

April 2/90

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two or three guests to introduce today. First, I would like to introduce to the Assembly two representatives of the State of Maryland who are visiting here. The first is the Hon. Wayne Cawley, Maryland's secretary of Agriculture, who is sitting in the Speaker's gallery; and Mr. Robert Walker, the deputy secretary of Agriculture from Maryland.

These individuals are here visiting Saskatchewan as a result of a Saskatchewan-Maryland Conference. We're doing some joint work on crop insurance. And many of the suggestions and improvements that we've made recently in Canada in crop insurance are of interest to Americans. We're also looking at joint ventures in tourism, in health care, and the combinations of other things. So I would ask all members to please join me in welcoming these two gentlemen to Saskatchewan and to our legislature.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Speaker, I also have a guest here from the Soviet Union, and I'm going to ask the Associate Minister of Agriculture to introduce him and then I will add a couple of remarks.

Hon. Mr. Martens: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to bid a welcome to Valery Pomerantsev from the Soviet Union. He is here today visiting on behalf of the Soviet in Russia, and he is looking to buy some dairy cattle and equipment in relation to that. I just want to point out that that's a very extensive farm that he manages over there. They operate mink, silver fox, fur bearing animals, cows, hogs, and also they have a fish processing opportunity there too, and a lot of farmers in Saskatchewan, sir, would like to have the opportunity to go fishing and have that as a part of their farm. And we in Saskatchewan appreciate you coming to visit us, and we wish you well in your sightseeing and travel around the province.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- I just want to add to the minister's acknowledgement that I was received very well in the Soviet Union, meeting with the Minister of Agriculture and many of the officials. And the hospitality was indeed as good as I've received any place that I've been in western Europe. So I say to the hon. member, welcome to the province of Saskatchewan. We've had many of your fellow ministers and officials here before, and we hope to continue to do good business. Welcome to the legislature.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have some out-of-province guests with us this afternoon. I would like to introduce them to you, and through you to all members of the legislature, and they are seated in your gallery. They come from the province of Ontario -- St. Catharines, Ontario, as a matter of fact. We have Mr. and Mrs. Greg Elliott, and they are here in Saskatchewan visiting Mrs. Moser from Regina. And we want to wish you the best of a stay here. We hope you get to see a lot of Saskatchewan. We want to give you a hearty welcome to our province and to the legislature.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Trew: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the Premier and the House Leader in welcoming the guests from out of town.

I want to turn your attention, Mr. Speaker, to another group in your gallery, this group from the constituency of Regina North, from Thom Collegiate. There is just over two dozen grade 10 students here and they are accompanied by teachers, Miss Paulette Hubbs and Mr. Bill Heavisides. I ask all members to join me in welcoming this wonderful group to our Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Solomon: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As many people know, Thom Collegiate is on Argyle Street, which is on the east boundary of Regina North West and on the west boundary of Regina North constituency. Many students who attend Thom Collegiate live in my constituency, and I'd like to join with my colleague, the member from Regina North, in welcoming the students from Thom Collegiate. Thank you.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Help for Saskatchewan Farmers

Mr. Romanow: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Speaker, as members of the House will know, and the members of the farming community in Saskatchewan will know, for weeks now, directly or indirectly, the government opposite has been assuring the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan that there would be -- the word used is a "commitment" of \$500 million cash from Ottawa before spring seeding, for spring seeding, for Saskatchewan farmers. And in fact this commitment and promise was made as late as Friday's question period. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you'll remember the exchange between the Premier and myself in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is this: in light of Mr. Mazankowski's announcement of Friday afternoon that we're going to get about \$225 million only in Saskatchewan and not the \$500 million, what happened to that commitment that you have referred to in the Speech from the Throne and repeatedly since that time? What happened to that

commitment? Did you really have one, or were you just leading the farmers on?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to meet with farm groups this morning from across the province -- the wheat pool, United Grain Growers, livestock producers, the (SARM) Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities and others. Their message was exactly the same as it was a week ago with respect to Saskatchewan making sure that the federal government know that the federal government is responsible for cash injections into the province of Saskatchewan. We had endorsement, in fact we worked on the plan to get our loan program out to the people of Saskatchewan. They have been quoted in various articles that I would be glad to share with the Leader of the Opposition, saying the money must come from the federal government. We met with and have talked with our American counterparts at the state level, Mr. Speaker, and you will find that the local states do not fund the export enhancement program. The local states do not fund the deficiency payments, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- The fact is, and when I met with the leader and Minister of Agriculture of the Soviet Union we agreed that it's a price war and it's an international war. And we both agreed that we must change some of those policies in western Europe, Mr. Speaker, because they're unfair.

And the hon. member mentions China. Yes, well, it's too bad there isn't some democracy in China as well. We'd look forward to that.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- There's no help from him. Mr. Speaker, I would just say again to the hon. member that we have asked and the resolution here put forward our request for \$500 million this spring. We will stay with that. We have support of the farm groups, the opposition, people across the province, that the provincial government should not bail out the federal treasury.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I have a new question to the Premier. And may I say by the way of preface to the Premier, I understand his argument with respect to the federal responsibility. But I do remind the Premier that the commitment was referred to in the Speech from the Throne. I have a copy of it here; it's on page four. The resolution which was passed unanimously -- in fact last Friday's answer is again a commitment of \$500 million cash. I think the expression used was cash on the dash. That was a commitment that you said in the Speech from the Throne, you had.

Now on Friday we find out from the Minister of federal Agriculture, Mr. Mazankowski, that it isn't \$500 million, it's only \$225 million. And it's

going to be cost shared before Ottawa kicks in any money.

My question to you, sir, is very simple and direct, for which I would ask you again to give us a response. Did Ottawa mislead Regina, or did your government mislead the farmers of this province?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Speaker, the hon. member cannot show this legislature or anybody else where there was a commitment for \$500 million. Now you show us that. I mean, he knows that's not the case. We have a commitment by the federal government that they would provide money to western Canada. And, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and I passed a resolution here that it be \$500 million -- \$500 million now, \$400 million later, and a billion dollars in the contingency fund. That's what we're going to stick by.

And the farm groups, Mr. Speaker, have agreed with us that we shouldn't be bailing out the federal government because it is indeed an international problem. So we're going to stick to our guns, and I hope the hon. member will stick to the facts and make sure, make sure that farmers get support here and there's solidarity across Saskatchewan, solidarity among all provincial parties, politically, and farm groups, that we hold the federal government to the fact that this is indeed a national problem and an international problem and not one that Saskatchewan treasury should be put up to stake.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, I have a new question to the Premier. And I want to say to the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan, I think the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan know what the real issue is, and that is that they need \$500 million in cash from Ottawa prior to spring seeding which is just around the corner. That's the issue. And the other issue is that it was your job to go to Ottawa and to get it, and frankly, Mr. Premier, you blew it. You didn't get it.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Premier, you blew it in spite of the commitments to the farmers that they would have that \$500 million. And my question to you, therefore, is very simple. I want you to tell this House, if you will please, sir, specifically what actions you propose now to take to convince Ottawa to get something today that you couldn't get last week and specifically what your timetable is for getting that desperately needed cash.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Speaker, I will just say, Mr. Speaker, with the greatest respect to the Leader of the Opposition, I've got more out of agriculture . . . for agriculture out of Ottawa than he did in his whole political career. And you can wave all you like.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: -- We've got hundred millions of dollars, billions of dollars, and low interest loans and protection, Mr. Speaker, and he doesn't want to hear about it. He doesn't want to hear about it. He says that's . . . Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll just say to the hon. member, we will stick to our guns and we'll defend the farmer and we will make sure that there's cash in his hands, Mr. Speaker, and there's money to seed the crop, because we will have the support of all the political parties, maybe not him alone, but all the political parties as we passed a resolution in this House, and indeed the farm groups, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Operating Grants for Education

Ms. Atkinson: -- My question is to the Minister of Education, and it has to do with his budget of last week's betrayal of young people in the province of Saskatchewan.

When you take all of the rhetoric out of the budget speech, we learn that the operating grants to universities, technical schools, and schools systems have only increased by 2.9 per cent at a time when inflation is running at 4.8 per cent. On March 12, Mr. Minister, you received a plea from school boards, the school trustees' association, and LEADS (League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents) asking you to substantially increase funding to education. I would like you to explain to the young people of this province how you justify your government's decision to cut educational funding.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Speaker, it's always interesting how members of the opposition can take figures and they all turn out to be cuts. How you can turn an increase in expenditures of 5.6 per cent and several millions, 44 million or \$47 million, and that turns into a cut, is beyond me, Mr. Speaker. I think that we need to take another look at what the budget actually says and what it means for young people in this province. I'm very proud of the record of this government with regard to education in this province.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- We have made a very definite commitment. We know that we're operating in tough times, and we've still increased the amount of spending for education in this province by \$47 million. More money for the universities, more money for the K to 12, more money for regional colleges, which is going to enable people out in rural areas to have greater access to first and second year university classes. Consider the amount of money that is going into literacy programs, adult basic education -- just total them all up, Mr. Speaker, and that certainly does not shake down into a cut-back.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: -- New question. Mr. Minister, you can . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. I must once more remind the hon. member that remarks directed to other members must be directed through the Chair.

Ms. Atkinson: -- New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you can dress it up any way you like. The fact of the matter is that inflation in this province is running at 4.8 per cent and your government only increased operating grants to 2.9 per cent.

The money that will need to come to pay for programs, teachers, staff, that sort of thing, will have to come from local property taxpayers. When you transfer money from the province onto the local taxpayer, that, in fact, Mr. Minister, is a cut in funding.

Now let me quote from Bob Thompson. He says, quote:

We have made the system more efficient and managed to maintain a high standard of education through recent economic hard times. For us to continue, the province must increase its support.

You didn't do that, Mr. Minister, and so the local school boards are once again on the hook. The SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association), LEADS and teachers have specifically asked you to back up your words with action. Why won't you do that?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Speaker, if you take a look at what the hon. member has just said, that the inflation rate is somewhere around 4.8 per cent, the increase in the educational budget is 5.6, which does add up to an increase.

I would also point out, I would also point out, Mr. Speaker, that if the hon. member would just take some time to check the facts, that the amount of spending that the provincial government, the share of the provincial government going into operating grants for education in this province, is still at about the same level that it has been for many, many years. I will admit, I will admit that it was a little bit higher at some of the years back in the 1970s, but I would point out that it's higher now than it was in the early '70s when that crew was in power.

So, Mr. Speaker, she needs to take a look at the facts instead of coming out with some of these stories here about the terrible things that are happening in education. I'm still very, very proud of what this government is able to do in spite of the tough times, in spite of the fact that grain prices and oil prices and potash prices and uranium prices are down, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: -- Mr. Speaker, a new question to the minister. Mr. Minister, your officials were in touch with school division directors all across this province on Friday. That is simply not what they are telling the school directors of this province. All you have to do is ask many, many schools in rural Saskatchewan what happened to their funding. Their funding was cut, Mr. Minister. Their funding was cut.

Now, Mr. Minister, our school system is currently losing teachers and programs and services because the money is simply not there because of the economic crisis in this province and because of the horrendous depopulation that is incurring. Now we have to face the worry of materials and programs being cut back even further.

My question is: how many more teachers, how many more programs, how many more services are our young people going to have to lose, and why won't your government get with it and begin to help?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- I think it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the member opposite makes no mention of the fact that there are 2,200 fewer students in our schools today. She's not making any mention of the fact that maybe fewer teachers are needed today than before. There's no doubt about it. There's no doubt about it that the taxpayers . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- There is no doubt about it, Mr. Speaker, that the property taxpayers are undoubtedly looking for some increase, but if you take a look at the grants that all of the school divisions across this province are going to be getting, there are very few of them that are going to be having a decrease. And in any of those cases where they are getting a decrease, it's because the enrolment has gone down for the most part. For the most part, all of the school divisions across this province are going to be getting an increase in their operating grant. They're also going to be getting, I think, some \$14.5 million from the educational development fund, Mr. Speaker, something that this government brought in, which is also utilized for many different things, whether it's computers or resource materials or whatever the case might be.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are doing the best that we can in these difficult economic times. A 5.6 per cent increase in educational funding for the most part is being met very, very positively in this province.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

University Funding

Mr. Rolfes: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Education also. And it's strange, Mr. Speaker, that he's talking about tough economic times when they've got \$65 million cash for Cargill, one of the richest multinational corporations in this world. Mr.

Minister, everybody is wrong but you.

Let me just address a question to you, Mr. Minister, in regards to the University of Saskatchewan and the U of R (University of Regina). Both President Ivany and President Barber have said that they needed increases of about 8.5 per cent in operating grants just to maintain the status quo. In your last budget, Mr. Minister, you gave them an increase of 3 per cent.

Mr. Minister, my question to you is this: when you meet with the presidents of the university, what programs are you going to recommend to them that they should cut? What professors are you going to recommend that they should let go? What students, Mr. Minister, are you going to say that they should not permit to enter the university? And, Mr. Minister, my last question to you is: how much are student tuition fees to increase in order that the universities can offer a good standard of education? Which ones of these questions are you going to direct to them, and which ones, Mr. Minister, are they going to be able to carry out so that they can offer a good program at the U of S and the U of R?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to be making any suggestions with regard to what tuition fees will be in the coming year. That's up to the board of governors and the administration. I'm also not going to be suggesting what programs be cut, or in fact if there have to be any cut. That's a decision of the administration.

The member opposite doesn't make any mention whatsoever about the increase that they're getting in their operating grant. They're also getting an increase in so far as the enhancement fund. There's also a substantial amount of money going into capital construction, particularly at the University of Saskatchewan and the College of Agriculture building.

Plus, Mr. Speaker, there are some 46 or 47 millions of dollars going into student loans in the province, much of which will be targeted for university students at the universities.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, you know as well as the people on your side do that the increase in student aid is mostly for repayment of default of student loans. In fact about half of the increase is for default of student loans.

And my question to you, Mr. Minister, is this: are you saying to this House today that the increase in student loans is due to the fact that there has been an increase of attendance at private vocational schools, and a lot of that student aid -- last year 22.2 million went to private vocational schools. Are you telling this House that much of that money is going to private vocational schools whose programs are suspect? Is that what you're telling us today?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Speaker, let me remind the hon. member that any of the money that is going into student loans . . . and he likes to play around with these figures. There's a lot of money that's going to the students that are going to private vocational schools is also from the Canada student loans. It's not just the Saskatchewan student loans program.

I would also suggest to him it's really only in his eyes, for the most part, that these programs are not as good as some would like them to be. We have them under investigation at all times. We have an advisory committee that is looking at the programs. The qualifications of the teachers all have to be approved by the Department of Education, and I think, for the most part, Mr. Speaker, they're doing a very, very good job.

I did not say that the student loan fund this year has increased; it's the same as it was last year. The student aid fund has increased.

And for you to say that a lot of this is default on loans is totally inaccurate. The increases, for the most part, are to make up for the interest on those loans which students have who are still attending university. And while they're at university, I would remind the member, they do not pay interest; the government has to pay that interest. We have a much more positive program in student loans, Mr. Speaker, than that bunch over there ever had, with a lot lower interest rates.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Speaker, my last question to the . . . new question to the minister. Mr. Minister, in 1987 you cut very dramatically . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order.

Mr. Rolfes: -- Mr. Minister, in 1987 you cut very dramatically the programs at SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), and you also cut a number, hundreds of student spaces at SIAST in order that, you said, that you could put the money into distance education.

I noticed in your budget, Mr. Minister, where you've cut the distance education SCAN (Saskatchewan Communications Advanced Network) by 33 per cent -- \$1.5 million -- and yet you're telling the people of Saskatchewan that you are going to make education, post-secondary education accessible to people in rural Saskatchewan. How do you explain that, Mr. Minister, to the people in rural Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: -- Mr. Speaker, the distance education programs are going ahead very, very quickly in this province. We also have to keep in mind the fact that SCAN is only one part of distance education and the provision of programs to rural Saskatchewan.

He knows full well that in this particular budget there has been a very

substantial increase for regional colleges which are going to be providing first and second year university courses to many more students, along with the vocational courses that are provided through SIAST. So there's an awful lot more happening in rural Saskatchewan today, Mr. Speaker, because of the programs that this government has put into place.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Health Care Budget

Ms. Simard: -- Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health, and it has to do with a quote from the Star-Phoenix on the budget, Mr. Minister, which says as follows:

I just question the allocation of the increases. I think the commission members will be disappointed.

Mr. Speaker, that sentiment was expressed by Dr. Bob Murray, the person whom the Minister of Health chose to chair the health care commission. Mr. Minister, when the head of your commission says he's disappointed with the health care budget allocations, wouldn't you say that your health care priorities are skewed?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: -- Mr. Speaker, let me remind the House that I think it was about two years ago -- I remember it very well -- when the commission members, including Dr. Murray, the chairman, to whom the member now refers, were sitting there in the gallery. They were introduced, and that member and other members on that side of the House talked about the commission members and the fact that they didn't have that much respect for the way in which the commission was appointed or who the members of the commission were. Now all of a sudden Dr. Murray is being quoted by the member, and that's as it should be.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Murray made those initial comments without having the budget documents in front of him, and he didn't. And I say that very clearly. And he . . . Mr. Speaker, the members will howl over there all they like but these are the facts.

Mr. Speaker, what Dr. Murray has said is in fact a sentiment that has been expressed by some people in the province, some people in the province who believe strongly that there should be even more money for home care than there is in this budget, even though this budget provides for nine and a half per cent increase in home care.

What Dr. Murray has expressed is what has been expressed by others, Mr. Speaker, that has been expressed by others. They would say, put more into home care, put less into the hospitals, into institutionalized care. Mr. Speaker, that's what we have done. That's what Dr. Murray said to do.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Ms. Simard: -- Mr. Speaker, new question to the minister. Mr. Minister, in looking at the Public Accounts for 1988-89, we see that in the health care budget you spent over \$1 million in advertising and another 144,000 with respect to polling in health care.

Now, when you juxtapose that against Dr. Murray's comments where he indicated that we need more money in home care and a lot more money is needed for mental health and community health services . . . And he says, as far as health services in the North are concerned, and I quote, "That's third-world medicine up there," Mr. Minister.

Now, since it was you who set up the Murray commission, since it is you who's talking about consulting and consensus, Mr. Minister, why didn't you consult with Dr. Murray before you set your budget priorities?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: -- Mr. Speaker, I would express the same thing as Dr. Murray did. It would have been better, frankly, if we had had the . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order! The Minister of Health is being interrupted and I ask the courtesy of the members to allow him to continue without interruption.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: -- Mr. Speaker, I concur with what Dr. Murray has said, in the fact that it would be better if we had received his report prior to this budget coming down. That's true. Mr. Speaker, the facts are that we did not receive the report but we are to receive it in a very few weeks now, according to the most recent release from the commission and from Dr. Murray.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the member stands on her feet here today, talks about the expenditures, and she uses the term "advertising," but it's in the area of public affairs and promotion in the Department of Health, and she talks about the amount expended there. A major portion of that expenditure, Mr. Speaker, was for the health care commission, the (Saskatchewan) Commission on Directions in Health Care. A major portion of that expenditure was right there, Mr. Speaker.

So on one hand she's up here quoting from the commission chairman; on the other hand she's saying, don't spend any money on the commission.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

The Speaker: -- Order, order.

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Mr. Speaker, before Orders of the Day, with leave, I would like to acknowledge the Canadian Junior Women's Curling Champions.

Leave granted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Saskatchewan Women's Junior Curling Champions

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- As all hon. members would be aware, Saskatchewan has won the Junior Canadian Women's Curling Championship. The rink consisted of Atina Ford; Atina and her sister, Cindy, are from Gray. Atina is 18; she's attending first year University of Regina. As well, Darlene Kidd was the third, she's 17; she's at Lumsden High School. And Leslie Beck is 19; she's a second year arts and science student at the University of Regina.

We will get the opportunity, I believe, Mr. Speaker, to introduce the Canadian champions at an appropriate date in the Assembly. All hon. members were honoured to have the women's champions, the Brier champions, the juniors, men's and women's at the opening of the legislature, and I know we had a chance to meet them all at that time.

Mr. Speaker, as I say, we will be acknowledging them at the appropriate time. Their coach is a very good friend of mine, and I think this is number seven for Harvey Forner, the Saskatchewan champions. He had also coached Jamie Schneider and the junior boys a few years back, so my congratulations. And I know . . . I ask all hon. members to join with me in congratulating Atina Ford and her rink who are the Canadian Women's Junior Curling Champions.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Sports Minister I'd like to join with my colleague, who just spoke on behalf of the Ford rink, in congratulating them on a job well done. I should point out to you, and to members of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, that they were beneficiaries of the Sask First program which, of course, was so successful in culminating in the best ever performance we had at Jeux Canada Games this past summer in Saskatoon. I also note that the rink will be going on to the world junior championships in March of next year, which are to be held in Glasgow, Scotland. I had the pleasure of spending a few very, very happy years in Glasgow, Scotland, and I'd be happy to reminisce and share some addresses with them prior to leaving. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: -- With leave, Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the ministers opposite on behalf of the members on this side of the legislature to congratulate the Ford rink for the accomplishments thus far, to wish them the best in their curling over the next year as they go into the championships and as they go abroad. They are maintaining that Saskatchewan tradition of excelling in curling, and we are glad to see them continue with it.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Table Officer

The Speaker: -- Before orders of the day, I would like to make the following announcement. I wish to introduce to the hon. members Mr. Blair

Armitage, committee clerk from the Senate of Canada. Mr. Armitage will be on attachment to this House for the month of April to assist our own Clerks at the Table and to observe how a provincial Legislative Assembly functions. On your behalf, I wish to welcome Mr. Armitage to our Assembly. Please welcome him along with me.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE
(BUDGET DEBATE)

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hepworth that the Assembly resolve itself into the Committee of Finance.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's always a pleasure to enter into the debate in this legislature. On behalf of the constituents of the Meadow Lake constituency in north-western Saskatchewan, I've been doing so now since 1978. And once again, as I did for just a few moments on Friday as we wound up the debate last week, Mr. Speaker, spoke just briefly about that part of the province, the part of the province that I feel so honoured to serve, and about some of the points of interest about that area as we . . . and all of us in Saskatchewan face some of the difficulties that we do, especially in the agricultural area.

I just might reiterate just very briefly, Mr. Speaker, and I have no intention of going back over all of that ground again, except to say that the key point and the point of which I am very proud and the people in the Meadow Lake constituency and that part of north-western Saskatchewan are so proud of, is that as we hear about diversification of an economy, as we hear about how important it is to have that diversification and spread that as much as possible throughout the economy of our communities and throughout our province -- and it's an area that we've tried to emphasize in a major way within this government since 1982 since coming into office -- it's something that we have been very fortunate about in that part of Saskatchewan in the north-west.

The Meadow Lake constituency has . . . certainly agriculture's the major industry, without question. It's a very important one, and that is the case, as is the case in all of Saskatchewan. And all of our people in agriculture are faced with the same kinds of problems that agricultural people are throughout the province in terms of significant debt problems -- obviously the problems that we're all trying to address as we face international price wars and low prices, and so on.

Agriculture in our area is more than just grain, very much a mixed farming area and, Mr. Speaker, very much a cattle ranching area. I think I said

the other day that . . . and it bears repeating. I think many of us in the province and conventional wisdom in this province says most of the cattle in Saskatchewan or the largest cattle numbers across this province are in the south-west. Many people believe that. In the south-western ranching country, very excellent traditional ranching country. But the facts are, and when one looks at the numbers of cattle across the province and the population of cattle, most of the cattle in this province are in the north-western part of the province, and a good portion of those are in my constituency of Meadow Lake where there are some very large ranches.

Mr. Speaker, gas and oil, both of those we have in the province. Certainly we know how important they are to the provincial economy. Natural gas is very important and to some extent on the southern portion of my constituency south of Paradise Hill, in that area, heavy oil as well.

Mr. Speaker, tourism, an area that we all feel has a tremendous potential in this province, has certainly got tremendous potential in the Meadow Lake constituency, and we've been realizing upon that potential for a number of years and continuing to promote it because it, once again, is a way in which we can diversify the economy of our community.

Forestry, Mr. Speaker, there's been a good deal talked about in recent years about the . . . and recent years and certainly in recent months about the forestry programs across the province and installations that are being built. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of the announcement in recent weeks of the CTMP (chemi-thermal mechanical pulp) pulp mill in Meadow Lake, and there's no question that that will have a significant impact on the economy of that portion of north-western Saskatchewan; frankly, Mr. Speaker, a significant impact on the economy of all of our province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say in leaving that aspect of my remarks today, because my intention is really to speak at some length on the Health budget, this budget presented by my colleague, the Minister of Finance, and presented very well, I might add -- and I want to add my word of congratulations to him for the way in which he presented that budget. I think he did an excellent job, and he is doing an excellent job as the Finance minister of this province on behalf of all our citizens.

Mr. Speaker, before I leave the area of my own constituency and get into the health portion of my remarks, I just want to say that I have been . . . from the time I came here in 1978, I have been very proud to represent those people. I have said that before. They are . . . I've talked about the diverse sort of ways of life that they are involved in. They are involved in a diverse way of life. We have a fairly diversified economy. They are without question, Mr. Speaker, salt of the earth people, the absolute salt of the earth of this province and western Canadian people who understand very, very clearly issues that are important and issues that are often talked about that are not so important. And I just want to say once again that I am very proud to represent that diverse group of people here in this Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address some remarks this afternoon about our government's commitment to health care over the past eight years, and about

the way in which that commitment continues with this year's budget. I want to outline the accomplishments that have been made in the past, as well as the challenges that our health system poses for all of us into the future.

There are concerns about our health system that many Saskatchewan people feel, and they feel those concerns deeply, I would submit. These concerns include the sheer complexity of our health care delivery system; our ability as a society to continue to pay for increasingly expensive health services into the future; the stresses on individual sectors of Saskatchewan's health services such as -- and I'll just use one example -- such as our mental health services. Our people feel those strains and they feel them deeply.

Mr. Speaker, it's not my intention today to resort to resting on the laurels of past accomplishments. And very often in speeches in this House we will hear that from, frankly, from members on both sides of the House, and historically we've done that sort of thing. But it's not my intention to do that only today, although I do want to go back over some past history. I believe it's important to look back at some of the recent history of health services in Saskatchewan.

In addition, there are many innovative and creative suggestions being made at present to help us to deal with the problems we anticipate in the future. But the thing I would like to stress most, Mr. Speaker, is the importance for all of us in the province to develop a vision. Our government and the health department, along with all health providers, have been working toward that vision. And that vision, I believe, can be stated as one of good health for all of our population -- good health for all of our population. Easy to say; difficult to accomplish, Mr. Speaker.

This more holistic approach to health is, in my view, a breakthrough in the way that government and health providers attempt to help the people across the province. Within the Department of Health, Mr. Speaker, our mission statement is -- and it hangs on the wall in the various branches of our department and as you know the department is a very, very large one and it's one that's spread throughout the province in various areas within which it works -- our mission statement is: working together for health and well-being. Let me repeat that: working together for health and well-being, the mission statement of the Department of Health. It's a mission for health that I know is shared by the all the citizens of this province, and it's a mission that can only be accomplished by continuing to work together as we prepare to face the challenges of the 1990s.

(1445)

Mr. Speaker, health spending increased dramatically in the 1980s, in the past decade, that decade just past, and it now accounts for one-third of our provincial budget. One dollar in three in this provincial budget is spent on health care services. With this 1990 and '91 budget, Mr. Speaker, health spending is now more than \$1,500 for each man, woman, and child in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, ensuring the continued health and well-being of the people of

Saskatchewan remains the number one social priority of all of our citizens. There's no question about that. And it's the main social priority and the number one social priority of our government and of the Department of Health as well.

Despite our difficult fiscal and economic environment, our government has continued to ensure access without financial impediments to hospital, medical, and other health services. In order to preserve and improve the quality of our health system, we've increased health spending by \$136 million for this fiscal year, Mr. Speaker, \$136 million more this year than last year. Mr. Speaker, that's a significant commitment in some difficult times. That represents an increase of 9.9 per cent over last year's budget, bringing total expenditures on health to more than \$1.5 billion in this budget.

We will spend more than 658 million on our 134 hospitals. This represents a 6 per cent increase over last year and will provide for more than 2 million patient-days of care. To put that number in perspective, Mr. Speaker, that is as if every Saskatchewan resident would spend two days in the hospital in the coming year. Now obviously most of us will be lucky enough to avoid a hospital stay, Mr. Speaker, but many others will not be so fortunate.

In addition to that, we've developed a \$2.5 million hospital initiatives fund to improve patient care and increase out-patient services. I believe the result of these measures will be a more efficient and responsive hospital system, better able to meet each patient's unique requirements.

Mr. Speaker, new developments in technology have made it possible for us to help more people with health problems than ever before. I mean, that's a statement that can be made in every province in this country right now. It's a statement that can be made, frankly, across the western world because technology has increased our ability to care for more and more people and more and more ailments which people have.

Think for a minute about the kinds of things that we are now increasingly taking for granted which just a very, very few years ago, a very few years ago, were really impossible or at best were very rare.

Hip replacements. Think of the number of people that have been helped and the number of people across this province who have had new hips. Knee replacements. Knee joint replacements -- tremendous breakthroughs in that area.

Cataracts. New technology in that area to be able to replace lenses and to deal with cataracts and which provide independence and so on to more and more people all the time. Changes, Mr. Speaker, services which just a very few years ago were not available to people at all and which have become, frankly, commonplace now. Those all bring pressures onto the system.

Mr. Speaker, and with each of these -- and I use those just as examples -- with each of these there is significant new technology. And new technology in health care as all of us can well imagine, and certainly we know that

these pieces of equipment are not cheap by any stretch of the imagination. Because of this new technology, and it's a very high-cost technology, Mr. Speaker, we've established a medical technology fund to improve our ability to acquire new medical equipment across our hospital sector.

In times of economic difficulties and restraint, I believe that this budget sends a clear signal to the people of Saskatchewan that our government's commitment to health is unshakable, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, our government is fully committed to preserving and strengthening what is already the most comprehensive health system in this country today. The most comprehensive health system in any of our provinces exists here in Saskatchewan, right now, and this proves our commitment to maintaining it at that level.

Mr. Speaker, with consultation and co-operation of our partners in the health field, we've significantly reduced waiting lists for surgery at the three Saskatoon hospitals for the second straight year.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's just a very short number of months ago, frankly, years ago, a couple of years ago when it was politically expedient to do so, we had questions, you know, from day to day. I think you may recall some of them. I certainly recall some of them. And those questions were: there's a waiting list in the Saskatoon hospital and these people have to wait and it's all your fault and it's no commitment to health care, and on and on it went.

And, Mr. Speaker, those questions were raised and they were duly recorded by the news media, and the people of Saskatchewan, frankly, were concerned about some of those things. And the reply at the time, if I could just remind you, Mr. Speaker, my reply at the time was: there was a need for some longer term planning, in some days just prior to that, in some months and years just prior to that, when what I would call some halcyon days when we had higher priced wheat and higher priced commodities across this province.

And did we build day surgery units in Saskatoon in those days, Mr. Speaker? No. This province did not. Did we plan ahead? Were the signals there? All these questions need to be asked, because we need to be reasonable and honest with each other about it.

Were there signals there that some of these new technologies were coming on stream? Were there some signals there that we had an ageing population in this province, that we would have more and more need for cataract surgery, for hip replacements, all of those things, in orthopedics? Yes, those signals were there, Mr. Speaker.

But was there a response to the signals in the 1970s when they were in government? There wasn't, Mr. Speaker. I said so at the time, and I said as quickly as we can we will be dealing with this, almost in a -- if I could use quotation marks -- in a "catch-up" sort of mode, even though some of the times are more difficult.

And we've done that, Mr. Speaker. We've done that. This government has done that. New City Hospital is now under construction in difficult times.

St. Paul's Hospital has a major regeneration opened last year, tremendous numbers of dollars -- tens of millions of dollars -- last year. A major regeneration at the University Hospital last year. A new Wascana Rehab Centre here in Regina. A new cancer clinic -- not renovated -- a new cancer clinic in Saskatoon. All of those things, Mr. Speaker, all of those things, important for our health care delivery system.

While they were in the planning stages and before they were able to open, we had some short-term politics. Folks over on the other side of this House were able to benefit from some short-term political headlines for a few days, a few months, a few weeks, whatever. But, Mr. Speaker, I'll stand before this House today and show some of the headlines that are now about in Saskatoon.

"Saskatoon hospital waiting lists pared." This is from the Star-Phoenix of March 21 of 1990, and its quotations there about how the waiting lists have been dropping because of the new hospitals that I've been mentioning, because of an emphasis on money going for day surgery units -- the kinds of things which are the forward-looking health care system that we knew, and the signals were there in the 1970s that we needed.

Another one, the Star-Phoenix: "City Hospital's waiting list slashed," Mr. Speaker. Those things. These are the kinds of headlines that are now there in the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix; those are the kinds of things that are now there.

I'm not up here . . . I haven't been up here saying to the hon. members every day, where's your questions about waiting lists, and all of that. Mr. Speaker, the question every citizen in this province should ask: why are there no questions about waiting lists now?

Obviously we still have people that have to wait. But, Mr. Speaker, there have been some tremendous strides forward, and we are striding forward even more so as time goes on and as some of these newer hospitals are still going to come on stream.

So I just wanted make that point, Mr. Speaker. It's very important that all of us think about this very large health care system in a way which is more reasoned than what we saw here a couple of years ago when some of those questions I referred to were coming our way.

The most important thing . . . Before I leave this issue of waiting lists, Mr. Speaker, I've said it before, and it's very important that people understand. It is not the number of people who are waiting for elective surgery. The key in relieving pain of individuals and consternation in families and all of that, the key is reduce the length of wait that any individual would have to wait, the length of time that an individual would have to wait -- far more important than trotting out some number of the number of people who are waiting, whatever that length of time is. And that's what we've been focusing on, Mr. Speaker, and that's what has been bringing us some result.

I might add, Mr. Speaker . . . well I've been through some of this, I won't

carry it on any longer. Just to say that long-term planning that I referred to earlier, that was needed before, is an exercise that we are very much involved in within the Department of Health now so that this society, this population of a million people in our province that we care about so much, does not find itself wanting ever again in terms of our health care services and our health care facility.

Mr. Speaker, here in Regina, together with the Regina hospitals, we launched a major effort to address a shortage of specialists and successfully recruited some of those specialists needed to meet the health needs of southern Saskatchewan. A case in point, Mr. Speaker, and once again we heard a good deal about this another time -- we don't hear it now -- is about ophthalmology and the availability of ophthalmology services here in Regina.

And I just want to say to the House and to all members of the public of Saskatchewan that it was a major recruitment that went on there. There was good co-operation between the department and from the hospitals of Regina, which is the only way that we're ever going to be able to approach any of these issues as we go into the future. And we've had some success. There are more ophthalmologists here now in Regina, and the length of time that people need to wait for that surgery in Regina has dropped dramatically.

But, Mr. Speaker, we're not kidding ourselves as it relates to the numbers of specialists available, where they are, the maldistribution of our professionals, any of that. The trend toward centralization of health professionals in our urban areas will be a difficult one to control. No question about that.

And I'm convinced that our community care initiatives will continue to improve local access to quality health services. But while I say that, I say that it won't happen without good co-operation because it is a trend line that's very, very difficult for all of us in health care delivery to deal with.

By working together for health and well-being, once again that whole area of our mission statement, we've accomplished a great deal over the past eight years, Mr. Speaker.

We've introduced the Everyone Wins health promotion program which encourages people to change their life-styles to prevent accidents and disease and to deal with areas of nutrition, physical fitness, stress, accident prevention, alcohol and drug abuse, smoking, and communicable diseases -- seven areas, Mr. Speaker, very much focused on those seven areas.

And those seven areas aren't just pulled out of the sky. They are the areas that health professionals, people in the field and people in community health and so on have said, those are the areas where we can make some changes in the way in which we approach our own life-style and areas in which we can make some changes and will have some effect on the way in which we live.

This year we've targeted \$3 million for Everyone Wins, for that program which, I would submit, can be only described as very successful. And that \$3 million will be there to ensure that they will have a continued impact on life-style choices in the work place and in the community.

Mr. Speaker, community health's regional and district offices will be receiving sixteen and a half million dollars from this budget, a 7.1 per cent increase to carry out prevention and community services throughout the province. And that's an area, the whole area of community health services, an area where there has been some significant pressure. There's no question that that's true. I know that people who work in the field will be . . . while they will still be under pressure, and no one is kidding themselves about that as well, I believe that they will be thankful for the 7.1 per cent increase, the kind of response that this budget gives for the work that they do on a daily basis.

In addition, we will be spending \$2 million on communicable disease control, including immunization programs for children throughout the province.

One point four million has been allocated for the breast cancer screening program scheduled to begin shortly. This is a pilot project designed to help prevent breast cancer in women who are at risk; in other words, those who are between the ages of 50 and 69. And that's the target group, Mr. Speaker, and it's important that that be understood. From 50 to 69 is the target group of this pilot. It's an educational program as well as a medical program, and it will help Saskatchewan women to seek early treatment if they develop breast cancer.

(1500)

Currently the pilot project will target two areas of the province. One rural, and that being the north-eastern quadrant of the province, north-eastern corner; and one urban, and that being the city of Regina. So those two areas, the pilot project and I am looking forward to the outcome of this pilot project, and if it proves successful, Mr. Speaker, there may be plans in the future to expand it to and include our entire province.

The preventative value of these programs is difficult to estimate, and there have been some varying opinions about these kinds of screening programs. But we're hopeful that they'll prove the axiom that an ounce of prevention is truly worth at least a pound of cure.

Mr. Speaker, there've been improvements in the children's dental plan. We now have 36 more rural dental clinics than we had in 1987, resulting in quality dental treatment for more children and their families than ever before. Last year, Mr. Speaker, 91 per cent of all children were enrolled in the children's dental program, and 92 per cent of those enrolled saw a dentist at least once. Mr. Speaker, this is the highest enrolment rate ever in the children's dental program in this province.

The innovative, computerized health services card has made things easier for the consumer, and encouraged more responsible use of prescription

drugs. This technology has created interest around the world. And I mean that, Mr. Speaker -- around the world.

We had a company from this province, CDSL, Co-operators Data Services Limited, which was the company located here in Regina that was contracted with Saskatchewan Health to create this card and develop it, along with several other companies. That company went to Anaheim, to a technology conference, I believe about a year ago, maybe a little more than a year ago. At that conference, their technology was seen by a representative of the Belgian government, in Anaheim, California. And from that contact in Anaheim, CDSL of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada now is actively working in Belgium, actively working in Belgium, and the Belgian government is looking very actively at involving that sort of software, that program which we pioneered here in Saskatchewan, into their health care system, along with some of their insurance companies.

Mr. Speaker, people from our Health department and from the company CDSL, and other companies, computer technology experts here in this province, people who are resident in this province, who pay their taxes in this province, who employ people in this province, are now working with the European Economic Community. Think of the impact of that, Mr. Speaker, if a technology developed here, a technology developed here, could go into use in the European Economic Community, as they come into one system, which they are intending to do shortly after 1992.

The state of Maryland . . . We had guests here in the gallery today from the state of Maryland in agriculture. The state of Maryland had its secretary of health was here in Regina to look at our system, and there's no question there's significant interest in the state of Maryland in the technology that we have introduced here in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the potential for application of the health card technology in other jurisdictions is great. This brings up an important aspect, a sort of a concept of economic development within Health, a way in which we can capitalize on this sort of thing. As world leaders in many aspects of health delivery, Saskatchewan people are in a position to market our expertise to the rest of the world.

One of the things that we have not done -- we being this society in Canada -- have not done well as it relates to health care and the application of technology to health care, is to apply technology as it now exists in other sectors, in the insurance industry and the banking industry and some of those areas. We have not applied new technology, leading-edge technology, to the administrative side of a very, very large industry.

Health care has been on the leading edge, and as I've said in some of my earlier remarks, has been on the leading edge of technology when it comes to machinery, when it comes to the best equipment available, the best research and development and technology available as it relates to what is in the operating theatre in any of our hospitals. Those kinds of things. But as it relates to the administrative side of health care, we have not been out on the leading edge, and it's time we were, given the percentage and the portions of our budgets that go out on an annual basis in the

health care world.

Mr. Speaker, as many members in this House will be aware, the rapidly increasing use of prescription and over-the-counter drugs is a quality of care of issue. As much as anything else, it's a quality-of-care issue.

The study into the growth and use of health services: this was a study, Mr. Speaker, that was commissioned by our department and it was done in conjunction with the Saskatchewan Medical Association, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and it had some very interesting findings, Mr. Speaker. It found that almost half of drug expenditures in 1985-86 were on products that were not available in 1977-78; almost half of what we spent on prescription drugs was spent on products -- in 1985-86 -- was spent on products that were not available in 1977-78. A significant statement if one thinks about it.

For drugs available in both years, that is, 1978 and in 1986, drugs which were available both of those years, use per person rose by 43 per cent. Those are significant increases, Mr. Speaker. The study recommended a public and professional education program, and I've accepted that recommendation. The seniors' association of Saskatchewan and other organizations as well, but that group is key in this.

As also requested, a greater emphasis on drug education. This budget, Mr. Speaker, allocates one and a half million dollars to the safe use of medicines advisory committee, to help change attitudes and encourage more responsible use of medications. This is something that's very important for every one of us, regardless of our age. And I'm sure many of us know of a person who doesn't understand how to use the medications that they have correctly. It's an initiative that I believe we as a government have a responsibility to provide for our citizens.

You'll notice, Mr. Speaker, that I said a public and professional drug education program. Just think for a moment of the number of drugs . . . and I just gave some statistics a while ago. One of the things that is faced, not only by our public, because of the more and more products which are coming on to the market, but our professionals are being overrun by this as well. The movement in drug therapy and the great innovations in drug therapy are difficult for our professionals, physicians and others, to keep up with. So it's not as though we're pointing the finger at anyone, and the physicians have been very, very good about co-operating in all of this. And it's very, very important that we provide education, not only for the public, but opportunities for continuing education for professionals as well.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health currently provides mental health services in 61 communities throughout this province, giving Saskatchewan one of the most extensive and comprehensive community-based mental health services in Canada. Over \$32 million will be spent for mental health services this year, about 50 per cent of that to be spent on community services. Mr. Speaker, that's the highest ratio in Canada, the highest ratio in Canada of mental health money being spent on community services as opposed to institutional services.

I'm still concerned though, that there are significant pressures in the mental health area, and all of us should be. There's no question that we all must continue to be concerned about those pressures, and I'm willing to work together with mental health care providers and with consumers and with other interested groups to help alleviate the problems.

Mr. Speaker, the last decade saw an unprecedented increase in the need for services to support the elderly and to help them to live healthy, independent lives -- and the next decade and the decade after that. And all we need do is look at the demographics of our province. Look at the demographics across the western world and we'll see that those pressures of an ageing population are upon us, and frankly, are just beginning.

Let me just cite this example. This sort of statistic, which if one really thinks about it, is mind-boggling. Of all of the people who have lived on the face of the earth from the beginning of history, who have lived beyond the age of

D65, two-thirds of them are alive right now -- right now. Two-thirds of the people who have lived to the age of 65 years in the history of our world are alive now. That statistic in itself, Mr. Speaker, tells us that the pressures that health systems, that delivery systems throughout the social services, all of those kinds of systems, will be significant for us as we face the next decade and into the decade following that.

We've responded in this province to some of those pressures that I refer to in the 1980s. We've responded by building 2,400 new and replacement special care home beds, by building 16 new integrated facilities throughout the province, by expanding our home care, chiropody, and rehabilitation programs, and capping ambulance costs for seniors at \$150, and no more than that. That means that no senior anywhere in the province has to pay more than \$150 for an ambulance trip to anywhere else in the province.

While it's important to remember these past accomplishments, Mr. Speaker, and I want all of us take pride in each of them, there's no room for complacency. There certainly is no room for complacency in this very large system that we all, as I say, take significant pride in. But there's no room for politics in the system, either. There are many present challenges that need to be addressed, and we're committed to meet these challenges.

Mr. Speaker, this year's special care homes' budget reflects that commitment -- \$220.8 million will be spent on special care home services, representing an increase of 8.7 per cent over last year. In addition, we'll be spending 30.4 million to serve this province's 19,000 home care clients. That is a 9.5 per cent increase over last year's budget. And you'll notice even though the numbers are small -- and it's important to say that they're small -- they're not . . . the percentage on home care, which is where there is more pressure even than there is in the institutional side, the percentages on home care are higher, are 9.5 per cent; institutional care as it relates to long-term care, 8.7; and in the hospital sector, 6 per cent.

That's significant, Mr. Speaker, because it shows ever so slowly trying to

change the direction that we're going, over to more of the independent living within their own homes, and so on, that people have been telling us and have been wanting, and that we heard a bit about here in the question period, as people were referring to the comments by Dr. Murray of the health care commission.

Mr. Speaker, all of us want to keep our seniors and our disabled in their communities and close to family and friends. That's why we've allocated 10.9 million for wheelchairs and other mobility aids offered through Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living. This service protects the independence, the dignity, the quality of life of these Saskatchewan residents who benefit from the program. But I expect continuing pressure in the '90s to devote an even larger portion of the provincial budget to health, and that's a major statement for us to make here.

We will have a continuing pressure throughout the next decade, as well, for an even larger portion of our budget. Our challenge is to continue managing health programs in an effective and an efficient manner. While escalating health costs will not shake our commitment to protect access for all to quality health services, we must be aware of the questions that our society increasingly asks.

Can we continue to pay for double-digit increases in health budgets on an annual basis? Significant questions. What can we realistically expect from our health system? These aren't questions that are just asked in . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member across says, start managing the system. These aren't questions that are just being asked in Saskatchewan, in this society of a million people, here in the middle of this continent. These are questions that are being asked across Canada, across the western world, and certainly here in Canada. What can we realistically expect from our system? Those are the questions, and they're important ones, and the ones that we should be addressing -- all of us, as citizens.

The principles we must rely on as we prepare for these challenges include: Consultation -- we intend to give individuals and communities a greater say in the health services they provide and the health services they receive. Responsibility-- individuals, communities, and government must begin to accept more responsibility for their own health and for the management of the health system. And compassion -- ensuring access for all to quality health services whenever they are needed.

We will accomplish those goals in this province, and I believe most of the health system across the country will accomplish those goals, if we continue to work with . . . and it's very important that we work together with the care-givers -- the nursing professions, the physicians, pharmacists, ambulance operators, other health professionals who play a major role in our health advisory committees.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned the nursing professions and working with them. One of the significant issues in health care in the next number of years as we look out into the future -- and we've seen some examples of it in the recent past, not only here but in other provinces -- where nurses have been expressing frustration, expressing frustration with their inability to be

as active as they would like to be in the running and administration of the institutions within which they work, and the systems within which they work and the community based services -- all of those things are all key and important questions.

(1515)

The questions that relate to nursing, and the role of nursing, in the delivery of health care will be some of the most significant issues of the 1990s. We saw some of these frustrations come to light in recent years in the context of collective bargaining. And they come forward in that context and it's a very difficult circumstance for the hospital administrations and for the nursing home boards and all of those to deal with in that circumstance. But I think the signals that are there for all of us who are charged with the responsibility in health care to deal with many of the facts that are presented to us, we must deal with them outside of the context of collective bargaining and in a co-operative and reasoned way. And we're trying to do that and we're trying to set up structures within which we can do that, through a nursing advisory committee and other things here in this province.

And the ministers of Health of Canada, all of us across the country from all the provinces and the two territories of Canada, are joining to bring together people from the nursing professions, both from the unions and from the professional bodies, in Winnipeg. I'm not sure of the date of it now, but it's a few months away, and it's the kind of thing that we're trying to attack as a nation, frankly, rather than just within one institution or within one province. But those are issues . . . I just wanted to identify them here, because they are important issues for our future.

Mr. Speaker, I can never emphasize enough how proud I am of our commitment to health, both in the financial sense, as we have seen in this budget, and in the budgets of the past number of years, but also in the creative and thoughtful ways we have approached the problems posed by health delivery.

But I also think it is time to go beyond the way that we have been defining good health care. When we try to measure our success in the health field, it's time to look at more than simply the number of services performed. And I grant you, that's some of what I've been doing in the earlier part of my remarks.

But it's more than just the number of services performed or the number of beds built. We must look at health, Mr. Speaker, rather than health care in many cases. We sometimes forget that it is better health for our population that we are working toward. And better health is only assisted by better health care. Better health is only assisted by better health care.

Because of our preoccupation with illness, we have focussed on our ability to patch things up with services when things go wrong. We call this approach the medical model. We talk about services, activities, and inputs as though they were positive indicators in their own right.

For example, Mr. Speaker, this year 47,000 in-patient surgical procedures and over 17,000 day surgeries will be performed in our larger centres. And we now have more than 10,000 long-term care beds in our special care homes throughout the province.

Should we consider it a success that we've increased the number of surgeries performed and added thousands of special care and hospital beds? Or should we in fact be viewing these indicators as a measure of our failures as a society? We often make the mistaken assumption that health care determines the health of a population. But, in reality, health is much more complex than that and many factors play a role in determining it.

The key factors affecting health appear to be the following, Mr. Speaker; heredity, physical environment, social environment, psychological factors, life-style choices, and of course the health care system. It's worth noting, Mr. Speaker, that most of these factors are within our control. That's why I say that many things, aside from health care, affect our health.

We cannot limit our vision, our talent, or our resources to providing only one necessary requirement for good health -- to providing only one necessary requirement for good health. Our challenge is to determine which factors affecting the health of the population can achieve the greatest results within the resources available, and then each of us must begin to take some personal and corporate responsibility for making it happen.

Mr. Speaker, I just . . . I can't, as I pause for a drink of water here, and I hear the chirping from the member from Quill Lakes, and he's there yelling across here, "user fees," and the old political saws that he's been into and that he's, in his whole career here in . . . his whole career here in the legislature is to yell some kind of political scare tactic, as it relates to health.

Mr. Speaker, what I'm talking about here is dealing with the most important thing that we can talk about as it relates to . . . No Health minister should be speaking only about the health care system without referring directly to the approach that the health care system, and the way in which the health care system contributes to the health of the population of the province. That's key, that's what it's about. And even though we have the old political stuff and the mediscare junk that comes from members like . . . and I don't say all members opposite, because many of them are very much in tune with what I'm saying here. But that member who has been involved in the mediscare stuff for so many years does not understand exactly what I'm saying.

When we consider health and quality of life, Mr. Speaker, we must begin to think of both treatment and prevention. One of our major challenges as legislators is to encourage Saskatchewan people, young and old, to adopt healthier life-styles. Researchers have found that just a few changes in our life-style can make a world of difference in our personal health and in the demands we place on the health system.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we all share a vision for Saskatchewan. It's a

vision of a healthy population and a healthy society. To reach our goal we must and we will provide and fund health services that contribute to our health, but we must also support those activities that maintain wellness and lead to better health. This approach to health will play a vital role as the people of Saskatchewan prepare for the next century.

Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Health, I ask everyone, not only members of the legislature, but others across the province, I ask everyone to consider the changes you can make in your own life to improve your personal health and well-being. I especially ask the member from Quill Lakes, think of whatever changes you can make, we'll all think of those things and it's important that we do that as we deal with the health of our population, health of the people that you serve, that I serve, all of that. I ask everyone to consider those changes.

Mr. Speaker, by working together for better health, we can build the best health system anywhere, and I emphasize, Mr. Speaker, the best health system anywhere, not the best health care system. Mr. Speaker, that's why our Premier asked the Commission on Directions in Health Care to assess the current state of the system and advise our people on its strengths and its weaknesses. I'm looking forward to seeing the commission's report and I'm convinced that it will help us to keep our health system the envy of the rest of the world.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say a word of thank you to all of those who have contributed, and all the individuals and the groups who've made submissions to the health care commission; many submissions -- I think more than 600 submissions to the health care commission -- as they travelled through our province. Their participation in the process assures their place in deciding the future directions of health care in this province.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, their recognition that the process of consultation is a valuable one is to be commended. Our government wants to listen to the people of this province and we want to know the best way to serve the needs that are out there. And it is through venues such as the commission that the people are able to have their say and the government is able to listen.

Mr. Speaker, throughout these remarks today, I have outlined many expenditures that this government has made to help improve the health of Saskatchewan people. These expenditures are significant and they will continue to be significant. I believe the money we spend in health is a responsible amount of money and it reflects the desires of Saskatchewan people to maintain and enhance our health system.

There's no doubt that there's room for improvement, as costs of technology, medication, and professional services continue to rise at an alarming rate. There is increasing pressure on provinces across Canada to control these costs. Although our department has received a large increase in funding for this year's budget, we've still been challenged to make our system more efficient.

There must be a way, people tell us, to maintain our health system in the

face of these rising costs. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that there are a combination of ways to accomplish this goal. It is something that is larger than the bounds of the Department of Health, obviously, larger than the government itself. It is in fact an issue that will involve each and every resident of our province.

We as government will continue to do what we can to eliminate waste and inefficiency within the health system. I believe we have accomplished this to some extent. Frankly, we've accomplished this to a great extent. I feel that we can continue to do it without sacrificing the outstanding service that our system provides.

But the one idea that I feel is imperative here, the idea that I would like every member of the legislature to take home to their constituency, is that the people of the province must work with us toward better health. Everyone is interested in their own health, obviously; that goes without saying. But the important thing to recognize is that each of us has a personal responsibility for our own health. Each Saskatchewan resident can do his or her own part, and in doing that they will all receive additional benefits.

I'm not asking that everyone try to live healthier simply because that would be easier on the provincial treasury. That's not it at all, Mr. Speaker. A healthier population will have that effect, but it will also have many other far more positive results. Healthier people are more productive, they're more active, they're generally happier than those who are less healthy. These seem like obvious statements, Mr. Speaker, but I submit to you and to all members of this legislature that we as a society do not think about them enough.

Our government, through the Everyone Wins program, and several other health education initiatives in this budget, is trying to disseminate that message, Mr. Speaker, a message of personal responsibility in health. I ask all members to help improve the health of our province by encouraging citizens to take an active interest in their own health.

When the people of Saskatchewan need health services, Mr. Speaker, government will be there, as we have been in the past. We will continue to enhance the services we offer, and we'll continue to be fiscally responsible in the way we deliver those services.

But, Mr. Speaker, this health budget is true to the principles of service, enhancement and maintenance as well as the principle of fiscal responsibility. It will allow us to provide needed care, counselling, and education to Saskatchewan people. I hope the people, through consultation and other processes such as the Commission on Directions in Health Care, will continue to recognize our challenges and work with us to accomplish that common goal -- the common goal of all of us, hopefully, and that goal being better health for all.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before I begin my remarks this afternoon, I'd like to congratulate both you and the member for Souris-Cannington on the special event that's happened in your life since I've last been in this Assembly and had a chance to address the Chair. I'm speaking of course of your marriage this past winter. Few things, Mr. Speaker, are as important as family life and the joys that they bring. And especially when you're in political life, which may not last very long, it's important for all of us to have a family to go back to that we can love and cherish and be accepted by. And so, Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish you all God's blessings in your new life together with your family.

The Speaker: -- Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: -- I would now like to turn my remarks to the budget of this government and to give voice to some of the concerns of the people of Saskatoon Sutherland and in fact some of the people of . . . (inaudible) . . . I want to begin by saying that this budget has all of the optics of being a good budget -- all of the optics. Now I hear a member on the opposite side saying hear, hear. Certainly they must agree, they must know that it's an optical illusion that this budget projects fiscal responsibility, and yet the truth of the matter is exactly the opposite, exactly the opposite.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say that this budget is an exercise in cosmetology -- creative cosmetology even. It's really a creature or a creation of a government that wants to conceal and mask its record, mask the truth about how much money it has spent and where that money has gone.

(1530)

I think, for example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of this government's record with respect to Cargill -- \$369 million for Cargill; \$65 million directly out of the public purse in form of a cash grant. That is masked in this budget.

I think, for example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of this government's record with respect to Weyerhaeuser corporation. And I want the people of Saskatchewan to know that this year and for 20 years they will be building roads and bridges for Weyerhaeuser corporation in northern Saskatchewan for 20 years, 20 miles each year, each and every year. Thirty-two kilometres, 20 miles for 20 years at taxpayers' expense. That is scandalous. That's why this budget, Mr. Speaker, has to be cosmetic, because if it tells the truth about this government's record and its handling of public affairs, nobody could stand to look at it or listen to it.

This government has basically walked as it says in this budget, hand in hand with Weyerhaeuser and handed over a billion dollars worth of assets from the Saskatchewan public to Weyerhaeuser and will see nothing unless and until Weyerhaeuser makes a 13 per cent profit, and on the public money given Weyerhaeuser, 8 per cent interest rates.

Why can't this government let these facts see the light of day? Because people would be outraged if they knew about it.

So this budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is an unabashed attempt to beautify a beast -- the beast of this government's fiscal mismanagement. And that beast has been growing larger and larger the last eight years with record and scandalous public debt. And what an ugly picture this debt presents in this most recent budget when it weighs in at \$4.3 billion.

How to you cosmetize a beast like that? It begs to be beautified, and that's what this government attempts to do. A half a billion dollars, Mr. Deputy Speaker, projected in this budget as the cost of servicing the public debt. Imagine that! This year alone Saskatchewan taxpayers, by this government's own admission, will spend half a billion dollars for nothing. We'll have nothing to show for it. A half a billion dollars simply to pay the interest on the Premier's deficit. That's Tory economics. That's a beast that needs to be disguised with the application of any kind of cosmetic surgery or make-up that the government can put onto the scene. The ninth straight deficit . . .

The Deputy Speaker: -- Order, order. Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Martens: -- I'd like leave of the Assembly to introduce a guest.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Martens: -- Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It gives me a good deal of pleasure to introduce to the Assembly, Mr. Tim Hammond, who is seated in your gallery here today. He's the Senior Stick for the College of Agriculture at the U of S in Saskatoon. He is selected on the basis of his academics, interest in college activities, personal character, and leadership qualities. He just lives between Rosetown and Biggar, and I want to welcome him here. He's here viewing some of the activities of the Department of Agriculture and the relationship that the minister's department has.

And it gives me a good deal of pleasure to welcome him to the Assembly, and I'd like other members to join me in welcoming him here.

Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE (BUDGET DEBATE continued)

Mr. Koenker: -- Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What an embarrassment to this government this provincial debt really is. In just eight years

they've gone from a budgetary surplus that they inherited to an accumulated deficit of \$4.3 billion -- a major embarrassment, a major facial flaw on the face of this government.

And Mr. Deputy Speaker, we aren't just talking about pimples or warts on the government's record; we're talking about a major facial flaw -- a \$4.3 billion deficit. If this were just a few zits, if this were just a few zits it'd be incidental, Mr. Speaker. It might embarrass the government a bit but that could be cleared up. People might not even scarcely notice, but this deficit of \$4.3 billion translates into \$4,300 of debt for every man, woman, and child in this province of Saskatchewan. And the interest on this deficit is \$1.3 million a day, \$56,000 an hour, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's grotesque, that's socially unacceptable, that's publicly unacceptable, and the government knows it.

And so it gives lip service to fiscal management while it goes on with fiscal mismanagement of the public affairs. Each year the promise of fiscal responsibility and not a word outlining a plan to deal with this problem that the province finds itself in in this budget. And that's why this budget is cosmetic. It has to be. It has to have all the appearance of something good and beautiful, and so what do we got? We've got money for agriculture and we got money for health and we got money for education. It all looks very good. It all looks very good. It's all sweetness and light, folks.

That's the projection that this government wants to put on this budget for public consumption, but underneath the facade, underneath that projection, are very real, ugly problems. Things aren't what they appear to be. You take a look at the money given for agriculture in this budget and what it really is is more debt for farmers. You take a closer look at health and that money doesn't go where it's needed -- into home care. There aren't the right priorities there. You take a look at education and there are cuts to education behind the figures in this budget. Now I'm going to go into that and document those, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It's no accident that this budget is cosmetic. It has to be. And I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this Premier of ours has learned a thing or two from his wife who has a background in cosmetics, who's driven a pink cadillac and has sold for Mary Kay Cosmetics. She knows how to make things look better than they really are. And that's the same with this Premier. He's learned the art of make-up. He's learned the application of make-up to the presentation of public affairs and to the face of his government. And this government reflects . . . and this budget reflects it with the taxes that it talks about.

And I want to quote from the budget speech, page 13. The Minister of Finance says:

And so, Mr. Speaker, I say to you, and to all the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, this Government has listened.

Parenthetically it has in bold print:

There are no tax increases in this Budget.

No tax increases in this budget. No new taxes. Well, what an untruth. Another fib from this government. We look at the gas tax, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and there we see an increase of \$68 million in taxation to the people of this province, and the Minister of Finance has the gall to say that there are no increases in taxes in this budget when he eliminates the 10 cent a litre gas rebate. And he says there's no tax increases.

There are increases in taxes in this budget of \$56 million in individual income tax and sales tax combined. People in Saskatchewan are going to be paying, and paying dearly for this government's fiscal mismanagement. It's simply not true, it's not being honest with the people of Saskatchewan to say that there are no tax increases in this budget. The average family that drives a car in this province is going to be spending \$200 a year more because of the elimination of the gas tax rebate.

Mr. Speaker, I now want to talk a little bit more particularly about this government's budget and how it impacts on education. I want to talk specifically about how it impacts on the University of Saskatchewan, since that community is very much a part of the Sutherland constituency. I have large numbers of students, faculty, and staff who work at the University of Saskatchewan. And I want to look at what the government says in this budget about education expenditures and what it does about the truth of its education spending.

I have here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a copy of this past Saturday's Star-Phoenix, and on the third page there's an article entitled "Campuses in financial strait-jacket." And the lead sentence reads:

The University of Saskatchewan is 6 million short of what it requires for this year as a result of Thursday's provincial budget.

The University of Regina says it must go into an "underfunded and trimming program mode" as a consequence of the budget. The vice-president of the University of Regina said about this budget, "Clearly it didn't meet our needs." And the U of S chairman of the faculty association says about it, that it's a financial strait-jacket for the University of Saskatchewan.

The university operating budget, the Minister of Finance will know, claims to increase university funding by 3 per cent when inflation is four and a half per cent. The government talks of giving \$8.5 million in a discretionary enhancement fund, 21 per cent more than last year, putatively, and the truth is that the total increase for education at our universities is more like 3.8 per cent.

And that's why people from the university community comment the way they do. They don't believe the Minister of Finance when he gives his figures. The truth is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the 3.8 per cent increase that the province gives the university community is far, far short of the 8.4 per cent that President Ivany of the University of Saskatchewan said two months ago that he needed, just to tread water and to meet present operating expenses.

So the Minister of Finance will give the University of Saskatchewan some \$4 million when it needs \$10 million just to stay where it's at right now. And the truth is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the University of Saskatchewan has been underfunded for the last eight years and now is underfunded again in this budget. And the Minister of Education, the member from Mayfair, has failed our province's young people with his efforts to enhance education in this budget.

The morning after this budget, in the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, the headline reads, education wins. But that's the cosmetics, Mr. Speaker. That's the cosmetics applied. When people scratch beneath the surface of this document, they see that it's just a short-term public relations effort, that its appearances are very, very deceiving and deceptive, and that the truth is quite other than what the Minister of Finance represents it to be.

And I want to talk, Mr. Deputy Speaker, now, about student aid because this is another perfect illustration of the doublespeak engaged in by this government.

The Minister of Finance on page 5 of his budgetary speech from last Thursday says, and I quote:

As well, our commitment to assist students in obtaining access to our universities, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, (SIAST) and our regional colleges means that student aid funding in this budget will almost double to \$47 million.

(1545)

Sounds pretty good, looks pretty good -- a commitment of \$47 million to student loans. And yet when you talk to people on the USSU (University of Saskatchewan Students Union) at the University of Saskatchewan, student representatives, as I did today, they told me that there is no extra money, that there is zero new money for student loans in this budget; that this budget represents, for student loans, the same old program with no program changes, with students stuck with the same problems that they've been stuck with before.

And how can it be then that the Minister of Finance says in his own remarks that it means that student aid funding in this budget will almost double to \$47 million? How can that be? Well, it's more cosmetics applied. It's more make-up applied to this budget.

Student financial assistance hasn't changed at all. What has changed has to do with government money going to student loans that need to be paid . . . government money going to pay down interest rates for student loans announced back in '86 or '87 when the interest rate was going to be subsidized down to 6 per cent. And the government now has to make up the difference to 11 per cent.

What this really means: there's going to be an increase putatively for student loans, that this has to do with the government forgiving certain

loans and writing down certain loans. But there's no new money for students seeking student financial aid at the University of Saskatchewan. And it's doublespeak and it's misleading to tell the people of Saskatchewan that that's what it's all about. It's not \$47 million. It's not even half of that for student loans.

Mr. Speaker, that's why young people and their families here in Saskatchewan resent this government because they can't be honest about what they're saying. Nothing grates on people's nerves more, Mr. Deputy Speaker, than the fact that there are quotas imposed at the University of Saskatchewan, that 1,100 student spaces at our technical institutes have been cut. And people across Saskatchewan know that their future is being cut off at the knees by this government's chronic inability to adequately fund higher education.

And much the same is true, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when it comes to our elementary school system. Operating grants have been increased by 3 per cent to \$360 million. But the education director of the Saskatoon separate school system says in an article in Friday's Star-Phoenix that this will only meet education costs half-way, only half-way.

The Saskatchewan Schools Trustees Association estimates that on average school divisions will need 5 per cent just to keep pace with their costs, and the government gives them 3 per cent. The truth is that the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association needs seventeen and a half million dollars, and what do they get? They get ten and a half million from this government. And the results are inevitable. They're a shift in the burden of taxation to local taxpayers, or the inevitable reduction in educational services, with local boards cutting programs or staff or resources, or increasing class size so that children will suffer.

And this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from a province that has the lowest per capita funding for education in all of Canada in 1989, spending \$744 per person when the average provincial expenditure for education was \$995. Another way of looking at it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is about 14 per cent of the provincial budget was spent on education in 1989, which was again the lowest in all of Canada.

And so it's not just the Saskatoon separate board of education, but the Saskatoon public school board that feels it basically will have nothing more to operate with this year than it did last year.

And it isn't just the educational system that is impacted by this budget in Saskatoon or across the province. I want to talk for a moment about the city of Saskatoon and what this budget means for them, a \$1 million shift, basically -- a \$1 million shift in financing onto the backs of Saskatoon's local taxpayers.

This budget eliminates the \$300,000 operating grant for the Centennial Auditorium in Saskatoon and the \$710,000 transportation grant, a grant that has existed for years and years for the city of Saskatoon for its public transport system, now gone with this budget. The truth -- it means that this \$1 million must either be made up with a 2 per cent increase in

property tax rates in Saskatoon, or by way of cuts in services for Saskatoon residents, or an increase in rates at the Saskatoon Centennial Auditorium, or for people who use the public transportation system.

And what does the Minister of Finance say about this budget? He says, no tax increases, no tax increases. Just not so, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's the same Minister of Finance in this same budget who says on page 13 of his budget address:

Mr. Speaker, I could stand here tonight and announce large reductions in government funding for hospitals, school boards and universities. We could have followed the Government of Canada's example and shifted our fiscal problems onto others. We could have said that the federal Budget, by cutting transfer payments for health care and education, forced us to reduce our support to these areas.

And what did he do? That's exactly what he did with the city of Saskatoon in shifting the costs of running Centennial Auditorium and the public transport system onto the backs of Saskatoon taxpayers. And yet he has the gall to say, again in the same page of his speech:

We recognize that shifting costs from one government to another does nothing to relieve the burden on taxpayers.

Does nothing to relieve the burden on taxpayers, but he does it anyway, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He does it anyway. And you've got to ask yourself why. Why would he do such a thing? This is off-loading, the very word that the Minister of Finance doesn't like when it comes to the federal government, off-loading programs onto the backs of the provinces like Saskatchewan. It's just empty rhetoric.

Revenue sharing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, revenue sharing. The minister says in an article on the front page of the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix this past Friday, and I quote. He says about the \$300 cut in the Centennial Auditorium operating grant, and I quote:

It's "not a big number, but it's certainly big enough. But I would argue in terms of looking at that whole off-loading question, the numbers that the municipalities are most interested in are the revenue-sharing numbers and we've maintained that pool."

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a plain and simple half-truth, a plain and simple half-truth that he's maintained that revenue-sharing pool. He's maintained it frozen for the last three years and therefore municipalities lose ground. It's been frozen at \$67 million for 1989, frozen at \$67 million for 1990, frozen at \$67 million for 1991. So well does the Minister of Finance say we've maintained the revenue-sharing pool. He's frozen it; that's what he's done.

And if you go back to 1987 and '88 budget, when they cut revenue sharing down to \$66 million, it's basically stayed there ever since. During the last four years . . . in fact if you take inflation into account when you calculate revenue sharing, there's been a 16 per cent drop in revenue

sharing with urban municipalities from this government.

And that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is why nobody believes this government. All they see is cosmetics. All they hear is make-believe and make-up, half-truths at best. And what happens when governments can't believe . . . when people can't believe their governments? They lose trust and they lose hope. They lose confidence in their future. And that's exactly what we see happening across this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker -- a crisis in confidence; a crisis in hope; despair settling over the province.

The truth about Saskatchewan today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that people can't wait to have an election. They can't wait to have an election. They literally can't wait. They have to move out of this province. They've got to leave. And that's why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there were some 23, 24,000 people who moved out of Saskatchewan last year alone -- a net loss, Mr. Deputy Speaker -- the second worst record in Saskatchewan history.

And do you know what the record is for the first two months of this year? Three thousand people gone in January and February of 1990 alone. More fleeing the province. We're losing some thousand farm families a year here in Saskatchewan. We have the worst -- the worst -- job creation record in the country; bankruptcies that are the highest in the province's history.

Sixty thousand people have left this province since 1985, the majority of them under the age of 34, Mr. Deputy Speaker -- our brightest and best people, our future, fleeing the province because of this government's mismanagement.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is hard to believe, but would you believe that 16 per cent of Saskatchewan families live on a yearly income below the Statistics Canada poverty line? Sixteen per cent of Saskatchewan families live below the poverty line. That there are some 64,000 Saskatchewan children growing up in poverty -- 64,000 people, young people, children, in this province growing up in poverty, day after day, year after year. Their childhood.

The minister says -- opposite -- that it's not true. But nobody believes the minister, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Nobody believes the minister.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: -- Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government and this budget talks, with a lot of fanfare, about \$740,000 that's going to be spent to fight child hunger; \$740,000 to fight child hunger this next year. With over 64,000 children growing up in poverty, that amounts to about \$12 a year per child. That's going to really do something about child hunger in Saskatchewan. It's pathetic: \$12 a year; a dollar a month; 3 cents a day. That wouldn't buy a cup of oatmeal, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That 3 cents wouldn't go that far.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a bit to do with the Saskatoon food bank; I take things down there periodically. And I want to share with the people of Saskatchewan, that last year in the month of December alone,

there were 2,719 children 11 years of age or younger who relied on the Saskatoon food bank -- just for that month of December alone -- with another 4,000 teenagers and adults coming to the food bank for help.

These people are desperate. They don't want to come to the food bank. They have to go to the food bank because there's no other hope.

You know something else, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This government, after it was elected in 1982, cut the northern food allowance for communities so that they could fly in fresh fruits and vegetables, cut that, cancelled it back in 1982-83. And within a week or two of that, increased cabinet expense allowances. Would you believe that? That's sick. That's sick.

(1600)

What a scandal, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What a cosmetic operation. And the Premier says that waste will not be tolerated. Waste will not be tolerated, he says. And yet we have 20 cabinet ministers with three assistant cabinet ministers and 10 legislative secretaries all lined up at the public trough. And children in Saskatchewan have to go hungry. All these government members, MLAs on the government side, lined up at the public trough with full staff complements of deputy ministers and assistants and cellular phones and everything else, and cars, under the sun.

And it doesn't stop there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Far from it. Not by a long shot. Even former cabinet ministers still get in and put their snouts at the public trough. People like Bob Andrew and Graham Taylor, with pensions of \$30,000 a year, and severance packages of \$60,000 a year, and government salaries of \$100,000 a year.

Mr. Speaker, there you have more than half of what this budget provides for hungry children this year. With those two former cabinet ministers, you have more than half of what the government provides for hungry children in Saskatchewan. Two cabinet ministers, two PC cabinet ministers, fed this year to the tune of some \$200,000 each. And for 64,000 children in Saskatchewan growing up in poverty, \$12 a year. That's obscene and that's immoral.

And that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is why I say this budget is a cosmetic job. And that's the kind of monstrous face that this government can't allow the public to see any more than is necessary. And that's why Saskatchewan people are so outraged when they see this face of the government, and why they can't wait for an election and have to leave the province. They can't stand to look at this government any more.

The deception, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the half-truths, and then this budget has the gall to proclaim, this government has the gall to proclaim, this Minister of Finance, on the second page of his speech as he's warming up:

We have eliminated severance payments for government MLAs going to Saskatchewan government jobs.

And that's not true. It's simply not true. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the face of this government is so bad it can't even be seen in public. And that's why they have to come up with Consensus Saskatchewan. That's why they have to come up with Consensus Saskatchewan -- more cosmetics, more fresh optics, more make-up for the Saskatchewan people.

And I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the time has come to give the people of Saskatchewan a new face in government, a new premier of this province, a new cabinet here in Saskatchewan, and a new set of public priorities that can stand the bright light of this province's sun without cosmetics and make-up; that can stand up to public scrutiny -- the public scrutiny of every man, woman, and child in this province, without 100 chosen elected having to be their representatives.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the face of this present Premier belies a hardness of heart, a real keen hardness of heart. A Premier who will subsidize alcohol shipments to northern Saskatchewan and eliminate subsidies for fresh fruit and vegetables for northern children -- that is scandalous.

And I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a better way. There's got to be a better way. There is a more positive role for government to play than to subsidize alcohol shipments to northern Saskatchewan and cut shipments of fresh food.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: -- I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there will be a new day for Saskatchewan people, a day when the jungle mentality of the PC government will disappear and will be replaced with principled leadership of a New Democratic government that has its priorities straight.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: -- A day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the governing modernistic, materialistic, me-first values will finally surrender to a higher ethic, an ethic that says, we are our brother or our sister's keeper, an ethic that insists that public interest be served and protected, an ethic that demands that the God-given resources of this province belong to the people of this province and are there to benefit all the men and women and children of Saskatchewan, and not just a few who have money.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: -- Yes, there is a better way to govern in this province. There's got to be a better way to govern this province of Saskatchewan, than to rely on the magic of the market place, the sort of macho economics that these PCs rely on, that's predicated on unadulterated greed, an unbridled worship of capital and money, and where we have the slanderous and scandalous spectacle of a Cargill -- the single, largest, multinational, privately owned corporation in the world -- living off of \$65 million worth of public money here in Saskatchewan. Or millionaire, Peter Pocklington, entrepreneur, getting \$10 million handed out. Or a Weyerhaeuser corporation, every year for 20 years, getting 20 miles of road

built for it at public expense, such a deal. Eight per cent interest rates, such a deal.

Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a better way and there is a new day coming for Saskatchewan people. A day when the public interest will be served and protected; where the public interest will be the right way to govern; where kids will not go hungry. And that is our pledge on this side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We won't govern like a bunch of drunken sailors, as if there's no tomorrow. We won't sell this province for a song. We won't sell out to big business, and we won't sell health and education and social services short, and then tell half-truths about it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will fight for this province and we will fight for what's fair for all Saskatchewan people, and not just the privileged and wealthy few. And that is the better way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the way to a new day for this province. That is the positive role for any government to play. And that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is why I will be voting against this budget. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martin: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege today to reply to the budget speech, and judging from what I hear from the people in my constituency and across the province, Mr. Speaker, in judging from the feedback that I have received in the few short days since the speech, the direction that was outlined in the budget is right on target.

First of all, I want to commend the member from Weyburn, the Minister of Finance, for taking his views to the people; for seeking out their ideas and seeking out their concerns; for asking the people of Saskatchewan to help this government define our economic direction for the coming year and the coming years. And Mr. Speaker, I want to commend him for being so sensitive to the concerns of Saskatchewan people who articulated to him, their ideas were articulated to him, in the pre-budget consultations that he took part of from across this province. This budget is positive proof of just how important public consultation is and how well it works for government and for people in partnership.

The people of Saskatchewan told the Minister of Finance that they want the government to eliminate waste, inefficiency in the government. They said they wanted the government to protect the priority areas of health, education, and agriculture to put more money into these areas to protect our future. We've done these things, Mr. Speaker, because they are vital to the well-being of our province.

But the last area of concern that was stated in the pre-budget consultation presented a conundrum. On one hand the people asked for increased spending. And on the other hand they asked to reduce the deficit. But they told the Minister of Finance in no uncertain terms that they did not want to have taxes increased.

So they wanted him to increase spending and to reduce the deficit and to hold the line on taxes to pay for it. Well, Mr. Speaker, they can't have it both ways. And I know, in talking to the people of my constituency and those who have phoned me from other constituencies within the city of Regina, that the public understands that situation.

I'm pleased with the decision of the Finance minister to enrich some programs which will help the farmers get their seed into the ground this spring, the increased budget which will enhance our children's education, and the increased budget that will help bolster our health care system.

Mr. Speaker, as minister responsible for seniors, I am pleased that there will be a further \$1.3 million allocated to the Seniors' Secretariat.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martin: -- The secretariat provides an important service to our elder citizens, and I'm grateful that we have received this \$1.3 million injection that will allow us to help our seniors live more independently and more fulfilling lives.

I compliment the Minister of Finance, and the Minister of Health who spoke earlier this afternoon, on the additional 9.5 increase for home care, which is an area that is requiring more and more interest all the time, and 8.7 per cent increase for long-term care or for nursing homes, those in the budget, as the Minister of Health mentioned a few minutes ago.

Mr. Speaker, by consulting with the people of Saskatchewan, the Minister of Finance has developed a budget that is responsive to the reality of Saskatchewan today. But this is not a new process. This is a process which has always taken place because it works.

If a government is to be the servant of the people, it must respond to the will of the people. It must listen and it must respond. This is the most fundamental element of the partnership between the community and of the government, beginning at our own doorstep in our own constituencies.

Mr. Speaker, the constituents of Regina Wascana have always been an important source of wisdom and advice for me as an MLA for this government. My constituency represents a cross-section of pretty much every segment of society in this province. There are pockets of low income families, single-parent families, dual income families, families on welfare, and families in what would be considered high tax brackets. We have business people, professional people, government workers, farmers, academics. There are blue-collar workers, white-collar workers, clerical collar, and every collar in between.

The views of the people of Regina Wascana are pretty representative, I believe, of the views of the people of Saskatchewan as a whole. Mr. Speaker, my constituents tell me about the importance of protecting our communities and the need to help stabilize them and to allow them to grow. They tell me about the importance of small business sector and the need to create new jobs.

They talk about diversifying our economy, of breaking up the welfare cycle, of empowering families to take charge of their own lives. They believe in the future of education and the future of our children. They believe you must feed our hungry children, but that neither governments nor schools should bear the burden alone. They say we need a partnership, a partnership between communities, service organizations, churches, individuals, educators and government to tackle this problem.

They tell me about the importance of parenting skills, of teaching our children about nutrition, budgeting, and about parenting. They say we must start today if we are to have healthier families tomorrow. And my faith in my constituents was confirmed when I was appointed Minister of the Family and began to travel the province to consult with community leaders across Saskatchewan and to ask them about the strength and weaknesses of the families where they live.

Mr. Speaker, I visited over 20 communities, and what I hear is the same whether it is Regina, Churchbridge, Yorkton, La Ronge, Kindersley, Cumberland House, or all the towns in between that we have visited. They say parental involvement is the key to the children's success in adulthood.

They tell me that our seniors are important. They're a valuable source that we should not leave out when talking about parenting, because they have the skills. We should keep them as busy as they want to be, doing meaningful tasks.

(1615)

We talk about the importance of teaching parenting skills, of getting volunteers mobilized, the importance of communication.

One lady told me in Humboldt one day, the moms and dads don't make time for their children. They should be started when they are young right up to their teens; that this communication should be started when they are young right up to their teens, even if it means only eating meals together. People tend not to make time.

You know, Mr. Speaker, you can accomplish a great deal with your children if you just go for a 15-minute walk every night or three or four times a week or even twice a week. Take your children for a walk. Walk around the block. Well, Mr. Speaker, parents should understand that when they take the children for the walk this should be an opportunity for the children to have their say. Because children are tired of being talked to. They want to have an opportunity to speak. They want their parents to listen to them. And they can do that very comfortably by going for a 15-minute walk every night.

Another fellow told me that families expect to have problems, but he identified communication as the biggest problem. That opinion was echoed by some high school students that I met not too long ago.

They said, you think our biggest problem is drugs and alcohol, right? I

said, well yes, I guess so; that's what some people have told me. They said, you're wrong; our biggest problem is communications. Our parents don't listen to us. They didn't listen to us when we were four or five or when we were 10 or 12 or when we're 15 and 16. Now that we're 18 they're ready to listen to us, and by this time it's too late. That's what the young people have told me.

And I've had dozens of young people come to the legislature and sit down and talked to them and asked them that question. And almost universally, Mr. Speaker, the young people have told me the same thing: we want to communicate more often with our parents; we want them to listen to us. When we were little, they sent us to our rooms when there was decisions to be made, and now it's too late.

Well, Mr. Speaker, all these issues which are surfacing in my community consultations are also being dealt by the communities themselves. The Family Foundation has been sponsoring what we call forums about families. Mr. Speaker, we call these forums about families. These are community family workshops which are planned, organized, and delivered by the communities themselves.

The Saskatchewan Family Foundation assists community groups and organizations identify community needs and conduct these workshops. We help them with funding, to a limited extent, we locate speakers and provide resource materials, and we offer help in setting up the seminar themselves.

But, Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, the community takes leadership for determining the focus, for the planning, for the organizing, and for staging the forum. Local businesses and service organizations assist with funding as well as with manpower. The workshops teach family living skills, topics may be covering parenting skills, marriage preparation, understanding child behaviour, drug awareness, caring for ageing parents, budgeting, farm stress, suicide counselling -
_ whatever the community decides is of concern to them.

By the end of this week, Mr. Speaker, 40 forums will have been held with about 4,000 people in attendance. We are expecting about 150 to be held before the end of the calendar year, 1990, and, Mr. Speaker, we should have no trouble getting that because the applications just keep coming in from all over the province.

These workshops have been tremendously successful. The Saskatchewan Cerebral Palsy Association held a workshop in Regina on March 2 and 3 and wrote to tell us that it was, in their words, an unqualified success. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read from that letter that we received from the Saskatchewan cerebral palsy organization:

This was the first workshop our association has hosted in Regina. . . . the workshop itself was an unqualified success. All participants felt that they benefited from the experience and evaluation forms were very positive. The support networks and contacts developed through participation in this workshop will strengthen these families in the future.

Mr. Speaker, the first time they've had an opportunity to hold a workshop like this. And as I've said, and this is the most important sentence in this letter:

The support networks and contacts developed through participation in this workshop will strengthen families throughout this province in the future.

And that's signed by Heather Rasmussen, provincial co-ordinator of the Saskatchewan Cerebral Palsy Association.

These sentiments were echoed in the evaluation received from the association of community living about their workshop for young people 14 to 21 which is held in Saskatoon at the same time. Their workshop attracted young people from across the province, many of whom have handicapped brothers and handicapped sisters. This is what they said, Mr. Speaker, a letter to my Deputy Minister, Dan Perrins, Saskatchewan Family Foundation. It goes on and on and then it says:

Thank you for your generous support of this training event

It was held on March 2 to 4 and it said this very successful forum attracted 27 young people from throughout the province.

And this was the concluding paragraph, Mr. Speaker. It was from Karin Melberg Schwier, youth committee support staff. And it said:

The weekend provided an opportunity for siblings and other family members to talk about their feelings, for teens to learn about careers in the field of human services and for all to be reminded of the power of simple friendships.

Mr. Speaker, that's from the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living. Mr. Speaker, these workshops are delivered by existing community service organizations. More often than not, our family forums have a different focus. We are encouraging the community as a whole to get involved and to stage a much broader interest festival-type forum. And for the most part this is what has happened in places like Estevan, Weyburn, Yorkton, Humboldt, North Battleford, Cumberland House and a number of other communities throughout the province.

Just let me show you, Mr. Speaker, this is the program from the Estevan Family Festival that was held on February 16 and 17 in the Estevan Comprehensive School. I had the opportunity to be there, Mr. Speaker, and it was certainly encouraging to be there.

Well it started on the Friday night, and I had an opportunity to be part of that. And on the Saturday they covered such workshops as: how to improve communication with your partner; peer pressure -- you can beat it; parent-teen relationships -- technique for reducing conflict.

You know, Mr. Speaker, for each of these workshops they bring in highly qualified people, many of them from this province. They bring very few

from outside the province because we have extremely high quality people throughout this province who can speak to these issues.

And other workshops that they held were: there is help for the single parent; teen-aid; the challenge of a disability in the family; how to cope with stress, and on and on, Mr. Speaker.

That was held on Friday night and all day Saturday in Estevan, and it was by all accounts an unqualified success with something in the neighbourhood of 350 people there.

Mr. Speaker, Humboldt family forum will be held April 6 and 7, that's this coming weekend. I'll have the opportunity to be there on Friday. And their keynote address is: what are healthy and functional family patterns? They have many . . . many of these forums, Mr. Speaker, are for younger children, like children from nine to 12 years of age: free to be hassle-free. And another one which should be most interesting, Mr. Speaker, is: raising parents. And they have a session for teenagers 13 to 18 years of age. It's called: chocolate chip cookies, part one, given by Colleen Wickenheiser, Bachelor of Education, with the Department of Education. And that's a very interesting, I understand, and humorous presentation. Also: teenagers' responsibilities in the '90s, by Corporal John Hodgson who is with the RCMP.

And for the adults, Mr. Speaker, they're going to have: why we get married anyway; family growth through community involvement -- is there time for both; family self worth or building self worth in the family; faith, spirit, and religion in the family; parents -- should we talk to our teenagers about sex? A good question; healthy life-styles -- make a change for the better. And that'll be in Humboldt this coming weekend, Mr. Speaker, and I know it's going to be a big success.

Well Gull Lake is staging a conference of communities where hundreds of people from surrounding communities will participate in a day-long event. That'll be coming up tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, and I'll have an opportunity to be there.

Well, Friday night, Mr. Speaker, I was in North Battleford at their family festival, and that was, to say the very least, an unqualified success. They had 400 adults registered with presenters, people doing displays. The total was close to 500 participants, and 150 children took part in the North Battleford family festival on Friday and Saturday.

The thing about it, Mr. Speaker, is that the people that were there were people who really needed to be there, Mr. Speaker. And that's really part of the key to the family forum. There's not much sense in having a forum and having just the same people who always go to these things. The important thing is to get to the people who need to be there. And the way they do that, Mr. Speaker, as they told me in Estevan, is they involve these people in the organization of these family forums.

People came from 75 miles around to attend the forum in North Battleford on Friday and Saturday. Mr. Cardwell's session drew about 200 people. He's

an excellent speaker, a Saskatchewan man. He talked about parenting teenagers; what you always knew about marriage anyway; pre-teens, letting them grow up, about letting them go. There were about 60 in the session about building our child's self-esteem.

And evaluation forms had a lot of positive comment from participants. One woman said she took two days off work just to come to the forum. She thought it was that important.

And in the North Battleford News-Optimist, appearing in the newspaper which I understand was published yesterday -- I would have thought it'd be today but apparently it was published yesterday -- an article by Steve LaRose of the News-Optimist says:

Organizers of the first Battlefords' Festival of Families are calling it a success and hope to follow it up with a permanent method of delivering aid to families. "We had more than 400 people registered," said Bernie Etchivery, one of the organizers. "There's been a great deal of interest expressed in aids to parenting."

More often than not, Mr. Speaker, the forum organizing committee is a group of interested individuals who are plugged into the community but have never worked together before. And ideally, after this event is over, the committee will stay together, will work together, and meet other needs within their community.

The organizing committee has stayed together in North Battleford and is working on an interesting model for a larger community organization to serve the needs of families in North Battleford. I think it may very well be a model for other areas in the province. They're looking for ways to bring the various agencies and services within the community network together in a co-ordinated fashion, and are seeking help from the Family Foundation to do that.

The educational focus of the family festival was the reason the committee got together originally, and they put on a first-rate series of workshops. But the long-term benefit of mobilizing the community organizations to work together will have a lasting impact on the people of The Battlefords.

Mr. Speaker, people need to talk about their problems. People want to talk about their problems. They need to understand that others have problems too, many of the same problems that they have. If these people can get together and talk about it and listen, it will help everyone.

These forums bring communities together to examine and address the issues, to work together to build stronger families, stronger communities, and a stronger Saskatchewan for our children. This government is concerned about our families and our children. We are working to help them help themselves to build a future for our children.

The Family Foundation is primarily concerned with all families, not just the 10 per cent of families that are in crisis at any one time. However, we do recognize that some families are experiencing difficulty to make ends

meet. Some of our children are hungry, and the government has a responsibility to help break the cycle of hunger and poverty in Saskatchewan for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, hunger is an issue which has been very high on my agenda since I became Minister of the Family in October. I have spent a tremendous amount of time meeting with community groups and individuals who are directly involved with feeding the hungry and helping them cope with life.

Mr. Speaker, I've been getting a fair amount of criticism from the member from Saskatoon Eastview who is the critic of the family, and who criticizes the family at every turn of events. And the reason, Mr. Speaker, that I've been reading in newspapers about criticism from the member from Saskatoon Eastview, the critic of the family, and his criticism was, Mr. Speaker, that somehow or other we hadn't explained what our mandate is. So, Mr. Speaker, I sent him a letter, and he's still saying, what is our mandate. I would suggest to the member from Saskatoon Eastview that perhaps some remedial reading classes might help in this regard.

(1630)

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take just a moment to read the letter that I wrote to the member from Saskatoon Eastview. In case he lost the letter or didn't have an opportunity to read it, I'm going to read it now.

It says: to the Member from Saskatoon Eastview. It says, Dear Mr. so and so, Saskatoon Eastview:

You have made several press statements recently . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

I can use his name? I'm reading a letter, Mr. Speaker, so I'm advised that I can use the name. Okay.

Dear Mr. Pringle: (who is the member from Saskatoon Eastview, who is the critic of the family) You have made several press statements recently on the Family Foundation which indicate you may not be aware of the work this department is doing. This letter is intended to provide information to you on the valuable work of the Foundation.

The purpose of the Foundation is to strengthen Saskatchewan . . . (family relationships and to manage their resources and) . . . We are doing so by: (first of all)

consulting with people from every part of the province to keep informed about issues of concern to families and communities

reviewing government policies and programs to determine their effect on families

speaking for family concerns and acting as a bridge between local problems and government programs

working together with government departments, community groups, agencies and individuals to develop programs and policies that work for families

promoting information and services to help people enhance their family living skills

Consistent throughout these activities is the goal of preparing and valuing men, women and children for their contribution as family members and caregivers.

And the letter goes on to Mr. Pringle, the member from Saskatoon Eastview:

An example of the work of the Foundation is the Forums About Families an initiative . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, Order. The hon. member is quoting a letter, and of course quotes are allowed. However, I think he should be careful about reading entire long texts from letters because it defeats the purpose of the rule which allows quotations.

The member from Moose Jaw North, perhaps he should pay attention to this as well so that he's not tempted to
Dbreak the same rule in the future.

Hon. Mr. Martin: -- Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I won't continue with the entire letter. I think I made my point. I would only urge the member from Saskatoon Eastview, the critic of the family, to read the letter that I sent him so he can no longer say that he doesn't understand what our mandate is. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to continue.

In this time of great need and this time of limited economic resources, any response to the problem of hunger must be affordable and, Mr. Speaker, must be carefully targeted. It makes . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. The member is being interrupted. It's difficult to hear him. I'm sure hon. members want to hear his remarks, and therefore I ask your co-operation in allowing him to continue.

Hon. Mr. Martin: -- Mr. Speaker, it makes the most sense to focus our attention on the children and on their parents, both as an immediate response and when looking for long-term solutions. And this is the essence of what I'm hearing right across the province.

Initially, Mr. Speaker, I wrote to each of the school boards in Saskatchewan to determine the nature of the problems of hungry children in their jurisdiction. Mr. Speaker, of the 150 letters that our department wrote, only about 25 were answered -- only about 25.

With the exception of Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert and North Battleford, virtually all the school divisions told me that hunger was not a major concern in their area. Even in Regina and Saskatoon, hunger largely exists only in pockets in the inner city areas. Moose Jaw tells me

their problem is moderate. And for Prince Albert and North Battleford the issue of hunger takes second place to their problems with street kids and gangs.

From the smaller communities, several of the letters that I received spoke of isolated incidents of hunger. Some identified a family here and there. But, Mr. Speaker, most said that hunger was not a real problem. And so I read to you, Mr. Speaker, a letter from the Thunder Creek School Division from Jim Armstrong, chairman. He said:

Children experiencing hunger has not been identified as a problem in our school division. This is not to say, however, that individual isolated cases may appear from time to time. We have found that in such instances Social Services has adequately provided for the needs of students and families.

I want to repeat that, Mr. Speaker. He said:

Children experiencing hunger has not been identified as a problem in our school division.

The Speaker: -- Order, order. I just want to remind the hon. members that you will have your opportunity to speak. I think that the tradition and the courtesies of the House dictate that you should give the Minister of the Family now the opportunity to speak. And you will have the opportunity after him.

Hon. Mr. Martin: -- Mr. Speaker, I'm going to go back to this letter from the Thunder Creek School Division, one of only 25 letters that we received who indicated that there was any kind of a problem in rural areas.

I did say we wrote 150 letters, Mr. Speaker. This is one of the ones we received -- from Thunder Creek School Division from Jim Armstrong. He said:

Children experiencing hunger has not been identified as a problem in our school division. This is not to say, however, that individual isolated cases may appear from time to time. We have found that in such instances Social Services has adequately provided for the needs of students and for families.

That's from Thunder Creek division, Mr. Speaker.

Some school divisions identified the nutritional value of food, and not the amount of food, as the problem. For instance, from the Shamrock School Division, Mr. Speaker, a letter from Austin Gerein. He says:

In response to your letter (etc., etc., etc.) . . . we do not have any hungry children in our schools.

However, he does contend that we do have a number of students who are malnourished because of improper or poorly balanced diets.

The problem is, Mr. Speaker, as he says, is junk food. The problem, they say, is junk food in the Shamrock School Division. That letter from Austin Gerein.

And, Mr. Speaker, the letters were much like that. The Swift Current School Division said, and I shall quote from them as well. This is a letter from J.J. Dalton, Jim Dalton, the superintendent of education in the Swift Current School Division No. 94. He says:

There does not appear to be a significant hunger problem for the school children attending the Swift Current School Division No. 94 or the Comprehensive High School.

The kinds of foods . . .

Mr. Speaker, here we go again with the same comment as we heard in the last letter. It said:

The kinds of foods some students eat could benefit from nutritional inservice. Many students eat sufficiently in quantity, but lack the quality of the essential food groups. Awareness sessions might help to overcome this problem.

And that's from J.J. Dalton, superintendent of education.

Still other schools identify parenting skills as a problem. The Melville school board, for instance, Melville separate school board, said -- this is from St. Henry's Roman Catholic Separate School Division in Melville, Mr. Speaker, from A.A. Wihlidal. It says:

. . . we do not have children who are experiencing hunger because of lack of food. In the case of 2 or 3 families, we do observe children eating a poorly balanced diet at the noon meal. This situation seems to exist because of the lack of adequate parenting skills.

And that's from Melville, Mr. Speaker.

And there's another one, Mr. Speaker. Let me read another one. This one, Mr. . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. I would like to read to the hon. member rule 328 which refers to quotations, and it reads as follows. And I will read the whole rule to you as a matter of fact:

A Member may read extracts from documents, books or other printed publications as part of his speech, provided in so doing he does not infringe on any point of order. A speech should not, however, consist only of a single, long quotation, or a series of quotations, joined together with a few original sentences.

I acknowledge that the initial part of your speech certainly wasn't that. But the last several minutes, quite a few minutes, you have been quoting one letter after another, and I believe that that is improper. Quotations

are allowed, but they should be spread out and not joined together as to form a major part of your speech.

Hon. Mr. Martin: -- So, Mr. Speaker, I understand the reading to be then that even if I read a line or two from the couple of letters I have left that that would be improper, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: -- The rule indicates that if you keep quoting from documents, and simply join them together with one sentence, or that sort of thing, that that is against the rules of the House. Speeches should not be quotations that are joined together with one or two original sentences.

Hon. Mr. Martin: -- All right, Mr. Speaker, I understand. Very quickly, then, from the Davidson high school:

Weekly, we receive concerns from individuals and schools which indicate a tremendous need . . . for assistance with learning about parenting practices.

So parenting practices, Mr. Speaker, parenting skills, seems to be a common theme that runs from many of these schools. So we're talking about nutrition. We heard the same thing from . . . the Paynton school division district conducted a survey, in which they said that programs such as budgeting, economical buying, Mr. Speaker, basic meal preparation, nutritional needs, beginning at the grade 4 level at least, Mr. Speaker. What the Paynton school division is telling us, Mr. Speaker, is that we should be teaching these nutritional values, and teaching parenting skills to these youngsters at a very early age.

In all the answers I received, Mr. Speaker, each school division expressed concern and the common theme, Mr. Speaker, was clear. Responsibility for feeding hungry children should not rest in the laps of the schools. Wherever I went, all through this province, they all said the same thing. It must be a shared responsibility between the family, the community, the municipal and provincial governments, and the schools -- in partnership, Mr. Speaker. And any solutions must include an educational component.

I spent the last many weeks meeting with the mayors and school boards and community groups in cities across the province, as well as individuals involved directly in feeding programs. I discovered that each jurisdiction has developed a different response to address the problem in their community, and the needs are very different, Mr. Speaker, from community to community.

For example, in Prince Albert and North Battleford, there is the parallel problem of street kids -- young people who don't go to school, or hang out on the streets after hours, who have organized themselves into gangs. For these kids, hunger is an issue, but only part of a larger issue.

And in schools, hunger is seen as a family issue, a community issue which involves education, training, parenting skills, as well as a co-ordinated feeding program.

Mr. Speaker, the school boards and the mayors agree that a co-ordinated effort is needed to address both the problem of hunger in schools and the kids on the street. This is a community concern that involves everyone -- community groups, volunteers, churches, and services organizations as well.

The mayor of Prince Albert told me that he felt that it was not realistic to expect government to carry the ball. In his words, and I quote:

Governments can assist, but can't solve the problems. The community has to take hold and pull itself out.

The needs are different from city to city, and the recommendations that were given to me by mayors, as to the school boards, and the community organizations I had met with, were unique in their community.

In Saskatoon there is a child hunger and education program, the CHEP program, where a co-ordinator who is a nutritionist heads up a program which is tailored to each individual school community. The CHEP program is a partnership between the city of Saskatoon, the school boards, the private sector, churches and service organizations, as well as concerned individuals.

Beyond feeding hungry children, its focus is on teaching them about what they're eating and what is good for them, and it works to get parents involved as both as volunteers and through educational programming. It's a good model, Mr. Speaker. It's a good model, Mr. Speaker, and it certainly works well for Saskatoon. It would be nice, actually . . . it would be very nice, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, if we could introduce this CHEP program in all the communities in Saskatchewan, but I'm not sure it would work in all the communities. Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure that all the communities want that particular program; they all have their specific needs.

In Regina, hungry children are being capably served by a number of different programs in different locations around the city, for instance, Kitchener School. There's an excellent program in Kitchener high school . . . or rather, public school in Regina. Theresa Stevenson's Chili for Children feeds lunch three times a week. The Circle Project reaches both hungry children, younger children and high school age. Food for Learning has an important educational component, and there are others. They're all telling me that they still have a need for more support.

(1645)

All these community organizations have stepped in to fill the need. But it is often overlooked that children are being fed by the provincial government as well. Mr. Speaker, since 1972, the Government of Saskatchewan has been subsidizing feeding programs for the community schools' program through the Department of Social Services, and through the Department of Health.

In Regina alone, Mr. Speaker, government funding accounts for approximately 1,600 meals a day. In other words, Mr. Speaker, 1,600 meals a day, the

children in this city, in Regina, are being directly funded by government agencies.

An interesting point should also be made here, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to feeding the hungry in Saskatchewan, we all recognize the importance of partnership between governments, municipalities, churches, private sector, community and service organizations, individuals, and especially families.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say at this point, that I mentioned that 1,600 families . . . or 1,600 meals are being paid directly by the government now in the city of Regina; there are about 2,000 children who are fed every day in this city, a great many of them through the community schools' program.

So if the government is feeding 1,600, Mr. Speaker, then another 400 are being fed by the service groups and by community organizations. I want to commend these organizations, Mr. Speaker, because what they are doing . . . what they have been doing for a long time, as I say back to 1972 people have been doing this, all of a sudden it's become a big issue in this city, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, these things have been going on for a great many years and these people, these same kind of people, have been feeding these children all this time without a lot of publicity, without a lot of hearings, without a lot of public exposure, these programs have been going on by government funding as well as the community workers.

And, I think, these people who dedicate themselves and many of their free hours that they do have to feeding these children, educating these children, feeding them with an educational component, Mr. Speaker, deserve a great deal of credit from the people of this city, because they're providing a service that hasn't been provided for a long time.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martin: -- I think, Mr. Speaker, we should almost also be looking to the federal government to share the partnership and share some of the costs. Right now that is not happening to the degree that it should be. They do have some help, Mr. Speaker, but not to the degree that it should be.

But feeding children is only an immediate response to a program that requires long-term solutions. We have to develop long-term strategies to break the cycle. And that strategy has to revolve around helping families help themselves as far as possible. It's all up to us, especially governments, to open the door to empower families to take care, to take hold of their own lives.

The recent increase in the minimum wage to \$4.75 an hour at the first of the year and again to \$5 at the first of July will help to some extent. And I've often been told, and I agree, that all the programs in our social safety net should be reviewed. What worked 10 years ago, Mr. Speaker, might not work that well today. Times are changing and we must be responding to these changes. Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of the Family, it is my job to do that, in co-operation with the other ministers and the other members of this government.

But if families are to take charge of their own lives, then education is the key. This has been the universal theme in all of our discussions -- involving parents in the schools and helping them encourage their children to get the best education that they can; involving parents in the feeding programs and giving them the benefit of nutrition and food preparation education; involving children in the preparation of their own lunches, just as they do in the boys and girls club in North Battleford.

Bill Wood, the principal of Kitchener School here in Regina said to me when I was out there the other day, he said, if I could just get parents more involved, it would be like icing on the cake. I'll be spending more time with Mr. Wood out at Kitchener School and the people that work with him out there, because I think we're going to be able to do some business together in terms of helping him and his program.

Harvey Welch at Pleasant Hill School in Saskatoon is doing everything he can to get parents involved in his school program and get them involved in preparing food for the children. He tells me that parental involvement is the key to the children's success in adulthood.

What he tells me, Mr. Speaker, is that many of the children who are coming to the school and need to be fed are coming from homes where education is not a priority to any extent. The parents are not encouraging the children to go to school. As a consequence, often they don't go to school.

And so his answer to that is -- that is, tying education in with the hunger problem, Mr. Speaker -- is to involve the parents in some kind of a program. And I think Harvey Welch of Pleasant Hill School in Saskatoon has some of the most innovative programs that are now currently existing in this province.

And recently several teams of teachers from Saskatoon, three groups of three actually, went to Winnipeg, went to Calgary, and went to Edmonton to see what kind of programs they're doing there with the inner city hunger problems that they have in these cities as well as they have here. And Harvey tells me that some of the programs at . . . the program they have in Winnipeg may be one of the most innovative programs that he's seen in a long time. It may actually, it may work very well in this city and certainly in his city. So we'll have an opportunity to talk to Harvey about that.

He has been very successful in getting parents into the schools along with the children. And what he does, he gets them into the school, gets the parents out at the school. He puts them in one class-room where they'd have some, perhaps some literacy education, some teaching, some schooling of some respect anyway, education of some kind, and while the children are also learning.

He feels that if you can get the parents involved and get them interested in education, get them enthusiastic about learning, that they then will make that a higher priority for their children.

And surely, Mr. Speaker, if the parents themselves see the key out of this in the long term is education, and then therefore influence their children to become more educated, that may be and probably is the one way that we can break this cycle, this welfare, this hunger cycle that seems to go on year after year after year, and has been going on for a long time in this province, and certainly well back into the '70s -- probably before that.

Mr. Speaker, when I was a boy growing up and going to school in this city, they were feeding children then as well. The same kinds of groups were feeding children then. This is not a new problem, Mr. Speaker. We have to break it. The way to break it, the way to break the cycle, Mr. Speaker, is to use education as the key.

Harvey said he'd like nothing more than to have a family centre set up in his school, Mr. Speaker, a family centre set up in his school. Let me explain to you what a family centre is. It's the initiative of Social Services and of Education that the government announced in November. It puts a social worker in the school to bring families into the school setting and give support and guidance to the parents as a group.

Now, Mr. Speaker, a year ago a family centre was set up in Haultain School here in Regina. This is a tremendous story, Mr. Speaker, because what they did was Social Services and Education got together and they put one worker into Haultain School, a young lady named Jamie Weintz who had been a social worker for a great many years and obviously a dedicated social worker.

She went into this school, and in the basement of the school she found a room that was full of all sorts of stuff, took it all out, and fixed up this room in a nice . . . you know, you put some curtains on the windows and fixed it up, put some paintings up, and made it a very comfortable place to be -- put in a chesterfield and a couple of chairs and a table or so.

Her job was really to respond to the teachers, so when the teachers identified a child in need or a child that'd been neglected, she would then go to the home.

Let me give you one example of what she did. A child was identified as being a child being neglected. So she went to the house of where this child came from. It turns out that the woman, the mother of this child, slept till noon. Well she slept till noon because she had no other reason to get out of bed. I mean, she didn't have any place to go. She didn't . . . you know, she had nothing to do so she slept till noon, and it just kind of got into that pattern over a long period of time.

So Jamie Weintz said to this lady, why don't you come on over to the school and we'll talk about it. Well she was a little hesitant to come but after a few days she kind of wandered in, and she didn't look that great. Her hair wasn't washed and she was looking, you know, a little messy. And obviously she could look a little better if she tried.

But after a few days, she came back again, and within a week or so she was coming rather quite regularly. Every time she came she looked better. Her

hair was washed, she had her make-up on, she cleaned herself up, and because, Mr. Speaker, because she started to feel better about herself.

And the reason she started feeling better about herself was very simple. Because when she came over to talk to Jamie Weintz, Jamie Weintz sat and listened to her. She listened to her talk about her problems. And over the weeks, Mr. Speaker, within three weeks, the woman had improved and felt so good about herself, she was virtually running the place. She was answering the phone and meeting people at the door and bringing people in. Within six months that woman had a full-time job and today is working full time.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martin: -- Now, Mr. Speaker, that didn't cost anybody any money. I mean, that wasn't throwing money into the pot. It was a simple matter of one person sitting down and listening to another person and helping them listen to their problems and getting them to feel better about themselves, Mr. Speaker. One on one.

Now the other thing that happened, Mr. Speaker, in that community was . . . This woman wasn't the only one in the community; there are a number of other people in the community who weren't feeling very good about themselves as well. So as a consequence, Mr. Speaker, women would come over to Jamie Weintz's little room in the basement of Haultain School. They'd sit around and they'd have a little group meeting and they'd bring their muffins or their doughnuts, whatever it was.

And week after week after week, women started coming in. They started sharing their problems and discussing -- this worked for me; maybe it'll work for you. An excellent program, Mr. Speaker. One might even say that you could probably even identify that in a sense with something like an AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) program or an AlAnon meeting. And there's no question, Mr. Speaker, that in the history of this world, there is not a social program as successful as AA. It doesn't cost anybody any money. It's one on one or a group of people sharing their experiences and talking. And it works.

So that's what happened at Haultain School. As a result of that experience with this young lady, Jamie Weintz, a social worker at Haultain School, we then went to -- the Minister of Social Services, the Minister of Education, and myself -- went to the school boards in Saskatoon and Regina and said hey, how about expanding this program? In Regina a public school was already; Haultain School is a public school. Regina Catholic School Board said yes, great idea; we'll do it as well. Saskatoon said, great idea; we want the program as well.

So right now, Mr. Speaker, there are three individuals working in schools in Saskatoon in what we call a family centre, and there are two in Regina. They want them in Prince Albert. They want them in Moose Jaw. They want them in North Battleford. Mr. Speaker, this is, I think, a simple idea, doesn't cost anybody any money, and boy, does it ever work well. And many of the schools that I've talked to want it, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, that in a sense is a response to the hunger issue. That child is no longer hungry, that was coming to school neglected, because that woman now gets out of bed in the morning to go to work, prepares food for the child, and sends him to school with a full stomach. That's a part of an answer to the hunger issue, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I've been actively seeking out opinions and recommendations about the issue of hunger right across Saskatchewan and have taken the concrete evidence that I've gathered back to cabinet. They share the concern, Mr. Speaker, and they share the desire to build the kind of community partnership that will not only empower families, but will build stronger and more stable communities as well.

And they are responded by approving funds for addressing the serious problem in the short term -- funds, Mr. Speaker, in the amount of \$740,000 that were announced in the budget. It is a substantial amount of money, Mr. Speaker, but not a lot of money; \$740,000 is enough to help the communities address their needs. It is enough to give the community groups a stimulus that they need to carry on their work, but also to look for creative and innovative ideas that will help to lead to long-term solutions in the problems of hunger among our children.

Rather than buying 150,000 jars of peanut butter, as the member opposite would recommend, this money must be put toward programming and strengthening communities and families. It must be used to get to the root of the problem. It must be used to support the many organizations and individuals who are already doing an excellent job of feeding our hungry children.

Mr. Speaker, the plan for disbursing the money must come from these organizations themselves. These funds must be used to support communities as they see fit.

Mr. Speaker, for too long governments in this province have been telling people what they had to do. And the people don't want that, Mr. Speaker. They want to make some of the decisions themselves. After all these years of socialism in this province, Mr. Speaker, the people have said, enough of that. We want to have a say in what goes on in this government. We want to have a say in how you distribute the money, how you introduce your programs, Mr. Speaker. No more from above, Mr. Speaker, like which is the socialist doctrine; but from above, which is the democratic way of doing things, Mr. Speaker.

This government commitment is part of the partnership between communities, individuals, and the government. And the creative solutions must grow out of that partnership.

My next step is to continue working with the many people that we have been consulting with. They must come back to me with substantial recommendations as to what they believe should be done -- recommendations generated by people who are directly involved in feeding hungry children; recommendations that are tailored to the needs of their own community. Then, Mr. Speaker, based on those grass roots recommendations, decisions

will be made about how the \$740,000 should be allocated.

The hunger issue is an important part of my responsibility as Minister of the Family, and I am committed to making something happen. But for the short term and the long term, as I said, Mr. Speaker, hunger is a real family issue. As Minister of the Family, if I am to be effective in building stronger families in Saskatchewan, then the issue of child hunger must be seriously addressed.

The Speaker: -- It being 5 o'clock, the House stands recessed until 7 p.m.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.