swan  
Johnson  
Gleim t

Hagel t  
Pringle t  
Calvert t  
Lautermilch t  
Trew t  
Smart t  
Van Mulligen t  
Koenker t

-- 53 R

Nays

-- 00 R

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Mr. Toth: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I count it an honour and indeed a privilege to stand here in this Legislative Assembly this evening and to address Her Honour's Speech from the Throne, and at the end of my remarks to move an address in reply to that speech.

The speech of the Lieutenant Governor is her second and is, I believe, a very historic speech for a number of reasons. Mr. Speaker, I believe we will find this Speech from the Throne given by Her Honour yesterday is possibly one of the most detailed and specific throne speeches ever delivered by a representative of the Crown. I believe it ushers in the new concept of government and governing. And, Mr. Speaker, it is also the first throne speech in this Legislative Assembly of a new decade.

In responding to the Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Speaker, I would like to deal with all three of these matters. Because it is, in fact, the first throne speech of a new decade, I believe it is appropriate to review the decade we have just completed and to examine how the government and the people of Saskatchewan are positioned for the next century.

Mr. Speaker, each one of us in this Legislative Assembly, and indeed in this province, is aware the decade we have just passed through, the decade of the '80s, has not been easy. In fact, we've faced some very difficult situations. I do not, nor will I, detail here the litany of challenge our people have had to face, but it is useful to make some general reminders.

In 1980 and 1981 Saskatchewan was emerging from a period of unprecedented prosperity. International prices for our commodities were at record high levels. Grain prices were at or near record high values. We as a province had been beneficiaries of the OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) oil embargoes and steep price rises of the early '70s. Economic conditions were excellent, and government revenues were larger than they had ever been before.

But in 1980 and '81 the inheritors of that period of prosperity also

contained within them the seeds of many of our most pressing challenges we face today. Interest rates soared beyond the reach of the average Saskatchewan resident -  
\_ up to 21 and 22 per cent. Land values were out of kilter with the productive capacity of the farms, making expansion difficult. But, Mr. Speaker, at that time borrowing was very easy.

During the recent recess of the Legislative Assembly, I have talked with farm groups, farm families, and individuals. In all of the conversations I have been involved in, everyone has agreed that as we look back it was the high interest rates and high land values that have played a significant role in many of the problems many of the farm families and the individuals in my community, indeed across the province, face today.

The advice of the government of the day was that Saskatchewan was sufficiently diversified and that farmers should make a switch over to continuous or to straight grain. Mr. Speaker, we know how false that statement was. Indeed, the people of Saskatchewan have indicated to me while I have been sitting in the coffee shop or in the farm home, that we must diversify. In Her Majesty's address yesterday, we were told the people of this province feel as well that we must diversify. And let me quote just a paragraph from the throne speech.

People have told my (the) ministers of this province (Her Majesty has indicated that) we must continue to expand and (to) diversify our economy. We must get further away from "having all our eggs in one basket".

As the people of my constituency have indicated, and obviously many of my colleagues have found, people want to see more manufacturing and processing in this province. They understand now that wheat alone is economically unstable.

Mr. Speaker, the combination of these things -- increasing debt loads on inflated land prices, escalated interest rates, and the move away from diversification -- created dire conditions that made the crisis that we face today almost inevitable. And at the same time, the twin devils of inflation and economic stagnation have started their destructive march across this province.

But when we look back, Mr. Speaker, throughout the decade of the 1980s, the people did in fact, despite the difficulties, build a partnership with the government, a partnership that was focused on meeting extraordinary challenges. The emphasis was on building a more diversified economy and on providing basic protections for the people from events beyond their control.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the first major program in this effort was the introduction of a program to provide basic protection for home owners against high interest rates on mortgages with the aim of helping Saskatchewan families keep the homes they had worked so hard to build.

If I recall correctly, Mr. Speaker, that program was introduced with a protection level of thirteen and one-half per cent. As interest rates fell

in the face of a national recession, the level of protection was improved to nine and three-quarter per cent. And recently, under pressure from inflation in Ontario and a difficult high interest policy in Ottawa, the level has again been adjusted to ten and three-quarter per cent.

It is worth noting, Mr. Speaker, that this program at any level of protection is the only such program of its kind in the entire country and one of the very few in the world. And I would also add again, there are many young families, many families on lower incomes in my constituency who have indicated that the home mortgage protection program begun in 1982 has been very beneficial and a real assistance to them as they have purchased and are paying for their home. It is symbolic of the innovation and determination of Saskatchewan people to find new solutions to safeguard the province and its families.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I ask you to keep at the front of your mind the background conditions of the 1980s, and I'll remind you of the words of one of Saskatchewan's former premiers, the Hon. Allan Blakeney, as the province entered these conditions. He said, "The public viewed the government as well-to-do, had lots of money. There was, in fact, no lots of money."

I raise that, Mr. Speaker, not in any way to be particularly partisan, and I fully intend to avoid partisanship remarks, but I raise it as an indication that there was in the beginning of the last decade a pretty universal consensus amongst political leaders, whether they be Liberal, Conservative or New Democrat or Rhinoceros or Social Credit, that money was tight, that revenue was scarce, and that there were tough times ahead for each and every one of us.

It is an important realization for us in this Assembly to keep in mind, as we assess the past and look to the future, that we had low commodity prices, low grain prices, low tax revenues, people leaving the province, government in court over its taxation schemes, and royalty structures in a general economic malaise developing into a full-scale crisis.

But, Mr. Speaker, how did we react? How did we come out of that malaise? Mr. Speaker, we built a consensus, a consensus we called the coalition of common sense. And as I said, one of the first things to emerge from that consensus was the home mortgage protection plan.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we determined as a province to embark on the greatest diversification effort in the history of Saskatchewan. And I would like to comment, Mr. Speaker, on some of the attitudes floating around regarding the so-called megaprojects. In Saskatchewan we have determined that we wish to process more of our resources at home and to preserve for this province the benefits of those resources. And I might add, at a recent meeting with a number of Pool delegates, the consensus around the table there was that we need to be a producer and a manufacturer versus just a hewer of wood. Again, through consultation with people in farm groups, the feeling continues to be we must be more than just hewers of wood.

And the point is, Mr. Speaker, that if you want to turn your pulp into

paper, we must be innovators. Why should we ship our raw product out of the province and give somebody else the jobs rather than producing it here? If you're going to turn pulp into paper, there's only one way to do that, and that's to produce your own paper mill. And we have built a paper mill, and we're all aware of the paper mill going up in Prince Albert. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe the people and the men and women of Prince Albert and the northern part of Saskatchewan are beneficiaries to the job creation and through the work that it creates in the forest industry.

(2100)

Mr. Speaker, if you want to stop shipping your heavy oil out of the province and wish to upgrade it at home, then what do you do? There is only one way of upgrading the product -- that's to build an upgrader. And we're aware of the NewGrade upgrader right here in the city of Regina. If you want to supply your own cable, it requires the building of a cable factory. And if you want to process your natural gas into fertilizer, then you must as well build a plant to process that product, to provide the fertilizer so that the farmers of Saskatchewan can have their own product provided at an economical price.

Mr. Speaker, there is no magic, no magic to diversification, no magic at all. It is quite simple. If we wish these diversifications, then we must build, and some part of that building is going to include large-scale projects that have been called, by some, megaprojects, but by those who find them untasteful.

But let us remember the serious economic backdrop of the 1980s, and let us have a quick assessment of the diversification we have been able to obtain in spite of those conditions.

We have built our own paper mill in Prince Albert. We have built a cable factory in Moose Jaw. We do have a bacon plant now operating in North Battleford; an upgrader in Regina, with one on the way in Lloydminster; a pharmaceutical company in Wolseley; a recreational vehicle company; a tractor manufacturer; a turbine plant; an entire computer industry in Saskatoon; a huge new natural gas exploration and development industry. And Mr. Speaker, there are many, many others.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, when you look back over the last eight years and you look at the amount of manufacturing that has taken place, we have indeed experienced a 600 per cent increase in manufacturing in this province -- 600 per cent during the toughest times possible. And these, Mr. Speaker, are only the directly economic facilities we have built. There is also the entire area of social and public infrastructure that, in spite of the hard times, in spite of reduced government revenues, we have built with a passion.

Mr. Speaker, we have built new hospitals in dozens of communities, and I am proud and grateful that the community of Moosomin, which I represent, recently had a new hospital announced for their community. And I might add, Mr. Speaker, that contrary to some of the suggestions that the announcement was made because there's an election imminently on the

horizon, I have consulted with the Minister of Health on many occasions, and I believe the people in Moosomin, over a period of years, have shown through hard work and commitment and co-operation, I might add, because when I was first approached as an MLA, the community had requested not only a hospital but a new care home. And I just felt that with the economic conditions maybe we should work for one project to start with and work into the next one. So I asked the hospital board and the care home board to decide what they wanted. And guess what, Mr. Speaker! They got together and they decided the hospital was the most important thing they needed at this time. They worked together rather than working as two separate entities.

And Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to say we didn't wait until the eve of an election to announce that hospital, but we announced it almost two years to when the next election needs to be called. Mr. Speaker, an election, we are aware it doesn't have to be called, or we really have to get into one, until October of 1991. So I believe we have treated the people of Saskatchewan and Moosomin fairly by announcing their hospital well in advance.

As well, Mr. Speaker, after years of a moratorium on nursing homes, this province has built well over 2,000 new nursing home beds from the north to the south, from the east to the west. Almost every community has been benefitting because of the construction in nursing home beds across this province.

We, as well, have built dozens of new schools and added to and renovated dozens of others. We have expanded and enhanced our educational system from regional colleges in the towns to satellites in outer space. And let me make a comment about our regional college concept.

I know a number of young people, know a number of young farmers, young working people, who are upgrading their education through the regional college concept. And, Mr. Speaker, I get favourable comments every day. In fact I might add that prior to my election in 1986, and sitting at the table of one farm family, and the lady that happened to be a teacher, she said, why couldn't we get more education out into rural Saskatchewan? Mr. Speaker, this concept has indeed done that, as it brings education, brings university, the opportunity for expansion in university, basically right to your doorstep. It takes away the heavy cost of tuition fees and living accommodations that are needed when you have to move away from home, and I believe more people will take advantage of this concept.

Mr. Speaker, working together with families and men and women across this province, we have constructed community rinks, museums, galleries, and theatres. You see, we have accomplished much in the face of great difficulty. We have done it through partnerships and consensus at every level, from fund raising in the community to government grants.

Mr. Speaker, much of this was made possible because people in Saskatchewan believe that they can do much for themselves if the government would give them a bit of assistance. And, Mr. Speaker, the list could go on and on, and during this debate I'm sure many of my colleagues will add to it.

But I provide this history to inform us in this debate of the fact that facing difficult challenges is not new to the people of Saskatchewan or to the government of this province. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the challenges have intensified, but in their basic character they remain the same. And while the solutions must take new forms at the root, the solutions will still be ones that grow out of the personality of our province and our people.

The Regina upgrader is a good case in point. We have had huge supplies of heavy oil for generations. In fact I'm not sure how many years or for how many decades we've talked of processing that heavy oil. And throughout our history, what have we done? We've continued to ship the raw product out of this province for processing and then to buy it back for our own use. The benefits of jobs and the new wealth accrued to those who processed our product and then sold the upgraded oil, not to the province of Saskatchewan. It was an obvious resource that could bring benefits home if we were able to build the necessary partnership, the necessary consensus to get the job done.

And indeed there are always going to be those who say, don't build that megaproject but do something else instead. Mr. Speaker, it took some time, some hard work, some dedication, but we did go forward and we built a partnership with the co-operatives of the province of Saskatchewan.

And there is no doubt that even with the start-up difficulties that the upgrader has faced, the people of Saskatchewan will indeed benefit from upgrading their own oil. Right across the province there are small businesses that have contracts today and are providing jobs in this province because the upgrader exists. There are employees who would not have jobs, at least not in Saskatchewan, if the upgrader did not exist here in this province.

And this is all because of the result of a partnership between the co-operative movement and the government of Saskatchewan. And that partnership, Mr. Speaker, has extended across the spectrum, particularly within the co-op movement.

Let me look for a minute at Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. Mr. Speaker, I met recently with a number of pool committee members, and as we were sitting and discussing the problems in agriculture, they also mentioned some of the problems they face as a grain-buying and marketing agency. And I complimented them on the fact that they got into the . . . pardon me, they have put themselves into the position where they are beginning to refine their product and market it so that you and I can drive down the street in Regina or Saskatoon, stop at Robin's Donuts, enjoy a cup of coffee and a doughnut, because Saskatchewan Wheat Pool believes they have to diversify.

We see the organization buying into Biggar malt to help diversify the economy and to build a consensus through public participation. Recently, Mr. Speaker, I noticed in The Western Producer of March 15, 1990, not only have they expanded into Biggar malt, but I see they're expanding into British Columbia. Saskatchewan Wheat Pool has decided to buy its way into a better market position through the purchase of two bakery supply

distribution companies in British Columbia. And you would ask why. Well Don Loewen of Sask Wheat Pool says:

However, tougher competition in the B.C. market-place meant a different approach was needed to get better access to the bakery trade there. They couldn't move the product from here to B.C. They found it was easy for them to buy their way into that market-place.

And why would they do that? They did that because they believed they have to expand their company so they can provide a better service for their members, and I believe in the end they're looking at supplying the service to the province.

Lois Loewen (it says) said the purchase fits in with the pool's long-term diversification strategy. In recent years the pool has bought shares in Prairie Malt Limited, Philom Bios Incorporated, a Saskatoon biotechnical company, and in Northco Foods, which owns and sells Robin's Donuts franchises.

So you see, Mr. Speaker, diversification is nothing new. It's not solely for the government of the province of Saskatchewan, but certainly diversification is something that even large businesses can become involved in to make their companies more viable and more productive.

We also see Co-operators Data Services designing and marketing the new health card now penetrating markets around the world. We see the credit unions acting as an energetic distribution system for Power bonds and other public participation instruments, and you can bet, Mr. Speaker, that they will be very much involved in the Community Development Bonds detailed in the throne speech.

And there have been other exercises in consensus building and partnership, whether with employees in WESTBRIDGE to create a state of the art, world class computer facility at the University of Regina, or the employees of Printco to create a new, competitive printing company. The partnerships have been there and they have been real. They have been creating employment and opportunity and conditions that can only be described as economically disastrous. And these partnerships, Mr. Speaker, have been working and, I believe, will continue to work.

But the best partnerships, Mr. Speaker, are those that are built at the local level. And I am particularly pleased with some of the major successes we have had in achieving that objective. The rural development corporations are partnerships in concept and in fact. They consist of a minimum of three municipalities joining together with the government to develop a local consensus, to find local opportunities, and to take advantage of those opportunities to develop their towns and the rural municipalities.

In my constituency alone, there are two RDCs (rural development corporations) that are actively pursuing ways and means of making their communities more viable and progressive. And the program has been gaining greater and greater levels of participation from communities right across

the province.

(2115)

The community economic development program was, and continues to be, another part of the partnership response to the serious economic crisis we face. With membership from the local community, these communities develop plans for the town and put those plans in effect with the active participation of all the townspeople.

And, Mr. Speaker, there are some notable successes for this program, where towns and villages have succeeded in obtaining new businesses, from furniture makers and manufacturers to dental clinics. And I have a few in my constituency.

Again I'll remind you to remember the backdrop to these events. Remember the crisis in agriculture, the rapid decline in government revenues, and the economic war being waged against our province by most of the world. Mr. Speaker, this is not a rosy picture, but I believe it is also not a picture of despair.

And I would like to directly address, Mr. Speaker, the concerns expressed by many people, including those on the benches opposite, about some of the unsuccessful programs. Because we must squarely and reasonably address the unsuccessful as well as the successful. And I say without reservation that members of the opposition or general public have a right to challenge the government on its attempts that we do not produce all that we would hope for.

However, I would suggest it is time to address a new agenda and the new challenges ahead of us. But I could also add that it is not human to admit failure. However, recognition of our mistakes and learning from our mistakes can help each one of us grow and develop personally and corporately.

We may condemn each other in this Assembly for our failures. The opposition may, and I'm probably guessing that we may hear about GigaText a number of times throughout this session, and we as a party could respond and say well, look at what happened with Nabu. But, Mr. Speaker, I do not believe we really want to get into the partisan act of blaming each other for each other's failures. I believe we want to compliment each other for the fact that we have learned from our mistakes and there is nothing inhuman in admitting your mistakes as long as you learn from them.

May I ask this question: is the fact that not all efforts succeed reason enough to say that no effort should be made at all? Would it be fair to surmise that had the Wright brothers failed in their first attempts to fly that we may be as well advanced in aviation as we are today?

Earlier I listed a number of the great successes achieved through our diversification program. And if we were to look at all of the small businesses that have been created directly as a result of the policies of the government and its efforts at building partnerships, I believe that we

would have to conclude that the program must continue.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, no government, regardless of political persuasion, is immune from making mistakes, not this government, not any government, whichever has existed over the period of mankind. But the answer to the mistake is not to attack the entire program, but it's to learn and to continue forward and to build. We must learn from our mistakes and ensure greater controls, and with the help from providence, better predictions can be made as we continue building our province.

The central issue is we should proceed, and we should proceed in the face of the enormous economic challenges we must cope with. The answer is that we must, precisely because of those challenges. Indeed our experience as a province is the unequivocal evidence written large in the 600 per cent increase manufacturing that we must proceed, we must continue to expand, to build, and to diversify. Our experience is that if we do not proceed, our population loss will be greater still, and our economic problems will become much worse.

So, Mr. Speaker, in concluding the first part of my remarks, I suggest that if we survey the past decade, we see that there has been much progress and much success in face of the great hardships we have encountered. I think also we can see that the mistakes that have been made, while important, should not persuade us to give up the goal or to ignore the dream. The lesson, Mr. Speaker, is not one of despair but one of hope and of confidence that even in the worst of economic circumstances we have managed to build, to protect, and to grow.

Now we look to the future with another crisis. As Her Honour said, every time a family loses a farm, young people leave the province, and those are young people in Regina as well as in my community of Moosomin or Kipling or Wawota, Mr. Speaker. And we have indeed entertained a fairly lively debate addressing the agricultural question today.

Mr. Speaker, we face a crisis, as speakers have said before me, in many cases not of our own making, but brought to us in part by some of the federal government policy, and mostly by the attitude of the Americans and the Europeans and the subsidy war that we have been forced into in order to protect the farming communities of this province. And again I say, we must find innovative and cost-effective ways of dealing with that crisis.

In my first few sentences I suggested that the throne speech outlines a new way of governing. And, Mr. Speaker, it is my deep conviction that this new way is the central key to addressing the challenges of today and the next century.

The speech outlines what is being called Consensus Saskatchewan. But the title matters less than the substance, and the substance of this proposal, I believe, is powerful. Already many of my cabinet colleagues have been engaging in an unprecedented effort to gain input directly from the people of this province in designing their individual programs.

Indeed the recent announcements of restraint are almost entirely a product

of those consultations, in what many are saying is going to be a pre-election budget, and we've heard many comments about this. The upcoming budget gives all the indications, I believe, of being the post-election document, bringing with it cuts in some of our favourite programs. I believe this is a dramatic change in Saskatchewan politics, if financial measures that reduce the benefits of every person in the province are heralded as a precursor to an election. And I wish to comment briefly on those measures.

I want, Mr. Speaker, to congratulate the Premier on what can only be seen as exceptional courage and exceptional character in taking the action he did a couple weeks ago, actions and decisions which were, nor will they ever be easy to make at any time.

It is true that many people in the consultation process called for an end to the gas tax rebate and the home program. And, Mr. Speaker, I have found over the past three years as an MLA, many of my constituents indeed telling me that we should never have put the programs into place. We should have put the tax on gasoline because we needed to build an infrastructure of roadways in our province and not worried about a rebate. So, Mr. Speaker, the response the Premier made addressed that question. Indeed many called for the complete elimination of the mortgage protection plan; however, I believe my colleagues made the right decision when they didn't eliminate the program. Even though they added a percentage to it, even today the interest rates at lending institutions are standing in the 14 to 15 per cent. Mr. Speaker, young families could not afford another round of high interest rates, trying to buy their homes.

I remind members of the Assembly that these programs were the very ones upon which the Premier built his first government, the first PC government in this province in a number of years, of 1982. And I can imagine how difficult it was to have announced the programs, and I believe we wrestled long and hard, but then to cancel and to constrain them. This decision, Mr. Speaker, showed political will and tremendous leadership.

And the fact is that while consensus and public input are critical, we will never eliminate the need for strong and effective leadership, leadership that sets out clear policy options for the people of this province; leadership that provides a vision and gives substance to that vision; leadership that not only identifies problems but that has the intelligence, courage, and willingness to send out solutions to the problems and policies to take advantage of the opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to work with such a leader. It is too common in many circles today to reap the harvest of despair, to exploit the loss of the farm or the family farm, or the hurt of small towns; too common to prey on the province's economic misfortune without ever posing an alternative. The challenge, I believe for all of us, is whether we are government employees seeking higher salaries, or politicians seeking power, the challenge is to put forward creative solutions that not only address our own demands but that account for the challenges of the province as a whole; to come up with alternatives that will address our own wants without injury to other members of our society. And that is the other half of the

equation of leadership, Mr. Speaker, consensus building.

It is not good enough for anyone to stand up and say, increase spending in every area that I think is important, but while you're at it, get rid of the deficit. It is not good enough to dismiss the real economic hardship of farm families and towns people and workers laid off in Regina or Saskatoon, or home owners who are faced with higher interest costs. It is not good enough to dismiss all of these people and to say, I want my standard of living to increase regardless of what is happening to my neighbour or to, indeed, the rest of this province, a province that I'm proud to be a member of and to have the privilege of living in, nor is it good enough, Mr. Speaker, to say, well, the government is full of waste and mismanagement. Mr. Speaker, I've heard that for years, and we've all heard that. I believe that's a easy comment to make and to hide behind, but let's look at the reality.

Let me address one of the continuing issues we hear about, and that issue I would like to address at this time is advertising. Advertising is a sensitive political issue, so I will deal with that item. The Premier announced that he has imposed restrictions on government advertising, but I would ask, how far should he go? The big ticket items in advertising budget are easy to isolate. These items, I believe, directly address family and personal concerns.

Let me give you a few examples. The Everyone Wins program -- this advertising addresses the preventative health measures that each one of us are responsible for in order to protect our health program. Major expenditures: we have the Lights On For Life campaign, the fasten your seat-belt campaigns, the campaign against drinking and driving. Each one of these expenditures, Mr. Speaker, address our families and protection of the family. The campaign against illiteracy and the children's reading program, an educational program promoting a greater awareness of reading skills. The Saskatchewan Pension Plan, the first of its kind, and when we look into the future, a real opportunity for Saskatchewan residents to plan for the future. And the tenders for departments and Crowns, the Dial Before You Dig campaigns, and several dozen others. You see, Mr. Speaker, some people may portray government advertising as if it is totally political, but when you look at the facts, you see that all of it serves social policy or, in the case of Crown corporations, corporate policy.

Let me give you another example. Should the government for example go to SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) and say, no more advertising. I'm sure that many of the small businesses in my community that are SGI agents would come running to me and say, what are you doing? Are you trying to destroy my business by not allowing me to advertise when all my competitors are advertising?

So the question has to be asked: how far does a government go? I believe there must be a consensus developed on the answer to this question as with others, but it should not be trivialized that significant internal restraint has been and continues to be exercised.

If I take this back just a couple of sessions, this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, considered measures that involved down-sizing the bureaucracy by some 2,000 government employees, and that was done through attrition and early retirement. It was done compassionately, but it was done.

Other measures include greater accountability for public funds distributed to third parties were also undertaken. And I can add, I'm sure, that many of my colleagues found that this was not an easy decision to make.

Recently the Minister of Finance announced a spending freeze on internal government expenditures, a reduction in cabinet and legislative secretaries' salaries, restrictions on travel and expenses, as well as the restrictions on advertising. I don't know of anyone who enjoys having a reduction in salary, but I believe the move was taken to show that we really were interested in addressing the deficit, realizing the financial difficulty that we face in this province, and the problems that farm families and small-business people and men and women across the province face.

And, Mr. Speaker, I was more than willing to accept that fact of the roll-back in order to help the people of this province. All of this has been done, and it is a real measure of the government's commitment to sound financial management.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, as the budget approaches, more will have to be considered, and the throne speech indicates that indeed more will be done.

But it is too simple to say that the consensus has been, build to diversify this province, should be sacrificed; to say for example that the fertilizer plant should not be built. If we are going to keep that commitment to develop and provide some economic stability for our communities, then we are going to have to compete with other provinces and indeed the world.

And I will not go into the details of the fertilizer plant because I am confident many of my colleagues will. But let me say that the attack on this project, as part of the old politics, it is a piece of ideology when now is a time for abandoning ideology and forging a new consensus to build the future of this great province.

I ask, do we build by standing pat, or do we build by encouraging diversification and job creation by working together with whomever is interested in helping our province by becoming a manufacturer, rather than a supplier of our raw products or a hewer of wood.

Where the hard line socialists of eastern Europe fail is that they do not understand that people want progress much more than they care about ideology. We are all aware of the major election which took place recently in East Germany, and the fact that there was an overwhelming response and vote for the conservative coalition, indicating that the people of East Germany want to begin to develop, they want to throw off the shackles that they've been under for years, and they want to unite with West Germany to form one solid, progressive country again.

And in Saskatchewan too, our people are tired of all the political bickering and the call to philosophy. I run into that every day. The people say it is time, Mr. Speaker, for a new politics, a new consensus. And this throne speech sets out a dramatic departure from past practice in Saskatchewan and possibly in the western world. Not only will public opinion be a constraint on public policy, as it is in any democracy, but the public will be directly involved in the crafting of the policy of their government.

I suspect, Mr. Speaker, that the 100 people talked about in the Speech from the Throne are a very small start to a very large undertaking, and I suggest to my constituents that I will continue to seek their advice, as I have done in the past, to determine what roles they want in this process. Because, Mr. Speaker, one thing that I do pride myself on is the fact that, as the MLA from the Moosomin constituency, I believe I have worked very hard at keeping in contact with my constituents and forcefully bringing their concerns to every level of government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: -- And again, I must thank the Minister of Health for his announcement, made in my constituency, regarding the hospital that the people have been waiting for, not just for eight years, but all the years of the former government, even back into the former Liberal years. It's a long time, and I believe they deserved it.

What I have learned through consultations is that my constituents are ready and eager to be directly involved with the development of new, more open structures. I fully expect a high degree of participation from every community in the riding and indeed from most families in the riding, as I have already seen. We are vitally concerned that our children have opportunities and that our communities are made more secure.

Mr. Speaker, when I talk about the security of communities, the constituents I have met with don't also talk on the basis of losing the family farm, but they go well beyond that and they begin to look at the community environment they live in. They look at the school, they look at the hospital, they look at the care home, they look at the community rink, and they say to themselves that the family farm is not here. Maybe there'll be a business out here, and before long, all of a sudden, you may not need a school because there are no children. You may not need a hospital or you may not need all the beds in your nursing home.

So it is vital that we work together to secure the future of our communities and small farms. We are willing to take a full role in pursuing economic development and in addressing major issues, whether they are to make choices in fiscal responsibility or to devise effective ways of protecting the environment. So I congratulate Her Majesty's government on this particular initiative and express my willingness as an MLA and a citizen of this province to make the effort a great success.

Mr. Speaker, we will address the challenges and create opportunities so

that our children can take advantage of their full potential; so that the economic difficulties we face will not pose a never-ending threat to all that we have built over so many generations; so that we have the best that can be built and build the best that can be imagined.

And just before I end, Mr. Speaker, I want to reflect for a moment on the momentous events in Europe and eastern Europe. For 70 years our relatives and friends in the East bloc have been told, wait, that heaven on earth would come if only they would wait for the government to do it all. And after 70 years of waiting, what is happening? They are rising up and demanding that they have a voice, a voice which we in our province and in our country have enjoyed for so many years.

But we must also reflect on the fact that in the past some groups have been denied that voice. Women for decades didn't have a vote in this country. Aboriginal people were constrained on where they could travel and also were denied a vote. Many of our ethnic communities were shut out of the democratic process. Indeed we have seen religious persecution and exclusion in our own history.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have always come together and challenged ourselves to be more open to include more people and to allow greater individual control over our lives. We have made strides that today in eastern Europe they are barely getting a start on. But all through our history we have known there could be more, and this throne speech is a major step in developing the new politics in Saskatchewan.

As I close, Mr. Speaker, I would like again to quote just a paragraph from the Speech from the Throne read by Her Majesty (Honour) yesterday, and it's this:

Saskatchewan people have always pulled together in times of crisis, and found creative and even unconventional solutions to difficult problems. Together we must face the new challenges of the future with the same sense of hope, conviction and co-operation that has kept Saskatchewan going strong in the past.

And I believe as we work together, Mr. Speaker, government and the people of this province, we indeed will be able to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support this Speech from the Throne, and I would move, seconded by the member for Nipawin:

That a humble address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To Her Honour the Honourable Sylvia Fedoruk, Lieutenant Governor of the province of Saskatchewan.

May it please Your Honour:

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan in session assembled, humbly thank Your

Honour for the gracious speech which Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of this present session.

I so move.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sauder: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to open my remarks by conveying to all present how privileged I feel in having the opportunity to speak today, and how pleased I am to be back here representing the interests of the constituents of Nipawin once again.

I am most honoured to be seconding the motion made by my colleague, the hon. member from Moosomin, and would like to congratulate him on a powerful, important address to the members of this Assembly. At this time, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that all present would also wish to join with me in congratulating Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor on a well delivered and historic Speech from the Throne, and in commending her on the fine job she has done on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan and on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome you, Mr. Speaker, and all of the members of the Assembly back to the House, for what I am confident will be a highly successful and a productive session of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

With respect to the Speech from the Throne, I am sure that the importance of the message and the timeliness of such an address escaped no one. The message put forward yesterday by Her Honour was very powerful indeed. And as was most eloquently stated by my colleague, it does usher in a new concept of government and governing, and is brought to us at a time of great change in our society.

The throne speech continues to recognize and to build on the great diversity of our province, and to build on our strengths as a people and a province. It recognizes the changing times, and offers new ideas and fresh approaches in working with the people in those changing times.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, all of us here have been provided a great opportunity to serve the people of Saskatchewan at this a very crucial time in our history, a time as we head into a new decade and face the changes before us.

We're in the midst of interesting times, Mr. Speaker; difficult, yes, but also challenging times for all the residents of Saskatchewan. But of course, we in Saskatchewan are not alone in facing these types of challenges. We don't have to look very far within our own country -- perhaps the east coast -- who also face an economy rooted in the production of food, the utilization of resources. For them there's been a drought of fish that I'm sure poses equally dramatic challenges for their communities and for their provinces.

Grain farmers across Canada and indeed in all nations that engage in fair

trade, these farmers around the world have been brutally attacked by the international price wars -- the international price wars, as our Premier discussed so well earlier in the debate on the motion on agriculture this afternoon.

(2145)

Mr. Speaker, the absurdity and, frankly, the stupidity of the thinking behind those types of confrontational trade practices are all too evident to us when we look at what is happening in the global grain trade. We look at the changes that are happening in trade and agriculture products world wide. We think of the changes that have happened with subsidies in Europe that have turned that part of the world into exporters of food and not importers any more. We think of changes in the Far East and India and China who are much less dependent on imported foodstuffs than they once were; changes in the market-place at this time that although world grain stocks have dropped to near record lows in lock-step with the decline in prices, everything seems to be backwards.

Mr. Speaker, not only in the grain markets, but there are also other changes afoot in the world. We think of recent political changes in eastern Europe. We've just seen elections in East Germany and a declaration of independence in Lithuania. But the change is not all happening in eastern Europe. Recently the hard line socialists of Nicaragua were thrown out by the people in free elections, and all of Central and South America is now on the move to democracy and more open economies.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, only last week on a commentary following the installation of the newly elected president of Brazil, the comment was made that it is the first time in history that all of South America is governed by duly elected democratic governments -- indeed changing times in our world.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, the world that we live in is changing at an incredible pace. As threatening as that change may be, and as daunting as some of the challenges that face us are, they're also exciting times to live in; an era of change at home and around the world, and all of the opportunities that it presents.

This is not something new for the people of Saskatchewan. For our part, we know that the people who built this province, our forefathers, the people who came here with nothing more than a few tools and a lot of determination and a lot of hope, these people also faced great changes and great challenges. Although the changes may have occurred at a slower pace then, our pioneers managed those changes and faced the challenges head on.

Today the changes are different, and obviously the responses will have to be different. However, we must face the reality of change and deal with the challenges presented by it. We think of the changes in our population, increasingly made up of seniors, who are living longer, more productive lives, and this is demanding careful thinking and a careful response, as many of these same seniors who are the ones who wielded those tools; who

had that determination and that hope to build this province; who understood the power that a positive response to that challenge could bring about . . .

We have communities and people all over the province who are feeling the effects of the shift in our economic base, and that requires careful thinking, analysis and response. We have young people, children and teens, who are faced with some very complicated social choices. Their education must prepare them for their role in the future of this province and as members of the global community, and this requires careful thinking and a careful response. Many challenges, Mr. Speaker.

We've seen many changes, as I've said, in eastern Europe. Who would have ever thought that that day would come. Who would have ever thought that the hopes and dreams of so many would start to come true so soon? It indeed makes me very happy to say, Mr. Speaker, that those changes have seen the hopes and dreams of many of my constituents come true. Not just constituents, Mr. Speaker, but neighbours and close family friends.

I think of a neighbour from my home community that I recently talked to who originally came from Romania, was back to visit family there just a year or so ago. And as we discussed on the street recently some of the changes in his home country, the tears that came to his eyes as he talked about the opportunities and what it meant to his family and to them personally -- very important, as we are aware of what's happening in the world.

Many of our constituents, I'm sure all of us, have those ones who come from other places in the world and who still have family and friends in the old country, people who will be living in fear for most, if not all of their lives. These changes have come about through events that we would have considered unthinkable even as this House sat in the last session, let alone years past.

Mr. Speaker, I make mention of those changes half-way around the world in other continents because it presents opportunities for us here. We have to recognize changes in the world. We have to grab a hold of what's presented by it as there's changes in the market-place, and perhaps look for the opportunities there. We can look at selling technology. We can look at other markets for other products as they change their life-styles and as their economies change. We can look for opportunities for business alliances and those types of things.

Mr. Speaker, coming back to our Saskatchewan family farm, you can take a look at the number of farmers and the farm families who everyone agrees are under an incredible burden of debt, Mr. Speaker -- people who have been victimized, not only by the unfair subsidization policies of Europe and the United States but also by years of uncontrollable drought, some areas grasshoppers and others, flooding in some, wheat midge in still others; victimized by problems that reach back to policies of the 1970s, policies of government ownership of land, inflated land prices; national policies of high interest rates without protection; policies designed to encourage widespread borrowing under those high interest rates, against very inflated land prices; policies of not diversifying and of looking at a single

commodity economy, wheat economy.

And I must say that I believe that we in north-eastern Saskatchewan are indeed fortunate to perhaps not have got caught quite as much in the wheat economy alone, but that we do produce a diversity of crops in the grass seeds, the alfalfa for processing, and we have people who are very knowledgeable and familiar with dealing in world markets in the export of many of those various commodities.

Mr. Speaker, we can't only look at that in isolation, but we also must recognize the needs and the hurts in our rural communities caused by the problems in agriculture, and I'm sure that we're all well aware and familiar with them.

Mr. Speaker, to deal with that is going to take leadership. Mr. Speaker, the kind of leadership that may not always make the most popular choice, but will always and consistently endeavour to do the right thing. Leadership, Mr. Speaker, whose sole motivating force is to form policy and make decisions, to find solutions and capitalize on opportunities that are in the best interests of the people and in the best interests of the future of the province. Leadership, Mr. Speaker, such as that provided so well and so strongly by our Premier.

Mr. Speaker, the main issue here is not the change, but it's the manner in which the people and the nations and the governments of them are managing that change and responding to the new world that we face. The way that we respond to the changing world scene today is going to dictate whether or not we survive tomorrow, and it places a tremendous burden of responsibility not only on the people but on all governments, this one included.

Regardless of the type of change that is occurring, I, however, believe that there's a common mark that sets apart all successful responses of change, and I believe that we have that here in Saskatchewan. The driving force behind any successful advancement, whether societal change, technological change or whatever, the driving force behind that and the coping with it, Mr. Speaker, is the people. I believe we have residents of Saskatchewan who have well demonstrated in the past their capability to deal with that change and are up to meeting the challenge of doing it again.

Mr. Speaker, just to make it very clear as I talk about this throne speech and I look at what it presented, and I think one of the most important things in it is going to be the method that we as a government use and any government can use in working with the people at the area that they represent, in this case the people of Saskatchewan. The announcement of building a consensus and working with those people, I believe is very important. I believe it is also very important that it's a continuation of the government's ongoing commitment to building the province through a partnership of people and government. This is a partnership, Mr. Speaker, that will have the people of Saskatchewan building the province.

As the Lieutenant Governor so effectively conveyed in the Speech from the

Throne, my colleagues and I spent a good deal of time consulting with the people all over Saskatchewan in the development of a Consensus Saskatchewan policy, finding out exactly what areas they wanted to address, finding out what their priorities are. They've identified the priorities and, Mr. Speaker, we are going to have to deal with those and respond to them.

Mr. Speaker, they told us that they want to see continued diversification and expansion of their economy -- very important for the future, for the economic well-being of our province, for the opportunities for our children as they face the future.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have the resources and the inputs necessary to be able to continue to diversify this province so that we're not totally dependent on agriculture.

As well, Mr. Speaker, along with that desire for development, people have told us that they want to see continued and improved protection for that segment of our economy which has always been the basis for our existence, and that, of course, is still agriculture.

The Premier, in an unprecedented move, has met with the leaders of the financial institutions to discuss ways of working together to handle the current farm debt crisis. He's pressing, continuing to press the federal powers that be to provide powerful assistance in rectifying the unacceptable subsidy practices of the Europeans and Americans that are hurting our farmers so terribly. He has secured a commitment from the Government of Canada that money will be provided for farmers for spring seeding. Mr. Speaker, today's motion was indeed an important tool to us to send to Ottawa to emphasize the importance that we place in our agriculture community.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to spend all of my time discussing agriculture and the plight of that industry. There are people who'd say that the attention paid to the farmers and the assistance and dedication given them by this government is causing an urban-rural split. That offends me, Mr. Speaker, that people would think that the interests of one group are being met at the expense of another.

I'd like to say, Mr. Speaker, that I've seen what is going on in my constituency, and it hurts me. In fact, in my career as an MLA, I can honestly say I don't think there's anything that's hurt me as much as dealing with people who are facing those types of situations on their farms and in their communities.

This problem that we face isn't about rural or urban, Mr. Speaker, it's about Saskatchewan. We're all in it together, we're all dependent on it, and we have to face it together.

Mr. Speaker, one of the important things that are going to have to happen for us to be able to deal effectively with it are going to be the enhancement and the enrichment of our education and training, providing tools to continue to build in Saskatchewan. It's very important as we just went through Education Week last week and have realized how important it is

that we have a sound and a good education system here.

(2200)

Mr. Speaker, people as well want to make sure that they have the facilities available to the members of their communities to address their needs, whether it's the health care needs and others there. Mr. Speaker, many of these things have been done and provided for, and I'm proud to say that I have many of them within my own constituency.

Mr. Speaker, these projects, such as nursing homes and hospitals, have been provided in spite of the adversity and the difficult times that we faced. Mr. Speaker, I believe that we'll continue to build on the base that we have. That's going to mean strengthening of our economy through developing existing industries and by further diversifying the economy as a whole. It's going to mean stabilizing our communities through the incorporation of things like local investment and small-business development. It's going to mean ensuring a healthy, satisfying environment for the personal growth and success of the people of the province.

Mr. Speaker, we can all be justly proud of what our province has done in its 85-year history. Mr. Speaker, I believe we can be proud of the many successes that we've had, the many things that we've built, and the wonderful place that we do have for our residents to live. Mr. Speaker, I believe we can be proud of the opportunities that we have here, as we look out to a changing world, and as we deal with the opportunities presented there.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this throne speech has outlined the way that we can continue to do it, in a partnership with the people of Saskatchewan, the government helping them to achieve the goals and the aspirations that they've set for themselves and for this province.

Mr. Speaker, this throne speech has set out a program and a process to ensure that that building will continue. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be able to second the motion of my colleague and encourage all other members of the Assembly to support it as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:03 p.m.