

March 22/90

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

ORAL QUESTIONS

Inquiry into Operation of Saskatchewan Transportation Company

Mr. Koskie: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to address a question to the Minister of Justice. Yesterday I stated, Mr. Minister, that the terms of reference in respect to the judicial inquiry that you announced yesterday into the Saskatchewan transportation corporation and its operation thereof, I indicated that they were narrow, to say the least.

And I want to ask you why Mr. Justice Brownridge, the commissioner which you have appointed, was not empowered to look into whether or not the officers of the STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company); whether they were engaged in any other questionable expenditures, any other wrongdoings during their term of office; whether they were acting on their own; whether they had instructions from other persons; whether or not the board of directors and/or cabinet ministers were aware of what was happening, or in fact were they negligent at not being aware.

Surely those are the questions, if you're going to investigate totally this issue, that you have to give the broadest terms of reference at the outset to the commissioner.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Well obviously, Mr. Speaker, allegations were made with regard to one specific activity.

An Hon. Member: -- No.

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Well the hon. members say no, that's not right. Certainly some employees, one of your supporters, didn't want the STC buying the buses from the United States. I believe Mr. Orchard made that allegation.

Well the allegation about where the buses should be bought is one . . . certainly, as I indicated, he did not want the buses bought in the United States. We did set up in terms of the internal operations of the company, the accounting firm, one of the major accounting firms to look at those internal operations. And that was announced immediately after the matter was raised.

Secondly, with regard to the criminal allegation. The one that made reference to Canada was the question of moneys being paid, and that is the allegation that's before us, before the public, and that is the one that we

have asked Mr. Justice Brownridge to investigate.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, we made it clear that if during the course of the inquiry Mr. Brownridge had reason to have his mandate expanded, that all he had to do was apply to cabinet, and as I indicated, the government would give that expansion to the mandate.

So, Mr. Speaker, the NDP say there you are. I doubt that any government could turn that down when the request came.

So having said that, Mr. Speaker, and the allegations that were before us, I believe that the mandate given and the individual involved has more than enough power and ability to get to the bottom of the matter.

The Speaker: -- Order. Before we go to the next questions, I would just like to draw to the attention of both members that we had a long question followed by a long answer. I don't think that that's conducive to question period, so I'd ask hon. members to co-operate in that regard.

Mr. Koskie: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll certainly attempt to abide by that, and I know the minister will too.

Mr. Minister, part of your answer you indicated that Mr. Justice Brownridge could come back to cabinet and get expanded terms of reference. Let me give you this example. Let us suppose that in the investigation Mr. Justice Brownridge decides -- this is a new question -- that he would like to look at the negligence, the involvement, or the potential involvement of a cabinet minister. It could be any one of you. Let's take the member from Melfort who was the minister in charge of STC. Do you know what you're asking him to do? You're asking the Justice minister to come back to the cabinet table and to ask that minister, can I investigate you? That's what you're doing with the narrow terms of reference.

I ask you, Mr. Minister, do you really think that tying the hands of the commission with the restrictive terms of reference is going to satisfy the demand of the public for a thorough and complete investigation of this mess?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- I believe, Mr. Speaker, that when Mr. Justice Brownridge makes his report to the people of this province, that the fair-minded people in the province will be well satisfied.

I don't believe, and I said this yesterday, that the judicial inquiry will ever satisfy the New Democratic Party. I made that abundantly clear. The New Democratic Party, Mr. Speaker, has had the reputation, the tradition, led by the Justice critic opposite, but well supported by others, in terms of making allegations, innuendo.

What I challenge the hon. member, because this is important. The hon. member today has stood before this Assembly, said "if," "what if," "what about." Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to put the following challenge to the

New Democratic Party and the Leader of the New Democratic Party: if they have one shred of evidence, appear before the judicial inquiry. You have a legal obligation, you have a moral obligation, and you have a political obligation to stand up before a public inquiry and tell what evidence you have.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: -- A new question to the Minister of Justice. Never, never before did I see anyone so sensitive on an issue as this. Do you know what the public, Mr. Minister, is going to say from those answers? That you are afraid of a full investigation. Not only in your meddling with this affair in the narrowness of your terms of reference, you have curtailed the right of the full inquiry, unless they come back and ask you whether they can investigate you.

But secondly, the Minister of Justice in his righteousness says, I'll appoint the counsel to the commission. Now that sure gives an indication of hands off. I want to ask you: after having appointed the commissioner, why didn't you allow the commissioner himself to appoint counsel?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Just so you understand, prior to the appointment of any counsel, I did ask the commissioner . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . well certainly we do, but all I indicate to the hon. member is that we did ask the . . . (inaudible) . . . names of possible counsel, and this was fully acceptable to him.

The Speaker: -- Order, order. We're having difficulty hearing the minister. I'm sure most of us fall into that category. Let us give him the opportunity to reply.

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- I did indicate to the hon. member that prior to the appointment of any counsel, the names of appropriate counsel were submitted to the commissioner, and he certainly approved the appointment of the counsel. Let me . . .

An Hon. Member: -- Who are you kidding?

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- I'm not trying to kid anybody; I'm telling you how it happened. But what I do, Mr. Speaker, because allegations have been made by the New Democratic Party, allegations have been made by the New Democratic Party, and I challenge the New Democratic Party, I challenge . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, no. There's a difference, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. Hon. members are engaging in debate, and I think that might be said on both sides of the House. And once more I ask members to try to adhere to the rules of question period and keep your questions short and to the point and your answers the same way.

Mr. Koskie: -- Thank you. I have another question, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Minister, we are not making allegations. The people of Saskatchewan do not trust this government and the shroud of corruption that lies over this government. And they want a complete investigation. I'm asking you today to justify why you are restricting the terms of reference and why it cannot be a complete and total investigation.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- I think, Mr. Speaker, I have put out the formal public challenge to the New Democratic Party and its members to bring any evidence that it has before the judicial inquiry and that is made to the public. And I ask the New Democratic Party not to play the game of innuendo and allegations but to bring the matter before the judicial inquiry. Mr. Speaker, that challenge is there. I know the press will watch to see whether it's honoured. I know the public will watch, Mr. Speaker, to see whether the New Democratic Party has anything, Mr. Speaker, or whether it is simply wanting a witch-hunt for partisan political reasons, because that's all that's come forward so far today, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: -- A new question to the Minister of Justice. Mr. Minister, the public is demanding a total and full inquiry with respect to this matter. There's no doubt about it. I'm going to tell you another reason why he didn't want to expand the terms of reference, because you couldn't possibly stand the public to see the mention of investigation into a minister or boards of directors. That's why you couldn't put it in there. That's why it's confined.

And I'm saying to you, if you've got nothing to hide, put it in there and clear the air. Why won't you do that?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Mr. Speaker, the mandate, as I have said on numerous occasions, is broad enough to deal with the allegations that are now before the U.S. tribunals, and certainly the matters that have been raised here in Canada. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I've made it abundantly clear that I believe that the judicial inquiry will clear the air, ultimately clear the air.

What I cannot guarantee, Mr. Speaker, is whether the judicial inquiry will clear the political mud. And I doubt very much that it will, Mr. Speaker, knowing what's coming so far today from the opposition.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

#### Further Purchase of Buses by STC

Mr. Trew: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a question for the Minister of Justice. Mr. Minister, I understand, and this has been confirmed in today's newspaper media reports, that while this process is going on Saskatchewan Transportation Company is still actively considering

the purchase of yet another 13 Eagle buses. Given the terms of reference that you have set out for the judicial inquiry, as narrow as they are, I don't see how you or any member of your government can allow those negotiations to go on.

Will you today give us your assurances that all negotiations with Eagle bus companies will cease at least until the judicial inquiry reports?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Mr. Speaker, I have some difficulty in that STC has made the case, I believe, and I thought that the opposition at one time wanted a modernization of the fleet of STC. And having said that, Mr. Speaker, why, if in future bus purchases, the particular bus company, the Eagle bus company makes the best proposal for STC and the people of this province, why they should be ruled out.

I have some difficulty, Mr. Speaker, with that argument. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, as well, I would expect that given the case that's before the public, Eagle, FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation), and whomever, that any sales are going to be pretty well scrutinized by whomever, Mr. Speaker. And I would ensure that if they are the successful bidder, and I say "if" because this is a matter out for proposals and tender, then, Mr. Speaker, the people will get the best deal. To exclude that is just not a wise expenditure of taxpayers' money.

#### Openness of Inquiry into Operation of STC

Mr. Trew: -- Mr. Minister, you as a lawyer, will be aware of this statement that justice must not only be done, it must be seen to be done. With that in mind, will you give this House your commitment that all of this inquiry will be conducted in the open, in the daylight, with the press and the public invited to attend and examine any and all documents?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- I have already made it clear in my remarks yesterday that this would be an open judicial inquiry. The rules, as traditional in the matter of such inquiries, are set by the commission.

Mr. Trew: -- Further to that, Mr. Minister, I want you to give this House your assurance that when the commission reports -- and this is important -- when the judicial commission reports, we want it to do so publicly and not first through the sanitization process of your office. Will you give us that commitment, that the report will be made publicly and not sanitized by your office?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- The report, when it's completed, will be made public in its entirety.

#### Call for Inquiry into GigaText Affair

Mr. Anguish: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to start off, Mr. Minister, with a quote from the the Star-Phoenix:

The STC scandal which involves two top executives who have been ordered to stand trial in a Dallas court does warrant closer examination to determine if allegations of bribery and political pay-offs are true, and to find out if anyone else was involved. But surely GigaText, which involves 100 times as much public money as the STC affair, deserves similar attention.

Could we have your commitment today that sort of completes the loop that would therefore give consensus to have a public investigation into the affairs of GigaText now that you are winding that corporation down?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Mr. Speaker, I find a great deal of difficulty in trying to answer for the schizophrenics in Saskatoon. And I say that because on the one hand they want an inquiry in the different matters, and at the same time we hold public hearings they criticize us for going to the public too often, Mr. Speaker. I can't listen to the Star-Phoenix, accept what the Star-Phoenix is saying with any credibility because they've got as many different positions on issues, Mr. Speaker, as there are pages in the paper.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: -- New question, same minister, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Minister, even ConSask, I am sure, would agree that GigaText deserves further scrutiny. You wouldn't let us discuss it in Crown Corporations Committee, committees that you haven't called back intersessionally like you said you would. You wouldn't let it have the scrutiny of this Legislative Chamber. The member from Souris-Cannington said he would take full responsibility.

You've wasted over \$5 million of taxpayers money and you don't want us to know what's happened to it. The public has the right to know. And I would invite you, Mr. Minister, in your mode of consensus building in Saskatchewan, that you ask the Provincial Auditor to take a full, comprehensive audit of GigaText and report back to this Legislative Assembly and to the Public Accounts Committee so we know where our \$5 million went.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Mr. Speaker, I suppose the more things change, the more things stay the same. I can remember a debate . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order.

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- And I remember, Mr. Speaker, when I asked the now Leader of the New Democratic Party to table all documents for \$400-and-some million of expenditure for buying potash mines, and the answer was no. We

asked, Mr. Speaker, for the public documents about Shane Industries, a matter of a police investigation, public investigation. The NDP under the then attorney general said no. I can remember the allegations made against Golden Acres motel and the corruption and the pay-off to a former NDP member. The then NDP leader of the opposition . . . now Leader of the Opposition said no, it's not in the public interest.

Mr. Speaker, GigaText, Mr. Speaker, had full, full public inquiry before the courts of Quebec with all the documentation brought to this Assembly by the members opposite, fully available to the public, Mr. Speaker. I suggest to you that GigaText, all the information was brought out in form of a judicial hearing. To say for the hon. members that they didn't have the information, is foolish, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: -- Well, my goodness, what a tirade. Doth I hear a minister of the Crown, in the new co-operative government, making politics out of a simple question in question period?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: -- What I ask you, Mr. Minister, is to come clean with people in the province of Saskatchewan. Five million dollars was spent on GigaText. There were distorted figures, distorted claims by your government. All I'm asking you very simply, sir, is will you call on the Provincial Auditor's office to do a comprehensive audit of GigaText and that audit will be reported back to this Legislative Assembly and to the Public Accounts Committee so that we in the opposition can do our job that the people of Saskatchewan are asking us to look into.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Mr. Speaker, let me assure the hon. member that my last reply, Mr. Speaker, was in the most non-partisan manner and intended fully, Mr. Speaker, to balance the public debate that has been before the people of this province for a number of years, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the commercial activity that, in fairness, should be given to the public and that which is not. Mr. Speaker, again the matter of GigaText, the investment, which I know that the the hon. members would want me to clarify the record in a non-partisan way, was considerably less than invested in Nabu.

And, Mr. Speaker, we will, I gather, follow the traditional practices of the House with the availability of the opposition to take the documentation that was before the courts in Montreal, which they have copies of, and to question the appropriate minister before both the Public Accounts or Crown Corporations (Committee), depending, so you've got a case to be able to take to the minister in the appropriate forum.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Suspension of Saskatoon Teacher

Ms. Atkinson: -- My question is to the Minister of Education. Mr. Minister, Murray Valiaho, a Saskatoon teacher and president of the Saskatchewan Educators of the Hearing Impaired, was suspended for three days from his job at the school for the deaf because he publicly disagreed with your decision to exclude Department of Education employees from the Deaf Education Advisory Forum.

Your government makes glowing speeches about freedom and democracy in eastern Europe, but it would appear that these same principles don't apply to Saskatchewan citizens. Mr. Valiaho, as president of SEHI, had every right to make public comment on how you operate, Mr. Minister, when it comes to deaf education in this province. It is his basic freedom not to be penalized because he happens to get a pay cheque from your Department of Education. Can you tell this House where you received the right to rob a man of three days' pay simply because he disagreed with you?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Speaker, I think that if the hon. member opposite would look at all of the facts involved in this particular case and would fully understand what the whole situation is, that this episode rose out of the fact that the previous minister of Education had indicated in setting up the advisory council on deaf education that employees of the Department of Education would not be eligible to sit on that particular committee. And I think that for the most part everyone fully understood that.

The fact that Mr. Valiaho was suspended without pay for a few days was, I think, clearly understood by the Public Service Commission and the Department of Education officials. I believe that they fully understood what the situation was and were within their right in doing what they did.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Okay, Mr. Minister, let's get to the nub of the issue. Mr. Valiaho who was upset, because although he was nominated to the task force as president of SEHI you rejected him because he was a departmental employee, yet Chris Gerrard, a Department of Education employee, is nominated by you to the advisory board for independent schools. Yet Rene Archambault, a Saskatchewan Education employee and brother-in-law to the Premier of Saskatchewan is nominated by you to the Fransaskois School component task force.

Mr. Minister, what hypocrisy. Mr. Valiaho can't be nominated to the task force on deaf education because he is an employee of the department. Yet Mr. Archambault and Mr. Chris Gerrard can be nominated to task forces by yourself even though they are members of your Department of Education. How do you explain this double standard and this hypocrisy?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Speaker, we're not talking about hypocrisy or a double standard, we are talking about an advisory committee for the Minister of Education.

The fact of the matter is that we had a task force on deaf education that spent several months looking into the education of deaf children in this province. After several hearings and after several meetings, the task force put forward a report to myself, and I would point out that all of the members of that task force, Mr. Speaker, were in fact employees of the Department of Education. I think that there is strong feeling within the committee, the membership on the committee, that they feel it would be a conflict of interest to have members of the school for the deaf on this particular committee.

And I would also point out, Mr. Speaker, that employees at the school for the deaf in Saskatoon have ample opportunity for input into the work that is being done by the advisory council, or by the advisory committee. The other members on this particular committee, Mr. Speaker, do not have that same option.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

The Speaker: -- Order. I would ask the hon. members to come to order. Order.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### SPECIAL ORDER

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: -- Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly a pleasure for me today to enter into this throne speech debate.

I want to congratulate, Mr. Speaker, the member for Moosomin on his moving of the throne speech, and as well, the member for Nipawin on his seconding of the throne speech. I feel that those two members in particular, Mr. Speaker, did just an excellent job of outlining and confirming the many, many points that were made in the throne speech.

I want to add congratulations to the Lieutenant Governor for her address, and to the Premier of this province for establishing in that throne speech, Mr. Speaker, a number of guiding principles that will take this province well into the 1990s, and in fact into the year 2000, which is only 10 years away, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think that that throne speech that was delivered just the other day dealt with a lot of things. I think some of the words that I would use to sum up the content of that throne speech might be words like "vision," might be words like "insight," "leadership," "the future."

Mr. Speaker, that throne speech deals with the province of Saskatchewan at a time when we are facing many, many challenges. It comes, Mr. Speaker, at a very interesting time, an interesting time in history, an exciting time in history, and an extremely demanding time, Mr. Speaker, for all residents of this great province.

Mr. Speaker, this Speech from the Throne is about the future; it is about goal-setting. Mr. Speaker, it is about looking into the future and seeing just where this province might want to be, let's say in the year 2000. Mr. Speaker, this Speech from the Throne is about planning for today, planning for today but also planning for the future.

Mr. Speaker, most importantly, this Speech from the Throne is about something that we hear a great deal about today, and that something I believe, Mr. Speaker, is the word "change." It is about massive change around the world. It is about change that is affecting us here in Saskatchewan.

There are those that say, well those world-wide events are irrelevant to Saskatchewan; we don't care what is happening around the world; let us close our eyes to the facts of life in today, the 1990s, and let us hide in a little shell and say it doesn't matter what happens around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make the case to you today that the change that is confronting this whole planet, the change that is confronting North America, the change that is confronting Saskatchewan and Canada is very relevant to every citizen in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, our residents, our taxpayers, the people of Saskatchewan want to hear more about what is happening around the world. They are hungry for information, Mr. Speaker. They need leadership, Mr. Speaker, and leadership is what this Speech from the Throne is all about.

Mr. Speaker, whether we like it or whether we do not like it, the fact is we are living in very revolutionary times. Mr. Speaker, as a young politician, it is one of the most exciting things that I can possibly think of, to be in this legislature at this juncture, at this crossroads in history, in the province of Saskatchewan. And I hope, Mr. Speaker, that today as I stand in my place and speak as I have been elected to do, that I am indeed representing the wishes and the desires and the dreams of my constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I submit to you today that every national economy and regional economy is being restructured into something we call a global market-place. Mr. Speaker, I remember a few years ago I heard this term "global village" by all of the academics. And I, like most residents of Saskatchewan, did not pay a great deal of attention to this thing called the global village. But, Mr. Speaker, I should have. And today I see so very, very clearly that that is precisely what is taking place.

I'd like to talk just for a few minutes, Mr. Speaker, about what is happening in eastern Europe. And, Mr. Speaker, once again the members of the NDP may want to stick their heads in the sand and say, that has no relevance. Mr. Speaker, I submit to you today, it has a tremendous amount

of relevance.

In eastern Europe, Mr. Speaker, people are casting off that yoke of socialist dictatorship. They are opting in favour of freedom, opting in favour of freedom of the individual, freedom to make decisions on their own, freedom to learn, freedom to share, freedom of information, freedom to take risks, freedom to succeed as well as fail, and freedom to try again, freedom to vote in open and honest elections.

Mr. Speaker, these people of eastern Europe have learned, as will other nations around the world, that to free up their economies to compete in the global market-place, to do that they must free their own people.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have to ask the question, why is all of this happening in these eastern European countries? Why is the wall going down in Berlin? Why in the big country of Russia are they turning to privatization? Why has McDonald's restaurant, that great, big symbol of North American free enterprise, gone into the country of Russia? Why has President Gorbachev allowed that to happen? Why has President Gorbachev turned over land that used to be collective state farms to individuals? Why have many of these countries turned over the factories to free enterprise? Why are they establishing, if you can imagine, Mr. Speaker, a landmark decision in socialist countries, the establishment of stock markets? Can you imagine that, Mr. Speaker -- the establishment of free enterprise stock markets in eastern Europe.

These are things, Mr. Speaker, that I or many people could speak on for a number of hours. But I think the point to be made is there's a number of these things happening in eastern Europe -- very, very significant; very significant, indeed, Mr. Speaker. And we have to ask the question, why? Was it because of political reasons? Was it because President Gorbachev fundamentally believes in McDonald's or believes in stock markets? No, Mr. Speaker. It was not because of politics; it was because of a practical economic solution to the problems that faced his country.

And, Mr. Speaker, to that President Gorbachev and to other leaders in those socialist countries, I say congratulations to you for taking the effort to make change, to make change that is difficult, to make change that is very difficult.

And, Mr. Speaker, the relevant point that I make today, if those leaders around the world can make that change, can the members of the NDP Party change? The question is, have they changed, Mr. Speaker? It's a very relevant question, and it is very interesting to note the Leader of the Opposition made no mention of these things that are happening around the world -- made no mention of whether or not the NDP themselves had changed. And I'll get into that just a little bit later, Mr. Speaker.

But I make the case to you, major change in eastern Europe. I make the case to you because of economics, not because of political philosophy, but because of real economics.

Now what do I mean by the real economics, Mr. Speaker? I mean, Mr.

Speaker, there is a phenomenon going on around the world today called trade, called free trade. And that is why these countries must change to adapt to this thing called trade. And, Mr. Speaker, it is another significant point to show you once again that the NDP are hiding their heads in the sand, are not recognizing, are not coming clean with the people of Saskatchewan about this phenomenon of trade going around the world and how we must change and adapt.

And I want to give you a little list here, Mr. Speaker, of some facts -- not political rhetoric, not anything that is really open to debate, because these are absolute facts, Mr. Speaker, respecting free trade.

Australia and New Zealand today have a free trade agreement. Brazil and Argentina are developing a free trade agreement. In western Europe the year 1992 will see all of the walls come down in western Europe, Mr. Speaker. One country economically.

United States and Japan are negotiating and talking about free trade. You will know, Mr. Speaker, the historic free trade agreement that we passed . . . or that we resolved in this legislature and in the Parliament of Canada just a few years ago. Tremendous political debate on it.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's clear now, it is clear today that there is developing world-wide free trade, that there will be in the near future, in the very near future, three major trading blocs. You will see western Europe, you will see western Europe as a major trading bloc. You will see the Pacific Rim as a major trading bloc, and you will see North America as a major trading bloc.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is just essential, essential that we not hide our heads in the sand and for political reasons, for political reasons, as the New Democratic Party had said, oh well, free trade, we're against that.

Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for the Leader of the Opposition. I believe he is an intelligent man. I believe he is a well-read man, Mr. Speaker. I believe that the Leader of the Opposition today, and many in the NDP ranks across the floor, know full well what is happening around the world with respect to free trade, and they are too arrogant to admit, Mr. Speaker, to the people of this province that yes indeed, free trade is a phenomena that is happening, and the correct decision was made. So that tells me, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP have not changed. They have not changed a bit, Mr. Speaker, and it's extremely unfortunate, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about something, about where this province, about where this province is at with respect to agriculture, and it relates to trade. It relates to one of the last issues that is not being dealt with today successfully, is that European-American subsidization war, subsidization war, Mr. Speaker, that has absolutely wreaked havoc in the international grain markets, Mr. Speaker. And today in Saskatchewan, our farmers, our rural communities are suffering. Communities are suffering badly, Mr. Speaker, because of this last bastion of protectionism. And it is a fine, fine example of how we must continue

with free trade and we must continue with our GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) negotiations to reduce and eventually eliminate these subsidies, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that today if you were to talk to most residents in my constituency and ask them what the issues are, they would say agriculture. If you would talk to them and say, well why agriculture, what's happening, they would tell you that it is primarily because . . . primarily because of these international grain subsidy wars, primarily because of high interest rates, primarily because of droughts that have taken place. And, Mr. Speaker, these have wreaked havoc on our province.

We are at a crossroads today and that is why this Speech from the Throne is so very, very important. I listened intently yesterday, Mr. Speaker, to the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition very conveniently, very conveniently made the case, made the case that oh, it's all the government's fault, all the government's fault. Ignored the realities, the realities of what international price wars on grain have done to us.

And I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, rather than blaming the government, a Leader of the Opposition, a true Leader of

the Opposition representing fairly the realities that have gone on, would have said yes, yes, Mr. Premier, you have tried and you have made a considerable difference by your successful negotiations with the federal government, something like 600 -- I shouldn't even quote the number, Mr. Speaker, I don't have it today.

But I do recall a couple of deficiency payments came to this province of Saskatchewan in the neighbourhood of hundreds of millions of dollars. Drought payment, drought payments -- hundreds of millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker.

And I think this government has made a tremendous effort to counteract those international subsidy wars. I want to commend the Premier of the province, Mr. Speaker, for his recognition all across this country on his work at the GATT negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, we should stand in our place today extremely proud of a Premier who is intelligent, who is articulate, who is aggressive, who is knowledgeable, and who is experienced in agriculture, and a very successful negotiator, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to agriculture, and I would say, Mr. Speaker, one of the outstanding men of this country when it comes to agriculture and negotiating with the federal government.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

(1445)

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: -- I say that, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NDP, or the Leader of the Opposition yesterday made the case that once again it's all the government's fault. Well I'd say, Mr. Speaker, maybe the members of the opposition should have given a little bit of credit to, in these times

of high interest rates, for the many protective programs that this government has made its mark with on the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, maybe the NDP should look back and see where they failed in the late 1970s and 1980s to address that particular problem.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to turn, Mr. Speaker, to something that was in the throne speech that was of extreme significance, in my view, and that was the concept of Consensus Saskatchewan -- 100 people from all walks of life across this province going out, consulting with other members of the public at large, dealing with some very significant issues.

And I paid particularly close attention to the Leader of the Opposition's remarks yesterday, and I won't quote precisely, but something to the effect that these people were not capable or able of answering these questions. Mr. Speaker, and that was a very, very scary remark for me to hear. And, Mr. Speaker, I sat here and I thought about it a little bit. What did that remark really mean to me? That remark meant to me, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP have not changed, have not changed one iota.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's a fundamental philosophical difference between this side of the House and members of the NDP, and that has to do, Mr. Speaker, with a fundamental belief in the individual. I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that Consensus 100, Consensus Saskatchewan, is based upon a fundamental, positive belief in the individual. I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that members of the NDP don't share that same belief. They still believe today, Mr. Speaker, that big government is all powerful, is all knowledgeable, and they don't have the belief in Saskatchewan people that Saskatchewan people can be imaginative and creative and look after our own destiny as individuals.

No question, Mr. Speaker, we in government have a leadership role to play. No question, Mr. Speaker, it is our duty to guide as best we can the people of Saskatchewan. No question, Mr. Speaker, it is our duty to be true leaders of society.

But, Mr. Speaker, there come times, and especially when Saskatchewan is at this crossroads we are today, economically and financially, Mr. Speaker, that the public must be consulted. This is a time of massive change, Mr. Speaker, that I have talked to you about, world-wide free trade; a time when agriculture is in probably the lowest state that it has been for many, many years; a time when farm debt is at proportions that are not sustainable, not sustainable in this economy; a time when interest rates are creating havoc with small businesses and home owners and farmers; a time, Mr. Speaker, when the people of Saskatchewan, with all of their values, will, I believe, Mr. Speaker, find many solutions.

I believe these people, Mr. Speaker, will quite rightfully look to the future. And they will say, where do we want to be in the year 2000? How do we want to get there, Mr. Speaker? What obstacles must we overcome?

And, Mr. Speaker, I think that Consensus Saskatchewan will deal with four very, very important areas. I believe the first one that was mentioned was economic diversification -- economic diversification. I submit to you, Mr.

Speaker, that there has never been a time, never been a time in the history of Saskatchewan where it has become more abundantly clear that we must diversify our economy. We must not have all of our eggs in one basket.

What do I mean by diversification, Mr. Speaker? I mean something less than almost a total reliance on agriculture. What I mean, Mr. Speaker, is jobs and opportunities and the creation of wealth, primarily by the free enterprise sector. Mr. Speaker, there has never been a more pressing demand and need for this.

Mr. Speaker, what I'm talking about is the development of our resources, and I firstly talked to you about the development of our natural resources. Mr. Speaker, we have been blessed in this province with an abundance of potash. We have developed that well. I disagree very much with the former administration and the method that they chose to -- and I can't even say develop; I have to say nationalize it, not creating a single job. We had the mines here, Mr. Speaker; we had the royalty revenue, Mr. Speaker. Those moneys by a wise and prudent government could have been spent elsewhere.

I use the example of the Alberta Conservative administration in those prosperous years of the 1970s. Did the members of the Legislative Assembly in the province of Alberta take their money and buy existing businesses? No, Mr. Speaker. No, Mr. Speaker, they used it to diversify their economy, and one of the reasons, Mr. Speaker, why they are sustaining just a little bit better than we are today in these terribly difficult economic times.

Mr. Speaker, we have been blessed with an abundance of heavy oil in this province, an abundance of heavy oil. Is there anything wrong, Mr. Speaker, with taking that oil out of the ground, processing it here in Saskatchewan, creating Saskatchewan jobs, creating Saskatchewan investment, creating Saskatchewan opportunities, and producing from that heavy oil some good, top quality diesel fuel and motor oil products? Is there anything wrong with that, Mr. Speaker? Is there anything wrong in doing that in conjunction with a major, major corporation, major co-operative, Mr. Speaker -- Federated Co-op? Is there anything wrong with that, Mr. Speaker? No. I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that has been the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, we have been blessed as well in this province with a multitude of natural gas. Is there anything wrong, Mr. Speaker, with processing that natural resource, creating jobs and opportunities and wealth for the people of Saskatchewan? Is there anything wrong with taking that natural gas, Mr. Speaker, and making it into fertilizer? I submit to you, no, Mr. Speaker. In fact that is something that we must do. We must process those natural resources.

Now, Mr. Speaker, members of the opposition say no to the processing of our natural resources when it comes to natural gas. Members of the opposition have said no to the processing of our heavy oil. Mr. Speaker, and there's something terribly wrong; there's something terribly wrong when politics will get in the way of straight, good economic sense. Members of the opposition will say, well, you shouldn't be developing those natural

resources with people like Cargill or people like Co-op. Mr. Speaker, I think it speaks very well of the Premier of this province. I think it speaks very well of this government and the people of Saskatchewan that we will go into a joint venture, into a partnership that will create all of these opportunities for Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for the opposition, it is time for the opposition to stand up today and say, Mr. Speaker, we support some of these initiatives. And I challenge the members of the opposition to throw their political rhetoric aside and think of the people in Saskatchewan. Think of all those people that will be employed by these industries. Think of all the people in the Meadow Lake area that will be employed in that pulp mill. I challenge members of the opposition to stand up and support some of these initiatives.

And, Mr. Speaker, must we do that in conjunction with a good, clean environment? Must we protect our environment as we do it, Mr. Speaker? Well of course we should, Mr. Speaker. And I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that during this session you will see more and more talk about the environment. You will see more and more commitments made by this government to review existing processes, to change those processes, Mr. Speaker, to absolutely ensure that there is absolute protection of our environment.

Mr. Speaker, the way I look at it, Mr. Speaker, is if you use a Saskatchewan person as an example and take a picture of that person and you build a frame around that picture, well what does that frame consist of, Mr. Speaker? It consists of protection in health care, protection in education, protection in social services, and some diversification of our economy to create those jobs. So, Mr. Speaker, use that as the frame around your own picture.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if we don't protect these fundamentals of health care, of education, of social services, and of jobs and investment diversification, Mr. Speaker, that picture will just float away if you don't have a good frame around it. And, Mr. Speaker, this Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, is exactly that. It is a frame around your picture and the people of Saskatchewan's picture, Mr. Speaker, and it is a frame that must be protected.

Mr. Speaker, members of the opposition have accused this government over the last while of cuts to health care, Mr. Speaker, one of those parts of that frame. Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that with the growing cost in health care, this entire country is very close to a crisis in health care, Mr. Speaker, and I have not seen an alternative presented by the NDP as to how to manage the health care industry better.

I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that investments in health care over the administration of the Progressive Conservative government, have approximately doubled since 1982. Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how you do your figuring back home, but I don't believe that that is anything like a cut-back, Mr. Speaker. It is a massive investment of moneys into the health care field, a fundamental part of the picture around people in

Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we must do, Mr. Speaker, is, in that picture, provide a good education environment for our young people. And I get back to, Mr. Speaker, the very competitive world that we live in today. I talk to you, Mr. Speaker, about the world shrinking, about our youngsters having to be better educated. And, Mr. Speaker, it is extremely important that we maintain our integrity when it comes to the educational system in this province, and I commend, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education for his many initiatives in that respect.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to just get back a little bit to Consensus Saskatchewan. It certainly speaks well of the Premier of this province. I believe it speaks well of the government in humbly admitting that we today do not have all of the answers for the people of Saskatchewan. I believe, Mr. Speaker, it does not speak well of an opposition who would immediately condemn such an initiative. I believe it speaks of an opposition that has become arrogant in these last years. I believe it speaks of an opposition that does not have a fundamental positive belief in the individual. I believe it speaks of an opposition that has not changed that big brother government mentality that only the elected people have that monopoly to know what is best for the people of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that that is wrong. I submit to you that this government recognizes that in a period of change, in a period when people in Saskatchewan are going through these very difficult economic times, Mr. Speaker, at a point in history when we must pay attention to the future and what we want it to be, that it speaks well of a government that would have the vision to adopt Saskatchewan consensus and go out to the people and find exactly what those people want their communities to look like in the years to come.

I believe it speaks of the very positive belief that this government has in the people of Saskatchewan -- the faith and the trust and the confidence in those people in Saskatchewan that they can chart their own destiny.

The people of Saskatchewan are made of very good stuff, Mr. Speaker. Our people have been sent all around the world, some of them holding very, very major positions in large corporations and governments, industry. And all around the world, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of Saskatchewan talent.

We have a lot of Saskatchewan talent here at home, Mr. Speaker, and I have every confidence that when Saskatchewan consensus goes to the people of Saskatchewan, deals with many of these pressing issues for which there are no easy answers, that the people will come up with very good suggestions and recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, members of the NDP tend to very much simplify where we are at in Saskatchewan today. They make the case day after day in this legislature: oh well, just elect the NDP and we'll fix everything up. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Saskatchewan would maybe believe that if members of the NDP would come up in this legislature with some concrete suggestions or alternatives.

But, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that you can trust an opposition that serves only to condemn and criticize, and has offered no reasonable solutions.

Mr. Speaker, I would be very scared of an opposition that has not changed. And I don't think they have changed, Mr. Speaker, when you consider that they have not stated whether or not they still believe in the land bank, whether or not they still believe that, let the free market look after interest rates regardless of home owners having houses foreclosed on or farmers being foreclosed on. Have they changed in that respect? Have they changed in the respect of their total indictment of free trade, that it's a fact of life? I don't think they've changed in that either.

Have they changed with respect to their position on developing our natural resources? I don't think they have. I think they still fundamentally believe that a government must develop those natural resources, that a government must continue to nationalize as they did the potash mines, or nationalize as they did the farm land.

I wonder if they've changed, Mr. Speaker. And I'm making that case to you today, Mr. Speaker, because we're in a period of change, a period of dramatic change. Political parties must change. Governments must change the way we do things.

(1500)

I don't believe that government can today provide everything that we have in the past. Conventional wisdom, as they say, is not the answer today, Mr. Speaker. Things must change. You must have a government that is flexible, you must have a government that is compassionate. You must have a government that is able to adapt quickly to the changing things in the market-place. Technology is a prime example.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this administration has shown that it has determination to make changes. I believe that the message given by the Premier of Saskatchewan just two or three weeks ago on television, a very difficult message for the Premier of the province to deliver, but I believe that it shows, regardless of whether in the short term it is politically popular or politically prudent for a government, that our Premier has the courage and the determination to make difficult choices.

I speak to you of the gas tax rebate cancelled, Mr. Speaker. I believe the public of Saskatchewan understand why that had to take place. I talk of the other difficult measures that the Premier went on province-wide television and spoke about.

I believe that all those measures had to do with change, Mr. Speaker, fundamental change. I believe they had to do with a dedication of those saved moneys towards that frame around your picture, the things like health care, education, social services, and diversification of our economy.

Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that any government that is not flexible and

ready to change in today's environment will not last. And, Mr. Speaker, I see that rigid inflexibility of members opposite. And I am frankly very troubled by that, Mr. Speaker, because I believe they have had their heads in the sand for a long time, and they have not awoken to the realities of this changing world we live in today.

Mr. Speaker, once again, these are interesting and exciting and demanding times for a person to be in politics. They are hard times for us too, Mr. Speaker, and I have every confidence that through Consensus Saskatchewan, through our other consultative processes, that this government will assist the people of Saskatchewan in managing that change.

And, Mr. Speaker, I believe that we will all do that to the best of our ability, and I ask today for some co-operation from the members opposite. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I start, Mr. Speaker, I would like to first of all welcome the staff of the legislature, and I would like to say welcome them in my own language, which is Cree, and I would just like to say "tuwaw" to all of them. And that means, you're very welcome in this House, by the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, in regards to the previous speaker, the Minister of the Environment, the member from Melfort, I would like to say that his overall view was very similar to the throne speech itself. I found it very lacking in new ideas, and basically what I hear coming through is a lot of the cold war rhetoric of past years.

And what I heard the person mention is, in the first 15 minutes of his speech, he was talking mainly about Europe. He was scared to talk about Saskatchewan. He was scared to mention anything about the lives of Saskatchewan people, and all he kept talking about was eastern Europe. He forgets that as a minister in this province that the first priority are the people of Saskatchewan. And he did not even have, I guess, the wherewithal to be able to recognize that important factor in Saskatchewan history.

One of the other things that I have noticed in regards to his statements is the concentration on freedom. And he mentioned the freedom of information, and yet this is one of the governments in the history of Saskatchewan and Canada that has one of the worst records in regards to freedom of information.

Last year they did not provide half of the information to the auditor although it was legally there that they were supposed to produce this information. They refused to do that, basically because they were scared that the auditor would find out about possibly what happened in STC, probably what happened in regards to the other Crown corporations and the privatization processes of it. They are scared to get the public to find out exactly what is going on in this government, and here he thinks he can talk about freedom and freedom of information.

The other aspect that the minister forgets is that the overall context of Europe, and the overall context of also Britain and all over the world is a question of democracy. That is the essential question that people are raising throughout the world, that they are not getting the freedom and access of information and the ability of a government to work with them in each of these levels. This government is well recognized for not working with the people of Saskatchewan and spends more time in selling free trade and the U.S. economy and the international economy rather than the Saskatchewan economy.

I would say very clearly that the minister, when he looks at the international context, forgets about the tremendous privatization process that took place in England, and the fact that that place is a mess, that indeed people are revolting on the streets when he talks about a revolution. When he talks about the poll tax and you see all the strikes in Britain and all the people in the streets, even fighting on the streets, this government talks about consensus and working with people, but it follows exactly the same strategy as Maggie Thatcher's Britain; that indeed all they see down there is conflict and more conflict. And that is precisely where this government is leading us into the future.

In regard to the central idea presented, which is Consensus Saskatchewan, I have this to say. I would refer to the three C's, or the three cons, of Saskatchewan. A lot of people have referred to this as ConSask, or "Saskcon," basically because there's three aspects to it.

Number one, this government is well-known for concessions, not to the people of Saskatchewan, but concessions to international, large-scale companies. Their only concession in the past eight years has been to big corporations to tremendous amounts of money, not only outright money given, not only outright give-aways, but royalty tax roll backs.

I would like to say also that the other con in regard to the Saskatchewan history the other ConSask of Saskatchewan is conflict. The basis of the past eight years has been one of conflict, and I'll be presenting that argument as I go along.

The last case is one of consensus. And I firmly believe that there is a very different view of what consensus entails in the province of Saskatchewan. I would like to say at the beginning on this overall concept that it is not a very new idea in politics. The putting together of an elite of government where you have four ministers with four civil servants and four members of the public to chair four areas of where the government has had disastrous policies in the economy, in the community of the family, and also in the area of management. We find that this idea of an expert panel of 100 people is not a new idea. The Premier should go back and read his political history and he will find that same idea in the concept of Plato and his philosopher kings, where he felt that the ordinary people of the day should not be able to partake in high levels of decision making in government; that you need a group of select expertise -- the philosopher kings -- to be able to deal with governing.

And this idea therefore is an ancient idea. And for the Premier of

Saskatchewan to talk about new developments, for him to say this is a new direction, he should read the political history of the world. He talks about global strategies, etc., but he doesn't understand world history.

This idea of a 100 panel is: number one, it will become a buffer zone. It will become an area where the government is scared to take flak from the people so they provide a buffer zone for the people to the attack. They feel that if they can decoy the people into attacking the 100 people, then they will not get the attack directly on them. It will save the Premier and it will save the cabinet members, so they think, in regards to getting this buffer zone. I also feel that by performing a buffer zone between themselves and the people what they are doing is that they are scared to deal with existing organizations of Saskatchewan people. They are scared to deal directly with the business people. Right, directly, the minister sitting next to them, they need a buffer zone in front of themselves on the business sector.

They need a buffer zone between themselves and the workers of this province. They need a buffer zone between themselves and the crisis that is happening in the farm gate. So they need a buffer zone between themselves and the farmer. We well know of the bureaucratic mess this province has given us, this government has given us, and we don't need another buffer zone.

I think it's very important to state that by establishing this buffer zone, what they're doing is that they're afraid to govern. They're afraid to take the responsibility. They've had eight years to listen to the people of Saskatchewan. They know the many ideas, the creative ideas in the field of economics, in the field of social development, in the field of cultural development; they know very well the tremendous ideas that have already existed and been put forth by many groups in the province of Saskatchewan.

Yet the government shows that they are not willing to listen. All they do is establish a small buffer zone between themselves and the people. That again, I would state, is one of the oldest ideas in politics. This government is so behind the time that they are using an idea by Plato, which existed 400 B.C. We're talking about an idea that is 2,400 years old. And this government has the audacity to say that they're looking forward into the future.

When I look at the idea of consensus . . . I mean, on the idea of concessions, one well knows the idea . . . It's not a very hard idea to figure out on who had the concessions -- where the give-aways went to, where the royalty tax roll-backs were in the province of Saskatchewan. It's very simple to know that it was the big corporations in the province of Saskatchewan, while everybody had to pay record high taxes from gas tax, from bingo tax, which we have never seen in the history of Saskatchewan; also to E&H tax (education and health tax) at record high levels. We have seen one of the worst economic situations in Saskatchewan history, but we well know that this government will not stand up to the big corporations and ask them to pay their fair share in Saskatchewan history.

They also know very well that their policies and their promises are

bankrupt. You just have to look at the free trade agreement. This is a real contradiction for this government because all of a sudden in the one hand they blame international economics. They say, hey, the world is attacking Saskatchewan; we are under attack, under siege by the world. That's what they say. The world economy is attacking Saskatchewan.

On the other hand, they want to have an old-fashioned trading bloc to go in the back pockets of the Americans in the free trade agreement. All the Americans want to do is utilize Canada in their competition with the trading aspect that is going on with Japan and also the European bloc. So all they're having is a "fortress North America" mentality.

(1515)

The actual solution for that is a multilateral trade negotiations in the world. That's the key item, not the back pocket approach with the Americans on the free trade agreement. I would state that in regards to the area of the farm gate and with the farmers, I would say, what I have seen this government do is this: it gives away and it attempts to give away to Cargill \$65 million. It guarantees them \$305 million, to the tune of \$370 million altogether.

At the same time we saw rural communities -- and you see this throne speech saying, yes we are going to work with the communities -- but when the rural communities asked for a share of the economic development proposal when the initial idea of the chemical plant came about, a lot of the rural communities said, we want a share of that. Three communities came out, and maybe even more, wanting to have ideas on how to develop with that \$300 million at that time.

But did the province of Saskatchewan, did the PC government make consensus with the rural communities? No. What they said, the only people in the world that count are the big corporations like Cargill, which makes billions upon billions every year. When the farmers who are going broke right now are asking for support, they will not get a commitment from this government.

When I look at the question of the forestry and I look at the Weyerhaeuser agreement, one well knows that when the farmers are being foreclosed with 10,000 foreclosures, notices of foreclosures in this province, 10,000 notices of foreclosures in this province, the government can turn around to Weyerhaeuser and say, here's 12 million acres of our best forests.

And this is at a time that farmers are losing their land. This is at a time also when you see one of the greatest injustices in regards to land, the outstanding land entitlement for Indian people in this province. When we look at that, we well recognize that Weyerhaeuser gets 12 million.

We knew that 100 years ago the Tory government gave CPR (Canadian Pacific Railway) 30 million acres of land. They gave Hudson's Bay Company 7 million acres of land. Pardon me, it was 23 million acres of land to the CPR and 7 for Hudson's Bay Company, for a total of 30 million. And the two companies got 30 million acres of land. Another 12 million for

Weyerhaeuser. Over 40 million acres for three companies, and that is Tory practice.

But the outstanding land entitlement is 1.3 million acres. Do you call that fair? This is a Tory plan in regards to conflict. What the people even in Candle Lake are saying and the La Ronge band, they want a solution to the issue that the Saskatchewan government can act in accord with the federal government so that they can fulfil those outstanding land questions in that area. But they will not do it, basically because they know that . . . they really don't have any commitment at all in that issue. A lot of the people are saying it can be done out of court, but they don't want to do it at all.

In regards to some of his statements, the minister's statements on Crown corporations, I would like to say this much. In regards to Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, which he mentioned, I would like to state that he said very clearly that the returns on taxes and benefits to the provinces were a lot greater during the free enterprise days. Well it just goes to show that he hasn't read Saskatchewan history. He has to read the facts.

During the time of the potash boom in Saskatchewan, when Saskatoon was supposedly the potash capital of the world, the then Liberal government was only able to collect \$16 million for the people of Saskatchewan. When the NDP basically established Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, in a six-year period, Mr. Speaker, they were able to get \$986 million for the people of Saskatchewan -- \$986 million which the taxpayers of Saskatchewan then did not have to pay. That 986 million was utilized for roads and the construction of airports and for health and education in this province.

When the PCs got in 1982, when you compare the following six-year period, Mr. Speaker, what they were able to get in return for the province was 274 million. In other words, there was a loss of \$712 million in a period of six years. And when you look at that, all it was was a strategy in rolling back royalty tax benefits. They gave away to the companies over \$700 million. That means that we had to take it out from somewhere. That's why we had the flat tax, the bingo tax. That's why everybody was pressured at school board levels, at municipal levels, basically because they did not want to stand up to the big corporations and stand beside the people of Saskatchewan.

When you look at the whole question of taxation, Mr. Speaker, one recognizes that in the '50s the corporations paid an equal share with the people of Canada in regards to income tax. The corporate tax was the same as income tax in Canada as far as revenue is concerned. During the '60s and the '70s, what happened is that the federal government, basically Liberal and Tory governments, moved the taxation question up where it benefits the big corporations, and it went from about 34 for ordinary people and about 20 per cent for the big corporations.

Now with Tory governments going full blast federally and provincially, we now see where the ordinary people of Saskatchewan, the small business, the workers of the province, the professionals, have to pay 50 per cent of the

revenue, and the big corporations get off with having only to pay 10 per cent.

That is the reason why we have this huge deficit. That is the reason why we have to pay \$4 billion in debt. That is the reason why we have to pay \$300 million in interest payments a year. That is why we cannot support our students to go to university in Saskatchewan. That is why we cannot help settle . . . even to equalize the payments for secretaries in northern Saskatchewan under the Northlands Career College. That is why we cannot pay for the seniors and their housing and a lot of the needs that they require after basically providing for this province for many years.

So when you look at this, this has been a history of conflict. This government first of all has a history of concessions and give-aways to big companies. Then they have a history of conflict. I would like to move into that area of conflict.

I would like to say in the most general levels that this government has played a divide and rule strategy for the many different groups in the province. I would just like to generally name that they played a divide and rule strategy, urban against the rural and against the North.

In this throne speech, not even one word, not even one mention of northern Saskatchewan. Not even once did they mention northern Saskatchewan. All they want to do is utilize a divide and rule political strategy which they thought got them into the last election. But they know that the only thing that won them the last election was the \$1 billion from Brian Mulroney.

I think it's important to recognize that there are many divisions, that we also play divisions against even the right for women in regards to day care. We well know the 14 women that were killed in Quebec the past while. That indeed, that was a shock to the people of Canada that you would have a situation could develop where there was such an intolerant attitude also to women.

That type of situation is fostered because of the economic and political policy management crisis that's embedded in Tory governments. That is the reason why that happens. I think one has to recognize that in regards to the area, there is also a greater intolerance also for people who are poor. And you see a lot of people who have been knocked off the job market by this government because of their failure in their economic policies, that a lot of people will now start calling down people in the social services area.

We see a lot of people at the same time recognizing that there's a lot more children going hungry in our province. There's more suicides. There's more alcohol and drug abuse. I know in my home town in Cumberland, a 14-year-old girl had somebody put some drugs into her soft drink and she died just a week and a half ago . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member over there from Regina Wascana is talking about the alcohol treatment program of three weeks that he put in there. He doesn't care of the person who died last week. And that's what I was presenting. He does not care that that is indeed the issue that I'm presenting, that he should

have some compassion for the people who die in this province because of the high unemployment rates and so on.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: -- I think he should also remember that in another place in northern Saskatchewan, in Sandy Bay, we know that a baby had died under the care of Social Services. And I understand that will be investigated in the future weeks to come.

When I looked at the aspect of intolerance, I also have to look at the issue of racism in regards to the overall question of all the nationalities in the province of Saskatchewan.

I recognize the importance of respecting each other. I recognize the importance of respecting people, whether they come from eastern Europe, whether they're from German ancestry or Romanian ancestry or French or English. We also have to remember that there are other people as well from Pakistan, from east India, from various areas of the world, from Chile, that we have to respect all peoples.

As an aboriginal person, as a Metis person in the province of Saskatchewan, I recognize that there is racism in the system. I cannot turn a blind eye like some members from across. And I've only heard one member, the former deputy premier, state that there was racism in Regina. He recognizes racism. We recognize that there is racism. We recognize that there is intolerance among nationalities.

We have to remember our recent history before the Second World War. People during the rise of Fascism in Germany, they used to make jokes about nationalities. And they started out by only making jokes. Later on it grew to anger, and later on we know what happened in the ovens that they baked in as time went on.

Intolerance starts out by just mere jokings or various ways of put-down of people, and that is what we are starting to see. And the reason for the intolerance that is growing in Saskatchewan, because we are in such an economic and social mess created by the governmental policies and the economic situation that we're in.

I think it's very important to recognize that there are many people out there that don't want this racism, this intolerance to go on in regards to women, in regards to the urban people, in regards to the rural people, in regards to people from the North; that we have to respect each other from wherever we come. We have to respect each other on our languages and how we dress. We have to respect each other in many different ways. And that is the basis of the history of this province, and we have to work at that level. That is what we need to do.

(1530)

And when I see policies of this government which basically focuses on international and foreign capital, where they put big bucks to their pocket

and keeps people poor in Saskatchewan, no wonder the conflict mounts. The conflict also mounts because we have higher taxes to pay for. We have gas and bingo tax. We have E&H tax. And we have many other different types of situations that a lot of people costs them more, and many different situations in which people have to pay more.

The last aspect I would like to deal with is the question of consensus. I think it must be recognized we don't need 100 new people to tell us that there is already a certain degree of consensus in the province of Saskatchewan. We don't need four new ministers to tell us from an e p litist strategy that there is consensus on certain developments in this province.

There is already consensus that this province is in the worst economic and mismanaged sense in the whole history of Saskatchewan. There is consensus that this government has to stand up to the big corporations that they pay their fair share of the Saskatchewan and federal revenues. There is already consensus that there has to be cut-back on waste, whether it's a gigamess, or whether it's something else.

People also recognize that there is consensus on dealing with very strong policies in regards to child hunger. There is consensus as I travel through the North that the food transportation subsidy should be reinstated; that this government can stand here even today and provide subsidies for liquor, for wine, for whisky, for brandy, and all the types of liquors in northern Saskatchewan, and yet they will not subsidize food in northern Saskatchewan. They will not subsidize milk; they will not subsidize fresh vegetables for the children of northern Saskatchewan, and yet they will keep on saying, we want to hear more consensus of the 100 people. We don't need 100 other people to provide a buffer zone against them.

So we also know that there is consensus, that they want a stable situation in the colleges. In the Northlands college a lot of students met with me, saying, look, we want to have continuous learning in the schools. We are in a turmoil situation because the government is unwilling to pay. A lot of the instructors say the government is unwilling to pay even wherein an instructor on the west side gets paid the same as on the east side. They can't even pay equal wages for a person doing the same job, and yet they can provide a \$7 million tax give-away to the uranium mining companies last year -- \$7 million. And yet they can't pay a secretary the same amount of wages from Creighton to Buffalo Narrows.

There is also consensus that our roads need to be improved in northern Saskatchewan. There's also consensus that Cumberland House needs a bridge. There is also consensus that the seniors from northern Saskatchewan want more housing and more personal care right in their own communities. There is also consensus that the La Ronge hospital finally needs to be built and can no longer be put off. There has got to be consensus that the people in general have suffered too much under this government.

In conclusion I would like to say that this PC government is unwilling to change. It doesn't accept new ideas of the people and instead creates a

buffer zone. The PC government hasn't been listening for eight years, and it shows, because they haven't got a vision for the future. It shows right through because all they could have is a 2,400-year-old solution by Plato to say that experts can run the government.

They also seem not to care at all. What people are having a consensus on is that this government doesn't care. All they do prior to every election is have promises of consultation and that they will listen, but it only lasts prior to the election but never after that.

There is also a consensus, Mr. Speaker, on the fact that the people of Saskatchewan no longer trust this government. The Premier of this province can break his very words. Whether it's with the gas tax, whether it's with the E&H tax, the Premier does not live up to his words. He does not stand up to his words. He does not back up his words. How can people trust a government leader like that?

This government has made many promises and they simply cannot be trusted whether they are conned by some somebody from GigaText. So there is no trust as far as people are concerned. In other words, what we see from this PC government is absolutely no direction. There is no ideas for action that are clearly to work directly with the people of Saskatchewan. There is really only one strategy that they follow and that's the strategy of padding the pockets of foreign, large-scale companies. And the only other aspect is that they provide give-aways for them.

I would say that what we need in the future is this, Mr. Speaker: we need a new government, and what we are

seeing is a general consensus in this province that we need a new government.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: -- We need a new government, Mr. Speaker, that will respect people of this province, that will respect the different nationalities, that will respect men and women. They will respect the poor. They will respect people with disabilities. They will respect the seniors. They will respect the children of this province. That is the type of government that people want in this province.

They want a government, Mr. Speaker, that will not only listen to the people on a consultation advisory basis, they want to be able to see a government that will act on their concrete reality. They want a government that will work with them in the economic development and job creation in this province. They need a government that says yes to them and give them the economic basis to be able to do so.

They want that support whether it's at the farm area, whether it's at the business area or whether it's at the worker level or whether it's at the unemployed level. They want to be able to have a government that is honest. They want a government that they can trust.

And I think what we are seeing is a consensus. We are seeing a consensus

that in the end result this government must go. This government must go because there is a greater degree of conflict in this province the likes of which we have never seen before. There is too much give-aways to the big corporations.

It's time that we want a government that will stand beside the people of Saskatchewan, the people at the rural area, the people at the urban area, and the people of the North, and say, yes, we can move forward and not having to rely on large-scale corporations from all over the world.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: -- So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that people from northern Saskatchewan are an important part of Saskatchewan. I would like to remind this government that we have to mention the people of the North; that they are willing to work with people of the North in the long run; that it has to be stated in throne speeches, in budget speeches, and in direct action by this government.

I think that it is very important that as we move into the future, as we move into the future, that this is the direction that a new type of government will take. And I predict that there will be change all right; there will be change because the people want change. The people want this government to go, and that is the consensus of the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. McLaren: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to also congratulate Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, for her address on the throne speech last Monday night here in this Assembly. And I would also like to really congratulate my colleagues, the member from Moosomin and the member from Nipawin, for their moving and seconding speeches. They did an excellent job and I'm real proud of them.

And let me just say, as a member of the Legislative Assembly and as a representative of the constituency of Yorkton, that I am really excited and optimistic about this session of the legislature and the corner-stones that have been set up for us in the throne speech given by Her Honour. And as we begin another session, Mr. Speaker, the fourth session of the 21st legislature, I also want to mention that I consider it an honour and a privilege to rise and speak on the throne speech today.

Mr. Speaker, 1990 marks the 85th birthday of Saskatchewan, a province in Saskatchewan . . . or the province of Saskatchewan in Canada. And this throne speech sets the tone for Saskatchewan as we enter a new decade and prepare for a new century. It reflects the many, many challenges and hardships that Saskatchewan people have had to face in the past few years, but it also recognizes the achievements we have made in light of those severe difficulties. And, Mr. Speaker, this throne speech builds on the achievements we have made, emphasizes the areas which we need help, and charts a course for our future. And most importantly, this throne speech builds on a Saskatchewan tradition, a tradition of co-operation between

individuals, communities, organizations, and government.

Our whole Saskatchewan way of life was founded and has been nurtured by this tradition of partnership and consensus building. It is a tradition of optimism, courage, and conviction, and those are the qualities of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. And those are the qualities of the people in my Yorkton constituency, the people who elected me to this Assembly.

And so on behalf of my constituents and the people of this province, I want to comment on the outstanding ideas and initiatives outlined in the throne speech, ideas which are ground in Saskatchewan's heritage, and initiatives which show leadership and vision.

And Mr. Speaker, these are the times that we require leadership. We are witnessing major changes, changes at every level -- social, economic, political, national, and global. We only have to look at the newspapers or watch television to see that change is all around us. But, Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to protecting this Saskatchewan way of life, to building on our strengths, and to moving this province forward through new approaches and through progressive and innovative policies that will keep Saskatchewan on the winning edge of change. And that is what leadership is all about.

And I have listened to several speeches in the last couple of days from members of the opposition. And the member from Cumberland and the member from Riversdale have both mentioned the drastic thing that free trade has caused for Saskatchewan. Well, what utter nonsense. What utter nonsense!

(1545)

How many of those gentlemen have manufactured some items and tried to export them or sell them? None. I bet you, not one. How many have tried to trade and export into other parts of the world? Not one. I'm proud to say that I was with a company that we exported for 31 years.

And what has free trade done for us? It has got rid of a number of irritants for us. That's what it's done. We had almost free trade with farm machinery. We could ship machinery back and forth, whole machines, no problem at all at the border on the duty side of things. We had no problems with that. And we had free trade for years. The U.S. could ship machinery to Canada; we'd ship stuff back to the United States.

What happened to the farmer in Kansas that had a cultivator that we manufactured? He got it duty-free going across the border. But if he broke down with that machine, what happened then? He paid duty on every part that he had to get from us to get that machine going again. If the hydraulic cylinder blew up, we had to ship that cylinder down to that farmer; he had to pay duty on it. It took time. It couldn't get him back into the field and operating quickly again.

But what happened with hydraulic cylinders coming into Canada? The United States could ship them up here in the carloads which we used to buy, at one

time, duty-free. So it's just in that small part alone on farm machinery, it has removed all that irritant for us.

Then we get to the travel and export and trading in other parts of the world. How do we sell in Australia or Europe or Algeria?

An Hon. Member: -- Why not Asia and Latin America? There's huge markets there.

Mr. McLaren: -- Well, we will some day if that's the type of equipment they want to buy in Australia. I'm talking about our equipment that we've shipped all over the world. How do we get it into Australia? I've heard nothing about, except these holiday junkets that we're on around the world for the last eight years. And I want to tell the members opposite that in the last two or three years before I left my company, that I went to Australia four different times. We went to Europe twice. We took machinery and put it into trade shows in Algeria. Do you think we'd have been in those countries of the world if we'd have sat on our behinds on the desk in Yorkton, Saskatchewan? No way.

But we've got dealers now in France, a distributor in France. We're shipping material to Algeria. We've got people in Australia. And we had to go down there to set up dealers. We had to put on implement demonstrations. We had to set up dealership. And we ended up finally moving a man down there to live down there for five years to get the Australians trained in how to handle our equipment. You don't do it by sitting behind your desk here in Saskatchewan. You've got to go out and do it.

The same leadership, Mr. Speaker, which was built on one of the best health care systems of the world has been carried on by us and the extra money that we have put into that health care system. Just this last year we allocated in excess of 30 per cent of the provincial budget to Saskatchewan health care -- 30 per cent, Mr. Speaker, or nearly \$1.4 billion. And how that is a cut, that I've been hearing for eight years, is beyond me.

We have spent it on hospitals, long-term care, prescription drugs, special care homes, seniors' housing, which was cut out by you people opposite, drug and alcohol clinics, research, preventative programs, and the list goes on and on and on, Mr. Speaker.

And in the Yorkton constituency alone, we have created a chiropody clinic, we have given 7 million to the Yorkton Union Hospital for construction and renovations, and another 17.3 million the past year for the hospital's day-to-day operations. Yorkton is the home of Whitespruce treatment centre, Mr. Speaker, Canada's first free-standing treatment facility for addicted youths.

We would encourage the members of the opposition to go and tour that facility. Two brand-new pods which are now handling 30 clients. I was there just a couple of weeks ago, and let me tell you, it makes my heart feel good to sit down and hear the clients that are in that facility tell their story -- stories that are almost hard to believe -- and to hear what

they say and the care and the treatment that they are getting out of that facility. Just excellent. Drug abuse is a growing problem among our youth, and the prevention of drug abuse is a major priority for this government.

There's been a 40-bed addition to our nursing home in Yorkton, and the government has contributed in excess of 3.3 million to Yorkton's special care homes. These facilities, Mr. Deputy Speaker, make it possible for the elderly to remain in Yorkton near their family and friends. And since 1986 we have provided over 110 million in assistance to seniors across the province through our seniors' heritage program.

This government has done a great deal in health care. But, Mr. Speaker, the price tag attached to quality health care system is very, very high. Many people do not fully understand the actual costs of health care. They do not realize that the average daily cost for a hospitalized patient is \$330 in major hospitals. They do not realize that the average cost of childbirth is \$2,600, and that the average cost of heart surgery is \$16,000. And they do not realize that they are spending on health some \$162,000 an hour. That, Mr. Speaker, is the combined average yearly incomes of five families spent every single hour. And with the appearance of new illnesses and the advances made in health care technology, our costs are still rising.

Mr. Speaker, this government has always been committed to providing one of the best health care systems in the world actually. However we must also deal with the tremendous funding pressures associated with our health care system, so we have created Consensus Saskatchewan to study the province's reaction to the report of the Saskatchewan Commission on Directions in Health Care; consensus, Mr. Speaker, which is essential to finding solutions to the pressures facing our health care system.

And we are doing the same thing in education. Through Consensus Saskatchewan, through a partnership between home, school, community, and the government, we will ensure that Saskatchewan has educational programs in place -- programs, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that build on the strengths of our educational system; programs that give the people of this province even greater access to learning opportunities; programs that prepare us for the challenges that the future is sure to bring. Make no mistake, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that education is a high priority for this government.

Since 1982, funding for education has increased by 80 per cent. In my own constituency, this government has provided well over 64 million in the form of educational operating grants. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have spent over 5 million on educational capital expenditures, grants to construct and renovate schools like St. Paul's, St. Mary's, Yorkdale, and the regional high school, and St. Alphonsus. All this since 1982, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that is just my own constituency.

This government is not just spending money on buildings. We are also developing the innovative programs, programs that will equip our children with the knowledge and the skills to deal with our rapidly changing world, and the change of technology that is coming into the world and our country

and our province and into our local industries.

And I can think of our own facility, Morris, in Yorkton, where we have computer lathes now, where we used to have to bring in people from London, England to fix them. Now with our schooling and our chances for people to learn, we are able to start using our own work-force to repair machines, to operate them, and so on; programs like the new core curriculum which provides a solid foundation for lifelong learning; the SCAN (Saskatchewan Communications Advanced Network) program and the regional college program which offers university and technical education opportunities to people in this province and the rural areas.

Mr. Speaker, 1990 has been designated international literacy year, and it is estimated that one out of every 10 Saskatchewan residents has difficulty reading and writing, and that is 10 per cent of our population. This is something that we can't just let sit idle, Mr. Speaker. This government's efforts to fight illiteracy have been significant. By reducing drop-out rates and by providing reading skill programs, we are going to wipe out illiteracy in this province.

In conclusion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased that our government has an excellent record in all these areas, particularly in health care and education, not to mention our accomplishments in drought assistance, community development, diversification, and in the overall trend of our government to develop a strong economic base in times when this province has been rocked by one economic challenge after another.

It is interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan has had a 600 per cent increase in manufacturing. I think this says something about the efforts that we have made in the various sectors of the province. It says that this government has taken our province's future very seriously; that this government has prepared Saskatchewan for the 1990s and is preparing us for the 20th century.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan is no longer a province that is completely dependent on agriculture. Rather, Saskatchewan is now a province which has a partnership between industry and agriculture, a partnership which will continue to build on our natural strengths. So I congratulate my cabinet and caucus colleagues for putting together such a forward-looking and common sense throne speech, one that I am sure we can all build on and ensure a great future for Saskatchewan.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the people of my Yorkton constituency for their continued support, and there's no doubt in my mind that I will be supporting the motion. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to, at the very beginning of my remarks, congratulate the member from Moosomin on his speech in moving the address. Considering the subject matter and what he had to work with, I thought he did a very good job and I want to commend him for it.

As well, I want to also congratulate the member from Tisdale on his speech in seconding the motion.

An Hon. Member: -- Nipawin.

Mr. Mitchell: -- I'm sorry, Nipawin -- for seconding the motion.

Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of my remarks I want to say a few words about events in eastern Europe which have been mentioned a number of times in this House. But before doing that I'd just like to comment on one aspect of the remarks of the member from Yorkton, and that had to do with tariff on various articles that the Morris Rod-Weeder Co. was concerned with when it was trading into the United States, and the subject of tariffs generally.

I want to make certain that the member from Yorkton understands that this party, the New Democratic Party, throughout its history has been very much in favour of the idea of trade free of tariffs -- trade free of tariffs. And we have pressed on a number of fronts for many, many years for the reduction and the elimination of tariffs.

And I want to make it clear that if that agreement, that what we used to call the Mulroney-Reagan trade deal, had been about the reduction of tariffs and if that's what it was, that's all it was, we would have supported it. The problem with that agreement is that while it did take off the small number of tariffs left in trade between the United States and Canada, it did so over a period of 10 years. But it dealt with so many other things which only peripherally touch on the question of trade, if indeed they touch on the question of trade at all.

And I would remind members opposite of what they have heard before in debates in this House, that it was the parts of that agreement that dealt with energy and with investment and with services that were three especially glaring problems with that agreement. Those were chapters which in that agreement were very much to the advantage of the United States and not to the advantage of Canada, and will affect our country detrimentally for many, many years to come. And it was those aspects of the agreement that roused our party into such strong opposition for that . . . against that free trade agreement.

(1600)

There's one other aspect too, and I mention it because it's very much in the news in Saskatchewan these days, and that is the problem of countervailing duties which the American trade tribunals put on our products from time to time, and I think particularly of Saskatchewan hogs. And it was my understanding, and I think the understanding of all Canadians, that Canada went into those free trade negotiations precisely for the purpose of ensuring that the countervailing duty weapon would not be used against our traders in the future. At least, that's what the Prime Minister said. That's what the Prime Minister said.

Now the former minister of trade, the member from Regina South, indicates

by motions of his hands that I am wrong. Maybe that's why he is no longer the minister of trade. The fact of the matter is that the Prime Minister, right at the beginning, staked out that point as being the crucial reason why we were entering into negotiations that eventually led to that trade agreement.

Now I just want to conclude this part of my remarks by saying, Mr. Speaker, that we did not come anywhere near addressing that problem in the so-called free trade agreement, that in fact Canada is probably in a worse position now with respect to the use of countervail than it was before those negotiations took place. And that position, Mr. Speaker, is only going to get worse as time goes on. We see all kinds of evidence of that happening in the trade relations between our countries.

Let me just give one example of how much worse it's got. The Saferco plant, the Cargill plant at Belle Plaine that's going to be manufacturing the fertilizer. Are members opposite aware of the fact that United States fertilizer producers have already been to the U.S. Department of Commerce to complain about the product that's going to be produced in a plant where construction of the plant hasn't even commenced. That's the kind of an awkward situation Canada is in with respect to its trade relations with the United States, which, in my view, have been in many respects remarkably worse as a result of the free trade agreement.

Well I want to say that in response to some of the remarks made by the member of Yorkton, and to assure him that as far as tariffs are concerned, this party is solidly behind the idea of free trade. It's the other aspects of that agreement that we fear will do damage to Canada this year, next year, or the next hundred years, for the rest of our future, indeed.

Now I'd indicated, Mr. Speaker, that I want to say a few words about the situation in eastern Europe. And I want to say how delighted I and my friends were with the sequence of events that unfolded there over the last year or two. Who could believe some of the things that have happened there.

In Poland, for example, where we saw a totalitarian communist government just simply give up, just simply say we can't do this any more, and give up the reins of power and hand it over to the Solidarity trade union; a government saying, in effect, you do it, we can't do it any more.

And the events swept through Europe. We just briefly mention some of the countries without going into any detail. Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania where the Ceausescu regime which would seem to be so solidly rooted in that country, having control over practically every aspect of life -- falling down, just falling within a matter of days, crumbling and being swept from power. Yugoslavia, East Germany, the Baltic states, and indeed events in Russia itself happening that we in this legislature would not have believed possible a mere year ago. And these are exciting events. And all Canadians, indeed all people of the world are excited by them.

The common factors in those countries are interesting to reflect upon. They were communist countries. They were a totalitarian form of communism

-- indeed a Stalinist form, a Soviet form of communism. They were not democratic. They were autocratic and they were bureaucratic. And that's a lot of centralization and a lot of power, a government that you would think would be impervious to the will of the people, and indeed which we all criticized for being impervious to the will of the people.

And they fell. And not only did they fall, but they fell in such rapid order that you literally never knew what you were going to hear when you turned on your radio in the morning -- what dramatic event had happened in which eastern European country. One thing you were certain of, Mr. Speaker, is that there'd be something on the news that would be dramatic coming from eastern Europe.

And I, and I think all of us, asked ourselves over and over again, why? What's happening over there? What is it that's driving these events and making them happen one after another in such quick order? Governments falling, governments handing over the reins of power, governments offering concession after concession in a dizzying series of events, and yet not being able to survive.

And the answer, I think, is clear. These governments, these governments, Mr. Speaker, had lost the political support of the people of those countries. The people had lost their confidence in the ability of their government to govern, and they withdrew their support and left those governments in a position where they simply didn't have the political mandate any longer in order to do the things that a government has to do.

And the remarkable part of that, Mr. Speaker, is that this was in a totalitarian government where the governments don't have to go to the people and renew their mandate every three or four or five years, as is the tradition in this country. These are countries where governments rule for 40 years, 50 years, 70 years, without once having anything like a free election, a democratic election; where public support for those governments was just an assumed fact, a given fact, one that was beyond question.

And yet those governments were feeling this last summer very acutely, the fact that they no longer enjoyed the support of the majority of the people in their country. And history will write, Mr. Speaker, history will write that those governments crumbled and fell because the political support for their regimes crumbled and disappeared. And that, I think, is the essential factor in eastern Europe, and made inevitable the changes that have proceeded so rapidly in all of those countries.

What we had in the dying days of those governments is that they were scrambling to think of something that they could do, some action they could take, some compromise or concession they could offer that would win back enough political support for them to survive and continue. But their support had eroded to the point where there just simply was nothing they could do. They couldn't think of any action they could take in order to win back the support of the people.

And so in Poland, the general who was running the country prior to handing over to Solidarity, just simply couldn't think of one thing that he could

do in order to win back the confidence of the people. And so it was in Czechoslovakia and Romania and East Germany. East Germany's a particularly interesting case because the government there really struggled to survive -- really struggled to survive -- offered concession after concession after concession to the opposition forces, and weren't able to think of what they could possibly do in order to win back the support of those people. And so we had totally totalitarian governments, not dependent at all upon the support of the people, in our view, falling precisely because they no longer had that support. And I think that's a most interesting aspect of the events of the past year, and a lesson that all of us would do very well to reflect upon and to consider.

It's not the first time it's happened, of course. There are other examples around the world; the European democracies have this crisis of confidence that comes up every once in a while. Some of those countries have had worse problems than others. I think of Italy, for example, where the confidence of a government has been a constant issue since the Second World War. And governments rise and fall rapidly, depending upon the degree of public support for the program that they put forward.

And in our neighbour to the south, which is a stable republic -- one of the most stable republics that the world has known in terms of the way in which its government operates and the way in which it is re-elected, having a set election date -- there we saw Richard Nixon in 1974 find himself in great trouble as a result of a series of criminal acts on the part of people around him. And he found himself, in the summer of 1974, again without political support, and realized that, and tendered his resignation in a very dramatic series of events that will remain in the memory of that country for as long as it exists.

And again the lesson is the same as eastern Europe in the last summer: a government cannot govern without the support of the governed. And my colleague says it sounds familiar, and that's precisely the point I'm coming to. The lesson has direct application to this province in 1990 and has direct application to my friends opposite because, Mr. Speaker, this is a government which has lost the support of the people of Saskatchewan. We know it, they know it, and the people of Saskatchewan know it. It has lost its credibility. It has, it appears, lost its ability to govern.

The people think, Mr. Speaker, and this is confirmed in poll after poll -- little ones that we take, ones that third parties take, and I'm led to believe by polls that they themselves take -- that the people think that this is a terrible government. The government doesn't know what it's doing, and further, has no idea what it can do -- what its possibilities are, what the options are in dealing with the problems that so directly and obviously confront them.

What's caused this lack of support? What's caused this lack of support? And let me just briefly touch on what I think are some of the high points, the high disaster points that have led this government to the position that it's in.

I think that when the history of this era is written, Mr. Speaker, with

respect to this province, that the crucial factor is going to be the accumulated deficit that has been run up over the past eight years. I sincerely believe that.

I don't have to remind members opposite that the debt of this province has risen to the point where it's over \$4 billion. I don't have to remind members of this House that every year, this year alone, we're paying interest probably in excess of 400 million.

The budget for this year, the year ending at the end of this month, allocated something like \$380 million to the payment of interest, but I think clearly that's going to be exceeded. But let's use the figure \$380 million. The people of this province are becoming aware that this expenditure is being carried, that before we do anything else in this province, we've got to shell out \$380 million a year in order to pay the interest on a debt that eight years ago didn't exist.

Now we ask, and I've asked some of you opposite and some of you supporters, how come this happened? How in the world did this province, with all of its resources and all of its advantages, find itself in debt to the tune of \$4 billion, so that we each have to . . . this province has to pay 380 million a year in interest? That's over a million dollars a day, every day of the year, including Saturdays and Sundays. The first thing that happens every morning is, we shell out another million dollars to the people who lend us money, the American bankers and the European bankers and the Japanese bankers.

(1615)

How did we get in such a state? And the answer I get when I ask that question is that times are tough, times are tough. Drought, agriculture sector's in crisis. That's what he

means when he says, drought. Potash prices are in tough shape, uranium prices are in tough shape, and so on and on it goes.

Lots of excuses, but let's just face the reality, Mr. House Leader. The reality is that the revenues going into the pockets of this government are more than 70 per cent more today than they were when you took office -- more than 70 per cent more. Imagine that.

An Hon. Member: -- What about expenses?

Mr. Mitchell: -- Now the question from the Minister of Education is, what about expenses. Let me tell you about expenses. The reason why we've got a deficit is your government is spending 88 per cent more than was being spent in 1982. Now sometimes governments have to spend money, there's no question about that. But when you've got in your hands 70 per cent more money than you had a mere seven, eight years ago, wouldn't you think you'd be able to run the affairs of this government within that reality? You've had an annual increase of about 10 per cent a year and you've managed it so badly, you've handled it so incompetently, that here you find yourself in 1990 with a deficit of \$4 billion.

We go around this province, we go around this province talking to people, and the question they ask us is how in the world we are ever going to be able to pay that back. How are you going to do it?

Good question. You created the problem. Somebody over there should stand up one of these days and tell us how this province is expected to pay back the results of their incompetence over the last eight years. All kinds of people are waiting for that to happen.

Now we don't hear a word about that. That's just a subject that's not addressed. As a matter of fact, it wasn't until just about three weeks ago that we heard for the first time from the Premier that he even knew there was a deficit. In that television broadcast on March 5 he seemed to admit, for the first time as far as I am aware, that there actually is a deficit in this province.

He didn't seem to have any idea where it came from. He didn't seem to have any idea who had caused it. He certainly never accepted any responsibility for it. It's just as though he had opened the door and walked into a room for the first time and looked over and said, my goodness, where did this thing come from? Where did this terrible problem of a deficit come from? I'd better do something about that. And what did he do about it? He started to cut back some of the very things that he had implemented in order to buy power in the first place.

Now what kind of government is that, Mr. Minister? What kind of government is it that gets itself into that kind of a fix? Pretty bad government. Pretty incompetent government. And the people of this province have some time ago come to that conclusion. So as I say, I believe that when the history of this period of Saskatchewan's politics is written, that the accumulation of that deficit and this party's handling of the finances of this province will be the main reason for that lack of political support that we all know exists.

The other point that really, really shocked the people of this province was one single event, and that was the day when the then minister of Finance, the present Minister of Justice, went before the media of this province and admitted that the deficit for that year, 1986, was actually 1.2 billion and not the \$500 million that he had told them was sort of the outside estimate before the last election.

Now you sort of gloss that over, over there, and the member still seems to want to play it down as though it were not important. But walk around this province and talk to people, and you'd be amazed at the number of times that that situation is recounted, that the deliberateness of the manipulation that went into that is recounted, that the credibility of this government was scarred, damaged for ever, almost beyond redemption. Like the government of East Germany, you just can't think of anything, you just can't think of anything to be able to win back that credibility.

Now the minister makes the motion indicating that I'm sort of off beam on the point, and I want to say it again: if I'm off beam, then a huge number of people in this province are off the same beam. They're off the same

beam, because they believe that your government has lost credibility. And that situation involving the deficit in 1986 is one that sticks in their memory and sticks hard. And no matter how many times you kick your feet, Minister, it's not going to shake loose; it's going to stick right with you.

Now the other events that have caused this situation that you're in, from my perspective, is the privatization fiasco of last year. And I don't have to heap insult upon injury with respect to that one. I think you have all recognized the horrible mistake that you made in violating the wishes of the people of this province with respect to the question of the ownership of certain Crown assets. You went too far. You damaged their trust in you on this issue. You took them far beyond where anyone is prepared to go, and you have paid a huge price for that in terms of your political support.

And I could go on. The damage to the health care system. Whether the member from Yorkton knows it or not the people of this province are terribly resentful, particularly in the rural areas, about having lost the school-based dental program.

And as recently as yesterday I had a fresh complaint about the changes to the drug plan. It just never goes away. Again you can kick your feet as much as you like and it's not going to be able to shake loose. You're going to be stuck with those decisions, and stuck with them during the dying days of your mandate.

And I won't even mention the aroma in the past months involving things like GigaText and the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . gigabus, as my colleague says -- the Eagle bus situation -- and the general perception of patronage and odd dealings that surrounds this government.

However I don't have to be standing here reciting these reasons, Mr. Speaker, because my friends opposite know perfectly well that they are a government that has lost the support of the people of this province. And like the countries of eastern Europe, like President Nixon, like many of the democracies in Europe, they are going to have to face the consequences of that. They are going to have to face the consequences of it.

A last factor that I must mention though because it is so important in the dilemma in which this government finds itself is the programming and the reprogramming of the Premier that we see going on over and over again, over and over again.

The big-time pollster comes in, the big Decima crowd, and they do a poll. And they work the raw numbers, or they massage the numbers or whatever they do, and they come up with certain conclusions. And they try to figure out what are the characteristics of a leader that the people of Saskatchewan are wanting at that particular moment.

They make a list of those characteristics and then they call the Premier in and they say, now here's what the people want. They want you to be this; they want you to be that; they want you to be folksy; they want you to drop your consonants. You know, they build a profile. And then the Premier

rehearses that, and then he goes out around the province and onto the media of this province and he tries it out.

And then Decima goes to work and does another poll to find out whether this reprogrammed image is going to work or not. And if it doesn't work, they adjust this and adjust that and call him back in and rehearse him a little more and send him back out again. Now that may work for a little while.

Mr. Swan: -- . . . (inaudible) . . . leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Swan: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have this afternoon a group of 26 Brownies, age six to nine years of age. They're from the 18th Brownie club here in Regina. And it's my privilege to introduce them to you on behalf of the member for Regina Wascana. The member's away at another meeting this afternoon and was not able to be present in the Chamber during the time of your visit.

I look forward to an opportunity to meet with the Brownies and with their leaders very shortly for pictures and refreshments. I'd ask all hon. members to welcome them here, and I hope you enjoy your time in our Chamber.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

#### SPECIAL ORDER

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY (continued)

Mr. Mitchell: -- I'd also like to welcome the Brownie group today to the House, and I hope you're enjoying what's happening. We're speaking to the . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. The hon. member would like to inform our guests. However we have made a decision some time ago that we will not involve our guests in the gallery in any way at all.

Mr. Mitchell: -- No problem, Mr. Speaker. I felt particularly able to make that explanation because of my experience with the Brownies and little girls. I've got six daughters and three granddaughters -- I can never remember how many there are. That's a total of nine. Even the dog is female.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: -- I was talking about the programming and the reprogramming of the Premier. And the latest conversion, the latest reprogramming, is really something to see. This incredible new person that has now emerged

in our midst, who doesn't want to get into politics, doesn't want to have any kind of political fights, wants everybody to join in a modified version of a big love-in, and we'll all sing along to the same tunes.

I sort of like people like that if indeed they are like that. A lot of my friends are people who exhibit those very characteristics. The difference between them and the Premier is that they've exhibited those characteristics all of their lives. They didn't suddenly emerge, reprogrammed, three or four months ago with this brand-new personality. It's just a little hard for people on this side of the House to accept this newer than new, reprogrammed, brand-new Premier.

It's a little bit difficult for the people of Saskatchewan to admit that this conversion on the road to Damascus, or wherever it was, is actually real; that this newer than new, reprogrammed Premier is for real and means the things that he says. The people in this province, Mr. Speaker -- and you know this -- are very, very intelligent, particularly when it comes to political matters, and they simply will not be fooled, will not be fooled by these public relations glitzy, gimmicky reprogrammings and conversions, and the restructure of the personality of the leadership of this party.

They will remember you for all of the deeds that you have done, and they will respond to you in accordance with that.

Let me just sum that up by describing how I see the dilemma for this government -- the question of where they're at, Mr. Speaker, what kind of a position that they're in.

They lack political support, as I have mentioned. They just no longer enjoy, haven't for some time enjoyed the support of anything like the majority of people in this province. They've been running in second place for a long time, and according to some polls -- not ours, but some -- they're actually running in third place, at least in significant parts of the province.

Now I mention that, not gloating or not wanting to rub it in or anything like that, but just to measure or to indicate the depth of the political problem for them. And the result is, from our perspective, that the government has lost confidence in its ability to govern this province.

(1630)

They have no sense of purpose. They have no plan. They have no ideas, no ideas about how to attack the many problems that are facing this province now. Not the foggiest idea of what to do, Mr. Speaker, not the foggiest idea.

And that couldn't be established any clearer than by a close reading of the Speech from the Throne. That couldn't be established any clearer. That document is just remarkable in its lack of ideas, in its lack of a sense of purpose, in its complete lack of any vision or any plan or any solutions to the terrible problems that are facing our people.

Now the Premier stands in his place debating the agriculture motion the other day and he talked and talked and talked in that new way that he has. And it's just words, Mr. Speaker. If you read that speech and analyse it, it's just blah, blah, blah. He could have been saying anything at all. He didn't seem to be caring what he said as long as he was sort of conveying that smiling sort of friendly exterior.

The speech, in my submission, Mr. Speaker, just denudes the government. They stand, as it were, naked before the people. Perfectly obvious that they have no idea in how to approach the problems of this province -- no plan, no ideas.

They just throw up their hands and say, let's find 100 people in this province. Let's find 100 people and let's call it -- what is it? Consensus Saskatchewan. Con Saskatchewan. ConSask. Let's find 100 people and let's, in some process that we can't describe to you, we are just going to pick 100 people. Maybe we'll draw them by lots. Some Wednesday night on television pick 100 names out of the drum.

But in any event, we will get these 100 people in here and maybe they can do what the government can't do. Maybe they can think of something. Maybe they can find an answer to the problems in education which seem to escape the Minister of Education and the government of this province. Maybe they can find an answer to some of the problems in Social Services which have escaped the present minister and his predecessors. Maybe they can solve some of the huge problems in economic development which have eluded a dizzying array of ministers who have been thrown into that portfolio and snatched out and replaced by others for a long, long time.

The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is that the people are laughing at them. The bottom line is that the people of Saskatchewan when they have been asked to respond to this Consensus Saskatchewan idea are laughing at them. One of them even said -- and I am going to conclude on this note -- one of them is reported to have said on an open line show, I'm in favour of that idea; I'd like 100 people to be appointed to this Consensus Saskatchewan and I'd like to be one of them, and the first decision that we'd make is that there should be an election in this province.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: -- Mr. Speaker, I share the sentiments of that person and I will be supporting the amendment and voting against the motion.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's really an honour for me at this time to enter the debate on the throne speech. I'm doing so both as the Minister of Education, but also on behalf of the many citizens that live in Saskatoon Mayfair, one of the largest constituencies in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I have one of the largest constituencies in Saskatchewan in another respect as well, in the fact that we have more than 300,000

students, 30 per cent of Saskatchewan's population in this province, that were enrolled in some level of our education system over the past year. We add to this the parents, the teachers, the trustees, and various other school officials, and the conclusion is obvious -- that virtually everyone in this province has a stake in what transpires within our schools.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne is an expression of confidence in what has always been two of our key strengths in Saskatchewan, and, Mr. Speaker, those are our people and our resources. It looks to the future with new measures to build on these strengths, to help us diversify and to grow. It looks to the future of our local communities, from the smallest hamlet to the largest cities with measures that will enhance their security. And it does so in a fiscally responsible framework, Mr. Speaker.

We cannot develop our economic potential until we develop our human potential. The two go hand in hand. This means we must provide the people of Saskatchewan with the knowledge and skills they will need to prosper throughout the 1990s and on into the 21st century.

Very few other things touch so many people directly. And very few other things will have so important a bearing on Saskatchewan's future. Indeed, the strength of our social and economic fibre through the 1990s and beyond will depend on the willingness and capacity of our students to learn, and on the learning opportunities that we make available for them.

Let's consider the following, Mr. Speaker. Ninety per cent of all our scientific knowledge has been discovered during the past 30 years. It is expected that this will double again by the year 2000. Ninety per cent of all of our scientists and engineers who ever lived are still alive today. When we consider that as recently as 1975, that only 50,000 computers had ever been built anywhere in the world, now that many are sold every year.

Change is certainly not restricted just to areas of science and technology. Think of the pivotal events in world history over the past year, and others in this Chamber have alluded to that -- the changes that we've seen in eastern Europe, South Africa, Central America, and many changes, Mr. Speaker, even here in Canada. Think of how different the history books of 20 and 30 years from now will be from those that we see in the class-rooms today.

We live in a knowledge-intensive world, Mr. Speaker. The role of our school system is therefore more important than ever. One of the ways Saskatchewan education has responded to this challenge is by taking a hard look at the course content, the curriculum used in our kindergarten to grade 12 schools.

Our objective here is really twofold. We must keep our courses of study up to date so that they reflect the changing world around us. We must also not lose sight of the fundamentals of learning. The last major overhaul of Saskatchewan's curriculum, Mr. Speaker, was conducted in 1963. This meant that we were using learning tools almost three decades old to prepare our students for the 21st century.

In December 1987 my predecessor, the member for Weyburn, released plans for the implementation of a new core curriculum in Saskatchewan schools. Through core, we expect to see major improvements to the process of teaching and learning in our schools. Core reinforces the teaching of basic skills, while also introducing an expanded range of contemporary knowledge and skills. Our overall objective is providing students with knowledge that will serve them well in furthering their education in the work place, in the home, and in their communities.

To put it another way. We look at core then to provide our young people with skills and knowledge that they will need to be lifelong learners. The 21st century will belong to those who recognize that learning is a lifelong process.

Core has now had its first full year of exposure in our schools, and I am extremely pleased with the results. The reaction from both students and teachers has been very, very positive. Other provinces are commenting favourably about the substance of what we're doing and also upon the fact that this major undertaking is being effective in such an efficient, consultative manner.

Core recently received international acclaim as well. The February 1990 edition of the Phi Delta Kappa featured an article on curriculum reform in Saskatchewan. The article suggests that Saskatchewan is leading the way in Canadian education, not only in what is being developed but also in how it is being developed. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the author cites the Saskatchewan model as an excellent example of the collaborative decision-making process, calling it the hallmark of Saskatchewan education for many years.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard members on the other side of the House condemn the suggestion about Consensus Saskatchewan and the fact that this government has not been consulting with the people. Well, Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the members opposite that in the Department of Education and the development of the new core curriculum, that we have had more extensive consultation in this province than has ever gone on in the history of the province.

Let's take a look at the number of years that were involved in having hearings and meetings with all of the different stakeholders throughout the province, with the parents, with teachers, with trustees. All segments of society, Mr. Speaker, have been involved in the hearings that are developing this new curriculum. Six years I believe, Mr. Speaker, were involved in the development of it, and now 10 years for implementation.

In addition to course content, we are also actively exploring ways to improve the physical settings within which our students learn. We are meeting their day-to-day needs and also actively examining the kinds of learning facilities that the future will require.

The average life expectancy of a school facility is 35 to 50 years. This means that schools built today will still be operational well into the 21st century.

What kinds of things do we need to take into account in planning our 21st century schools? To answer this question, Mr. Speaker, last year we undertook development of the first integrated high technology teaching facility in the province at Viscount School in the town of Viscount. This is a joint project involving Saskatchewan Education, the Lanigan school division, the Saskatchewan Future Corporation, and private sector interests.

The objective is to evaluate and incorporate the latest technology for teaching and learning. Key features include extensive use of computer-based instruction and enhanced distance education capability. The school will also provide greater use of individualized instruction and improved capability for interaction with other schools.

Viscount School could serve as a prototype of what Saskatchewan class-rooms will look like in the 21st century. Similar projects are under way at Fairview School in Swift Current and Eastend School in the town of Eastend.

Mr. Speaker, projects such as these can play a major role in furthering stability in our smaller rural communities. I say this because the learning opportunities available to a rural school can be greatly enhanced through technological tools. We know of the growing concern that there is today in the rural areas of our province because of declining enrolments. We know that in some cases school boards have to make tough decisions; that they have to close schools and children have to be bused from one centre to another. This of course is very tough, tough decisions that have to be made, and we have to ensure that our children, wherever they reside in this province, have access to quality education. We must take full advantage of all that technology has to offer in planning our schools. By so doing, we can help maintain access to learning resources by all Saskatchewan students.

Mr. Speaker, the education development fund continues to provide the financial means for quantitative and qualitative improvements to our schools. More than \$75 million have been provided to Saskatchewan school divisions since EDF (education development fund) was established in 1985. More than 2,000 projects have been undertaken during this period of time.

(1645)

The education development fund has provided school divisions with more than \$12 million for computer technology alone. As a result, almost every school in Saskatchewan now has computers available for instructional purposes. And, Mr. Speaker, you could go into schools found in so many different areas of the province, whether you look at some of the Hutterite schools where you have a one-room class-room, whether you look at some of our northern schools like Cumberland House, whether you look at larger schools that you would find in our larger centres, and you'll find young people from kindergarten right on up that have access to computers and learning all that there is to learn about them.

This fund, Mr. Speaker, has provided some classic examples of technological

change and how it can open the doors to new learning opportunities for students. For example, a Braille computer is now available for visually impaired students. New Canadians now have computer programs that teach appropriate pronunciation and spelling. Gifted learners, students requiring remedial assistance, and youths facing career choices all benefit from computer-based instruction. All benefit from having state of the art learning tools at their disposal thanks to the education development fund which was initiated by this government, Mr. Speaker, in 1985.

The education development fund was designed to provide school divisions with resources for upgrading their learning resources, improving school efficiency and improving the quality of educational programs. It has performed admirably on all fronts. Bear in mind that the \$75 million provided through EDF is over and above the regular capital and operating grants provided for our kindergarten to grade 12 school system.

The development of our human potential must be done without exception. By this I mean that accessibility must continue to be central to the development and delivery of learning opportunities at all levels of the school system. The doors to our schools cannot be closed to those disadvantaged by geographic location or socio-economic circumstance. Towards this end we will continue to give education in northern Saskatchewan the high priority it deserves.

Over the past few years, steps have been taken to resolve problems related to governance of education in the North, administrative problems, if you like. Bringing the board of the Northern Lights School Division closer to the people it serves, has been one such measure, Mr. Speaker.

More recently, we have focussed our attention on how to improve the quality and delivery of educational services to northern residents. The latter part of November, I had the opportunity to visit some of the schools in the North, Mr. Speaker, and I was very impressed with the quality of education that I saw taking place there.

Early in 1988, a northern education task force was established to examine issues on northern education. Ten public meetings were held throughout the North, along with two radio phone-in shows conducted in English and in native languages. Thirty-nine written submissions were also received. In addition, an interim report was provided by the task force to over 200 stakeholders in northern education, for their reactions and comments.

The final task force report was presented to me in November of last year. It provides a summary of concerns and comments by Northerners, along with specific recommendations for change at all levels of the school system.

Mr. Speaker, it's clear from the report that Northerners recognize that education is the key to economic and social progress. They also recognize that steps must be taken to keep students in school, and allow those who do leave prior to graduation the opportunity to re-enter. The report highlights the need for increased emphasis on the teaching of native languages, along with the need to increase parental and community involvement in northern schools.

The task force also recommends development of training programs for teachers in native languages. Other recommendations call for the development of a guidance counselling program, along with measures to combat substance abuse, and improve literacy rates in the North.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that we have already acted upon some of the task force recommendations, and will act on others in the very near future. For example, a pilot project is in place that gives young adults in northern Saskatchewan, who've not completed high school, another opportunity to do so. The native counsellor training program, the guidance counsellor pilot project, and the just announced northern student awards program are all measures developed in direct response to task force recommendations.

In the same vein, we will continue to provide a full range of programs to meet the special needs of Indian and Metis students. Towards this end, we now have in place a new Indian and Metis education advisory committee to provide me with advice on the development and implementation of improved programs of instruction. A new Indian and Metis education policy for kindergarten to grade 12 was adopted just this past year. The policy provides a comprehensive framework for the development of Indian and Metis education in provincial schools.

The principle of accessibility must be universal. It must take into account that while everyone has the ability to learn, not everyone learns at the same pace or in the same environment. For this reason we will continue to provide special education programs for children with various disabilities, as well as those with above average learning ability. Over the past year, new policy guide-lines for the education of gifted learners were completed and implemented. A workshop was held for teachers and others working with visually impaired children.

The task force on education for the deaf submitted its report, a document that will help determine the future direction of education services for the deaf and the hearing-impaired. This January, a new advisory committee on deaf education was established, in keeping with the recommendation of the task force report. The committee will provide advice on policies and programs for deaf education in Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that has to be dealt with within the next couple of years, in that we have to consider that today over 80 per cent of those children who are hearing disabled are now being served in regular school systems.

We have to consider then the operation of the school for the deaf. We have to consider the quality of education that these children need and where this can best be delivered. And those are some of the things that the advisory committee are going to be dealing with.

Natives, Northerners, the disabled, all of these then have programs that are in place to address special needs. And we will continue to improve existing programs and develop new ones with the objective of ensuring that

our school doors always remain open to them.

We have to consider that there are other programs that have been developed, Mr. Speaker, in the last while, which meet concerns or needs of today, and I would refer specifically to the after-care program in Saskatoon at Marion M. Graham Collegiate which is now just going into operation, where young people who have problems with drug and alcohol and who have received treatment at Whitespruce will now have a program that will enable them in integrating back to regular class-room settings as time goes on. This is a program that is needed today and it's a joint effort with Health and Education.

Another program that meets a concern of today is the program for teen moms that was started up a year and a half ago at Mount Royal Collegiate in Saskatoon. We recognize that young people today have many problems that they have to deal with and we have to be there to help them deal with these problems and ensure that they have an opportunity to continue with their education.

In addition, to those with special needs the principle of accessibility must also encompass physical distance. Distance can represent a barrier to education for Northerners and those in rural Saskatchewan in particular. We have responded to this need in a number of ways.

A regional college network is now an integral part of our post-secondary system, relied upon by more than 30,000 adults annually to meet their learning needs. There are now nine regional colleges with 26 sub-offices all over Saskatchewan, from Creighton to Shaunavon, from Kindersley to Yorkton. These now form the backbone of our adult education system in rural Saskatchewan by providing improved access to post-secondary education and other learning opportunities.

Students living outside of major urban centres can pursue their education without making a major move to Regina or Saskatoon. This not only furthers the goal of accessibility but it promotes the objective of stable rural communities.

And, Mr. Speaker, when we consider the tremendous costs that young people have to undergo today in moving to Saskatoon or Regina to take their university or to attend SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), we can see that this will improve the accessibility if they can live at or close to the facility, such as the regional colleges, where they can have access to more first- and second-year university courses as well as courses from SIAST.

We also know that because of some of the quotas that exist at the University of Saskatchewan, that there are cases where students have to have a fairly high average before they have any opportunity to get into some of the colleges. This of course will mean now that more of these students can have access because they will only need to have an average, in most cases, of only 65 per cent.

The new field support services division of the Education department

achieves a similar purpose. The division was established in June of last year and its purpose is to work directly with local school divisions in carrying out department programs. The division provides a way for my department to reach out into local communities and work more closely with schools on all matters relating to public education.

Some things do not change, Mr. Speaker. Successful delivery of educational programs will continue to depend upon effective communication between Saskatchewan education, parents, school officials, and the community at large. The field support services division furthers this end. We will continue to provide conventional forms of distance education such as university extension courses and correspondence school programs. But we are also actively applying today's technological tools to the distance barriers that Saskatchewan's demographic and geographic mix can present.

For example, the Saskatchewan Communications Advanced Network, or SCAN, was established to co-ordinate access to SaskTel's communication network. SCAN's primary objective is creation and operation of a state of the art education information network for Saskatchewan. Within five years I expect that more than 75 centres all over Saskatchewan will be linked by the SCAN network.

Educational programming will include some university and technical institute courses. There will also be literacy courses, inservice education for teachers in outlying areas, professional development courses, and vocational classes.

Along with providing improved access to learning opportunities, SCAN will also carry information on other topics such as agriculture, health, and culture. It can therefore represent another means of keeping our local communities intact. Instead of local residents leaving the community to acquire information, SCAN brings information to the community.

Mr. Speaker, development of our human potential can take many forms in addition to academic learning. We will continue to provide ways for all those who want to learn to develop their potential here as well. For example, state of the art skill training is available through campuses of the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology. Since 1982 SIAST's training capacity has increased by 28 per cent, or about 1,350 seats.

The number of courses offered off campus in rural communities has also increased dramatically. Today's technical institutes must be able to respond quickly to changing technologies and shifts in employment demand. SIAST has the autonomy and the flexibility to do so. We will continue to work with SIAST, Mr. Speaker, to ensure effective delivery of skill training programs.

We will also continue to work on innovative ways of providing skill training such as the highly successful training to employment programs for Northerners. The provision of training through human resource development agreements with the private sector have also borne fruit. They exemplify what can be done when government and the private sector work together

towards a common goal.

Mr. Speaker, learning of any kind begins with the ability to communicate. Students of any age cannot learn if they cannot read, speak, or listen. The year 1990 is the International Literacy Year. And this is a time when we take a look at the programs and the problems that exist here in the province of Saskatchewan.

And we also have to take a look at the world-wide problem that exists out there today, Mr. Speaker, where today that we know that almost one-quarter of the world's adult population lack basic literacy skills. More than 100 million school-age children have no schools or other facilities within which to learn, while others have no reading material available away from school to hone their skills.

We in this province are extremely fortunate by comparison. Nevertheless, 145,000 Saskatchewan adults, almost 20 per cent of our adult population, have less than a grade 9 education. Many of them have difficulty with reading and writing, and some in fact are illiterate. This represents a loss of human potential that we cannot afford. And it represents a travesty of social justice in that so many are disenfranchised from the knowledge intensive world that surrounds them, not to mention the pure pleasure that reading affords.

We have a major campaign under way in this province to upgrade literacy skills for Saskatchewan adults. In 1988 we entered into a three-year, \$2.5 million agreement with IBM Canada Ltd. to introduce computer-based literacy instruction to Saskatchewan. This represents the first major application of such instruction anywhere in Canada.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.