

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: -- Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on Tuesday next move:

That this Assembly, on this 42nd anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights by the General Assembly of the United Nations, formally recognize the extreme importance of advancing the cause of human rights in our quest for creating a truly just society.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Solomon: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure this morning to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly on behalf of my colleague the member for Regina Elphinstone, the Minister of Economic Diversification and Trade, 12 adult students from SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) seated in the west gallery.

I'd like to ask members to join me in welcoming these students here. I look forward to meeting with you after question period to discuss any of the things you felt were important in this Assembly, as well as to take some pictures and have some refreshments.

The minister is not in today; he's on a trip outside of the province and he's asked me to introduce you on his behalf. So I welcome you to this Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: -- Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all present in the legislature this morning 55 grade 6, 7, and 8 students from St. Dominic Savio School in the constituency of Regina Wascana Plains. They're located in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, and they have had a tour. They will be meeting with me on the stairs for pictures and later, refreshments. They are accompanied by Bryce Buchanan and Michele Buchko, their teachers, and a chaperon, Kathy Kwasnicki. I would be glad to speak with them and I hope that they enjoy and learn during their tour and their time with us this morning.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: -- Mr. Speaker, through you and to all members it's my pleasure to introduce a number . . . 11 adult guests from the SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) campus in Moose Jaw. These are all students in English as a second language course at the SIAST campus in Moose Jaw. Today they're accompanied by their teacher, Joyce Stryker, and their bus driver, Chris Benson.

Mr. Speaker, these students are all relatively newcomers

to our city, to our province, and to our nation, and so not only are they learning of the English language, they're learning of our democratic traditions and structures and freedoms.

And in many ways, Mr. Speaker, these are the new generation of pioneers to our province. And as other generations have contributed so much to Saskatchewan we know that these too will contribute to our province. So I not only welcome them to our legislature, but to our province and nation.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: -- I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with my colleague, the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow, in welcoming these students from SIAST to this their Legislative Assembly -- and for many of these people, if not all, Mr. Speaker, their first visit to their Legislative Assembly. I look forward to joining with the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow later following the question period.

The students will be taking a tour of the Legislative Building, and we'll be meeting later for pictures and refreshments and, most importantly, a chance to discuss your experiences and to say a special welcome not only to the Legislative Assembly but welcome to Moose Jaw and Saskatchewan and Canada. So I'd ask all members to once again join in welcoming these very special students to the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Financial Management Review Commission

Mr. Swenson: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this morning is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, it is a well-known fact that three members of the Gass tribunal have been financial contributors or have actively displayed campaign signs and literature during campaigns in this province, I think a criteria that clearly would define them as being partisan people.

Mr. Premier, would you not agree that if this government, this newly elected government, is going to achieve its stated aim of setting a new direction for the spending of public moneys in this province, that you will now, this day, disband the Gass tribunal and allow the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker, to head a new commission with criteria which are clearly non-partisan and which does not prejudice the institutions of this legislature?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In response to the member's question, I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the members of the Financial Management Review Commission were chosen because of their capabilities and because of their expertise: an assistant dean of law at the University of Saskatchewan; a prominent business lawyer who has the background and qualifications to know what to look for in the form of this kind of a commission; the Saskatchewan of the . . . of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, a very prominent individual

in charge of one of the largest business enterprises in the province of Saskatchewan; and Mr. Gass, the chairman, former president of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants.

They were chosen, Mr. Speaker, on the basis of what they could contribute to this exercise, in order that the books of the province of Saskatchewan can be opened, so that the people of Saskatchewan can know what the true financial affairs of the province are. And we're looking forward to the work that they're going to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: -- Supplementary to the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker. To the minister, and I reiterate that three members of the Gass tribunal are NDP (New Democratic Party) partisans, to the Minister of Finance, is this nothing short of a *in camera* McCarthy-style commission, this Gass tribunal that you've put together?

Will the minister not admit today that the terms of reference, the political nature of most of the appointees, and the time period which is being reviewed can only lead to one conclusion, and that is nothing but a political witch-hunt designed more to satisfy the government's desire to discredit anything good done by the previous government than truly examine the financial state of the province?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: -- Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting to hear the members opposite talk about political appointments when at the time that they served on this side of the House they did nothing else but make political appointments.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: -- I also find it disturbing, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite, the critic for Finance opposite, would try to discredit prominent Saskatchewan citizens who have at their own . . . who are not going to even be paid a per diem for the work that they do because they think it's important that the difficulties, such financial situation, which this province faces be revealed and opened up for the public and the government to know.

These people were appointed because of their expertise. They will do the work that is necessary. In fact they will probably consult with the member opposite in the work that they do, and do the job of opening the books that is so important to have.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A new question to the minister. The chairman of the Gass tribunal yesterday, in the *Star-Phoenix* December 5 issue, laid out some criteria that his commission would operate under.

It seems odd to me, Mr. Speaker, that they have limited their purview to about a dozen transactions. They won't name them, Mr. Speaker, but about a dozen. Surprise, surprise that these transactions will only be the ones that

spent large amounts of public money with a high degree of public visibility and, Mr. Speaker, that the four members of the commission will vote -- behind closed doors, Mr. Speaker -- on whether they will investigate further.

Now I would think the members of the media, Mr. Speaker, would want to know . . .

The Speaker: -- Order. Does the member have a question? I'd ask the member to put his question.

Mr. Swenson: -- My question to the minister is, Mr. Speaker: does he think it proper that four people, three of whom have obvious partisanship, should be voting behind closed doors on whether to look at a transaction that may involve thousands of people's investments in this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is quite proper that the Financial Management Review Commission be independent. It is independent from the government; it is important it be that way. It will set out the areas in which it is going to look into within the terms of reference which it has before it, which the Provincial Auditor helped develop. And it will report in the public way, not only to the government but to the public as well, because this inquiry, Mr. Speaker, is important to the public just as much as it is important to this legislature.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: -- Supplementary to the same minister, Mr. Speaker. The very fact, Mr. Minister, as I said before, that thousands of Saskatchewan people have seen fit to invest in some of the government's transactions in the last decade, don't you think it's proper . . . and I remind you, no one on this side of the House has anything to hide. We want this out, Mr. Minister, in full public purview. The only way an independent review can happen is through the *Public Accounts* Committee with full access of the media and public.

The question then is, Mr. Speaker: will the Premier allow his Finance minister to make sure that this Assembly has its rightful scrutiny of the dealings of Executive Council? And I believe, Mr. Speaker, the only way that that can be done is if the Premier has this committee disbanded and turns it over to full control of this legislature, which is the *Public Accounts* Committee.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: -- Mr. Speaker, let me assure you, Mr. Speaker, that this report will be openly debated in this legislature for the benefit of the member.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: -- This report will be considered by the public because it would be a public document. And, Mr. Speaker, the member at that time will have an opportunity to debate it. And I hope also that this report

will be considered by the *Public Accounts* Committee in its deliberations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: -- New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, are you not doing what you so roundly criticized the previous government for doing, that of holding meetings in secret without full public scrutiny?

You have opted to take the Provincial Auditor into this process not as a full participating member, but simply in an advisory committee. He will be asked to comment on things which your commission will have voted on in secret, things that the auditor will not have the chance to be privy to in person, and neither will the members of the media or the public.

You roundly criticized the former government for years because they did things behind closed doors.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that there is partisanship openly displayed by members of this committee, that they are voting in secret behind closed doors, will you not this day, Mr. Minister, order this commission disbanded and let the auditor fulfil his rightful role?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: -- Mr. Speaker, it is really a strange performance to hear members opposite defending the auditor when they attacked the auditor for nine whole years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: -- Mr. Speaker, it's because the Conservative members and the Leader of the Opposition, when he was premier, locked the auditor out of the books of the government -- that's why this commission is now set up.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: -- This commission is doing what the government opposite refused to do for nine years, Mr. Speaker. It is opening the books to the people of Saskatchewan and this legislature. And I can assure this House and you, Mr. Speaker, that from now on those books will stay open.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: -- Supplementary to the Premier. Mr. Premier, quite seriously, when you're looking at this Legislative Assembly and the role of the auditor, and you want to publicly examine the books according to the province of Saskatchewan and you have partisan members that are involved in this, partisan members involved; (2) the media excluded, the media is excluded, you know that they can't go to the meetings -- the vote will be in secret -- you're going to compromise the auditor and the members of the Legislative Assembly.

It's contrary to the freedom of information Act introduced by our administration, passed here. It's not consistent, not at all consistent with the fact that thousands and tens of thousands of people have bought SaskPower bonds,

Saskoil bonds, Saskoil shares -- people on both sides of the House.

Mr. Premier, would you now admit that if you want to have true public access and scrutiny that it should not be partisan, it should not be secret, and you should not compromise the auditor all at the same time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: -- I think maybe . . . I think, Mr. Speaker, the most appropriate question that could be asked here today in view of the members opposite, is what is it that they are afraid of in having such an inquiry?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: -- I want to assure you, Mr. Speaker, that this is not a partisan commission. I want to assure you, Mr. Speaker, that it is an open commission and it will make a report to the public which members opposite will be able to comment on and discuss in this legislature. I want to assure you, Mr. Speaker, that this commission is carrying out what the public of Saskatchewan asked of this government to do and asked of this legislature to do, and that is open the books of the Government of Saskatchewan so that they know all of those things which they were refused in the last nine years, and will in future know all of those that their government does on their behalf in future years as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: -- One last question, Mr. Speaker. One final supplementary to the Premier. Would the Premier consider proclaiming the freedom of information Act prior to this commission and its review?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, the freedom of information Bill is going to be proclaimed and be proclaimed as quickly as possible. We are in government 36 or 37 days. We think the freedom of information Act as suggested by the former administration needs a closer review.

I would say to the hon. Leader of the Opposition that as far as the Financial Review Commission is concerned, the rules of operation are entirely up to them. What submissions are to be made public or not to be made public will be in their purview, not the government's purview. You are free to make submissions; you are free to write to the chair, who I think you know very well. And you can explore all of this with them in every way going.

And I do say to the hon. members here that we . . . this commission has been prompted by the very well-known fact that the provincial auditor, the former provincial auditor, Mr. Lutz, documented that 50 cents out of every dollar spent by your administration, sir, he could not adequately account for . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And no, that's what the . . . the provincial auditor said that. And the result is . . . I've said the commission can make that decision for you. I've said the commission can do this. The rules are up to the commission and this has

prompted . . . Now I just wish these people wouldn't be so squirmy about the position of the commission.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: -- Take part, take part. Let the media take part. The commission chair will know how to handle this very well. These are four very distinguished people, notwithstanding your attempt to malign them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Relocation of Piper Aircraft Corporation

Ms. Haverstock: -- Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Economic Diversification and Trade, I pose this question to the Premier. It's come to my attention that Piper Aircraft Corporation has made a decision to move its operations to Canada and with it some 5,000 jobs. This corporation has made it known that it will not be going to Ontario, which was its first choice, because of the unprofessional manner in which the Ontario government treated it this week. My question to the hon. member is: is the Government of Saskatchewan actively pursuing Piper Aircraft Corporation?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, the government obviously wants to pursue any viable economic enterprise which can benefit the people of this province, this region. The question of the specific one that the member mentions I'm sure is on the list of considerations of the Minister of economic development and the government. I think all we can do is simply answer that far for today and see what economic or other financial considerations are attached to this or any other proposal.

Ms. Haverstock: -- Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Are you indeed telling me, sir, that you are unaware as to whether or not the Government of Saskatchewan is actively pursuing -- as is Nova Scotia, Quebec, and the province of British Columbia -- Piper Aircraft Corporation?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is not a question of being aware or unaware. What the member is in effect saying, or at least suggesting, is based on a **Globe and Mail** newspaper story with which I totally disagree on the member's interpretation. I saw it this morning. The fact of the matter is that a number of governments provincially are pursuing economic enterprises. I think what we need to do as Canadians as a whole is come up with an industrial strategy which benefits regions that need economic developments such as ours. But it's based on some sound fundamental principles and policies which don't end up begging other regions or other Canadians.

Now the Piper proposal, like any other proposal, needs to be weighed in terms of its economic viability, in terms of that kind of a consideration. And that's exactly what we're doing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: -- Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to inform the Premier that Piper Aircraft Corporation is from Florida, so it will not be taking anything away from

any part of Canada. My question to you, sir, is what is the Government of Saskatchewan's policy related to the assistance to companies such as Piper Aircraft Corporation which may bring with them the job opportunities that Saskatchewan residents need?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The policy is one which is basically summarized as follows. We want to attract as much investment and business opportunity in this province as we can. We want to do it in a way which is based on a proper analysis of the costs and the benefits.

As the hon. Leader of the Liberal party will know, the province has been virtually bankrupted as a result of nine and a half years of administration of the Leader of the Opposition. We know what the situation is in debt on the operating side. We have yet to discover the contingent liabilities which have attached to whole series of financial projects -- huge financial projects -- which this government has attached itself, something that I think the Gass Commission will assist the people of Saskatchewan in informing.

So subject to those caveats, subject to those considerations which are legitimate and honest ones, and based on what the demands and the requirements are, we will do whatever we can to attract the businesses available. So we're not closing any doors necessary to open up investment to the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: -- Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, I'm having some difficulty, I think, perhaps in understanding this and you can help me further. I am wanting to know if in fact your government is actively pursuing something that could possibly bring 5,000 jobs to the province of Saskatchewan, that it seems as though other provinces of Canada are actively pursuing, that they too would be responsible to all of their citizens to determine whether or not it would be a good situation for their province.

Please, sir, would you let me know whether or not you are aware of whether the Government of Saskatchewan is pursuing this company which is going to be coming to Canada from the United States.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, I thought I made that absolutely clear to the member opposite. I'll repeat again for the members in the opposition, this government is pursuing any credible possible economic enterprise, including Piper, which could benefit the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Now that's the question that you put to us; that's the answer I've given to you straight across the piece.

I have said that we have a couple of considerations which have to be taken into account, namely that the province is bankrupted, virtually bankrupted, thanks to the nine and a half years of the Conservative administration. That is a consideration. And we have to also consider what the other factors are pertaining to the offers or lack of offers from other regions.

But the answer is, we're trying to get employment for the province of Saskatchewan and this is one of the aspects we're looking at.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Premier a supplementary to the line of questioning that has just gone on. Five thousand jobs, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Premier, in Saskatchewan means an awful lot.

Now for you to say that you are going to be looking at all things, I want to know and I want to be put on record right now, what have you specifically done to contact the Piper Aircraft company of Florida to specifically negotiate with them the possibility of them bringing these jobs to Saskatchewan, in contradiction to what the Ontario Premier, Bob Rae has already said, that Piper is not welcome in Ontario?

I want you to say to the people of Saskatchewan now, what have you specifically done to attract 5,000 jobs to Saskatchewan, to Saskatoon perhaps, to complement Promavia?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, I'm going to refrain from responding to all aspects of that question at this time . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: -- . . . at this time. But soon we'll be making some responses there. But for the time being, let me say that it is not going to be the policy of this government in serious discussions, negotiations with respect to economic matters when we're discussing them, to be doing this in an open area at a preliminary stage. It will be the policy of this government to make public the documentation pertaining to any economic development, unlike the policy of the former administration.

And the comments that I've given to the Leader of the Liberal Party pertain. We are examining the options that are there. The contacts that have been made are the appropriate ones by the Ministry of economic development. And for the time being, that's as far as I can go and I'm not going to go any further this morning.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: -- You didn't go anywhere. What do you mean, you're not going to go further?

The Speaker: -- Order. You have not been recognized by the Chair, sir. Order. I recognize the member from Rosthern.

Mr. Neudorf: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I tend to get excited when I have asked a very, very pertinent, important question, and when I see the Premier laughing over there in response to my serious question, I get

excited. Because he did not go anywhere. What do you mean, you're not going to go any further? You didn't go anywhere. You didn't answer my question. What have you specifically done to attract 5,000 jobs to this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, the hon. member from Rosthern is a very excitable fellow; he's demonstrated that again. But I would ask the hon. member just to sort of keep his cool and his calm, chill out a little bit. We're not going to adopt a policy like the former administration which is to run out and scratch up on the back of an envelope an economic deal that is faced by a minister in the corridor of the hallway.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: -- We're not going to scratch out kind of deals like that -- produced the GigaTexts of the world, the Joytecs, and the Supercarts of the world . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: -- And we're not going to do it a very excited way. We're going to do it in a calm, rational, economic, business-like way.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Daryl Bean Letter

Mr. Neudorf: -- Mr. Speaker, one thing is for sure: I'm really going to get chilled off because after a cold shoulder like that, there's nothing else for me to be doing here.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I want to change direction, and I direct a new question, a totally different new question now, to the Premier as well. And I want to preface my question with a short quotation. And this is the quotation, Mr. Premier, that I want you to react to:

After God had finished the rattlesnake, the toad and the vampire, he had some awful stuff left with which he made a scab. A scab is a two-legged animal with a corkscrew soul, a waterlogged brain, and a . . . backbone of jelly and glue. Where others have hearts, he carries a tumour of rotten principles . . . No man has a right to scab as long as there is a pool of water to drown his carcass in, or a rope long enough to hang his body with.

Mr. Premier, my question to you is based on this quotation, and I quote a fellow called Daryl Bean who, as we all know, is a national vice-president to the NDP Party. This letter, this quotation . . .

The Speaker: -- Order. Does the member have a question?

Mr. Neudorf: -- Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: -- Okay, put your question.

Mr. Neudorf: -- Yes, Mr. Speaker, I certainly have a question. Mr. Premier, based on this letter written to three grandmothers who were in fear of losing their jobs -- this letter was written to three grandmothers -- Mr. Premier, the question is this. Considering this day opposing violence against women and considering that these very violent words were written to mothers by national vice-president of the NDP, will you and Bob Rae join together today and condemn this contemptible action?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the hon. member from Rosthern, first of all I do not know whether Daryl Bean is a national vice-president of the federal NDP or not. I do not know that.

And I want to say to the hon. member from Rosthern and to you, sir, Mr. Speaker, I will answer questions pertaining to the actions and the deeds and the words of this administration right here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: -- And so I would say to Mr. Excitement over there, please calm down. But if you want to ask me any question with respect to the Saskatchewan provincial government in the legislature and our government policy, I'll try to answer it.

If you have questions about Daryl Bean and what he has said or he has not said and whether you agree or disagree with it, please, sir, take your complaints directly to Mr. Daryl Bean.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 1 -- An Act to amend The Northern Municipalities Act

Hon. Ms. Carson: -- Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Northern Municipalities Act.

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

Bill No. 2 -- An Act to amend The Medical Profession Act, 1981

Hon. Ms. Simard: -- Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Medical Profession Act, 1981.

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

Bill No. 3 -- An Act to amend The Education and Health Tax Act

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Education and Health Tax Act.

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

Bill No. 4 -- An Act to amend The Income Tax Act

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: -- Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Income Tax Act.

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

Bill No. 5 -- An Act to amend The Liquor Consumption Tax Act

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: -- Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Liquor Consumption Tax Act.

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

Bill No. 6 -- An Act to amend The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: -- Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act.

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

Hon. Ms. Simard: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would seek leave to move directly to the government motions to consider item number 1, our motion respecting the Montreal massacre.

Leave granted.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

Hon. Ms. Simard: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on a matter of grave importance to the people of this province. Today is an official day of remembrance and action on violence against women. The Saskatchewan government recognizes today as an appropriate, meaningful, and positive memorial to the 14 young women who were so tragically killed on December 6, 1989 in Montreal.

We can only assume because Marc Lepine went into the engineering building that day, separated the men from the women, then screamed: you're all a bunch of feminists, before he shot them, that he obviously believed that they had overstepped their rightful place in society. For this he put an end to their promising lives and to their plans for the future. All because they had stepped beyond what he considered to be the traditional role of women.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, there are people today who share the view that women have no place as engineers, truck drivers, physicians, or even indeed politicians. There are those who see victims of rape not as people who have suffered incredible pain and psychological trauma, but rather as women who asked for it and who deserved the assault. There are people who think that wife beating can be prevented by just keeping the

children quiet and the house immaculate. If not, then the beating is deserved.

Today, Mr. Speaker, violence against women is a serious problem. It affects women of all ages, of all cultures, of all economic situations and abilities. Violence and the threat of violence deprives Saskatchewan women of their ability to achieve full equality in Canadian society. Violence manifests itself in many ways, Mr. Speaker, including physical assault, sexual assault, psychological and emotional abuse, pornography, sexual harassment, and pervasive social attitudes that condone violence.

Mr. Speaker, let me quote some statistics which reflect the serious dimension of this problem. In Canada it is estimated that at least one in every ten women is battered by her husband or her male partner. A recent Alberta study puts it at one in eight. Three-quarters of wife assaults involve physical effects such as broken bones, burns, bites, lacerations, black eyes, gun wounds and death.

Sixty-two per cent of all women murdered in Canada are victims of domestic violence. Every 17 minutes a sexual assault is committed in Canada, and 90 per cent of the victims are female.

In 1990, 27,000 sexual assaults were reported to police -- almost double the figure reported in 1984. Women who have been sexually assaulted are approximately five times more likely to have a nervous breakdown, six times more likely rather to attempt suicide, Mr. Speaker, and eight times as likely to commit suicide or die prematurely.

One in every four women will be sexually assaulted at some time in her life. One half of these women will be assaulted before they reach the age of 17. Eighty per cent of women incarcerated under federal jurisdiction have had a history of physical or sexual abuse.

A study of women with disabilities found that 42 per cent of women with disabilities report they have been physically or sexually abused and that a female child born with a disability has a 52 per cent chance of being abused at some time during her life.

Female victims of elder abuse outnumber male victims two to one. Fifty-six per cent of women who were surveyed in several urban Canadian cities told researchers they feel unsafe when walking alone in their neighbourhoods after dark. The results of another recent study indicate that 90 per cent of women report experiencing some form of sexual harassment on the job.

Mr. Speaker, the statistics are appalling, but the more we talk about them the more we learn about the facts and teach our children and all of society that violence against women, or indeed against any person, is unacceptable. It is wrong, it is never justified, and it must stop.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1045)

Hon. Ms. Simard: -- The more we learn about the devastating effects and the pervasiveness of violence in

our society the more we can take those necessary steps to progressing toward a more fair and equitable and supportive community for all of our members including women and children.

It is important to note that violence against women is not natural. Nine out of ten men do not beat their wives. Violence is a learned behaviour. It is an unnatural behaviour. It is based on the idea that men should control women rather than the idea of the equality of men and women in a shared humanity.

Mr. Speaker, on this national day of remembrance and action, I want to encourage all members of this Assembly and all members of society to join with us today in recognizing the valuable work being done by the sexual assault centres and shelters for battered women in this province.

In Saskatchewan we have 11 crisis or sexual assault centres. They are located in Melfort, Kindersley, Regina, Saskatoon, Yorkton, Lloydminster, Prince Albert, North Battleford, and Swift Current. Last year nine of these community organizations served 1,856 people who were affected either directly or indirectly by a sexual assault -- 1,115 of their clients had himself or herself been sexually assaulted. Of these, 89 per cent were female.

In addition there are 10 shelters for battered women. These shelters are located in Regina, Saskatoon, North Battleford, Yorkton, La Ronge, Moose Jaw, Swift Current, Prince Albert, and a safe-house program in Melfort.

It is committed women in this province who saw to it that shelters for battered women, services to sexual assault victims, and a second-stage housing project have been set up. These groups continue to talk about the issues and to undertake public education.

Today it is appropriate that we recognize their work and the contributions of all people, men and women, who are working to eliminate violence in our society and to help victims of violence.

Regina and Saskatoon have women's support group programs, and there are several treatment programs for batterers and sexual assault offenders. Teachers in our schools have the option of teaching family violence and child abuse in the health curriculum. And personal and social values and skills that promote respect for others are being taught across the curriculum as one of the common essential learnings.

Indeed today, Mr. Speaker, whole communities are working together to address the issue. For example, the Touchwood File Hills Qu'Appelle District Indian women have developed a training manual on family violence. It is entitled **Community Response to Family Violence**. Over 100 women have taken the four-day training course. And the workshop raises the level of community awareness, gives an understanding of the cycle of violence, and makes community members aware of appropriate services. Resource people from the community, such as the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) participate.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage every Saskatchewan citizen to

follow the example of this Indian community and to talk about the attitudes and circumstances which allow violence against women and others in this province. Each and every one of us should be aware of violence 365 days a year. But today, let's give it special attention.

Just a few years ago, Mr. Speaker, violence against women was still a laughing matter for some of Canada's politicians. On May 12, 1982, when the problem of wife-battering was raised in the House of Commons as a serious problem affecting one in every ten women, laughter echoed through the House. Let me contrast this action with the action of the members of the House of Commons this past October, when federal members of parliament unanimously approved NDP member Dawn Black's private member's Bill declaring December 6 to be a national day of remembrance and action on violence against women.

Mr. Speaker, governments working together across this land can do a lot to address this problem. National task forces have been created and Saskatchewan has participated in these. And just last week as Minister responsible for the Status of Women I announced this government's support for **Building Blocks: Framework for a National Strategy on Violence Against Women**.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: -- This document outlines measures which can be taken by various levels of government, communities, and individuals in order to eliminate violence against women. Mr. Speaker, the elimination of violence is a priority of our government. And although in Saskatchewan we are facing very serious financial restraints, we will within the confines of those restraints take whatever steps we can to help the women, children, and families affected by violence.

For that reason today I wish to reiterate the Lake Louise declaration on violence against women, to which Saskatchewan is a signatory, and this declaration says:

We, the ministers responsible for the status of women in Canada, are committed to achieving full equality for women in all aspects of life. As Canadians, we value the inherent worth and dignity of every individual and we expect all persons to treat one another with respect. Since violence and its threat are depriving many women of their ability to achieve equality, we declare that: violence against women is a crime and punishable under law; women are entitled to live in a safe environment; offenders must be held accountable for their behaviour; the elimination of violence against women requires a response including prevention, public education, services and enforcement of the law; every individual, community and government in Canada must do everything possible to help the women, children and families affected by violence; we must all work together to achieve a society free from violence.

And that's the Lake Louise declaration, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: -- As a society we all pay the cost of this violence. We pay in health care costs, in social service costs, in court system costs, and in increased use of the penal system. But most importantly, Mr. Speaker, we pay a terrible personal and human cost.

Mr. Speaker, society's tolerance of violence minimizes the gravity of the impact of violence on the lives of the people affected. It will take a concerted effort by both men and women, by teachers, police officers, judges, governments, churches, and many other groups and individuals acting together to change this tolerance for violence.

In legislatures across this country today this serious problem is being addressed, and MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) are speaking out against this violence in the hope of raising public awareness and in this way contributing to reducing society's tolerance of violence against women and children.

Mr. Speaker, today we all wear a white ribbon as declaration of our personal commitment to ending violence against women. And together with others in the province, we can work to ensure that we build a society that accepts women and men as equal, one where women choose their roles rather than having them designated at birth. That is when violence against women will no longer be tolerated.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let me assure the people of this province that our government recognizes that we have a role to play in eliminating violence. We support the work of the Canadian panel on violence against women, and we will continue to support all future intergovernmental efforts aimed at eliminating violence. We will work with the federal government in their public education campaign centred on the prevention of violence against women, and we support the work of the federal, provincial, and territorial Justice ministers and attorney generals' work on gender equity in the courts.

Finally, let me state our commitment to working with community organizations, churches, businesses, unions, and women's organizations, and individuals, to find creative and innovative solutions which will work towards the elimination of violence in all of its forms.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to move the following motion:

That this Assembly on the occasion of Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women recognizes the seriousness of this problem and expresses its determination to eliminate this violence in our society through programs which include prevention, public education, support services, and the strict enforcement of the law.

And it's seconded by the member for Yorkton. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Serby: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise, Mr. Speaker,

as a seconder to this motion to speak to an issue that confronts our lives and paralyzes our society. A day to remember, Mr. Speaker, a tragedy of 14 young women killed on December 6, 1989 in Montreal. A day, Mr. Speaker, to designate and resolve as an Assembly to collectively work at eliminating the actions of violence against women and families.

Mr. Speaker, violence and fear of violence threatens the personal security and safety and equality of all women every day -- in the home, on the street, and at work. When women are denied their basic rights of security of person, they cannot participate as equals in society.

Violence and the threats of violence are depriving women of their ability to achieve full equity in our society. Violence against women is deeply rooted in our socialization process, in our power structures, and in our institutions.

Today, Mr. Speaker, family violence and violence against women is a grave and serious problem in our society. The violence centred around women takes on many forms, physical and sexual assault, psychological and emotional abuse. Mr. Speaker, the victimization of women is devastating and the trauma experienced from the incidents creates dysfunctioning in the lives of women and families that leave permanent emotional scars, and in many instances are irreparable.

Mr. Speaker, it is truly a myth that violence against women and families is culturally or socially associated, because violence against women and families has no boundaries of status, age, culture, economic situation, or ability. Mr. Speaker, violence against women is a societal ill which is precipitated by men.

Violence against women, Mr. Speaker, isn't an inherent behaviour and all men are not violent. We, as men, Mr. Speaker, have created cultures where men use violence against other men to solve differences between nations, where every boy is forced to learn to fight or he is branded as a sissy, and where men have forms of power and privilege that women have not yet enjoyed.

And, Mr. Speaker, men have been defined as part of the problem. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that men will also be part of the solution.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Serby: -- Mr. Speaker, women, men, and children of our society all pay for violence against women, both emotionally and socially. We all pay financially for the police intervention, for lawyers in courts to process the crimes, for health care needs to treat the women's injuries, for counselling and support services for the women and children, and for the transition houses and safe shelters which are often the only place women can go to keep out of danger.

Mr. Speaker, the social costs of violence and fear are even more devastating. When fearful women isolate and withdraw from the community to protect themselves, the community begins to die. Because I believe that women are still the

keepers of our communities. They are still the community volunteers and we can find them in the minor sports arenas, the arts and cultural boards, the parent-teacher associations, and on and on. Violence against women creates isolation, fragments society, and debilitates communities.

Mr. Speaker, on this national day of remembrance, I ask all the members of this Assembly and all the people of this great province's society to recognize our first-line employees who are working in the field and are serving our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I also ask this Assembly to recognize the women of this House, and the commitment and dedication and perseverance in achieving a place in this Assembly. Because through your victories you have and will influence the future status of women in this province, and at the same time will educate this traditional system on the principles of equality.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Serby: -- Mr. Speaker, I also wish to recognize our Premier for his commitment to the people of this province with this selection and appointment of women to his Executive Council. This kind of signal, Mr. Speaker, points to the future, that both he and our government are sincere in achieving the ideal of equality of men and women.

The statistical data on family violence and violence against women has been substantially covered by the member from Regina Hillsdale and I will not recite them. But the incidents in this province are staggering.

As a 20-year public servant and executive director of a human social service agency in this province, working with families, children, women, prior to entering political life, I know that we have a lot of education to do in this province, Mr. Speaker, in order to reduce and eliminate violence against women and families.

(1100)

Mr. Speaker, women want to be truly an integral part of our community and society in which we live. Violence isolates. Women will come to fear violence less and the violence against them will be reduced. Only then will we become equals, respected and involved partners in our society.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, as a government and a society, we want to ensure that women and children, as well as men, have the right to live freely from violence. We must have the courage, Mr. Speaker, to change our hierarchical structures. Mr. Speaker, we must turn towards co-operative ways of interacting, rather than to the competitive model.

Mr. Speaker, in the commensuration of this day, we must take our vision of experience, our wisdom, and our power so that together we can arrive at a new consciousness of equality for men and women.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Britton: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we in the opposition would like to join this Assembly in recognition of Canada's national day for the remembrance and action on violence against women.

Mr. Speaker, we are pleased that a day has been set aside for such an important issue. Violence -- whether it is physical, sexual, emotional, or economical -- is not acceptable, and yet it is happening repeatedly throughout the world.

Helping all victims of violence must be a priority to all Saskatchewan people, and indeed, Mr. Speaker, to all people in the world. Violence is transmitted through generations, and if this cycle is to be broken we must provide not only support for the victims but we must educate the whole of society. Mr. Speaker, society must receive and comprehend the message that violence is wrong. And it's our opinion, Mr. Speaker, that those in the leadership role must be especially careful that they do not indicate in any way that they condone violence.

Children of abused women are also victims. They are victims in danger of becoming a new generation of abusing parents and partners.

You know, Mr. Speaker, some may be surprised that I have included the term economic violence in these remarks. But while not as openly brutal as physical violence, those who would deny proper economic support to their spouses, and indeed the elderly widowed, are guilty of a great violence indeed. That is why I am proud of the maintenance enforcement program we have in our province. Through this service economic means can be sought, alleviating some of the difficulty.

And although economic abuse can be tragic, Mr. Speaker, equally as tragic is the abuse that senior women suffer at the hands of children and adults, strangers. Society must be especially outraged at these horrific actions, Mr. Speaker. Statistics on wives who are physically abused would astonish most people. This abuse must be stopped to protect and prevent families from breaking down.

And I have high hopes, Mr. Speaker, that this government will do more than simply recognize this day. There is much a government can do, such as automatic maintenance enforcement, fund safe houses, and promote counselling for the abused, and indeed, Mr. Speaker, for the abuser.

I strongly urge the Attorney General of this province to pursue severe measures for the protection of those guilty of such violence. And I believe a national day of remembrance and action is an appropriate step in the process to do away with violence. It is my sincere hope that a national day such as this, along with support services, professional counselling, and educational programming, will continue to work toward the elimination of this very serious problem in our society, Mr. Speaker.

With that I would like to commend the member from Hillsdale for bringing this motion forward. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: -- Mr. Speaker, this is indeed a significant day in Canada, a day now marked by senseless blood stains on the pages of our history books. And it is a day that gives us pause for sobering thought in this legislature when we reflect upon the horror that we felt two years ago when the lives of 14 young women ended without warning.

This horrible episode must not be without purpose. It is something where the deaths of these young women must not be in vain. The agony and sorrow of those left to mourn must not be futile. This is truly a time for a call to action for those of us who have been moved by this massacre.

With one in ten women in this country being battered, there is much that we are responsible to change. And out of respect for these women and for their survivors left to mourn this senseless and tragic loss, I say let us take action. Let us make this day to remember the extent and severity of violence against women in Saskatchewan, in Canada, and around the world.

And let us all commit, Mr. Speaker, to working harder, all of us, as women, as mothers, as wives, as sisters, to stand up against the prejudices and inequities in our society. It shall be up to us as the elected representatives of the people, to ensure that offenders receive treatment, that offenders receive punishment, that the bitterness and bigotry and violence towards women here at home is eliminated.

And to the other women in this legislature who I'm proud to have as my colleagues in this government, let me say this: let us look to our sons, our brothers, our fathers, and our husbands, and our friends, and indeed to these men who are our colleagues in government, and let us ask them to be our partners in this struggle. For as men they must accept not only some responsibility for the problem, but they must bear equally in the responsibility for the solution. So let us help each other to move toward the evolution of attitudes. For progress, I believe, is being made, and we need their help if we are to ensure that the event we solemnly remember today is never to be repeated.

We must support and encourage progress, and we must hold men in our lives and in society accountable in our homes and in schools and in businesses and indeed in our courts, when they fail in their responsibilities.

As tribute to those who have died, and as hope for those hundreds of thousands of women who endure violence in their daily lives, we must provide leadership and commitment from this Assembly.

We must be strong because those who are abused and threatened will need to know that we have the strength and the courage to defend them. We must be sensitive and patient because change takes time. But we must also be committed to those who are weary and battered and

afraid. And we must offer shelter and compassion and resources through our powers in this House, because we must protect those who are our sisters, from the very young to the elderly, for abuse and violence has no barriers of age or race or income. And we must press forward to ensure that violence against women becomes completely unconscionable in our society.

Every government has a chance to change some things. So let this be one of them. And there may be many things which are out of reach for us in terms of change, but this is something upon which we really can have an impact. Our attitudes, in fact our behaviour, are things that are malleable in our society. So let's work to reshape attitudes of those who perpetuate this crisis of violence in Saskatchewan.

We can take positive steps to ensure that the deaths of these young women have true meaning for each of us. And I ask this House on behalf of the mother of one of the young women who was murdered in Montreal, with whom I met last Saturday, that we use this day each year as a day to measure our progress in the war against violence towards women.

Let us commit today to work towards the improvement of the law and the support systems that deal with this issue. Let's strengthen to resolve to make this province, our nation, a safer place -- a place in which fear of violence is no longer a part of anyone's lives.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: -- Mr. Speaker, I want to intervene with a few short remarks in support of the powerful statements that have been made on this subject by the previous speakers, and especially by the Minister of Health and the member for Saskatoon Greystone.

All aspects of this question are of intense concern to all members of this House, and all concerned people across Canada. It is unfortunate that it takes an incident of the horrifying dimensions of the incident in Montreal two years ago to bring this issue to the top of our minds and to the top of our agendas. But it is there and we must all endeavour to ensure that it does stay on the top of our minds and at the top of our agenda.

The idea of family violence, Mr. Speaker, is a subject that has been much in the news lately, an aspect of the broad issue of violence towards women. Family violence carries in it the horrifying idea that our society produces people who are physically and mentally cruel to the people who they should love the most: their families, their spouses, their children. The idea that there are children who live in homes where they don't feel safe, where they have to go through the mental gymnastics of finding ways to rationalize the behaviour of their parents, trying to take the blame upon themselves, trying to make sense of what is essentially an irrational attitude towards them by one or both of their parents.

This is a matter that has received attention by successive governments in Saskatchewan, by the previous

administration and -- I believe in spades -- by our administration. This will be a priority of our government.

In addition to the efforts of government, there are efforts in the communities in Saskatchewan and indeed across Canada. I mention one with which the member from Saskatoon Greystone will be familiar and that is the program at the Saskatoon Mental Health Clinic called Alternatives, where men who are violent to their partners have a place to go, a program to support them and to try and help them, which focuses on the male abuse of power. I think that I correctly state the focus of that program.

It's one example of a large number of efforts that are being made by various sectors in our society to cope with this horrifying idea of fathers and parents who are violent towards spouses and children. And we will continue to try and support those efforts in whatever way we can, and to initiate others. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1115)

Ms. Atkinson: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with my colleagues on both sides of the House in commending the Minister of Health for introducing this motion of remembrance. And I also want to pay special tribute to the thousands of women across this country that asked for a special day to remember the 14 young engineering students that were killed in the massacre in Montreal. I want to thank those women because they were able to lobby all members of the federal House of Commons in getting this special day to remember.

Mr. Speaker, for many people in this House, I am sure that they have come from families where violence -- verbal violence, physical violence, emotional violence -- was not part of their growing up. And for me personally, Mr. Speaker, I did not really become aware of violence until I became a person who was interested in becoming an elected member of the legislature.

And as I went door to door in the constituencies that I've represented since 1986, I came to know women, particularly older women, who had experienced a lifelong of verbal violence, physical violence, and emotional violence.

And I think in particular of a 86-year-old woman who was out in her backyard when I was door knocking and I came into her backyard and she was crying. And I asked her what the problem was, why was she crying. Well she was in a situation where her husband regularly beat her and she had to leave the house in order to protect herself. And she thought if she was in her backyard the neighbours would see and she wouldn't have to continue that cycle of violence for that particular day.

And when I saw this woman, she had very little hair. It looked as though because of her nerves she was pulling her hair, and she had very little hair. And I asked her, why don't you go to an interval house, or isn't there anybody that can come and make sure that this doesn't continue?

This woman was obviously an immigrant. She spoke very little English. She had no children. She had no family in this country. And when I said, what about the transition house, which was just down the street, she didn't know about it.

And it seems to me that on this day of remembrance of the women, we also have to remember the victims of violence that are still in their homes being victims of violence. And somehow as government and as all members of this legislature we have to ensure that people who want to be safe and have a desire to be safe have a place to go.

And that means, Mr. Speaker, that we are going to have to not only provide safe places for people, but we are also going to make sure that people are aware of where they can go and who can help them.

And I'm pleased, Mr. Speaker, that for the first time in this Legislative Assembly we have 12 women that were elected on October 21, 1991.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: -- The 12 women not only represent urban Saskatchewan, but they also represent rural Saskatchewan where this problem of violence is just as prevalent as it is in the cities.

And I am sure with all of the progressive members of the legislature, male members of the legislature who have been elected, and if we have the will to do it, we can ensure that women and children, older women, younger women, rural women, urban women, women who don't speak English, women who do speak English, have access to the kinds of services that will ensure that they are protected and their children are protected.

And I am sure if we have will to do it, Mr. Speaker -- and I know we do -- that we will not only deal with services for women and children, but we will ensure that the batterers who also are victims, because they come from homes where this was something that the family did and it's a learned behaviour, that they will have access to services and counselling; and all of us if we have the will to do it, can eliminate violence, verbal violence, physical violence, and emotional violence towards those people in our community.

So I thank the member from Regina Hillsdale for the opportunity to commemorate this day. It's a most important day and I'm sure if we leave this legislature committed to eliminating violence and helping our victims and helping those who are the perpetrators, we can have a truly just society where men and women are equal.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Shillington: -- As a technical matter, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to return to special orders of throne speech, so

I'll ask the House for that.

Leave granted.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Ms. Murray, seconded by Mr. Flavel.

Mr. Harper: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Time did not allow me to finish my presentation last night so I would like to conclude it this morning.

In my speech last night I mentioned some of the issues the government are committed to, such as dealing with the agricultural crisis and repealing legislation which provided for the expansion and harmonization of the provincial sales tax.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude by saying that the members of the opposition have claimed that the establishment of a Financial Management Review Commission is a witch-hunt, an attempt to embarrass the previous government.

It would seem to me, Mr. Speaker, that an independent review of our financial records of this province by an independent and non-partisan commission that would only provide us with an unbiased inventory of our financial assets and liabilities, and would suggest ways to improve financial accountability and efficiency of government, is a good fiscal management and sound common sense.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: -- I suggest to the members opposite that if they would have followed these same such principles, we would not be in the mess that we are in here today.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would ask a question of the members opposite: what are you afraid of? Is your opposition to the Gass Commission based on a fear that it will tell us the truth about where has all the money gone?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: -- Mr. Speaker, some of the members of the opposition claim that the throne speech contains no plan. Our former premier keeps saying, where's the beef? I would suggest to the former premier that even though we intend to work as hard as possible on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, that it will take a little longer than a month to clean up after nine and a half years of Tory mismanagement.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: -- Nine and a

half years of deficit, nine and a half years of reduced services, nine and a half years of continuing scandal, nine and a half years of patronage, nine and a half years of attacking the weak and helpless in our society.

Mr. Speaker, the reason why I am standing here in support of the throne speech is because the people of Saskatchewan had a beef and it was with the members of the opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: -- The people of Saskatchewan were fed up, and on election night they demonstrated that. They weren't going to take any more. And the members of the opposition know what happened. And I will say, Mr. Speaker, I can guarantee to you, the members of the opposition, that nine and a half years from today, we will look back on the record of our government and we will do so with pride and with a sense of achievement.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: -- The most important of all, we will not be afraid to go and ask the people of Saskatchewan for their support in an election because we will have earned their trust and their support.

Mr. Speaker, what does this throne speech mean to me. I would suggest to the members of the opposition that it illustrates the profound difference between our parties, the two visions of our province's future. You measure success by the size of house in which you live. New Democrats measure success by what we contribute in mind and character to the community in which we live and serve.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: -- You measure success by how you make your living. New Democrats measure success by how you live.

Mr. Speaker, the choice is clear. The path that we are taking now is the one that will lead us to a sense of worth in the things that we create, a path that leads us to brotherhood, not only for today but for all the years to follow -- a brotherhood not just of words but of acts and deeds.

Mr. Speaker, as this government sets out on a great journey, I would hope that all of us here, each and every member, would ask themselves what manner of member do I want to be, then act on it in all that we do.

Let us aim high in our aspirations for the people of Saskatchewan so that, working together, we can create a Saskatchewan that honours the dignity of each and the brotherhood of all. The throne speech is a first step in that direction, and I am very pleased to do my small part in supporting the motion. Thank you.

Mr. Kluz: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is quite an honour to reply to the Speech from the Throne. And I sincerely congratulate you on your election to the office of Speaker, Mr. Speaker. I know you will be presiding in a just and fair

manner over these proceedings as we embark on the 22nd sitting of the Saskatchewan legislature.

During our proceedings however, we must not forget that the fine people of this province deserve to know the basics of what is and will be happening in this government caucus and this building during the next few weeks of our first session.

As the people come to know us as a fair and caring government, they will also come to know us as responsible and approachable representatives, as concerned human beings who are striving to make Saskatchewan's future a brighter one.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kluz: -- Certainly our Premier will lead us during the next few weeks and beyond, demonstrating over and over again his people-before-politics philosophy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kluz: -- The Kelvington-Wadena constituencies have been represented by many outstanding members. F.A. Dewhurst from the Wadena constituency served in the Speaker's chair during the Blakeney government's first term. Mr. Speaker, I know you will carry on the tradition he helped establish of fairness and impartiality, commanding respect from both sides of the House.

Collectively we will accomplish many tasks on behalf of the people who elected us. And I pause here to extend my congratulations to my fellow NDP colleagues, both the newly elected and re-elected. It was a victorious election, worthy of the battles we all successfully fought. Again congratulations and congratulations to our cabinet members. Your talents and energy will take us forward into the future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1130)

Mr. Kluz: -- Mr. Speaker, campaigning with integrity and honesty has achieved an historic landmark victory for democratic socialism in Saskatchewan -- a victory that would have not been possible without the electorate at large, and in specific the voters in my constituency. I thank them for the trust they have placed in me, particularly considering how vast an area I represent.

Mr. Speaker, my constituency of Kelvington-Wadena, located in north-east Saskatchewan, consists of parts of the previous constituencies of Kelvington and Wadena. It has an agriculture economy with some forestry in the north end. This has been a bell-wether riding. Since 1944 the seat has consistently elected a government member.

I covered a lot of territory during my campaign and tried to meet as many people as I could. I represent 9,885 constituents scattered over an area that stretches from Highway 52 to as far north as Round Lake and includes Kelliher, Jasmin, Parkerview, West Bend, Bankend, Wishart, Mozart, Elfros, Leslie, Foam Lake, Tuffnell, Chorney Beach, Sheho, Pasweign, Wadena, Kylemore,

Kuroki, Margo, Invermay, Hendon, Fosston, Rose Valley, Kelvington, Nut Mountain, Perigord, and the Fishing Lake and Yellow Quill Reserves.

While I would like to personally thank each and every one of the people in these communities, I have no doubt, Mr. Speaker, we would not have enough time to read out the countless numbers of names of our supporters. Of the people who supported me, to them, and they know who they are, I thank you.

That support, Mr. Speaker, was critical. It came from well-informed voters, friends, neighbours, and communities who take their politics very seriously. So seriously that we have, and I say this with immense pride, the largest number of NDP memberships in 1991.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kluz: -- These good people know the issues and know party policy. They obviously have a good handle on what our province needs for the future because on October 21 they elected an NDP government, an NDP MLA to represent their concerns. And not only did they elect to vote NDP in Kelvington-Wadena, they opted to cast their votes province-wide for the NDP in 54 other constituencies.

Mr. Speaker, after years of uncertainty we now have the return of a caring, sharing, compassionate government . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kluz: -- . . . which will put the needs of the people and the needs of our communities first. Although the people of my riding are well versed in partisan politics, I have every intention of putting politics aside as I serve them, no matter whom they voted for on October 21. After all, who they voted for isn't relevant to doing a good job on their behalf. Doing a good job means representing everyone to the best of my ability.

My constituency boasts of some of the finest agriculture land in this province, often called the sure-crop district, a rich and fertile area that consistently produces. There are other industries, labourers, and professional people; however, agriculture as a way of life is the most prominent, a way of life that focuses and revolves around the family farm.

There are two theories about family farms, Mr. Speaker. The first theory is that farming is strictly a business where only the strong, the wealthy and clever survive, leaving the weaker ones to fall by the wayside, perhaps to be called losers. The NDP do not -- repeat, do not -- agree with this philosophy. Yes farming is a business, but first and foremost it is a time-honoured, traditional way of life. A true Saskatchewan way of life, it is definitely worth preserving and protecting.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kluz: -- I raise this point because it is devastating to hear about the number of farmers who have been forced to leave the land, a choice they had hoped they would

never have to make. During the previous administration approximately 1,000 farmers left every year the Tories were in power. While this was happening the old government did little to stop this out-migration. In fact, Mr. Speaker, they even said, in order to make our farm economy more efficient, another 30 per cent or 20,000 family farms would have to go, be put out of business to ensure the prosperity of larger operations. I am talking about 100,000 people involved in those family farms.

One certainly has to wonder just what was the plan for agriculture before October 21 or was there one. We need more farmers not less.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kluz: -- That is why, Mr. Speaker, the new NDP government will be designing and redesigning agriculture programs.

Before we forge ahead with our plans, we must get a sense of what kind of debt load this province is facing. We must get a handle on the massive farm debt.

And there are other questions such as: why should family farms have to purchase their land every 25 years just because one family member is retiring and another wishes to take over? This may be an ideal situation for the banks and other financial institutions, but it is certainly not ideal for the people they serve.

Mr. Speaker, imagine how many hundreds of thousands of dollars of interest we are talking about. Many of my neighbours benefitted from the old land bank system initially designed by Allan Blakeney. Although the land bank had its flaws, it was better than the system we have now, otherwise known as bank land.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kluz: -- And I'm speaking about some 1.2 million acres. We also have to clearly recognize that the PC's free trade deal with the United States caused the end of the two-price system for wheat, undermined the Canadian Wheat Board, and failed to address the international grain subsidy war that has driven down world prices.

We need to support the Canadian Wheat Board and orderly marketing. Orderly marketing has proven itself in ensuring adequate returns to producers. Although safety nets like GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) and NISA (net income stabilization account) are a start, they must and will be reworked to accomplish a meaningful, long-term solution.

As I stated earlier, Mr. Speaker, this province has seen a mass exodus of over 80,000 people from all walks of life. But perhaps the hardest-hit area is our agriculture sector. That is very clear when you look at our cities. Growth has not been evident for some years now, and so we know that our rural people are not leaving their farms for the cities; they are leaving their farms and leaving the province.

Between 1986 and 1991, in Kelvington-Wadena alone, we lost 1,050 voters. While this may be a head count of

those who are eligible to vote, it does not reveal the other frightening side of the picture -- along with those 1,050 departed votes, Mr. Speaker, were many children under the age of 18 who took their futures with them.

I remember a remark made in 1982 by the then government: bring your children home. It seems to me that did not happen. They had nothing to come back to, nothing to come back for; there was no plan. Saskatchewan was faced with a future generation drain and along with our children went our farm families.

Mr. Speaker, that situation is slowly beginning to reverse itself since we took office. There is a renewed sense of optimism among the electorate. The tide is turning, Mr. Speaker. But this certainly reaffirms a need for new farm programs aimed at small and medium-sized farms, programs that will attract young people and those who left. We need them to carry on with farming, a most notable enterprise. The only way to revitalize rural Saskatchewan is to repopulate it. Communities and co-operatives will come into play with new job creation.

We need more farmers and we need jobs for rural Saskatchewan, new jobs designed specifically for rural Saskatchewan, not borrowed from our city cousins. I think that message came through loud and clear at election time. As an example, the polls of Foam Lake and Wadena, even though they may have benefitted from Fair Share, overwhelmingly voted for NDP government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kluz: -- Let's face it, Mr. Speaker, the last decade has been a pressure cooker in agriculture. However other sectors have also suffered. For instance, education -- between 25 to 30 per cent of our students never finish high school. We are talking about tomorrow's leaders. We must do better for our young people. We will strive to make education accessible and affordable for everyone, regardless of income, gender, race, disability, or geographic location.

Education, Mr. Speaker, is not a privilege; it's a right. We will work to restore proper funding to education. However first we must repopulate rural Saskatchewan. For what is the good of proper funding alone when there are fewer and fewer students in our rural schools and fewer and fewer schools for our children? I am proud to say that I have recently been elected to chair the caucus committee on local government and education, and hope to make significant changes in this area.

I cannot emphasize enough the need to revitalize and repopulate rural Saskatchewan. It means the survival of rural Saskatchewan and the very survival of this province.

Speaking of this province, when I travel through this great land I often realize how much we have to be proud of. For instance, we are universally recognized as the home of medicare.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1145)

Mr. Kluz: -- That is a significant achievement, Mr. Speaker. It is something that deserves respect and nurturing. And yet in the last decade we have seen the gradual deterioration of the system and many other health programs, the elimination of the school-based dental program, changes to the prescription drug plan. These things should not have happened. We will work to enhance our health care system for every citizen.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to talk to many seniors over the last two years -- our pioneers, the very foundation of this province. There are many senior issues, people's issues really, that concern them and should concern us all -- housing, health care, transportation, to name a few. However what disturbs them even more is witnessing the rapid erosion of this once great province over the last decade. This is a sad state of affairs, one that impacts on all of us, now and well into the future.

When I speak of erosion of programs, I also again speak of the massive debt we are saddled with in Saskatchewan. In the last decade, Mr. Speaker, we have gone from a surplus budget to a projected total deficit budget of \$6 billion -- \$6 billion. The mismanagement of the past is first and foremost in everyone's mind. We will be struggling to deal with this debt for many years to come. But with common sense, financial management, we can and will overcome this crushing burden.

We will strive to balance the books in this term of office, and we'll work out a solution to pay back the debt. With good management, Mr. Speaker, and a little luck, this may be accomplished within the next decade or so -- accomplished with the co-operation of the people of Saskatchewan and every member of this House. And with good financial management and co-operation, we will restore Saskatchewan its former proud reputation as one of the best provinces to live in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kluz: -- The fine people of this province deserve no less. Mr. Speaker, speaking of financial management, I am proud to say I am part of the government that repealed the harmonization of the PST (provincial sales tax) with the GST (goods and services tax).

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kluz: -- We could have eliminated the debt a lot more quickly with the harmonization, but we would also have eliminated the tourism and restaurant industries. It would also have meant the death of a number of small and mid-sized businesses. Once again, I'm proud to repeal this unfair tax, and my constituents are happy and relieved also. We will work on a fair taxation system for the 1990s.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I want to say that I also firmly believe it is time to review regulations pertaining to storage of dangerous chemicals that affect our environment. I refer to the recent near disaster at Grand Coulee. Can you imagine the previous government not even having the common sense to store those highly toxic chemicals -- cyanide of all things -- without adequate protection.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kluz: -- We have to take action.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, it will be with the co-operation of the people and every member of this House that we can and will give Saskatchewan the reputation it once had as being a leader, a province others envy. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Keeping: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to congratulate you on your election to the Speaker's Chair. I want to also congratulate all the re-elected members and the newly elected members on both sides of the House.

If I look a little tired and nervous this morning, it's because I have actually been in the bullpen for 23 hours.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate those members that made the cabinet and say to them, your talents and your drive have been recognized. The challenge ahead of you is great, but I think each one of you is up to that challenge and I look forward to working with you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Keeping: -- And, Mr. Speaker, I certainly believe that our new Premier, who has worked so long and hard for this province, is to be congratulated. To me, Mr. Speaker, he has always believed in reasonable, responsible, attainable policies and put them ahead of personal popularity, choosing rather if necessary to lose with integrity than to make promises and be unable to keep them. And the people of this province have rewarded him with this historic victory.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the people back home, the people of my constituency of Nipawin. I recognize the responsibility they have placed in me, and I'll do my best for them.

I thought I would in my first speech in this House today have the best story I know and bring the best, comical story that I know. And so I was going to do that, but I see quite a few of the members on our side and at least one of the members opposite have possibly heard this story, because it's the kind of a story that will just knock the hair right off the top of your head. And so seeing as some people have heard it before, I'm going to forego that one.

The constituency of Nipawin lies in the north-east and takes in the northernmost and easternmost agriculture land. It also includes the edge of the forest, the northern forest, and includes two reserves. Mr. Speaker, in the case of much of this province . . . as is in the case of much of the province, agriculture is the most important back home. Our agriculture in our constituency is probably more diversified than in some others. We have several farms that have cattle as an important part of their operation. We also in our constituency have three community

pastures, provincial pastures, that are very important to the farmers in the area. Mr. Speaker, provincial pastures have a special place in my heart as I was manager of one of those three pastures for eight years and worked in it for five more.

Besides, Mr. Speaker, our farmers, besides the regular grains that most people grow such as wheat and barley, flax and oats, our farmers also grow a lot of the specialty crops, and they have worked them into their crop rotation on a regular basis, such as peas, and lentils, alfalfa, grass seeds of all kinds, and so on.

We grow a lot of alfalfa back in my constituency. A lot of it for dehy (dehydrating) that's exported either in the form of pellets or cubes. We also grow a lot of alfalfa for the production of the seed. And along with the seed production goes the leafcutter bee business. These leafcutter bees, Mr. Speaker, the farmers in my area grow and reproduce these bees, which in turn pollinate the alfalfa and increase the production of the seed.

This, Mr. Speaker, is only half of the story of the birds and the bees, as you well know. The other half is honey-bees. Honey is another product that's produced in abundance in my area. With all the blossoms on the fields of clover and alfalfa and especially canola, our bees do very well and we have a lot of them.

Mr. Speaker, at Nipawin we have a -- speaking of canola -- we have a crushing plant which is a very much appreciated industry in our area, both as a major employer and also an outlet for the canola grown in the area.

Another major influence in our constituency are two large hydroelectric dams on the Saskatchewan River. The construction of these over the years has been a boost, a major boost to the economy of the area. And the two lakes -- I should say man-made -- have created a very exciting tourist attraction. The local people along with visitors very much enjoy the natural beauty of this area of the province. The regional park at Nipawin and the provincial park . . . or the Pasqua Park I should say at Carrot River are very popular and very well used.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that without a doubt we have the best place in the province to fish. We have very large-sized pike, wall-eye pike . . . I should say northern pike and wall-eye, record size being caught all summer long, right at the town. There's many places up there to fish. Many Saskatchewan people as well as those from other provinces and from the United States have found this area of the province to be exactly what they're looking for come holiday time. The people of Nipawin have really done an excellent job of promoting this industry in the past and expanding it. And as word gets around, it increases every year.

Now just this past fall, Mr. Speaker, the tourism potential of our area received another big boost with the discovery in the arbour field in Carrot River area of a pre-historic crocodile affectionately known as "Big Bert." He is said to be 85 billion years old -- older than the dinosaurs. This fossil, by the way, is in excellent condition. I've never seen a fossil that is so well preserved in all the museums.

that I've been in. And just the other day -- I think a week ago today -- I had the honour of unveiling him, and he's located at the Museum of Natural History just a few blocks north of the legislature here. It's the only one ever found in Canada, and he's one of only four or five in North America.

Mr. Speaker, our area of the province was moved into by the people around from 1910 to 1940, with many of the pioneers in that area coming from this part of the province because of the drought and the dust of the '30s. And they moved into that area of the province because of the forest and the game. They were better able to support their families if they worked hard and make a living.

In the first years logging and lumber was king in that area, and even today there are many people that have mills and log and cut pulp for the mill at Prince Albert, and it's very much appreciated in our area.

Mr. Speaker, as a new MLA, a few days ago I listened with intent to the Speech from the Throne and I was pleased to hear what I heard and I whole-heartedly supported. In the past nine and a half years Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan people have endured many hard times, most of them due to bad weather, poor grain prices, and bad government.

Mr. Speaker, people cannot do anything about the bad weather. They can't do very much about the bad prices. But, Mr. Speaker, we did find the solution for the bad government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1200)

Mr. Keeping: -- In the last nine and a half years thousands and thousands of small farms and small businesses have gone broke and left the province, many of them. The numbers are staggering and we've heard them over and over, but the numbers do not do . . . do not tell the whole story of the heartaches and the heart-breaks and the pain and the headaches that these people that are involved have experienced. That's the tragedy that's happened.

As things went from bad to even worse, the broken dreams, the lost hopes, the despair have taken their toll on the people of the province. Many of them are young. They gave up.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne talked about a new beginning, and that is exactly what we need at this time in history. We need a new beginning. These last nine and a half years of waste and mismanagement, patronage and corruption, financial irresponsibility, have come to pass. And most of the people of the province are glad they have passed. This was clearly shown on October 21.

Mr. Speaker, the people of my constituency are very responsible people and reasonable people and so are the people of the province. They are not expecting miracles, but they do expect a better government. We know that first of all we must get our financial house in order. They understand that and we all understand that. First of all we have to get our financial house in order. And that is what

we are doing, as we promised.

Mr. Speaker, several years ago, I think it was about 13 or 14 years ago, I had an uncle -- he's passed away now -- and I talked with him one day and I told him I was thinking of going into politics. He said, don't do it. I said, why not? He said, you don't have a chance. I said, why not? He said, you've got two things against you, Tom. He said, number one, you're ugly, and number two, you're bald.

And I just want to say to the member from Moose Jaw Palliser how much inspiration and encouragement he has been in this area over the years without even realizing it and without knowing it. I mean that was the thing that I thought was so good of him. But he's been a great example for me and gave me hope.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Keeping: -- Mr. Speaker, agriculture was mentioned as a major priority of our government and I'm glad it was, because I know and so does our government know that if we lose our farms, we lose our towns. And if we lose our towns, we lose the major part of Saskatchewan. The family farm is vital to the prosperity of our province and we realize that.

The people back home in my constituency realize that our farms and indeed the province are in a very serious, even precarious I should say, position because of the debt we have both on our farms personally and as a province -- the highest per capita debt in North America. It has limited us in the options we have. Responsible, reasonable people realize that. But the people in my constituency, and I believe the whole province, are prepared to do -- to co-operate and work together and do -- what we have to do. They realize that no one person, and in fact no one party can solve the problems that we face because of the magnitude of them alone. I had hoped that the days of narrow-mindedness and non co-operation were over.

I was glad to see, Mr. Speaker, the other day, the co-operation shown by the groups, the farming organizations and others, as they joined together to lobby Ottawa. They are to be congratulated and so are the politicians from the various parties and the various provinces that put aside their differences, saw the responsibility they had to their farms and to their provinces and went to work on their behalf.

Needless to say I was extremely disappointed in the member from Estevan and our former premier. And it was a shame, Mr. Speaker, that he was not there because he could have helped and it would have helped. And people realize that and people are going to remember that, that we have to put aside our differences and we have to work together.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Keeping: -- And the days of narrow-minded, non co-operation are going to have to be put aside if we are going to succeed.

It was also encouraging, Mr. Speaker, to see in the Speech from the Throne that the proposed changes to the GRIP and NISA programs are being negotiated with other governments involved, and that consultation with the lending institutions that are so integrally involved are going on daily.

Now this lobby to Ottawa was right and it was in order because the problems facing our farms to a great part are caused directly because of decisions made by other federal governments.

And our government has to respond. Our federal government has to respond and meet the challenge.

Mr. Speaker, also mentioned in the throne speech was the need for democratic reform and our plans to proceed in that area -- a code of ethics, a conflict of interest guide-lines. And after the goings-on of the last nine and a half years, we have a long ways to go in restoring the trust in the minds of the people of this province, of politics and politicians.

I was glad also to see that in your comments, Mr. Speaker, when you took your chair, about wanting to, and being determined to, improve the decorum in the House. Because our government is responding to that and we are planning to increase and improve the decorum in the House, and I will commit to that as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Keeping: -- Mr. Speaker, about a year and a half ago my home town had its unveiling of its history book. And in our part of the province all the towns along the way whether they're big or small, have been putting together history books.

And I was never much to read one until our own history book was unveiled, as so often is the case. You don't really get involved in things until something personal happens in your life.

And our town put together a history book of the history of the early pioneers of the area. And I took it home and I read it, Mr. Speaker. And as I read story after story of the pioneer families of that area I realized as never before the extent of the problems that they faced and overcame.

Our pioneers in Saskatchewan have set us a clear example of what it takes when the going gets tough. And we are in those kind of times again, Mr. Speaker.

They didn't look at how things were in the province with despair and criticize one another. They put aside their differences. They put aside their differences of language, religion, customs, even politics, and they worked together, Mr. Speaker. They worked hard together and made this province the kind of place that it's been, the kind of home that it's been for you and me.

I appreciate what they did for me. And surely, Mr. Speaker, we must do the same for our children and our children's children.

Mr. Speaker, the challenges that we face today have been faced

before and overcome. Are we up to the past? Each one of us has to examine ourself and see the reasons that we are in politics. Why are we here and what are we doing? Are we doing this for the better of our province and our communities, or are we doing it for gain?

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we're up to the task and I consider it a personal privilege to be here today and to serve the people. This is a new beginning and I'm proud to be part of it and I support the motion.

Thank you.

Mr. Jess: -- Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure and pride that I rise to speak. This is my first speech in the legislature. However in some ways it represents what I have worked for all my life.

As a kid back home, we had politics for breakfast, dinner, and supper. My family thought in political terms from the time of the other Great Depression. I am honoured and proud that I was chosen by my peers to represent them in this noble institution, this institution of democracy.

I am proud of the many dedicated men and women who worked so hard to elect me and return a New Democratic government to our great province.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as Speaker, a role which I know you will fulfil fairly and with wisdom. I also congratulate all the members on their election. I believe those of us that are serving the people of our constituencies have an obligation and a responsibility to serve them fairly and with compassion.

I intend to keep in touch with the people in Redberry with my office and very capable staff in Hafford. In addition, I am looking forward to meeting with groups and individuals all over the constituency. It is with great enthusiasm that I face the challenge of the next four years of serving the people of Redberry, and also to play my part in the government of the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jess: -- My greatest pleasure comes from touring around Redberry and meeting with the people back home. Incidentally, Redberry is the most beautiful constituency in Saskatchewan.

The people of Redberry are from many parts of the world, with the largest ethnic groups being first of all the original Canadians. My constituency contains no less than six reserves: Beardy, Mistawasis, Muskeg Lake, Moosomin, Saulteaux, and the newest and yet to be settled, the Lucky Man Band.

A very large number of my constituents are of Metis ancestry, a proud and noble group. This group has made a great contribution to the history of our area. As well, Mr. Speaker, we have many people of French origin, and of course the descendants of the Anglo-Saxon.

In the central part of Redberry we find people of Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, and German descent. The blend of

these nationalities and many others gives us the rich and complex culture that we enjoy in Redberry.

I often joke that it took four great nations just to produce me. As my sons are the 10th generation on my father's side born in this country, we have been here longer than most.

Another bit of history is the fact that one of my ancestors was prime minister of this country. He also was one of the Fathers of Confederation, Sir Charles Tupper.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1215)

Mr. Jess: -- I would appreciate it very much, Mr. Speaker, if you would keep that fact a secret, as he was a Tory.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jess: -- Mr. Speaker, the people of Redberry are very industrious, hard-working, rural people. The largest town is Duck Lake, with approximately 700 people. The overall largest community is Beardy's Reserve, containing over 2,000 people.

Redberry is primarily a mixed farming area. Despite its natural beauty, however, tourism potential has hardly been touched. This is definitely a growth area in my constituency. Due to the economy, some of the small towns have died, and others may well soon be beyond salvage. These towns, like the farming community around, have been drastically devastated during the last decade.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see the commitment to agriculture in the throne speech, and it is in this area that I will address the most of my comments. Mr. Speaker, farmers have told me of their serious concerns about federal government policies which impact negatively on the farming community. Rural post office closures and worries about rail line abandonment have not helped.

During recent years the federal government has used tax dollars to artificially prop up the Canadian dollar, with great success -- great success for the multinational corporations; not so great for Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan people who depend on the exports of our products to make their living.

In recent years that support has created an environment where the Canadian dollar has risen 18 cents -- 18 cents from its lowest point -- and each time the dollar goes up 1 cent, Canadian farmers lose \$1.3 billion. That's \$23.4 billion in total, not to mention increased freight costs, not to mention the loss of the two-price system -- \$23.4 billion, and Saskatchewan people should be happy with the share of 800 million, not when the hurt occurred but a year and a half later.

Even then, Mr. Speaker, only a partial payment and the rest to come later yet. No wonder the farmers of Redberry and the rest of Saskatchewan are unable to survive.

Mr. Speaker, we also need to establish a system of

intergenerational land transfer. Unlike the previous administration, our goal is not to transfer land from a whole generation of farmers to the banking institutions.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident of my government's commitment to solving these and other problems faced by farmers and small-business people.

Before the election the people of Redberry would come to me with their problems and concerns in dealing with institutions like the ACS (Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan). I am confident that ACS will change, and change it must.

The goal of the new government is unlike that of the previous administration, as our goal is not to sacrifice two-thirds of our farmers, not even one-third of our farmers. Our goal is to save every last farmer from ruin, every last farmer that is humanly possible to save.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jess: -- We must move toward a policy of protecting the people of this great province. Under an NDP government, Saskatchewan will in fact become a good place to farm, and consequently to run small business, indeed to live.

Saskatchewan will once again be known as the province that looks after its elderly and its sick. We must once again be recognized as a leader in health care in North America. Our tax dollars will be redirected to encourage small business. The Cargills and the Weyerhaeusers of the world have their own agenda. Let them use their own money.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jess: -- It would not take a very big share of the dollars now directed to foreign companies to staff and supply hospitals and nursing facilities in places like Hafford, Rabbit Lake, or Borden.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to take this opportunity to explain some of my concerns with the existing GRIP and NISA programs to clarify what changes I see as necessary. First of all, any safety net is not worth the paper that it's written on unless it contains a cost-of-production formula.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jess: -- Mr. Speaker, at the present time the formula is based on only 70 per cent of the previous year's moving average and drops to less than 60 per cent after premiums are deducted. Farmers have told me of their concerns about this.

As it now stands, GRIP favours high production areas. For example, when wheat declines to 25 bushels per acre the price and the yield guarantee would be only a hundred dollars per acre minus the premium. Presently support is based on what you grow. It doesn't protect you from low quotas, poor export sales. Cash flow could be very poor but still it may not trigger any GRIP payments.

The farmers in Redberry are concerned with this program. In its present form it may allow a few farmers to survive, but it also provides a source of cheap labour to continue to produce cheap food for all time. The GRIP's main problem is the fact that it is designed and it will self-destruct, which makes it the shortest long-term program possible.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jess: -- The leaders of the opposition should realize that if there had been a consistent plan for farmers, that there would be no need to call for federal money each time there is a shortfall.

Mr. Speaker, there are other problems with GRIP as well. A 50-bushel crop even at \$2 a bushel would not trigger any GRIP payment. It has been suggested that farmers have the option to continue with crop insurance. Farmers have told me that this is not a reasonable alternative when the present support price for wheat under the present crop insurance is only \$2.40 per bushel.

Mr. Speaker, the support level will decline dramatically as we move from the present 4.15 per bushel for wheat; we are moving from higher late 1970 prices to the low prices of the 1980s.

Mr. Speaker, I want to clear up some misconceptions about this program. The public should not look on GRIP as being popular because of the high percentage of farmers signing up. Farmers join mainly out of desperation. The western grain stabilization was being eliminated. Crop insurance protection had been drastically reduced, making it impractical for most farmers.

Mr. Speaker, to encourage greater participation, farmers were offered reduced premiums for one year. On the other hand, they were threatened with not qualifying for other special grain payments if they did not join GRIP. It was the old story of the government using the carrot and the stick to ensure a large initial sign-up.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jess: -- Mr. Speaker, farmers have told me over and over of their concerns about the slow pay-out. This will force farmers to borrow money to meet the financial obligations. Interest costs will further reduce benefits. Mr. Speaker, farmers fear that under the present plan, banks could be the greatest beneficiaries of GRIP.

I would like to, for just a moment, focus my attention on NISA. Mr. Speaker, there is a perception in the farming community that NISA has deliberately been designed to benefit the top one-third of the financially stable farmers. That's in order to speed up the demise of the other two-thirds. The greatest benefit is to those who need it the least, and little benefit is given to farmers who are in financial trouble. There is a fairly attractive pay-out for the current year; however the paperwork required to become involved in a . . . (inaudible) . . . pay-out is absolutely ridiculous.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take this opportunity to share

some of my own long-term views on agriculture as they impact on Saskatchewan as a whole in the '90s. One idea that I would bring forward is the establishment of a rural repopulation program.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jess: -- Starting with a training employment program involving young people wishing to become involved in farming. Such a program would assist farmers who need help on their farms and who can't afford wages for full-time employees. Mr. Speaker, I suggest an example of eight months of work and three months of training, similar to the school of agriculture course in practical agriculture.

Such an investment in rural youth can be justified by the fact that a similar investment in other young people has been an accepted rule for generations. My position is that these young people in the rural areas have as many rights as anyone else. I submit that their contribution would be valuable to our province, as they would remain in Saskatchewan.

I often tell the story of a friend of mine that went through dental college, and at that time the investment by the province was approximately \$50,000. And since that time, he's been out of province and all his taxes and all his talents have been utilized somewhere else. If I had been given, or any of my generation, the same kind of investment, I could have bought and equipped the farm that I'm on and, thank you very much, I wouldn't have needed any other assistance.

I suggest that lip service using the term "family farm" is really not enough. We must make a conscious effort to revitalize the rural communities by reversing the flow of young people off of our farms. Actually, a ribbon-cutting ceremony on a new town hall or an arena, as important as these projects may be, is somewhat of an empty gesture if the population base is being eroded.

When we look at one of our major problems, that of competing with European farm subsidies, I feel we should question why Europe has chosen to go in this direction. I suggest that it is the conscious decision to keep people on the land. This is done for many reasons. I wonder if instead of condemning their approach to the rural problems, we might learn from their actions.

In conclusion, I would like to again extend my congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, and to all other elected representatives in this legislature. I believe that the direction given by the Speech from the Throne has demonstrated that Saskatchewan can, with responsible management, once again be a place that truly respects humanity first. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1230)

Mr. Toth: -- Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's an honour for me to join in the debate this morning to the speech of Her Honour, the Honourable Sylvia Fedoruk. Certainly being able to rise and speak in this House is historic and

something that each member of this House cherishes and has cherished over the years.

And there are many members in this House who have been here a lot longer than I have, but I appreciate the opportunity to join in, to be part of this Assembly, to thank the members of my . . . the men and women of my constituency who voted on my behalf and who gave me the honour of representing them here in the constituency for . . . or in the Assembly for a second term. I'd like to thank them from the bottom of my heart for all their support, their encouragement, and their hard work. And I don't believe anyone knows any better than I do the importance of hard work, as has already been mentioned on a number of occasions by some of my colleagues and former colleagues and some of the people who worked for me.

Yes, we had a major landslide in the Moosomin constituency. But truly democracy works on the basis of 50 per cent plus one. And all a person needs to represent an area is 50 per cent plus one. I understand the members of the government do have a few as well who won by a landslide and I guess we can all take credit for that. But what it indicates is the determination, the hard work, and the commitment of many people who believe in individuals like myself.

And so I say thank you to my friends and neighbours who believed in me and through their expression at the polls put faith in my abilities. And I believe in them as well and I endeavour over the next period of years to represent them as fairly and as honestly as I believe I can and have tried over the past four or five years in this House.

It's because of these fine people that I am here today, and they are that, just fine people; people who know the meaning of hard work, people who are willing to lend a helping hand to their friends and their neighbours; people who have deep roots in agriculture and in the family.

And, Mr. Speaker, I guess as all members in this Assembly, we can all go back to our tradition. We can all look back to our grandparents or our parents, and our grandparents, our great grandparents, our friends and neighbours we live with. And we think back of the difficult times men and women faced over the years. But we all see, we see, Mr. Speaker, the commitment that men and women made to their communities and to this province, not only in helping neighbours, but believing in the family and in family traditions.

And the Moosomin constituency has a real sense of community spirit. Certainly I am proud to bring the concerns and issues Moosomin faces forward and to be a strong voice for them in this Assembly.

And yes, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that the members of the opposition, we may be few in number, but certainly the members on the opposite side of the House can reflect back a few years and realize the few number they were. And yet did that hinder them in their abilities or their willingness to serve their constituents and their province and their community? No it didn't. And so, Mr. Speaker, I intend as a member of the opposition caucus, to speak out very strongly and as loudly as I can, to represent my

constituents, to represent all my constituents, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: -- Mr. Speaker, we all have concerns. And I guess one of the things in politics that maybe most people find frustrating at times is when, as you're out campaigning and you meet someone on the street and an individual will come up to you and you'll say hello and chit-chat for a while, and then you get an accolade and someone . . . and the comment is, I sure appreciate the job you've done for me. I sure appreciate the way you showed your concern and went to bat on my behalf and the results that were obtained, but I'm sorry, I won't be able to vote for you.

Well you know, this is the democratic system. This is the democratic process, and every member in this House is responsible to all their constituents. They're responsible to represent them as fairly and honestly as they know how. And that has been my endeavour since being elected for the first time in 1986, and I intend to continue to represent my constituency in that way.

Mr. Speaker, I have concerns about what direction our province is heading. What is in store for our children and our parents? That is part of the reason I am so pleased to have, among other responsibilities as a member of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, the response for the portfolio of the Families.

Mr. Speaker, people who are familiar with me know where my priorities lie. And I'm not ashamed to let this Assembly know that there's a very important place in my life for God first; my wife and my family second; and thirdly, my responsibility to serve my constituents and to serve them well.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think this could be any one of us in establishing guide-lines and principles and ideals. It would probably serve us well to realize that there are important places to present to . . . or priorities we must establish for our lives. So, Mr. Speaker, I have laid those out because I believe in them. I believe if we have a commitment to God and family, we indeed . . . it will measure well in our commitment to society.

And this afternoon, or this morning, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as well, all members of this House joined in expressing our sympathy and our condolences to the violence that was seen two years ago in Montreal -- violence and actions against women.

And truly as a society it behoves us to reach out to those less fortunate than ourselves, whether it be women; whether it be children; whether it be the unborn; whoever it is. Whether it be another nationality or a race, Mr. Speaker, we ought to reach out and embrace each and every one of them.

Though my priorities are placed in specific numerical order, I take each one very seriously. Mr. Speaker, as a husband and father, and now with my new responsibilities involving the family, I have some very serious concerns about Saskatchewan's future.

What happens to our provincial economy is important, but without protecting and improving the very core of our lives, the family, what is left? Even the discussion this morning, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can ask ourselves, where has our country, our province, or we -- where have we as a generation of people gone in relationship to the values and moral values that the men and women who came to this country years ago and through the years fought for and stood up for.

And I believe that as we look over the next few years we must go back to the roots and establish our family values, establish our moral values, raise our children on values that they can stand up on and believe in. What's the point of building and expanding industries if we have no children, no family to carry on our legacy?

Mr. Speaker, that's part of the reason I have so many concerns today. Recently the people of Saskatchewan were able to cast their ballots to have a direct opinion on some very important questions -- questions which were put forward, I know, through the term that I was in government; questions that were put forward to my colleagues even prior to my involvement in government; opportunities for people to speak out on very important issues, important issues that they were given the privilege of voting on.

Mr. Speaker, in this last election three plebiscite questions were placed before the people and three results came in. And what were the results, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Well first of all, on the first plebiscite question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the question was given whether the people of the province wanted balanced budgets or deficit financing. And the overwhelming result, over 79 per cent were asking for a balanced budget.

What about a voice in the decision-making process regarding our country's constitution. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we look at our country today and the constitutional discussion we are involved in, it appears that we are becoming more involved in the constitutional discussion than we are in the very needs of individuals around us. And indeed I'm sure that many people were voicing that opinion when they voted overwhelmingly in favour of more open discussion on the country's constitution, even in fact 79 per cent.

I suppose if we were to go back to 1979 or 1980, 1981 when the members on the government side of the House were, and for government at that time, were into constitutional debate, had we had a more open constitutional debate at that time we may not find ourselves in the same situation we face today.

And thirdly, the public has definite views on abortion and how abortions should be funded, and there again an overwhelming response opposed to publicly funded abortions. Mr. Speaker, the people voted not to publicly fund abortions but rather to take that responsibility off the backs of taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the plebiscites, we look at how people spoke out.

A letter to the editor in the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*

basically reiterates some of the view that was expressed through the election process, and I quote:

I hope the new government understands that people don't want any more debt. I remind Education minister, the member from Saskatoon, that we do not need and cannot afford another school board in this province. We need governments that can manage finances and not cater to every special interest group that shouts and hollers.

Mr. Speaker, the public casts their ballots, and as the public was speaking, the public that were speaking to us came from every background you could find in this province, every political persuasion, and they made a clear, conscientious decision. Their minds are made up, sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the concern I have today about the plebiscite question is whether the NDP government will honour the wishes of the people; whether they indeed will listen; whether indeed they are willing to lay out a plan of how they're going to attack the deficit.

Certainly we have heard over the past number of years on many occasions, criticisms regarding deficits, regarding deficit spending. But at the same time we've heard criticism about being uncaring.

Well let me just remind you a little bit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of where was the caring in 1982 when interest rates were at 22 per cent? Where was the caring for young families who couldn't make their mortgage payments, or farmers who were having difficulty staying on the farm? Where was the caring for those families?

Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we've been reminded this morning, we faced some difficult times through the '80s -- some low grain prices; certainly we faced drought. We faced circumstances beyond our control.

And yet, Mr. Speaker, I believe if you would have asked men and women around the province in the early '80s whether government should respond and help them, I think people would have said yes, we believe government should be there. We believe government should be there to help when times are difficult. And certainly in better years, and might I suggest, maybe through the '70s would have been a time to put aside, to build up for the poor years that . . . we know we live in cycles. We live in cycles when commodities are up and commodities are down.

Mr. Speaker, we will be watching this government. I wonder, will the minister . . . or the member from Riversdale be willing to answer these questions today. Is he or his government going to listen to the people, or are they going to appoint groups of maybe two or three partisan people to continue to develop policy on their behalf? Are they going to come through with promises of honest and open government?

Mr. Speaker, if the member from Riversdale means what he says, I believe he must honour the plebiscite questions and the results that were indicated by the electorate as

they voted on election day.

(1245)

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to remind the member how hard it is to get a straight answer; how hard it was to get a straight answer on these questions before the election. And it seemed that the member was quite adept at giving the answer his audience was looking for. Certainly when he was in Tisdale, what was his answer regarding Fair Share? Well decentralization isn't bad. When he was back in the Queen City, what was the answer? Well it certainly isn't good.

Today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no pending election to worry about. No pro-life activists protest in your presence. Today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people deserve answers. And I believe the people at this moment are willing to sit back and give the government an opportunity to deliver on their promises. After all, it's a basic democratic right to know what to expect from the government elected by the people.

However when we talk about promises, I've run into so many people over the past month and a half, that I'm wondering where the government was on its promise to eliminate the PST. Certainly that was the term that many people throughout our province, when they heard the term PST, they put into a factor, or in their mind was a total provincial E&H (education and health) tax.

How many business men who had customers come into their businesses and indicate, you can't charge me tax on that now; we've elected a new government and they've eliminated the tax.

Certainly it's been in the media. Many people have seen it. In fact the *Leader-Post* finance department says: Some confused by PST changes. That indicates, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to me, that many people certainly were confused.

When we asked for the NDP to lay it out as clear as they could, which was very difficult to do, it appeared that it just got washed up and the waters even got murkier. But, Mr. Speaker, they are duly elected and we give them that honour.

Mr. Speaker, what are the NDP going to do, not just about the plebiscite questions, but on other important issues as well. Take the proclamation of freedom of information Act. Mr. Speaker, on page 1 of the throne speech, the government talks about being . . . reinstating the proclamation, being open and honest.

My government accepts with enthusiasm its mandate to provide Saskatchewan people with honest, open, accessible and truly accountable government.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, as we have seen in this first week of the Legislative Assembly, we ask ourselves maybe how honest and how open are the government going to be. What better way could the NDP show the people of Saskatchewan how true they are in their word than to proclaim the freedom of information Act.

Mr. Speaker, just a few short months ago, members from both sides of the House stood in this Assembly and voted in favour of the freedom of information Act. And there's no doubt that we all believe that we must be more open, more honest, and more free, so that the general public, as we've heard a number of speakers indicate, the general public have a better idea of the workings and the goings-on of government, feel that they are more accessible.

And, Mr. Speaker, the cynicism that we see in the eyes of the public . . . or Mr. Deputy Speaker, the cynicism we see in the eyes of the public will certainly be changed as they have more respect for their representation, for their duly elected leaders.

However, when we talk about open and honest, we've been discussing in this House for the last few days the appointment of a committee, a committee which the members opposite suggested would be non-partisan, and suggested that in being open and honest it would be available to all.

I would think if a committee is open and honest, the Leader of the Opposition would have indeed responded to my colleague, the member from Thunder Creek, when he asked the leader and indicated his willingness to sit down with the government to be part of this process and to suggest some names for the government in appointing this committee.

I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that would have made the committee more . . . a sign to the general public that it was more non-partisan and open. And I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this side of the House has indicated their willingness to work with government to help make government more effective.

But then when we talk about openness and honesty, prior to the election, Mr. Speaker, on many occasions we heard the government of the day, the newly elected government making promises that they wouldn't go into massive firings or asking people to let people go, to find other employment -- that they would be fair.

And yet what have we heard in the media? What have we seen? Well there's nothing wrong with those proposals. They don't go far enough in talking about reform. The problem is they focus on the political process and ignore where you find much of the real power in government.

What we have seen in the past few days as the real power in government is in the hands of a few basically directed towards a few. Since the NDP took power last month this group of people has moved into positions of power. They are individuals with political ties to the NDP who effectively are replacing the Tory elites within government.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we all realize that in politics there will be appointments. We all realize, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that people will move in and out. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can also acknowledge that when a political appointment or a political appointee, when they take on a position, realize that a change in government

may mean their job is not there.

But what about all the people who have worked in the civil service through the years -- people who have worked so hard, been diligent, have done their job well. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would suggest to you when we get beyond the political appointments and into the ranks of government, people who have worked their way up through numerous governments or even the 200 crop insurance employees, that we have stepped beyond partisan political appointed individuals. And it's time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we indeed worked with people to give them a better understanding of government and indeed got away from this blatant political partisanship.

The NDP have promised many times over to provide an open government. Yet I fail to see where they're keeping their word.

They promised a non-partisan government, yet in a few short months what have they done? They closed trading offices. And we just heard today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of the Piper Aircraft looking at possibly locating in Canada. Wouldn't the trade office in Minnesota have been an excellent place to work to develop and enhance our province and look at bringing more industry and development into our province? What about the Far East?

What about replacing private-sector board members with NDP politicians and forming a partisan committee to conduct an NDP . . . and would we dare call it a witch hunt, Mr. Deputy Speaker? -- known as the Gass tribunal, headed by Donald Gass, accompanied by who else, Garf Stevenson, President of Sask Wheat Pool? Where is the openness, Mr. Deputy Speaker? My colleague, the member from Thunder Creek, indeed asked for that openness and asked for an opportunity to speak out and to voice his concerns.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we talk about openness in government and non-partisanship, what about this column in the *Star-Phoenix*, "Proposal unfair."

The provincial government should abandon the idea of using only unionized contractors on big public projects.

What is that telling the people of the province of Saskatchewan? What is that telling the hard-working people of this province? As the article says, it seems the NDP is already attempting to intimidate, the sin for which it condemned its predecessor, rewarding its political friends. In fact the Labour minister says jobs done by unionized companies go a lot smoother and tend to happen on target, within budget, and tend to employ more Saskatchewan people.

Now I would ask you to take a look at the Co-op upgrader and the work done on the Co-op upgrader. I'm sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you would have to admit there were many Saskatchewan people involved in that project. Mitchell should not expect the taxpayers of Saskatchewan to swallow generalizations like those unless he can produce some strong supporting evidence. I think there are many private companies out there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, small businesses that can prove to you

and show you that they can be efficient and that they can be effective and certainly can complete their jobs on time with a very skill in their workmanship.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think when comments like this are made, it reflects on, not on openness in government, but indeed the fact that partisan politics continues to be part of our democratic, so-called democratic, system. Where is the open and honesty in government? I am concerned -- concerned that the NDP just made promises with no intention of delivering them; concern the member from Riversdale didn't mean what he promised when he said, open the books; concern, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Saskatchewan were taken on an NDP ride to gain power at the expense of taxpayers.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am here to ensure that the Moosomin families and other families in our province are not taken advantage of. As the opposition member responsible for families, I am troubled as to what the new government will do with the Family Foundation. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, having moved the Family Foundation into the Department of Education, I'm concerned that this foundation may be lost in the shuffle. I don't believe there is any way the Family Foundation can continue to have the same impact while it is buried inside a department the size of the Education department.

The question, Mr. Speaker, is: does the NDP recognize the importance of the family and therefore the Family Foundation? And if so, why would the member from Riversdale submerge it deep within the Education department?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that the NDP cannot deny the success of the Family Foundation in just two short years. Take a look at its record. Forums about families were held in over 150 communities all across this great province to identify problems and find ways to solve them.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these forums were open. They were open to all individuals, they were non-partisan. People were invited to attend . . . or people who attended were members of school boards, principals, teachers, members of community organizations, and civic officials, people from all walks of life, people who cared about their communities and their families.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP cannot ignore the fact that the Family Foundation deals with problems 90 per cent of the people in Saskatchewan face on a daily basis -- 9 out of 10 people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are not the problems of the Department of Education but are completely non-political, affecting all walks of life -- family problems like parents communicating with teenagers. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I haven't quite reached that situation, but certainly I realize the difficulties that parents face in dealing with teenagers in the complexity of our society today.

Talking about drugs with our children. Part of the difficulty faced by women and children and abused individuals can be reflected in the fact the effect that

drugs and alcohol have on individuals and certainly how they treat those around them.

Dealing with ageing parents. Mr. Deputy Speaker, many people in this province are elderly. And certainly we have seen over the last number of years with the improvements in health care that many people are living longer. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my grandfather was 91 when he passed away. All of my grandparents were well into their late '80's and early '90's, and each and every one of them were very healthy when they passed away and left this life. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm glad that we as grandchildren and our parents were able to lend a helping hand to our grandparents.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the major concerns we all face is budgeting, and of course many others. Setting a budget for the family, how do we plan? I believe this Foundation had significant input on the welfare of many people in our province. The Foundation responded to hunger in such a way that they don't even talk about hunger in school systems any longer.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP talk about spending millions of dollars to feed every child in Saskatchewan; however, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would suggest, rather than make political observations, let's talk to the school systems. Let's take the time to talk to the principals. Let's ask them for their advice and their interest.

The Deputy Speaker: -- Order. It now being 1 o'clock p.m., this House stands adjourned until Monday at 2 o'clock p.m. Have a good weekend.

The Assembly adjourned at 1 p.m.