

March 28/90

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Prebble: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on Friday next move:

That this Assembly calls on the Government of Saskatchewan to implement a comprehensive plan to address the root causes of the growing poverty and hunger problems in Saskatchewan, and in particular to address the need for school lunch programs, full employment strategies, special housing and health care needs, improved income support programs, and the unique problems of northern Saskatchewan.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Wolfe: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the Assembly, a couple of honoured guests -- my aunt and uncle, Dr. Bernard Wolfe and Elene Wolfe from London, Ontario. Dr. Wolfe is an endocrinologist at Western, and his wife Elene is a microbiologist. I'd like to ask all members of the House to welcome these guests of mine.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Funding for Education

Ms. Atkinson: -- My question today is to the Minister of Education. Mr. Minister, you will know that there has been a clear consensus developed around the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association proposal calling on your government to implement a 60 per cent-40 per cent cost-shared funding of education by 1992.

Mr. Minister, these are letters from school trustees from across the province, calling on your government to start paying its fair share. Obviously, Mr. Minister, a consensus has been developed around 60 per cent funding on the part of the provincial government. Can you say today, and can you tell the trustees, parents, and taxpayers today, that you are going to implement this particular recommendation?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Speaker, I have as well received many letters and I've had discussions with the president of the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association with regard to changing the formula. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that this government is paying about the same portion of the operating costs of school boards in this province that has been in place for many, many years, in fact going back into the 1970s.

So I have indicated, Mr. Speaker, that we are willing to look at the formula. If in fact we take a look at all of the expenditures or all of the moneys that go to school boards in the province, if we include the payments that go for teacher pensions and dental programs and so on, the fact of the matter is that we are paying approximately 57 per cent of the total bill today, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: -- New question to the minister. Mr. Minister, it is a well documented fact that your government has cut your share of educational funding from an average of 55 per cent in 1982 to less than 50 per cent in 1989. These letters talk about the importance of your government's cuts or the effects of your government's cuts on students, teachers, communities, and taxpayers all across this province.

School trustees want to know, Mr. Minister, whether your government will commit itself to funding 60 per cent of the cost of education in this province by 1992.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated to the hon. member, I have passed on word to the president of the school trustees association that we're willing to take a look at this. Obviously there's a lot of discussion that will have to take place. There are a lot of different factors that have to be taken into consideration. If we consider teacher pensions, dental programs, and group insurance programs, we are paying much more than 50 per cent today.

I could also point out, Mr. Speaker, that when the trustees talk about a 60-40 formula that we have to take into consideration if they also mean that we should be moving to a 60-40 formula for capital construction of which the government now pays 80 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: -- Mr. Minister, the SSTA's (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association) position is supported by school divisions in Wakaw, Kamsack, Shaunavon, Moosomin, Potashville, Buffalo Plains, Hudson Bay, Saskatoon, Canora, Meadow Lake, Turtleford, Thunder Creek, Weyburn, Blaine Lake, and the list goes on and on and on and on. This is a consensus, Mr. Minister. This is a consensus, and I want to know, are you going to listen to the school trustees in this province or aren't you?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's only a matter of whether I'm listening to the trustees. I don't think the member has been listening to what I have been saying. I've indicated twice that we are going to be discussing this with the trustees and with those representatives from SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) and SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association), but there are a lot of details that have to be looked at in this.

It's not a simple matter to say that we are going to change the formula. I think that if people want to consider changing the formula, then we have to consider where the money is going to come from. Do people want to see the gas tax increased, for example, 3 cents a litre, to make up the difference? Or would they like to see income taxes go up by 10 per cent? Mr. Speaker, it's an easy thing for the member to stand in her place and suggest that this is the direction in which we should be going. We will work with the trustees and the other representatives in the future to look at this.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: -- New question to the Minister of Education. Mr. Minister, some of these documents and letters that have been sent to MLAs from across this province outline the impact of your program cuts and your funding cuts on education in this province. For instance, in Yorkton they had to reduce 17 professional staff in the 1988 school year because of a lack of provincial funding. For instance, in Herbert school division they had to cut seven teachers who no longer contribute to the local provincial economy or local economies because of your government's cuts in educational spending.

Mr. Minister, you have received a press release from the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, and LEADS (League of Educational Administrators) outlining very clearly that they want to see the Government of Saskatchewan move to a 60 per cent financing of education in this province by 1992. That is a tremendous consensus, Mr. Minister. And I want to know today: will you or will you not move towards a 60 per cent funding of education in this province by 1992?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Speaker, for the fourth time, I will indicate again that we will be discussing this with the trustees and the other representatives in the province to look at moving towards a difference in the formula. But it is not a very, very simple matter to deal with.

With regard to cuts in education that the member is talking about, that's totally untrue, Mr. Speaker. Over the last eight years of this government in power we have increased the budgets, the operating grants to school boards, every year, Mr. Speaker. We are adding more and more money to the school budgets through the educational development fund as well as other specialized funding for special education. So for her to stand in her

place and say that we have had cut-backs is just total nonsense.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Regulation of Private Vocational Schools

Mr. Rolfes: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is also to the Minister of Education. And Mr. Minister, my subject refers to the private vocational schools and the lack of action that your government has taken in the last three years which has developed, in our educational system, a deplorable, and simply an intolerable situation as far as private vocational schools are concerned.

Mr. Minister, about three years ago we asked on this side of the House, did you develop some guide-lines for private vocational schools? And you simply have not done that.

These private vocational schools are charging large tuition fees. The product that they are delivering is simply not acceptable out by the business industry. And, Mr. Minister, the students who graduate from the schools' so-called graduation do not have any enhanced skills to get into the work-force.

Mr. Minister, my question to you is simply this: when are you going to stop the victimizing of these students by some of the private vocational schools, and when can the public out there expect some stringent guide-lines and regulations pertaining to private vocational schools? When can they hear that from you, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's question with regard to private vocational schools because there have been some concerns raised in the last few months. The fact of the matter is that action was taken by my predecessor back in February of 1989 to set up a special committee to look into the operation of vocational schools. This committee that has been set up has broad representation on it. They have now come forward with recommendations. There are new regulations that are being drafted and, Mr. Speaker, they will be out very shortly.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Speaker, new question to the minister. Mr. Minister, may I remind you that the member from Prince Albert, when he was the critic for post-secondary education in 1987, almost three years ago, asked the then minister of Education to do something about the victimizing of students by private vocational schools. It's almost three years.

Mr. Minister, while you are procrastinating there are students out there that are being saddled with large student loans -- large student loans. The certificates that they are getting are worthless because they are not recognized by the industry. And, Mr. Minister, they don't have any way of paying off those student loans. Mr. Minister, many of those individuals

are people who you have forced off the welfare rolls, and now you let them out there to fend for themselves.

I'm asking you again, Mr. Minister, what are you going to do to help those students who have no way of paying off those student loans? What are you going to do to help those students renegotiate their loans and have a way of paying off those loans. What are you going to do about it?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that the member opposite generalizes with regard to discussion of the private vocational schools. There have been some problems in the past; I readily admit that. I will also suggest to the member opposite he's fully aware of the fact that one of the private vocational schools was shut down last fall because they were not following all of the criteria. And we have looked at others in the province.

But the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that with all of the private vocational schools that there are in this province, that there are very, very few complaints coming forward from students that are attending those courses.

Now I certainly, as the member opposite, am also concerned with the fact that there are students, number one, that are getting into some of the colleges that should not be getting in because they do not meet the criteria, do not have the proper qualifications.

I am also concerned about the courses that are being offered, that they be quality programs.

And the third area that I am concerned about is the fact that we have quality instructors.

Mr. Speaker, those problems are being addressed. There are new regulations that will be out very, very shortly. We're also looking at new criteria with regard to the qualifications or criteria that private vocational schools have to meet before students can be eligible for student loans. They will be in place by the August 1 this summer, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: -- A new question to the minister. I want to remind the minister again that Bridge City College was closed after much protestation on this side of the House. I also remind the minister that Bridge City College got \$1 million in student loans last year from your department.

And, Mr. Minister, let me remind you, while you're saying to my colleague there is no money for education, private vocational schools last year got \$22.2 million -- \$22.2 million in student loans from your department. And many of those students have certificates today which aren't recognized by the business industry. They are saddled with huge student loans and you are doing nothing, Mr. Minister, to help those students.

Mr. Minister, I have indicated to you that some of those private vocational schools are simply not putting out a program that is worthwhile. My question to you, Mr. Minister, is this . . . My question to you, Mr. Minister, is this: will your committee also look into the possibility of restructuring those loans for students who were on welfare and have no way of paying back those loans? And also those students who have received worthless certificates -- is that committee going to make some recommendations for restructuring of those loans who were victimized because of your inaction, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Speaker, we have one of the best student loan programs in this country, and I don't think that for the member to stand in his place and suggest that it's in any way unfair, that's just not accurate at all. Many of the loans that these particular students are getting are not ones that they have to pay back; there's a lot of forgiveness with regard to them. And certainly there are concerns in some cases where maybe they have not been able to complete programs.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that in all cases that we can stand beside the students and ensure that they are taking a good look at the courses that are being offered. I think they have a responsibility in that regard too.

So we are looking at them as I suggested. There are new regulations that are coming down, and we are clamping down on some of the colleges. The colleges themselves are very, very anxious to ensure that they are providing good programs and they have improved, I think in many ways, some of the systems or the ways in which they've been operating.

But for the most part, Mr. Speaker, the private vocational schools that are operating in this province have excellent programs, they are meeting the needs that are out there, and when the students are finished they are getting jobs, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Dispute at Northlands Regional College

Mr. Goulet: -- Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education. Mr. Minister, you will know that the Northlands . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order.

Mr. Goulet: -- Mr. Minister, you will know that the Northlands Career College, located throughout northern Saskatchewan, has had rotating work stoppages for the past seven weeks. Students have also been locked out of classes.

The central issue in this dispute is wage parity for the administration support staff who work there. For instance, a clerk typist in Creighton is

paid \$1,266 for doing the same job as an employee in La Ronge, who is paid \$1,382. This is a difference over \$100. This doesn't sound like an insurmountable problem. What is your department doing to correct this situation?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Speaker, it's not up to my department to be taking any steps with regard to this situation. The negotiations that are going on are between the Northlands regional college and its staff. And I think if the member would check, I would think that he would find that the parity issue has already been agreed to by both parties.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: -- A new question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, students at Northlands have lost valuable class time as a result of this dispute. Given the terrible job situation in the North, they cannot afford to have anything interfere further on with their education.

Mr. Minister, the students are very, very concerned about their classes and their job prospects. What arrangements have you made for catch-up or extensions to the missed classes?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Speaker, we haven't made any arrangements with regard to lost time, in the same way that we didn't make any arrangements with regard to lost time when the SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) instructors were out. But I understand that that has gone very well, that those students have now made up the time, and they will be finishing their programs on schedule.

I would assume that the same thing might be possible in Northlands, but I would also point out to the minister that it takes two sides to negotiate. So I think that it's important that both sides do get back to the table and get a resolve to this dispute, because it's unfortunate that the students are caught in the middle and are missing out on their courses.

Sexual Assault Case at Swift Current

Ms. Simard: -- Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice. Mr. Minister, you'll know the circumstances surrounding the young woman in Swift Current who, after lodging a complaint of sexual assault against two local hockey players, was herself charged with mischief and the charge against the two hockey players was dropped. She was later acquitted of mischief charges and it appears to have ended there. But I think, Mr. Minister, most Saskatchewan people feel this case has very serious ramifications, and we are wondering whether you're looking into the matter?

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- The answer is yes.

Ms. Simard: -- Mr. Minister, whether it was intended or not, this case

sends a very serious and very regrettable message to women in our society. And that message is, is that if you've been a victim of sexual assault, you had best not bring charges because it might be you rather than your attackers who are charged or who face a criminal charge.

We know that many women who have been victimized in a sexual assault charge, Mr. Minister, have a lack of faith in our legal system, and instances such as this just cause to reinforce that lack of faith, Mr. Minister. To show women that the justice system does work, we ask you to open up a full public inquiry into the Swift Current events, and we are wondering whether you are prepared to do that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Well I share the hon. member's concern as to how women, in particular, but others deal and how they feel about the justice system and whether they have confidence in the justice system. I may remind the hon. member that it was this government that changed the policies on prosecution with regard to, for example, battered women, so that the charges would be proceeded with.

I do indicate to the hon. member that there is another principle involved, and in no way to demean what you have raised, and that is the independence of the prosecutors and prosecutorial judgement, and that is obviously a matter of concern, I would think, shared by the hon. member.

We are looking at the situation that did arise in Swift Current; I'm not unsympathetic to the general points you make. I do have to balance the other side of a difficult question on the independence of the prosecutors and the ability of them to exercise their judgement.

Ms. Simard: -- Mr. Minister, you said that you . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. I must interrupt the hon. member because there have been several members now that have done this. We know that all the remarks to the Assembly should be directed through the Speaker, and in the last days or two some members have been forgetting that. I just bring that to your attention so that we don't get into a general debate between members.

Ms. Simard: -- Mr. Speaker, new question. Mr. Minister, you indicated that you were looking into the matter. I'm just wondering if you can tell us the extent of your investigation and when you will have made a decision as to whether or not you're going to take any action and whether or not you'll be reporting to the House.

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- I cannot answer that. I'll wait for . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. I have just mentioned to the hon. member from Regina Lakeview, and I'm now drawing it to your attention, sir.

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- I apologize, Mr. Speaker. If I may respond to the hon. member, I have asked for a report from my officials. I will not commit. If the advice from the prosecutors is that that is not a matter to be made public, then I would be persuaded by that.

I do want to indicate as well that we do have a policy in the province of the prosecutorial independence. And I do want to raise with you in response to your question about a full public inquiry, I have some concerns, and I'll be quite candid, whether the particular individual charged should go back through any type of an adversarial process or whether she has to go through interrogations again in terms of questioning. I may have to make a decision ultimately that that may of itself not be a wise approach. So the question of a full public inquiry, I think, is fraught with some potential unfairness, particularly to the one that was charged.

Ms. Simard: -- New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, the lawyer for the particular woman involved has called for a public inquiry. Mr. Minister, you've received a full report on the case from the defence lawyer, and I believe his letter and the statements of the presiding judge open up a number of areas of question which are not addressed, such as: who decided to bring the mischief charge? What was it based on? Why were the other charges dropped and never pursued? And was a double standard shown in the handling of the case? And yes, the independence of prosecutors is also an issue, as raised by the lawyer for the woman.

All these questions, Mr. Minister, have to do with possibility of holding our justice system up to disrepute -- up to disrepute -- and therefore they must be answered, Mr. Minister, in the fullest possible manner. And that's why it is important that we have a public inquiry and that you come to the House and report on your findings with respect to your investigation.

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- I'm fully aware, Mr. Speaker, of the requirement of confidence and the need for all of us to have confidence in the justice system. I also, in my role as Attorney General of the province of Saskatchewan, have to take into account some other principles involved, including the matter of prosecutorial independence and prosecutorial judgement. I have to take into account whether in some cases individuals may in fact be hurt by an inquiry, as to whether it's necessarily the best approach.

I prefaced my remarks today by sharing the concern of the hon. member that certainly the justice system must be seen in a way that people have confidence in it. It's a difficult situation that arose in Swift Current, but I'm also not prepared, and I don't think it advisable, to make it a matter of some political debate -- a difficult question, and I have asked for a report from my officials, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 1 -- An Act to amend The Environmental Management and Protection Act with respect to Ozone

Mr. Tchorzewski: -- Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Environmental Management and Protection Act with respect to Ozone.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 2 -- An Act respecting Family and Community Services

Hon. Mr. Martin: -- Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill respecting Family and Community Services.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 3 -- An Act respecting Custody of, Access to and Guardianship of Property of Children, Child Status and Parentage and Related Matters

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill respecting Custody of, Access to and Guardianship of Property of Children, Child Status and Parentage and Related Matters.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 4 -- An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments to Certain Acts resulting from the enactment of The Child and Family Services Act

Hon. Mr. Neudorf: -- Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill respecting the Consequential Amendments to Certain Acts resulting from the enactment of The Child and Family Services Act.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 5 -- An Act respecting Child and Spousal Maintenance and Consequential Amendments resulting therefrom

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill respecting Child and Spousal Maintenance and Consequential Amendments resulting therefrom.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 6 -- An Act to amend The Dependants' Relief Act

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Dependants' Relief Act.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 7 -- An Act to amend The Intestate Succession Act

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Intestate Succession Act.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 8 -- An Act respecting the Survival of Certain Causes of Action

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill respecting the Survival of Certain Causes of Action.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 9 -- An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Act

Hon. Mrs. Smith: -- Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Act.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: -- Mr. Speaker, prior to orders of the day, I'd seek leave of the House to introduce a couple of motions that would change or substitute the government members on the committees of public accounts and Crown corporations.

Leave granted.

MOTIONS

Substitution of Names on Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: -- Mr. Speaker, I would like to move, with leave, seconded by the member for Yorkton:

That the names of Mr. Swan, Mr. Britton, Mr. Baker, Mr. Muller, and Mr. Sauder be substituted for the names of Mr. Muirhead, Mr. Neudorf, Mr. Martin, Mr. Martens, and Mr. Wolfe on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Motion agreed to.

Substitution of Names on Standing Committee on Crown Corporations

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: -- Mr. Speaker, I would also like to move, seconded by the member for Yorkton:

That the names of Mr. Gerich, Mr. McLaren, Mr. Muirhead, Mr. Petersen, and Mrs. Duncan be substituted for the names of Mr. Baker, Mr. Britton, Mr. Muller, Mr. Sauder, and Mr. Swenson on the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Motion agreed to.

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.

Mr. Brockelbank: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I rose to begin my remarks on the throne speech, and in all sincerity, I complimented the member from Turtleford in the speech that he had given prior to my rising. Therein rises an inconsistency, Mr. Speaker, and it has to do with the actions of the Premier of this province.

The Premier last year brought about the lottery and bingo tax, which was a straight money grab. The consequential impact of that new tax which the Premier brought in was swift and direct. It was swift and direct on Sask Sport. Sask Sport this year has a 20 per cent cut in their budget, and 1200 students that would normally attend the summer school of the arts, a program which has been in effect for about 20 years, have been cut. That program's been cut.

So the question for the people of Saskatchewan is: are we to believe the fine speeches given by the member for Turtleford or are we to believe the harsh actions of the Premier of this province -- a member of the same Executive Council as the member for Turtleford -- whose harsh actions had a direct and drastic impact on Sask Sport, the body which funds the very cultural things that the minister from Turtleford was referring to and expounding on in his comments?

That is a not a difficult question for the people of Saskatchewan to answer, and I believe they have the answer now. They believe the harsh actions of this Premier, in implementing the lottery tax, the lottery and bingo tax grab, and having the direct impact on Sask Sport and the results thereof.

I wanted to say a few words about the constituency of Saskatoon Westmount, Mr. Speaker. It's been a great pleasure for me to represent that constituency in this legislature for many years now, with one short interruption. And when I wasn't representing that area of the city in this legislature, I had the honour to represent those people in the council in the city of Saskatoon, and I don't want to let the opportunity pass to be able to say to those people that I've appreciated their support over the many years that they've given me the support, and I also want to comment that I think they have a fine sense of political judgement.

I cannot let this opportunity pass, Mr. Speaker, without making some comments about the Mulroney PCs at Ottawa, the Mulroney PC government at Ottawa -- the serious and costly impact on our Saskatchewan way of life economically and culturally, the disquiet of the GST (goods and services

tax), Meech Lake, exceeded only by the negative impact of the Mulroney free trade deal and the Saskatchewan farm crisis. As if that were not enough, Mr. Speaker, and I repeat from last evening, Saskatchewan people are bedevilled by the terrible Tory twin MPs from Ottawa -- Benoi pît and Lucien Bouchard.

Benoi pît Bouchard perpetrated the great VIA Rail train robbery on the province of Saskatchewan. The full impact of the loss of VIA passenger service to Saskatchewan is not known yet on increased unemployment, on increased personal travel costs for people in Saskatchewan, on increased provincial highway costs for the province of Saskatchewan, and on inconvenience to the travelling public in Saskatchewan, especially seniors and people on lower income.

Some may remember how the PC MPs, I might say, while in opposition in Ottawa protested the VIA Rail cuts by the Liberal government in 1981. The PC Party started up a task force at that time. And the task force was called, "The Last Straw." I have a copy of the task force here. It was headed up by none other than the hon. chairman, Don Mazankowski, privy counsellor, Member of Parliament, chairman of the task force on rail passenger service, of the Conservative Party, October 1981.

The recommendations of that task force are quite interesting and enlightening, I'm sure, to the people of Saskatchewan who are interested in rail passenger transportation in Saskatchewan. The second recommendation in the task force report reads:

The task force believes the federal government has a responsibility to ensure that rail passenger service in Canada be retained, modernized, and expanded as part of our national transportation system.

And in fact the Conservative Party in Ottawa went into the election campaign with that on their mast-head. They were going to improve and expand passenger service, specifically VIA Rail. Further on, the report reads:

The government's current policy of increasing the level of subsidization .
. .

Of course the Tories here in opposition are talking about the Liberal government when they say:

The government's current policy of increasing the level of subsidization for other modes of transportation while decreasing the support for rail passenger service is extremely short-sighted and totally out of tune with Canadian transportation needs and concerns regarding energy conservation, urban sprawl, pollution and safety.

The Conservatives of this day only need to look at their own charts in the report to get some leads on energy conservation, for example -- one of the points they mention in their recommendation. If you check the chart that they enclosed in the task force report, you will find that they've rated the energy requirements in BTUs (British thermal units) per seat-mile on

different forms of transportation.

The three lowest are electric train, diesel train, and current train equipment, and they refer to the Rapido. The next one, the next most efficient is inter-city bus, and then the fourth most efficient is a Volkswagen Rabbit diesel car with four people in it.

You might be interested in noting, Mr. Speaker, that that same Volkswagen diesel car with only the driver in it is more than triple the inefficiency of the Volkswagen with four people in it. So the Progressive Conservative government, when it got into power, completely ignored its own task force report.

It goes on to say, it recommends the development of a national transportation policy which favours not only continued federal support, but indeed a stronger commitment for VIA Rail, and in particular increased funding for their capital investment and infrastructure -- exactly diametrically opposed to what the Conservative government did when they got into power.

The task force recommends the establishment of a special parliamentary committee with power to conduct hearings across Canada as it deems necessary. Without restricting the generality of this mandate, the committee should be empowered to -- and it lists a number of things, Mr. Speaker -- examine all aspects of VIA Rail's existing passenger routes in all regions of Canada to determine the relationship in terms of support and priority with all other modes of transportation; hear all witnesses necessary to determine the rail passenger policy consistent with the needs of the travelling public, including transcontinental, inter-city and commuter services; call upon all necessary legal, regulatory, technical and financial expertise for the committee to carry out its duties.

And this task force report goes on with further recommendations.

(1445)

Today, Mr. Speaker, the shoe is on the other foot. The PCs are the Ottawa government and the Liberals are in opposition. Last year the PC government rammed through the VIA Rail passenger cuts without consultation, contrary to its recommendations in the task force report; without consensus, contrary to its recommendations in its own task force report.

The Ottawa PCs completely forgot or ignored or both, their 1981 task force report, "The Last Straw."

Meanwhile, right here in the province of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Tory government was so compliant that their federal cousins acted on VIA Rail abandonment without fear of interruption from them -- not a word out of the Saskatchewan Tories.

Mr. Speaker, the irony of the Ottawa Tory government now ignoring their own task force recommendation is only exceeded by them establishing a royal commission on national passenger transportation after, Mr. Speaker -- and I

said after, Mr. Speaker -- after they have sacked VIA passenger service.

Soon, on April 11 of this year, that royal commission will be here for -- dare I say it? -- consultation. Ottawa Tories, in power since 1984, finally moving six years later. Maybe we should be thankful for small mercies such as consultation, late, and after VIA's abandonment. Maybe, maybe we should be thankful.

The other terrible Tory twin was Lucien Bouchard, has stumbled all over his feet -- and indeed Saskatchewan feet too -- on environmental matters. The on-again, off-again Rafferty-Alameda environmental hearings will be recorded in history as a classic Conservative bungle. Again, Conservatives at Ottawa and Regina are causing endless frustration, millions of wasted taxpayer dollars, regardless of what happens from this point onward on the Rafferty-Alameda situation. Again, Mr. Speaker, yet another example of PC governments at Ottawa and Regina proceeding without consultation and without consensus.

Mr. Speaker, could one conclude that Tory twins are terrible twins? Possibly. Could we also conclude that twin Tory governments at Ottawa and Regina are terrible for Saskatchewan? Well, I suppose we'll find out about that. Massive federal neglect or adverse decision making cannot be ignored; however, in due course, in due course, Mr. Speaker, we must turn our attention directly to Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, following closely on the heels of the GigaText scandal in 1989 is an altogether new development. Before I get into that GigaText Tory scandal, I note that the GigaText scandal has made it into the "Believe it or Not" column on the Report on Business magazine in March 1990.

This Globe and Mail magazine has a page called Spectrum, and I have that page out of The Globe and Mail. I am sure the members will be interested in hearing about it. It's headed up "Spectrum: Statistical Lore for Everyday Living". What these are, Mr. Speaker, is astounding facts and figures to confound the minds of the people.

I'll give you an example of one. Did you know that the combined military budget in 1987 of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Pact was \$957 billion? Interesting figure.

Let me go on to another one. The price paid at a London auction for a red 1962 Ferrari, 250 GTO, was \$18.8 million. Another interesting fact.

The third one I want to refer to. The cost to the Ontario government for a 10-minute video tape produced to promote Ontario as a good place to invest is \$300,000. There's a supplementary to that, Mr. Speaker. The cost to re-edit the 10-minute tape down to an eight and a half minute tape cost \$450,000. Another interesting statistic that will boggle the minds of the taxpayers of Canada.

And here's one that boggles the minds of the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. Investment by the Saskatchewan government in 1988 and 1989 in GigaText translation systems inc., whose computers were supposed to translate the

province's laws into French, \$5.3 million. And I don't think that's the final price. I don't think that's the bottom line. There's more to come on that one.

There's a supplementary to that one, Mr. Speaker, and it's this. The number of laws translated before the government shut down the firm in November 1989, the answer is zero. Zero.

The new development that I referred to earlier, Mr. Speaker, will again put Saskatchewan in the headlines. This particular development concerns the STC Eagle bus manufacturing caper. Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that a tender and purchase of a few buses would be a relatively simple, straightforward procedure. It follows, Mr. Speaker, I must ask: why are there at least five separate national and international investigations or inquiries under way at the same time on this matter? Simple little matter about purchasing a few buses for Saskatchewan.

There are an FBI investigation, Royal Canadian Mounted Police investigation, a Sask transportation internal inquiry, a Sask government-ordered audit of STC, and a judicial inquiry. There are probably internal investigations under way at Eagle bus manufacturing co. and Greyhound as well. Of course, those, Mr. Speaker, are tangential to the main Saskatchewan issue, and I don't want to digress from the subject.

It seems that the grand jury in Texas believe that there was sufficient evidence to proceed to court trial. Some evidence suggests that a kickback was paid on the bus purchase which may have found its way into political pockets right here in Saskatchewan. Right here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

In GigaText, the Premier, attempting to quiet the . . . I want to say that these Tory scandals, as they arise, as each one arises, exposes more ironies for the people to comprehend. In GigaText, the Premier, attempting to quietly circumvent the law of the land on a very sensitive issue, namely translating Saskatchewan statutes from English to French, succeeded in getting loads of publicity for Saskatchewan and himself.

The Eagle bus purchase from the United States caused me to read The Eagle Has Landed just last weekend while I was back in Saskatoon. The Eagle Has Landed is a fascinating World War II story about a covert operation. The objective was to kidnap Winston Churchill during the war; lacking that, to assassinate him.

Woven into the story are such code phrases for communication purposes as, "The Eagle has landed," meaning the specially trained team has been successfully parachuted onto the English coast. That's what "The Eagle has landed" means.

"The fledglings are in the nest," meaning the special team had a successful rendezvous with their English underground contacts. And finally, "The Eagle is blown," meaning the operation was a failure. And it was, Mr. Speaker. There were no survivors.

When consensus Dallas is complete, I believe that the conclusion will be: "The Eagle is blown" -- a failure, Mr. Speaker. Whether there will be any survivors will be decided by the Saskatchewan electorate in due course, in due course.

I don't believe, Mr. Speaker, in psychics. However, I couldn't help but notice an article in the December 30, 1989, Star-Phoenix. I have it here, Mr. Speaker. It says psychic reader, Santana, and spiritualist, Madam Karmine, had made predictions for the coming year. They predicted earthquakes in British Columbia, and both psychics predicted political scandals will rock the province of Saskatchewan before 1990 ends.

Now I still don't believe in psychics, Mr. Speaker. I do believe that psychics are people whose reputation, superficial though it may be, depends on building a record of accurate predictions. The successful psychics tend to make predictions based on the likelihood of an event occurring.

Example, right out of the psychic's prediction. An earthquake will shake B.C. before June 1990. Mr. Speaker, you see, chances are it will happen anyway.

Another example. Scandals will rock Saskatchewan before the end of 1990. Again you see, Mr. Speaker, chances are it's going to happen anyway. It's going to happen anyway.

The disquieting part of the predictions of the psychic is this, and let me read it to you:

Something will surface to embarrass the Devine government after the spring of 1990.

You will recall spring only occurred a few days ago. The STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company) Eagle bus purchase occurred long before that. Does that mean that it's a question of bad timing by the psychics, or is there more coming down the tube by way of scandals from this government?

In looking at this particular throne speech, I cannot help but be impressed with the gimmicks that this government uses at budget time. In 1985 they had the computer budget game. That former well-known minister of Finance, Mr. Andrew, who is now safely ensconced in Minneapolis, brought in the computer budget game. The minister of Finance, the previous minister of Finance had consultations before budget time, just before budget time. The present Minister of Finance had hurried consultation with the public in Saskatchewan just before budget time this year.

Now we all know, any of us that have been in government, that budgets are starting to be prepared in early summer, and virtually are put together by the end of the calendar year. But I received a letter from the Minister of Finance and I have a copy . . . not only one, I got three. The Minister of Finance sent me three, exactly the same -- they're all the same, Mr. Speaker; I have them here -- inviting me to come out for consultations about the upcoming provincial budget. Not only that, he ran an ad in the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix saying that there would be a meeting in Saskatoon on

February 13 at 7 p.m. at the Sheraton Cavalier. So this goes on and on and on about this consultation.

That wasn't quite enough for the Premier. The Premier says, look, we've got to give this thing about consultation more hype. And here it is in the throne speech, Consensus Saskatchewan. This is the new gimmick of this Premier to give a little more hype to consulting the people of Saskatchewan for budget preparation.

What is Consensus Saskatchewan, which some people have the temerity to shorten to con Saskatchewan? Well it doesn't say much about who's going to be selected or how they're going to be selected; what's the mandate of this con Saskatchewan; what's the structure; accountable to whom; meetings, public or otherwise; what will be the format of the meetings; budget for this con Saskatchewan, how much; recommendations -- will the government accept the recommendations of con Saskatchewan?

I thought maybe the Premier -- you know, a long shot, maybe he'll have something here that'll get him into shape before his June election, if in fact he has a June election in mind.

(1500)

But my hopes were dashed the other day because the Deputy Premier said in a press release that, don't expect any results from con Saskatchewan until at least the fall of 1990. So we have to . . . The crisis was yesterday, we're here today, the Premier is presenting his solution to the problem, which is con Saskatchewan, and the Deputy Premier is saying there'll be no results until at least fall.

I think the people of Saskatchewan will recognize this for exactly what it is, a clever public relations plan to involve a wide spectrum of the public and thereby implicate them in the government's folly to date; in short, share the blame with all the citizens. Makes a lighter load for the Premier then.

The Star-Phoenix saw through this immediately. In their editorial on March 20, 1990 they have this to say:

By making this proposal, the government showed that it lacks the essential qualities of vision and leadership (and to that I say, amen).

They conclude in the Star-Phoenix editorial:

But the question remains, why does the government seem reluctant to do what it was elected to do: govern?

And I say amen to that.

Now lest the Liberal party be outdone, Mr. Speaker, they jumped on the band wagon too, but bigger and better. Ms. Haverstock of the Liberal Party said that she's going to establish a senate in Saskatchewan. And she said . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I thought the Premier's plan was bad

enough, to overlay all the structures we have for decision making in Saskatchewan with another hundred people and the associated bureaucratic nightmare and expense, but the leader of the Liberal Party says, I'm going to set up a senate. And who is going to be in the senate, Mr. Speaker? Well it's going to be the mayors, the reeves, the Indian chiefs, etc.

And I went to the . . . I took the opportunity to go to the Saskatchewan Municipal Directory to find out how big will this be, this senate that we're instituting in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan people have some fairly strong feelings about senates, and I would caution the Leader of the Liberal Party to be careful when she's foisting this senate upon the Saskatchewan people, because of the cities, towns, villages, resort villages, northern towns, northern villages, northern hamlets, rural municipalities, organized hamlets, and Indian chiefs totals about 1,054 people. So the Leader of the Liberal Party is going to have a senate that is the Triple E senate. She's grabbing on that popular phrase that this is going to be a Triple E senate: elected, equal, and effective.

Now I don't know what that means, but what the Leader of the Liberal Party has done here is one-up the Premier of Saskatchewan which I did not think was possible. She has established a senate which will be 10 times as large, 10 times as bureaucratic, and 10 times as expensive. And she then caps it off -- and this must be due to naivety -- the second reform is that she'll make it illegal to introduce a budget without going to the Lieutenant Governor for special permission.

What does that mean to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? It means exactly this. This government couldn't introduce a deficit budget unless they go to Brian Mulroney in Ottawa and get his permission, unless they go to the granddaddy of deficits in Ottawa and get his permission to introduce yet another deficit budget in Saskatchewan. They've already got us \$4 billion in the hole through their own ineptitude, and the Liberal leader is suggesting that they go to Ottawa and get the permission of Brian Mulroney to bring in a deficit budget. My heavens!

I am sensitive about this because when we were the Government of Saskatchewan for 11 years, we never had a deficit, surplus budgets every year. This government has nothing but deficit budgets, nothing but deficit budgets. And they suggest from time to time, well they don't have the kind of money to work with that we had. I did a little bit of checking, Mr. Speaker. You check back in 1981 the revenue from taxation, etc., for our government, the New Democratic government, was two billion four -- 2 billion, 400 thousand dollars. This government in 1989 had over \$4 billion of revenue -- double, double the amount of revenue -- and they couldn't balance the books. They could not balance the books.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, this throne speech had some humour in it; it has some understatement, some overstatements. I can't help but refer to some of them. One of the overstatements of course was ". . . the world has declared economic war on Saskatchewan." The world is zeroing in on Saskatchewan. How dramatic. What an overstatement, Mr. Speaker. What an overstatement. We want serious attention to the problems of Saskatchewan, not rubbish like that by the Premier of the province.

Some of the humour, here's some of the humour:

My government proposes to lead this province through the next decade and into the next century . . .

Can you believe that? These people have the temerity to suggest that they're going to lead this province for the next 10 years, with their eight-year record of destruction in the economic life of Saskatchewan, that the people of Saskatchewan are going to give them 10 years more? Not a chance, not a chance, Mr. Speaker. The people of Saskatchewan are wiser than that, I'm sure.

This government says to this group of a hundred they're going to set up -- they call it ConSask -- we need ideas about how we're going to run the province. Well some of the ideas . . . and they've been asking the people: where can we cut? Where can we cut costs?

Well I can give them a few suggestions about where they can start cutting costs. I've got a list here that will choke a horse. Here's one. These are some of the expenses they've made that they could have cut out. And there are probably some that they're making now that they could cut out: government payment to PC Party advertising company, Dome Advertising, for advertising costs related to a chamber of commerce conference in Saskatoon to promote free trade -- \$26,800 they spent there; another \$61,198 additional costs to the provincial . . . or from the provincial government for the chamber of commerce free trade conference -- the same conference, another \$61,000. More money wasted.

Here's some other places. They paid defeated member of parliament, Stan Korchinsky, \$45,000 to advise this government -- to advise this government -- how to lobby the Mulroney government in Ottawa. That's their kissing cousins in Ottawa and they didn't know how to lobby them. And they got a defeated Tory MP to tell them how to lobby and they paid him \$45,000, Mr. Speaker. Utterly ridiculous.

The new cabinet, 146,400 additional salary costs for four extra cabinet ministers that the Premier added to his cabinet in October. Another 86,295 additional salary costs of 11 PC MLAs that were appointed as legislative secretaries. Agreed there's only 10 now; one has gone off to his reward in Hong Kong. He is not about. I have \$1,524,600 additional staff, office, and travel expenses for the four additional cabinet ministers and 11 legislative secretaries. Boy, they sure are spending money on that cabinet, Mr. Speaker.

Another area they could save money. They paid \$638 air fare for Paul Schoenhals to travel to the Banff School of Management. Well I agree Paul Schoenhals needed that training but he's gone off to work in Alberta now; he's no longer with us.

They also paid additional 2,600 for Paul Schoenhals and Chuck Childers to travel to West Virginia. And they paid 3,930 for air fare for Chuck Childers and Mrs. Childers to attend a fertilizer conference in Dallas.

Mr. Childers should have stayed right here in Saskatchewan because that front bench produces a lot more fertilizer than Dallas does.

Number four, \$100,000 salary and benefits for the first full-time chairman of the Potash Corporation, defeated PC cabinet minister Paul Schoenhals, and as I've remarked he is no longer in that position; \$550,000 annual salary and potential bonuses for Chuck Childers, the Premier's appointee as president of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. Lots of room for cutting expenses here, Mr. Speaker. And I could go on. There's many more opportunities.

Let me give you just one of them. I have the seating plan for this House, and we find that the member for Kinistino is the Legislative Secretary for the Provincial Secretary, the member for Souris-Cannington. Now the Provincial Secretary is a nothing job, quite frankly. You know, it's quite common for one cabinet minister to have Minister of Justice and a couple of other portfolios and also have the Provincial Secretary. But we have the member for Souris-Cannington, a cabinet minister as the Provincial Secretary, and he has a Legislative Secretary, the member for Kinistino. You could abolish both those positions.

You look at the seating plan here, you see the member for Rosetown-Elrose. He's the Legislative Secretary to the member for Regina Wascana . . . this government has created a job for. They've chipped off a little bit here and there and given him a job as the Minister of Family. But he's got a Legislative Secretary.

DYou have the Minister of Justice, the member for Qu'Appelle-Lumsden. He's the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Telephones. He has a Legislative Secretary, the member for Arm River. You have the member for Rural Saskatchewan. He has a Legislative Secretary, the member for Saltcoats. There's another bunch of jobs you could get away with.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, this list of obvious cuts that could be made will not be made by this government. They're going ahead on their wild spending spree regardless of the depth of the debt the province is getting into.

The Premier is an economist -- the Premier is an economist -- and the Premier gives validity to that old statement, if you laid all the economists end to end, you wouldn't get anywhere -- you wouldn't get anywhere.

There are only two groups that are proud of this throne speech, that is dinosaur Tories in this province and the rats, because they've done away with the rat eradication program. This is a new high because they've got this program not even started yet. It was announced last year, and they've done away with it before the starting date. So the rats are quite happy about this throne speech.

Regardless, Mr. Speaker, regardless of what I've said, I am optimistic about Saskatchewan's long-term outlook. Given that there is a change in leadership and a change in direction, I cannot support this throne speech. It will not answer the problems that are facing Saskatchewan today. It's a

con job on Saskatchewan people and I cannot support it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swenson: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to pass on my compliments to Her Honour in the eloquent address which she gave to this legislature last week in presenting the Speech from the Throne. I think that Her Honour is certainly growing into the position most admirably and does a fine job as Her Majesty's representative for the province of Saskatchewan. I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, in the various venues that you have the opportunity in being with Her Honour, you certainly can see that that progress is there.

I also would like to compliment the mover and seconder from the government side. I think these two individuals in their service in the legislature, one individual for some eight years and the other for coming up to four, do a fine job as representatives of what is rural Saskatchewan. We know that rural Saskatchewan is made up of farmers, individual farmers and their families, spread out across the vast potential of our province in mostly small towns and villages.

And I think these two representatives, the member from Moosomin and the member from Nipawin, are a good cross-section of the type of people who make up our province from the near-city size of Moosomin, the little, smaller area of Nipawin, down to some of the very small towns and villages and, if you will, elevator stops which are commonplace in our province. And I just want to commend both of them on the excellent job that they did in representing their ridings and also in representing the thoughts and aspirations which are common to a throne speech, and particularly to this one.

(1515)

I'd like to address, Mr. Speaker, some of the areas that I saw, some of the pillars of Saskatchewan which were in that throne speech. And irregardless of what we've heard from some of the members opposite, I think if they had listened they would have seen certain areas that we in this province have always considered to be pillars of strength.

That throne speech talked about the growth of human potential in our province, about developing our people to meet challenges into the future and into the next century. That throne speech talked about the stability and the growth of our communities; some of the things that we can do to add to those strengths. It talked about the diversification of our economy and the development of our resources.

All of those areas, Mr. Speaker, impact, I believe, in certain parts of the various portfolios which I have the honour of handling in the cabinet of this government. And I wish to comment on them individually and how they tie together and interact with people in our province.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk about the growth of human

potential that was talked about in the throne speech, and some of the things that I see both for my constituency and my province, and certainly those areas that I represent.

I think, Mr. Speaker, all of us who sit in this legislature believe that the people in this province are of strong character. They have a fibre, a moral fibre that is without parallel in our country. And I think last night that the member from Turtleford, the Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism, very eloquently explained some of those things that make Saskatchewan people so special and so strong. And I think all members of the legislature appreciated that address and some of the points that that member touched upon last night.

As that member said, all people in this province come from somewhere, either in their recent memory, in the recent memory of their grandparents, other than the native people who were here for thousands of years, and certainly bring a cultural fabric to our province that is mixed in with those that have come afterwards. My own family is no different, Mr. Speaker, and you've heard me talk about it in past addresses to this legislature, people who came from Sweden, from Great Britain, from Ireland, obviously a diverse mix, as many in this legislature would experience in their families.

One of the things that has stood out about all those people that came here and people of Saskatchewan was the fact that they throughout their history, because of climate and other things, economic conditions that have been imposed upon them by climate and world events, have always had the ability to draw together and reach a consensus about things that would affect their community.

And I have heard a great deal of derision by people across the way on the word consensus. They have used many different forms of that word to denigrate the Speech from the Throne. And I think that's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, because I know in every community in this province when anybody got together, whether it was putting up a new backstop for the ball diamond or fixing the boards on the hockey rink or talking about improvements in the school, there was always that ability for the people in that community to sit down together and reach some form of consensus.

And you saw that really be strengthened, Mr. Speaker, when there was a difficulty, either difficult economic times or a tragedy within the community. And I think of things like the curling rink or the skating rink burning down, perhaps a problem in the school or the church when people would gather together and know that because that particular circumstance was inordinate or more difficult than we had seen in the past, they would draw together. There would be some very harsh words said sometimes and difficult arguments carried forth, but at the end of the day usually there was a consensus in that community as to the solution.

And I think particularly of my own community, the day that the one-room school was to be shut down. I was in grade 5 at the time, and I remember it was held in the winter-time and we had one of those winters we had lots of snow. And the snow banks had piled up so that you could look in the

windows of the hall.

And the people in my community had drawn together to discuss the closing of the one-room school and the potential busing of people into the city. And I remember it so well that day because as the children outside were playing on the snow banks, one of us got a little over-zealous and went through the window and ended up in somebody's lap in this discussion.

But this discussion was heated. It was no holds barred because people talked about the store and the community going down because the school wasn't there. They talked about the elevator disappearing because the school wasn't there. They talked about all the things that they felt so strongly about that had been developed in that community over a space of 50 or 60 years.

At the end of the day, the decision was made that for the good of the children of that community, for the ability for them to access what their parents considered would be a better education -- and they were the taxpayers who would be involved in this new school -- the decision was made to close the school and bus the children in.

And it was felt after that meeting, Mr. Speaker, that some people in that community probably would never speak to one another again. And I suppose for a while that was the case, because there were very deep feelings there.

But I think in retrospect, Mr. Speaker, that that school that I started attending in 1962 where children were bused in from all over Thunder Creek School Division, in which my son now attends as a grade 1, has been a benefit to the people of those communities, because certainly the ability for me to access a good and advanced education was there. And even though many of us, in our hearts, think fondly of the one-room schoolhouse and the store and the elevator in my community, for it to exist some 12 miles from the city of Moose Jaw perhaps was a little foolish, in not only economic terms but in the ability of us to move on into the decades.

And I think when we talk about Consensus Saskatchewan, as the Deputy Premier, I think, put it so rightly: Saskatchewan is in a phase of transition. We've had very difficult economic times because of international conditions in both economics, trade wars, and also Mother Nature has been most unkind as far as the weather goes in our province. People know that we're moving into an age when the transmission of thoughts and ideas is almost instantaneous. Those decisions about busing kids 25 years ago are now the decisions of whether the ratepayers of a particular school unit can afford the computers and the satellite dishes and the technology to keep their students in tune with a world that absolutely moves at the speed of light.

And I think that Consensus Saskatchewan is a fair and honest attempt in these times to draw people together who have the ability to take the best interests of their community and meld them together and give advice to all levels of government. And I certainly don't take that, Mr. Speaker, as a personal slight on myself as an elected representative in this legislature. Anyone in this legislature who serves here that feels, Mr. Speaker, that

they know all the answers to the problems in our province, I would suggest, had better think about leaving this particular institution, because obviously you're stuck in a rut and can't allow your mind to expand and bring in new thoughts. And I'm afraid, Mr. Speaker, from what I've seen from some of the members opposite, that they should seriously think, when the next election rolls around, about perhaps going on to other venues, because obviously they have said to the people of Saskatchewan, we know it all, and there is no room for anyone else.

And I had hoped, Mr. Speaker, that minds would be more open than that, that the Leader of the Opposition in his new-found ways that I will talk about a little later, vis-a-vis the energy sector, perhaps had allowed his members to expand their minds a little bit. But we certainly haven't seen it to this date in the replies that have come from members opposite.

I think it's fair-minded if these people sitting together facilitating ideas and perhaps paid by the taxpayer in this province for their gas mileage, if they do come up with ideas that make some sense in the '90s into the 21st century, that we, as elected politicians, would have the consideration to look at those ideas and see how we could implement them.

Obviously, ultimately, the members who sit in this Chamber have the ability to make into law the things that are deemed necessary by our citizens. And only the people in this legislature will have to take that ultimate responsibility upon their shoulders, because they're the ones that stand in their place and vote. But I do believe that any time that we would not seek advice from the public, in whatever manner, that we would do a disservice to this institution.

Moving on a bit, Mr. Speaker, in talking about stability and growth of our communities, I think it's something that is really on the minds of people out there because of the economic conditions that we've gone through. And it's primarily to do with the grain economy, which has been a stand-by of this province, which indeed has been the foundation of our province. And it was based upon the fact that elevators were spaced on rail lines every nine or 11 miles because that's as far as a horse could draw a wagon.

And we've all known that that process has been consolidating for some time, that we have seen rail line abandonment, we have seen the grain companies consolidating their handling facilities. And I think our towns and villages and the people from the rural communities that go in and support those towns and villages were accepting a lot of this transition, providing that the flow of money in the rural community stayed strong. And because of the things that I mentioned earlier, that flow of money, because the grain economy was in such trouble, has virtually dried up. It has really pointed out to people in our smaller communities that there have to be other alternatives to the grain dollar flowing through those communities to make themselves viable.

I've been very fortunate, Mr. Speaker, to be a part of that process as we work with those communities to try and build stability and growth into them. As minister of SEDCO, I have a number of programs which are very active with people in Saskatchewan right now. And I'd like to say to

start, Mr. Speaker, as we talk about SEDCO, the previous speaker also talked about SEDCO and had some very unkind remarks for that particular institution.

And I'd just like to say to people in this province that the GigaText affair, as the opposition talks about, I think did a great disservice to the institution of SEDCO which has been an integral part of our province for some 27 years. It was started by the Liberal government of Ross Thatcher back in the 1960s, was carried on by the NDP government during the 1970s, and of course has been part of this Conservative government since 1982.

Mr. Speaker, I think since taking over this portfolio it has been freely admitted by myself and by this government that the GigaText venture in translation of French was not perhaps the wisest decision, given the economic times and the mood of the people in this province. And I think it's been freely admitted, Mr. Speaker, that yes, there was a loss associated with that endeavour to translate from English to French with computers. It was looked upon as having some very real possibilities in the high tech field; another diversification tool, if you will, which could have added to the economic well-being of our province.

I think, Mr. Speaker, the fact that any time we get into an R&D (research and development) situation with something like this and you set stringent time lines upon it, that is not the wisest thing to do. And certainly the GigaText business proved that out to us, because those time lines became unrealistic and those losses were incurred.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, we've been very open and above-board with that process, the public advertising of the SEDCO assets. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing there, nothing there to hide, as far as SEDCO goes.

I can't help but wonder, Mr. Speaker, in this whole process, if the GigaText translation thing had been from English to Japanese or Mandarin, if the reaction of the members opposite would have been quite the same. I find that when we hear such strong representations today in keeping our country whole and talking about the French/English entity in our country, I can't help but wonder, Mr. Speaker, if it wasn't the French part about it that made the members opposite so owly in their chasing of the GigaText affair.

(1530)

Because I see, Mr. Speaker, a school out here at White City, Saskatchewan, where they have a Mandarin Chinese class being taught now where children will go through their entire school system learning Mandarin Chinese, and I just know that the ways of the world are that we must have the ability to communicate with each other and translate various documents. And I know that at some point down the road that it will be done by computer, that there'll be great wealth created by that, and whoever has the tool at their disposal will certainly have an advantage over others in this world trading economy which we have. And I think that down the road that thing will be

so commonplace that everyone will accept it.

In the SEDCO portfolio, Mr. Speaker, we have a couple of programs that I would really like to talk about. They are fairly new to the province. They've only been up and running for some 10 months, and I think by their very success they are things that we should talk about, because they fit right into this building and growth of our communities in the diversification. I'm talking about the participating loans division of SEDCO which was announced last spring.

I think this particular tool has been tremendously successful. We have had over 3,000 direct inquiries and have generated nearly 800 applications with that particular program. We have seen over \$27 million approved in 359 applications.

And I think that speaks well for a program, Mr. Speaker, whose basic design is to go out and lever money from other sources. We, in effect, with the participating loan division, become an equity partner with various companies who are into a whole realm of different areas. It helps that company stay viable because it does lever that extra partner, that bank financing, perhaps money in the community, that feels very strongly about the success of that particular enterprise. And of course we don't participate in the profits, you might say, until that company is viable in producing a profit, and then we take a fairly hefty interest rate.

I'd just like to run over some of the areas, Mr. Speaker, that so far people have been involved in with this particular loans division. We've had food processing, manufacturing of clothing and household goods, products for nursing homes and hospitals. We've had services which included contractors, equipment rentals, custom hauling and waste removal -- the environmental side is drawing a great deal of attention from this particular loans vehicle. We've had retail businesses, and it's just really covered the piece out there, Mr. Speaker.

It, along with another tool which has been the small-business loans associations, have been an integral part of the rural development organizations which we've seen springing up out there. These small-business loans associations are a vehicle whereby local people get together in a community or in an RDC (Rural Development Corporation) and they have a \$50,000 loan from SEDCO which they in turn then use as seed money to promote the establishment of new enterprises and businesses in their towns and villages and communities. And I think that it's important that the people on the local level have the ability to supervise this money, to have the ability to look at the proposals that come forward and analyse them, because oftentimes that we'll have a community that has an expertise or a special want or a special niche out there that they know what they need to fill. And the small business loans association, by being a local entity with the ability to put that seed money out to a maximum of \$5,000, I think can make those choices as wisely as anyone out there.

And the fact that it's encouraged communities to draw together into an RDC where you may have one or two or three towns and two or three RMs drawn together, sharing things like fire protection, EMO (Emergency Measures

Organization), and indeed some of the recreational facilities which they wish to enjoy in the rural parts of our province. And the loans association is one more tool that they have at their disposal.

But of course, Mr. Speaker, I expect that these particular tools which are available from SEDCO to people all across our province will be even further enhanced when the community bond idea is drawn to its full structure and we know that the people in a community will have the ability to invest money that will be guaranteed by the government. I'm sure that both the small loans associations and the participating loans will be important tools which will go along with that particular vehicle in stabilizing and encouraging growth in many of our rural communities.

Just in parting, Mr. Speaker, before leaving this particular area I just wanted to leave some numbers with members of the legislature. Sixty-four per cent of all the loans in these two areas have been in rural Saskatchewan. They have created 1,392 jobs at present and have preserved or maintained another 2,244 jobs. And I think for a program, Mr. Speaker, that has only been in existence for some 10 months, those are pretty amazing statistics. It means that people all across our province are conversant with them. It means that people in the business resource centres around the province have been doing a good job in talking to local folks and encouraging them to set up new businesses and enterprises.

And I think it speaks well for the employees and the people that work directly out of SEDCO. They've obviously been very busy. They've been on the road talking to people, or they could not have had the kind of results which we're seeing with these particular programs to date. And I know as we go through 1990 that many other communities and people are going to access these programs, and I expect at the end of the year that those results will even be more significant.

Another area, Mr. Speaker, I think that certainly fits in with the portfolios that I represent and is very important to our province, and that is the area of diversification. It's an area that I certainly feel very strongly about, and is definitely one of the reasons that I sought elected office.

Many members in this legislature before have heard me talk about things such as the potential for Lake Diefenbaker and the dream that was had back in the 1930s to place a dam on the south Saskatchewan water and the diversification and benefits that could flow through to communities throughout this province because of that. That dream was realized in the 1960s and has certainly been built upon by this government.

There are many other areas out there, Mr. Speaker, which can be just as significant, and certainly we look at the whole value added area of our economy and what is possible. And I've heard many remarks in this legislature over the last few days, and I'm sure I will hear into the weeks to come, about people leaving our province because of the difficult economic times here.

And I think of where the majority of those people go. And those people,

Mr. Speaker, invariably head west. A great number of my class-mates, the people that I went to school and university with, today reside in the province of Alberta.

The provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan have had similar types of histories from their inception into confederation in 1905 through the opening up of the country to homesteading, the growth that took place in the agricultural community up to the 1930s; some of the problems which occurred in both Alberta and Saskatchewan, the devastation of that time both economically and the destruction which took place to the land base of both provinces through erosion and the whims of nature.

And as we know, both of those provinces chose a method, a way that was different than the norm in Canada. Alberta became adherents to the Social Credit philosophy and stayed that way for a great number of years, and people in Saskatchewan adhered to the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation).

And I think both provinces knew that there were inherent strengths available to overcome some of their problems, and certainly in this province we had the former CCF government of the '40s and '50s taking on the rural electrification program which was something that everyone in this province appreciated. Some of the moves that they made to help farm communities consolidate themselves, the people in Alberta basically followed the same track under the Social Credit.

We then came to the 1970s and there was quite a divergence, Mr. Speaker, in what happened. The province of Alberta came into some resource wealth that was basically precipitated by the OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) oil embargo of the United States. And that wealth by and large was built into an infrastructure of value added industry and potential.

And today when you go to the city of Calgary, you see a boom in housing construction. You see a boom that is not tied to the hydrocarbon sector at all. The price of oil has stabilized to around \$20 a barrel. It certainly isn't generating the kind of wealth and excitement which we saw back in the 1970s, that boom, primarily as a result of the forward-looking Conservative government of Peter Lougheed in Alberta in the 1970s.

In Saskatchewan the same choices were presented to people here. It was resource wealth, the likes of which we had never seen before. It was time to make some choices as to what we would do in the province of Saskatchewan. And unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, choice here was, rather than build on an infrastructure which would support the tax base of this province 10 and 15 and 20 years down the road, the choice was to buy into existing enterprises.

Mr. Speaker, I can't help but think that some of those choices were made, not because they made good economic decisions but because they were rather politically expedient. People in this province were told that it was smart to beat upon these bad multinationals because they were robbing us of our inheritance. Mr. Speaker, I've always felt the way to deal with a multinational that was being unfair with the particular resource it was

associated with, was to tax that particular resource and use the proceeds for the health and the education and the social services of the people in this province. It wasn't to get into direct competition as the owner of that particular enterprise.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think some of things that we're trying to do in this decade of the '80s, and now as we move into the '90s -- and there's some very difficult economic times -- are the right decisions, because they add value to so many of the products which we have a natural abundance here and where we have natural advantage. We haven't attempted to buy the enterprise and run it in direct competition, but rather have often joint ventured with people to add value to products in our province, add value which will be here for generations down the road. Anyone that can tell me, Mr. Speaker, how to add value to natural gas other than to make it into fertilizer, I would certainly like to hear about it.

The province of Alberta certainly figured that out a long time ago. They've had as many as six fertilizer plants using their vast natural gas reserves to manufacture fertilizer. Unfortunately for the province of Alberta, most of that production is taken in the forest fringe area where there simply isn't any farm land. Most of that production, other than what we saw at some smaller plants at Medicine Hat, was removed from the centre of agricultural Canada, and indeed the centre of agricultural North America.

The very fact that we now have a viable natural gas industry in this province, Mr. Speaker, a natural gas industry by the way which is a result of this government, means that we would be remiss if we didn't add value to that product. That natural gas industry occurred here because of the leadership of this government and my predecessor, the Deputy Premier, who was minister of Energy, in the deregulation process, which gave people in the exploration and development fields the opportunity to seek markets outside of our province.

And I think that was very important, Mr. Speaker because it opened up a whole new realm to us. One of those realms is the manufacture of fertilizer. Nitrogen fertilizer will be without doubt one of the mainstays of agriculture in North America in the decades to come. And it simply occurs with . . . as the longer you farm land, the less fibre that is associated with it, the more nitrogen fertilizer is needed in order to keep up production.

I would hope down the road, Mr. Speaker, that as we recognize some of the environmental concerns and soil conservation concerns, that we marry that use of fertilizer with some very intelligent agronomics in farming; that we use our forages and that type of thing in order to safeguard our soils. But let no one kid you, Mr. Speaker, in order for the prairies of North America to maintain their productive ability to the limit as we've seen them, nitrogen fertilizer will be essential.

(1545)

The fact that we would joint venture with a company to place a fertilizer

plant dead smack in the middle of the Regina plain, dead smack in the middle of North America in the most productive soils that we have, I think is a wise, not only economic decision, but simply one that enhances Saskatchewan's ability as a province in Canada.

This will be a state of the art plant which will manufacture and produce fertilizer in competition with anyone in the world, Mr. Speaker. It will use a resource that is one of the untold success stories, I think, in our province, and it will employ a great number of people.

It will benefit the cities of Regina and Moose Jaw, and it will benefit many small communities that are close to that plant. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, it will give the farmer in this province and the northern United States the ability to access good nitrogen fertilizer.

And I can go on and on, Mr. Speaker, because the same thing is true in timber, in pulp. The same thing is true in red meat. And we've seen this government all through the 1980s joint venturing, getting in with people who are adding value to different products. And that infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, will be there for a long, long time.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think when you contrast that type of approach with what we saw in the 1970s, you will know that this throne speech is dead on the money with the way that the future of this province should be developed. It's joint venturing, it's people being co-operative, it's people working together, using the tax dollars of this province along with people in private business to build on those strengths which are so natural to us.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, hindsight's always 20-20, but it would have been so nice to have seen those developments when we did have those resource dollars that, by the way, were worth a lot more than they are today. Some of those things could have been built rather than buying existing institutions. And they would have been employing all those people today, rather than have them go to the province of Alberta, which obviously did build them and now employs them.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, we're getting there. Economic times are slowing us down. But believe me, the will is there and this government will not flag or fail in its opportunity to build those things which we know will benefit us for so long in the future.

Another part, Mr. Speaker, that I'm involved in as Minister of Energy and Mines, I believe needs to be talked about in this particular address because the development of our resources has always been one of the strengths and, as I recently said, you always have choices to make in the way in which you develop them and how you use the proceeds of those resources to enhance the quality of life in our province.

The ministry of Energy and Mines is one that is very broad. It covers everything in this province from gravel to oil to gas to uranium to bentonite to potash. We are a province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which is blessed with all five of the energies known to man. We are a province that is blessed with many of the minerals which are integral to the production

and building of things in an industrial society. We are a province that is blessed with a natural fertilizer, potash, which is used all around the world to produce food for the growing millions of our world. So it's a portfolio, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which obviously has a great deal of importance to our province, and one which contributes so many of the dollars which we use in other areas for that quality of life.

And I really wonder, Mr. Speaker, at some of the comments that come from members opposite when they talk about this particular sector. We have the case of the Leader of the Opposition who was on province-wide TV a few weeks ago talking about the rip-off of over \$2 billion by people associated with the hydrocarbon industry in our province.

And I know, Mr. Speaker, that in the years that I've been in this legislature that particular subject has come up in estimates every year. And after an explanation by the Minister of Energy, whoever it was at that particular time, and some arguments which were obviously irrefutable by members opposite, that discussion quickly died down because they knew the truth had been told. There was no rip-off by the oil companies in the province of Saskatchewan, because we've got to remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who we're talking about. It's no longer the large multinationals. Those people have basically pulled out of the western sedimentary basin. We're talking about the IPACs (Independent Petroleum Association of Canada) and the SEPACs (Small Explorers and Producers Association of Canada) of the world. We're talking about the people like Sceptre Resources, Upton Resources, people like some of my friends out at Kindersley who belong to SEPAC.

Some of these are small, family-run operations, Mr. Deputy Speaker; others are mid-sized public companies, all of them, all of them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, risking either their own capital or the capital of their shareholders to make a profit, definitely, but by doing so, striking oil and gas in the province of Saskatchewan and paying the highest royalties in North America. And that is without doubt, Mr. Speaker. The royalty curve in this province is the highest in North America. Companies doing business here pay the most of any jurisdiction that they have the opportunity to do business in.

So, Mr. Speaker, when the arguments are made, and so that members opposite clearly understand who they're talking about, they're talking about the people in Lloydminster and Kindersley and Swift Current and Shaunavon and Estevan and Weyburn. They are talking about the livelihoods of many hundreds of families. They're talking about the thousands of people employed in those areas.

Let it be clear that the members opposite cannot go out of this Chamber, as the Leader of the Opposition did a week or so ago, and go before the business community of this province, and he did, and there were a number of people there from the oil and gas industry, and say that the NDP Party is launching out into a brave new world where we won't do those nasty things any more, and not talk about, at that particular time, this \$2 billion rip-off, or as the member from Saskatoon Eastview said in his speech the other day in this House, \$2.7 billion rip-off, and then come back into this

House and talk about it again.

And I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that if that is what you believe, if that is what you believe, then you better be honest with the folks in all of those communities. And when you go out and you have dinner with the business community, you better be prepared to lay it on the line that you folks have ripped this province off for over \$2 billion. And you can't hide in the legislature and say those things and not do it out there. And it's in Hansard for everyone to see, but unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, sometimes the people in the communities that I mentioned don't get the opportunity to read Hansard.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a great deal of faith in the people involved in the oil and gas industry and the mineral development industries in our province, that they are going to continue to be an integral part of our community, that they are going to generate revenues for our province for a long time in the future. I see a lot of exciting things down the road. We have a natural gas industry which in 1980, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe had nine wells drilled. We had nearly 1,000 wells drilled in this province last year, and that particular industry paid over \$40 million in royalties to the Government of Saskatchewan.

And that's a resource, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which either wasn't known or wasn't cared to be known about when members opposite formed a government in this province for 11 years. The fact that that natural gas is now being developed and paying those kind of royalties and also being able to deliver natural gas to the small communities and farmers of this province, rather than paying those royalties to the province of Alberta which we were doing in the past, tells me that this government has been bang on the mark on our development policies.

We've been able to work in co-operation with a lot of junior-sized companies in developing that resource. And the fact that those revenues are accruing to us rather than the province of Alberta tells me that that is smart resource development, and it'll continue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for generations to come because we are doubling the reserves almost every year of known natural gas in this province.

And it's very exciting to go out into those gas fields and talk to the people involved in that development process and know what the possibilities are down the road. And I would just hate to return, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to a system that frowned upon that type of development, that took the opportunity away from so many of our citizens to have those jobs, to participate in that particular economy.

Even the oil industry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which as we all know has fallen on some difficult times because of international pricing, that oil industry is bouncing back. And I believe that down the road, because of some new technology, it's going to become very vibrant in our province again.

As most people involved in the industry would know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Saskatchewan oil fields sometimes present some very difficult problems for people wishing to develop them. By and large our fields are lower

producing fields, sometimes more difficult to get at than some of the ones in Alberta, and consequently, over time, have been more expensive to implement.

We have in this province in the last couple of years, Mr. Speaker, had some interesting things happen which I think are going to pay big dividends to the taxpayers of this province down in the future. One of them is horizontal drilling. The province of Saskatchewan was one of the hottest spots in North America for horizontal drilling in 1989. We had over a dozen wells drilled in all types of formations. And I expect in this coming year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that will double and maybe triple.

Horizontal well technology has the promise of freeing up much of the oil reserves which were considered unattainable by companies in this province previously with some of the conventional equipment available to them. It's things like horizontal drilling, I think, Mr. Speaker, that mean that companies and shareholders and people are going to be committed to this province for a long ways in the future.

And because of the resource development policies implemented by this government, when we worked with the industry, when the price of oil dropped to the bottom, when we've had the ability to move our royalty rates to consider some of the EOR (enhanced oil recovery) projects which we know are necessary to develop our resources, means that people have confidence in this government. And by having confidence in this government, they'll invest their money here. And well into the future, Mr. Speaker, we will be drawing royalties, the highest royalties in North America, back to the people of this province to develop our educational and health and social services potential, and certainly contribute to the quality of life which we in this province have come to expect.

And I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we'd be totally remiss in our policies if we did things to drive people out of this province, or as some people in the hard rock business have told me as minister, all that has ever held Saskatchewan back was this geopolitical fault line which ran down the Manitoba and Alberta borders, where people didn't feel confident about coming here and investing their money, about bringing their employees to our province, because there was always this spectre of a government which would step in and seize half of that particular enterprise before they had the ability to generate any income from it. And I think that was foolishness because it certainly robbed our province of many jobs and the opportunity to access resources which are still hidden out there and which we need to open up, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in order to provide those royalties and taxes which we as a society need.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to wrap up my speech and talking about the throne speech delivered by Her Honour last week, by saying that I believe there was a tremendous amount of potential talked about in that speech. It certainly covered the pillars which we in Saskatchewan have known to be our strengths for a long, long time.

It talked about the human potential, the stability and the growth of our communities. It talked about the diversification of our economy and the development of our resources. And there is no part of my constituency or any constituency that I've ever been in in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for those things were not absolute pillars, the pillars that those communities were built around.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think as long we talk about those, that we involve people in the process, that we accept the ideas that'll move us into the next century, and that we aren't so hidebound to not accept the ideas of others, then this province will continue to grow and be a good place in which to raise our families and our children.

I just appreciate the opportunity, Mr. Deputy Speaker to enter into this debate.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: -- Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise and partake in this debate today noting that the members on the other side of the House, many of them who are claimed farmers, seem to be avoiding the issue of agriculture quite pronouncedly. Talking about . . . as just the last member just stopped talking -- and he's a rural member -- and he cautiously avoided the topic of agriculture to any great degree, as do many of the other members.

And that doesn't surprise me, you know. The ones who do talk about agriculture sit and talk about all the good things they've done in the past, like looking backward, looking backward. I'm not so sure that they're looking backward as much as looking over their shoulder, because there is a sentiment out in the country, that they know is there, that they have failed agriculture and deceived the people of this province.

But they talk about the eastern bloc and the opening up of the eastern bloc, and that's very important in its own right, but I just wished they'd spend a little more time, just a bit more, confronting the agricultural problems of this province because, as we know, they are in great destitute, the farmers and rural communities of this province. So I'd just ask them if they could just focus a little more attention on that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to start off by making a few comparisons about where we, as the New Democratic Party opposition, stand on issues, as opposed to they, the Tory government.

Now I'm just want to run through a dozen or so of these points just to let the people know clearly where we're standing.

On the issue of two-price wheat at \$240 million a year coming to western Canada, well, we were fighting hard to keep the two-price system because we knew the value of having that cash coming to Saskatchewan and Alberta and Manitoba. Yet the Tory government opposite was promoting the free trade agreement that was dumping the two-price wheat system. That's a very clear difference as to supporting the agriculture of western Canada.

And just ask yourself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has the price of bread gone down? So where is that \$240 million going? These guys promoted the loss of \$240 million and who did they give it to? -- the corporate mills who need just a few more hundred thousand dollars or million dollars profit.

Now let's look at the interest-free cash advance program. While we on this side of the House were fighting tooth and nail saying no, and as our counterparts in Ottawa were saying no, do not put it into cash advance -- a cost of \$27 million a year to the Saskatchewan farmers -- this government was quietly endorsing that cash advance interest. Twenty-seven million dollars a year every year. Great support for agriculture in Saskatchewan.

When we were rejecting the increase of 30 per cent last year to the transportation rates, this government was endorsing the federal budget. In fact the Premier was saying that he could live with it. Well maybe he could live with it in his tidy little house with a swimming pool in the backyard on Albert Street, but there are many farmers in Saskatchewan who won't be able to live with it because that money is coming out of their pockets every year. In fact, on the average-size farm in Saskatchewan, another thousand dollars a year is going to be lost to farmers because of the increase in transportation rates.

So there's a bit of a difference there too on who's fighting for farmers and agricultural prosperity in this province.

Rail line abandonment -- another issue where this government is silent. Four hundred million dollars a year it's going to save the federal government. We were fighting to have the federal government retain that rail line project, but no, they cut it out. And these guys were silent on the issue. And that means more money out of the pockets of Saskatchewan farmers because, you know, the same arguments prevail. There's more traffic on the roads, there's higher upkeep, costs more to the municipalities, therefore more money out of the taxpayers in that RM. And these guys were endorsing that while we rejected it.

The fuel rebates were taken off, a cost of \$600 a year to the average farmer. Did this government stand up and say no, leave that fuel rebate on? Not only did they do that, they kind of went on their own and did it some here too. But they weren't standing up for the farmers of the province. Six hundred bucks a year to the average farmer, while we on this side of the House were vehemently opposing that. There was a bit of a difference there.

Crop insurance. Crop insurance rates have gone up double last year, the premium rates. The federal government has reduced its share of the crop insurance program. And continuing on now, the problem that I see and what we on this side of the House are saying, that crop insurance must be an affordable program. And if you look at the doubling of the premiums last year and then predict this year, if anyone has taken the time to look at what their premiums are going to cost them, the last bit of coverage to the 80 per cent level, or the last two or three bushels an acre, is going to cost a phenomenal amount of money. But that's okay with these guys.

What we are fighting for is affordable premiums in crop insurance and a stable program. What they are doing is trying to get as much money out of the pockets of farmers as they can without giving them that security of income. There's a difference there on this issue.

Interest rates. This government sat all last year with a motion before this Assembly to unanimously send a message to Ottawa to reduce interest rates. And if you just take the increase in last year of 4 per cent on a \$100,000 loan, that's \$4,000 extra a farmer would have to come up with to pay the interest. This government simply refused to do that.

So, Mr. Speaker, you see there are some differences on the major issues, and I go on. The method of payment. Well we on this side of the House are supporting that the method of payment of the Crow benefit be paid directly to railroads, because we know that the long-term implication of removing that will be detrimental to the farmers of Saskatchewan. Right now on my farm I'm paying about \$8 a tonne. The total cost is about \$30 a tonne.

So now there's an ingenious program or some thoughts coming forward that maybe they're going to pay the whole thing out over a few years. Well that may sound very good in the short term, but I'll tell you, what you would be paid out, let's say, in a five year pay-out of this benefit, you will pay back in two and a half years because of the increase in the freight rate and the fact that you're paying the whole bill. So that is not very forward thinking on the part of this government.

So there's a difference there in the method of payment. Who's supporting farmers in the long term and who isn't? I think we have to be perfectly clear on that.

While we were opposing movement to tripartite on beef stabilization and hog stabilization, this government was boldly marching forward to the new tomorrow, as they say. And the results of that have the red meat industry complaining about lack of support, about low returns. And we knew that was going to happen. But there again, this government was saying no, it's going to be better. Better for who? Better for the feds and better for the province, but not better for the farmers.

There are other issues. The green paper on agriculture, which we totally rejected. This government, the Tory government here and the federal Tory government were pushing forward, saying that we have to be more market responsive. It's too bad they didn't think about Cargill when they were talking about being market responsive and being more self-sufficient. It seems it works for the farmers, but it doesn't work for Cargill because these guys just finished giving them \$275 million in loans and guarantees.

So there is a difference. On free trade, the Premier of this province was the little cheer-leader going around for Brian Mulroney, saying how great free trade was. In fact some of the quotes are just incredible. And what we have now, we have problems with the hog industry; we have problems with the dairy industry; we have problems with the Canadian Wheat Board; we have problems with durum under the wheat board, and poultry, and it's going to

go on and on, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So there is a difference, and that's why these people are looking over their shoulders, because the farmers of Saskatchewan are telling them, you were wrong when you supported free trade, and you were wrong when you supported all these other cuts to Saskatchewan agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: -- And then there's the GST. Well we're not sure where they stand on that. It depends which way the wind's blowing, or it depends, maybe more, on who they're talking to, Mr. Speaker, because I think when they're talking to the people of Saskatchewan they're saying they're opposed to the GST, but when they're talking to the people in Ottawa and their big, corporate friends, they're saying that they support the GST. And I think if the truth were to be known, that would be the case.

All these differences between this side of the House arguing to keep dollars in the hands of farmers and that side of the House saying they're farmers' friends, but all the while cutting, cutting, cutting, creating more and more costs to the agriculture industry, on top of the fact that they have not delivered, as promised in 1985, long-term stability program. They have not delivered a debt restructuring program that is so badly needed in this province to ensure that the farmers that have had large debts and can't get out from under them will continue to farm and their families will be able to continue to farm. On top of that, they have added costs through all these programs. The result of that, Mr. Speaker, is a crisis in agriculture -- all these added costs.

And I just want to run through quickly some of the numbers in the crisis in agriculture, and this comes from a publication from the government. I mean, by their own admission net farm income declined by 11 per cent in '88 to '89, and in fact in 1990 it's projected it will drop below zero, a negative \$9 million income.

In a province where we have \$6 billion of agricultural debt, in a province where the value of assets are down 30 per cent since 1982, in a province where Saskatchewan farm families are paying half a billion dollars a year interest on their debt, it's sad, Mr. Speaker. We in this province have about one-third of the farmers -- those are the young, ambitious farmers with low assets -- carrying about 70 per cent of that \$6 billion debt. And that is why we are seeing them leaving the land. That is why we are seeing one in 10 going before debt review boards. And this is the government who's supporting agriculture? I mean there are answers out there and we know there are answers, but they are not being brought forward by this government.

The only hope that we have is that there is an election coming up pretty soon, and they are so far down the polls that they will actually try to do something concrete to help the farmers of Saskatchewan.

An Hon. Member: -- Ad hoc.

Mr. Upshall: -- It'll be ad hoc, but the only hope we have is that they

will try to buy themselves out again. In Alberta and Manitoba there is a reduction of applications before the Farm Debt Review Board, but in Saskatchewan it's up 20 per cent.

Now you'd think proportionally if this prairie region which is so similar, proportionally there should be some consistency in that. But no, Alberta and Manitoba are much different than Saskatchewan -- ours is driving higher.

Agriculture lenders right now own somewhere in the area about 850,000 acres, and that's a very difficult number to nail down because they're always rolling over land. If you look in the papers, Western Producer and other papers, there's pages and pages and pages of land for sale through FCC (Farm Credit Corporation) and ACS (Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan). That's up 730,000 acres in the last three years. And they say they are supporting and behind in solving the problems of agriculture? Incredible.

One in four Farm Credit Corporation accounts in Saskatchewan are in arrears, 54,000 accounts in arrears. ACS capital arrears are up to 33 per cent from 26 per cent last year, and the production loans arrears are up to 18 per cent from 10 per cent last year.

It's escalating, sky-rocketing, in a very short period of time. And what effect has this had -- the fact they have not stopped the drain of funds from farmers' hands; the fact that they have not stopped the trend to depopulating rural Saskatchewan; the fact that they've done nothing but say, well, when you're in a bind, we have an ad hoc program that will give you some money?

Well that's the easy out, there's no doubt about that. The farmers needed the money but they needed the long-term stability, predictability, and they needed the debt restructuring.

But no, this government says, the easy out is no problems; give them a cash pay-out. We can see that that has simply not worked because what effect has that had, what effect has that Tories' policy had on this province?

(1615)

Farm bankruptcies up 32 per cent over 1988. In 1989 Saskatchewan had 45 per cent of all bankruptcies in Canada; of all farm bankruptcies in Canada, nearly half of all farm bankruptcies in this province. And the total bankruptcies in the first two months of 1990 are up 32 per cent over the same time last year.

So what happens? Net out-migration -- over 23,000 people leaving in 1989; 3,000 in the first two months of this year. In fact in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, 64 per cent of all the towns and villages have lost population, a direct result of this government's so-called great agricultural policy.

And they talk about managing change. Well I think when managing change

they have failed, and failed dismally.

Other results of this mismanagement of the agriculture and general economy of this province is that in 1989 we had the fewest housing starts in 20 years. And we're 47 per cent below last year in the first two months of 1990. I don't know how you're going to get down to a negative housing start. Maybe they'll start tearing them down and it'll be a Tory job creation program.

The total labour force dropped by 6,000, Mr. Speaker, and the only province in Canada where that happened.

In 1989 Saskatchewan retail sales were slower than any other province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you see we have, first, the comparisons of policy that drain money out of the pockets of farmers. We have, second, the problems that created by debt and lower assets and low income, and then we have the effect on the general population of this province where they're emptying it out. What a sorry indictment of a government who stands up and says there's a better way.

I want to bring it a little closer to home, Mr. Speaker. This is the regional planning profile, the Carlton Trail Regional College, and that is in the area in which I am located. And I want to quote from this book a few of the notes that they put in. And it says:

Note, considerable rural depopulation has taken place with 2,425 individuals 15 years of age and over moving off the farms from 1981 to 1986.

In one area -- a central part of this province, takes in the Quill Lakes and Humboldt, in that area -- young people moving off the land. Another note that says, and get this one:

Over 40,000 people 15 years of age and older live in low income families in the Carlton Trail region.

You know, Mr. Speaker, 40,000 people on low income represents 80 per cent of the families living in that area living on low-income. That's the heart of, heart of the Saskatchewan, right in the centre of the province; the centre of the province that this government, when it came in, said, we're the saviour of farmers, we're going to end all your woes, and we're going to be here to go to the wall with the treasury for you guys. They've gone to the wall all right. Talking about the Berlin Wall more than they're talking about going to the wall for farmers these days.

And just to capsulize it, Mr. Speaker, we have the anticipated changes in agriculture as a headline. And there's five points:

Anticipated Changes in Agriculture in the Carlton Trail Region:

1. Continued depopulation of farms;

2. Fewer farms and creation of larger farming enterprises;
3. Increased use of application of computer technology;
4. Additional closures of farm machinery dealers;
5. Continuing trend towards seeking off-farm income.

That is the projection in the Carlton Trail Region, in the centre of the heart of this province. A real rosy picture painted by the government opposite with its great plans. But the hypocrisy, the hypocrisy is there and the people of this province knows it's there. That is why they have to be looking over their shoulders when they're making their speeches.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: -- Mr. Speaker, I want to touch briefly on a couple of other points. I want to ask you, and ask yourselves, what does Consensus Saskatchewan really mean other than con Saskatchewan? You know there's the obvious; there's the obvious that it's a ploy to make people think that they're going to be co-operating and communicating. In fact they're saying they're going to end mismanagement, corruption, that type of thing . . . public relations.

But you know what I think con Saskatchewan really is? I think Consensus Saskatchewan is put in place because there's a total breakdown of the Tory party. It's an admission . . . Just think of it this way. If this is an admission simply to pretend that they want to get people on side, what depths will they stoop to, to try to do that, try to win government?

But what they have essentially done, they have admitted that the system in their party has broke down -- from the Premier, the cabinet, the caucus, the president of the party, the elected officials, and the party members. They are void of ideas, they have no policy, and they have showed frustration and despair. They are unable to manage the affairs of this province. That's what they're saying. A total breakdown of the Tory policy, Tory machine. And like I said, if that's simply a ploy to try to win the next election, well these guys will go to any depths -- any depths -- to maintain power, that all-holy power that they like to have.

Mr. Speaker, you know when this Mr. Premier was elected last time, he came in with great fanfare. He was going to show this province how things were going to be done. Remember give 'er snooze Bruce; never say whoa in a mud hole; bring our children home; you can misspend in Saskatchewan because it's got so much and still make money. You remember all those lines?

But the problem is, Mr. Speaker, the problem was . . . and I know the minister . . . the Premier was educated in the United States, got his degree in the United States. And I know that he admires Maggie Thatcher

and Ronald Reagan and George Bush. But the problem is, Mr. Speaker, this Premier doesn't understand Saskatchewan. He's looking all over the world but he doesn't understand the economic environment in which we have built upon knowledge from people putting themselves together and building Crown corporations, building private enterprise, building co-operatives. He doesn't understand that. And you see what's happened to our province. He just doesn't understand. And you know what? He's going to ask to be re-elected. He's going to ask to be re-elected after all the indictments that have been placed upon him.

He is a deceptive Premier. He keeps telling the people that it's the best way; it's the only way; you'll see; just, you know, forge on. He puts on his little folksy, well boys it's doable, so we'll go out there and do it. And golly gosh gee, you know, all you got to do is go out there and work hard and take on the world and all this kind of crap. Unbelievable. Give the perception that's he doing good for agriculture by pumping out some money; perception that he's doing it when in fact it's basically the federal government that's doing it.

But look at the litany of cuts, the litany of mismanagement, the devastation, and he wants people to trust him. He wants people to trust him and re-elect him after he's done all these things. Well, you know, I can best sum it up, Mr. Speaker, what I feel in rural Saskatchewan when I'm out there. After eight years of Tory government, and it's summed up in the lines of a song and it goes something like this: it's hard to keep believing when you know you've been deceived. And that is exactly the feeling I get in rural Saskatchewan. When they've been deceived, they just simply can no longer believe in this government.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I just want to go through a couple of quotes here. This is from the throne speech of last year, March 8, 1989. One paragraph says:

Legislation for protection and mediation services for farmers was consolidated last year in The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act.

Well we all know what happened there. It did absolutely nothing. Anyway, it goes on to say:

In this session, (remember this is last year's throne speech) you will be asked to consider consolidating farm finance legislation with new and innovative farm financing options. The Farm Finance Act will expand the mandate of the Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan to provide loans to producers to purchase their home quarter and re-establish viable farm operations. A pilot project of equity financing will also be introduced. These measures will present alternative means of stabilizing financial status to many of our young producers.

That's what the throne speech last year said. You know, you have to ask yourself what happened in the meantime.

But it goes on. I want to give you a couple of quotes from the Premier when talking about The Farm Financial Stability Act last year. Remember last July? He was saying:

Now by providing all of this in one place, and the regulations that go with it, any individual in Saskatchewan can go down through this legislation and say, here is the protective safety net for farmers.

I mean, that's what he was saying last year when introducing Bills in the throne speech, in the budget. And you know what? I'll bet he's going to say the same thing this year. Wouldn't that be coincidental! He's going to be providing a safety net. He's going to be doing this and that for Saskatchewan farmers. And eight years in a row he's failed to tackle the problem in a way that solved the problem.

But, Mr. Speaker, we in the New Democratic Party have to put forward some alternatives to provide stability to farm families. I'd just like to go through this just to lay out what we feel should be done, this announcement made today in Ottawa by the Leader of the Opposition and the federal Leader of the New Democratic Party, on agriculture.

The New Democratic Party both federally and provincially offers a clear alternative to the ad hoc agriculture policies of the PCs. That alternative vision offers stability and predictability from farm families and the rural communities who depend on their well-being.

And then it goes into the 1988 federal program that we had, that still stands true today, whereby a family farm stabilization program based on -- using wheat as the example -- the first 8,000 bushels at the U.S. target price, a safety net, an assurance of return for farmers.

They were saying, strengthen the farm marketing boards and supply management -- complete reversal of what the free trade agreement is doing right now by destroying supply management; revising the mandate of Farm Credit Corporation so it becomes a primary provider of long-term financing rather than a lender of last resort.

In that program we had \$125,000 at 8 per cent interest for everyone. The next \$125,000 through farm credit would be a set aside program. And that's the type of stability, long-term program that we need in this country, in this province.

And also, in order that we can get to that point, we have to have a short-term program because of the short-sightedness and the ad hoc-ery. So we need one more ad hoc. We need \$500 million in the hands of farmers prior to seeding. It has to be there. I've got people telling me they can't get the seed in the ground.

We need a moratorium on Saskatchewan farm foreclosures, at least until July 1, 1990. And we believe that the federal and provincial governments should set a deadline of July 1, 1990 by which to develop a national consensus for the farm groups and financial institutions on a plan to restructure farm debt; and also that the federal and provincial governments set a deadline of July 1, 1990 to develop an implementation of a national farm income stabilization program which would guarantee production and price shortfalls on delivery; and that the Government of Saskatchewan introduce a program to

assist intergenerational farm land transfer.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is the type of a program that we have needed for years and years in this province, and yet these governments . . . And I mean we're not the only ones that come up with decent programs. I mean, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, National Farmers Union, Grains 2000, some of the economists, they are putting forward programs of income stability, but this government and the federal government in Ottawa simply does not pick it up. They do not pick it up because, as the Premier wrote when he was a professor in university, he thinks that they should get rid of the 80 per cent of the unproductive farmers.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House simply are reflecting what the people of this province are saying. They are saying that this government has first of all failed to stand up for them when it comes to money coming out of their pockets. Secondly, it has failed to restructure the long-term debt to provide predictable long-term income stability programs. And these programs wouldn't cost any more than what they're paying out now in their ad hoc-ery. And it would provide a solution.

And as we come closer to an election, I am sure you'll be hearing the rhetoric pumped up and there will be great plans like there were last year to solve the problem. But ask yourself, Mr. Speaker, how can anyone in Saskatchewan, how can anyone in Saskatchewan believe that this Tory government, after eight years -- eight years higher debt, lower income . . .

The Speaker: -- Order.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

The Speaker: -- According to rule 13(4), which reads as follows:

On the sixth of the said days, at thirty minutes before the ordinary time of daily adjournment, unless the said debate be previously concluded, Mr. Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and forthwith put every question necessary to dispose of the main motion.

(1630)

The division bells rang from 4:31 p.m. until 4:34 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas

Muller	Klein t
Schmidt	Sauder t
McLeod	Toth t
Hodgins	Duncan t
Smith	Petersen t
Lane	Wolfe t
Hepworth	McLaren t

Maxwell
Kopelchuk
Meiklejohn
Martin
Hopfner
Swenson
Neudorf
Gerich

Baker t
Swan t
Muirhead t
Johnson t
Gleim t
Britton t
Gardner t
Saxinger t

-- 30 R

Nays

Prebble
Rolfes
Shillington
Lingenfelter
Tchorzewski
Koskie
Thompson
Brockelbank
Mitchell
Upshall
Simard

Kowalsky t
Solomon t
Atkinson t
Anguish t
Goulet t
Pringle t
Lyons t
Lautermilch t
Trew t
Van Mulligen t
Koenker t

-- 22 R

MOTIONS

Address be Engrossed and Presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move, seconded by the Deputy House Leader, the member for Rosthern:

That the said address be engrossed and presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor by such members of the Assembly as are of the Executive Council.

Motion agreed to.

Ways and Means

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: -- Mr. Speaker, I would also like to move, seconded by the Deputy House Leader, the member for Rosthern:

That this Assembly, pursuant to rule 84, hereby appoints the Committee of Finance to consider the supply to be granted to Her Majesty and to consider the ways and means of raising the supply.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:38 p.m.