The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Hamilton: -- Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, 30 students from Wilfrid Walker School within Wascana Plains constituency and with them their teacher, Anca Toma. They have presented to me some letters that I have given to the Premier, and I'll be meeting with them at 2:30 in the members' lounge. So I would like you to welcome the members of the class from Wilfrid Walker School.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Changes to GRIP

Mr. Martens: -- I have a question today, Mr. Speaker, for the Premier. The people of Saskatchewan on Monday and subsequent to that have given the government the mandate to change the deadline for the sign-up of the new GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) program. Will you now go all the way and inform the industry, the agriculture industry, that they have an option on the '91 or the '92 GRIP?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the member opposite is now supporting something he voted against yesterday.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- It's not a surprising reality considering that they are continuing to reject the demands of farmers in Saskatchewan that the federal government meet its responsibility to programs such as this. As the members opposite know, the federal government has not only created the methodology that has created pain by increasing premiums for Saskatchewan programs that have off-loaded to the Saskatchewan province in excess of $200 million in the last four years while they have reduced their total program payments to Saskatchewan.

We are committed to working with farmers to design the kind of program they want. We've done that. Farmers who did not join in last year's program have signed up for this program while only two and one-half per cent have decided to leave this program. We are committed to a program that is going to be fair for farmers in the long run, and try to get something different than the mess you created last year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: -- Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Agriculture said in this Assembly that the addition of the lentils in the province would cost $200 million. Manitoba is suggesting that they're going to put a cap on what they're doing. I got a news observation from them today.

Would you put that into perspective of what last year's '91 GRIP would have cost if it would have had a 10 per cent cap on it just like it did last year in the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- Mr. Speaker, the fact that the Manitoba government is now considering options which would allow it to put a cap on their rental prices or their acreages is a consideration that only responds to the comments we've been making from day one, and 7,000 farmers made last fall in Regina and 4,000 in Rosetown, that that program is very seriously flawed and has to be fixed on the run in order to even try to survive.

The members opposite know that the threat of what's happening in Manitoba, which has gone beyond a fix at the moment, is hurting us not only in those provinces but in Saskatchewan and internationally. The changes that Saskatchewan has made has addressed those realities. And the difficulties in Manitoba are real, and the Saskatchewan reality, if it had followed the same pattern, which we could believe it would because Alberta has followed that pattern, would in fact result in the very serious problems that Manitoba is experiencing now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: -- Mr. Speaker, the minister made the observation of fixing it on the run, and I want to read a term and a condition that exists in the contract for revenue insurance. It says:

> No term or condition of this contract is deemed to have been waived or altered . . . unless the waiver or alteration is expressed . . . (in a written) form authorized by the corporation and signed by a duly authorized representative of the corporation . . . (on or before the 15th of March.)

Mr. Speaker, I also have some information here, if I would be permitted, just briefly. The Court of Queen's Bench in the judicial centre of Melville today received this affidavit from your deputy minister. And, Mr. Speaker, item no. 5 under this affidavit states this:

> I am aware and do verily believe having been advised by the Honourable Mr. Wiens that in addition, he intends to introduce legislative amendments in the current Session of the Legislature.

What are these amendments going to do?

> These amendments will include a provision in which notice of the 1992 (GRIP) changes will be deemed to have been given to the Producers by March 15, 1992 as required by their individual contracts.

Now will you provide some reasonable semblance of

suggestion to the people of Saskatchewan, the agriculture producers, that they have an option on the '91-92 GRIP, or will you continue to break the law?

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- Mr. Speaker, I will not comment on the court proceedings. But I will say that it's very interesting that the members opposite would comment upon deadlines and those kinds of things when one might recall back in the days in the early '80s when people like myself were trying to make a living at the livestock business and you guys decided you wanted to diminish the returns in the beef stabilization program and the SHARP (Saskatchewan hog assured returns program), and you, without any consultation, deferred to the federal program, the tripartite program, and undermined it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- And I want to remind you that with respect to contractual obligations you may be aware, and then on the other hand the members opposite may not be aware, that the Saskatchewan federal crop insurance GRIP contract was not signed till September 18 last year after our crops were all in the bin. I find it very interesting, the observations you make.

Mr. Martens: -- Mr. Speaker, yesterday this minister identified to this House that it was going to cost $200 million for lentils. And, Mr. Premier, in the light of the conflict that this minister has with the contracts that are illegally being handed out to producers in the province of Saskatchewan today, under an illegal action by the minister of the Crown, are you going to ask for his resignation or do the people of the province of Saskatchewan have that right to ask that minister to resign?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- Mr. Speaker, I find it very, very interesting that the members who designed the consultation process which was followed in the design of the revisions to the program which was so fatally flawed by their design are the processes that were followed in the consultation which brought forward the report.

I want it also on public record that by the middle of February the Saskatchewan revisions were ready to be implemented, at which point the members opposite, in co-operation with their members federally, delayed the process for implementation for a month and left the Saskatchewan farmers in a position where the changes that they had demanded were delayed by a month.

Now we are needing to put an extension on so that we can make sure that everybody has proper opportunity. Take some responsibility for the messes you've created.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: -- Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture indicated yesterday that he had agreement from the federal government to implement this program. Today's statement by your deputy minister says that you did not legally put the contracts into place and give information to farmers of changes in those contracts. And, Mr. Speaker, the very inference that the member gives, that the federal government is in agreement with an illegal action, is again, Mr. Premier, a responsibility that you should address with that minister. Are you ready to call for his resignation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- We could provide, Mr. Speaker, we could provide for the member opposite the communication from the federal minister, Minister McKnight, about his compliance with the Saskatchewan procedures should we have the support of the required number of provinces, and that is a matter of record and can be shared with you. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: -- Mr. Speaker, in December we had a piece of legislation that says this:

> In this section, "claims for loss or damage" includes any claim in damages or debt for unjust dismissal, breach of contract, inducing breach of contract, interference with a contract . . .

And a whole lot of others. Are you prepared to foist on the agriculture community of Saskatchewan the same kind of breach of contract legislation that you initiated, your government initiated, Mr. Premier? In light of that, are you going to ask for his resignation, or do the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan have to do that for you?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- Mr. Speaker, let me remind the member opposite about the abrogation of responsibility the federal minister has displayed with respect to Saskatchewan farmers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- In 1988 the province of Saskatchewan had no cost for income support for our people, like other countries who were engaged in this international trade war. Since that time Saskatchewan has taken on $242 million of program support, $242 for every man, woman, and child in Saskatchewan, while the federal government has removed their responsibility and reduced their contributions.

And you talk about commitment to Saskatchewan farmers. The fact is that when Saskatchewan agreed to take on, under the members' opposite direction, the responsibilities for these programs, the federal government committed itself to help farmers when that was inadequate. And where is that money?

Farmers are waiting for NISA (net income stabilization account) money, they're waiting for third line of defence money, they're waiting for GRIP money, they're waiting for interim payments from the Canadian Wheat Board, and your federal minister sits there and plays politics with the farmers of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in this House on Monday last, the Premier of this province gave his commitment to the people of this province that he would have an open and accountable government. The farmers of this province were on the steps of this legislature on Monday last, saying that they were not prepared to accept the dictums of the Agriculture minister.

Mr. Premier, today in a court in Melville, your Minister of Agriculture is attempting to abrogate his responsibility to agriculture because he did not fulfil the contractual obligations of the GRIP contract. Will you this day, Mr. Premier, be an open and accountable government and instruct your minister not to try and abrogate the judicial process in this province by an Act of this legislature with your overwhelming majority?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite were listening, farmers who were here on Monday talked about their income problems in Saskatchewan. It doesn't matter with whom you speak, if you want to listen, farmers are saying that they have an income shortage.

Who created the programs which have delivered to the farmers an income shortage to this point? Why are farmers squeezed more now than they were before? Because they do not have the money from GRIP. They do not have the money from NISA. They do not have the money that was promised last fall, and they don't even have the money from the market-place, from the Canadian Wheat Board interim payments.

You talk about worrying about what the farmers are saying. Farmers have a cash flow problem in Saskatchewan because of the designs and the off-loading of your federal counterparts. Why don't you ask your federal minister to resign?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, your Minister of Agriculture continues to talk about moral hazards associated with the GRIP contract. The farmers of this province have said the only moral hazard they face in their 1992 seeding program is that minister.

Mr. Premier, the fact that that minister is now trying to cover his tracks in a court in Melville, Saskatchewan, to go against the wishes of the farming public in this province, I say to you, sir, one final time: will you do the right thing, Mr. Premier, and will you offer the farmers of this province the option of 1991 or 1992 and let that minister prove to the farmers that he has done his homework?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- Mr. Speaker, the most significant moral hazard that this province has been subjected to in the last 10 years was the government of the members opposite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- The financial ruin that's come to this province by the inappropriate decisions and the careless management of the government of the members opposite previous is a shame that Saskatchewan will be 20 years living down.

You talk about moral hazard. There is no moral hazard in farmers in Saskatchewan. There is moral hazard in the design of programs that came from you and there is moral hazard in the playing of politics with the lives of farmers from your federal counterparts and from your actions. You stood in the House yesterday and voted against $500 million for farmers and you voted against third line of defence and you voted against an extension and you voted against all of the provisions that we need to provide a good replacement program for the kind of travesty that you visited on Saskatchewan farmers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Gass Commission Report

Mr. Swenson: -- Speaking of economic issues I have a question for the Minister of Finance. Mr. Minister, today I was provided with a copy of a brief presented to your cabinet this morning by the Public Sector Bargaining Coalition.

Mr. Speaker, essentially this brief statement says that the government's Gass Commission misrepresented government spending, understated revenue potential, and provided no evidence to substantiate this government's assertions that we are in an extremely serious financial situation.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I only quote from the various labour groups in this province that have banded together.

Mr. Minister, Mr. Minister, will you admit that the Gass Commission distorted the financial picture of Saskatchewan's financial situation in order to accommodate the NDP's (New Democratic Party) political agenda?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: -- Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that by this time even the member opposite would have been prepared to admit the kind of financial crisis which he and his colleagues created during the 10 years, and wouldn't even think of asking that kind of a question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: -- I remind members opposite that the Financial Management Review Commission chaired by Mr. Gass was a commission of qualified people to which the Provincial Auditor had a significant input.

And if, Mr. Speaker, the members would look at the auditor's report which was tabled for the year when they

were in government, they will find on page 84, where the auditor clearly says that the public was not able to know what the true finances of the province were because the members opposite wouldn't provide him the information.

Mr. Gass has provided the information. Now we know. And now we know what the financial crisis is and what we have to do to correct it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: -- Mr. Speaker, question of the same minister. In the document prepared by Professor Jim Sentance of the Department of Economics at the University of Prince Edward Island, and once again I quote, and this is sponsored by the Public Sector Bargaining Coalition. And I quote:

> . . . given the doom and gloom scenario being painted . . . the Province's books are not (all) that out of line with other provinces and that the trends do not . . . show bad news.

It goes on to say, and I quote again, Mr. Speaker:

> The near $1 billion deficit estimated for 1990-91 is taken at face value despite being padded (padded) by a quarter billion dollars in pension liabilities that no other government in the country would treat as current expenditure and (padded by) a further quarter (of a) billion dollars in one-time write-downs.

Mr. Minister, will you admit that the Gass Commission was nothing more than a public relations exercise, a public relations exercise, Mr. Minister, that would effectively allow you to renege on all those excessive promises which your leader and party made to the people of Saskatchewan in the fall of 1991.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: -- Mr. Speaker, in 1982 when those people over there formed the government, they inherited a surplus of $139 million. There was an accumulated debt in the province of Saskatchewan of $3.5 billion, all of it self-liquidating in the Crown corporations.

In 1992 when the people of this province unceremoniously turfed out those mismanagement people, the total debt of this province was almost $14 billion, almost all of it to be paid by the taxpayers because they have ground down the corporations and plundered so that they could not return dividends to the treasury.

Mr. Speaker, I remind the member from Thunder Creek that it was he and the member from Rosthern who provided the kind of deals like the GigaTexts, who sold off the potash corporations and lost $442 million, who sold off the Cameco shares and lost $161 million. It is those kinds of financial deals to treat some of their friends favourably that have caused the crisis which we face in Saskatchewan today. They can keep their head in the sand as much as they want, Mr. Speaker, but the people of Saskatchewan want their government to act responsibly and do what has to be done to save this province from the kind of financial disaster that it will face if we don't.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: -- New question to the same minister, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, this report commissioned by the Public Sector Bargaining Coalition clearly states that the Gass Commission's accounting methods merely presented already existing information in a different format and that the deficit has not suddenly gone up. In fact, this coalition rejects the Minister of Finance's conclusion that Saskatchewan's lower credit rating is a result of our debt position. Instead, the unions of this province state that one of the reasons the credit rating has been lowered is because of the election of an NDP government.

Mr. Minister, will you admit that the Saskatchewan financial review management commission's report was really a smoke-screen to cover up your inability to clearly plan? And will you admit that the Gass report purposely distorts the financial picture of this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: -- Mr. Speaker, for the March 31, 1991 **Report of the Provincial Auditor** he states the following: legislators and other readers do not have the information necessary to understand and assess the financial position and the results of operations of the government. We are not able to determine the precise effect of this matter on the financial statements. The adjustments necessary may be significant.

That's the record of the members opposite who hid the information from the people of Saskatchewan for 10 long years. What the Gass Commission did, Mr. Speaker, is open the books, told the people of Saskatchewan in an independent way what the situation was, told this government what the situation was so that we could start from the right bottom line and begin to bring about the financial freedom which this province and the people of this province deserves. And that's what we're up to and that's what we'll do when the budget is introduced on May 7 in this House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: -- It's becoming very clear, Mr. Speaker, in questioning this minister, that he does not accept any advice from anyone in Saskatchewan society today, even his friends in organized labour.

Mr. Premier, it has to be abundantly clear, as Donald Gass said in his report, that your government and anyone else who wished to look would know what the books of Saskatchewan said. And yet you have said, and you made, sir, literally billions of dollars worth of promises in the last election campaign.

Today we have evidence that clearly outlines that you have intentionally exaggerated the deficit numbers simply to gain public acceptance of imposing various revenue measures on the public of this province.

Mr. Premier, will you admit today that you have intentionally exaggerated our province's financial picture to justify huge tax increases, service cuts, reductions in transfer payments, and the gutting of the GRIP program for Saskatchewan farmers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: -- Mr. Speaker, the member from Rosthern was quoted in the *Star-Phoenix* on June 24, 1987 as saying the following: the alternative is just to let the deficit grow and that would not take courage. It would just put your head in the sand and say, I don't have the money and I have a deficit now. But I will just continue to borrow and it won't matter.

I say to the member from Rosthern and to the member from Thunder Creek, get your head out of the sand. Follow your own advice.

Any tax increases that will be in this budget, Mr. Speaker, will be a direct result and the responsibility of the irresponsibility and the mismanagement and the waste that was created in this province when those members were sitting on this side of the House as the Government of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: -- New question to the same minister, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, this brief confirms what Saskatchewan farmers are saying, what now the labour groups of this province are saying, is that the NDP (New Democratic Party) Party had no plan in opposition, that they have no plan after their election as government, and there is no plan today.

Mr. Minister, you're caught in a corner, I know. You've promised the moon and you can't deliver. Mr. Minister, are you now . . . Are you going to now take the responsibility vested upon you by the people of this province and act like a government instead of an opposition? When are you going to admit that you are riding on the coat-tails of the previous government as far as economic initiatives in this province?

And I say to you, sir, only look at your own throne speech for confirmation. And would you now, sir, would you now, sir, listen to the farmers of this province, to the labour groups of this province, and the business people who say, get on with the plan, sir. Quit fudging the figures and act like a government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: -- Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the member from Thunder Creek that this government will not ever ride on the coat-tails of GigaText.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: -- This government will never ride on the coat-tails of the GigaTexts or the privatizations which lost us literally hundreds of millions of dollars or the Guy Montpetits or the plundering of Crown corporations that was brought about by those members opposite even to the point where they forced them to borrow money that they didn't have to pay a dividend to make their deficit look better.

I tell you, Mr. Speaker, in my final comment, that is not going to be the approach of this government. The approach of this government is going to be honest, accountable, straightforward. We will look after the interests of the people of Saskatchewan and not the interest of a political party as those members did for 10 long years, rewarding their political friends at the expense of not only the present generation, but of generations to come in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Extended Deadline for GRIP

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of great interest to the people of the province of Saskatchewan. As Mr. Speaker may already know, I have earlier today announced that the deadline for farmers to sign up for the gross revenue insurance plan, or GRIP, has been extended two weeks to May 15. We are giving farmers this extra time to decide on crop insurance coverage and whether to opt out of the revenue insurance offered under GRIP or whether to join if they have not previously been in the program.

I am pleased to announce that well over 300 farmers who did not join GRIP in 1991 have already opted to join the new program. This is clearly because the program corrects a number of identified deficiencies in the original program and is, for the most part, being accepted by farmers across Saskatchewan. But there are options under the plan, in terms of revenue and crop insurance coverages, which farmers should look at carefully so that they can make informed decisions on what is best for their particular circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that farmers who may be hit by drought could be adversely affected if they don't choose the market price option offered under the new program. This extra time will give our agents a chance to talk to farmers again to ensure they fully understand the implications of not taking the market price insurance option. This coverage provides the most protection to farmers who are concerned about drought.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, our government requested and received the federal government's agreement to extend the deadline. This action comes as a result of concerns raised by Saskatchewan farmers and farm organizations. The extension was approved by the national GRIP committee yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, this extension is the first step towards acting on a motion passed by the Saskatchewan legislature on April 28. That motion also called for $500 million in cash assistance from the federal government, a properly triggered third line of defence, an extension to the GRIP deadline, and a review commission to design a better long-term safety net program for farmers. We will be actively pursuing those aspects as well.

Mr. Speaker, I do not pretend that our actions today correct the problems with GRIP. The truth of the matter is that GRIP became impossible to fix the day the previous administration, against all advice, entered into the program. The only thing which will fix the program, Mr. Speaker, will be to start all over again with the intention of meeting the needs of farmers, not the short-term objectives of a political party.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members of this Assembly to join us in our efforts to develop a safety net program for farmers which is truly a safety net and is truly designed for farmers. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: -- Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to the public of Saskatchewan that I agree with the extension. However, I believe, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan would have been far more impressed by the Minister of Agriculture if he would have provided them an option on a '91 GRIP or a '92 GRIP, and that, Mr. Speaker, would have been the solution to the problem.

And that was evidenced on Monday. It was evidenced the week before in Shaunavon. It was evidenced the week before that in Paradise Hill and all through the province.

And that, Mr. Speaker, would have been the kind of thing that this minister could have done in order to give the people of the province of Saskatchewan, in particular in agriculture, the sense of well-being. And then go and produce a committee that will provide the opportunity to develop the GRIP program in the light of what the farmers want to have. That would have been the right thing to do, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MOTIONS

Referral of Annual Reports and Financial Statements to the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: -- Mr. Speaker, I have a number of routine motions that I'd like to make, this being the beginning of the session. And I would move, by leave of the Assembly, seconded by the member for Regina Dewdney:

> That the annual reports and financial statements of the various Crown corporations and related agencies be referred as tabled to the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Motion agreed to.

Referral of *Report of the Provincial Auditor* to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: -- Mr. Speaker, I move, with leave, seconded by the member for Churchill Downs:

> That the *Report of the Provincial Auditor* for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1991 be referred as tabled to the Standing Committee on *Public Accounts*.

Motion agreed to.

Referral of Public Accounts to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: -- Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Regina Churchill Downs, by leave of the Assembly:

> That the *Public Accounts* of the province of Saskatchewan for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1991, tabled as sessional paper no. 20 of the first session of this legislature be referred to the Standing Committee on *Public Accounts*.

Motion agreed to.

Referral of Retention and Disposal Schedules to the Standing Committee on Communication

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: -- Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Swift Current, by leave of the Assembly:

> That the retention and disposal schedules approved by the Public Documents Committee be referred as tabled to the Standing Committee on Communication.

Motion agreed to.

Referral of the Bylaws of the Professional Associations and Amendments to the Standing Committee on Regulations

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: -- I move, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Westmount, by leave of the Assembly:

> That the bylaws of the professional associations and amendments thereto be referred as tabled to the Special Committee on Regulations.

Motion agreed to.

Referral of the Annual Report of the Legislative Library to the Standing Committee on Communication

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: -- Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Swift Current, by leave of the Assembly:

> That the report of the Saskatchewan Legislative Library be referred as tabled to the Standing Committee on Communication.

Motion agreed to.

Attendance of Member to the United Kingdom Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: -- Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to members of the opposition that this is not a routine

motion but deals with an issue that they likely will be aware of, but I would move, seconded by the member for Churchill Downs:

> That by leave of the Assembly that leave of absence be granted to the hon. member for Saskatoon Eastview-Haultain from Monday, May 4 to Friday, May 22, 1992 to attend, on behalf of this Assembly, the United Kingdom Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference.

Motion agreed to.

CONDOLENCES

Hon. Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move by leave of the Assembly -- and I would hope that the Acting House Leader of the official opposition will consent to second the motion -- a motion at the end of my remarks which would read:

> That this Assembly records with sorrow and regret the passing of a former member of this Assembly and expresses its grateful appreciation of the contribution that he made to his community, his constituency, and to the province.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you members.

Mr. Speaker, I refer to:

> **Robert Hanson Wooff**, (Bob Wooff as he was known), who died in Turtleford on March 23, 1992 and was a member of this Legislative Assembly for the constituency of Turtleford from 1944 to 1948, 1952 to 1956, and 1964 to 1971.

As members will note from those dates, Turtleford constituency was a bell-wether constituency which swung back and forth between the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) -- as it then was, and subsequently the NDP -- Bob Wooff and, I think, Foley, Mr. Foley, as the Liberal candidate, were the two main combatants for a long period of time. And one had the kind of feeling that if the seat of Turtleford was won by a particular party, it was a pretty good harbinger that that party would become the government of the day.

It doesn't always quite always fit the pattern because Bob Wooff lost in 1948 election and Tommy Douglas was returned to power, but then Bob was re-elected in 1952, and so it went. But there was really a see-saw, and I might say rather in a cliché way, a ding-dong battle which existed in Turtleford between these two outstanding contributors to the community and public and political life of this province.

Bob Wooff was born at Dunoops Bridge, Yorkshire, England on May 7, 1900 -- 92 years of age. In 1906, he came to Canada with his parents who first settled near Moosomin. The following year, the Wooff family moved to the North Battleford area to homestead. Bob Wooff himself went to school in Emmaville, and in 1925 he completed a two-year agriculture certificate course at the University of Saskatchewan. He took up farming in the Turtleford district and in 1930, he married Elin Larson of Spruce Lake, Saskatchewan.

As can already be seen the late Bob Wooff took an active interest in community affairs. But more than simply political affairs, he was truly a member of the community and for the community. For example, he was a member of the Warnock school board for nine years and served as a member of the Turtleford school unit.

As well Bob Wooff was a member of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool for several years and served on the local Pool Elevator committee. He was a member of the area United church and taught Sunday school, and was very active in the religious activities of the church.

(1445)

Bob Wooff's involvement in provincial politics first started back in 1940 during the war years, when he was nominated for the Turtleford seat. He was nominated and didn't win, but in 1944, in the sweep of that election with Tommy Douglas, he was elected to the Legislative Assembly and served, as I've already pointed out, until 1948.

In 1952 he was re-elected only to be defeated in the 1956 general election. After having been declared elected in the 1960 election, Bob Wooff lost his seat on a court appeal. This is really a tough way to lose an election. It's tough under any circumstances, I guess, but to have been declared the winner on election night only to have the courts overrule you subsequently was really a bit of a heartache for Bob. And I happen to have known a little bit about that case too because at that stage in the game, I was a would-be young law student already showing my own interest in political activity. I know it's hard to believe a young person like myself at such an early age being involved in political activity, but that was the case none the less.

Determined not to give up, Bob Wooff was re-elected in 1964 and served as a member for Turtleford until 1971 when he retired from politics. And that's when I really got to know Bob Wooff first really well. Of course I'd met him at various CCF and NDP conventions but it was when we served together in opposition from 1967 to 1971 that my first appreciation for the depth, the scope of this person really struck home.

I was a rookie, and I was seated somewhere in the back rows as rookies always are, and Bob because of his record, was in the front row. My party had lost its second election in a row that time to the former premier of the province, the late Hon. W. Ross Thatcher. And like all political parties in those circumstances a lot of thought is given to re-organization, new ideas, new people, and new activities.

One of the great unselfish acts of Bob Wooff . . . and there were two others actually who agreed to do the same thing with Bob, two long-serving members of the House. One was was Frank Meakes from Touchwood constituency

and the other one was the late George Willis, long-standing minister of the Crown from Melfort constituency. The three of them agreed that what perhaps the party should do was put a new face on its image -- even back in 1967 we were conscious about such things as image -- and the three of these veterans decided to voluntarily take seats in the back row. And I was one of the ones -- fortunately or unfortunately, depending on your point of view -- who was asked by the then leader of the party, Woodrow Lloyd, to move up to the front seat to join the front rows in '67-68.

This might not mean like such a big thing to those people who are not directly involved in political activity, but I think all of us who know what politics is all about and how it operates will know the meaning of the story. I'm still enough of a traditionalist to support the notion that years of service, public service, do count. They count in a political party; they count in any organized activity of society.

Today we're under enormous pressure as political parties with respect to gender and gender politics, which I think is very important, aboriginal issues. Those have to be accommodated and accommodated within the context of the fact that service -- long, honourable, devoted service -- must also be recognized.

In 1967-68, Bob Wooff's act of generosity -- not to Roy Romanow or to myself, but to the members -- the act of generosity to all of the members of the official opposition I think told all that you needed to know about this person's commitment to the philosophy and to the movement that he believed in right from very early days and from his first involvement.

As an MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly), the late Mr. Bob Wooff took a special interest in agricultural issues and technical education. He was really one of the true agricultural leaders within our caucus. And while he never was a member of the cabinet, what he had to say with respect to farming matters carried a lot of weight, both in opposition and after he was out of politics in '71, to the Blakeney government of that day.

Bob's interests weren't limited to agricultural and technical education, although he was very much inclined to head in that direction; he had a wide-ranging concern of matters of concern.

If I may again take this moment to reminisce a bit, one of our great battles in the session of 1968, the first session right after being elected for me, and this was Bob's re-election as well again in '67, was the imposition of deterrent fees.

The government of the day, headed by the late former premier, Ross Thatcher, imposed what we called utilization fees, and this was a matter of certainly novelty at that time and a great deal of contention at that time. And Bob rolled up his sleeves and took part in that debate as he did in every debate with a lot of vigour and a lot of commitment.

He was a very compassionate and caring person who put the good of others above all else. He was active right virtually to his last days. In this most recent provincial general election campaign of September-October of 1991, when I attended in the north-west part of the province at speaking engagements, there was Bob Wooff, 91 years of age.

He would attend the meetings, and as is the case with New Democratic Party meetings, very often a question period ensues. This is a dangerous thing in politics at any time for any meeting, but it is in NDP meetings because when you invite questions you get them, and they're very embarrassing questions often.

Bob Wooff was there. That was one of my last meetings with him. And he had some very, very tough questions about the direction of the New Democratic Party and how we might handle the issues facing the province in the 1990s, given the fiscal squeeze which faces our province and actually faces many of the provinces and countries of the world.

His questions were clearly based on, I would say, a deep understanding of the concerns, occasioned by some reading which could not be characterized as being light. He had been ploughing through a number of books in the United States, about United States financing.

One of the ones that we very briefly talked about, if my memory serves me correctly, was a book written by a gentleman called Kevin Phillips, called **The Politics of Rich and Poor**. Perhaps some members have read it. But this is really a fascinating analysis of the Reagan fiscal policy between the years of '82 to '90, whenever the period was. My years may not be right on or at least coinciding with the American presidential cycle.

Bob's great concern was that in the attempt to get the province out of the fiscal morass, we don't develop a society where the cleavage between those who have and those who do not have is further exacerbated, as was the case in the United States by the Reagan years.

And I was just thrilled to see him in what I thought was good health. And I said to myself that if the good Lord should give me years to live that long, to be blessed to have a mind that was still thinking and working and questioning. And not doing it in any personal way, not doing it in any way which attacked motivations -- doing it from the point of view of searching for answers to very difficult questions; doing it from the point of view of advancing ideas to be either accepted or amended or rejected.

He always had that spirit about him. And I have this image in my mind of now a very elderly, not too frail but somewhat frail, person who walked on his own, didn't need any particular help. He was suffering from a variety of ailments, never complained to anybody about them. But had this image in my own mind of a gentleman, a gentleman in the best and all sense . . . all meaning of that word gentleman. In all senses a person who acted with civility and with respect for the interest and the concerns of others.

I went to his funeral in Turtleford; I went with heavy heart. You can't help but admire a person who's contributed so

much for the province and with whom you've worked so long and so hard -- and we've been through a lot of battles together, Bob and I have been.

Some of his sons have been very active in the NDP; Spencer Wooff sought the nomination; actually ran for us on one or two occasions in Swift Current. The Wooff family has been with you through the good times and the bad times. And I went there with a real sense of hurt and sorrow. But you know it didn't turn out to be that way, Mr. Speaker.

The funeral really was a celebration. He'd suffered for about two to three weeks at most. Up until that time he was clear, coherent in his thoughts, still asking questions about why we were doing some things and not doing other things. Were we true to our principles. Had Romanow forgotten statements that I'd made to him earlier in the campaign trail. He was the happy warrior and the sensitive human being right to the end.

He would have been 92 in a few short days from now. And it was in a sense a celebration. A celebration of a life which was of a life of a person who was good and decent and honest and thoughtful and caring. And I guess when it comes right down to it, Mr. Speaker, if that's what they can say about each and every one of us at the end of the day, here was a good person or is a good person, there's not much else that can be said. Bob Wooff was such a good person.

On behalf of all of us, record our condolences to his widow, his family. We express our sincere sympathy to all members of the bereaved family, and thank Bob Wooff for the contribution that he made to the people of this province.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. member from Thunder Creek by leave of the Assembly:

> That this Assembly records with sorrow and regret the passing of a former member of this Assembly and expresses its grateful appreciation of the contribution he made to his community, his constituency, and the province.
>
> **Robert Hanson Wooff** . . .

I'll avoid reading, with consent, the balance of the rather lengthy motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Swenson: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour for me to second the motion of the Hon. Premier on the condolence motion to the Wooff family on behalf of the official opposition.

Certainly, from the comments that the Premier has made about this gentleman, that he is one who probably went above and beyond the call in serving the province of Saskatchewan. It's not often that one encounters an individual in our society, at least today, that has been a part of public service for some four decades.

I think all of us in this Chamber realize the pressures that are upon individuals when they enter public life. Certainly Mr. Wooff's family should be commended for the diligence that they must have shown in supporting his endeavours while serving the public in this legislature.

Turtleford is a fair ways from Regina and when Mr. Wooff started his public life, that probably meant a day's journey on a train to get down here. It meant that communication often was difficult with one's family members. And it's, I think, so important that we recognize the family of individuals like Mr. Wooff because of the contribution that they also would make in his endeavours.

(1500)

Unlike the Premier I didn't have the opportunity to know this gentleman, and will make my remarks very brief so that members, particularly of the government who knew Mr. Wooff, will have an opportunity to speak.

But I do know that coming from a family that takes a deep interest in politics over some decades, that Mr. Wooff must have had a very singular dedication to his beliefs. It isn't often that you would see three electoral defeats keep an individual in the game. And I guess it also speaks highly of his ability to communicate with his constituents because constituents don't often give that fourth opportunity to people in our society.

And obviously, as the Premier has said, the man had an intense ability to empathize with the needs of others, whether it be rookie MLAs in his own caucus or people in his home town where he served on other committees. It's, as I said, a rare opportunity to eulogize someone of this calibre, and I just say it's been an honour for me on behalf of the opposition to take part in it.

Mr. Johnson: -- It is with somewhat of a heavy heart that I rise today as the member from the Turtleford constituency to offer condolences on the passing of Bob Wooff to his wife Elin, his daughter Marilyn, his sons Spencer, David, and Roger, and to their families.

Although Bob signed his name as Robert H. Wooff, young and old knew him as Bob, a compassionate person, one who would take time even to deal with a very young person such as myself. He was always a friend that you could meet any where. I have always considered Bob as a very close personal friend, someone I could go to for advice. He would always take the time to hear you out, and he had a wealth of knowledge that he would gladly share.

Most people, I believe, have a handful of friends they would consider very close. Bob had many close friends -- everywhere and in every walk of life. And if you measure a man's success by the number of his friends, I believe that Bob would without a doubt be measured as a very successful man.

He had the knack of meeting people, making them feel comfortable, and giving them a feeling of value in themselves in just talking about the every day things. He could provide advice in a very gentle way; it never seemed as if he was preaching, and he was never obtrusive in doing so.

He had the uncanny ability to analyse the actions of

people or events that were taking place or life in general and state them in a manner that allowed people to understand. Perhaps this occurred because of his lifelong interests in the community and the world in general which, as the Premier has indicated, in that he was a very great reader.

My first memories of Bob go back to childhood when I remember him at my parents' house discussing the issues of the day or planning for a campaign. The discussion would go on into the wee hours of the morning, and I would be sent to bed before they were finished. And I recall laying on the floor upstairs at the heat vent because sound as well as heat came up from the living room below. And I would listen to the conversation that went on. The Bob Wooff I grew to know and respect could make himself understood whether he was speaking or writing. And in both, he had the ability to get and keep one's attention. I believe for a large part of that is because he spoke from the heart.

He wrote two short histories. One of the early history of the CCF in the Turtleford constituency detailing the intrigue that went on over a period of about six or seven years before the organization of the CCF was completed. The other history entitled **Following the Gleam** is a history of his parents' journey to Canada and their life in the Emmaville district.

As was previously stated, he was born on May 7, 1900, which would be the day that the budget comes down. He would have been 92 on the day that the budget comes down. He received his elementary education at Emmaville and he attended the school of agriculture at the university in 1925-26, supported by his sister who is a school teacher.

He married Elin Larson in 1930 and they farmed for 44 years before moving into the community of Turtleford in 1974.

In addition to his farming activities, Bob was very active in the community. He served on the Warnock school board; he took part in the organization of the Wheat Pool in 1924 and was on the committee at Cleeves for some 25 years. He helped to organize as well the Turtleford and district co-op association and was one of the directors on the board. When the credit union which was formed later was being organized, he also assisted in that.

Bob was always an active participant in his church, and serving for some 50 years in one capacity or other from that of a Sunday school teacher in the non-denominational Sunday school at Emmaville known as the Maple Leaf Sunday School, to a lay minister in later years.

Bob's family was very important to his life. He was very proud of his children and their accomplishments. And his love for his children and their family was evident in a number of ways when he spoke of them. He stated public on many occasions that his involvement in the community and politics were made possible by the continuous support that Elin gave him. When his wife's health failed and she required some help in order for them to stay in their home, Bob willingly sacrificed his interests, his outside interests, to care for her until she moved to the Turtleford nursing home.

In the book that he wrote about his family, and I quote, he said this about his wife: I could not have had a better partner for all the struggles that lay ahead. She was magnificent all the way.

I believe those words indicate very clearly what his actions that I see in him and what he felt towards his wife.

It was Bob's involvement in the provincial politics where he influenced the greatest number of people, from the Premier today to myself, at that heat vent in a storey-and-a-half farm house many years ago.

Bob represented the CCF or the NDP in every provincial election held in the Turtleford constituency from the 1944 one until 1967. He won some, and he lost others with a difference of less than 50 votes and in the process picked up the nickname "Landslide Bob."

After 1971, no longer the MLA or the candidate, he worked for the New Democratic Party in forwarding his belief in a caring society. He solicited funds, he sold memberships, he campaigned continuously at coffee row and at the post office. And I'm told that, although not often, when he felt it was necessary, he did so even as he attended church.

For many years, when he would no longer accept the nomination to the executive of the Turtleford constituency, we considered him an honorary member and invited him to all the executive meetings. His contribution to the executive was appreciated and valued because of the experience and the knowledge that he brought and that ability to analyse the situation at hand.

Bob's intensive political activity continued until his wife's deteriorating health and his own health forced him to ease off in the mid-'80s. And during the 1991 provincial election, as I had done many times before, I visited with Bob asking his advice and discussing some of the problems that were occurring in the campaign. But the conversation very quickly turned to the economy where Bob expressed his deep concern about the desperate economic conditions of the province. And I must say that over the last six months I have come to realize that his concerns were very well founded.

Bob will be missed by many in the Turtleford constituency. I thank him for his friendship, for his warmth, and for his advice, but most of all for his commitment to make this world a fair, compassionate place for all to live.

Mr. Speaker, I want to extend my personal condolences to his wife Elin, his children -- two of whom I know, Spencer and David -- as well as the rest of the family. I believe that all of us who knew Bob are more caring persons for having had the opportunity. Thank you.

Ms. Haverstock: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to add my sincere condolences to those who knew and loved Mr. Wooff. I attended Swift Current Collegiate Institute as well as the Beatty Collegiate Institute, where

his son Spencer taught for many, many years. And I had the privilege this week to actually see Spencer Wooff after some 25 years. It was a great privilege for me.

After hearing so much about the character of this gentleman, I feel that I have lost by not knowing him. And I did understand that he was an absolutely incredible opponent in the elections in the Turtleford constituency. It's obvious that he had an extraordinary commitment to public service, and for that we should all be grateful.

Mr. Sonntag: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise also with my colleagues here in the Assembly, to extend my sincere condolences and sympathy to the family of Mr. Bob Wooff as well.

When Goodsoil and Pierceland were part of the Turtleford constituency, Mr. Wooff, or Bob, as he was more affectionately know by everyone, used to . . . represented our area, I should say. Bob was one of the very few people who influenced me and persuaded me to let my name stand as a candidate for the New Democratic Party in the constituency of Meadow Lake, and I will never forget what he said to me. He said: young fellow, you'll never, ever regret it. And he certainly was accurate; I have never regretted it.

The first time I heard of Bob was when my parents spoke of him when I was a very young person. They talked of this gentleman that used to campaign on horseback in the early 1940s, riding through the bush country up around Goodsoil and Pierceland. They spoke of an individual absolutely committed to the cause.

Bob seldom ever raised his voice and I believe was liked by everyone regardless of political persuasion, which is evidenced here today. I think also very well evidenced by the large attendance at the funeral -- well over 500 people. And I concur with my colleague, the Premier, who said that when he attended he was expecting a sad ceremony and it was not at all; it was a joyous celebration, in fact.

As an example of how caring and concerned he was, during the election campaign last fall he phoned our office several times just to make sure that we were running the campaign correctly.

In closing, I would once again like to convey on behalf of myself, my parents who knew him very well, and the constituents of Meadow Lake who were represented by him, my sincere condolences to the Wooff family.

Mr. Kujawa: -- Mr. Speaker, I have listened to all of these wonderful remarks about Bob Wooff. I want to join with the speakers who have made them.

I come from a little place called St. Walburg which used to be just the other side of . . . it still is the other side of Turtleford, when Bob Wooff lived in a place called Cleeves, which no longer is on the map of Saskatchewan.

I think that perhaps if there was one simple test for evaluating a human being, it would be his consideration for other people. If that's a test, then Bob Wooff is one of the finest persons any of us will ever know, and from what I know of his family, which is quite a bit, they're following in his footsteps.

Hon. Mr. Rolfes: -- At this time I would like to ask permission of the Assembly for the Speaker to say a few words on behalf of the . . . Is that permitted? I would be remiss if I didn't say some words on behalf of Bob Wooff and his family.

I met his family in 1970 actually, when his son Dave sought me out to run for the NDP for the first time. Dave later on became the . . . the next following year became the president of my constituency and certainly was responsible for getting me elected in what was probably the toughest seat at that time. And in fact in the NDP, the expression was, win Nutana South and we'll sweep the province. And as I think most of you know, we won Nutana South and I give a lot of credit to the Wooff family for that; and we also swept the province.

I want to also today say that I got to know Spencer very well through the education system. Spencer and I spent approximately 20 years together, not in the same schools, but certainly our paths crossed on a number of times.

All the words that have been used about Bob today, that he was compassionate, that he was generous, that he was a humble man, he was a committed individual, are certainly true.

And Bob was certainly very generous with the wealth that he had accumulated. And he was also very, very generous with the advice that he would give to a rookie cabinet minister. I remember being the minister of Social Services, and later on the minister of Health, two areas that Bob was keenly interested in and wanted to make absolutely certain that the government at that time was aware of some of the problems of the poor people in our province, and that we would meet that commitment to the poor.

And at any NDP convention Bob would corner me and give me some very friendly and good advice. I want to thank Bob for that and I do want to also thank his family, Dave and Spencer, for their friendship, for what they have done for me in improving my life. I know that if it hadn't been for Dave and the rest of the family, that I would not have been able to serve the public in the number of years that I was able to.

So I want to express my appreciation to the Wooff family and I certainly want to convey my condolences to Mrs. Wooff, to Dave, and to Spencer. Thank you very much.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: -- Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move, seconded by my colleague, the House Leader for the official opposition and member for Rosthern, that by leave of the Assembly:

> That the resolutions just passed, together with a transcript of oral tributes to the memory of the deceased, be communicated to the bereaved families on behalf of this Assembly by Mr. Speaker.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

Ms. Hamilton: -- Mr. Speaker, it is truly an honour to be called upon by the Premier to second the Speech from the Throne and the words of my eloquent colleague from Meadow Lake.

Yesterday when he said the government would be judged by their actions and not their rhetoric, he was certainly correct. Sadly, the past government has exploited even our own language by too often saying one thing and then doing the opposite. It is no wonder the public has become cynical. The words of politicians have come to mean nothing. It has been all too easy for the Tory government to say the words that the latest poll claims that people want to hear. But too often in the past the words have been hollow and empty. Words that are not tied to meaningful action and principles are useless.

Mr. Speaker, we in this government will be judged by our actions. We will be judged on whether or not we have used common sense and are competent in our administration of the public purse. We will be judged on whether our decisions have been made in the public interest. We will be judged on whether we have given hope to those who are presently disadvantaged. We will be judged on whether we have implemented policies that will bring people together in times of adversity. Make no mistake: we will be judged, and we should be judged on our actions -- just as the members of the opposition were judged this last October.

The people have harshly judged the previous regime, and it is a sad commentary to know that because of their empty words politicians are neither respected nor trusted by the population at large. Think about it. The very people that are charged with the responsibility of making major decisions about running the province or the country, these people are neither trusted nor respected.

Mr. Speaker, something is clearly very wrong. That is the reality that was left to this caucus and to the New Democratic government. That is the reality that a New Democrat government is going to change.

I take the whole matter of integrity and accountability very seriously. My colleagues and I take these matters seriously and we're willing to act upon them. We will ensure that a code of ethical conduct will be passed that will set a high standard of behaviour to which all public office holders should aspire. A new conflict of interests Act will be introduced to provide strict guidelines for all elected representatives in the performance of their public duties.

Mr. Speaker, the people of my constituency, Wascana Plains, from Douglas Park to the very new Wascana View, they all ask one thing. They just want everyone in this province to be treated fairly and honestly.

My conviction that politicians should work hard for their constituents and should be accountable to the people that elect them was a major motivating factor for me to seek election and seek office at the provincial level. I have served these people as a member of city council. Their trust allowed me to see first hand the total disregard of the Tories for the capital of this province.

In one year alone the past government removed over $9.2 million in transfer grants and payments. Not in March, Mr. Speaker, but by July, far after a city can adjust to that kind of transfer. A few months later, what do we hear? The announcement that Saskatchewan is going to celebrate an 85th birthday party. The birthday party would cost us all -- you guessed it -- $9 million.

Despite the lack of support from the government who touted economic diversification, Regina did not give up. We formed the Regina Economic Development Authority which includes a broad cross-section of our community. It brought together business, labour, aboriginal people, our university, and civic government. It brought them together to hold their heads high with pride for Regina and for Saskatchewan.

I am proud of those people who with vision, commitment, and dedication have given to us an example of the successes of community-based economic development strategies.

Our action as government is also informing the people and forming together a group, the Premier's Economic Action Committee, with representation from all sectors. And they will in the same way advise and assist us in the economic rejuvenation of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: -- Mr. Speaker, local government is no stranger to public involvement and accountability. These past six years have been a good experience. It is now my intent to work hard for my Premier and with my fellow caucus colleagues to provide the integrity and accountability demonstrated by local government to now the provincial level. Our team effort will be judged on how we restore the public's faith in elected people.

So yes, my colleague from the North is quite correct; words of politicians and governments mean nothing, nothing at all until they're followed with concrete and responsible action.

The throne speech that we heard on Monday makes very clear that this government is prepared to take action, prepared to take action now. The model is very simple really. Words are spoken based on principle, based on beliefs and values. Then action is taken to support those words.

But, Mr. Speaker, before we can get our own plans implemented, we're required to mop up the mess. What a mess. I personally feel like someone who's lived through one of Regina's infamous tornadoes. Everything is laying in ruin and shambles around us.

The member opposite from Rosthern has been trying to absolve himself from any responsibility of the present financial mess. Well that member, he's been farming in Saskatchewan long enough to know that after a tornado has struck the land, signs of destruction are clearly visible everywhere -- long, long after the storm has died away. The damage caused by the Tory tornado that hit this province will remain with us long after their term of office.

We are prepared to clean up the debris. Before any positive construction can be started we must clean up the mess, so understand the course of action that we must now take is also essential. We must understand first how we got to the point of this mess and destruction, and we must all remember.

When we were in opposition and when we were on the campaign trail last fall, we raised strenuous objections to how the previous government mismanaged the finances of the province. We made a commitment, a promise to the people of Saskatchewan that we would restore responsible fiscal management to the running of this province.

Mr. Speaker, our party understands, along with the people in this province -- which is unlike the opposition members that huddled together yesterday -- we understand the importance of sound financial management and a sound financial base. Surely this should be painfully obvious to everyone, because after all we are talking here economics at the kindergarten level.

When you run up bills, you have to think about how you're going to pay them. School children know that much. If you are borrowing money, then you have to sit down and develop a plan on how you're going to pay the money back.

So what were you people thinking about when you were on this side of the House? How could you stand by and watch the province go deeper and deeper into debt until we're now faced with a total debt of nearly $14 billion?

How is it possible that you could remain silent while Crown corporations, the people's assets, the assets of the people of this province, were gutted financially or sold at huge losses? How is it possible that you felt you could justify to your own constituents an annual interest charge of $700 million?

To put these numbers in some perspective, with $700 million we could resurface the Trans-Canada Highway from Vancouver to Montreal. Yet you were prepared to keep funnelling this incredible amount of money off to financial institutions. Now with total provincial revenue at just over $4 billion, the interest payments are the third largest item of government expenditure.

Didn't you think the banks make enough money without turning over 20 per cent of our revenue every year? How is it possible that you're able to look yourself in the mirror knowing that you were bankrupting what was once a strong and healthy economy? We wonder, the people of Saskatchewan wonder how you could do this to your own children and your own grandchildren.

(1530)

Mr. Speaker, people keep asking me over and over again, how could this possibly have happened? And I can only think really of two possible explanations. Maybe the previous government really honestly didn't know what they were doing. It is possible. It is possible they just didn't understand what happens if you continuously spend the people's money that you just don't have. So by not understanding the reality of bankruptcy, perhaps they really believed that it didn't matter if in a province when you're in debt, somehow magically it would all take care of itself.

It's just like a very young child who has no concept of money, only the immediate desires. A toddler in a store only understands that he wants to eat the candy or play with the toy and take it home with him. It never occurs to the child that there's any reason why he can't help himself to whatever he wants. A child of that age requires patience and kind guidance, but he is certainly not capable of taking responsibility for doing the family shopping.

So was that how this province came to financial ruin? Can we really credit you with childlike innocence?

An Hon. Member: -- Hardly.

Ms. Hamilton: -- Hardly? Well-meaning but naive? Just not capable of understanding or fulfilling your responsibilities? Like the two-year-old, left to tend the family business matters, is that how you can explain your actions?

If you were not totally juvenile and incompetent, then the explanation for this financial mess becomes a lot more sinister because then you had to have been acting deliberately and because then you had to have known full well the hardships that you were placing on Saskatchewan people.

Your party leadership has never made any secret of your disdain for social programs. Neither have you offered any apologies for your actions -- actions that have imposed hurt and hardship, actions that all too often have increased inequities and unfairness in this province.

This government has opened the books on Tory mismanagement because we believe the public has a right to know where their tax dollars went. What the Gass Commission revealed has been truly shocking. One thing that everyone can agree on, after reading that report, is that the Conservatives certainly knew how to live the high life at the taxpayers' expense.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: -- The people of this province will never

forget who benefitted from the former regime while services were cut. They will never forget who continually hiked our taxes, and they will never forget who put us into this massive debt.

The senior on limited income will never forget that members opposite defended a $1.3 million pension plan for George Hill. Single mothers trying to scrape together enough money to buy food for their children; they won't forget members opposite condoning spending $16,000 of money -- the taxpayers' money -- so cabinet ministers could have free booze.

University students will not forget that while university funds and loans were cut, money was always found for Tory friends and big business megaprojects -- even against the advice of their own advisors.

Farmers forced off their land and small-business people forced into bankruptcy these last long 10 years, they will never forget that our future was recklessly mortgaged away for short-term political gain. And they won't forget that just yesterday you voted against what? Fighting Ottawa for the $500 million owing to them.

They voted to extend with the federal government's consent, the deadline to be mutually agreed upon extended on the GRIP program, and they voted against a request by farmers to establish a review commission to design a long-term farm stability program that would be based on the cost of production -- in this Chamber yesterday, voted against that for the farmer, Mr. Speaker.

We all will never forget that the previous government operated irresponsibly in the managing of the public purse. But worse, they ran the affairs of the province to benefit a small elite group of their friends while the rest of us suffered the results.

The members opposite have spent hours in the House warning of the dangers of socialism -- denouncing a concept that believes government has a responsibility to ensure that social and human needs of all its citizens are met.

Was bankrupting this fair and beautiful province how you thought you could prevent Saskatchewan from returning to a compassionate and social-minded community? With the massive and crippling debt, did you honestly believe that you could publicly argue the province could no longer afford to take care of any of those who were disadvantaged? Did you think that by destroying the financial base of this province you would be able to kill our vision of social fairness and equality?

Well I tell you, Mr. Speaker, the human spirit and the will to do good cannot be snuffed out that easily. Yes it's true we've been left with a horrific financial legacy; and yes it's true it will not be that easy to pull the province back from the brink of total economic collapse. It will now take longer to restore the economy, to create the jobs, to implement programs and policies that ensure all people can live in dignity, that all people can have the basics of food and shelter.

But as difficult as it may be, the throne speech pointed out we have already begun to put actions behind our words. I see the government members of this legislature as already embarking on a very difficult journey, but we're not going to be put off. We, along with the people of Saskatchewan, we're on this road together, and together we will overcome the obstacles.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: -- Together we are recapturing the vision of responsible government. We in this province will once again be the masters of our own destiny.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: -- To take responsible fiscal action is merely the tool, albeit an important one. It is the tool required to create the kind of society that will reflect our beliefs and our values of fairness, of equity, and of compassion.

We are doing that with our actions. The first action this government took was to keep the promise of eliminating the unfair PST (provincial sales tax). We didn't take months, we didn't takes years, we didn't take a week; we did it the same night we were elected.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: -- And why? Because it was an unfair tax. We are determined to have a tax system that is fair -- taxation based on the ability to pay.

We also promised to conduct an audit of the province's finances and to review the PCs' (Progressive Conservative) privatization and business deals. That promise too we have kept. Less than a month after taking power the Financial Management Review Commission was established by the Premier, and on February 18 the commission released its report -- on time and within budget. We promise to bring to the light of day the whole sorry financial mess that the previous administration created.

I remember how, as in opposition, my fellow colleagues -- and it was not easy -- but my fellow colleagues like the member from The Battlefords, the member from Prince Albert Northcote, from Regina North West spoke strongly against how the Tories were using Crown corporations to hide their financial mismanagement from public view.

At the time my colleagues were accused of being overly partisan, of inflating issues for political gain. Well this situation has now been brought out in the open too, been brought out in the open by our government.

Our senior members have worked hard to reveal the truth because they believe in accountable government. Now the report of the Gass Commission has revealed that if anything, my colleagues understated the magnitude of the problem of mismanagement. The people of this province also realize that forcing the Crowns into debt in order to pay dividends to the province makes about as much sense as using a credit card to make mortgage payments.

We the people of this province will never forget the long, dark journey of the past 10 years. We will never forget the governing party that brought us to this rocky and barren wasteland.

An Hon. Member: -- The people won't forget.

Ms. Hamilton: -- Not forget. But now the light is beginning to dawn. We are still in rough terrain, but we are determined to find our way back to the province that Saskatchewan people believe in. We know exactly how we got into this mess and who is responsible, but it's time to move forward, to slowly begin implementing our vision.

Mr. Speaker, we did not create this mess. The people of the province did not create this mess. But we promised to get our financial house in order when we formed government, and we're acting on that promise.

But what I want to stress to this Assembly is why we are doing this. We do believe in sound financial management, and we will eventually restore health to the provincial treasury, but let's make it very clear that this is not an end unto itself. We know that human and social needs must be addressed for any society to call itself civilized. It is essential to gain control over our finances in order to have the freedom to do what is needed and what is right. Financial security does mean freedom for the people of Saskatchewan, but I also want to commend this government in the steps that they're taking to enhance freedom in other ways as well.

That's the promise for freedom from government secrecy and manipulation. It's the promise of freedom to ask questions and state differing opinions. Mr. Speaker, it also returns the promise of freedom to participate in meaningful consultation, evaluation of government, fair criticism without fear of reprisal.

To be successful today and into the future, governments must adapt and share decision-making powers. Individuals and communities are rightfully insisting on the freedom to make their own decisions and to solve their own problems. In solving problems, government's role must become more facilitating and co-operative.

The throne speech, Mr. Speaker, is putting into practice this new approach. Initiatives like the economic development bank, the co-generation energy projects, the changes to the community bonds program, the initiatives on the environment -- these all show that our government is acting on its commitment to bring people together to solve their own problems. Meaningful consultation will allow the people to make decisions today toward a better future for all of us tomorrow.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: -- We recognize government expenditures, programs, and services must benefit all our citizens, not just the few. That is the essence of ensuring that human and social needs are being met. That is the essence of why we are starting now to develop plans for a guaranteed income for seniors; where we're starting now to ensure that in the future our elderly can have the choice of remaining in their own homes. We not only respect the wisdom and experience of our elders, but this government wants to ensure that all seniors can live out their lives in dignity.

An essential part of equality and fairness is also having the opportunity of employment. This government is acting on its commitment to make jobs a priority. We understand how absolutely critical it is to get Saskatchewan people working again. Individuals, families, and communities cannot survive without employment opportunities. But neither can our economy. A fundamental requirement in getting people working is to ensure appropriate education is available. Having the right training is a key factor in order for people to achieve economic independence in our society and economic security.

(1545)

I commend my colleagues for their vision and commitment in this area. Clearly our new government understands the close connection between employment and training. They not only understand but they're initiating measures to solve a major problem. Having a co-ordinated education system is essential to ensure that our people will get the skills required by business and by industry.

I am proud to be a part of a government that will hold these ideals above all else. And I'm proud that in spite of the necessity for severe financial management, this government has set its priorities on people first.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: -- What limited resources we do have will be targeted to those greatest in need. We will feed hungry children. We cannot stand idly by waiting for the recession to end when a future generation is becoming an innocent and sorry victim of the mistakes of the past government the past 10 years.

Instead of dwelling on heart-tugging rhetoric, this government has acted on their belief in the importance of equality. We are taking measures to improve and enhance job training for both women and for our aboriginal community. This is one small step but it reveals our government's commitment and understanding of equality issues.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech that we all listened to on Monday is about a government that is willing to take action today for our children and for their tomorrow; a government that is willing to do this together in co-operation with the people who love this province, who will make their homes here, have their farms and businesses here, and yes, want to relax and play here too.

This government acknowledges that there are hungry children. It has made a commitment to help the community feed those who are hungry. Our government has taken long-term steps to ensure dignity to our seniors, and to develop fair access to jobs for the rest of us; to have fair labour practices; to restore democratic principles; and to safeguard our environment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: -- Well I would say, Mr. Speaker, that that is not a bad plan for a government who is accused by the leader of the members opposite of not having any plan. I am proud of this plan, because if we can do all of this in a year when we have no money, think of what we will be able to do when our financial base is restored. If we can do all this, our public will once again have faith in its leaders and the democratic process.

The members of the previous government may have thought for a while that by taking this province to the brink of financial ruin, that they would kill the spirit of our people. But out of adversity, Saskatchewan people always rise to a challenge in a spirit of innovation, co-operation, and fairness.

From the ruin around us we now have the opportunity to work together to recreate our institutions like health, education, local government, and social programs into something even better. Once again our party and this government is going to create something positive out of hardship and out of difficult times.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be a part of this province and this government during difficult times -- but yes also very exciting times. This government, just like the people that elected it, is equal to the challenges ahead. Working together and making tough choices today will reclaim this province for our future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: -- Mr. Speaker, I am indeed honoured to second this Speech from the Throne.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed a pleasure for me, Mr. Speaker, to enter this throne speech debate to have the opportunity as the MLA from Thunder Creek to finally come to this place of debate and do my duty. I wondered for a while, Mr. Speaker, if I was ever going to get the opportunity.

During the last session of this legislature I heard a lot of pronouncements from the government as to their ability to stay on schedule, how budgets would be brought in on time, how special warrants would never be used again in this particular government, that we had a government that was going to respect many of the principles of democracy which they claimed others had abrogated over the years. So as we head into the month of May, Mr. Speaker, when the farmers are hoping to get out on the land, it is good that I've had that opportunity to finally come here.

I'd like to say, Mr. Speaker, that I once again would like to congratulate Her Honour on the job that she did. And I was outside the legislature on Monday when Her Honour came up in the landau, and I was standing amongst several hundred Saskatchewan citizens who weren't feeling particularly good about their government that day. But when Her Honour came and walked on parade with the troops and stood at the salute, you heard a lot of comments about what a great personage she was. Her contribution to our province is well-known in a number of areas. And people, I think, out there on the steps of the legislature on Monday were truly respectful of Her Honour and the way that she carries out her duties. And certainly she came into this Chamber and once again showed us why she has the position that she has, both within our legislature and within society in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I think one of the central issues of the throne speech that was delivered to us on Monday is the fact that I see a less than honest approach to the taxpayers of this province in this throne speech. I see a government that makes all sorts of pronouncements about what they're going to do, how they're going to set in place various commissions, groups of people to look at the way that our province governs itself. This coming from a Premier and a party which roundly criticized similar processes by the former government.

Consensus Saskatchewan which brought in a report that truly, I believe, represented a broad view of Saskatchewan and our province was roundly criticized. The Murray Commission -- member after member in this legislature from the then opposition stood and condemned the Murray Commission because it went out and talked to people about the health care system.

Mr. Speaker, the government would like the now opposition to give them their due and allow them to enter into this great consultative process without being critical. And I'd like to say to you, Mr. Speaker, that I think this opposition will be very responsible in viewing the works of the various bodies put in place by this government, that it will not use cheap partisan politics in discussing the issues that those particular people are endeavouring to find out.

I see a throne speech that takes a great deal of credit for some economic agenda items. I see them refer to specific businesses that are providing employment to the province of Saskatchewan -- businesses that were all either started or helped by the previous administration. And yet they say they would never come into this legislature piggybacking on the deeds of the former government.

And I guess that's the difference between this opposition and the one that previously sat in this legislature. Because it didn't matter what the former government said or did or wished; that opposition was always very vitriolic and against whatever the government talked about.

And I think this opposition has demonstrated to you, Mr. Speaker, that where credit is due, then recognize it. That when there are reforms to be made in this legislature, that by having an all-party consultation that this opposition will fulfil its mandate of opposing but of being reasonable and when necessary, standing firm.

This throne speech also talks about the way that our government is going to put people first. And I think we're going to have to have a diametric change, Mr. Speaker, from this government if we're going to put people first, if we don't come clean with the way the financial situation

is in this province.

As came up earlier in the day in question period, many people in our society and indeed around Canada, are questioning some of the numbers that the government is using. They're questioning the motives behind the use of those numbers. And they're really wondering if this government is simply not trying to pull the wool over the taxpayers' eyes in Saskatchewan so that, number one, they don't have to live up to the agenda that they promised the people of Saskatchewan in last year's election campaign; but, number two, so that they can position themselves politically in three or four years to say: gee, taxpayer, what a wonderful job we've done in this province. We'll fudge the numbers sufficiently at the beginning so that we can look good politically at the end.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, that it's incumbent upon government in this province or anywhere in Canada today, given the tight economic situation that we're in, that government not be fudging the numbers simply for their own political gain.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to lay out some premise today in my speech that I think . . . and I would ask all members of this legislature to follow along fairly carefully as I outline a case and use quite a lot of numbers. It's very difficult I know, Mr. Speaker, when one talks about numbers that have several zeros behind them, to make any sense out of what truly is going on. But I think it's important, given the pronouncements of the government and indeed the speech that was just delivered prior to mine in this legislature where a lot of economic issues were talked about, that we do make an attempt to follow along with the arguments that I'll make today.

And the first proposition that I'm going to make, Mr. Speaker, is that the Premier, the now Premier, when he was leader of the opposition in this province, was irresponsible in not taking into account some numbers and some facts that would be well-known to an individual who has been in politics in this province for a quarter of a century -- numbers that I'm sure a former deputy premier of this province would have known about, would have availed himself of when going out and promising the taxpayers of this province several billion dollars in promises, when going out and criticizing the former government of the province of Saskatchewan for certain economic initiatives which were undertaken.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the NDP leader, the Premier of this province, appointed a gentlemen named Donald Gass, a chartered accountant from Saskatoon, to head up a review of the province's financial position. The member from Regina has just mentioned this particular individual and that commission a number of times in her speech and drawn certain conclusions from the findings of that commission.

The Premier of the province expressed every confidence in Mr. Gass. And I would say to him, if he has changed his mind recently, even as recently as this morning when the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour and others presented counter-arguments to the cabinet of this province, it is incumbent upon the Premier to stand in his place in this legislature and repudiate Mr. Gass.

(1600)

But I think, Mr. Speaker, until he does that, until he does that, then this Assembly must give credence to some of the statements that Mr. Gass has made. And I refer first of all to an interview with CKCK-TV on February 18, 1992, and I quote. Mr. Gass said: The books were open all along to credit agencies or anyone else who was interested.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I said before, we had a leader of the opposition who'd been in politics for a quarter of a century, has obviously displayed a burning desire to be Premier of this province for some time. I would have thought he would have taken the opportunity to avail himself of knowledge which seems to have been shared by people all over this country and indeed this continent.

Mr. Gass personally wanted to say that the new NDP government would not be surprised by his findings; they would not be surprised. That is the position of the officially appointed Financial Management Review Commission chairman -- a man appointed by this government. The books were always open and there would be no surprises.

The second issue is the Premier's claim that the financial books of the province were not kept in a way which fairly reflected the province's financial position and that he did not know what was going on.

Well, Mr. Speaker, aside from Mr. Gass's report that this was not the case, we have the sworn word of the Minister of Finance. And I would refer members and the public to a document known as a shelf filing that was made by the Minister of Finance in Washington, D.C., by his representatives a short time ago.

This filing is a sworn legal document to prepare the way for the government to borrow up to $1 billion -- $1 billion by the way, which was not approved by this legislature -- $1 billion. That's a one with I believe nine zeros behind it. It's a lot of money, Mr. Speaker.

Now members of the media I know have seen this document, but I think one of the things that they have failed to report is the sworn statements of the Minister of Finance found on page 11 of this particular filing. And I quote page 11, and I'll be tabling this document, Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks so that any member of the legislature may view it. And I quote:

> The report of the Provincial Auditor on prior financial statements has not been adverse and the Department of Finance of the Province believes the 1991 Financial Statements present fairly the financial position of the Consolidated Fund, Saskatchewan Heritage Fund and the Combined Funds and the results of their operations and the changes in financial position for the year then ended.

Note, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Finance states that the previous government's financial statements were not adverse and that they are fair. The minister's sworn statement then goes on to take into the account Mr. Gass's

comments and recommendations. And it says also on page 11, and I quote: "Application of the PSAAC . . ." commonly called PSAAC (Public Sector Accounting and Auditing Committee) ". . . guidelines would not change the total level of the Province's debt currently outstanding . . .

So here we have, Mr. Speaker, the NDP Minister of Finance saying the former PC government kept financial records that were fair, that accurately represented the financial position of the province, and that accepting the Gass recommendations would have no effect on the size of the provincial debt. And that is the sworn statement of the member from Regina Dewdney.

Now, Mr. Speaker, lest the Premier of this province say that his own minister had insufficient information and that there was information missing that makes the above sworn statements misleading, let me further quote the minister's own document.

First of all, let us be clear about what time period the minister swears was reviewed as fair and accurate. On page 12 of the same document we read, and I quote:

> All the financial information set forth or incorporated by reference in this Prospectus is derived from financial statements and supplementary schedules of the Combined Funds which have been examined by the Provincial Auditor for the five years ended March 31, 1991, and has been included or incorporated by reference in this Prospectus in reliance upon his authority as an expert in accounting and auditing.

So the Minister of Finance swears that based upon the work of the Provincial Auditor, that the bookkeeping of a former government was up to snuff at least since the year ended March 31, 1985.

I think, Mr. Speaker, it's important for members of this legislature and of the public to understand the enormity of this and the contradiction that it represents from the propaganda that we have seen come out of this government in the last six months.

This Minister of Finance swears, swears to the courts of New York and Washington and to investors who buy the bonds of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, that the former Tory government kept solid, fair, and open books at least since 1985. This is what he tells the legal authorities in the United States of America, that he is so confident in the bookkeeping of the previous government that for these statements he makes the Government of Saskatchewan liable before the courts of the United States of America.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that is a fairly significant statement for our Minister of Finance to make. And yet here in Saskatchewan he and his Premier are telling the people of Saskatchewan exactly the opposite, exactly the opposite what they would put in a document this thick which costs several hundreds of thousands of dollars to put together, delivered into the securities exchange in Washington, D.C.

He's been telling the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, that the books were closed, that it was all a surprise to a man that had been in public life for 25 years, that the Tories kept the books in a mess. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance goes on through a great ritual every time he sees the media, repeating, the books are open now. Well, Mr. Speaker, the books, according to Mr. Gass, were never closed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: -- The NDP leader tells us that he never knew how bad it was when he stood in this legislature, and I remember those times well, when he stood in this legislature and asked for more and more money for all of the various things that the NDP supposedly espouse. He campaigned on promises of everything for everybody all over this province for two years. And now all of a sudden the poor fellow is surprised when he opens the books.

I guess the question I would have, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for members of this legislature and for the public of Saskatchewan is, exactly where does the Minister of Finance want to announce that he has told the truth? Does he want to announce it to the bankers in New York or does he want to announce it to the people of Saskatchewan.

Now we know about the truth according to Gass, at least until the Premier repudiates him. So we have to accept that the New Democratic government which now governs this province is going to tell the truth to the American investors whom they're going to borrow a billion dollars from, but they won't tell it to the people of Saskatchewan. And instead they will have a purely cynical, reprehensible political agenda for the taxpayers in this province.

You know it's sad, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we think about going to New York to borrow a billion dollars, that some of the practices of the former government, which I think most people in this province considered good and reasonable, are not being followed. Because, Mr. Speaker, why should we pay interest to the people in New York when we in fact could be borrowing monies from our own people and paying the interest here, as we did with Power bonds, TeleBonds, Potash bonds.

Indeed this morning, this very morning, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this very morning a coalition representing the various labour groups came in and presented a submission, and I believe this is the submission here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the cabinet of this province. And it's from the coalition on public sector bargaining, saying that very thing -- that this government should be making a pact with the credit unions; that it should be doing things to borrow money within our own province so that the interest stays in this province, that it doesn't go to the New York bankers; that the mechanisms are already in place to do that borrowing; and that we don't have to sneak off in the dark of night and ask the Americans for a billion dollars with a statement that directly contradicts everything that we've heard out of this government in the last six months.

In his first *Economic Review*, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the

Finance minister of this province said on page 6 of that particular document, and I quote:

> . . . the construction of a second heavy oil upgrader, a fertilizer plant and a pulp mill will help support economic growth . . . as well as offer opportunities for more growth in future when these new facilities come on stream . . .

The Minister of Finance says that the investment in diversifying Saskatchewan's economy made by the previous government is precisely what is keeping us going through some very difficult times, particularly in the construction industry. And yet he would have the people of this province believe -- if you can believe the rhetoric which we hear spouted all around this province by members of this government -- he would have us believe, when he is out in the public with the taxpayers, that this money was all wasted.

You base some of the economic foundations of your province and your economic forecast, which are read by financial people all across this country and indeed around the world, on some corner-stones, some major initiatives. And yet you tell a different story when you're out there with the people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to directly address the issues of the provincial debt. Let us start, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with a surface review of some easily agreed upon numbers, with the possible exception of the size of the accumulated debt itself. Every cabinet minister on the other side has his own opinion it seems these days, on what that number is. And it's sort of randomly used around the province. But anyway, let us put out some numbers that I think have been pretty well agreed upon by people in the financial circles at least, and others around this province.

Let us take, for the sake of argument, the numbers produced by the government's Financial Management Review Commission. That shouldn't be too hard for members of this legislature to take -- the numbers from the Gass report. And I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is going to be a bit tedious, but I think knowing the Deputy Speaker's diligence in *Public Accounts* that he's used to going through lots of numbers, and that other members of this legislature are going to be faced with looking at lots of numbers over the next few months. So please, members of the legislature, pay attention because I think these numbers are fairly significant.

Donald Gass reported on the day before the New Democratic Party assumed government in this province, October 31, '91, using new accounting methods, that the accumulated debt stood at $8.697 billion. You will find that number on page 32 of his report.

(1615)

Now we can work with that figure, or we can work with the figure that the Premier of this province uses most often -- though he does use so many figures, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's hard to believe that he has any number in his mind. In any event, the Premier of the province most frequently cites the debt of the province as being just over $14 billion including Crown debt. And we will do our first accounting using that number, and come back to the Gass Commission in a few minutes.

Now the government themselves, this NDP government, admits that they left a debt of $2.8 billion in the Crowns in 1982 dollars. And I can refer you to the *Public Accounts* of December 1, 1982, where the now Associate Minister of Finance, the member from Churchill Downs, uses that number in the verbatim of the report -- former cabinet minister in the regime of the Hon. Allan Blakeney. Someone who would be fairly conversant, I think, with those kind of numbers.

You can find the calculations for that number on page 18 of what is commonly known as the Wolfgang Wolff report -- the report of the Crown Investments Review Commission of December, 1982. Now that 2.8 billion in current dollars is something close to $5 billion in 1992 dollars. But I think to be charitable to the members of the government, I will call it 4 billion. And believe me, that is charitable.

So you subtract the 4 billion from the Premier's 14 billion, and we have 10 billion to work with. The NDP also conceded at that time that they left a debt in the Heritage Fund of $250 million in 1982 dollars. So once again, let's be charitable and call that 500 million in 1992 dollars. We now have a debt of 9.5 billion to account for.

There was a $235 million equity investment in the NewGrade heavy oil upgrader. We are now at 9.37 billion. There was 110 million for the new City Hospital in Saskatoon. Some would argue that it should have never been built, but at the time it seemed reasonable to the people of Saskatoon that they have that facility. That leaves us at $9.26 billion.

And please note, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I am rounding the numbers down to be totally fair, so for example, the upgrader investment was actually 235.4 million but I reduced the debt side by only 230 million in making my analogy.

There was $544 million in school capital projects, including new schools, repairs and renovations, since 1982. Once again, I suppose some would argue if some of those repairs and renovations and new schools were necessary. But to the people in those areas they seemed very important, I'm sure, at the time.

We are now at $8.7 billion. There was $120 million spent for underground power lines in this province. And I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that 60,000 farmers in this province particularly, and also in many of our resort villages, have totally agreed with the burying of power lines. There are several deaths associated each year with the interaction of farm machinery and power lines in this province. The burying of lines around yards, around schools, around many of our public facilities, has been deemed by most to be reasonable. And indeed the Power Corporation has for decades run advertising saying that it is the proper thing to do.

So that leaves us at $8.68 billion. There was 225 million in capital funding to our universities. Once again you can

take issue, but to the students in our universities it seemed reasonable.

That leaves us with 8.46 billion. There was $244 million in rural natural gas network construction. I don't think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will find very many people, particularly in rural Saskatchewan, in our towns and villages and on the farm, who do not appreciate the taxpayers of this province allowing them the opportunity that our larger cities have enjoyed for decades.

That leaves us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with $8.22 billion. There was $264 million spent for individual rural telephone lines. In other words, the local telephone company and later on SaskTel did not have to go out and fix several hundred poles in this province every time we had a hail storm or a lightning storm and that service would be disrupted to large portions of its subscribership, because of the burying of telephone lines which allowed farm people and people in our smaller communities to use on-line computer services, to avail themselves of emergency numbers, to do a lot of things that are necessary when you are miles and miles from your school, your hospital, the rink, and the other services that we in rural Saskatchewan think are pretty darned important.

That leaves us with $8.16 billion. There was 317 million in the Meadow Lake pulp mill and the Bi-Provincial upgrader -- projects which the Minister of Finance, in his financial review of the province, says are absolutely fundamental to this province to provide jobs and some continuance until new things come along. The very financial prospectus that he put together for people across this country to look at, he says those are good things.

That leaves us with $7.79 billion. There was 155 million spent on Rafferty-Alameda. And I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that many members of the New Democratic Party stood in this legislature and condemned that water project, that water power project.

And I guess maybe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that only time will tell, but that particular project was used over and over and over again for political purposes and political purposes only in this legislature and around the province. A project that is universally subscribed to by people in south-east Saskatchewan and a project which the now government has seen fit to back up in the courts of our land and see through to its fruition.

That leaves us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with $7.64 billion. We had a $64 million investment in a fertilizer plant, a fertilizer plant which once again the Minister of Finance in this province, in this NDP government, says is a good thing for our province. A project which I know the people of the city of Moose Jaw support in a big way, and a project which is going to pay back its investment to the people of this province in approximately two years, because it will be the single largest consumer of natural gas in our province and will pay large amounts of royalties and taxes to the taxpayers of this province. There aren't many things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you can invest $64 million in and have it returned to you over a period of two years.

That leaves us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with $7.58 billion. Between 1985 and 1989 in this province -- and I'm going to use a very modest number here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I think members opposite would appreciate that I've been trying to keep these numbers down and very reasonable -- there was $888 million paid in agricultural support programs.

Now that's a lot less than what the NDP opposition of the day was crying for. They said we should have been spending four, five, ten times that amount, and it's well recorded in *Hansard* what those comments were from the members that sat over here at that time. They said that simply wasn't enough; there had to be more.

But the true fact is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, being on the modest side, that there was $888 million in agricultural support to a farm community that was being ravaged, particularly by international price wars and the ravages of nature. That leaves us with $6.69 billion.

We had $200 million paid out to home owners in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on mortgage interest protection payments. And that plan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was put in place, as you well know, back in the early '80s because people were losing their homes in our province at an alarming rate. And the then government of the day, the Allan Blakeney administration said there's not a thing we can do about it.

So there was $200 million spent on home owners in this province so that they could keep their homes. That leaves us with $6.29 billion. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I haven't touched hospital construction in a general way, nursing home construction, highway construction, and on and on and on in this province.

As well there was the Nipawin hydro project; the Digital equipment upgrade at SaskTel; the building of things like the Regina-Moose Jaw water treatment plant; Saskatchewan Place in Saskatoon; trade and convention centre here; rural service centres throughout the province; the community physiotherapy program; New Careers; Saskatchewan Pension Plan; home care services; municipal recreation grants; home improvement grants; gas tax rebate; the exemption of clothing from the sales tax. It goes on and on and on, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

You take that list and you'd be so far over the $6 billion that we were left at after we got through my last page. And I don't think it's particularly difficult, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to see where the money went.

Our health care system, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has consumed over the billion dollar mark for years. And that doesn't include the capital spending part of it. The annual operating budget of Health has been over a billion and a half dollars for the last three years, excluding capital site construction. And the same goes for education. An annual operating budget approaching a billion dollars and then all of the capital stuff besides.

Either one of those, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would give you $6 billion, I'm sure, between 1982 and 1991. As I said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one doesn't have to be a particular

financial genius to follow the addition and subtraction of those numbers.

And I guess, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I go back to the fact that our Minister of Finance, the current Minister of Finance, the member from Regina Dewdney, in a sworn testament to the American Exchange Commission says that the numbers from 1985 at least on, were fair and reasonable and accountable -- in his own sworn testament.

And you know, while all of this was going on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the then NDP leader of the opposition kept saying we need more, more, more. We can do better with less, less, less. He could find the money no matter what, and he promised them that at election time.

He said he could get rid of harmonization, and at the same time he would come up with -- and I use those words because they are his, sir -- he would come up with the extra money needed to finance additional spending in education and health and in the elimination of poverty. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't believe, given the scenario that I have just laid out to this Assembly, that he was being entirely honest with the voters of this province.

(1630)

He now tells us what a crisis we're in, that most of those things can't be done because of the waste and mismanagement of the former government. It's all right that his buddies over in SaskPower had a Lexus in the garage till they were caught with it; that they can't even move into the executive suites which many have occupied for years without having a redecorating program in place.

It doesn't matter that in the throne speech that he even admits to 580 appointments to boards and commissions already, and that doesn't include the people that are in this building that are probably sliding into the civil service unbeknownst to this legislature.

It doesn't talk about the verbal contract of Jack Messer. And I'm sure that with the loss of the Lexus that the verbal contract will make up for it in some way. I am sure that probably Mr. Reg Gross and Mr. David Dombowsky and others also have verbal contracts that at some point in time will probably be revealed to the people of this province. But contracts, I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, these verbal contracts with the friends of the government, that probably breach his very own Crown employment contracts Act.

And I'm really surprised, Mr. Speaker, that certain members of this legislature, particularly some of the government members who I came to know quite well in the way that they conducted themselves in this House in the previous five years, would put up with that sort of manipulation and gross misinformation that is being perpetrated on the taxpayers of this province. I'm really surprised because I heard so much righteous indignation coming from members of the then NDP opposition about perks like Lexuses and about things . . . I can just imagine, Mr. Speaker, if they had come into this House and said, so and so's got a verbal contract.

And do you know what would have happened, Mr. Speaker? There'd have been a great uproar and probably bells would have started ringing and there would have been all sorts of indignation coming forth from the members of the New Democratic Party. Because that was the standard practice, for five years at least, that I viewed in this House. If one of the employees of the previous administration had had a verbal contract, I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that a verbal contract isn't worth the paper that it's printed on.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, how can the members of this government caucus live with the president and the vice-president of SaskPower having verbal contracts? I guess what it does, Mr. Speaker, is it speaks to the pronouncements that were made by that party while in opposition about their true dedication to democratic reform in our province. And I guess we'll leave that topic because I think the taxpayer of this province, Mr. Speaker, will pass judgement on the verbal contracts of the friends of the NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Minister of Finance in December in this House say that he was going to refer the Gass Commission report to the *Public Accounts* Committee. And I hope that he does. I urge him to do so. As I said earlier in my delivery, I think a lot of people are questioning that report. A lot of people are finding flaws. A lot of people are saying that perhaps the government had ulterior motives in commissioning the Gass report.

I think that that referral needs to happen fairly soon and that the *Public Accounts* Committee take a look at it, at some of the recommendations. I personally am very interested in the idea of accrual accounting being introduced to the books of the Government of Saskatchewan. I think other governments across Canada have seen some good in moving to that system. Many say that it would be impossible to move immediately, but that all governments should look at combining numbers that have never been used before to paint a broader picture of the financial position of provinces and indeed our federal government in Canada.

But I think I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that rather than members of this government using all of their energies as we have seen in the last six months anyway in still acting like an opposition to continue attacking the previous administration because they have no plan of their own, why don't they actually use the tools that exist in this legislature to help govern this province?

Specifically, Mr. Speaker, I am asking you to refer to the *Public Accounts* Committee, through a request to the Provincial Auditor, a special study on the financing and the financial management and the husbandry of the finances in Saskatchewan's health care system. Understand very clearly, Mr. Speaker, what I'm talking about. I'm not suggesting that we duplicate the apparent mandate of the new Health Research Board which I'm sure will deal with many of the actual medical procedures that are performed in our hospital system. I am specifically asking for a financial review, including a value-for-money audit.

Secondly, that this opposition feels very strongly about

this issue. Before this government starts dismantling our health care system with phoney taxes disguised as health care premiums, I don't think this government has any choice but to appoint a full-scale public hearing process for health care funding in this province.

This government and its candidates in the last election were absolutely unequivocal in their opposition to any kind of user fees or premiums. There was no question in the voters' minds of this province that voting NDP clearly and certainly included a vote against such fees. That being the case, the government has no mandate and certainly no moral authority to impose such fees without at least some kind of public hearing.

I think people want to propose alternatives to what has been bandied about in the press. I think the government of the day might be surprised to find that Saskatchewan people will be very willing to participate in addressing this issue.

Neither the opposition nor I think the people of this province are opposed in principle to people having a direct financial participation in the health care system. But we are opposed to a flat tax. And we are opposed to the concept of imposing fees without public consultation.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I think it will be a very long session if this government should choose to impose user fees without public hearings.

And I want to refer to a recent precedent in Canada. The NDP Government of Ontario brought in a budget a year ago that was highly controversial to say the least. The opposition demanded that public hearings be held, and eventually, Mr. Speaker, after a long exercise in bell-ringing, the NDP government agreed to the public hearings.

I don't think that this particular House should be reduced to that, Mr. Speaker. And that is why I ask you as the Speaker of this Assembly, through the appropriate channels, to institute a process that would be fair and reasonable to all. Because I have noted, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, and the Premier referred to it in the last session, unfortunately, that I felt a fair degree of arrogance and disrespect, that we are a small opposition, and that our ability to bring the government and hold the government accountable is limited to a certain degree.

So I think it's incumbent upon us to use all the tools available to us to make sure that this government does not make those types of radical changes which I don't believe it has the electoral or the moral authority to implement.

And I guess in passing, Mr. Speaker . . . and I know members opposite like to chuckle at some of the things the opposition says, but I'd like to tell the member from Saskatoon in passing, Mr. Speaker, that a hundred dollar deductible for chiropractic services is a specific line item in the budget. It is a line item in the budget. And if it turns out that this particular leak is accurate, then I expect this Minister of Finance had better be prepared to resign.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: -- It was not a trial balloon or a suggested possibility; it was a statement that the government will impose a hundred dollar deductible user fee on patients of chiropractic services. And if that is the case, then that member had better be prepared to follow the traditions of the British parliamentary system.

This has affected the financial course of the province because, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you right now that in my home town and other home towns around this province, that chiropractic patients are scrambling -- are scrambling, Mr. Speaker -- to get their normal appointments in advance of May 7 so that they won't be the first to feel the impact of user fees.

So I say to the Minister of Finance, note. We will watch carefully to see if on May 7 the deductible of a hundred dollars in fact is there. And we hope that you will honour the traditions of this system.

I think it's important, Mr. Speaker, that we return to the basic question that I asked at the beginning of my remarks. What exactly is the truth for the taxpayers of Saskatchewan?

And make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, this NDP government is taking charges that would normally accrue in the 1992-93 year, and at least in one case that I know of, those costs would have been spread over the next four years, and is by executive order -- by executive order -- paying for those charges out of the '91-92 year.

The fact that cabinet is willing to back-charge makes us wonder in the opposition how much of the same thing is going on in the departments, invisibly and unannounced to this Assembly. This takes tens and possibly hundreds of millions of dollars of spending out of the future accounts and puts it into the old account, swelling the deficit.

This is not only deceptive, Mr. Speaker, it is also a serious, financial mismanagement question. By inflating the 1991-92 deficit, the NDP and its Premier is incurring additional interest charges for the future. And I think by doing so, Mr. Speaker, he is grossly misusing taxpayers' money for obviously political reasons.

And that is why, in the comments that were brought to the cabinet this morning from the people of the coalition and their analysis of our fiscal situation in this province, they said there was an extra half a billion dollars being put on to bloat the deficit.

(1645)

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm afraid that our Premier, the member from Riversdale, is doing this in a blatant way to deceive the people of this province. One day he says the deficit is 800 million. The next day it's 980, and then it's up to 1.2. And now we are to believe, now we are to believe, Mr. Speaker, that it has grown to 1.6 plus the deficit in CIC (Crown Investment Corporation of Saskatchewan). The deficit in CIC alone, he says, is $900 million in non-recoverable losses, plus 600 million in recoverable losses.

The table, Mr. Speaker . . . And I wish the members would

listen closely to these numbers because a lot of these numbers are the ones generated by Donald Gass. The member from Churchill Downs will be very familiar with these numbers; the table produced by Donald Gass which shows that the Crowns made a net profit of 348 million on net assets of 1.2 billion. So the turnaround, according to the member from Riversdale, is actually 1.6 billion plus. The 348 million profits that somehow have disappeared, or a total turnaround of $2 billion.

Now I've heard fishing stories before, Mr. Speaker. You know -- the size of the fish is this one day and the size of the fish is this the next day and all of a sudden I caught a whale.

Well it's evident the member from Riversdale has caught a whole ocean full of whales the way he uses numbers. You can see what he's doing. But I'm afraid, Mr. Speaker, it's one of those words in the English language which we hon. members are not permitted to use in this House.

Why, Mr. Speaker, is he not being forthright and factual with the people of Saskatchewan? Well just like his Minister of Finance; his Minister of Finance got into this game of telling fishing stories. He told everyone in the province that he'd made $115 million in cuts. Well he actually misrepresented the value of the cut by 400 per cent. Not a bad fishing story.

We're not talking about a projection here, Mr. Speaker, a prediction, an estimate, or something down the road. We're talking about a statement, a fact that is easily checked by the minister himself. Yet he purposely, I believe, mistook a $30 million reduction for 115.

So let's do a little math and see what the deficit should be. Not accounting for any of the extraordinary spending that the government has done on its own agenda, let's take that 265 million projected in the last Tory budget. Let's add $180 million that the NDP gave up when they cancelled harmonization. Well my math, Mr. Speaker, is that 265 plus a 180 equals 445.

Now during the election campaign the member from Riversdale, our now Premier, claimed that the deficit was dramatically higher than forecast. As a matter of fact, in the middle of the election campaign, Mr. Speaker -- and it must be emphasized that this was he was out shaking hands with voters, saying vote for me -- the former minister of Finance, the member who formerly represented Weyburn, wrote the member from Riversdale a letter explaining the financial position of the province of Saskatchewan. And included in that explanation was the provision that there'd been a $58 million over-expenditure on farm support due to a larger than expected uptake in the GRIP program. Very up front about it, Mr. Speaker, that farmers in this province felt so threatened by the international scene, by the things that Mother Nature has ravaged upon this province in the last several years, that they signed up in droves for a program which they felt gave them sufficient protection that they could keep the banker off their back for another year.

So now, Mr. Speaker, let's add 265 plus 180 plus 58. And my math says that those three items, and we get a deficit of 503. So without taking anything else into account, the member from Riversdale was fully aware by his own agenda that there was a minimum deficit of over $500 million.

Now we can look at the Minister of Finance's own statement titled: 1991-92 financial report, December '91. And we can add in some other numbers if we choose to believe them. In that document he says on page 4 that there will be an additional 122 million added to the deficit through what he calls, quote "economic changes." Add that to the 503 million and you have a deficit of 625.

He also states that there are a number of other changes, Mr. Speaker, but what is most interesting is what he leaves out. He leaves out 45 million in the Liquor Board's retained earnings. Why? Well as for the games being played with the Crown Investments Corporation, Mr. Speaker, I think they would almost be fraudulent misinformation.

If the same principles were applied in 1982 to inflate the deficit of the day . . . I'll give you a partial list. There was the SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) reinsurance problem that SGI experienced. In today's dollars it would have amounted to 54.4 million. There was the problem that CIC picked up for SGI with a bill of 47.6 million in 1991 dollars. And then we had $313 million in a thing called PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp Company), and we didn't create one new job, we didn't build anything new, we simply invested a whole pile of taxpayers' money in an investment that was worthless.

The New Democrats have always tried to hang on the losses of the potash nationalization and hang them on the previous government. But the fact is that the New Democrats carried the investment of the potash mines at a value that was far in excess of its real worth. While clearly not worthless like PAPCO's investment, the potash nationalization, in everyone's opinion, I think, cost the people of Saskatchewan more than a billion dollars -- most of it out of our country into the hands of American bankers and companies.

Mr. Speaker, there were all sorts of other little ventures. There was the attempt to enhance the Ontario economy with a thing called Nabu computer corporation -- another 5 or $6 billion that had to be written off.

Mr. Speaker, I have two pages of similar losses which I could read into the record. But I don't think that's important, Mr. Speaker, because I know from experience the government from time to time does make mistakes. That as the NDP did from '71 to '82, they made mistakes, so did the government from 1982 to 1992.

That yes, GigaText did lose as much money as Nabu, and it's very unfortunate that those losses occur. But, Mr. Speaker, the government that took over in 1982 did appoint an investment review commission. And I think if you find it and read it, you will find a very dispassionate report about the structure of the Crown investments and how to maximize them for the taxpayer. You did not find a witch-hunt.

And I think that is why it will be important, Mr. Speaker, as more information comes out that this government

repudiate certain parts of the Gass Commission for its own credibility. Because the way it stands right now, I believe it is the member from Riversdale, our Premier, who is keeping our books closed.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that if this Premier would approach his job as other premiers have done upon election in our province -- and there have been some very good premiers -- that he would get over his opposition mentality, that he would make his members realize that their responsibility is to now govern this province. And all the rhetoric that came from the opposition benches in the previous five years needs to be put aside and the job of governing taken upon themselves.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, this government was offered an opportunity in the throne speech presented on Monday last, an opportunity to set that agenda for the people of this province, an opportunity to say that we do have a plan, we do have an agenda that is moral and right, and we'll take our province into the next century in the way that people in this province would expect.

And instead I see no plan, and I certainly haven't seen the moral authority from the way that this government has acted and no desire given -- what we have just experienced in this legislature -- to be honest with Saskatchewan voters to the point that they would not try and fudge the numbers as the gentleman from Prince Edward Island says. But they would truly represent to the people of this province where we're at, and come clean on some of the promises they made to the people of this province as they went out and solicited votes last fall.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I'm afraid I will be voting against the Speech from the Throne as presented by this government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Solomon: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure this afternoon to rise in support of the government's Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Speaker, you may not know this but I was not able to participate in the Speech from the Throne prior to Christmas. This is my first opportunity so I'd like to extend my congratulations to you on your election as Speaker of this Assembly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Solomon: -- You are known, sir, as being a fair and a firm legislator over the time of your career. And I know that you have respected the tradition and the laws of this Assembly over the past, and you will continue to do so. And I look forward to representing my constituents in this Assembly in your capacity as Speaker while you are here.

I would also, Mr. Speaker, like to take this opportunity to congratulate the mover and seconder of the Speech from the Throne prior to Christmas -- the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden that prior to Christmas moved it, and the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood seconded. And they did an excellent job and I convey my belated congratulations to them.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to convey my congratulations to the mover and seconder of this Speech from the Throne which we believe is a commencement of the blueprint for the solution for the 1990s.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Solomon: -- Mr. Speaker, being near 5 o'clock, and I have many more things I would like to say on this address in reply, I would beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.