

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
March 7, 1995

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present a petition this morning on behalf of the people from my constituency and across the southern part of Saskatchewan. I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to allocate adequate funding dedicated towards the double-laning of Highway No. 1; and further, that the Government of Saskatchewan direct any monies available from the federal infrastructure program toward double-laning Highway No. 1, rather than allocating these funds towards capital construction projections in the province.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

From the areas of Webb, Tompkins, and Gull Lake, and I'm happy to table these this morning, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have petitions today to present from the people of Saskatchewan. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to present legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, and urge the federal government to recognize that gun control and crime control are not synonymous.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These petitions come from Carievale, Storthoaks, Swift Current, Bjorkdale, Carnduff, Weekes, Somme, Porcupine Plain area of the province, Mr. Speaker. I so present.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions to lay on the Table, and as a matter of explanation, deals with the Government of Saskatchewan entering into a casino agreement with FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations), and that it has since introduced legislation enshrining this agreement into law and because it directly affects the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan. Therefore I will read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to pull the agreement until such time as the exhibition associations of Saskatchewan and the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan can be involved in the decision making and the direction of gambling in the province of Saskatchewan.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 11(7) they are hereby read and received.

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to oppose changes to federal legislation regarding firearm ownership.

And of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to allocate adequate funding dedicated toward the double-laning of Highway No. 1.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, it's my distinct privilege today to introduce two very special people in the Speaker's gallery. Doneta Brotchie as well as Brian Rombough from the CIBC (Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce) are with us here today on the important occasion which was announced by the Deputy Premier along with CIBC officials today in Regina — the introduction and the announcement of a new banking centre here in the province of Saskatchewan with 500 new jobs for the province of Saskatchewan. And I'm sure all members will want to join with me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to my colleagues in the legislature, seated in the west gallery, a good friend and neighbour, Vic Ellis. Vic has always been very involved in the world of energy conservation and in fact has built an energy efficient house in my home town, our home town, of Pilot Butte.

I would ask all members here to join me in welcoming him here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Stanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of my colleague, the member from Turtleford, I would like to introduce some guests from his constituency. Seated in the west gallery are Dick and Marilyn Roney, and they have with them an exchange student from Brazil, Michelle Naback.

And they are here today to observe the proceedings plus have a tour of the legislature. So I would like you to welcome the Roneys and Michelle to Saskatchewan and to Regina.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Direct Tech Organization in Leroy

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the town of Leroy in the new constituency of Watrous, which I'll be representing after the next election, something remarkable is happening there.

A while ago a group of local hockey players, members of the Leroy Old Chiefs, came up with an idea to raise money for their hockey rink. They created a company called Direct Tech, which is now owned by the Leroy Old Chiefs Community Association.

Direct Tech gives an annual demonstration of a direct seeding near Leroy. But now it has come up with an exciting new concept — a concept that was presented in Saskatoon during Crop Production Week at the end of January.

The Leroy organization demonstrated a multimedia Internet computer service that will advertise Saskatchewan-made farm equipment all around the world. The Internet simulation will give descriptions and show photographs of direct seeding equipment and other machines offered by Saskatchewan implement manufacturers. Farmers from around the world will be able to see and read immediately about all the equipment produced in Saskatchewan. And they'll be able to do that right in their own home. And not only that, Mr. Speaker, in the future they hope to be able to blow up these farm machines part by part and so that people who need those parts will be able to access them through the Internet.

There is little doubt among Direct Tech members, the University of Saskatchewan, and Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, that these services will expand sales of our products.

Mr. Speaker, this is just one more example of what we all know is happening in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan agriculture and Saskatchewan industries are marching in step with developing technology. This is true at the universities, at Innovation Place, and Saskatchewan communities like Leroy. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

26th Annual Winter Festival - Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan

Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we think of winter, several things come to mind, such as cold weather and shovelling snow. But the winter weather hasn't dampened the enthusiasm in the Meadow Lake region. Beginning tomorrow five days of events are planned for the 26th annual winter festival. It's a time set aside for residents to participate in the events and have some fun during the winter.

Some of the fun includes snowshoeing, a snowmobile rally, chucksled races, a hockey tournament, curling, a sno-pitch tournament, hayrides, and always a highlight — the king of the woods competition.

One of the real crowd pleasers though, Mr. Speaker, is the water boiling contest. Soon to be an Olympic event, this requires incredible skill and technique. And the secret from last

year's winner, simple: start the fire, put on the water, but under no circumstances do you watch. As tempting as it may be to take a peek, every good water boiler knows that water simply won't boil while you're watching it. Besides the crowds will let you know when it's boiling. And people say we don't have fun in Meadow Lake.

I know the community of Meadow Lake welcomes all participants and visitors to the area during this winter festival which will provide for entertainment for the people of all ages.

I would like to congratulate the organizers and volunteers for their time and energy in preparing the event so everyone could have some fun during the winter. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

File Hills Native Policing

Mr. Carlson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the member from Meadow Lake announced the creation of the Waterhen Nation policing unit. Today I'm happy to report on a ceremony in my constituency that also took place yesterday.

I was glad to be present at the File Hills Agency First Nation police servicing agreement. Like the one at Waterhen, the new police service will provide police service to five first nation communities — the File Hills reserves. The File Hills Agency is unique, Mr. Speaker, in that it encompasses five first nations of three cultures — the Cree, Assiniboine, and Nakota.

These five are closely linked by geographic and family ties, and obviously they have learned the wisdom of working together for the betterment of their people. The establishment of this culturally appropriate police service is just the latest example. And I want to congratulate the chief and councillors of all five File Hills Agency First Nations — Chief Clarence Bellegarde, Chair of the File Hills Agency and chief of the Star Blanket Cree/Assiniboine First Nation, Chief Joe O'Watch of the Carry The Kettle Nakota First Nation, Chief Marie-Anne Day Walker of the Okanese Cree First Nation, Chief Eugene Poitras of the Peepeekisis Cree First Nation, and Chief Irvine Starblanket of the Star Blanket Cree First Nation.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police), the provincial and federal governments, in the implementation of this necessary police service. As the member from Meadow Lake said yesterday, I'm sure there are more to come.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Donation of Trolley to Saskatchewan Railway Museum

Mr. Whitmore: — Mr. Speaker, just south of Saskatoon near the town of Vanscoy in my constituency is the Saskatchewan Railway Museum, the fond creation of the Saskatchewan railway historic association. I might add, Mr. Speaker, just about the only group left that recognizes the value of the

railway to Canada.

Recently the association had undertaken a project that is both historically significant and sentimentally attractive.

Some members more experienced than I will remember "The Trolley Song", a song from the musical "Meet Me in St. Louis". The one that goes "clang, clang, clang goes the trolley; ding, ding, ding goes the bell", and so on. I could sing but I won't.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whitmore: — From 1912 to 1951 Saskatoon was served by several trolleys. And after 1951 most were scrapped or sold for storage buildings. However, one owned by Eugene Bulani of the Biggar district is in good enough shape to be restored, and this is what is happening.

The Bulani family has generously donated the Saskatchewan municipal railway car no. 51 to the museum. Car 51 was built in Hamilton in 1927, and was the last of the streetcars to run in Saskatoon.

Thanks to the generosity of the Bulani family, Wiebe building movers, and the members of the railway historic association, ambitious plans are underway to restore the car to its original condition, and to use it for an exhibit illustrating Saskatoon's early street railway system.

Mr. Speaker, the preservation of our heritage is a necessary function in preparing for our future, and I congratulate all involved in this effort. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Lakeland's Citizen of the Year

Mr. Langford: — Mr. Speaker, often the people who do the most for their communities are the ones who receive the least recognition for their efforts. In Lakeland area in my constituency, a citizen who was contributing much of his recognition was recognized last Friday.

Jim Logan of Christopher Lake was named Lakeland citizen of the year at the Lakeland winter festival. It is an award well deserved.

Jim is well known for his services to the Christopher Lake area. He is an active member of the Lions Club and the Royal Canadian Legion. He has organized many events for both children and senior hockey over the years. He has also donated his time, energy, and his money to any organization which has needed his talent.

Mr. Speaker, Lakeland is a small area in a large province but the hearts and energy of its people are as big as the whole province. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate Jim Logan.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Food Bank Use

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise once again to present questions that have been sent to us through our "Mr. Premier, I want to know" initiative. It's been an overwhelming success and responses continue to come in every day. We're very pleased to be able to offer this service to the people of Saskatchewan, because it seems that they have been demanding something like this through their responses.

My first question comes from Gerald Fichtemann of Estevan. And Gerald wants to know: Mr. Premier, I want to know why the NDP (New Democratic Party), when they were in opposition in the previous years, did a lot of grandstanding and crying out shame, shame when there was a line-up at the food banks. They got a lot of TV news coverage that way. Now that they are in power the food banks have a much larger number of people standing in line at the food banks but nothing is said. If I was sitting in the legislature I would be crying even more shame.

Hon. Mr. Pringle: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that we're not getting support from these people on the initiatives that are designed to provide better supports to people, to low income people, and they're not supporting all the many jobs that are being created in the province. Mr. Speaker, they're not supporting the *Partnership for Renewal*. They're not supporting the tax break so small-business people can create more jobs for people.

And I would say that if they're sincere, if they're sincere about dealing with the issue of low income people in food banks, then they should join some of the progressive legislation that's designed to help low income people and get with the optimism of the people of Saskatchewan who are on the move in terms of job creation, and not be doom-and-gloom people like they are.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Public Service Salaries

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too have a question from the "Mr. Premier" files. The question is from Mr. L. Huard from Vawn. And the question is this: Mr. Premier, why is it that social workers are allowed a 4.6 per cent wage increase and the average person who is on UI (unemployment insurance) or working for minimum wage has to get by on 6 or \$700 a month. Does this government think a family can survive on this and have children in school and feed and clothe them without the help of the food bank, etc.?

The Speaker: — I've got two people up and I don't know who to recognize.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I think, Mr. Speaker, the difficulty is we can all see an easy ball to bat out of the park and we all wanted a crack at this one.

As it turns out, I say to the hon. member opposite, and to your questioner, as it turns out there is no such increase offered, contemplated, or indeed demanded. The collective agreement is currently being . . . in the process of being taken out to the

memberships for ratification. I therefore do not want to comment on it extensively, but I can say that no such sum was offered. No such sum was ever contemplated. Your figures are right out of the ballpark.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Job Creation

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a question to the Premier, and this one comes from Harry M. Wilson from Saskatoon.

Mr. Premier, in your 1991 pre-election speech, you promised to jump-start the economy and close the food banks. What happened? You've had three years to move on this, and nothing has happened. Would you please answer.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to respond to the question. But in fact, to the member from Rosthern, that is exactly what we are doing because everyone knows that the best solution to food banks, which were established under your administration, are jobs.

And if you look at the record of the government since 1992, 7,000 new jobs have been created, and I say here by the private sector, and today's announcement of 500 more new jobs in the province of Saskatchewan, Cargill's announcement yesterday of hundreds of jobs in Saskatoon . . . The best solution to food banks are jobs. And that's exactly what we're helping the private sector facilitate in the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Help for Low Income Families

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today comes from Tena Katzell from North Battleford.

And her question is: Mr. Premier, I want to know what you are doing to help low income families. By the time my fiancé and I pay our bills and buy \$150 worth of groceries, we have no money to take our son out. We are home-owners and sick of these outrageous bills. If you had to live like we do for one year, you wouldn't make it. Could you answer, please.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank Tena for that question. What I would say to Tena is that in our recent budget we targeted tax reduction specifically to middle and low income families. Each family in the province will get \$150 tax reduction, \$300 tax reduction for a two-income family, because it is across the board. It happens to affect low-income people more dramatically — they get a higher percentage of the benefit than other families.

I'd also point out to Tena that if you take the whole basket of utilities provided in this province along with the taxes that people have to pay in the province, other things such as the cost of housing, if you take the whole basket of basics, Saskatchewan is still the least expensive, and I would say, the very best place in all of Canada in which to live.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

GRIP Premiums

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This question comes from Lonnie from Bethune.

Mr. Premier, when the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) program ran a surplus, you put it into the General Revenue Fund to help the balanced budget. How come you didn't do the same when the government caucus office ran a surplus? Do you care more for your flunkies than you do for farmers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, there's a great deal of confusion from the opposition — or planned confusion, I'm not sure which. Mr. Speaker, the GRIP program ran a surplus as did tripartite for cattle and tripartite for hogs and some other programs. We wound them down, giving back the producers' share to the producers.

We also used the government's share; over 70 per cent of the government's share went back into agricultural programming. We think that given the tight finances of the province, that this was a very fair deal for the farmers of Saskatchewan, and I might also — and fair for the taxpayer, as well — I also might add, Mr. Speaker, that our farmers, because of the changes to the program, got a lot more out of the market-place than did neighbouring provinces. And I think that's where farmers would sooner get their income if they have that opportunity.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Food Bank Donations

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions this afternoon are for the Minister of Social Services. Mr. Minister, there's been lots of discussion this afternoon about food banks and their need for food and the people associated with the food banks across this province.

Right after question period I'll be introducing a private members' Bill that will enable those in the food industry to donate left-over food to food banks. This good Samaritan legislation is now in place in five other provinces and by all accounts is working extremely well.

In Ontario, for example, it was just introduced last June, and food banks in that province have seen a significant rise in food donations. For example, the food bank in the National Capital Region has gained a steady supply of liquid milk that has not been previously available. That was a direct result of the good Samaritan Bill.

Mr. Minister, this is a common sense solution and it doesn't cost the taxpayers of this province one dime. Will you and your government support our good Samaritan legislation, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Pringle: — Well, Mr. Speaker, let me say first of all that we are always interested in good ideas as to how we can put people back to work and support low income people. I might say that this Bill was brought to my office about maybe 10 or 15 minutes before the House came into session, Mr. Speaker, so I've not had a chance to look at it. And I will be obviously interested in trying to do the best I can to be supportive.

But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that low income people aren't looking for charity. That's why with our balanced budget we're looking to make job creation our number one priority, Mr. Speaker. And the results are coming in — 500 jobs and 400 jobs announced yesterday at the canola plant, 100 just in the trucking industry, 500 today, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, Prairie Malt and the Future Skills program, the JobStart program, Mr. Speaker, that give people the skills, those are the kinds of things that will make a difference and deal with the causes, Mr. Speaker. We have no lessons to learn from . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I'm not interrupting the speaker because he's going on too long, but I am interrupting the minister because the opposition is simply interrupting too much. You're asking a question; then we've got three or four or five of you continually interrupting the minister when he's trying to answer. Now give him the respect at least to answer the question.

Hon. Mr. Pringle: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've indicated in my answer the number of jobs that are being created over and above the ones that were announced by StatsCanada.

Mr. Speaker, there were no food banks in this province when they came to power in the 1980s. From 1984 to '85 they devastated, in their so-called welfare reform, social programs for low income people. They didn't admit that poverty existed until 1990, Mr. Speaker. So if this is a sincere attempt to deal with the issue of poverty with some good ideas, then we'll be interested. But the key is dealing with the causes, not charity.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, hungry people are looking for only one thing, and that is food. And that's what this initiative and that's what this good Samaritan legislation is all about. And we don't need to go into any big, long-winded diatribes about jobs in Saskatchewan. We're simply trying to deal with the situation relative to food banks in this province today.

A headline in last Friday's *Star-Phoenix* reads: Saskatoon food bank down to last crumbs. The article explained that the food bank is down to just one day's food supply.

Mr. Minister, we have spoken to numerous food banks and hunger organizations who support this legislation: the Regina and Saskatoon food banks, Chili for Children, REACH (Regina

Education and Action on Child Hunger Inc.), the Saskatoon Child Hunger, just to name a few, Mr. Minister. We've spoken to hotels who are prepared to donate left-over food once this Act is passed. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business supports this initiative. Every interested party supports this legislation. We are hoping that all parties in the legislature can show that same kind of cooperation.

Mr. Minister, the situation at the Saskatoon Food Bank is critical. The Regina food bank is facing similar shortages. Can we expect work right away, this afternoon, to pass this good Samaritan legislation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Pringle: — Well, Mr. Speaker, this is an interesting change because last week they were using Ralph Klein as the model who's cut so deep; he's cut so deep, Mr. Minister, that he's driven people back to reserves and out of province and onto the street. That was your model last week.

You gave me this Bill 10 minutes or 20 minutes before the session opened. I mean I will take a look at it; I've already indicated that.

I want you to know though that we're creating jobs — a thousand announced in the last two days. Join us in saying that that is the way to go. Support this budget which gives low income people tax increases. Regina and Saskatoon have the lowest unemployment rates of the major cities in Canada — tax breaks, sorry — have the lowest unemployment rates in Canada.

Now acknowledge that and we will . . . and support the initiatives designed to support low income people. Talk to your person to the left there, the Liberal leader. Get her to talk to her federal counterparts to deal with the question of block funding and the Crow rate cut-backs. Ask her why her Prime Minister is not in Copenhagen with all the other leaders, dealing with the issue of unemployment, poverty, and low income people.

We will support this if it's good legislation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, this is designed to help hungry kids. This is what this piece of legislation is all about. It's been enacted in five other provinces across this country. We're not interested in all the rest of the stuff you want to talk about. Let's just simply deal with the issue this afternoon.

My final question is to the Government House Leader. Mr. Minister, earlier today we took the unusual step of providing you with a copy of this Bill in advance. I wanted you to have a look at it so you would recognize that it is a good solution. It cuts across party lines; it's working in other provinces; and it addresses a problem that exists right now.

I also want you to commit to dealing with this Bill as quickly as possible. We would even like to see it passed today, with your cooperation, so the food banks and those in the food industry can get to work immediately to coordinate the donation of left-

over food and address the current shortages that are out there.

Mr. Minister, would you agree to put this good Samaritan legislation ahead of other House business and deal with it today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Social Services has so clearly indicated, of course we will look at it. And we're very receptive to positive ideas and I think the member has here a positive idea. The irony is though, of course, looking back only a few years when the former minister of Social Services, Mr. Grant Schmidt, with the Conservative then government, of which you members are a part of, was chasing poor people around the province, kicking them wherever he could.

But obviously, on the issue of this piece of legislation, we'll take a very close look at it, and we're very receptive to positive ideas.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Health District Deficits

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We all heard concerns today from the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses that hospital beds may have to close in Regina and area to cover the expected operating deficit of the Regina District Health Board. We hear that the deficit could be as much as \$4.5 million for the last two years, that 150 beds could be closed and 250 staff laid off.

My question to the Minister of Health: given that The Health Districts Act requires you, sir, to approve any projected deficit spending by district health boards, what do you do to monitor spending by district health boards on an ongoing basis to ensure that they do not get into deficit situations?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I want to report to the Leader of the Third Party and to members of the House that she makes certain claims in the House today about the size of the deficit and what may or may not result. I want the member to understand that the Regina District Board is at only a very, very preliminary stage in looking at their budget and their plans for the upcoming and subsequent years. These are very preliminary discussions.

And I want to assure the member, in specific answer to her question, that with each of our district boards we worked very, very closely. And we'll work with the Regina board in terms of their budget and their plans, as we do with every board in the province.

Now if she is concerned about a deficit in funding for health care, then I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that the Liberal leader please contact the federal government. Please contact her colleagues in Ottawa. And she nods and shakes her head. Well please do it and talk about the massive cut that's coming in health care funding to every province in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can only assume that the minister is stating that even though The Health Districts Act requires him to note exactly what is going on, he did not state whether or not he has anything in place to monitor the potential deficit situations of health boards. Deficits for district health boards are not new. And the minister cannot avoid taking responsibility because he has seen the documents.

I'd like to table today financial statements for Midwest and Living Sky health districts for the last fiscal year. They show operating deficits for both boards of over \$100,000 each. These deficits mean lay-offs, and they mean cuts to services.

And I quote from the Midwest report. Quote:

Staffing patterns and facilities are currently being reviewed and staff reductions are anticipated.

This is a very disturbing trend, Mr. Speaker. And it seems that the government is offloading its deficit problems to the health districts.

My question to the Health minister: since, Mr. Minister, you are required — you are required — to see these and other health board financial statements, can you assure this legislature that you have reviewed this year's situation with each of the boards and that you're satisfied that there are no other deficits among the 30 district boards?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Liberal leader that the Department of Health and this minister, according to the legislation, will be reviewing all of the spending and the budgets and the financial accounting of the district health boards. There is no doubt about that.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you, if she thinks we've got a problem now in funding health care, then she will know what will happen when the federal government delivered their package of cuts in next year's budget. I mean, to an extent where people across Canada, people within our province, and people across Canada are saying this sounds, in headline, the death knell for medicare.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is interesting to note the minister's comments, and perhaps he'd like to get in touch with health economists on this issue.

There are 30 district health boards in the province. The Premier and the minister are quick to attack the federal government on block funding proposals. But this particular Saskatchewan government, Mr. Speaker, has offloaded its responsibilities to 30 health district boards, each with different doctor-to-patient ratios, different waiting-lists, and apparently different financial management abilities.

The ultimate authority, however, Mr. Speaker, lies with this minister, the Department of Health, and this government. What

policies does your government have, sir, to monitor the deficit situations of health boards on an ongoing basis, and to ensure that provincial standards are maintained across the province? That's your responsibility. You're the minister in charge.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I found a little difficulty in hearing her question. But let me respond in this way, because the member stood up and said I should talk to some health economists. Well in fact we have been talking to health economists, and health economists have been speaking out across Canada.

Let me quote from the *Star-Phoenix*, February 28, a Dr. Allen Backman from the city of Saskatoon. He says, Mr. Speaker:

... the new block funding arrangement for health, education and welfare will leave Ottawa with little power to enforce national standards, he says.

"I think the federal government has sold our legacy down the river."

Mr. Speaker, Carol Clemehagem of the Canadian Hospital Association says:

Block funding signals the end of the federal role in medicare. They've dumped all the problems into the provincial court and continue to pretend the federal government retains its moral and legal role.

That's the Liberal policy. That's the Liberal policy, and it spells the end of national medicare.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Construction Opportunities Development Council

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have another example of mixed messages and mixed-up ministers from the other side of the House. And it's all about the union slush fund — the CODC (Construction Opportunities Development Council). We like to call it the Codco, Mr. Speaker, because it's fishy and it's also very funny.

In trying to explain Codco, the Minister responsible for Crown Investments told the media the CODC has existed for several years and has produced some tremendous successes. But the vice-president of CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan), Bill Hyde, said that Codco in its infancy having started ... is in its infancy having started in 1994 with contributions from unionized employers and employees.

My question is to the minister responsible for CIC. Mr. Minister, which is it — a tremendous success which has been in existence for a year or something not even a year old?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to respond to the question of the member opposite, and he is correct that this organization began in 1994, not several

years ago as I had indicated.

Nevertheless the purpose of the organization ... and I want to present the mission statement as put together both by the contractors — that is, the employers and the employees — which defines what the purpose of this organization is.

And it says: to develop and maintain a partnership comprising clients, unions and members and contractors and employees which will create mutually beneficial business and employment opportunities and to recognize the value and skills of our employees by working towards an accident-, incident-free work environment and by empowering individuals to be creative, innovative, and productive.

Now I know that the Conservative members opposite don't understand that most people in this province prefer to work together and cooperate and problem solve and come up with the kind of solutions which are a benefit to the province as a whole. I know that. But there are some of those people who believe in that kind of an approach. And the contractors and the unions and the employees who they represent know that, and that's the way they try to work. And the mission statement I think makes it very clear what the objective of this organization is.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Well, Minister, I hope that you intend on sending us a copy of the names of those contractors that you allude to. I know you'll want to do that, so we'll await those.

It appears, Mr. Speaker, that we have a case of Dr. Jekyll and Bill Hyde; only we're not sure which one is the monster today. Mr. Hyde said in today's paper that Codco will benefit non-unionized contractors by educating them about the collective bargaining terms they must need to do the work for the Crowns.

Now that is simply incredible, Mr. Minister. You have implemented a payroll tax to support union activity, and this somehow is going to benefit non-union contractors because they will be educated on how to become unionized so that they can bid for government contracts.

We have heard what Mr. Hyde has said; now let's hear what Mr. Jekyll has to say, Mr. Minister. If you would like to confer with your *alter ego*, do you agree that this slush fund is designed to promote the union propaganda?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well it just so happens, Mr. Speaker, that I do have a list of contractors for the benefit of the member opposite, which I will give in a minute.

But first of all let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, what this organization does. The money that is going into this fund is going to the building trades and the CLR (Construction Labour Relations Association) to provide for the administration and enforcement of this agreement, and the money is going to this organization to help improve the productivity and efficiency and safety in the construction industry. And it's an example of

employers and employees cooperating together to problem solve and come up with solutions, something that members don't understand.

Now what kind of employers? Well I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, and I hope the member listens carefully. And I'll just give you a few examples because the list is very long. Comstock Canada, Inter-City Mechanical, Balzer's Canada Ltd., Inter-City Mechanical, Dominion Bridge, Christie Mechanical, Hub City Steel Erectors, Con-force construction ltd., Thorpe Brothers. And the list goes on and on and on.

Those are the employers who want to cooperate with their employees because they know when there's a good working environment the employer, the employees, and the taxpayers all benefit. And that is what our objective is with this fair tendering agreement.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Establishment of CIBC Telephone Banking Centre in Regina

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, earlier today it was our pleasure to officially welcome representatives from the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce to Regina to join in celebrating the arrival of a very exciting business venture here in Saskatchewan.

The CIBC announced plans to establish a telephone banking centre in Regina, an investment which will mean hundreds of new jobs for our residents which our youth can benefit from. This is indeed a major statement of renewed and positive business climate in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, as we are well aware, such decisions are not made lightly. Indeed there were four main criteria that a location had to meet. First, a qualified labour force, a solid telecommunication infrastructure, reasonable operating costs, and a proven track record in call centre operations. We took an aggressive team work approach in demonstrating that Saskatchewan excelled in all those areas.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier personally lead a team of individuals from SaskTel and the Department of Economic Development in presenting the Saskatchewan opportunity to CIBC in Toronto. Today we reap the result of the hard work of many individuals as the telephone banking centre will provide the equivalent of 500 full-time jobs and an additional \$15 million in annual payroll to the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, this is a situation that young people in our province can take advantage of. I would like to take this opportunity to say a thank you to all those who were involved in bringing this new project to the province.

Mr. Speaker, SaskTel has a proven track record along with

highly competitive rates. We've developed, through the Crown corporation, an infrastructure that can meet the demands of call centre technology, and for which, I might add, we are now receiving international recognition and contracts.

In this province, Mr. Speaker, we also have a stable fiscal environment, one that has been made possible by the dedication of Saskatchewan residents. We are the first province to have a balanced budget and it is that effort that now allows us to go after job creation and training as our top priorities.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1415)

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, we have a solid dialogue between business and government. We have made a commitment to strengthen an already top-notch labour force — a labour force that is already one of the best educated and most dedicated in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, in the recent provincial budget it has also continued a very clear commitment to expanding and renovating and rejuvenating training services in the province. We will develop the training and the recruitment capacity required to take advantage of opportunities in the call centre industry.

Mr. Speaker, when CIBC opens its telephone banking centre here in the province, residents will be ready, willing, and able to fill the hundreds of jobs available. These jobs are part of the new economy, an economy based on the plan that builds on the strengths of technology, agriculture, resources, research, and most importantly, the people in the province.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank, along with all colleagues in the Assembly, the work done here, especially the CIBC people who are with us here today. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome the representatives for CIBC today and also like to compliment them on choosing Saskatchewan as a location to set up this centre.

I note that in the minister's news conference and release he put out that it's the equivalent of 500 full-time jobs. Any jobs, Mr. Speaker, are welcome in Saskatchewan, very welcome.

I find it somewhat ironic though, Mr. Speaker, that while yesterday was an announcement that Cargill was coming to Saskatchewan and the government was participating, today it's the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce that's coming to Saskatchewan with a new centre, and the government is participating.

Perhaps all those things they said about Cargill and the big banks while they were in opposition was just irresponsible. Perhaps they really didn't mean it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it's very, very indicative of what was happening in the province that the opposition of that day, when they were sitting over on this side, was prepared to say anything and everything about someone from outside of the province. And yet when they become government, they're prepared to sit down and work hand in glove.

Mr. Speaker, this initiative deals with the youth. And the minister for Social Services was bragging during question period of how great this was going to be for the people in the food bank lines. Well, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot more people in the food bank lines that aren't youth than there are that are youth. And so this initiative, if it is dealing with mainly youth, is not going to have any effect on those food bank lines, Mr. Speaker.

Again I would like to compliment the bank for coming to Saskatchewan. We appreciate your business. I don't want to get too negative because I do have a loan with them, so I would just like to thank them for coming. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am delighted that Saskatchewan has been chosen as the site for the CIBC call centre, and I truly hope that this is the first of many, many announcements of new companies coming to Saskatchewan, because the people of our province have been waiting a very long time for something tangible to materialize.

Mr. Speaker, so many people in our province are hoping for an opportunity to make a contribution to our home, that I cannot overstate the importance of new employers and new opportunities. Today there are more than 30,000 people willing to work, people who have no jobs. Today there are 30,000 people looking for work and 80,000 more who have given up and are collecting welfare. These jobs will provide encouraging news to these people, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that one day there will be enough jobs to go around.

Mr. Speaker, I urge this government to pursue new employers, and most importantly, to enhance the climate for investment and job creation for small business in our economy.

I welcome CIBC very much. I congratulate the minister and the employees of his department for whatever roles they have played in securing these jobs for our province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 33 — An Act respecting the Donation of Food

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill respecting the Donation of Food be now introduced and read the first time.

Motion agreed to and the Bill read a first time.

The Speaker: — When should this Bill be read a second time? Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Boyd: — With leave, now, Mr. Speaker.

Leave not granted.

Bill No. 34 — An Act to repeal The Economic Development and Tourism Act

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of The Economic Development and Tourism Repeal Act.

Motion agreed to and the Bill read a first time.

The Speaker: — When shall this Bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — With leave, now, Mr. Speaker.

Leave not granted.

Bill No. 35 — An Act to amend The Department of Economic Development Act, 1993

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of The Department of Economic Development Amendment Act.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE BILLS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 01 — An Act to amend An Act to incorporate the Briercrest Bible College

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 01, An Act to amend An Act to incorporate the Briercrest Bible College, be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 1 — Unfair Contractor Tendering Policy

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed a pleasure and a privilege to be able to stand up in the Assembly today to talk about the motion that I am about to pass.

I was really quite surprised that I'm standing this quickly in the Assembly this afternoon because we had really thought that the government would want to talk about their gambling Bill and to discuss that for the people of Saskatchewan. But I guess gambling must be something that the government has become

allergic to; it must be a new disease that's going around because they don't even want to talk about it now.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that at the end of my remarks, I will be moving the following motion:

That this Assembly condemn the government for its recent Crown tendering policy which demonstrates unfair preference for unionized contractors and which moves governments away from the principle of contracting with the lowest bidder hence driving up the costs of government borne by taxpayers, and further that this Assembly condemn the government for its gross failure to consult and respect the opinions of small business in arriving at this agreement.

I would like to start with a quote that says it all, Bruce Johnstone in the Saturday *Leader-Post*, Mr. Speaker: "When is a Fair Wage Policy not a fair wage policy? When it's the NDP government's Fair Wage Policy, which is anything but."

I'm not sure which facts astounds me more, that even the NDP would have the gall to bring in a policy like this or that they would actually do this in broad daylight instead of trying to bury it on federal budget day which of course is what they did.

But of course, Mr. Speaker, even though they tried to hide it under the cloak-and-dagger of the budget from Ottawa, people were bound to notice such a horrendous piece of work. We can only conclude from this that the NDP is actually proud of this policy, that they really think they have done a good thing.

Well let's start with one important fact. Non-unionized construction employees make up over 80 per cent of the construction contracting industry, Mr. Speaker. Now I want you to understand, members of the government, this is 80 per cent, like 80 out of 100. That's pretty near everybody. Only 20 per cent that is on the opposite side of this thing that belongs to the unions.

Yet here we have a construction agreement where 75 per cent of all government work goes to the minority of unionized contractors. Now that again is the 20 per cent. And we are supposed to believe, Mr. Speaker, that that is fair.

Now not only are we supposed to believe that this is fair, but we are also supposed to believe, in the words of the minister responsible for CIC, that this agreement removes preference from government contracting and creates a level playing-field for the unions and non-union firms. These statements were so preposterous that at first I couldn't understand how even the minister could believe it. However, I thought it was only fair to try to see things from his point of view.

What is it that would make a government show preference for non-union firms as the minister suggested used to happen? Well first of all, they are in the majority, so it is hard not to pick them. And if you have a bag of marbles, for example, Mr. Speaker, with 80 per cent of them are white marbles and 20 per cent are black marbles and you reach in to pick one at random, you will probably get a white marble. I suppose this could be

called a preference.

Secondly, the government Crowns are generally required to contract with the lowest bidder. Well there is a preference right there. If 80 per cent of the contractors are almost always cheaper than the other 20 per cent, I guess that's a preference too, Mr. Speaker.

So in other words this policy seeks to eliminate the advantage that non-union contractors have by virtue of being cheaper and more numerous. These two things add up to a third reason for showing preference — common sense. It is just common sense to go with the cheapest, most numerous source of contract work.

What this policy declares then is that the government, in order not to show anyone any preference, will abandon all semblance of common sense in deciding how they award contracts. In fact just to show how unbiased they are, they will insist that the awarding of government contracts makes as little sense as humanly possible.

Now perhaps this is a new concept in political correctness, that we are all conscious to avoid racism and sexism, and now we have a new ism — sensism — discriminating on the basis of whether or not something makes common sense.

Now this government has proven that it certainly is not sensist. Of course, I'm being facetious, Mr. Speaker.

I wish I could believe that the government actually had a good reason for this policy; but we all know what the government's reasons were and we all know that they weren't good ones. We all know of the long-time cozy relationship that has existed between the NDP and the unions. That has been no secret over the past years. In fact, if I'm not mistaken, that's the main difference between the NDP and Tommy Douglas's old CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation); the NDP has union and union money pulling their strings while the CCF of course did not.

Given this fact, what the NDP has founded on the premisses of giving unions more influence, how can we expect them not to bring forward such blatantly unfair and biased policies? If anything, we almost have to hand it to this government for holding back on this influence for so long. It wasn't until last year that they brought in amendments to The Trade Union Act and even then they watered them down against the protests of their own union friends — not very loud protests, mind you, but they were somewhat mildly protesting.

But an election is looming, Mr. Speaker, so the government had to do something big and in a hurry to get their union friends back inside. Obviously the polls must have shown that the NDP were slipping — and badly — and needed that support very quickly and very dramatically.

(1430)

It's rather unbelievable just how big a kickback the government managed to drum up for the unions — 75 per cent of

government jobs; forcing all contractors to pay into a union slush fund at 21 cents per hour for every hour worked by every employee; forcing unionized employees on non-unionized firms, giving the unions a foothold for extending certification.

Really a one-sided deal, Mr. Speaker, when you look at it. A tax for sure that can only be described as being a tax on the employer because none of this money comes out of the employee's portion of his cheque. It all comes out of the employer, 100 per cent.

Given how much contractors are dependent on government contracts, it is no exaggeration to say that this agreement delivers the entire construction industry into the hands of the unions whether the workers involved want to join or not. It almost becomes a compulsory union. This is the NDP's version of a no-cut contract. Even if the government or another government reverses this policy somewhere down the road, the unions will have increased their influence so much that it won't matter any more.

In this underhanded way the government has achieved what I believe is a first — the first time a government has forced an industry to unionize. The government struggles to spin this the right way, but they do their best to confuse the public with their talk of eliminating preferences. They struggle to find explanations and precedents, all of which fall apart under the slightest examination, Mr. Speaker.

And to quote once again from Bruce Johnstone, they say, "other jurisdictions have fair wage policies for taxpayer-funded capital projects, including the federal government." What they don't say is that federal fair wage policies don't use union scale as the minimum wage rate, but use an average rate of comparable projects in that area.

They also cite recent projects like the Shand power plant, where a project agreement specified the amount of union content required. What they didn't say is that wage rates for the Shand were posted and they weren't necessarily union scale. Nor did the Shand project agreement require a set percentage of the employees to be union members.

Mr. Speaker, the government has pulled its rhetoric in a circle in terms of a wagon train on this issue. If there is a distortion available to them, they'll use it. If there is a self-evident fact that they can deny, they'll deny. They deny that unionized contractors are more expensive and that this will cost the taxpayers and of course the utility rate users of the Crowns to go up; for example, power, gas, phones, etc.

Part of this is just their own willing blindness on the subject, just like they refused ever to admit that the unionized portion of the Melfort water project was over budget, over deadline, and under quality. And of course that is history that has already been written and is a fact of life.

Another explanation they supply is that the Crowns will actually save money because this deal is buying, pay no strike, no lockout agreement. What a ridiculous argument, Mr. Speaker. In order to have a strike, you need to have a union in there. If the government were not putting mostly union people

in its contracts, there wouldn't be any danger that there could be a strike.

It's like putting a bomb in the middle of a room and saying don't worry, I defused it. You wouldn't have to worry about the bomb if you hadn't brought it into the building in the first place. The members of this House know how this agreement is going to interfere across this province, Mr. Speaker. For all of the government's trickery, the public is going to see this as a government rewarding its friends.

The businesses that have been affected by this commercial apartheid will rebel just as they did to The Labour Standards Act. And there's no wonder, Mr. Speaker, that they will do that when you consider the enormous cost that there will be involved directly for them at the outset.

The government was forced to renegotiate and water down that piece of legislation, and I'm talking about The Labour Standards Act. What makes them think they're going to get off any more lightly this time when they try to force people to unionize an entire industry?

I would urge the members of all sides of the House to save yourselves the trouble, save the province and the economic environment another major upheaval. For the sake of your reputation with your constituents, if nothing else, members, join with us in condemning this agreement.

The reality is, my friends, that if you continue to forge ahead with this kind of legislation and this kind of approach through the back door, if you continue to do this and continue to force people to pay more and more, you will get our province so seriously out of sync with our neighbours around us that companies that have been coming to Saskatchewan, as you have indicated yesterday and today, those future companies won't come here any more unless you cut them secret, private, sweetheart deals.

And the rest of the province knows full well that in both of the cases of the past two days, you have had to do that. You've had to cut sweetheart deals, giving exemptions of taxation, of giving not just hundreds of thousands but millions, millions of dollars to these two corporate entities in order to buy them into the province. You've bought and paid for them at the expense of other Saskatchewan taxpayers.

If you're going to give tax breaks and concessions, why not do it for everybody on a level playing-field and really let the province develop? Why not stop trying to force everybody to be a union member so that they automatically kick into your election campaign as your election working team, as well as your slush fund for the election itself? To buy votes with the people's own money — that's what it's all about. And I think you have to put a stop to that.

Mr. Speaker, I move, and seconded by the member from Morse:

That this Assembly condemn the government for its recent Crown tendering policies which demonstrates unfair preference for unionized contractors and which

moves government away from the principle of contracting with the lowest bidder hence driving up the cost of government borne by the taxpayers, and further that this Assembly condemn the government for its gross failure to consult and respect the opinions of small business in arriving at this agreement.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to second the motion by my colleague from Maple Creek. The NDP's announcement of the new Crown tendering policy did not come as any surprise to the official opposition. In fact as the government is well aware, this policy was brought to our attention back in January of this year, Mr. Speaker. We opposed the union-preference tendering policy then and we oppose it now. The policy is clearly designed to buy union support for the NDP for the upcoming election. This announcement is only their most recent attempt to buying the vote.

Consider some of the government's more recent endeavours. First of all, an agreement penned between government and municipalities regarding VLT (video lottery terminals) revenues and that was indicated here in the discussion we had yesterday with the minister responsible for community service. Six per cent natural gas rate reduction; a new agreement with the FSIN for five new casinos in Saskatchewan; new highway Crown with no specific purpose other than to award contracts to unionized companies; new SGEU (Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union) contract awarding 3 per cent increase in pay and better benefits such as optometric coverage.

Mr. Speaker, here's another one. The new union-preference tendering policy is all about getting union support. Support the NDP, we're losing, Mr. Speaker, and the new tendering policy is supposedly sure to work. After all, under the new policy successful bidders on SaskPower, SaskTel, SaskEnergy, Sask Water, SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company) and Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation contracts will be forced to hire 75 per cent unionized workers and pay them union wages and benefits.

What this policy does, Mr. Speaker, is effectively restrict companies from bidding for government work. Only companies paying union wages will be able to bid on major Crown corporation construction contracts. And non-union companies can compete for contracts but they have to pay the same wages and benefits as unionized firms. The policy goes so far as to tell businesses where to hire their workers. They must hire up to 75 per cent of their workers from union halls, and employees must pay union dues.

Mr. Speaker, the irony of that is this, that when Saskatchewan people go to the union halls to get a job, they will get a job. But when the union hall is empty — and that is something that can easily happen in Saskatchewan because only 20 per cent of the people in Saskatchewan are unionized — when the union halls are empty in Saskatchewan, who gets the first job? Is it Saskatchewan contractors? No.

An Hon. Member: — Yes.

Mr. Martens: — No.

An Hon. Member: — Yes.

Mr. Martens: — No. It will be out-of-province contractors who have to hire and bid in for the contractors here to supply the union labour.

Mr. Speaker, no, no . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Dewdney north is saying that this is all wrong. Well, Mr. Speaker, I've had some experience of this myself, and that's exactly what happens.

The contractor goes to the union hall, it's empty. Who does he get in? He gets employees from Manitoba; he gets employees from Alberta. But does the non-union contractor get any opportunity to work? No. Do Saskatchewan people get any opportunity to work? No. And that's the seriousness of what we have here, Mr. Speaker.

The NDP government is implementing this policy knowing full well that the construction industry is 80 per cent non-unionized — non-unionized, Mr. Speaker. Not only will this policy turn into a province-wide certification drive of non-union companies, it will be obscenely more expensive than a low-bid tendering policy, Mr. Speaker.

Is this new policy part of the reason that the Crown Investments Corporation did not pay a dividend to the General Revenue Fund this year? That's an interesting question, Mr. Speaker.

The Crown corporations in . . . CIC didn't pay a dividend, as the auditor pointed out they should. Is it the reason, so that the Crown corporations could have extra money to pay our expensive contract provisions?

This new policy is costly, unfair, and unnecessary, Mr. Speaker. Why are companies that win Crown construction jobs forced to pay the contract administration and industry development fee of 21 cents an hour for every employee on the job?

Mr. Speaker, 21 cents an hour for every job that is made available to a contractor in the province of Saskatchewan . . . will have to have a fee attached to it of 21 cents an hour — 21 cents an hour for each of these employees on the job.

Here's how this money is to be used. The money is to be divided between the unionized contractors association which this government made up a year ago. And most of the construction people in the province of Saskatchewan — we had a list of over 300 here yesterday — most of these people don't belong to that association. The other association is the Union Employees Council and the other one is the Construction Opportunities Development Council which was established last year.

In what other province in this country do successful contractors have to contribute to a slush fund, to a union slush fund, Mr. Speaker? And the answer is none. Not even in Ontario do they have to do this.

The Provincial Secretary tried to explain the purpose of the CODC yesterday. Unfortunately he chose to mislead reporters rather than to come clean and admit that this organization is a brand-spanking-new one. He tried to suggest that the CODC has existed for years. Well Crown Investments Corporation vice-president, Bill Hyde, set him straight. He said, and I quote the *Leader-Post*:

CODC is in its infancy, having started in 1994 with contributions from unionized employers and employees.

I dare to say that the CODC was set up the day the unions and the NDP cooked up this new tendering policy. Imagine this — one of the purposes of CODC is to improve the image of unions, to inform people that union labour is less costly and more efficient than that of non-union labour.

Tell that to the people around Melfort, the people that witnessed firsthand the difference between union and non-union employees. The members opposite should recall the sprinkler system that was set up in half of the water pipeline from Melfort to the North Saskatchewan River dam. The members opposite should recall the fiasco that was created there.

They should also be able to recall that the job was divided so that half of the work was done by non-union and the other was done by unionized employees. The non-union side had two crews consisting of 18 people, Mr. Speaker. The union side has twice as many crews, consisting of four times the amount of employees. The union side completed its project on schedule, exactly on budget.

(1445)

We never did find out, Mr. Speaker, how much the unionized cost was and how much really the taxpayers of Saskatchewan had to provide. But it was in the neighbourhood of 3 million over budget on about a \$12 million project, Mr. Speaker.

I am not suggesting that disaster is looming for any project going union in Saskatchewan; however I'm suggesting that extra costs are obviously associated with union labour. Any of the people that we've talked to where provisions are similar to this, talk about a 25 to 30 per cent increase in cost. And when we're talking about the Crown corporations in Saskatchewan — the Crown corporations of SaskPower, SaskTel, SGI, STC or any of these Crown corporations — we're talking about contracts that are significant in the province of Saskatchewan.

And will the taxpayer then have to pay 25 to 30 per cent more for each of these? Is that why our utility rates have gone up in the past year, some four per cent, some nine per cent, some seven per cent? Mr. Speaker, that's the way it happened, and that is very, very significant. And that's why there is, as was quoted in the paper, significant surpluses in places like SaskPower — 81 million, 120 million, 118 million — in three years. Those are the totals for each of those years.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is borne by the people of Saskatchewan trying to do business in the province of Saskatchewan. That's in the neighbourhood of \$300 million, Mr. Speaker, in the last

three years. That goes directly into the hands of those people opposite to use for whatever purposes they wish, and then they have the option on turning this back to unions with a 21 cent-an-hour factor built in.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is why the opposition is against this sort of thing happening. It's an unfair advantage that should not be awarded to unionized contractors. After all, the only way to create jobs and build our economy is through less government interference and not more.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen, as was announced today and yesterday, islands building in this province, islands where this government is choosing not to tax nine per cent on E&H (education and health) tax, islands across this province, Mr. Speaker. We have an island in Lloydminster. We have an island in Simpson Sears. We have an island in construction of casinos on Indian reserves. We have islands where nine per cent sales tax is not going to be allowed to be collected, or they have an option on not collecting it.

And what we have here, Mr. Speaker, is islands that are going to have to say . . . in this contract, what will we do for this contractor who has a union shop? And what specific thing can we do for him to offset the extra cost that is going to be for him to compete with other contractors? Are we going to build islands like that for those contractors as well? And that's what we're discussing here today.

And so, Mr. Speaker, because of these things, we felt it necessary to bring to the attention of the people of Saskatchewan the problems that are going to exist with a policy set out by the Provincial Secretary and the minister responsible for CIC in setting up a policy that says 75 per cent of the contracts given out by CIC will be awarded to union preference only, and that 21 cents an hour for every employee will be charged back as a benefit to the unions.

And what's it for, Mr. Speaker? It's to provide an opportunity for the union — and we had that expressed here today — an opportunity for the union to go in and unionize every other shop in the province of Saskatchewan. It will give them extra money.

And what will they do, which is obvious to me, is donations will come from the unions, which has always financed the people opposite in their election bids. Unions will be able to pay their NDP Canada fund and then they will transfer that money into the province of Saskatchewan deliberately for a union contribution that can't be traced. Everybody knows that that's what's going on. Why don't you just stand up there and admit it? Are you ashamed of doing that?

So we felt it necessary today, Mr. Speaker, to bring to the attention of this Assembly and to the people of Saskatchewan, the inconsistency of the government opposite. And it is therefore with pleasure that I move . . . or second the motion presented by the member from Maple Creek today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to register my opposition and the

opposition of our Liberal caucus to the Crown tendering policy put forward by this provincial government.

The members opposite continue to show, through legislation like this most recent tendering policy for the Crowns, their disdain for free enterprise and their lack of respect for the taxpayers of Saskatchewan.

It is no secret that the NDP has a history of using the Crown corporations of this province as an extended limb of its political bureaucracy, a hiding place in many instances for political friends and appointees. The NDP government uses the Crowns as well to feed its insatiable appetite for spending — spending taxpayers' money. And the taxpayers and consumers are constantly picking up the tab for higher utility rates, fees, and licences.

The NDP solution to an opportunity in the market-place always poses a question: is this a chance to create a new Crown corporation? And so the family continues to grow.

But this particular administration's obsession for power and control has taken another twist. For years people have felt that union operators have received preferential treatment from NDP governments. For years taxpayers and business people alike have felt that jobs were not being awarded on the basis of lowest bid and most economical contract because there was evidence that union contractors were favoured by NDP governments. The objection to this had nothing to do with a pro- or anti-union sentiment.

The fact is that the taxpaying public wants government to get its spending under control; to quit passing the exorbitant costs through higher taxes or utility costs or deficits onto the people. People were just looking for government to exercise the same common sense and smart shopping habits that consumers have had to develop during tough economic times.

But this government, Mr. Speaker, which claims to be so concerned with deficits and taxes and jobs, keeps introducing policies that say, we don't care about jobs, we don't care about taxes, and the only solution to deficits is to keep raising more money for government.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I disagree with this approach, and the Liberal caucus disagrees with it as well. I disagree with this particular tendering policy and I disagree with the NDP government using public tendering policy to prop up its sagging support with unions.

Mr. Speaker, this policy, like The Trade Union Act amendments and the labour standards amendments, is impractical and it's uncalled for. Like the "cutting edge Labour legislation designed to protect us from the ruthless greed of business," this tendering policy is yet one more tedious and expensive millstone around the necks of local governments, businesses, and taxpayers.

Just listen to this description in the March 4 *Leader-Post* and tell me if any self-respecting business person would ask government to add this aggravation to the bidding process. And this is entitled "Hiring policy rapped," and this is the quote, Mr.

Speaker:

The non-union contractor's first employee on the project can be a regular employee, and if it takes more so can (be) the third, the 12th, and after that every fourth employee hired to do the job. But the second employee must be a union member, and so must (be) the fourth-11th employees, and three out of (the) four additional employees hired for the job.

Now can you imagine how absolutely cumbersome and ridiculous this sounds to any person trying to do business in the province of Saskatchewan?

Let's think about what this really means. When private contractors decide they want to bid on some trenching being done by SaskTel, they follow a certain process. They determine the cost of equipment and fuel and manpower and put their experience and expertise to work to come up with a bid because they want to win the job for their firm and for their employees.

Mr. Speaker, many of our small and medium-sized construction firms are family-type operations where the boss knows the employees and where the owner cares about the workers and their families. More than that, the contractor wants to make sure he can do the job if he wins the tender. Part of the process is to assess the skilled labour available to him — the tradesmen, the tradeswomen — and to calculate the real costs of the job.

What this government is suggesting, Mr. Speaker, is that private, non-union contractors be forced to pay union wages when they bid on a government job. Even if a contractor has a qualified team of tradespeople willing and able to work for him, willing to work for the wages offered, this government is saying no, you have to inflate the cost of the labour component of your bid because we don't want to be put in a position where we have to save the taxpayers considerable money.

That's really what the government is saying, Mr. Speaker. They are saying with this policy that the free market, the competitive edge, the skill and business acumen of our entrepreneurs in this province, is no longer relevant. They are saying that the government wants to level the playing-field for its political supporters by simply raising the threshold — raising the costs to taxpayers by eliminating labour costs as a variable in the tendering process.

And that isn't all. That isn't all. The government isn't satisfied with setting the wage rates; now they also want to dictate the number of union employees at the job site. Mr. Speaker, all of this smacks of the government being in the face of business when it has no business being there at all.

The member from Elphinstone stands each and every day in this House, always commenting on how they're trying to facilitate the private sector doing business in the province of Saskatchewan. There's absolutely no foundation — no foundation at all — to those words if in fact they follow through with this policy.

Where does the contractor I've just talked about go now? Where

does that leave the contractor, Mr. Speaker? Where it leaves real people is he's forced to sit out some of his regular workers, and this might be for a big job. He might also have to forgo the talents and working relationship he has with a tradesperson just because he has to meet this quota. Now the contractor has a number of union people on his job site and the stage is set for a union certification drive happening while he's paying the wages.

And what happens when we have a non-union contractor who has to depend on using the unionized employee pool for a job while a union shop is bidding on the same project? What happens if the union workers choose not to meet the contractor's requirement for union employees, just so the union shop wins the bid? Who's going to step in and blow this fair-play whistle in those situations, Mr. Speaker?

I know that the trades council has made assurances that that won't happen, but what comfort is that to the contractors of Saskatchewan? The whole argument for this is that it will be more fair. It will be more fair, they say. There is absolutely no evidence of that. I have no evidence. But it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that it will certainly be more expensive for the taxpayers of Saskatchewan.

The budgets of Crown corporations are limited, believe it or not. The more one job costs, the less likely there will be money to undertake another. That is a fact of life for the private sector and it is quickly becoming a reality for the Crowns as well.

I read just yesterday that the president of SaskPower is worried about the threat of competition from TransAlta Utilities; that SaskPower have may to downsize and trim its bureaucracy. Good thinking, I say. Let's do what we have to do to stay competitive. But for heaven's sake, let's not talk about efficiency in one breath, and then legislate inefficiency in another.

There has been far too much valuable time and money wasted by small-business people in this province, hiring lawyers, organizing rallies, travelling to Regina to meet with the Minister of Labour over the last round of labour laws. Meetings that should never have been necessary, because the legislation was unnecessary. And now just weeks before an election, here we go again. Trying to argue the obvious to a government that just doesn't get it, or if it does get it, it should truly be ashamed of itself.

(1500)

People are tired of pointing out the obvious, and some of them when they get tired enough, just pack up their families and their capital and their companies, and they move. Mr. Speaker, the Premier says out-migration has stopped, but every month, hundreds and hundreds of people move away from Saskatchewan.

Yes, babies are born and people move in, so the overall out-migration is at almost zero. But the fact is people are still leaving by the thousands, and they aren't the people who depend on the government for their livelihoods. Many of the people who are leaving are the entrepreneurs. And we know

we've lost 1,331 employers in Saskatchewan — 1,331 fewer than in 1991. The job creators.

The people who are leaving are also the young people who have just not been finding work in Saskatchewan, and they are skilled tradespeople who are willing to sell their skills in free markets of other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, we have to ask ourselves, what has this government done to make Saskatchewan stronger and more able to compete on a global scale, or even with our next-door neighbours? What will this policy do to make us more competitive? Will we have cheaper costs of doing business? Will there be more jobs? Will this give us smaller, more efficient government? Or will we need more watchdogs to hover around private contractors to see that yet another letter of the law is being met?

This policy will not give people added incentive to invest in Saskatchewan. It will not give our young people more opportunities. Mr. Speaker, this will add to our reputation as a province that is becoming more and more unfriendly toward free enterprise.

This legislation comes out of the past, and it is brought forward by a government that is living in the past, regardless of how it tries to paint itself otherwise. It is time to reject these outdated ideas, time to put Saskatchewan taxpayers first and politics last.

On behalf of myself and the Liberal caucus, I urge the government to withdraw this policy and to replace it with one which supports the philosophy of competition in the marketplace, which gives the job to the lowest qualified bidder — the way it happens in a true free market economy, which is what we should be aiming to create, not destroy, in our province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to enter into this debate put forth on this malicious motion by the official opposition and supported with much enthusiasm by the Leader of the Third Party.

Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the members of the opposition and to the third party as they bring their comments regarding this resolution to this debate here this afternoon. And I find interesting, Mr. Speaker, that as I listened to not only the content, but particularly with the Leader of the Third Party, to the tone of those comments, that I see here a motion that is brought forth with an agenda of fear and division that is part and parcel of what they're all about.

I've heard misrepresentation, and I think blatantly intended misrepresentation, of the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement here on the floor here this afternoon.

Now my good friend, the member from Maple Creek, has brought his remarks to the Assembly, and I listened very carefully. And I note that he is also listening with some attentiveness, Mr. Speaker. And perhaps the opportunity will be

there for him to get back into this debate because I will be moving at the conclusion of my remarks, Mr. Speaker, an amendment. And if he wishes to get back into the debate, he'll have an opportunity to do that.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, let me just give notice to the Assembly that at the conclusion of my remarks I will be moving a motion along the lines that all the words after the words "this Assembly" will be deleted, and the following substituted, to read: congratulate the government for implementing a new Crown Construction Tendering Agreement which gives union and non-union contractors equal access to government jobs and maximizes Saskatchewan employment, while ensuring that tradespeople receive fair treatment.

Mr. Speaker, I think that's a fair reflection of what this tendering agreement is all about, and that is what it is intended to do.

Now my good friend, the member from Maple Creek, says what about the workers? Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest. I listened with interest to phrases being used across the floor like, union-preference policy and union preference only. Mr. Speaker, if you listen to the Tweedledum and Tweedledee and pick your Tweed, which is which; but if you listen to Tweedledum and Tweedledee, and their use of the word union, Mr. Speaker, when it slips through their lips, it comes out as a dirty word.

That's what this is all about. Union is a dirty word to these folks opposite. And union workers, if you're to believe the innuendo, Mr. Speaker, union workers have horns on their heads and forked tails behind. Mr. Speaker, it's got nothing . . . when you listen to them, it's got everything to do with political philosophy, it has everything to do with a campaign of fear and division; it has very little to do with honest belief about what is good for the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, they describe this tendering policy as union-preference policy. Mr. Speaker, if we're going to describe what it really is, what we have here is a Saskatchewan worker preference policy, to do work for the Crown corporations in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I find interesting, as I listen to the remarks of the official opposition, and then I listened very carefully to the words of the Leader of the Third Party, who says, and if I got it down correctly — *Hansard* will determine whether I got it precisely correctly — but if I'm quoting her correctly, she said, and I quote: this policy, like the labour standards amendments and Trade Union Act amendments, is impractical and unworkable. Well she nods her head, Mr. Speaker, and I think I've quoted her correctly.

It's kind of interesting, Mr. Speaker, when I pull out my blues for the orders of the day; we've had brought to this Assembly a Bill, a private Bill brought by the Leader of the Opposition which the Leader of the Third Party has now indicated on the record she will intend to support. Now we've been calling it every day, day after day, and the Leader of the Opposition has not yet moved it.

But I remind the House, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Opposition, supported today by the Leader of the Third Party, Leader of the Opposition has a Bill before the House which is entitled a Bill to repeal The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 1994 and The Trade Union Amendment Act, 1994.

They make it very, very clear — very, very clear that when it comes to protecting the quality of work life and the rights of working people, be they organized working people or working people who are not organized in the collective agreement, Mr. Speaker, in the province of Saskatchewan, they stand opposed to progress which working people have earned in their rights and protections within the last year in this Assembly.

Now that doesn't surprise me; that does not surprise me, Mr. Speaker, because this is all about philosophy. And when you've got the white cats and the black cats or the right foot of the chicken and the left foot of the chicken or Tweedledum and Tweedledee, however you want to describe them, Mr. Speaker, what they come to this Assembly is with a political philosophy that says if it has anything to do with unions, if it has to do with collective agreements, workers coming together, then it's a bad thing.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that I'm a member of a government that believes not only in building an economy to improve the quality of life of all Saskatchewan people, but that, in building an economy and advancing economic development in our province, that we are also committed to an equitable sharing of that opportunity and security by the working people of the province of Saskatchewan. And that is part and parcel of the thought behind this tendering agreement that we're debating here today. That's what it's about.

We have before us here — let us make it abundantly clear — we have before us here today, crystal clear, a difference of point of view, a difference of philosophy. That's what this is all about; let's not confuse it with anything else. You have the Conservatives and you have the Liberals who say that if it's good for working people, then it's not good for Saskatchewan. And you have the New Democratic Party Government of Saskatchewan that says that what is good to be shared in the way of opportunity and security for working people is in the long run good for all the people of Saskatchewan. There is clearly a difference of philosophy. Let us make no confusion about that.

What I find kind of interesting as well, Mr. Speaker, is that the Liberal leader says that when she refers to people leaving the province of Saskatchewan, she says that some of those people leaving the province of Saskatchewan are skilled tradespeople. And do you know what, Mr. Speaker? She is bang on, bang on. And it is a continuation of a consequence of a policy of the PC (Progressive Conservative) government through the 1980s that led to a significant loss of Saskatchewan people, and in particular skilled tradespeople, from our province, that was part of the population loss that devastated the province of Saskatchewan through the '80s — and, thank heavens, is now changing.

And I'm going to comment on that in my remarks just shortly, Mr. Speaker. But we saw, we saw in the 1980s when we had a PC government, we saw a policy which was intended to weaken the security and the opportunity of skilled tradespeople in this province, purportedly in the interest of profit for the employers — purportedly — that led directly to the outflow of skilled tradespeople from the province of Saskatchewan, that is now supported holus-bolus by the Leader of the Liberal Party.

And I say to all the working people of Saskatchewan, be warned. When you listen to the remarks of the Conservative members and the Liberal members on this debate here today, be warned that if you are a working person in the province of Saskatchewan, that a Lib is a Tory is a Lib is a Tory. And they have made that abundantly clear in the remarks that we've heard here today.

What I find also, Mr. Speaker, kind of interesting, is that the remarks we hear today contradict not only the history in the province of Saskatchewan, but in fact the history of their political parties in the province of Saskatchewan. When we think about the responsibility, Mr. Speaker, of government to lend some constructive direction to the world of employment, when you're given the authority and responsibility to govern, then you have to ask yourself, how do you use the tools of government in the best interest of the working people of the province of Saskatchewan?

And it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that coming with government is the responsibility that when you're shaping your policies, that you pay particular attention to the impact of those policies in the world of employment. And you ask yourselves, do these policies lend stability to employment in our province? Are these policies which are leading to crests and valleys in the employment of the people of Saskatchewan. And clearly, Mr. Speaker, I express a bias, I express a bias towards employment policies which lend stability to employment in our province — predictability, Mr. Speaker, and an absence of the boom and bust kind of philosophy that seems to be part and parcel of what's endorsed by the members opposite.

You have to ask yourself as well, Mr. Speaker, what are the long-term implications? Do employment policies lend to the building and maintaining of a pool of skilled tradespersons in our province or not? And you have to ask, Mr. Speaker, as well, whether these policies lend, in the long run, to the best value for the dollar spent when engaging in public contracts.

And, Mr. Speaker, finally you have to ask yourself, in the long run what are the policies that will maximize Saskatchewan employment — maximize Saskatchewan employment. Employment by Saskatchewan people who pay Saskatchewan income tax when they live in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I express very clearly, no doubt about it, a bias in favour of all four of those principles — stability of employment, the promotion of a pool of skilled tradespeople in our province, best value for the public dollar spent, and the maximization of Saskatchewan people being employed to do Saskatchewan jobs when you're spending Saskatchewan taxpayers' money.

And that's what this policy does, Mr. Speaker. When I look carefully at the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement, that's what this policy does. Now I reflect back, Mr. Speaker, over the last couple of years and as a member of this Assembly and I don't think that I'm particularly unique. All of us have had, and we've certainly heard from the opposition many times in question period, we've had requests for clarification for the construction tendering policy for the Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, and here is the response.

This is the response to what we've been hearing about for . . . and I think with some justification, some confusion as to what the policy is. Clearly, construction companies have wanted to have a clear and simple statement about what the policy is, and here it is. And it's drafted, Mr. Speaker, and it's collected in this agreement — the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement. Here it is; it's been signed.

(1515)

Now who has signed this agreement, Mr. Speaker? Because the members of the opposition would like to leave the impression that somehow the Saskatchewan government has taken this agreement, and in the dark of night has crafted it out and then they flipped on the lights and charged out into the public and exposed it to the world and said, here's the policy.

Well nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker. This is an agreement which has come about as the result of a great deal of consultation and then was signed by a number of partners to the agreement.

And who are they, Mr. Speaker? Let's identify them very clearly. First of all, which Crown corporations are affected by that and signatories to this agreement? There's the Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation. There's Saskatchewan Government Insurance; SaskPower; SaskTel; the Saskatchewan Transportation Corporation, (STC); Saskatchewan Water Corporation; SaskEnergy. Those are the Crown corporations that are signatories to this agreement, Mr. Speaker.

But who is the agreement struck with? There are two other partners in this agreement, Mr. Speaker, who were part of the negotiations and the discussion that led to the signing of an agreement — to the signing of an agreement between those parties.

And who were the other two? Mr. Speaker, there was the Construction Labour Relations Association of Saskatchewan — the Construction Labour Relations Association of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, who are these folks? Mr. Speaker, these folks are the certified bargaining agent — let me repeat that — the certified bargaining agent for construction employers in the province of Saskatchewan. That is who they are. They are signatories to this agreement.

And who was the third party, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who is

March 7, 1995

signator to this agreement? The third party is the Saskatchewan provincial building and construction trade council — the Saskatchewan provincial building and construction trade council who are representatives for tradespersons.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let us make it very, very clear that what we're talking about here today is an agreement that was negotiated and signed by Crown corporations, by the representative body for construction companies, and by the representative body for tradespersons in our province. This is nothing that's being rammed down the throats of anybody.

And like any collective agreement there will be those who say, well it's not exactly what I wanted, and they'll want to complain. And their voice is the opposition and here we are.

But let us make it very, very clear that this is an agreement struck with Crown corporations, the representatives of construction employers, and the representatives of tradespersons.

Let me also, Mr. Speaker, then draw attention of the Assembly to the fact that this is entirely consistent — not only in the province of Saskatchewan, but I'll dwell on that for a moment — this is entirely consistent with the history of employment in the province of Saskatchewan.

The member from Maple Creek referred in his remarks — and he's quite correct — he referred in his remarks to the fact that this is an agreement that is not dissimilar from some that were struck by his predecessors when his predecessors, the Conservative government, was in office here in the province of Saskatchewan.

The Bi-Provincial upgrader here in Saskatchewan, over in the Lloydminster area, the NewGrade upgrader here in Regina, the Shand power plant down in the Estevan area, and Cameco's Contact Lake gold mine all have stipulations into their agreements, Mr. Speaker, which are similar to this agreement that are signed by the Crown corporations, the representative for the construction employers, and the representative for the skilled construction tradespersons of Saskatchewan.

Now when we look back through Saskatchewan history, Mr. Speaker, and we ask ourselves, has there been anything like this that has ever existed before, if you listen to the words of the opposition and to the words of the Leader of the Third Party, you would think that this was some wild and novel idea that came screaming out of the cloud of night and perched to lay prey to the construction companies of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. This idea has not only been around; it has been government policy in the province of Saskatchewan since, get this, Mr. Speaker, since January 7 — of what year? — 1913, 1913. This wild, ridiculous, radical new idea has been government policy since 1913 in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, my predecessors, the members of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, the CCF, the forerunners of the NDP, didn't even exist until 1933. Before the NDP and its

predecessor came into existence, the Government of Saskatchewan had had this policy for 20 years when the government was run by those who stand in the opposition today.

Well this is a radical, new idea coming in screaming out of the dark of night to perch and prey on construction employers — nothing could be further from the truth, and we should be very, very cautious, Mr. Speaker, of any who would try to paint it that way.

Mr. Speaker, let me quote from *Hansard* in 1913, in 1913 on a resolution called the fair wage resolution. Now who was the government in 1913? I'm not that old; I don't remember this, Mr. Speaker. Was it Liberals? No! Tell me it isn't true. Tell me it's not the predecessors of the Leader of the Liberal Party who stood here and venomously — venomously — let the words “union” drip off her lip, Mr. Speaker. Her predecessors 82 years ago — 82 years ago — her party was implementing this resolution in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I go around the province of Saskatchewan I've had people say to me that they think the Leader of the Liberal Party is a tad out of touch. But even this, Mr. Speaker, is taking it to extremes. She's a tad out of touch; she's more than 82 years out of touch with the history of her own party in the province of Saskatchewan.

But what did the Liberal government of 1913 pass in this House, Mr. Speaker? Well it passed a resolution with these words, entitled the fair wage resolution, and these are the words, and I quote:

. . . insert in all contracts a clause for the payment of a fair and reasonable rate of wages to all workmen engaged on . . . (the construction of public works) or in lieu of such clause a schedule setting forth the minimum wages to be paid to such workmen;

And quote:

. . . the Government should take such steps as are necessary to apply its fair wage policy to all provincial works and undertakings over which it has or may exercise the necessary control . . .

Mr. Speaker, all we're talking about here is an agreement — an agreement, I read them — with, is it six, Crown corporations. The Liberal government of 1913, Mr. Speaker, says, and again I quote:

. . . wage policy to all provincial works and undertakings over which it has or may exercise the necessary control . . .

Now in the context of their history, I can understand why the Leader of the Liberal Party may say you have betrayed the history of Saskatchewan, you're only implementing this for Crown corporations. The Liberal government of 1913 had it for all public works.

Well, Mr. Speaker, time marched on. And then on March 23,

March 7, 1995

1944 . . . and 1944 was a significant year in the province of Saskatchewan. But, Mr. Speaker, I remind you that June 15, 1944 was a significant date because on June 15, 1944 Saskatchewan got its first Co-operative Commonwealth Federation government.

But, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, before the government changed, when we had the, I believe it was the Liberal government again . . . that's right, because we'd had the Anderson government. They'd taken us into the Dirty Thirties and been tossed out by the people of Saskatchewan and we now had a Liberal government, they were back again. And then on March 23, 1944, prior to the 1944 election, the Liberal government passed an Order in Council No. 301/44, which read, and I quote:

To more effectively further the purpose of the fair wage resolution of 1913.

Mr. Speaker, in 1944 the Liberal government was saying, not only did we have it right in 1913, we're not going to let the opportunity pass us by to reinforce this resolution. And 31 years later they said we have to reinforce what we did in 1913.

And what did that order in council spell out? Well, Mr. Speaker, it required that, and I quote: contractors employing none but skilled workmen and their apprentices; that — and I quote — the rates and wages shall be the standard rates and wages for the same trades in the district; that — and I quote — subcontractors shall be bound in all cases to conform.

Liberals in 1914, Liberals in 1944, Mr. Speaker — history has said that the initiators of this idea in the province of Saskatchewan were the Liberal Party. That's who introduced it in the province of Saskatchewan, this radical new idea that is going to undermine our economy and chase, presumably, more skilled tradespersons out of the province than the Tories chased out.

This is a little bit difficult to believe, is it not, Mr. Speaker? It is a tad difficult to believe.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask, are we alone? I heard the Liberal Party, the Leader of the Liberal Party refer to Saskatchewan as an island. Well are we alone? Is Saskatchewan the only province in all of Canada with the leadership of a Liberal government in 1913 reinforced by a Liberal government in 1944? Is Saskatchewan the only jurisdiction in all of Canada that has an understanding . . . a construction agreement like the one that's been signed here?

Are we an island, a Liberal-led island, as the Leader of the Liberal Party would like us to believe? No, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, unfortunately, the facts of the matter are, for debating purposes and points by the Leader of the Liberal Party, wrong.

In North America today, Mr. Speaker, British Columbia; Manitoba — oh, Tory Manitoba; Quebec — oh, Liberal Quebec; New Brunswick — who's in power in New Brunswick?

An Hon. Member: — The Liberals.

Mr. Hagel: — Oh, could that be a Liberal government there, Mr. Speaker? Nova Scotia, who's in power in Nova Scotia?

An Hon. Member: — Nobody is.

Mr. Hagel: — Nobody. My colleague says nobody is in power, but I think officially . . . is it Liberals there?

An Hon. Member: — Where's that?

Mr. Hagel: — Nova Scotia.

An Hon. Member: — Yes.

Mr. Hagel: — Liberals in Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker. Ontario, oh Ontario, that province with a dreaded NDP government there, Mr. Speaker.

In fact the Government of Canada, the Liberal Government of Canada . . . but here's one that they'll feel very, very comfortable with, Mr. Speaker, the federal government of the United States of America.

An Hon. Member: — Those are NDPers.

Mr. Hagel: — All those, almost . . . Well the good member, my good friend, the member from Souris-Cannington, accuses their American brothers and sisters of being NDPers. Ah, Mr. Speaker, I recognize that President Clinton, he knew a good thing when he heard it. I recognize that he in fact referred to himself as a new Democrat in the last election. And not only in Canada but in the United States where they heard that term, they were attracted, because they know that New Democrat government is fair government in the interest of the people of the country, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — But sad to say, sad to say the New Democratic Party is not in government in the United States of America today.

However in the United States of America, in Canada, in Nova Scotia, in New Brunswick, in Quebec, in Ontario, in Manitoba, in British Columbia, there is an agreement similar to the one that we're talking about here today — this scary, scary agreement, Mr. Speaker, that has come screaming out of the night and will just throw the entire economy of Saskatchewan into bedlam, if we're to believe the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Leader of the Third Party.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm afraid that neither history nor in fact the facts across our country support them in predicting that somehow this is going to lead to some great unravelling of our economy.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I will move along in my notes here because I don't like to be too lengthy and I know other members are

going to want to get into the debate here. In fact I kind of expected my good friend, the member from Maple Creek, in his new found enthusiasm for our subject, will want to get back in, recognizing that he'll have an amendment that he'll be able to debate.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at what's gone on in the province of Saskatchewan, what I hear coming out of the mouths of the Conservative members opposite is not particularly surprising. In fact if there's anything you can say about the official opposition, the Conservatives, that you can't say about the Liberals, Mr. Speaker, at least the Conservatives are consistent. They get full marks for consistency.

(1530)

They may be wrong but they are consistent, Mr. Speaker — some would say consistently wrong. And some would say that that is an admirable quality in . . . if you are attracted to consistency, Mr. Speaker, you are attracted to the Tory Party on labour policy, because they are consistent.

We'll recall back in 1984, the new Conservative government here in the province of Saskatchewan, and one of the acts that they did at that time, Mr. Speaker, was to eliminate at that time The Construction Industry Labour Relations Act . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well my good friend, my good friend the member from Maple Creek, his only disappointment about being here today is that he wasn't there then, because he would have loved to have been part of eliminating The Construction Industry Labour Relations Act. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, when we reflect on the fact that a new Act was introduced in this province in 1992, I believe it was, it was no surprise to us on this side of the House that that was opposed by those on the other side of the House.

It's no surprise that when there was an attempt to bring back into the province of Saskatchewan some sense and some semblance of order in the setting of the construction industry labour relations, or in the improvement of occupational health and safety, or improving the protection of workers in The Workers' Compensation Act or Labour Standards or Trade Union Act, all of that was opposed by Tweedledum and Tweedledee, the black cats and the white cats, the left leg of the chicken and the right leg of the chicken.

Mr. Speaker, it's no surprise to those on this side of the House that they opposed all of that. And it's no surprise that they bring to the House now a Bill to repeal The Trade Union Act and Labour Standards Act, as we heard from the Leader of the Liberal Party today endorsed with great enthusiasm. It's no surprise.

When they repealed The Construction Industry Labour Relations Act, Mr. Speaker, back in 1984, I believe it was, what happened in the province of Saskatchewan? Well, Mr. Speaker, what happened is that there were . . . it stimulated a number of new constructions companies, Mr. Speaker. That's the most positive thing I can say about it.

But these were, Mr. Speaker, these are described by everyone as

double-breasted companies. In other words, these were the non-unionized companies of unionized construction companies — very, very . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . well the member from Maple Creek, he wants to know how that worked.

Now I would assume, Mr. Speaker, if there's anybody who knows how that worked, he would be the expert, he would be the expert. He seems to be the one who understands those principles more clearly than anybody else in this House. You've got to give it to the member from Maple Creek. He has been a leading spokesperson on this subject in the Assembly. Fair enough. He is entirely consistent with his predecessors in the Conservative Party, and I give him full marks for that.

But what this meant, Mr. Speaker, is that you had non-union companies then who would bid on work, they would bid on work without paying union wages. And what began to happen in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is that a very, very significant factor in the winning of tenders for construction contracts was lower wages. And many of those contracts, Mr. Speaker, were then won on the backs of lower paid workers doing exactly the same job that they had been doing earlier but for lesser pay and with less security, with no pension benefits, often without the health benefits that apply to construction workers, Mr. Speaker, who are often seasonal workers.

Let us keep in mind as well, Mr. Speaker, that there is a difference here between unionized workers in the construction industry and unionized workers in the rest of . . . in all other industries. In the construction industry, unionized workers are registered with a union. They don't belong to a certain employer. And they're available for work for any employer who requires skilled tradespeople in the province to do the work that requires their technical knowledge and their skills.

Well, Mr. Speaker, as a result of these double-breasted companies and the elimination of The Construction Industry Labour Relations Act, history will tell us that wages for workers went down, predictably. They went down. And where did the skilled tradespeople of Saskatchewan start to go, Mr. Speaker? They started to go to other provinces.

The Leader of the Liberal Party, in her remarks, referred to the outflow of skilled tradespeople from the province of Saskatchewan and she was right. That was a policy that was led and spurred on by the Conservative government of the day here in the '80s in Saskatchewan — endorsed today by the Liberals.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, what tends to happen then is that over a period of time you begin to have a real lack of skilled tradespeople because they go where the jobs are and where they can get decent income for plying their trades. And that's where we are in Saskatchewan right now.

See I referred before, Mr. Speaker, to a bias in favour of stability of employment, maintaining a pool of skilled people, skilled tradespeople in our province, and what we've had going on in Saskatchewan is attack on that principle — endorsed again today by the Tories and the Conservatives.

Well, Mr. Speaker . . .

An Hon. Member: — Tell us how the union halls work.

Mr. Hagel: — Well the member from Maple Creek wants to know how the union halls work. Let me tell you how the union halls work, Mr. Speaker.

Union halls work this way. When you are a skilled . . . a qualified, skilled tradesperson, then you can join the union and you become available to work in Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when work is being called in Saskatchewan and a union worker is required, then the union goes to its list of available skilled tradespersons.

And they have a very, very important bias in terms of the way it works, Mr. Speaker. The way it works is this. The way it works is this — is that there will be a list of those who are available. And, Mr. Speaker, before any worker can ever be called to work on a job who lives outside of the boundaries of the province of Saskatchewan, absolutely every registered union tradesperson in the province of Saskatchewan must be at work. There must be full employment of the skilled tradespeople of Saskatchewan — that's how it works.

That's how it works, Mr. Speaker. That's how it works. And so when I said before, Mr. Speaker, that what we have here is a policy in fact which not only promotes but virtually ensures that a very, very high percentage — well over three-quarters, well over three-quarters — of people who are working on Crown corporation construction jobs in the province of Saskatchewan will be Saskatchewan tradespeople who pay Saskatchewan income tax because they live in the province of Saskatchewan, that's how a union works, Mr. Speaker.

Now my good friend, the member from Morse, had said earlier, he'd said earlier, that a problem that he saw with this agreement was that, he said, what if there's not a skilled tradesperson available because the Tories drove so many of the skilled tradespeople out of the province that they're not available now when we need them to work on a project?

The member from Morse asked that question. It's a legitimate question. And the answer, Mr. Speaker, is found in this agreement. Because this agreement says, and I quote:

In the event that a Union is unable to fill a requisition for employees within a forty-eight hour period (within a 48-hour period) (Saturday, Sunday and recognized holidays excluded), the Contractor shall have the right to employ qualified employees for that requisition from other available sources and the provisions of this Agreement shall apply to such employees.

That's what it says. If you can't find a Saskatchewan skilled tradesperson to fill the job when it's a union worker that's required, then the contractor has the right to fill with another qualified employee of his or her own choosing.

Now, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the reality is today that there are a number of union tradespersons, skilled tradespersons who

are union members, who at times will choose to stick their union card in their back pocket in order to work non-union, usually at a lower rate of pay and with less security, pension, health benefits.

An Hon. Member: — They got a job.

Mr. Hagel: — Well now the member from Souris-Cannington has become the resident expert; he says, they got a job. He's right; they got a job. They got a job working for less than you're worth. Let's keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, let's keep in mind that by comparison to other provinces, the amounts that are agreed to for the hourly wages for skilled tradespersons are negotiated with whom?

With the representative for the contract employers and the representative for the tradespersons. These are negotiated. They're well aware of what the standards are in the rest of the country. And they are well aware that they collectively want to have an available pool of skilled tradespeople working for what they are worth, Mr. Speaker, working for what they're worth in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite would like to paint this as . . . they call it a union preference collective . . . a union-preference construction tendering agreement. Now, Mr. Speaker, I said this is a Saskatchewan preference construction agreement. Saskatchewan preference, that's what it is.

Why do I say that, Mr. Speaker? Because when the job is advertised and tendered, who does it go to? Who will it go to? Mr. Speaker, crystal clear in the agreement, it will go to the lowest qualified tender. The lowest qualified tender, that's who will get the job, no if's, and's, or but's about it — not like we used to do in the decade gone by where some would be invited and others would not. Open to everybody and then to the lowest qualified tender goes the job; Mr. Speaker, the best value for the public dollar.

Who will work on those jobs, Mr. Speaker? Saskatchewan people will work on those jobs, Saskatchewan people who pay Saskatchewan income tax, the best value for the public dollar.

Now they like to say, Mr. Speaker, that this will mean that all the employees will be those dreaded union workers, those dreaded union workers. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not what the collective agreement here says, I'm afraid. It says that the first employee in each trade — not on the job site — the first employee in each trade on the job site, the first employee in each trade on the job site will be as selected by the contractor.

The second employee will be drawn from the available qualified union workers, a Saskatchewan worker from the province of Saskatchewan in that trade.

The third employee, if . . . and let's be reasonable here, Mr. Speaker. Let's recognize the fact that the large majority, the large majority of construction projects will have a large number of different trades on site and will usually — usually, not always — but will usually not have a large number of each trade on site. However, Mr. Speaker, the agreement says that

the third employee will be as selected by the contractor. Again, Mr. Speaker, for each trade, for each trade on the site, not number of workers on the site, but for each trade on the site. That's what it says, Mr. Speaker. And then the fourth will be a union worker and so on, Mr. Speaker.

That's what it says. That's the collective agreement. That's the agreement between these companies, Mr. Speaker, and most companies will recognize, particularly small companies. These folks opposite like to defend them . . . like to present themselves as the great defenders of the little companies, Mr. Speaker. What this says is that if you have a company with three, with three people in a specific trade on site, in that trade two of them will be at the selection of the contractor, one will be union. If it's four, it's two and two, and so on.

An Hon. Member: — How many out of eleven?

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, well the member says, how many of 11? And I ask him, when was the last project you had where you had 11 people of the same trade on the same site?

Well, Mr. Speaker, what does this agreement say? This agreement says that what those workers who are on site will be paid will be the same wage. And it'll be a wage that is negotiated between the representatives of the construction employers and the representatives of the skilled tradespeople. They negotiate that rate and every worker on site will be paid the same rate.

Now I know that that is objectionable to the members opposite because they are defenders of what they call free enterprise. I say what the world lives with these days is fair enterprise. And the sooner that they get that through their heads, the sooner that they will get back in touch with the people of Saskatchewan.

(1545)

That's what people of Saskatchewan want, is fair enterprise — fair enterprise where you have an opportunity to tender based on your expertise, not on the fact that you are able to take advantage of lower-paid workers who have got the same skills as others. Every worker will be paid the same rate.

And so what it will do, Mr. Speaker, is it will require . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well now the member from Wilkie is chirping away. We have a whole range of labour experts on the other side, Mr. Speaker. I can hardly wait. I can hardly wait till they get back into the debate here, so we can be entertained with the brilliance about this brand-new policy that's come screaming out of the night that started with the Liberal government back in Saskatchewan back in 1913.

Well now, Mr. Speaker (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I will listen with great attention to the member from Wilkie because this will be a deep insight — I am sure — into the development of the economy and the fair employment of Saskatchewan skilled tradespeople. But in the meantime while I'm awaiting his rising to his feet, Mr. Speaker, let me say this, that these workers will be paid at the same rate.

And so who will win the contract? Who will be the lowest bidder? The lowest bidder will be the one with the best expertise at working at developing a project effectively, who will get the best prices on the materials that are used on the job, Mr. Speaker. Those will be very, very significant factors as to who is the lowest, who is the lowest bidder — the one that can get the best price for the materials used, the one who best knows what he or she is doing in organizing the construction project.

And, Mr. Speaker, there will be a bias in favour of the local bidder because the local bidder who uses local employees will not be required to pay the subsistence that is paid to those who travel to the job site. So there would be an advantage there again to the local contractor, Mr. Speaker. That's who will get the job. And so, Mr. Speaker, when I look at what this agreement is about, I find myself feeling a little confused as to what all the furore is about.

The members opposite conveniently forget that in this agreement — although I have to admit my good friend, the member from Maple Creek, zipped across it very quickly — this agreement includes a no strike, no lockout clause. What it means is that for the next five years, for the next five years on construction projects with these Crown corporations, there will be no strikes, and there will be no lockouts. And when the job starts, it starts. And it will be worked at until it's done, and that's guaranteed in this agreement. That's stability of employment, Mr. Speaker, achieved through mutual agreement of representatives of the contract employers and the skilled tradespersons themselves.

And so, Mr. Speaker, what we have is an agreement which means that managerial expertise and technology and non-labour related business expenses such as materials will become a very important factor to win tenders with Crown corporations. The tenders will go to the lowest qualified bidders, no questions asked, no exceptions. They'll be the best value for money spent, for the public money spent. Workers will be treated fairly and consistently. There will be access for work to the small local contractors who will have some slight advantage, and it will maximize the use of Saskatchewan labour. If it's possible to use Saskatchewan labour to fill the bill, then it's Saskatchewan labour that will be used.

There will be fair wages paid; there will be no strikes; there will be no lockouts. There will be a level playing-field, and union contractors and non-union contractors alike are eligible to bid. Workers can come to work and receive union wages without having to pay . . . without having to join a union, or in fact the other side of the coin, to quit a union in order to get work as is happening these days sometimes.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that it will ensure that there will be a sufficient base of construction trades work in Saskatchewan in order to keep our apprenticeship programs operating in this province, and a reliable supply of skilled labour in the province that will be able to be maintained.

Well, Mr. Speaker, for all of those reasons I find myself being opposed to the resolution that has been moved by the member

from Maple Creek, and as I said at the beginning, I am therefore motivated to move an amendment which I will now introduce, Mr. Speaker.

And I move the following amendment, seconded by my good friend and colleague the member for Saskatoon Idylwyld, and it goes as thus:

That all the words after the words "That this Assembly" be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

congratulate the government for implementing a new Crown Construction Tendering Agreement which gives union and non-union contractors equal access to government jobs and maximizes Saskatchewan employment, while ensuring the tradespeople receive fair treatment.

I so move, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in support of the amendment. And I think one thing that I find very interesting about this debate on this particular matter and matters of labour policy generally in this House, is the amazing similarity between the official opposition, the Conservatives, and the Liberal Party when it comes to treatment of workers in our province. And it's really amazing how similar they are and how really there's absolutely no difference between those two parties.

Of course one shouldn't one shouldn't be too surprised about that when one realizes, looking at events in Ottawa, that the Liberals in Ottawa are actually more conservative than even the Conservatives were when they were in power in Ottawa. And here what we seem to be seeing is the Liberals and the Conservatives competing with one another to see who can be more right-wing and who can take us back into the 19th century faster.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I think that people make better decisions and that we would make better decisions sometimes if we would just put ourselves in the shoes of other people. And I'm thinking about construction workers in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. I'm thinking about construction workers, electricians, plumbers, painters, pipefitters, who are neighbours of mine and friends of mine and live in the same community that I do and that I represent in the city of Saskatoon.

And I know, Mr. Speaker, that despite the fact that our economy has improved a great deal in the last few years and there's a lot of hope and optimism in our economy and there are more jobs, there's one sector in our province that has not really shared in the renewal of our economy and that sector is the construction building trades.

Because many of those trades are experiencing unemployment of 70 per cent, 80 per cent. They're experiencing levels of unemployment that are unprecedented. And some of the people

that work in those trades are living on social assistance for the first time in their lives.

And when I listened to representatives of the Conservative Party, and when I listened to the Leader of the Liberal Party, get up in this House and speak about whether or not these people should receive fair wages and a policy that will put them to work, what I really think on the most basic level, Mr. Speaker, is this. That we in this House, whether we're in the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party, or in the government New Democratic Party, are privileged individuals in many ways. We are privileged because we get to serve in this Assembly; that is a privilege and an honour.

We're also privileged because we are paid sums of money that I don't think are unwarranted, but we have to remember are above the average of what the average person is paid in the province of Saskatchewan. And those who are privileged to sit in this Assembly, I think, should try to put themselves in the shoes of others who are affected by their decisions. And those others include construction workers.

And we'll hear the Conservatives and the Liberals talk about how much people might get paid per hour to work on a construction job. But one should never forget that people who work in the construction trades move from job to job. They're often hired on a union hall basis, on a rotational basis. They have to wait until their name comes up and they don't work all the time. They don't necessarily get paid their wages 52 weeks out of the year as we are privileged to be paid our wages 52 weeks out of the year and as many people in other sectors of the economy are privileged to be paid.

And when I think of the construction workers, Mr. Speaker, I think of the construction workers — the painters, pipefitters, electricians — in my riding who have not been working 52 weeks of the year, who maybe have been working 16 weeks of the year.

And when I think of this policy, not much has been said about this policy in these basic terms. What I think about is people who have families and are trying to make a living and are trying to put food on the table for their families. That's what this is about.

And from the comfortable position in life that I am fortunate to occupy, I don't want to forget about people that aren't as fortunate as I have been.

And to listen to the opposition in this legislature, one would think that the worst thing that this government could do would be to say that people working on construction projects, people lucky enough to get work for part of the year should be paid fair wages, that that's just the most irresponsible, worst thing that any government could do.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, that's just not true. As the member for Moose Jaw Palliser has very ably pointed out, governments across the country of all political stripes have this kind of policy because it's a fair policy.

The member for Moose Jaw Palliser also pointed out, and I'm going to return to this, that this policy has its origin in a resolution of this legislature in 1913, Mr. Speaker, brought in, in 1913 by the Liberal Party. Those were the days when we actually had a Liberal Party in the province of Saskatchewan, not a second Conservative Party run by people from the former government of this province who have now moved to the Liberal Party because they want to take power again. Those were the days in 1913 when we actually had a Liberal Party.

The concern that the members opposite seem to have with paying fair wages, I have to say, is not a concern that I share, that is, being against it. My concern is people that need to have some work and some fair wages to put food on the table.

(1600)

I noticed that the members opposite, the Conservatives who spoke earlier and the Leader of the Liberal Party, didn't bother going into any detail about what the effect of the policy would be in terms of whether it would increase the amount of construction costs. They didn't talk about the percentage of the cost of a construction project that is made up of wages and the percentage that is taken up by materials and the percentage that's taken up by architectural fees or anything like that.

They want to leave the impression that if you bump people's wages up a bit in construction, that that somehow is going to cost the taxpayers of the province a great deal. Of course that's not true. The percentage of any increased wages as the result of this kind of policy, the percentage increase is really quite minor, and the overall effect that it would have on a construction project is so small that those jurisdictions that have such a policy, as several do, have not even bothered to quantify any cost differences because Price Waterhouse has confirmed that any cost difference is small enough to be very difficult to calculate. So what we really have here is an attempt by the opposition simply to convince people that the government is doing something irresponsible here, which of course is not the case.

Now I want to issue an invitation to the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party, Mr. Speaker. And I think it's timely to issue this invitation in this year of 1995, which is five years before the beginning of the 21st century, or six years if you belong to the school of thought that says that the 21st century doesn't start until the year 2001. But in any event, whether or not the 21st century is five years away or six years away, I think it's not too early to issue an invitation to the Conservatives and Liberals to come on into the 20th century. Come on into the 20th century before we get into the 21st century.

Now it's interesting that this policy of paying fair wages on construction jobs which the Conservatives and the Liberals find so outrageous, is or was — as the member from Moose Jaw Palliser pointed out awhile ago — actually begun in the province of Saskatchewan in 1913. And in 1913, Mr. Speaker, January 7, 1913, the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, which at that time was governed by the Liberals, passed a resolution that said:

Whereas it has been the policy of the government in providing for the construction of public works to insert in all contracts a clause for the payment of a fair and reasonable rate of wages to all workmen engaged on such works, or in lieu of such clauses a schedule setting forth the minimum wages to be paid to such workmen;

and whereas it is desirable that this policy which has been so beneficial to the wage-earning classes employed to all undertakings over which the government has control, therefore be it resolved that in the opinion of this House, the government should take steps such as are necessary to apply its fair wage policy to all provincial works and undertakings over which it has or may exercise the necessary control for this purpose.

So in other words, in 1913 the Liberal Party adopted a fair wage policy such as has been adopted by the government recently in the Crown sector. But it didn't just apply to the Crown sector which at that time admittedly was quite a bit smaller than it is today — that is, the Crown corporation sector — but it applied it to the entire government, to all the government departments and agencies. Any time the provincial government from 1913 on hired people for a provincial project, those people were paid a fair wage according to an established schedule. Now that was good enough for the Liberal Party in 1913 but not good enough for the Liberal Party in 1995.

Well it would seem, Mr. Speaker, that in terms of being concerned about working people and fair wages for everybody and spreading the wealth around a bit, which I think is still a good principle in our society, the Liberal Party has been going backward since 1913, instead of forward. It's too bad; it's really unfortunate.

The Liberal Party was in power also in the spring of 1944, before the election in June of that year when T.C. Douglas and the CCF were elected. And before the Liberal Party was defeated, the legislature passed another resolution. And they confirmed the principle that has been part of our legislative policy since 1913, and went on to say . . . and I won't read the whole policy although it's reasonably detailed. But they said that contractors had to post on their premises, for the workers to see, a copy of the fair wage clause and the schedule of wages so that everybody could see that there was a certain rate of payment required.

They had to keep a record of the people that worked for them and that had to be open to inspection by the government, and the rate of wage had to be open for inspection. They had to employ skilled workmen and their apprentices. So the policy tried to say, don't just hire whoever will do the work for the lowest amount; hire skilled workers, and hire apprentices so that we can bring people along in the trades and have them develop the skills that we want to have in our province and develop a skilled workforce so that we don't have to import all our workers from Alberta, so that we can have skilled workers right here in the province of Saskatchewan. That was always an objective of the Government of Saskatchewan.

And the agreement goes on, but I won't read the whole thing.

March 7, 1995

But let me say that to listen to the Liberals and the Conservatives, one would think that the government here was doing something that was very radical, very much against the public interest.

But it is not radical. It is not new, and it's not against the public interest. What it is, is in favour of fair wages for construction workers to allow them to continue to live in the province of Saskatchewan and work and earn a living and feed their families.

That, I think, would be in contrast to the dog-eat-dog attitude that simply says you pay the lowest wage to whoever will do the work for the lowest amount. And if that means that people have to move from province to province to find work, well that's their problem.

And I noticed in her remarks, the Leader of the Liberal Party said, well this kind of policy will cause skilled workers to leave the province and seek work elsewhere. And of course, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing further from the truth.

The reality is that this kind of policy, which says that we'll employ skilled workers, that we'll have an apprenticeship policy and train apprentices in the trades, and that we'll pay people decent wages will have the effect of maintaining a skilled workforce in the province of Saskatchewan. And that's what we want to do.

I want to say too, Mr. Speaker, that the construction trades have been hard hit, as I said a few minutes ago, by unemployment and a high rate of employment. And aside from a simple concern that people have reasonable incomes, I think we have to be concerned about the fact that we've got unacceptable levels of unemployment in the building trades.

And I am concerned about that. I'm not embarrassed to say that in my riding in Saskatoon there is an unacceptably high level of construction tradespeople who are unemployed. And I'm not embarrassed to stand in this House and say that I want the Government of Saskatchewan to have a policy which will get those people to work. That's what I want, and that's what we've got. And I support it, and I'm proud of it.

And I said a few minutes ago that it doesn't really make much difference in terms of the overall cost of construction. What it really means is that you try to achieve efficiencies in other ways, that if you're bidding on a contract you will get the lowest bid, not at the expense of workers, not by saying I'm going to employ whoever will take the lowest possible bid, regardless of whether they live in Saskatchewan and pay taxes here, regardless of whether they are qualified, regardless of whether they have an apprenticeship program.

No, we're not going to get the lowest bid through that kind of method. We're going to get the lowest bid through cost-effective planning and materials and others factors that go into construction projects which I think, Mr. Speaker, are a more major part of the classic construction projects than wages paid to workers.

The opposition, both the Liberals and Conservatives, have suggested today and on other occasions that this policy is a union-preference policy which will mean that a union has to be accepted for work on a Crown construction project. And when the Liberals and the Conservatives say that, in an effort to undermine the policy of the government, they are really not being completely straight with the people of the province, Mr. Speaker, because the policy adopted by the government is not a union-only policy.

There's nothing stopping a company that is a non-union company, a non-union construction company, from bidding on a construction project, and there's nothing stopping them from winning the bid. All they have to do to win the bid is have the lowest bid; that's all they have to do. And they are on a level playing field with unionized construction companies. There's no advantage to unionized construction companies. The only effect of the policy is that when you make a bid, the bid has got to have a fair schedule of wages that will be paid to the workers.

And for the reasons I indicated before, I support that. I think that's good policy, and it has been the public policy of this province since 1913. And when the Liberal leader gets up and tells people that we've got some new kind of Draconian and unacceptable policy, I think she'd better explain why this has been acceptable public policy since 1913 when the Liberals introduced it, but it ceased to be acceptable public policy in the year 1995.

This is a policy that has not been imposed by the government on anybody. It's a policy that's been arrived at through consultation with employers and unionized tradespeople and the Crown corporations sector.

The policy does these things that will be good for the province of Saskatchewan. Firstly, it encourages the employing of local Saskatchewan workers through its hiring formula. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that when we have unemployed tradespeople in our constituencies, we'd better be concerned about a policy that encourages hiring of Saskatchewan workers. I think we'd better be concerned about that. And so I support it.

It encourages the majority of workers on Crown-funded projects to be Saskatchewan residents. I make the same comment there: that's good; we should support it. It means that people who are employed on Crown construction projects will cash their pay cheques here, buy their goods and services here, buy and licence their vehicles here, and pay their taxes here. And that's good, and I support that too. And so should the opposition.

It means that we will keep skilled tradespeople living in our province and better develop a skilled construction labour force. And that's good too. When skilled tradespeople leave our province, they hardly ever return. And looking at what this kind of policy does, Mr. Speaker, frankly what I have to say is we should have done it a long time ago.

(1615)

The policy, as I said before, doesn't force anybody to unionize.

The question of whether to be in a union or not to be in a union is now, as it has been in the past, an individual's right; a person chooses that himself or herself. A union shouldn't be taken away from anybody if they want to be in a union, nor should it be forced on anyone. And there's nothing in this policy that does either of those things.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that sometimes the opposition portrays this kind of policy as a policy that favours unionized employees in the cities. That's not true. More than 60 per cent of unionized tradespeople in our province live outside of Regina and Saskatoon. These are people that live in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Coronach, Shaunavon, North Battleford, Battleford, and all over the place.

And of course there are provisions in the policy too that would encourage local contractors to do local work in these communities and would make them more competitive in bidding on a contract in their local area because their cost of doing business, if they hire local people who live in the area, is less because they don't have to pay a living allowance for the people. And I think that's good too.

The policy that the government has brought in, Mr. Speaker, I said is not that different than the fair-wage policy brought in by the Liberals in 1913. But it also is a policy that has been used on other projects, notably the NewGrade project which was a project of the co-operatives and the Government of Saskatchewan; the Bi-Provincial upgrader which involved Alberta, Canada, Husky, and the Government of Saskatchewan; the Saskferco fertilizer plant which of course is Cargill and government; Cameco at their new Contact Lake gold mine.

And if that policy is good enough for Cameco and the Bi-Provincial upgrader, NewGrade, and Saskferco, I think the opposition should explain why it's such a terrible thing when it's applied in the Crown corporation sector. Of course the reason they take the position they do, Mr. Speaker, is just to distort what the policy really means and to play politics. Otherwise how do they explain the fact that Saskatchewan is not unique in having a fair-wage policy for construction workers working on government construction projects?

For example, British Columbia has such a policy. Ontario has such a policy. Manitoba, which has a Conservative government, has such a policy; Quebec, Liberal government, now PQ (Parti Québécois), such a policy; same for New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and the federal government . . . oh, and the federal government of the United States. These jurisdictions all have fair-wage policies, and now Saskatchewan has an updated fair-wage policy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cline: — And so we should.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, this policy has been successfully used and working very well. I certainly support it wholeheartedly because, Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is, as I said when I began, that we can get up in this legislature and play politics and distort the truth and say that a policy says something it doesn't

say. But when you boil it all down, what we have to remember is that this policy affects real people with real families who are trying to make a living and trying to feed their families. That's what it's all about. That's what it's going to do. And I support it. And I'm very pleased to second the amendment proposed by the member from Moose Jaw Palliser. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, thank you. Mr. Speaker, it's not surprising that today we're talking about a Conservative motion that condemns the government for reaching its recent Crown corporation tendering policy. It's not surprising because that's the same Conservatives that governed Saskatchewan from 1982 to 1991 while the construction industry workers struggled for their livelihood, struggled for fairness, struggled for Saskatchewan content, and indeed struggled to keep things together.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted today to stand and tell you I support my colleagues, the member for Moose Jaw Palliser and the member for Saskatoon Idylwyld. Both of them spoke very eloquently on this very important matter.

But equally as important, I am delighted to say that the Conservatives and the Liberals stood together today. I have never seen a better example than this debate that shows that New Democrats stand for fair value, for fair opportunity, for fair Saskatchewan content and for fair treatment of Saskatchewan workers, and they do not — neither party, neither Conservative nor Liberal.

And, Mr. Speaker, today the Leader of the Liberal Party said the government just doesn't get it. I want to tell you Lynda Haverstock's got it dead wrong. She doesn't get it and . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. I know the member knows he cannot use a member's name in the legislature other than referring to the constituency that the member represents.

Mr. Trew: — I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that ruling, and of course I know it.

Mr. Speaker, the politics of the lowest common denominator might be the Liberal way, it might be the Conservative way, but it sure is not my way. It's sure not the Leader of the New Democratic Party nor any of my colleagues' way. The politics of Saskatchewan is the politics of us growing together, of us all being in this together, making this province a better place. As I said earlier, my colleagues have spoken very eloquently on it. There's little I can add in a substantive way other than this debate clearly delineates the difference, us from them. I think it's time we voted on the issue. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well we have just had another example of the disgorgement of the fairy tale as the member from Moose Jaw provided us earlier today, about how great it is to be in the union and how great it is to have union pay for everybody.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think what we have here in reality is an edited and revised version of Saskatchewan's history. The member from Moose Jaw has even gone back to 1913 as an example of how the Liberal Party supported the NDP's union-only policies. Well I think when you look at that, Mr. Speaker, when you look at that 1913 piece of legislation, it never said union any place in it. It said, a fair wage for all workers — not just for union workers, Mr. Speaker, but for all workers.

And the 1944 amendment to that Act never mentioned the word union. It said, wages — not union wages, but wages, Mr. Speaker, for people. And no one in Saskatchewan is opposed to fair wages for employees. But when it becomes a selected few employees, there is a major problem, Mr. Speaker, a very major problem. And that's what the government is supporting — wages and jobs for the selected few that vote for the NDP. That's who this policy is for.

In reality, Mr. Speaker, this whole piece of legislation is a re-enactment of the events leading up to the 1982 election. The unions were unhappy with the NDP in 1982. The nurses had been legislated back to work, so what did the unionists do? They didn't go out and knock on the doorsteps for the NDP. They didn't give their money to support the NDP Party, and the NDP members of the day that had been the government that had voted in favour of legislating the nurses back to work were dumped out on their ear, Mr. Speaker. Unceremoniously turfed out onto the street. And that's what this is all about. This is the member from Riversdale's attempt to reforge that unit of NDP-unionist coexistence, that incestuous relationship, Mr. Speaker, between unions and in particular unions working for the government and the NDP Party. That's what this piece of legislation is all about.

It's an attempt by the members opposite to buy, to buy the unionist support in the upcoming election because when the union member goes out to protest, Mr. Speaker, against another political party other than the NDP, in a lot of cases they're paid by the union to be out there. When they're out on the doorstep, knocking doors, in a lot of cases, Mr. Speaker, they're being paid by their union. When they work as the campaign managers for the NDP candidates, they're being paid by their union.

And that's what this is all about, Mr. Speaker. It's an attempt by the members opposite to ensure that they have somebody who will be their campaign manager, somebody who will go out there and knock on doors, somebody who will go out and lick stamps for them to send out all their propaganda. That's what it's all about, Mr. Speaker.

It's nothing about fair wages for the people of Saskatchewan. It's all about trying to win the next election, plain and simple. It's how the members opposite, the NDP Party, can buy the next election with the help of the unions.

If it was fair, Mr. Speaker, if it was fair, then why would only two people out of the first 11 be from the company's own workforce? Why would the other nine have to be from the union hall if the company isn't unionized? What happens if that company has 11 employees already and they go to work for the

Crown corporation? They have to fire, lay off, do whatever it is to their regular employees and say, sorry boys — boys or girls — you can't come to work with us any more. We have to hire the NDP's friends.

It's not exactly what I would call fair, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly fair if you're sitting in the union hall looking for a job because you can count on your brothers in the NDP to give you a job. But it's certainly not fair to the family person who has that job already and who's going to lose it just to give them an election worker on election day. And that's the only reason, Mr. Speaker.

The member from Moose Jaw talked about the U.S. (United States) president and how he was a great new Democrat. Well, Mr. Speaker, the American voters sent a message to that great new Democrat last November when, for the first time in 40 years, they turfed him out of the House of . . . I was going to say House of Commons, but their legislature, their House of Representatives. They turfed him out of the Senate, Mr. Speaker. And in 1996 they're going to turf that new Democrat president, Mr. Speaker, just like they're going to turf the members opposite in the next election here.

The member from Moose Jaw also talked of Tweedledum and Tweedledee. Well, Mr. Speaker, I have to agree with him on Tweedledum and Tweedledee because that is the NDP Party and Barb Byers, the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, playing tiddledy-winks together with the taxpayers' money because that's what this is all about. It's how they can get the labour unions on side, and the taxpayers of Saskatchewan will pay the bills for them.

That 21 cents that they're talking about siphoning off every worker's wages, Mr. Speaker, the worker doesn't have an option. He's going to pay union dues whether he's in the union or not to support more money into the NDP coffers. And they're going to siphon off 21 cents an hour more off of him to go into their CODC, which is a joke, Mr. Speaker. And a portion of that money will go to education and union activities. In other words, it will be siphoned back into the NDP Party.

Just this great big sucking sound going on in Saskatchewan, with all the money from the taxpayers sucking back into the NDP Party coffers. It's exactly what's happening. And I can hear it coming from over there already.

(1630)

The question of fairness, Mr. Speaker. It's only fair, only fair for those who have union cards in their pockets today.

The member from Moose Jaw talked about Shand. Well, Mr. Speaker, Shand was an open site. That meant you could be either union or non-union. And what happened down there, Mr. Speaker? Talk to a number of people working at that location. A fair number of the union people, Mr. Speaker, that were working on that site were not Saskatchewan people. The member was saying earlier that there were no jobs in Saskatchewan for the union trade halls.

Well, Mr. Speaker, down at Shand, the union workers were

from Manitoba. So if he's saying there was no jobs in Saskatchewan in the '80s for the union halls, why were they hiring union people from Manitoba to work at the Shand site on union contracts? That's not true, Mr. Speaker, when he says that they have to hire every Saskatchewan person that belongs to the union before they can hire anybody from outside. Not a chance, Mr. Speaker.

They hire them from wherever they can get them. They come in from out of province and put their names on the list here and now they qualify as a Saskatchewan unionite, and they get hired to go down to Shand and work.

But what happens, Mr. Speaker? The guy at Shand from Estevan isn't listed in the Estevan union hall, he's listed in Regina. So he works in his home town and collects pay for working out of town. He collects travel allowance back and forth from Regina, and people wonder why they feel that union wages are too high.

B.C. (British Columbia) has done this sort of thing, Mr. Speaker. They've gone to a union-preference, union-only policy. And what does it cost? Thirty per cent more for the job, Mr. Speaker — 30 per cent more. And in this province, who's going to pay that 30 per cent? It's going to be the taxpayers, each and every one of them. And they're not going to be getting the jobs, Mr. Speaker, it's only going to be the people with the NDP union cards that are going to get the jobs.

The two out of eleven workers, Mr. Speaker, the union halls have no regard to whether or not that employee may have been a long-term employee, 20-year employee with that company. They're simply going to bump him out of the job. We see that in the various jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker. You look at the hospitals right now. As soon as there is a lay-off the union says, no, this person has to lose their job because they're not senior to this person over here. Boom, you're out of here.

The Minister from Social Services today was bragging about the jobs that were going to be made at Cargill and at Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Mr. Speaker. And good jobs. But what he forgot to mention is that there's 70-some people losing their jobs over in Moose Jaw because of this government, Mr. Speaker. Those are good union jobs and they're dumping them.

Mr. Speaker, when they talk about fairness, they only mean fairness for the people that are going to be supporting them or that they hope that are going to support them.

You look at the Cargill project, Mr. Speaker, that's up and coming. The government members opposite vilified Cargill during the late '80s and '90s -- vilified them. Booed them when they were introduced in the legislature here, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister for Economic Development introduced the people from the Imperial Bank of Commerce today — they booed them; booed them, Mr. Speaker. How utterly rude and ignorant.

But that was the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, when they were in opposition, and they haven't changed today, Mr. Speaker. But now today, now today, Mr. Speaker, what'd they do? They're prepared to say, oh well, that was when we were in

opposition, and when we were in opposition we can say whatever we want, because now they're getting into bed with Cargill and giving them \$3.8 million to do that, Mr. Speaker — \$3.8 million for that big, bad company that they wouldn't have anything to do with, that they were going to run out of this province.

That's what it is, Mr. Speaker. Now it's good to have Cargill here, Mr. Speaker, very good to have Cargill here because they are a very strong and progressive company. They will make things happen within their industry; they'll be good for the canola industry in this province. But they came here in spite of the government opposite, not because of it, Mr. Speaker — in spite of it.

There was a union boss on the radio . . . in the paper the other day, Mr. Speaker, who said, oh no, we wouldn't certify a company because they had union people on site while they're working for a Crown corporation, Mr. Speaker. Well when else do they certify workers of a company, Mr. Speaker, other than when they're employed by that company? This is simply another attempt by the government to certify more and more of the construction trade within this province.

They had to bring in their own pet company, CLR, because, Mr. Speaker, the real construction people of this province wanted nothing to do with them. They had to get their own little pets to come forward to form a corporation. There's over 300 construction companies in this province, but the government went out and picked six to form a little trade group of their own to make representations to the government. And they gave them the sole jurisdiction over all construction labour in this province.

That's what they call fair, Mr. Speaker. Six can overrule 300 — that's fairness on behalf of the government opposite. Mr. Speaker, they don't understand the terms of the word fair.

If they were really interested, Mr. Speaker, in being fair, if they were interested in being fair to employers that have to hire their trade unionists, Mr. Speaker, their 9 out of 11, they would bring in a rule, Mr. Speaker, an amendment to The Trade Union Act that says that unions cannot proceed with a certification while they're under contract to a Crown corporation.

Now that would be fair, Mr. Speaker. If they can unionize that construction company outside of their work time with Crown corporations, fine. Then the employees obviously want to be unionized. But when the government is forcing that company to hire about 90 per cent trade unionists, Mr. Speaker, to work on a Crown corporation job, then they should not be allowed to certify. It should be outlawed, banned. And, Mr. Speaker, it should not be allowed to have deemed happened, which seems to be one of the favourite words of the members opposite.

Because that would be fairness, Mr. Speaker. What is unfair is to force the companies, force them to hire 90 per cent union employees, and then turn around and allow that union to certify them. Now that is unfair.

But that is exactly what's going to happen, Mr. Speaker,

because it does a couple of things. It ensures that those union employees will now have a job permanently with that company; and in turn, because those union employees now have a permanent job, they will be permanently paying into the NDP coffers through their union dues. And that's, as I said earlier, the entire object of this, is to build up the war fund and the human resources for the NDP to move forward to win the next election.

Let's talk about a couple of the union projects that have gone ahead in this province already. Let's talk about the Melfort sprinkler system. I'm sure everybody is familiar with that project — it's the water system to supply Melfort and communities in that area.

The contract was originally let to a non-union contractor. The government came forward and said, oh no, oh no, we can't have this; we've got to have union people working on here. So they jerked a portion of that contract away from the contractor who was the lowest tender and gave it to a union contractor.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that union contractor did such a shoddy job on it that it came in after deadline; it had innumerable leaks all along it, innumerable leaks. And that was the union portion, Mr. Speaker. The non-union contractor was done on time and under budget, Mr. Speaker, but not the union contract. It came in over a million dollars over budget.

Now that's fairness; that's fairness because it was union wages that were paid on that, Mr. Speaker. And in fact a good portion of those union wages went to the people in Alberta. And B.C. is no different. Their construction jobs are costing about 30 per cent more, Mr. Speaker, than what the non-union jobs cost, and it's all being paid for by the taxpayer.

When the member from Moose Jaw talked about his 1913 Bills, there was no union involvement in that legislation, Mr. Speaker. That was just a figment of his imagination. He was attempting to say, oh no, no, no, we're not the bad guys in this; it's been done before. Well, Mr. Speaker, they are the bad guys in this. It was not done before. It was done in the 1970s by the same member sitting opposite, but it certainly wasn't being done back in 1913.

And that's what's wrong with this, Mr. Speaker, that's what's wrong with this. It's only as my colleague here says, they're only telling you half the story, and they're not even telling that much. They're just telling you that you've got to hire a union guy and you've got to pay him union wages and you've got to give him all the union benefits.

And I have to say whether he's entitled to it or not, you're going to have to give him pay for being away from home when he may be in his own community because he gets hired out of the union hall in Regina. You're going to have to pay him travel back and forth whether he is driving a mile or he's driving 600 miles, Mr. Speaker. Just because he gets hired out of the union hall in Regina doesn't mean that he doesn't happen to live in Nipawin, which is what happened to the Nipawin dam project.

The people there were hired out of the union halls in Regina and Saskatoon who lived . . . their homes were originally in

Nipawin. And that's where they lived and yet they got paid the transportation back and forth.

Mr. Speaker, the one person who is getting hurt by this is the Saskatchewan taxpayers, and the other person that's getting hurt by this is the people who were working for those companies initially.

Mr. Speaker, the other unfairness about this is when a person is employed with a company and is not a part of that union, he doesn't receive any of the benefits from the union but he will pay union dues to them. The day his job is done, because the contract has ended, there's no benefits left for him. He's paid his money out. He's paid his money out, but he gets nothing back for it. But the NDP opposite do, because they've got a portion of that money that comes back to them into their party coffers . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . My colleague says, how that would happen.

Well I'll tell you how that happens, Mr. Speaker. What happens is the union to whom that member is paying his dues turns around and gives a donation to someone. Now I'm sure that in some cases they give it directly, such as what would be given to the member from Moose Jaw Palliser. Some union in his area will come up to him at the election time and say, Mr. Member, here's a campaign contribution to you. And so it shows up in the member's statement, election statement, after the day is over, that he got a big bundle of money from his friendly neighbourhood union.

But that's not all the money that goes to the member from Moose Jaw Palliser from his friendly neighbourhood union, because they also give some to an organization called Tommy Douglas House. Now who in the heck is Tommy Douglas House, you might ask. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's an entity created by the NDP Party. Now the friendly neighbourhood spiderman, or union, gives his contribution to Tommy Douglas House. Tommy Douglas House in turn gives it back to the member from Moose Jaw Palliser and it shows up in his statements after the election as a contribution from Tommy Douglas House.

Well who else would you expect to contribute to an NDP member other than the past leader, the foundation for the past leader of the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation), Mr. Speaker? I mean it sounds all very logical to everybody that Tommy Douglas House would be making contributions to the NDP members. But the question is, is where did the money come from? Where does the money come from?

I really wonder how much money to Tommy Douglas House comes out of the pockets of those six construction companies that formed CLR in the first place. That would be interesting to know. Because we don't get a chance to have a look at the books of Tommy Douglas House, Mr. Speaker. That's all a deep, dark secret.

The only part we get to see is when Tommy Douglas House turns around and makes a contribution to a member sitting opposite in their election campaign or a contribution to the NDP Party. But other than that, Mr. Speaker, it's a deep, dark secret where this money . . . how it's funnelled into an

organization like that.

Or like a number of other ones that are around the province, Mr. Speaker. Money can be given to them because they're claimed to be non-profit corporations. And then those non-profit corporations can turn around and make contributions into anybody's political campaign, Mr. Speaker, because each member's election campaign is a non-profit event also.

There's some other issues too that we could talk about — such as the member for North Battleford. His rent goes to a non-profit corporation. I think if you look on the list of the rents paid by the members of this Assembly, you will find that his rent is one of the highest, Mr. Speaker, if not the . . .

(1645)

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. I looked very carefully at the Bill, and I think the member is wandering away from the motion and the amendment, and I ask the member to return to the debate that is before the House.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed we're talking about the labour union policies of the government, and I shall return to those.

Mr. Speaker, we're talking about how unions pay off their political allies and their political brothers. As I was saying earlier, they give their contributions, which are taken from the membership. The membership doesn't have to agree that they want to have those union dues taken off and given to a political party; they're simply taken. They're simply taken, Mr. Speaker.

And how often, Mr. Speaker, do you see a union conduct a secret ballot to say whether or not we should be making a contribution to a political party. I don't think they've ever done it, Mr. Speaker. It's decided around the boardroom table — that's where it's decided — by the people who can benefit most by it.

If you look throughout the halls of government here, and throughout the Crown corporations, we see a significant number of ex-union leaders occupying those positions, Mr. Speaker. That's one of the pay-offs that you get by supporting an issue of giving money through union funding to the party opposite. That's what happens, Mr. Speaker, and that's the pay-offs.

And the government is trying to ensure now with this piece of legislation that indeed those funds will continue to roll into their coffers, whether it's through a direct contribution or whether it's funnelled through one of their nefarious corporations to launder the money, Mr. Speaker.

I've mentioned this earlier, Mr. Speaker. But whenever we get a large piece of legislation like this coming forward — it's not even legislation; it's just being done by policy and regulation — there is somebody who has to pay the bills at the end of the day.

Whenever this particular piece of . . . this regulation comes forward and the bills go up by 30 per cent, who pays? Who

pays? It's going to be the taxpayer of this province, Mr. Speaker, the taxpayer of this province. And that's perhaps why, when you stop and think about it, Mr. Speaker, why the utility rates have gone up; why SaskPower has increased, SaskEnergy, SaskTel, SGI, everyone of them, Mr. Speaker, up, up, up, up, up.

And the government says, well there's no particular reason why these bills have to go up, why our utility costs have to go up, but it's our policy that we will raise the rates on a regular basis every year whether we need it or not. How are these corporations supposed to pay for all this added cost they're going to have to bear when they have to hire all these union hall people to do this construction?

And that's what this has to do with that, Mr. Member from Biggar. It has to do with how do you generate the money to pay for this contract? You generate it by jacking up the utility rates. That's why grandma down the street has to pay more for her telephone bill, is so that we can hire a union hall member from the Biggar constituency. That's why, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when you talk about the lack of employment in Saskatchewan for the union halls I think you have to take a very serious look at the economic environment in which we operate in the province of Saskatchewan. There has been absolutely no reason, absolutely no reason, Mr. Speaker, why anyone would want to come to Saskatchewan to do a construction project or set up a business. The only way the government can get anybody to come in is to pay them. What did they do with Sears, Mr. Speaker? They harmonized their taxes — now the big, bad harmonize word — with E&H and GST (goods and services tax), that's how they got them in, Mr. Speaker. They harmonized it for five years — allow them to write off their E&H tax.

That's how the government got jobs in here, Mr. Speaker. It's not good enough for everybody, but for our selected friends, hey, we got a deal for you. They had a deal for that Cargill company also — \$3.8 million to come in and set up in Saskatchewan. It would be really interesting now, Mr. Speaker, to find out what the deal is with the CIBC. Because the government's initiatives have not allowed any construction projects to go ahead that would have provided work for union employees, for any employee for that matter, in the construction trade, Mr. Speaker.

Down in Estevan at the Shand project, a significant number of the employees there voted against the member from Estevan because they were supporting the NDP. And what happened? Shortly thereafter, Mr. Speaker, the government opposite, with the kingpin Jack Messer, said: hey, we're not going ahead with Shand 2; that's it, cut, no job, no job.

And what happened to those union people that were working there, Mr. Speaker? Sorry, you don't have a job any more. But now what are they going to do? Now they're going to try and buy those people back by giving them all the other jobs that may have been involved with the Crown corporations across this province. Every little construction job is now going to have to have its union rep on there.

I've never belonged to a union, although I did come close once. It was a scary thought, but I managed to get out of it.

Mr. Speaker, so what happens when you have all these union people on site now with a non-union company? Are they going to have to have their union reps on there too? Who pays for them? Are they going to have to have study sessions, Mr. Speaker? What happens then? Now are they going to say, well gee, I can't possibly work with this non-union person; he's got to be unionized. So either you get rid of him or we're going to wobble. I'm never quite sure how you wobble on the job, but that's what unions do.

They say either that guy's got to go, or we go. And you got to have the union guys there, or you don't have a contract, Mr. Speaker. So all of a sudden number 1 and number 3 lose their jobs because the unions are going to wobble because they're not prepared to work with non-union people.

And fact is, a lot of times unions aren't prepared to work with unions . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . the member from Morse asked what wobble means, and I have no idea, Mr. Speaker. I think it means that they're sort of on the work site, but they aren't doing any work, which in a lot of cases could be a government employee, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it reminds me of Shand. It was a project down at Shand to build the towers. And there was two unions on site, the steelworkers and the boilermakers, Mr. Speaker. And they could not come to a decision as to who should actually be doing the construction.

One company had been hired with their union employees to do the job, but the other employees believed that it was their job. And so the group that didn't have that particular piece of work went on strike, or they wobbled. They wobbled, Mr. Speaker, to try and get the jobs away from the other employees. They threw nuts and bolts at the other workers, Mr. Speaker, as they were walking past to go to their job sites. So there is no harmony, Mr. Speaker, even when the unions are on the job site; they're fighting amongst themselves all the time.

So what's going to happen, Mr. Speaker? What's going to happen when you have nine union workers on one hand, employed on the site because they've been forced on this company, and two non-union workers? What's going to happen?

They are going to make life very rough and very untenable for those two workers because they're going to go out of their way to try and ensure that those two people are gone, that they lose their jobs, and that somebody else in the union gets it. And heaven forbid it should be somebody from a different union, because that will just cause chaos amongst them, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Moose Jaw was talking about how great it would be when everybody receives the same pay. How fair that would be and how equitable. Well, Mr. Speaker, it reminds me of a place in this world that had that kind of a policy, of fair and equal wages for all, without regard to the job

they did, without regard to the quality of the work they did, without regard to anything.

An Hon. Member: — Where was that?

Mr. D'Autremont: — That was in Russia. What a great example of what the member from Moose Jaw Palliser would like to emulate, Mr. Speaker. What a great example.

Everybody will get the same pay, Mr. Speaker, and it doesn't matter how well they work or how poorly they work, or whether or not they're in the union or outside of the union or whose company they work for, because they're all going to be paid the same, Mr. Speaker. And that's what you call fair and equal.

There's no concept in their circumstances for merit, Mr. Speaker, for the guy who works hard, who's prepared to spend that extra five minutes, ten minutes, or half an hour on the job site. There's none of that.

When you look at a union site, you've got a burnt-out light-bulb, and the carpenter is walking past and it's dark in his work area, what can he do? He can't change light bulbs, he's not an electrician. So he has to sit down and wait for an electrician to come along. Now that's great if there happens to be an electrician on the work site. But if there isn't an electrician on the work site, well then he may have to wait until the next day before he can ever pound in his nail because the light bulb's burnt out. There could be a box of light bulbs sitting in the corner, but he's a carpenter; he's not allowed to change light bulbs.

And then what happens, Mr. Speaker, when they do have the nine out of the eleven workers on site and the unions decide, well, you know, we've got to certify this company? You know, these guys get a lot of jobs. These guys get a lot of non-Crown corporation jobs. So now you just can't go up to the company's employees in the normal sense when they're employed out in the workplace and convince them that we need a union. You know, they've had a long-term job, they've got a pension, they got benefits, they got a good salary, they get to work in their own community. But we need . . . no, no, we can't unionize them then because they're happy.

So what do we do? Well, Mr. Speaker, we wait and we wait until they get a contract with a Crown corporation. That's what we do. We wait until they get a contract with a Crown corporation and then we submarine in our union employees. We slide them in because they're forced . . . the government says, you've got to hire them. You don't have a choice; you've got to hire our buddies from the union hall.

And what's the first thing they're going to do after they've got them slid in, submarined into this company? Well all of a sudden you're going to see the little union cards come floating around. Would you like to belong to the widget union? Well gee, I already belong to the widget union so I don't see why this company shouldn't be unionized. We'll have a closed shop here and everybody can belong to the widget union.

And that's what's going to happen, Mr. Speaker. And those two

March 7, 1995

little guys that are left there working — or the few more because number 12 doesn't have to belong to the union either — what's going to happen to them? They're going to be strong-armed, Mr. Speaker, into signing those union cards. They're going to be strong-armed into it. Because things are not going to be very pleasant on the job site. All you have to do is look at what happens when they have two unions on a job site fighting for jurisdiction. It gets pretty ugly, Mr. Speaker, pretty ugly.

And we've seen the comments that Daryl Bean has made about scabs — how they should be drowned in a pool of slime. That's the kind of attitudes that you're going to run into, Mr. Speaker.

And all of those people that are going to be left stranded, stranded on the job site when all these union people are submarined in and their friends are forced out of those positions, are going to be left in a very untenable position, and they are going to be unionized. Doesn't matter whether they want to be unionized, they're going to be forced into it.

So the union is going to come up some night when the kids are all at hockey, and dad, who's the number one worker for this corporation, is out at Johnny's hockey game, and they're going to have a certification vote. They're going to have their certification vote and now that whole corporation, that whole company, is unionized only because they once applied for a job with . . . a contract with a Crown corporation. Just once. And now they've gone down that never-ending tube that siphons money into the NDP Party.

When you look at the concept that unions are fair and democratic, Mr. Speaker, fair and democratic, how many people on a job site or in a work location really vote on the certifications? How many?

Now you have to get 50 per cent that'll sign the card that says yes, I'm interested. But when it comes down to the vote, how many of them really vote in favour of it? Not many.

But sometimes that corporation, that company site, gets unionized anyways. And now with the new labour policies that the government has brought in, the employer can't even say boo. He can't say anything about it. He has to just keep his mouth shut and stay back. He can't talk to the number one employee or the number three employee or the number twelve employee to say, well, gee guys, you know if we unionize this site somebody else is going to get your job. Because you're going to have to belong to the union hall and you've got to go on the seniority list. And since you're going to be the junior man on the totem pole — number 2 and number 4 to 11 are all senior to you in the union — you're toast; you're out of here. You don't have a job any more.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is the total unfairness of this whole piece of legislation — the total unfairness. It has nothing to do with fairness for the wage-earners, Mr. Speaker. It only has to do with how fairly the NDP can get their hands on the union money. That's what it's all about, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Bruce Johnstone wrote a very interesting article, Mr. Speaker, a very interesting article. And the headline on it says it

all, Mr. Speaker. The headline on it says it all.

The Speaker: — Order. It now being 5 o'clock, this House stands recessed until 7 o'clock this evening.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.