

April 2/90

EVENING SITTING

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. Martin: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. When I finished off at 5 o'clock, Mr. Speaker, I was speaking about the success that we've had with the family forums around the province. We've had so far about 44, Mr. Speaker. There'll be another one tomorrow -- will it be number 45? -- in the Gull Lake area, Mr. Speaker. There'll be something like 5 to 600 people attending from a variety of communities in that area of the province.

We expect to have about 150, Mr. Speaker, before the season is out. The beauty of the family forums, Mr. Speaker, is that the community does the organizing. The community picks the subjects they want to talk about, the subjects that affect their community, whether they be family stress, whether they be drugs and alcohol, whether they be sexual abuse, whether they be teen parenting skills, whether they be communication -- whatever they want to speak about, Mr. Speaker.

And the communities organize them; they bring in the speakers; and they run the show. All we do from a government point of view, Mr. Speaker, is provide some financial help, whether it be for paying for some of the speakers coming in, the travel, perhaps a little food, whatever. But it is a community organization.

And really the beauty of that is, and the underlying theme, Mr. Speaker, of these family forums is, is that because communities, all communities, have problems, family problems, Mr. Speaker, it goes right across political lines. This is a non-political subject, goes right across political lines because all political parties and families have to have family problems.

But the beauty of it is, and I suppose really the underlying theme is, is that you want the community to start establishing a network within the community for people to talk about their problems with each other. Because, Mr. Speaker, when people talk about their problems with other people, when they share their problems with other people, it has the effect of strengthening that particular person, because everyone wants to talk about their problems, and if they have problems they should speak about them, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things we find is that everybody should have a best buddy. Everyone should have someone that they can talk to; someone that they can

share their problems with and discuss their problems, Mr. Speaker. It has a feeling of self-awareness and self-strengthening, Mr. Speaker. So as I said, these family forums have been very successful; successful not because of anything that I've done, particularly, Mr. Speaker, but because the communities themselves have done them.

The other thing I spoke about just before breaking at 5 o'clock, Mr. Speaker, had to do with the hunger problem. And I talked about the 3,000 students, or the 3,000 young people in the province who are being fed every day in this province. And I reminded the members of the House that these feeding programs go back to 1972 when they were started by the then government, the NDP government in 1972, to respond to the need of hunger in those days.

And the program was delivered through the community schools program. And I think that perhaps some people don't know what a community school is and I will try to explain as best I can. Community schools for the most part exist in the core areas of the city. And these are schools that have particular needs outside of education needs, and often this is where the food programs are delivered.

The Government of Saskatchewan, since 1972, has been funding meals in the city of Regina, and I will speak specifically of the city of Regina because I know that situation best. But as I said, there are 3,000 young people who receive meals in this province every day. In Regina alone there are 2,000 students who receive a meal of some description, either a hot breakfast like they deliver at Kitchener School in Regina or a muffin and milk program that they have in Moose Jaw or larger programs like the program that Theresa Stevenson runs, which is Chili for Children. She feeds up to 250, 300 children at noon at Scott Collegiate in Regina. And that's an excellent program. The government puts up about 1,600 meals of those a day; the other 400 come from community organizations.

But let me say once again, Mr. Speaker, that I want to commend the people of this city, not only this city but the people of the province, who are involved as volunteers delivering these food programs to children around the province. Because these people recognize and they have for many years, long before it became more or less politically highlighted in this province, that there was a need for these programs. And I say it goes back to 1972, and I commend the government of the day for organizing and getting started in those programs. It's a needed program then; it's needed today.

So having said that, Mr. Speaker, I said that I will be addressing these particular hunger programs in specific ways. And those specific ways will depend on what the community themselves want. Now I'm not sure if I said this, Mr. Speaker. Let me repeat it if I did say it, and that is that the people around the province tell me, specifically those people who are in the feeding programs with a few exceptions, Mr. Speaker, with a few exceptions, but generally the people I've spoken to -- the mayors, the municipality people, the schoolteachers, and community workers around the province, is that what we do not want and what we do not need in this province is a massive feeding program. That would cost somewhere in the neighbourhood of . . . well it's estimated somewhere between 26 and \$40

million a year. They say we don't need that. We need to target it, we need to target it to specific areas. And that's what we will do, Mr. Speaker.

So in the incoming weeks I will be responding to each of these communities where there is a hunger situation, in the way that they want it to be. And I think in the next few days . . . Well it may take a week or so before we get some of them settled, but I'm looking forward to that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of the Family, if I'm to be effective in building stronger families in Saskatchewan, then the issue of child hunger must be seriously addressed because it undermines the potential of the families of tomorrow. Community stability and human potential are two major aspects of what the initiatives that we're running, Mr. Speaker.

To paraphrase Mayor Henry Dayday of Saskatoon, if you allow something to undermine the family unit, then there is no support system left. And I think we all agree with that, Mr. Speaker. It's basically fundamental.

One of the major factors which undermines a family and is related to the issue of hunger is unemployment. As the minister responsible for the New Careers Corporation, I am proud of this government's insight and creativity in establishing this corporation and, through this budget, allowing it to continue to do its fine work.

New careers is a unique program, probably the most advanced and successful job training program in North America. Since it was introduced six years ago, we've had almost 700 trainees in the program. In a survey of former trainees, an independent evaluation has found that two-thirds of new careers participants found steady employment after some time with the corporation. An additional 5 per cent left new careers to further their studies. Mr. Speaker, of those trainees who completed the full 18-month career plan with the corporation, new careers, over 90 per cent are fully employed. The results are unsurpassed among similar programs in North America.

Let me give you an example, Mr. Speaker, of what I'm talking about. It's a young fellow, a native chap, who came into Saskatchewan, brought his . . . rather into Regina, brought his family into Regina because he wanted to be involved in new careers. Now here's a chap who didn't have the opportunity to receive the education that many of us have had, and that's unfortunate, but it happens. And it's unfortunate. He came to Regina -- had a great pair of hands, Mr. Speaker; the fellow could build anything. He was a fine finishing carpenter, a marvellous carpenter, quite frankly. Beautiful work. But he had the problem with mathematics. He couldn't do mathematics because of the poor education that he had had from where he came from.

So he got involved with new careers . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I will speak to that. The member just mentioned from Saskatoon wherever, that . . . one of the Saskatoon seats, that it's our problem. And I'll speak to that in a minute, Mr. Speaker.

But let me finish this story about this chap, the young carpenter. This young carpenter had problems with mathematics. He got into new careers and

part of the 18-month training program in new careers involves education upgrading where it's required, whether it be at the public school level, the high school level, or the university level. There's also counselling as he proceeds through the 18-month period. Well at the end of the 18-month period, he was fully qualified through new careers, had got his mathematics training at school and wrote his carpenter's journeyman's papers -- which he couldn't qualify before because he couldn't do the math -- got his journeyman's paper and the day that I handed him his certificate from new careers, he also had a job in his hand to go to work for a builder in Regina where he's now making in the neighbourhood of 18 to \$22 an hour, Mr. Speaker, as a finishing carpenter. And that's because he came into the city, got involved in new careers, had the opportunity, and now he can go home every night and his children are very proud of him. That's the sort of thing that new careers does. It's a good feeling, Mr. Speaker, to see that.

As I said, of those trainees who completed their full 18-month career with new corporation, over 90 per cent are employed. The results are unsurpassed among similar programs in North America.

I've had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to visit such locations. I was recently up in Cumberland House. I was in Cumberland House, Mr. Speaker, to visit a project that new careers had been doing there. New careers is going to be involved in two projects in Cumberland House. Now as we all know, Cumberland House is an area where there's a high level of unemployment. There is not a great deal of economic development in Cumberland House. But by building a new recreation centre in Cumberland House, Mr. Speaker, new careers will be supplying all the labour for this recreation centre in Cumberland House. There'll be a new hockey rink and a facility for children to play in, and that will be starting very shortly.

The other thing that we're going to be doing in Cumberland House, Mr. Speaker, is building some cabins on an island out in the Cumberland House delta flats area there. The people have asked that we build some cabins on this island -- that new careers build the cabins on the island -- so they can take these young children who will be undergoing . . . who will have an opportunity to undergo drug and alcohol treatment, and get them isolated from the community, to work and to live in these cabins. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, they'll have an opportunity to really understand the need to be drug and alcohol free.

While I was in Cumberland House back in, I think it was January, I had an opportunity to visit the treatment centre in Cumberland House. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health, or SADAC (Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission) in the Department of Health has introduced a new program and, working with the native alcoholic association in Regina and throughout the province, they now take the treatment centre facility right into the community.

Heretofore, Mr. Speaker, we've taken natives or people from other areas into centres like Regina or Saskatoon or Mandan, and into a drug treatment or alcohol treatment centre. The difficulty of that would be, Mr. Speaker . . . I certainly don't speak with any authority as a native, but natives

tell me that it is extremely difficult to be taken from a community -- a reserve or their community -- and put into what might be termed a white man's treatment centre. And I say that with all respect to the natives, the reason being because their spirituality is so different. And there's a big difference there, Mr. Speaker.

The programs have been notably unsuccessful in the past, Mr. Speaker, notably unsuccessful in the past. And I know that the member from Cumberland House will agree with me that in the past these kinds of treatments have not worked well for the native community. And so it was a wise decision by SADAC, as well as the native alcoholic treatment organization, to take the treatment centre right into Cumberland House.

So I went into Cumberland House, Mr. Speaker, and I had an opportunity to sit around the room with all these young people, ages 18 to 24, I suspect, who had undergone this alcoholic treatment opportunity. And it was fascinating because I had a very strong feeling, Mr. Speaker, that all these young people, these native people in Cumberland House, had decided that now is the time to make a decision in their lives, that they no longer wanted to live the way they had been living in Cumberland House. They wanted a better way of life.

And I don't know whether that has anything to do with the television that's available, an opportunity to see what's going around the world, or just whatever that initiative was, or that spark of enthusiasm that occurred -- the light going on as it were, Mr. Speaker. But it became very clear to me as I listened to them talk, as I looked into their eyes and heard what they said, and it had a profound effect on me, Mr. Speaker, because I saw that the future of Cumberland House lay in these young people -- not in the older people, not people my age or in their 50s or beyond that in Cumberland House, but in these young people of Cumberland House who decided that there's a better way of life than what they had up to now. So I applaud those young people of Cumberland House, and I know that a second treatment centre has gone into Cumberland House and another 40 or 25 or 30 young people have gone through the treatment centre.

I understand from a young lady that runs the treatment house up there . . . treatment centre, that they're lined up to take this treatment centre at Cumberland House. And they're not people my age, Mr. Speaker, or older people. It's the young people. And whatever it is, whatever it was that turned them on, whatever it was that they decided is a better way of life than what they've been living all these years -- whatever it was, they've found it. And I wish them the very best of luck, because it was an eye-opener for me and a wonderful experience to be there and see this, and I hope it works well for them.

(1915)

Getting back to new careers, it's a long-term program that provides trainees with honest work, reasonable benefits, counselling services, and educational opportunities. It is designed to equip trainees with skills they need to get off social assistance and do steady jobs with good career prospects.

When a trainee enters the program, he or she develops an individual career plan that sets out the kind of work they want to do and the training courses that they require. As well as institutional study and on-the-job training, trainees receive on-the-site courses about alcoholism and drug abuse; about first aid; about defensive driving, occupational safety, money management, and job search and retention techniques -- life skills, Mr. Speaker, that many of these people need.

When they enter new careers, trainees start out at the minimum wage, which is 4.75 today. By the time they leave, 18 months later, they can be earning up to 9.68 per hour. But that doesn't mean that all of them start . . . They all start at 4.75, Mr. Speaker, but within two months they could be graded up to 7 or \$8 an hour, depending on the skills that they have.

New Careers has had a profound impact on the lives of families and many trainees. Throughout the development of career plans, trade skills, and by securing permanent work, many men and women have successfully beat the welfare trap.

And most importantly, Mr. Speaker, they develop some self-confidence and they develop self-esteem. They start doing more for themselves, taking charge of their careers and of their lives. And that has had a very positive impact on their families. As one trainee said to me, new careers is the best thing that could happen to anybody on provincial assistance.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the budget for this excellent corporation has been maintained at last year's level so that it can carry on with this important work.

Proceeding with our future . . . Protecting our future, Mr. Speaker, is something that is vital to the people of Saskatchewan. I recently had the opportunity last week, as a matter of fact, to be in Moose Jaw to announce that the Wakamow Valley in Moose Jaw will be receiving a crew of 10 people, and also I think it's 100 . . . around \$195,000 for the work that they want to do improving the Wakamow Valley, working on the river area, the parks area, and I was delighted to be part of that. And I must say that the Wakamow Valley people of Moose Jaw were delighted to have that opportunity. Helping people to become productive members of society, as we're doing through new careers, Mr. Speaker, is what we're speaking of.

Ensuring that our seniors live healthier, more independent, and satisfying lives as we are doing through the programs of Seniors' Secretariat; feeding our hungry children as funds have been allocated from this budget; and working to strengthen families, as we're doing through the Family Foundation with such things as the family forums -- these are all important steps to protect our future, Mr. Speaker.

The people of Saskatchewan have been telling us that these are among the priority areas where we should be placing our emphasis financially, and I'm honoured to have responsibility for each of these areas under my purview.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of this budget which has responded so positively of

the recommendations of the people of this province. I'm proud to support this budget, and the Minister of Finance and the Premier of the province, in the direction it takes to build Saskatchewan families of today and tomorrow. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: -- Mr. Speaker, I listened very closely to the minister responsible to the family. He has spoken in this legislature for over one hour, outlining his various travels across Saskatchewan speaking to these family forums, along with the 25 letters that he has received from some citizens in Saskatchewan expressing their views on the need for child hunger programs.

Now, Mr. Minister, it's quite obvious to us that you gave us a travelogue this afternoon. We know where you've been. We know you've been to Humboldt and Estevan and North Battleford and Regina and Saskatoon. We know that you have suggested that one of the things that parents do is take a 15-minute walk with their child each day to assist in their parenting skills and communication skills.

And we also know that what you have found on your travels is that most people apparently are telling you that hunger is not a problem in Saskatchewan. Well, Mr. Minister, what you did this afternoon and this evening was build a case to take absolutely no responsibility for the fact that there is child hunger in this province and there is poverty in this province.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: -- It's also quite obvious that the minister responsible for the family does not understand the relationship between jobs or lack of jobs, employment or the lack of employment, and poverty.

Mr. Minister, it's quite clear if you look at the statistics in this province, that Saskatchewan has the second highest level of poverty in the country. We have over 64,000 children living in poverty. The last time we had feeding programs in this province -- and the minister this afternoon said that he can recall these feeding programs -- was under a Tory government in the 1930s. That's the last time we had child feeding programs in Saskatchewan.

Now my colleagues this morning in the city of Saskatoon, the member who is the critic for Social Services and our member who is the critic for the family, outlined in some detail a New Democrat response to the outrageous levels of poverty and hunger in Saskatchewan.

There's no question, if you look through the budget that this Minister of the Family has just decided to defend, you will see that the effect of this latest budget, this 1990-91 Conservative Party budget, will lead to an increase in poverty and hunger in the province of Saskatchewan. It will do nothing to eliminate or reduce poverty and hunger in Saskatchewan.

The cuts in real terms to income security programs in the province, and the cuts to employment creation programs, will have the result of creating even more hardships on the very poor and the poor in our province, both in rural Saskatchewan and urban Saskatchewan.

For instance, the family income plan which was introduced under a New Democratic government in the 1970s has been frozen at last year's allocation of \$13.1 million and that is a cut, Mr. Speaker, from the allocation in the 1986-87 year of \$20.8 million.

Now the purpose of the family income plan is to provide income supplement to working families with children. And there are numerous people living in the constituency that I represent who work as waitresses or they work in the service sector as minimum wage workers, or workers barely above minimum wage, or they are women whose husbands have been killed in accidents, who are living on the Canada Pension Plan benefit for spouses. And these people have been able to take advantage of the family income plan in this province.

The family income plan is a supplement for working families or families with some income from other sources, with children. The supplement is based on your income and the number of children in your family.

Well this reduction that we have seen occur in the family income plan means that the plan will not be paying any benefits, any new benefits to families with children, unless they earn less than 70 per cent of the poverty line.

And you will know, Mr. Speaker, that university students -- single-parent women who are attending university, who are on student loans and were eligible for the family income plan, are no longer eligible for that plan. And that, in fact, is a cut.

Thousands of families who need help right now are ineligible and are being made ineligible by this government, and this government says that it has this great warmth for Saskatchewan families. They've even set up a minister responsible for the family. But this minister goes on road shows across Saskatchewan and this minister's budget does absolutely nothing to deal with the problems facing Saskatchewan families, particularly families who are unemployed or disabled or who are living in hard times. And the budget also means the benefits paid out per child, Mr. Speaker, under the family income plan, will be frozen for a fifth year in a row.

Furthermore, it's clear from the budget that the government intends to continue its policy of not advertising the existence of the family income plan. And I know that there are thousands of Saskatchewan people who would be eligible for the family income plan but they don't know about it because this government would much rather advertise Consensus Saskatchewan, which we see in every daily newspaper in this province and every weekly newspaper. It would rather advertise its various programs that they think are politically popular, but they have not chosen to advertise the family income plan which would really lead to increased money available for low income working Saskatchewan families.

The other point that the Minister of the Family did not recognize in his response today to the budget is that day-care subsidies paid to low income parents whose children are in day care while they work or pursue an education have also been frozen for the ninth year in a row as a result of this budget.

The maximum subsidy available, no doubt, will be \$235 a month, the same as it was in 1982 when an NDP government left office. This is despite the fact that day-care costs have risen dramatically in the province. This is despite the fact that more and more people require day care. But they've decided to leave the allocation for day care at the same as last year's allocation of \$13.2 million. The freeze in the day-care subsidy for the last nine years is putting day care out of the reach of more and more poor people, and they are often the ones that are forced to remain at home and on social assistance because they can't get access to subsidized day care.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if you are a single woman living . . . single parent family with two children, two children under the age of five years, and you need to put your children in day care, and the cost of that day care is 390 or \$400 a month, and you're only receiving \$235, and you have to come up with \$165 for two children, and you're not earning very much, you're not going to put your children in subsidized day care. And even if you do have a little bit of income and you can find . . . and you are prepared to pay for that space, often you can't find subsidized day-care spaces.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, the social assistance payments are also going to stay frozen for virtually another year. And this budget allocation for the Saskatchewan assistance plan has risen from 194.5 million in 1989-90 to 195.5 million in this year's budget. This too marks the ninth straight year in a row when social assistance payments to families have remained virtually frozen.

In real dollar terms, there has been a 40 per cent cut in social assistance benefits paid to families with children since 1982. This cut is one of the largest single contributors to the child hunger problem in this province, this cut in social assistance benefits to the poorest of the poor, and those are the people that have to rely on social assistance. That's why we have poverty in the province of Saskatchewan, and we have children going to bed hungry and going to school hungry, because this government has left social assistance benefits at virtually the same rate since 1982.

And if this government genuinely wanted to do something about hunger, they wouldn't appoint a Minister of the Family to travel across Saskatchewan, basically rationalizing their sort of argument that there isn't such a thing as hunger in Saskatchewan, building a case to take no responsibility for the fact that there is hunger. What this government would be doing would be increasing social assistance benefits for poor people in this province and this government surely would begin to create employment opportunities and job opportunities for Saskatchewan citizens.

(1930)

If they genuinely wanted to do something about hunger, if they genuinely

wanted to do something about it, they would have increased the family income plan benefits, they would have increased Saskatchewan assistance plan benefits, and surely those increases would have led to reductions in food bank line-ups in our province. And all of us who live in the city of Saskatoon, members who represent the city of Saskatoon, and I'm sure that the members in Regina, have seen people literally lined up by the tens and the hundreds at the end of the month waiting to get into the food bank because their social assistance cheque has run out and they require food.

My colleague, the critic, the member for Saskatoon University, has spent a great deal of time on a hunger and poverty report, along with numerous other people in our caucus, Mr. Speaker. And we have outlined in detail how a New Democrat government would go about in an attempt to reduce poverty in the province of Saskatchewan. And one of the first things we would do, one of the first things we would do, is come to terms with the fact that there are hungry people in Saskatchewan and we would increase social assistance benefits to people to ensure that they could have enough food to feed their children. That's one of the first things we'd do.

Another thing that we would do is we would make sure that there are employment opportunities and we certainly wouldn't be cutting back in job creation opportunities for the people of this province. And if you look at the budget, it contained absolutely no employment creation initiatives and, in fact, they cut back on the two employment creation programs currently in place. Funds for the Saskatchewan Works were virtually frozen at \$11.1 million, the same amount as for 1989-90. This in fact represents a cut from the 1987-88 expenditures of \$13.5 million. Funds have also been cut, Mr. Speaker, for the Saskatchewan Opportunities '90 student employment program which has dropped from \$13.1 million in the summer of 1989 to . . . or pardon me, \$3.1 million in the summer of 1989 to \$2.6 million in the summer of 1990.

And if we look at 1986, an election year, they had \$10.5 million available for summer opportunities programs, but because we're not in an election mode, obviously, we've seen numerous cut-backs and slashing to summer employment opportunities for students, and this no doubt will increase or lead to an increase in more and more students having to rely more and more on student aid programs.

Now the only source of relief that we saw in the budget presented by this government in the form of social services is the announcement of \$740,000 which is to be allocated to help relieve the crisis of child hunger in the province of Saskatchewan. This amount no doubt will be cost-shared by the federal government, so in fact the province is only putting up \$370,000.

While any amount of money, while small, is helpful -- it will provide a bit of relief to hungry kids in Saskatchewan -- this sum of money is not at all sufficient to mount the kind of school breakfast and school lunch program that is needed in schools where hunger is a demonstrated problem. With over 22,000 children relying on food banks in the last year in Saskatchewan, a program of \$740,000 will at best put a small dent in the crisis. The government's announcement boils down to a proposal to spend about \$2.85 per child per month, and that is to help 22,000 children.

Hardly enough money; hardly enough money. But the Minister of the family spent one hour justifying, building a case to take absolutely no responsibility.

He didn't talk about jobs and employment opportunities. He did talk about new careers for a few moments. New careers has been useful in many communities; there's no question about that. But new careers is not the answer to permanent employment opportunities for the people of this province.

He did not talk about the fact that his government has cut back on summer opportunities programs for our students, and many of those students are parents of children. He did not talk about the fact that he cut back on a summer works program or Saskatchewan Works.

He didn't talk about the need to increase social assistance benefits. He didn't talk about the need to increase the family income plan benefits for poor working families. All he did was talk about a 15-minute walk with your child, and somehow this was going to resolve the crisis of poverty in the province of Saskatchewan.

The minister obviously has to go back to school. He has to go somewhere and understand that poverty is associated with a lack of employment and the lack of job opportunities on the part of the people of Saskatchewan. And poverty has come about as a result of this government's mean-spirited cuts to social spending in this province.

They have money for Cargill Grain, one of the largest multinational corporations in the world; they have money for the Husky upgrader; they have money for the Millar Western; they have money for Weyerhaeuser; they have money for Rafferty-Alameda. They have money for megaprojects, but they don't have money to assist children. They don't have money to assist children.

And what they want to do is blame the victim, that somehow if these parents would communicate with their children, their children wouldn't be hungry. Well kids are hungry because of unemployment and poverty and the lack of job opportunities.

And the minister talked about a woman who had some hygiene problems apparently and she wasn't washing her hair and bathing. And once she started to do this, this assisted in her chances of becoming employed. There's nothing worse . . . There's nothing that could happen to a person's self-esteem and self-concept other than to lose your job.

And I know that there are some members over there that think people don't want to work. Lots of people want to work if they could only find a job. And as you spend longer and longer and longer on the unemployment lines, or on your couch because you're unemployed, you begin to lose your sense of self-worth, Mr. Speaker, and you become depressed, and you become more and more dysfunctional.

And sometimes it's hard, Mr. Speaker, to get out of bed. And sometimes

it's hard to look after your children. There's no question about that. But what people really need is not a 15-minute walk; what people really need is hope and employment opportunities in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: -- And did this budget contain any hope? This is the fourth occasion that I have had the opportunity to respond to the budget delivered by the Conservative government that we elected in 1986. And each time I have entered into this debate, I have done so on behalf of the 10,000 people in the constituency of Saskatoon Nutana.

Now obviously, Mr. Speaker, not all of those people voted for me in 1986. There was a good number that didn't. And obviously I cannot speak on behalf of all of the people living in Saskatoon Nutana, but I think I can speak on behalf of the majority of the people living in Saskatoon Nutana. I won't pretend to represent everybody, but I will attempt tonight to enter into this debate and try and outline what I believe to be the major concerns of the people of Saskatoon Nutana, the people I represent.

If there was one thing that I heard over the winter, there was one thing I heard over and over again, was the need for integrity and honesty in government -- integrity and honesty. You know, politicians aren't very popular people these days, they're not very popular. There are more and more citizens in our province who are becoming very, very cynical about people like us, the people that sit in the desks in this legislature, the people who were elected in 1986.

The people want some leadership. They want leadership. They don't want Consensus Saskatchewan. They think Consensus Saskatchewan is a major joke. In fact, I've had several people say to me, why did we elect all 64 of you? We thought we elected you to represent us, to bring ideas and solutions to problems to the legislature of Saskatchewan and present ideas and solutions in the House, in this House of Assembly. That's what they elected us to do.

They think that Consensus Saskatchewan is something that has been conjured up in the minds of a few pollsters and presented to the Premier, and then to his cabinet, and now the caucus, and it's nothing more than a smoke-screen or a ruse. It's a way to get themselves out of their unpopularity and get themselves into a position where they can run in the next provincial election, and I suppose win.

Well people are on to the members opposite. They are on to you. And in fact, people are telling me that they are writing in and saying, call an election. Or they're writing in and nominating the meanest person that they know to go and tell these people what to do. That's right. Every street in the province has someone, and every community has someone who's extremely angry with the members opposite. And they've had enough.

And what people are doing is nominating people who they think will go and tell them a thing or two. That's what they're doing, because they've had it with the people opposite. They want people who are honest representing them. That's what they want. And every time we have another scandal, every

time we have a STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company) fiasco in Dallas, Texas, every time we have a Supercart or a Joytec or a gigabus, every time we have a scandal, that reflects on all of us.

Well I want to tell the people tonight that the people who have had the most scandals in this province are the members opposite. They're the people that have had the Joytecs and the Supercarts and the STC and the Weyerhaeusers and the Pocklingtons and all of the give-aways. They're the people -- not the members of the opposition, not the members of the opposition.

I don't know how you bring honesty, integrity to that side of the legislature. I have no idea. I have no idea, other than to possibly change the people that are sitting in those desks. That may be the only way to do it.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: -- It may be the only way to do it. Because the people of this province have lost faith in the members opposite. They have had it up to here. They have had it up to here with waste and mismanagement, and there is a sense developing in this province that they are a joke. In fact, people are laughing all the time about the government. They're laughing at them. They are the laughing-stock of this province. And Consensus Saskatchewan does nothing more than confirm what the people already think -- that they're a joke, that they're a joke.

Now this government talks about fiscal responsibility and how they have cut spending; that they have cut waste and mismanagement, and cut ministers' salaries, and cut this and cut that. But I think there's one thing that we need to know. The one thing that we need to know is that there has been a \$332 million increase in expenditures since last year's budget and they are projecting a \$195 million increase in revenues. So how much cuts have there been? I didn't see any cuts in all the staff that are running around this building, supporting the ministers, the political ministers. I haven't seen a lot of cuts in advertising. We have ConSask, Consensus Saskatchewan, being advertised in virtually every newspaper in Saskatchewan, every day of the week.

I note that the Minister of Education has sent a letter out to every parent in the province.

An Hon. Member: -- What's wrong with that?

Ms. Atkinson: -- Well, you know, what's wrong with that? At a time when we don't have money to feed hungry children; at a time when we don't have enough money to pay school boards, Mr. Minister of Education: why, why spend 200 or \$300,000 on a letter to parents when it will go in the garbage? Why would we do that?

An Hon. Member: -- What did he put in it?

Ms. Atkinson: -- And what did he put in it? P.S. It's a form letter; it's

a direct mail letter. Everybody's name's on it: Dear Mr. Hagel, Dear Mr. Solomon, Dear . . . You know, why would you do that? A two-page letter with a little form, postage paid, I presume. Why would you do that, by the people of this province, asking, asking questions?

They elected us to provide some leadership. They have school trustees in this province, they have teachers, and they have superintendents, and they have parents that go to the school, and they elected us to provide some leadership in this province, and instead we waste their money. And I think the people of this province are tired of being taxed and they're tired of having their money spent stupidly.

(1945)

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: -- And the other question that people ask -- the women of this province ask -- why was it sent to every father, every father, but not to the mother? There are many families where there are two parents, a mother and a father, but we note, we note that most of the letters were sent to the male parent.

Now we have had nine straight deficit budgets. This year we have a deficit of \$363 million.

An Hon. Member: -- Maybe.

Ms. Atkinson: -- Maybe. There is a possibility that they've overestimated some of this revenue. We have a combined deficit, we think; but, you know, we can't really get access to the audited books. We think it's \$4.36 million. That amounts to \$4,360 for every man, woman, and child. That is a deficit that has come about by this Conservative government -- entirely, every red cent. We have the highest per capita debt in the country.

We have gone, from 1982 to 1990, from having balanced budgets and a surplus of \$139 million to a debt, a total debt of \$4.36 billion, we think; we're not sure, but we think. The interest on that debt is \$493 million a year. We spend about \$1.5 billion, I believe, on health. We spend about \$888 million on education. And what is this government's next priority? The next priority is to service the debt -- interest to the bond dealers and the bankers in New York city and Tokyo.

That's \$135 million a day that leaves our province because of the fiscal irresponsibility and mismanagement of these members opposite. That's \$56,000 an hour that leaves this province to Tokyo and New York for ever. That's \$493 million a year that could be put to work in our province to eliminate poverty, to properly fund our schools and universities, to properly fund our health care system, to properly ensure that we have highways in this province that are safe. But where is that money going? It's going out of this province because of the irresponsibility of the members opposite.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: -- You know, I was really proud of this province in 1982. We were a have province. We had gone from a have-not province under the Liberal government to a have province. We didn't need welfare payments from Ottawa. We didn't need equalization payments. But since this government's been in office we now get equalization payments from Ottawa. We are a poor province.

We have gone from a province that had the highest economic growth rate, the highest employment rate, in this country, lowest unemployment rate, the best credit rating in the country. We have gone from being the best to one of the worst. We now get welfare payments from Ottawa in the tune of \$510 million. In fact, this is the third largest revenue source if you look at the money that will be brought in by this government in the next fiscal year.

Under the Tories, the Tories that were supposed to bring us prosperity, and bring all the children home, and bring us good times, have brought us nothing but sorry times, unemployment, bankruptcy, high welfare rates, debt, embarrassment, embarrassment. We have two civil servants down in Dallas, Texas fighting corruption charges and there's some indication that the money was to be used for political purposes up in Canada, some allegation to that effect. And it's embarrassing to the people of the province because the people of this province are basically honest, decent, hard-working people.

Now this government says that there were no tax increases in this budget. The government, however, failed to mention that they eliminated the gas tax rebate a few weeks ago, 10 cents a litre. That amounts to about \$68 million per year that has been taken out of taxpayers' pockets. That means that about \$200 a year will be lost on the part of the average driver. My next door neighbours and the people in the community I represent, they think that's a tax increase.

The people in the constituency I represent also realize that they are the highest taxed individuals in the country. If you have an average income in the province of Saskatchewan of \$40,000, you pay the highest personal income taxes in the country. And quite frankly, people are sick and tired of paying taxes when they don't see their taxes going into needed services, but see their taxes going into waste and mismanagement.

If you are a person with two children and earn \$25,000 a year, you have the second highest personal income taxes in the country. If you're a person with two children, grossing \$25,000 a year, that's not very much. In fact, that's poverty level wages according to Statistics Canada. And you pay the second highest personal income taxes in the province.

Now since this government came to office in 1982, we used to have something that was called the property improvement grant. I think people got \$230 a year. And this money was used to offset their local property taxes -- their municipal taxes and their school taxes. Well the Government of Saskatchewan got rid of that, got rid of that. They introduced a flat tax. I think they've increased that three times and we're now 2 per cent of net.

So if you're just a working person and don't have all of these business deductions, you're pretty well paying 2 per cent on your gross. And people are sick and tired of that.

And then the sales tax. And this is the government that promised to eliminate the sales tax. They were going to eliminate the 5 per cent E&H (education and health) tax. And did they eliminate it? No. Increased it 40 per cent, to 7 per cent.

And then, of course, what I find so hilarious is the government saying that they are committed to funding education. And that was in the budget address. And in fact, the Minister of Finance, who was the former Minister of Education said, and I quote:

Those who are looking to this Budget for significant new programs and new initiatives may be disappointed.

We have acted responsibly. We have strengthened our commitment to education, health care and agriculture -- the priorities of the people of Saskatchewan.

The Government has listened to the people.

The Government has responded.

Well how did the government respond? How has the government responded to the funding of education in this province in the last eight years? What they have done is they have not adequately funded the education system, particularly the K to 12 education system. And what we have seen is a steady transfer of responsibility of funding from the province onto the backs of the local property taxpayers.

What this has meant is that school boards, in order to provide education for students, have had to significantly increase property taxes.

So when this government announces a 3 per cent increase in operating grants to school boards when inflation is running at 5 per cent, and using their own figures that they fund approximately 50-50 -- 50 per cent from the provincial government and 50 per cent at the local level -- this means that local schools are going to have to raise 7 per cent, \$7 out of every \$10. There's a \$10 increase in inflation. The province will kick in 3 per cent, and the local school boards are going to have to kick in \$7.

And what does that mean? That means that they are going to have to increase school property taxes or, Mr. Speaker, they are going to have to cut teachers, close schools, cut programs, increase class sizes.

Now school trustees in this province tell me that they have done as much cutting as they possibly can; that they are running at the bare minimum level if they are going to provide any kind of quality education in this province. They have increased class sizes. They have closed some schools. They have amalgamated different schools. They have cut teachers.

But they have to provide a core curriculum to the students of this province and they have to provide a bare minimum of education. And they tell me that they have cut as much as they can cut. But, Mr. Speaker, we have another problem in this province and that is that people simply can't afford to pay more taxes -- they can't pay more. And school trustees are cognizant of that. And school trustees will be extremely reluctant to increase school taxes at the local property taxpayer level.

And so what are our trustees going to do? They somehow have to balance the requirements of the Department of Education core curriculum, meeting a minimum standard of education for the young people in our province, with the need to deal with a very real problem of taxpayers not being able to afford more, particularly taxpayers in rural Saskatchewan and taxpayers in urban Saskatchewan who are unemployed.

Now the Minister of Education in his throne speech response said, everyone in this province has a stake in education. Everyone has a stake in what transpires in education. He said that there are over 300,000 students. I presume he's talking about K to 12 students and post-secondary education students. You add on the parents, the trustees, the teachers, and the staff, he said; everyone has a stake in education. He also said, if we are going to . . . Young people are going to be the strength of society and the economy in the 1990s. He says that this government's going to provide learning opportunities. He says that we have a knowledge-intensive work; the role of our school is more important than ever.

Well if the role of the school is more important than ever, tell me why this Government of Saskatchewan, with all of the challenges and opportunities in education, and all of the curriculum work that's being done in education, and all of the textbooks that need to be bought to meet the requirements of core curriculum, why it is that we had an increase in Education of only 3 per cent, 2 per cent less than the rate of inflation? Now why would that be? Why would a minister say that education is so important? This is the Minister of Education we're talking about. Education is important. In order to meet the challenges of the 1990s and the 21st century, we have to have a well educated population. We have to have kids that are getting the very best access to quality education.

Well quality of education is not new schools. And we see there are lots of new schools that are being built around the province. Quality of education is having the teachers and the programs and the commitment from the Government of Saskatchewan to education to ensure that those kids have access to excellence. Three per cent is not enough; it's not enough.

Now this government says that education was the big winner in this budget. Something like a 5.7 per cent increase in educational spending. But if you look at the \$47 million increase, \$22.5 million came in the form of student aid fund. That's 58 per cent of the increase.

Now the student aid fund is loan money. It's money that has to be repaid. It's not free money for anybody. It's not money that's going to be going to students and they won't have to pay it back. They have to pay it back.

So it's a fund; it's a fund. It's not money that will be going into the K to 12 system. It's money that students may have access to in order to pay their rent and transportation, maybe some tuition and books.

So there was a \$24 million increase in the educational budget of over \$800 million. That's not very much money, Mr. Speaker. It's not much money.

(2000)

Operating grant increases to the schools, 2.9 per cent; I'll say 3 per cent. Operating grants for the universities, 2.9 per cent; 3 per cent. Operating grant increases for SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), 2.9 per cent.

Native training projects. The Minister of the Family talked about native people coming into Regina and having access to the New Careers Corporation, but if you look at the money available for native training projects, there was a cut of 7.1 per cent. So the minister's words don't match the reality of what's taken place in this budget. Grant increases to libraries, 1.9 per cent. And over the last four years, grants to libraries have increased by less than one-half of one per cent. That's it. That's it; that's all.

Libraries are important. If kids are to have access to information -- and the minister talks about a knowledge-intensive information age; knowledge-intensive work the minister talks about -- kids have to have access to books and materials that are up to date. And a 1.9 per cent increase in grants to libraries isn't going to do it, Mr. Speaker; it's simply not going to do it.

Now, Mr. Minister, this is a budget that is an indictment of the past. It's an indictment of the past history of this government -- the past eight years, soon to be nine years . . . or eight years, I guess; 1982, eight years. This budget does nothing to come to grips with some of the very real economic problems in this province. It does absolutely nothing; it's not even a very good band-aid.

There are structural changes that are occurring in this country and in this province, structural changes that I don't think the government is even aware of. We have a major, major shifting in population out of this province and from rural Saskatchewan to urban Saskatchewan . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, we do, we have a major shifting in population.

There is a major depopulation occurring in rural Saskatchewan. Those are people who are leaving. This government says that they are committed to agriculture. Farmers at this stage don't need more loans. They don't need more loans. What they need is some sort of assistance to help them restructure their farm debt of some \$6 billion -- \$6 billion in farm debt. That's more than the provincial debt that we presently have, our government debt.

So do we have a government that talked anywhere in the throne speech, or the budget, about the need to restructure farm debt? Not a bit. Do we have a government that talked about rural depopulation and the need to . . .

. Even though rural Saskatchewan is depopulating, kids in rural Saskatchewan still have to have access to an education; they still have to go to school if they are going to be able to compete in the world, as the former minister of Education used to talk about.

People in rural Saskatchewan still need access to health services and educational services, mental health services, social services. And as the population shifts out of rural Saskatchewan into urban Saskatchewan, there will still be an expectation that those services will have to be provided.

But instead of coming to grips with a strategy to repopulate rural Saskatchewan -- we didn't see any of that. Instead of developing a strategy to provide employment opportunities in rural Saskatchewan -- we didn't see any of that. Instead of developing an educational strategy to ensure that young people in rural Saskatchewan don't have to go by bus 70 or 80 kilometres, or 70 or 80 miles a day -- we didn't see any of that.

Rural school units all over Saskatchewan are closing rural schools. I am literally getting dozens of letters from parents who are concerned that their school is going to be closed. And why is that happening? Because of underfunding of education in rural Saskatchewan, as well as depopulation.

Now there's no magic solution to any of these problems. I acknowledge that. But it requires some leadership -- leadership that we have not seen coming from those benches. Not at all. Leadership that would not ask 100 citizens their opinions, but leadership that would start to address some of the very real problems in this province.

Mr. Speaker, this government said that it was committed to health, education, and agriculture. If you look at the budget address, they didn't make it in education -- 3 per cent increases. It's simply not there.

In health care, Dr. Murray, who's a constituent of mine and is the chairperson of the directions in health care, said that he hadn't been consulted on how the Government of Saskatchewan devised its budget in Health, but that, had he been consulted he would have suggested more funding for home care and mental health services; not more money into some of these other programs, but redirecting money into mental health services and home care.

Home care is a lot cheaper than hospital care; it's a lot cheaper than nursing home care. And you know what? It's not only cheaper, it provides better care for people, Mr. Speaker. It makes people feel better. It's better for the people that are starting to age, or are frail and elderly. It's better care. They'll survive longer. And I think most of us want the very best kind of care for our ageing parent or disabled brother or sister.

Home care is simply better. But the Minister of Health obviously didn't consult with the chairperson or the task force on directions in education. This government's record in health has not been a very fine one. They privatized the school-based children's dental program. They did in the prescription drug program. There are people that literally waited years on hospital waiting lists for hip replacement surgery or knee surgery, and

some of them are still waiting. We don't have quite the problem we had with hospital waiting lists.

You know, there are problems, there are problems, and the budget says they're going to deal with. The priorities are health, education, and agriculture. And it's simply a smoke-screen. We still have the problems in education, of underfunding. We still have some major problems in health, particularly in the field of mental health and home care.

I represent an ageing constituency. Many, many people in my constituency can't get access to home care because the money's simply not available; it's simply not available . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member over there asks me for how much longer. Well I would like to think that I've done a fairly decent job of representing those people and that I will be able to represent them after the next provincial election.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: -- And it may be a bit longer than the member who asked the question, because I would like to think that the New Democratic Party has been sensitive to the needs of individuals living in this province, and that all of us will be returning after the next provincial election. I'm not so sure about that for the members opposite.

Now as I was saying, the people in my constituency, older people -- I represent many of them -- have not been able to have access to home care and so they've had to rely on private services. And private services aren't always helpful, and they're often very expensive. And so what we have seen is a privatization of some of the services that used to be offered by home care.

Home care can no longer provide handyman services, or handy person services: sidewalk shovelling, putting on windows, cleaning windows, taking off storm windows. I live in an area where there's a lot of older housing and they have storm windows. That kind of service is no longer available. Coming in and cleaning up the house, that kind of service for many people is no longer available. They've had that service cut back because of underfunding in home care.

Well those things may not seem like very big deals, but if you are an older person, if you're a frail person, that's very important if you are to remain in your own home. To have a clean sidewalk in the winter so you don't fall and break your hip; to have the windows cleaned -- people don't like dirty windows; to have their house cleaned; to have a bit of maintenance done.

Those are the kinds of things that allow people to remain in their own homes, and those are the kinds of things that have had to be cut because of this government's underfunding of home care. And while the government has improved its funding to home care, it's simply not enough because our population is ageing, and ageing dramatically.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I've spoken for some time. I wanted to put my thoughts

on the budget on to the record. This may be the last time that I have an opportunity to speak to the throne speech on this side of the House, as opposition. Maybe next time I'll be standing up having to defend some of the actions of my government, on the other side of the House. I hope so. I at least would like to be given the opportunity, along with my colleagues, to perhaps turn Saskatchewan right side up. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Klein: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll deal with the member from Regina Centre later in my remarks. But it is again a real privilege and an honour for me to participate in the debate on the new provincial budget. As I speak to you, Mr. Speaker, I will direct my comments as well to my constituents of Regina South.

I will begin by firstly congratulating my colleague, the member for Weyburn, on a job well done, as he provides sound management of our provincial finances into the 1990s.

All of us have come to expect a high level of services for our people in health care, in education, in family programs, and this budget delivers on those expectations. On behalf of my constituents in Regina South, which I am always extremely proud to represent, I want to thank the Minister of Finance for his consultations and concerns as he developed his plan for the future.

As I mentioned recently, Mr. Speaker, in the throne speech debate, these are difficult economic times, difficult for all of us -- for our families, for farmers, for communities, for students. And therefore I must compliment the Minister of Finance for the fine delicate balance of fairness that he was able to thread through the entire budget.

We have been witnessing perhaps more changes in our world in the last year than at any time in history, Mr. Speaker, changes that I referred to as beginning right here in Saskatchewan in 1982 . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. There have been two speeches being given simultaneously, one by the hon. member for Regina South and one by the member for Regina Centre from his seat. I ask the member from Regina Centre to wait his turn.

Hon. Mr. Klein: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's ironic that you said that, because my speech that I'm presently giving is the one on record, and the one that he was giving from his chair matches the one . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order.

Hon. Mr. Klein: -- As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, those changes probably began right here in Saskatchewan in 1982, when the people of our province indicated in no uncertain terms that they were tired of socialism. They were tired about everything that it represented and the walls that were built around this great province of ours, that hindered all of our

activities, that suppressed trade, that suppressed investment, that suppressed business opportunities, indeed, jobs.

And the walls started tumbling down here in Saskatchewan and over the, particularly the last year, we have seen these walls come tumbling down right around the entire world. And interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, these walls come down not because of any particular party of government, or party in power, but rather because of people involvement. The people themselves want to become involved.

And we know that right here at home our people too want to become involved. And why shouldn't they? Why not get involved? So our Minister of Finance went and did the proper thing and consulted with many, many people; listened to them, heard what they had to say, what they had to offer. And now we are embarking on another new venture called Consensus 100.

The opposition still doesn't understand, still likes to play games with, put their little words to, call it something different, and think that it's pretty smart because that's about all they have to offer. No constructive criticism, no new plans, no ideas, no vision. Just simply words -- empty, hollow words.

(2015)

But the people here, Mr. Speaker, our people, as a result of droughts and international trade wars that they understand, high interest rates, and how these things have a major impact on our lives, on our livelihood, indeed on our quality of life, want to become involved. They see a need for giving the government direction. They know that this government will listen and take that direction and provide what they're looking for with that input.

So in our traditional and normal and acceptable style of consultation, our Minister of Finance prepared this budget by using the very ideas and comments and suggestions gained in that extensive consultative process in the budget. And I'm pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that many of my people, many of my constituents in Regina South, were indeed listened to and had input into it. They will have the opportunity to do that again.

I've spoken many times, Mr. Speaker, about Saskatchewan's great tradition of working together, of overcoming difficult times, and we have seen it in our history. We have certainly seen our forefathers do this in the past, pull together when times are tough, make things happen. We will persevere now because they are tough and difficult times. But we see the people, volunteers and everybody else, getting together, seeing that things will work out. And I dare say, Mr. Speaker, that we will have to do it again in the future and importantly we will.

And I can speak about this with a little bit of authority, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to mention a few words about my own personal background as I set the stage for yet another time in the past and one now and perhaps one in the future. Tough times are nothing new for my family. My wife lost her father, not a farmer but rather a railroad worker in rural Saskatchewan, when she was a very young girl. And her mother moved my

future wife and her younger sister from the country into Regina, where she obtained work to raise her two young daughters. She worked very hard as a young widow and did a fine job of raising her family during the tough times of the early '40s.

My circumstances are similar, Mr. Speaker. I lost my father. He was employed in rural Saskatchewan; he worked for the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. And I lost him as I was a very young boy. My mother moved my sister and I into the city. She first scrubbed walls to raise my sister and I, to earn a living. She then improved her education standards herself to eventually work as a bookkeeper. And I'm pleased to tell you that to this very day she still performs that function in one of my little systems.

It was tough. It was tough on many families that we grew up with on the east side of Regina, from all walks of life, many varying religions and beliefs, all kinds of ethnic backgrounds and languages. Those families, and both of our families, Mr. Speaker, pulled together. They worked hard. They enjoyed life, and then they got to enjoy a better quality of life as their hard work paid off and in spite of those difficult times.

Now I don't believe that my wife Shirley or I missed out on a thing as children. Sure we enjoyed watching the infrastructure change in Regina on the east side. It was nice to see cement sidewalks replace the wooden sidewalks that we grew up with. It was nice to see paved roads replace the gravel roads because when you fell you didn't get skinned as bad. And that came to Regina later, and indeed Saskatchewan, as our position improved following the long, tough drought of the '30s.

And our moms certainly had no car to drive us anywhere. And our rinks were not indoors; they were outside. And we walked or we took our bikes. Yes, our moms worked hard to give us those luxuries, our bikes, or bus fare in the winter to go to school. School was a long way and we had to use the public transportation system. Finally even luxuries like refrigerators came our way. Things were tough when I was a kid. But so were the people and their families, and so were my friends.

As the time went by, and Shirley and I married, together, neither of us born with the so-called silver spoon in our mouths, worked hard. We learned about business. We made investments. We took risks. And we did it all with our hard-earned dollars.

And if we indeed have enjoyed some small measure of success, Mr Speaker, we enjoyed it with the help of our five kids. They worked hard to help us in our family businesses. They worked hard to educate themselves. And they're still working hard now to ensure that their families too will enjoy the quality of life that we all wish to have.

And then I remember our new home . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . as the member from Regina North spouts from his seat, or Moose Jaw North, doesn't even have the decency to listen to my background. You should, maybe you'll learn something.

But I remember our new home, Mr. Speaker, when we pioneered Albert Park.

We were one of the first families to live in that area of the city and that area, of course, is in my present constituency of Regina South. My kids grew up and were educated in that very constituency. And that's why I speak with a lot of degree of pride and a lot of degree of knowledge about my seat, Mr. Speaker. We pioneered Albert Park.

And yes, my family and I were proud of those results. Many times we had the opportunity to leave, leave for so-called greener pastures. And I remember very vividly the time that I decided to become active again in politics in 1981 because of the stifling grip that the NDP had on the business community to wipe out all the incentives that my business colleagues and I were trying to enjoy.

The Speaker: -- Order, order. The hon. member is attempting to give his remarks on the budget speech. He's being interrupted too often and I know hon. members realize what they must be doing and I ask them to co-operate.

Hon. Mr. Klein: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, and the member from Regina North East . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. I believe that the hon. member should also refrain from engaging in debate with them. Let both sides simply refrain from engaging each other in debate and let the hon. member continue with his speech.

Hon. Mr. Klein: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. But my business colleagues are indeed doing well, because since 1982 they've been able to operate freely, within the confines and the way that they understand, with government not baby-sitting them, with government removing useless regulations.

Do you know that we've taken out 1,500 useless regulations put in by the members opposite, because they had no idea why they were there, what purpose they served. Just big government, that's all they knew.

And you know, many times, Mr. Speaker, we had the opportunity to leave and go for the so-called greener pastures. But we didn't. My family and wife and I had faith in our city; we had faith in our province; we had faith in ourselves. And that faith has paid off now and paid off in spades.

And now, Mr. Speaker, I have that faith permanently embedded in my kids, and in my grandchildren, that they will carry on this fine tradition established by my friends and I a long time ago, and their forefathers prior to that, as they work towards their future in this city and in this province.

My kids ask me now, dad, if things are so bad, what about my future? What's here? Well what a great, great future my children and everybody's kids have if some of the things beyond the control of this government, or indeed any government, would occur. When our international competitors face reality and recognize that their taxpayers and our taxpayers can't become involved in global trade warfares and remove the tariffs and subsidies that all of us are faced with in living, that'll help.

Yes, God blessed Saskatchewan with many resources as well. And in agriculture the massive debt that has now occurred and that our farmers are living with -- with a return to normal rainfalls, to sensible prices. We have the best farmers in the world right here in this province, and unfortunately it's something that the NDP doesn't realize. And they can certainly handle fewer subsidies if they didn't have to compete unfairly with the rest of the world.

And I tell my kids, oil, an abundance of oil in this province to look forward to, if we handle it right. Right now the world price isn't controlled by Saskatchewan, and it may never be. But when the world oil prices return to normal, just think, Mr. Speaker, with two heavy oil upgraders right here in Saskatchewan, something that the NDP couldn't put together, processing our own heavy oil, shipping it in a finished commodity throughout the world -- gasoline, diesel fuels -- that's what they've got to look forward to.

Potash. The greatest supply in the world, Mr. Speaker, right here in Saskatchewan. As prices recover, so will our economy in the potash industry.

Uranium. Same thing. And there are very, very many countries in the world, Mr. Speaker, extremely dependent on Saskatchewan uranium for their very lifeline, for their power plants. They need our uranium. They can't live without it. Korea -- 10 new nuclear plants going up in this decade, searching the markets for uranium. We have that uranium, Mr. Speaker. A great future for my kids, for my grandkids -- you bet.

And while we're waiting for a return to normal, so to speak, in those areas, diversifying our economy becomes paramount so that we can deal easier with the declines in our prime resource sectors. No longer can we put our eggs in one basket and be so dependent on it. People are finally starting to understand and realize the true meaning of diversification.

People all over our province have been talking and meeting with our Minister of Finance, suggesting how we should deal with today's present situation -- good, solid, constructive suggestions, Mr. Speaker, not the hollow, meaningless responses that come from most of the members opposite, but good, solid, constructive suggestions. Diversification and its idea, and its success, is finally starting to hit home here in Saskatchewan.

And unlike the members opposite and the financial critic . . . Unfortunately, I probably listened to the most hollow, desperate form of speaking ability that I have heard in a long time as he stood in his place following the budget. As I visited on the weekend with many constituents at various areas of my city . . . not particularly Tories, not particularly perhaps any political persuasion, but . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . When you go to public functions you see all kinds of people. Their observation was that the critic perhaps really didn't understand, or never did understand what the budget was all about. Not one constructive suggestion or idea in his whole darn thing, Mr. Speaker, not one time.

We've heard the member from Saskatoon Nutana talk about a joke. Well his response was indeed a joke, but it was a bad joke. Not one shred, not one piece of evidence of any meaningful alternative. And the people around the city of Regina are just kind of amused at this whole episode. They expressed to me bitter disappointment in the critic, and indeed in the Leader of the Opposition and all his bench over there. All they hear is rhetoric, pie in sky stuff, like goofy terminology, for instance, that they just seem to grab and behave like kids with. Like gigabus. Who ever heard of gigabus, and what does it mean, really? And yet they proudly stand up there and talk about gigabucks.

And, you know, when other members speak or when there might obviously be an error, you know, you hear the whole chorus over there: whoops, whoops, making this entire Assembly, turning it into a bad joke, Mr. Speaker. People expect more from the loyal opposition than that kind of nonsense. They seem to have a strange terminology for anything that seems to tickle their little fancy.

And as I continue my discussions with my kids and even with my little grandchildren, who are getting a little bit older than I'd like to see them grow so quickly, Mr. Speaker, but members opposite, they don't want any tax increases, they don't want any program cuts, they want us to spend more money. They want a balanced budget, and my 10-year-old grandson looks at me and says, Grandpa, how can you do that; how can you do all those things? Well even he understands that that's an impossibility. You can't not have a tax increase and increase programs. You can't have a balanced budget and have increased expenditures. I mean, their demands are totally unreasonable. That even the kids of this era understand, Mr. Speaker. So then they say, well cut expenses, cut waste. Well we have.

And that's not to say there might be a few more expenses that our government might find. But yet as the opposition argues about give-aways, and waste, and our friends in the business community, and in big business, and all the rest of it, even if you added up those dollars, as they throw around this or that, the advertising budget of the government, whether it be 8 or 10 or 12 or \$14 million, Mr. Speaker -- that's a far cry from the hundreds of millions of dollars that our treasury requires. So none of their observations make any sense. So . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'll get to that. There was another comment made. None of their arguments really make any sense, they're really not serious about a thing.

And yet we still have many fiscal problems ahead, Mr. Speaker. Health care expenditures now \$1.5 billion and rising. Education approaching the billion dollar mark, 888 million now approaching a billion dollars. These costs, Mr. Speaker, will continue to rise. That's why Consensus 100 is so important and makes so much sense.

How do we address the fiscal responsibility that I just

Doutlined of making more and having less, and yet plan for the future of providing more, more of the very things that we would like to have? So our population, Mr. Speaker, our base population is about a million folks, so we must address on how to protect those two major areas which we all hold

so dear to our life-style. And we, together with the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, will determine that -- our government, in consultation with Saskatchewan people.

Economic diversification and jobs: the members opposite can't even recognize that in the budget. What a sad commentary that is to make. Where have they been? Obviously they don't listen. You know, their only idea of helping business was grants, a series of useless, meaningless grants that had no relationship at all to a business person's success, or a business plan, or profitability, or anything. And they said, well here, we'll just throw money at them.

They didn't listen to the business community then, and they don't listen to them now. The business community doesn't want grants. They have been saying that for a long time. They don't want grants. What they want, Mr. Speaker, is a good plan with solid opportunity.

For example, I spoke earlier about the families that I grew up with . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes indeed, Cargill and Weyerhaeuser. No problem with Cargill and Weyerhaeuser because you don't . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order.

Hon. Mr. Klein: -- Mr. Speaker, the NDP just simply don't recognize the support services and support industries that are required to support major projects such as that. And yes, while Saskatchewan is probably not a smokestack industry in comparison to some of our larger provinces, and may never be there, certainly we require a certain amount of those smokestack industries and they add to the overall economy. But the basic diversification plan, it's there, and it's there in spades -- trade so vitally important to our business community.

But who's against trade? They are. Each and every one of the people in those benches opposite, Mr. Speaker, have stood in their place and spoke against free trade, and against trade, and against trade officers, and against trade appointments. And every single thing that relates to trade, they're against it. And yet now their leader comes out with the charisma of trying to persuade the business community that he's going to lead them into some great land. Well I'll tell you where he'll lead them if he ever gets there; and he won't get that opportunity, so it doesn't matter.

But they're obviously against trade. And I'll tell you why, Mr. Speaker. Because the same way that they play politics with the farmers, they play politics with the business community as well.

Community economic development bonds, they don't have the foggiest idea what it's about, what it represents. And it will strengthen the communities, Mr. Speaker. It's what the community . . .

The Speaker: -- Order. Order. Now look. Now look. It seems that the hon. members are just stepping across the line, a fine line, and as soon as the hon. members say something they don't like, they all start hollering. Certainly, certainly, this is not proper behaviour. I am simply asking you

again to refrain from those types of antics and allow the minister to continue.

Hon. Mr. Klein: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Community economic development bonds will strengthen communities; will give them hope; will let their dreams and ideas come to fruition; will provide their communities with jobs; will give them economic stability; will indeed give them a future as well.

The critic, the member from Regina Centre, spoke of small business. He wouldn't understand small business if it hit him smack in the middle of his forehead. Doesn't he, or the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, listen? For instance, Dale Botting -- and they may not even know who Dale Botting is, but he's with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business -- he said he liked our no frills budget. And he went on to say that no tax increases provide some breathing room. Now maybe they didn't listen to him say that, as well.

And you know, I just get kind of annoyed and tired of the unfounded, ambiguous, inaccurate statements that the members opposite keep spewing out in this Assembly without disclosing how those numbers or statistics or that information works together or intertwines.

We've heard examples of blue book figures being down massive percentage amounts and yet they know full well that those figures have simply been pulled over and put into another department. And yet they'll make it sound like a cut and there is no cut. They keep talking about cuts in health and cuts in education, and yet we all know the full amount of the increase in those things.

And particular, the member from Regina Centre, how he makes a desperate attempt to articulate in a noble fashion. And unfortunately, as I was saying, many people tell me that in their opinion he simply makes an arrogant, foolish attempt with a smirk on his face.

The Speaker: -- Order, order! I'm also going to draw to the attention of the hon. minister that I think in the best interest perhaps he should confine his remarks on the budget speech, and perhaps refrain from referring to other members in those terms.

Hon. Mr. Klein: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. But his statement of nothing for small business, when the business community itself feels otherwise -- I can't understand how they can make a statement like that in this Assembly, and it flies in the face of what the business community itself are saying. And then an observation regarding their big, new agricultural policy as well. And you know, we know that they don't understand business, and now it's obvious that they have a problem understanding agriculture as well.

I'll take the opportunity to quote from the Moose Jaw Times-Herald, March 1. And the headline, "Romanow wants \$500 million injected into farm economy." He called for an immediate payment of \$500 million from the federal government. The \$500 million federal payment is needed by many farm families. "And Romanow wants the province to provide loan

guarantees." That's what this says; that's what this says he said. He wants the province to provide loan guarantees. No. Then they argue even today, Mr. Speaker, in this Assembly, something other than what has been said here.

And another paper -- I believe this is from the Regina Leader-Post. At least it's written by Vern Greenshields of the Leader-Post, and I quote:

At his news conference Wednesday, Romanow agreed with Devine that the \$500 million had to come totally from Ottawa and little room for provincial contributions.

Yet they stand in this Assembly and try to argue something different. I can't understand, Mr. Speaker, how they can get away with that because it just doesn't make any sense. The Leader of the Opposition continues to use, in my mind, for his political gain the less fortunate in our society, the sick, the elderly, and now that list includes others as he includes farmers and the business community, as he exploits his own political agenda.

They simply play politics, Mr. Speaker, with farmers, with families, with the business community. And they sit in this Assembly, and the best observation that they have to make continually is to call an election.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Klein: -- There it is again. What an alternative to very difficult times. Have they had one meaningful, constructive criticism? As the members of the loyal opposition, seems to me that that's what their responsibility is, Mr. Speaker. Seems to me that that's what they're supposed to be here doing.

And can they come up with an alternative? They don't have any idea of an alternative. If they would, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to hear it. I'd like them to share this big secret with us, because they don't have a policy in agriculture, they don't have a policy in small business, they really have nothing for families.

(2045)

They just get up with hollow, meaningless rhetoric and say, call an election. What a feeble attempt at trying to operate or trying to change or trying to do what the opposition should do in helping a government direct the programs and the policies for the betterment of our people for a better Saskatchewan. That's no answer, what they say, Mr. Speaker; it's no answer at all.

And it's no wonder that the opposition can't gain any credibility with the people of this province. The people are starting to recognize that, that they don't have any alternatives, that all they do is just wave a banner and say, here we are and we're better than them and they say why . . .

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Klein: -- There they go again. Why are you better? Oh because, because we are. Can they offer any reasons why? Can they offer any suggestions or alternates? No. People in the business community are telling me that every day. People from the agricultural sector tell that to us regularly -- they have nothing there, they have no policies. So we have to live with that.

And then their leader publicly admits that it's no wonder there's so much second guessing going on within the NDP caucus about their strategies and about their scare tactics. I mean, that's what he publicly admits. So what does that tell you about their policies and their programs? And I'll repeat what I read in one of their own publications, and I quote:

People, particularly in rural Saskatchewan, have no reason to vote for the NDP.

Came out of one of their own publications. Another quote:

All we do is talk about how we will restore this, or defend that, or fight to maintain something else. If this is all that people wanted, then they wouldn't have voted against us in 1982.

And those quotes comes from one of their own NDP publications.

So I remind you of this, Mr. Speaker. The people of Saskatchewan tore the walls around Saskatchewan down in 1982, and again the NDP were rejected in 1986. And with their lack of policy, with their lack of credibility, with their scare tactics being the only thing that they can employ, the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, will continue to reject the NDP because they can't even make a good formal opposition.

From the time we assumed office, Mr. Speaker, our first major objective has been to protect people against problems that they cannot control -- in other words, a strong safety net.

Our second major objective is economic. We simply have to develop a provincial economy that is viable in today's global world. No longer can we live in the past and depend entirely upon our primary resources of agriculture and oil, potash, uranium, and forestry which are subject to the very unpredictable markets of the world and the world prices. In a few words, our second major objective has to be to diversify our economy.

With respect to the safety net, we believe that nowhere in the world do people have the protection that has been provided for the people of Saskatchewan, and our government has done much to strengthen that safety net.

We now have the finest health care service anywhere. We are contributing the largest expenditures of provincial funding to health care in the history of this province: about \$1.5 billion this year.

Mr. Speaker, that amounts to \$1,500 for every man, woman, and child in this

province. That means for every person in this Assembly, for every person that may be watching on television, for each of their dependants and their . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. The hon. member is addressing his remarks to the Assembly. There are two other members attempting to speak simultaneously. Let us allow the hon. member to continue.

Hon. Mr. Klein: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government, Mr. Speaker, is contributing \$1,500 annually for each one of us, for health care services.

Our opposition keeps up the old refrain about cut-backs in health support, and yet this year our government is increasing expenditures on health care by \$136 million. Hardly . . . you know, I hardly regard an increase of \$136 million, Mr. Speaker, as any kind of a cut-back.

In addition, our safety net includes improvements to social assistance, under which we give recipients the opportunity to work, and boy, do they appreciate that opportunity.

For our farmers, a tremendous crop insurance program; for seniors, the heritage program, and the finest quality senior housing accommodation and nursing homes anywhere in North America. And I won't dwell on that, Mr. Speaker; many of our members have.

And added to this was our new Saskatchewan Pension Plan, the finest and most novel pension plan of its kind in the world, with over 40,000 of our citizens already enrolled in it.

And contrary to what the NDP claim, for people on lower incomes we have the lowest income tax of any province in Canada. That's the strong safety net for the people of this province that we have successfully built together in these past few years, Mr. Speaker. And we've managed to achieve these accomplishments despite dwindling provincial revenues brought on by the collapse of world markets for many of our primary resources, and not to mention the last few years, droughts.

Meanwhile on the economic front the need to diversify has been a top priority of this government for the past few years. And as I mention, in my opinion really it's the number one challenge that's facing us here in Saskatchewan today. Indeed as we work to improve our economic situation, to create more jobs and opportunities for business, the need to diversify is really what it's all about.

And if we didn't know it before, Mr. Speaker, the urgent need to diversify was driven home to all of us by the events of the past few years. We have had to struggle through a major economic downturn, created not by us, but created for us by the poor market conditions around the world for our resource products. And if this province continues to depend so predominantly on our primary resources for our livelihood, we will continue to be susceptible to severe downturns in our economy.

So as I mentioned, in a nutshell, we have to take steps to eliminate the

boom and bust cycle of our resource based economy. And we have. We have taken our rich raw materials another step along the production line and we're now doing more processing and manufacturing of our resources before we ship the products to the world market.

Manufacturing last year, Mr. Speaker, up 600 per cent in this province. We don't speak much about that. We will when the time comes.

Soon we will have two heavy oil upgraders -- one already operational right here in Regina and another under construction -- as I mentioned, manufacturing our own diesel fuel, our own gasoline, from our own Saskatchewan heavy crude. Turbines are now being built in Saskatoon for power projects all over North America.

We have our first paper mill making our own paper in this province with 170 new permanent jobs and a monthly payroll of a half a million dollars -- a tremendous boost to the Prince Albert economy. And yet the member from Saskatoon Sutherland stood in this Assembly this very day and condemned that project. I wonder what the member from P.A.-Duck Lake thinks about it; the member of Prince Albert. I wonder if they get together on that before they make those wild accusations and wild statements, condemning something in one of their own colleague's constituencies. It's virtually unbelievable, Mr. Speaker.

Saskoil, a former small provincial oil company, has now become Canada's eighth largest oil and gas company, with over \$1 billion in assets. And it's headquartered firmly, and it's firmly established, right here in Saskatchewan. We see a new office building going up, Saskoil's office building in Regina -- not the government's, Mr. Speaker, Saskoil -- adding again to the economy of this city, of my home city. And I mentioned that earlier. I'm proud of it.

And we're shipping bacon to Los Angeles where Canadian bacon is treated as something special, and it should be, and we should be proud of our Saskatchewan processors. And they send that from this province down into the United States of America where they're tickled as all get out to have it, and to buy it, and again, help our economy.

What's wrong with that kind of trade? NDP can't answer those questions, Mr. Speaker. They don't have any constructive criticism, just negative. And they don't like it -- because.

The member from Saskatoon Sutherland doesn't like the Weyerhaeuser paper plant because. And yet I understand that the members from Prince Albert -- they think it's not too bad. You should think it's not too bad. But you should tell your colleague that it's not too bad.

And now in trade, small Saskatchewan companies, a small Regina company, a company that I've been familiar with for a long time -- salted Sid's Sunflower Seeds. Well, Mr. Speaker, they will be supplying many, many concession stands for major league baseball in the United States of America -- Saskatchewan's sunflower seeds. And including, I believe, Shea Stadium.

Saskatchewan company printing all the tickets right here in Saskatchewan for use for NFL (National Football League) football throughout the United States of America, right here in Saskatchewan. You'd think that there'd be a printer in New York or Los Angeles or something, wouldn't you, that could print those tickets for the NFL? They're printed here in Saskatchewan.

You want to talk trade. You want to talk exports. Let's talk trade. Let's talk exports, because you don't understand.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak for just a moment or two on a few initiatives of my Department of Consumer and Commercial Affairs as part of the wide range of services that we provide to the people of our province.

In a few short years, under our government, my department has become a leader in Canada for the high level of our consumer education programs and in protecting the well-being of residents of this province in the market-place. As you know, my government is committed to insuring economic stability and well-being for Saskatchewan business, for families, and for individuals.

Saskatchewan Consumer and Commercial Affairs plays a vital role in protecting the economic well-being of our residents, as its goal is to create a fair and equitable market-place where buyers and sellers can exchange goods and services with confidence.

My department administers a wide range of innovative and effective programs to protect and enhance the activities of all Saskatchewan residents in our complex and changing market-place. I'm proud to report that Saskatchewan Consumer and Commercial Affairs enjoys a reputation for leadership and excellence in both education programs and in its legislative initiatives. We are planning a number of exciting programs to further assist Saskatchewan residents in making the best use of their resources and functioning effectively in the Saskatchewan market-place.

Saskatchewan is co-ordinating the co-operation with the provinces across Canada and the federal government, the design of an activity-based resource which will deal with money management, entrepreneurialism, and basic economic know-how topics. This program, Mr. Speaker, will provide high school students with an orientation and training ground in the economic realities as well as opportunities of our society.

(2100)

My government has also taken some strong steps to address the problems faced by the poor in Saskatchewan. We will be launching a comprehensive education program including new resources, new education resource materials, as well as courses for residents on social assistance to provide skill development, opportunities and topics such as basic money management, budget and credit use, renting, using banks, and problem solving in the market-place.

We've used an extensive consultation process in the development of this new program, Mr. Speaker, and its delivery will be through the agencies,

non-government organizations, who currently work and directly interface with this target group.

Seniors market-place protection is another program. Seniors continue to be a vulnerable target for unscrupulous players in the Saskatchewan market-place. My department will be enhancing our efforts to provide educational programs to alert seniors and heighten their knowledge on subjects such as door to door sales and telemarketing, new technologies and aids to living, food shopping, cutting costs on money management, wills and estates. In addition we produce an excellent resource entitled "The Senior Consumer". This will be revised and released once again throughout the province in the upcoming year.

We also have the consumer education community program, Mr. Speaker, where we use a particularly innovative and cost-effective method of extending our education programs right across the province. Since 1984 we have made a wide variety of programs available to Saskatchewan residents, but interestingly enough, through the use of volunteers.

At this time we have approximately 75 professionals, Mr. Speaker, who volunteer themselves to our department. They are trained by us, then they deliver courses on subjects such as money management, budgeting, credit use, consumer law, food buying, financial planning; and this program has permitted my department to reach more residents with education programs than we ever might have with limited paid personnel.

In the last year we have provided more than 250 programs to over 5,000 Saskatchewan residents. And this program is considered to be the most comprehensive example of the use of volunteers in the public service in Canada and is used as a model in a number of other jurisdictions across the country and our province.

Mr. Speaker, my department produces a range of high quality, self-help education resource materials. And I am pleased to tell you that the quality of these materials is such that we will soon be making them available for sale across Canada and throughout North America. This of course will generate some revenue for Saskatchewan so that we will be able to provide more copies to Saskatchewan residents free of charge. Our materials are specifically designed on economic living skill topics for a range of targets: low income Saskatchewan residents; low literacy residents; middle income residents; seniors; young people in school, as well as for the general public.

In an effort to make as many of these resources available to Saskatchewan public as is economically possible, we are currently pursuing, with some success, corporate sponsorship. In addition, we cost share many of the ventures with other government departments and agencies in order to make the most effective use of our budget.

Plain language for Saskatchewan. My department will be co-ordinating in the new fiscal year a government-wide initiative to encourage the use of plain language, that is a language that anyone can read in all government communications. Too often bureaucratic, academic language is used in

government publications from various items through to forms and correspondence. This tends to be both alienating to the general public as well as costly, and when people can't understand government print communications, costly errors often occur. And I am particularly pleased with this initiative and will certainly report on it at a later date to this Assembly.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I just refer to some news articles that appeared immediately after the budget that kind of set the tone and set the stage for the remarks that I have made. For instance, our Premier, who has been saying that provinces don't have enough money to take on the treasuries of foreign governments, and he's right. We can't take on the treasury of other countries alone, here in Saskatchewan.

Continuing on with other observations from the media. A home care spokesman was very pleased. Hew Helmsing says he is pleased with the bigger health care budget.

As well, it was indicated that there were no tax increases; extra money for health, extra money for education and for agriculture. The Minister of Finance indicated that the people will not tolerate more tax increases and want restraint from government. And this budget shows that, Mr. Speaker.

And of course he honestly pointed out that those that expected new programs would be disappointed. SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) says that municipalities weren't hit too hard. And again that's not what we here from the members opposite, Mr. Speaker. And proponents of help for hungry children say that the government has made a good first step.

So, Mr. Speaker, all in all, when you couple the remarks that I've just referred to and the remarks that I have been speaking about for the past while, and because of the vision that my Premier has for our future, for Saskatchewan, there is no question that I will support this budget. Thank you.

Mr. Kowalsky: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I commence with the major portion of my remarks on this budget debate, Mr. Speaker, I want to make reference to a couple of things that were mentioned by the previous speaker, the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

For the Minister of Consumer Affairs, I must say that that was . . . I've listened to several of his speeches, and I must say that that's perhaps his most temperate speech, Mr. Speaker, the most temperate speech I've ever heard from him. I think he only lost his temper three or four times during the speech.

It's interesting that he referred, Mr. Speaker, to the walls in Europe tumbling down, but he can't see the walls of his own government tumbling around him. Even his Premier can see the walls tumbling around, and they've hired pollsters who have advised them to find 100 people to put the blocks back up, or at least to cover the scene so the blocks that are being littered around this government cannot be seen.

It's also interesting, Mr. Speaker, that this minister, who spoke for one and three-quarter hours on the throne speech, and an hour and a quarter today -- a total of three hours altogether -- spoke, and he spoke, and he spoke, and he spoke.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if people . . . if you asked anybody in Saskatchewan what the major issue was, with respect to the Department of Consumer Affairs . . .

An Hon. Member: -- Principal Trust.

An Hon. Member: -- That's what they'd say.

Mr. Kowalsky: -- That's exactly what they'd say, Mr. Minister. They would say that the major issue regarding the Department of Consumer Affairs was with respect to the Principal Trust affairs -- 6,000 people, up to 6,000 people in this province affected, many of whom had invested their life savings and are losing a lot of that. Why? Because of the inaction of this minister in that portfolio, because of that. It boils down, straight right down, to negligence on the part of the minister and on the part of the government.

The Government of Alberta, the Governments of B.C., Governments of Nova Scotia -- they all helped out -- but did the Government of Saskatchewan, through this minister, help out? Not a chance. Not a chance.

And that's not only after listening to the people of Saskatchewan that had their money invested, and after listening to the opposition, but even in response to an indictment by the Ombudsman. And I want to quote from the Leader-Post, March 30, which deals with this issue:

Despite a damning indictment by the Ombudsman's report, the Saskatchewan government admits no responsibility to compensate the Saskatchewan investors.

You'd think that in his three hours the minister would at least have alluded to this, would at least mention this. No. He talks about walls tumbling down, and he can't see it happening from there.

You can have this. You can have this. This is . . . There's another paragraph here at the very end, which I will quote, which says:

When questioned about the possibility of compensation, Consumer and Commercial Affairs minister Jack Klein refused to comment, saying the matter was before the courts.

March 30, 1990, Leader-Post.

Well that was an interesting thing. That was an interesting omission. So then we listened to his speech a little further on, and then he made a comment about taxation. Matter of fact, I think he even referred to income tax. The minister mentioned that Saskatchewan people paid the lowest

income tax in Canada. Another interesting comment.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if you take a look on page 28 of the budget address, which was delivered to us by the minister sitting opposite, not too long ago, and you take a look at page 28, and there the minister provides us a little chart. I wish the minister would give the member from Regina South, the consumer . . . minister of consumer and corporate affairs a copy of this budget speech. Maybe he could take a look at it.

And if he checked the figures there, where it says, provincial income tax, on page 28, and he looked across and he saw . . . he would see that the Saskatchewan income tax, right here, is stated as the . . . lowest? No, not the lowest. Not the lowest. Not the second lowest. Not the third lowest. The highest. The highest in all the provinces listed. The highest in all the provinces listed.

An Hon. Member: -- Jack had his chart upside down.

Mr. Kowalsky: -- He must have.

That applies to people in the family income of \$40,000. And there's another chart dealing with single parents, \$25,000, single parents of \$25,000 total income. And even there, Mr. Minister, Saskatchewan is the second highest in income tax payable. Second highest. Second only to Newfoundland.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that makes it a little difficult to, you know, believe some of the other statements that he made. The minister kept asking us for alternatives. Yes, there is alternatives to a policy like his non-policy that led to the disaster with respect to Principal affairs, the Principal Trust group. Very simple alternative. And the alternative was to fund the department so they could properly look after the affairs of the department and protect the people of Saskatchewan. And that'll be done, that'll be done when this government is booted out of office.

Mr. Speaker, I will turn now to my main remarks. I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I appreciate this opportunity to speak on a debate of this type, to speak to the throne speech and the budget speech. I didn't address the throne speech, so I'll make some comments pertinent to that here.

I appreciate the responsibility and the confidence voted in me by the people of my riding. It's a distinct pleasure for me to be able to represent the constituency of Prince Albert. It's a pleasure always to get advice and to be in contact with the constituents and to hear the genuine interest that they have in our political system.

(2115)

We have in this budget speech and debate speech . . . budget speech and throne speech. We go through a process, Mr. Speaker, a process where there is a government role for the speeches and there's an opposition role for the speeches. And the government role is to put as positive a look on the speeches and to identify exactly what it is that they want to do. And it's

the opposition's role, Mr. Speaker, to present the alternatives and to point out the errors of government.

I believe this to be a very, very important . . . a very important concept to remember, Mr. Speaker, very important. We have here in Saskatchewan, in Canada, a parliamentary system, a party system. It's a democratic system, and it takes all kinds of opinions, and we have an opportunity to present our opinions.

It's important because we know that there are people the world over, particularly in eastern Europe now, who are striving to get rid of a one party system, striving to get rid of a totalitarian system, so that they can debate items that governments present in the manner which we are doing.

I'm going to set as my theme, Mr. Speaker, to this debate, I'm going to set as my theme that after pondering over and listening to what the members have said, and listening to what people are saying, that I can sum it all up and this government's experience by saying, they have made Saskatchewan, and are in the process of making Saskatchewan, an undesirable place in which to live.

What's happening, Mr. Speaker? People are moving out of the province. People are acting on what has happened as a result of this government. There are statistics that prove it.

In 1989, 23,705 more people left the province than moved in. Since 1986 a total of 53,000 more people moved out of the province than moved back in. And they moved out for good reason. Why? Because they moved out because they feel that Saskatchewan is becoming an undesirable place to live under this government.

Well statistics are sometimes cold, Mr. Speaker, so I thought I'd present some personal testimony -- personal testimony about a situation of a family that I know of, I've been dealing with for two or three years. It's a situation . . . the family that had six quarters of land. They were in the process of expanding, borrowed some money, purchased an additional six quarters. This was about five or six years ago.

Then, of course, they ran into some difficulties with crop failures. They ran into difficulties with higher interest rates. They ended up losing six quarters of land, the six quarters that they had tried to buy. They ended up losing that.

In the process, there was another misfortune beyond the control of anybody. In this particular case the woman was widowed and she fell into a situation where she had to manage the farm on her own. She moved into town, put the land up for rent, but still had to make the interest payments. The interest payments were greater than the amount that she was able to collect in rent. And there were expenses.

First thing that happened is the banks came and took away her machinery. Then another misfortune misfell her. The loan happened to be with a bank by the name of Northland Bank, which happened to go belly up -- completely

out of her control went belly up.

So then the trustee started putting the pressure on her to pay up. They wanted to clear the debt, not because she hadn't made her payments; she had kept up. She'd been very close to keeping up. Well, it wasn't too long before they claimed one quarter and then another quarter and then another quarter. And she was right down to the home quarter the last year, right down to the home quarter.

She couldn't get a loan any place, in any bank or any financial institution. She applied to the Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan. Do you think they'd touch her? No, they wouldn't touch her. Why? Because she wasn't a bona fide farmer.

In the end, that last home quarter was put up for sale. There was a bid on it for \$12,500. She had the right of first refusal. This lady had, through her own hard work, saved \$4,000. Because she had been doing some work at home that she picked up after her husband died, she had saved \$4,000. Do you think that there was any bank, any financial institution, including the government of Saskatchewan's only Agriculture Credit Corporation, that would lend her the additional \$8,500? Not at all, not at all. Not at all. It wasn't till the very last few moments, the dying days before they were going to take the land, that she was able to find a friend who lent her another \$4,500; they finally came down, and she was able to repurchase her own home quarter for \$8,500.

Mr. Speaker, 12 quarters of land, six or seven years, plus personal family tragedy. These are things that make me ask the question: what is the purpose of government? What is it that government can do? What is it that we can do to make Saskatchewan a better place to live? What is it that we can do to make Saskatchewan a desirable place to live in rather than making Saskatchewan an undesirable place to live in.

Let me give you another example, some more personal testimony, Mr. Speaker. Last winter I was in many small towns in Saskatchewan. It was quite common when you walked into coffee row in any small town and introduced yourself, made a few comments and asked people what they were talking about, that you would hear quite a lot of pessimism. They were all concerned about the very same things: the towns were getting smaller; the machinery dealers were either closing down or down-sizing; hoteliers were just barely hanging on; schools were being consolidated. Those people that were landlords -- some of them were landlords -- had empty houses. Why? Because of rural depopulation. In short, Mr. Speaker, they had the feeling that Saskatchewan was becoming an undesirable place to live.

I spoke to some students in a high school, in a small town, small school, small class. I was actually there; I was talking about GST (goods and services tax). We had a little question and answer period, and we talked about things like trying to determine how they were going to be affected, and what's going to happen to them with the GST. But you know the question that came out during the question period -- not so much GST because they didn't even consider themselves as having to pay a GST -- the question that was asked was: is there any reason for us to stay here in Saskatchewan, or

should we get out after grade 12? The students in grade 12 asked me if there was any future for Saskatchewan. Now why did they ask this, Mr. Speaker? Because they, too, could see that under this government Saskatchewan was becoming an undesirable place in which to live.

So, Mr. Speaker, what that does is it begs the question: what, then, needs to be done to reverse this, to make Saskatchewan a desirable place in which to live? What needs to be done so that farmers can thrive in Saskatchewan and survive? What needs to be done so that people in small business and professionals would find Saskatchewan a desirable place to live and move in and that the youth of Saskatchewan would move into Saskatchewan because Saskatchewan would be a desirable place in which to live?

I believe, Mr. Speaker, it is the job of government to set the conditions. I believe it is the job of government to do positive things so that Saskatchewan does become a desirable place in which to live. And any government that refuses to do that, and any government which abdicates that, same thing should happen to that government as is happening to the governments in eastern Europe. It should be rejected. The same thing should happen to them that is happening to the government in Great Britain, the government of Maggie Thatcher that followed that same procedure. It should be rejected.

Mr. Speaker, let's take a closer look at the throne speech and the budget speeches. The throne speech itself is something that's written by the government. It's a document written by the government and read by Her Honour. It's supposed to lay out the government's intent, and it's supposed to lay out the government's specific intent with respect to new legislation. The budget speech is supposed to detail the spending initiatives and to detail the spending priorities.

Well we had a lot of visitors here during the throne speech debate. Many were partisan; some were not. But what were there comments? Well in all cases, Mr. Speaker, they respected the process and appreciated the process and liked being here. And then they started to scrutinize the speeches. And they told me that when it came to the content of the speech -- nothing to do with the delivery -- when it came to the content of the speech, that it was void; it was empty.

In fact the Minister of Finance's announcement two week's previous to that had more substance in it in his 30-second television clip where he cut the home programs, the loans and the grants, and he cut the tax rebate, than in the entire throne speech. More substance right there.

The throne speech became a non-event. Actually there was one thing that they came up with, one innovation. That was the intention to form this elite group of 100 called Consensus Saskatchewan, ConSask for short.

So we can only conclude by the absence of any new initiatives that this government is going to continue on its headlong program to continue to privatize.

You know, it's interesting, there was one other thing that happened. The

government, perhaps a couple of months before the speech, before the House was called, named some new ministers. And somehow their pollsters must have told them, the pollsters must have told them that the word "family" was important. Because what did they do? They named somebody the Minister of the Family.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate that I in no way want this to be interpreted as somebody on this side saying something against families -- against families. We're all part of families, it's quite obvious. Mr. Speaker, but what we have here is a special department named the Minister of the Family. It's kind of interesting that that should happen. I say it happened because of the polling, because they found that there was a pretty good consensus from their polling about that there should be an emphasis on families.

So then we take a look at the budget; so then we take a look at the budget. If there is a minister of families, what is it that the minister of families is going to do and how much money is he going to get to do it with.

So we take a look on page 43 of the budget Estimates and there we see the Family Foundation. Minister of families is responsible for Family Foundation. And you know, they give him here \$1.288 million to deal with. Well, not too bad.

But then when you take a look at the little asterisk down here and look at the fine print, it says, the expenditures for the vote of Family Foundation were last year included in Education and Health, and Human Resources, Labour and Employment, Justice, and Social Services. Well, well, well. The minister of families, anything new? Any new money? No. New name. New name, Mr. Speaker, that's all.

(2130)

As a matter of fact, you can even go further about the money. I said that this year it's 1.288 million. Do you know what it was last year, the year previous? The year previous it was \$1.3 million. So what happens to the minister of families. They name the minister and they give that department less money than it had last year. So much for the emphasis on families, Mr. Speaker. So much for the emphasis on families.

You know, using that same process of polling, I can see that, you know, when we have a government here that if they figure that families a good name they could come up with a minister of families, it's a wonder they didn't come up with a minister of consensus. We could think of all kinds of these. Minister of change, wouldn't he have fun. Minister of future, how about minister of cutting edge? Wouldn't that be something? How about ministers of: this is a good place to make a deal?

Well what's happened, Mr. Speaker, is when you look at that, you can see why it is that people who have watched the budget process, who have watched the throne speech process and listened are coming to the conclusion that this government is continuing to make Saskatchewan an undesirable place to

live.

There was another impression that people had when they came here. I was interested to hear people say that when they compared the appearances of people on both sides of the House while the speeches were being read, they said, you know, they kind of looked kind of glum over there on the government side. Kind of tired out and glum. And you fellows looked kind of eager, like you were ready for government. And I said, yes, we are. He said, how come they're so worried? I said, I think I know why they're worried, because many of those members over there are trying to figure out whether they should run again, duck now, rather than get defeated. And a lot of them would duck now but the problem is they can't find somebody else to take their place. Two of them already, two of them -- Bob Andrew and Graham Taylor -- have managed to duck already, and I predict there is going to be about 15 to 20 more who will duck before the election is called . . . before the next election.

Well we might wonder, how did this all come about, Mr. Speaker. How did it come about that Saskatchewan is becoming a place in which it's undesirable in which to live? What happened? You know in 1982 they had a bit of vision; I must admit, they had a vision in '82. But come to '86, the election in '86, they got elected without a plan. They had established a rather poor economic record by 1986. We had already had a scorched earth policy in the cities, and it was spreading to the rural area. But what would happen was that the rural people swallowed hard after getting the federal money and they decided to give this government one more chance -- one more chance.

Now many of them feel badly that they did so now, and they surely won't do it again. Why not? They see their neighbours losing money, and instead of this government acting, as their neighbours in rural Saskatchewan are losing money, they're seeing the Premier blame, always laying blame -- blaming it on the U.S., blaming it on Europe.

The problem is that they had no plan when they got into government, no plan. So what did they decided to do? Well they decided to hire a plan and a few years back they hired this Coopers & Lybrand Group. Why Coopers & Lybrand? Because they had heard about fellows of the name of Oliver Letwin and Madsen Pirie, the two gurus of . . .

An Hon. Member: -- The P-word.

Mr. Kowalsky: -- Of the P-word, my colleague says -- the two gurus of privatization, which ends up with the poll tax. Well, what was the method? It was rather something that they caught on to, and they grabbed, because they thought they could get it. The method was called, let's make a deal, and it was sold right to Saskatchewan people by this group. The idea was this: to privatize . . . What you do is, you take the assets of Saskatchewan and you sell them to the people at a discount. Sell them especially to your friends, and then pay off, and use the money to buy your friends. So they did, and so they did. And they started with selling \$400 million worth of assets of the Prince Albert pulp mill for \$238. Let's make a deal -- \$239.

We're still to hear about the money. Not only the assets worth \$400 million; there was also included in that, we remember, Saskatoon chemical and the saw mill, and some road building, and some fire protection, and some nursery stock. And a loss accompanied with that of \$400,000 per year to the city of Prince Albert, in royalties they were not able to collect from the SaskEnergy privatization. Let's make a deal.

So what happened, Mr. Speaker? That was the first example. Well, if you want to do business, if you want to do business, Mr. Speaker, the first measure, the first social responsibility of any business, I believe, is to make a profit. That's what it should be. And we could do it. Prince Albert pulp mill was doing it. It wasn't something that had to be given away; it was doing it. It was making a profit -- 20 to \$25 million a year, according to Peat Marwick, on the average. After it was being sold and subsidized, this was even improved upon by a record of around \$80 million profit of the mill.

So what we have here is a government selling off assets at a discount, making . . . and in the process, making Saskatchewan, the province, poorer. And in the end, the end result which we see now, five years later, making it a place where people are moving out of; making Saskatchewan a place which is undesirable in which to live.

Well then they proceeded with other privatizations, Mr. Speaker. They privatized the highway equipment -- \$40 million worth for 6 million; privatized Manalta Coal; privatized Sask Minerals; went into private vocational schools; privatized part of SaskTel; privatized North Park Centre; privatized children's dental plan; privatized the prescription drug plan; privatized the Saskatchewan Mineral . . . SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation), Saskatchewan Mineral Company; privatized . . . whoops! Were going to privatize SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) but it was stopped.

They were going to privatize SaskPower but the people of Saskatchewan put a stop to that, too. Then they went ahead and privatized Sask Potash. And we were selling stuff off so fast, Mr. Speaker, that the assets depleted, so that the net balance sheet of the province of Saskatchewan went from a positive position to a negative position. We are now in a negative position.

While this same government was privatizing, also sponsored the free trade deal. And we have a situation now, under this free trade deal, where a Crown cannot any longer, can no longer increase its assets in an existing Crown. It can only decrease it. That's the deal that they were promoting.

And as they went to privatize, where did the subsidies go? Who are the companies now that are receiving the greatest subsidies in the province of Saskatchewan? Is it the little-business people? Is it the little-business people? Or who is it? Well, take a look at it. Who receives the biggest subsidies? Or is it people like Pocklington and Hunters and Cargill, the people who receive the biggest subsidies in Saskatchewan?

The net result of all of this, Mr. Speaker, the theme of my speech, is that this government is making Saskatchewan an undesirable place in which to live.

You remember the Premier when he started in '82, he said Saskatchewan is a place we can come home to. We're open for business. We're in great shape, he would say.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I have a quotation here from . . . I would attribute to the member from Shellbrook-Torch River, and it was a quotation in 1989. Before I go into that quotation I would read another quotation that pertains to it. Just to indicate what has happened to this group that is governing over there and how they've lost touch.

In this particular quotation, which they're both from the same paper, the Prince Albert Daily Herald. This one is June 30, 1989 and the headline says, Saskatchewan no longer one of hottest job markets. And the quotation is:

Saskatchewan, once one of the hottest job markets, Saskatchewan was bumped out of the country's top ten employment regions last year, according to Stats Canada. The province was ranked second only to Toronto in 1985, but the following year it slipped to fifth spot, then to seventh in 1987. Last year it placed eleventh, just ahead of Alberta.

This was in June of 1989. This is after this government was in power for seven years. And the member who really stays in touch here, the member from Shellbrook-Torch River, Mr. Speaker, replied to this shortly, or it looks like it could have been a reply to this, and this is July 19th, a full 20 days after this first article. And I quote here and the heading of the article says, Muller points out signs of optimism, "The provincial economy is on the upswing" quote, he says.

And later down the quotation says:

That he expects there to be good to excellent soil conditions around the province and low unemployment rates that are all helping to invigorate the economy. And when people feel good about the future of Saskatchewan, they spend money. And then the remainder of '89 will see increased growth in Saskatchewan's economy.

Well, pretty close, pretty close. But I guess what's happened there, Mr. Speaker, is that this is a good example of what has happened to the entire government -- completely out of touch with reality and with the facts -- the facts as printed by . . . derived from the department of statistics in Ottawa.

Well, what has been the effect, Mr. Speaker, of these last nine years of Tory government? Take a look at a quick list of what's happened to the taxes, what's happened to the deficit, what's happened to the services. Taxes are going up and increasing; deficit is going up and out of control, completely out of control; and services are decreasing. Take a closer look at the taxes that are going up. Sales tax, up; income tax, up; flat tax,

up; gas tax, up; property tax, up; lottery tax, introduced, dropped; car tax, introduced, dropped; and now some more Tory tax coming, the GST, the famous GST.

What has happened, Mr. Speaker, to the deficit? Well, Mr. Speaker, you take a look at where the deficit was in 1982 and '83, and take a look at it now. What has happened? In 1981-82 the province had recorded a surplus of 139 million, and since then, every year there has been a deficit, every year there has been a deficit. And when you total the deficits, all of the deficit that we have now, you come to a grand total of \$4.4 billion -- \$4.4 billion.

Now every year that thing is increased. Every year the amount of interest we have to pay on that deficit has increased. Now it turns out that every woman and man and child has to pay an equivalent of \$1.35 a day on interest -- \$1.35 a day, every day. Think of the services that that could produce.

(2145)

Mr. Speaker, the payment on the interest had the single greatest leap in the amount that was spent in any particular department this year. Thirty per cent more in interest this year -- 33 I believe to be more exact, 33 per cent more than last year.

What's happening is, with the interest we're paying, it's limiting our ability to do almost anything else, Mr. Speaker. It's limiting the ability for the government to deal with the problems in Health, in Education, in Social Services, the Department of Highways. And that's why they're standing up and taking notice and letting people notice.

Let's take a look at what happened to the decreasing services. Let's look at what happened to the services. We know that the dental plan for children went down. We know that the food banks have increased in Saskatchewan. We know that there was a strike at the U of S, and that there is a quota at the U of S. We know that there was a strike at SIAST.

We know that there were waiting lists in Saskatchewan like never before. We know that the mental health treatments are in a shambles and in disarray in the province. What has happened? All of this -- the rising taxes, the rising deficit, the decreasing services, is making Saskatchewan an undesirable place in which to live.

The result of all of that, as I mentioned earlier, an out-migration this year, Mr. Speaker, of 23,705 people. Why? Why are people moving out, you might ask. What is happening?

Well, we take a look to what's happening to the income of people, Mr. Speaker. And I have before me a chart which I want to talk about very briefly. And this chart tells us what the average income is of any citizen in Saskatchewan, and it compares the average income in Canada. And starting back in 1977 and right through to 1983, Saskatchewan and Canada's average income was neck and neck -- probably within a couple of hundred dollars.

When you see the two lines in the chart, one is right on top of the other until about 1983, and then what happens? The average of income of Canada continues to rise, for the average person in Canada it continues to rise, but in Saskatchewan the thing does not keep up. The average income of a person in Saskatchewan is down by \$2,000 from the average income in Canada. And that happened only since 1982. That happened since privatization. And that's why people are moving out of the province. That's one of the reasons, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if you take a look at the unemployment rate in Saskatchewan, we had an unemployment rate which we were proud of: 4 per cent in 1979, slightly over 4 per cent, compared to about 7 per cent, nearly 8 per cent on the national level. We were always away below the national level. We had a better record than the national level, in terms of unemployment. And if you follow the chart, from 1979 right through to 1988, you'll see those two lines far apart at first, and then as you get closer and closer to 1988, Saskatchewan's level and the Canadian level are almost one and the same thing. We have caught up to the Canadian unemployment rate. Saskatchewan, which always had leadership, has now caught up with Canada. The poor, the poorest, we've caught up with the worst in Canada in our unemployment rate. That's why people are leaving Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

If you take a look at what happened to the retail trade in Canada and compare that with the retail trade in Saskatchewan specifically, in Saskatchewan from 1979 till 1983 the per capita retail trade was higher in Saskatchewan than it was in Canada. The per capita retail trade up to 1983, from '79 to '83, was higher. Starting in 1983, about the middle of '83, the line crosses, and ever since then, from '84 to '88, Saskatchewan in the per capita retail is falling further and further behind the national average. No wonder people are moving out of Saskatchewan, and no wonder people are saying that this government is making this province an undesirable place in which to live.

Well, what's happened in other places, Mr. Speaker? What's happened in the area of culture? Are things better or are things worse? Have we got more facilities, more cultural facilities? Do we have more going on or do we have less? Let me ask you this question: is the Saskatchewan summer school of the arts going to be functioning this year? And the answer is no; the answer is no. Why? Because the government has run out of money to fund it. Basically, that's what happened; it has run out of money to help fund it. And Sask Sport is no longer able to fund it as well, because the government imposed its silly lottery tax, which went belly up. So I ask you, Mr. Speaker, has Saskatchewan become a better place in which to live or poorer?

Let me turn then, Mr. Speaker, to the issue of leadership. And let's take a look at how these difficulties that we had were addressed by the leadership of the province. We know that what happened is, the Premier adopted an ideological stand. The stand was, let's make a deal; let's make a deal. And what he did is, he was leading by paying attention to the polls. You know what a poll is, Mr. Speaker? A poll is a look at what

happened yesterday or what happened the day before or the day before. A poll tells you how people were thinking last week. This Premier, and this government, is using the rear-view mirror to drive forward, Mr. Speaker.

When the poll says the used car tax is unpopular, well then they came and dropped it, not when they were advised before. They didn't consult before. When the polls told them, several months after they were told by the people of Saskatchewan, and by the opposition, that the lottery tax is not the way to go, then they dropped it.

When the polls told them that the GST wasn't too popular, then they started speaking up against it. What's happening is, we've got leadership that is finding which way the people are going and then scrambling to get ahead of them -- scrambling.

And if they can't catch it . . . Now what he's done is, he's appointed this group of 100, so they can hold a place some place in the leadership, so as he scrambles, there's a place for him to find, and to lead from.

Mr. Speaker, we heard the Deputy Premier refer to the concept of change. We heard her refer many times to the concept of change. She talked about change and the need for change, and we agree there's a need for change. Matter of fact, change is probably one of the few constants there are.

Mr. Speaker, if you're really serious about changing, if the government is really serious about changing, the one thing that is easiest to change and is a sure thing that you can change, is you can change yourself. You can change yourself.

If the government was serious about change and they did want to change, well they could start with the cabinet, right there. They could start with democratic reform. They could start with democratic reform. Our opposition, our side of the House, has laid a proposal on the table, Mr. Speaker. The member from Saskatoon Eastview, who put it on, and we have a paper which is titled "Democratic Reform for the 1990s." And it has several suggestions, which the government could well take into advice. It would do you well to take a good look at it. The paper deals with public accountability, Mr. Speaker, and I think the public, and I think the farmers of Saskatchewan, would be interested in a couple of the things here.

Let me take, for example, an item about public access and participation. Let me take a look at an item or two that's proposed in this paper. How about accountability? In the paper it says that:

This government has severely distorted the budget review program. The payments made to the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation have become a mechanism to withhold expenditure information from the public.

Well, I think maybe the farmers of Saskatchewan might be interested in how this government wastes its money. What they've done is they've set out . . . they don't . . . there's no place in this public accounts, in the public accounts books, that there is a description for the spending under each

sub-vote. Our proposal, Mr. Speaker, is that such a thing happen so that, Mr. Speaker, the government can be held a little more accountable. They've set these things up that at this stage only about 50 per cent of the public spending of the government of Saskatchewan is reported through the auditor. It no longer goes to the auditor. They have found a way of by-passing the auditor.

Now, I think the farmers in Saskatchewan might be quite interested to see exactly what happens to 50 per cent of the spending that is not accounted for and not audited by the Provincial Auditor.

There are items in this proposal regarding openness in government and access to government information. There are items in this proposal that talk about fairness in contracting, Mr. Speaker. I say to the government members opposite, if they're serious about change, the first thing you should do is make a commitment to change yourself.

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: -- Mr. Speaker, is it desirable for us to have a Premier that is lead by ideology only? The answer is no. Is it proper and desirable for us to have a Premier that leads by polls? The answer is no. Mr. Speaker, I'm for a leader, and I'm for a premier, that has a vision, that can lead by vision and that can lead by example.

We need a vision for economic development, we need a vision for education, we need a vision for health, we need a vision for culture, we need a vision for rural Saskatchewan. What is it that you want rural Saskatchewan to look like 10 years from now? Don't look through a rear-view mirror. We need a vision for small business, and that vision should be based on values.

And let's compare some values of the Conservatives opposite with the NDP: the Tory vision of rugged individualism with the NDP vision of a fair share for all. What is good according to the Tory vision? The answers would be money, consumption, and power, if you looked at their literature and if you looked at their slogans. What is good for the NDP? The answer would be services, co-operation, sharing, and community. Those are the words you'd see. They have the ideology of competition and winning is everything. How many times have you heard the word competition? Compare that with the New Democratic vision of co-operation and treating people the way you would like to be treated. Compare that, Mr. Speaker, compare those values. With competition, Mr. Speaker, for every winner there are many losers. Why shouldn't we use the vision and the ideology and the values of the New Democrats, where you build on each other's strength? Why not?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: -- My leader, Mr. Speaker, my leader, the member from Riversdale, is creating a vision based on egalitarian values, a vision that involves economic planning. We ask the question, Mr. Speaker, what is it that needs to be done to make Saskatchewan a desirable place in which to live? We don't ask the question, how is it that we can privatize in

Saskatchewan? In education we ask the question, not how do we privatize education; we ask the question, what shall we do that our schools can be regarded as the best in the land? In health, we don't ask the question, what should we do to privatize health? We ask the question, what should we do to make people confident in a health system for the future?

Some Hon. Members: mHear, hear!

The Speaker: -- It being 10 o'clock, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 10 p.m.