

EVENING SITTING

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE
(BUDGET DEBATE)

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

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Speaker. And again, continuing on from our last discussion, I'd just like to kind of summarize.

One of the weaknesses of the budget is that the government continues looking at northern Saskatchewan as a land of opportunity in terms of gaining all kinds of revenues. And I think the big problem that governments have is that as long as we look at the development of the northern economy based solely on the development of the non-renewable resource industries such as mining for uranium, mining for gold, mining for diamonds, etc., it isn't a long-term plan.

And in the budget that the minister presented in this House, we didn't really talk about supporting northern people. We've talked about developing the northern resources, but the key resource that we've left out, Mr. Speaker, is the people of northern Saskatchewan.

Now what I hoped the budget would have addressed, and which we see it didn't, was the fact that there was nothing in the discussions nor the budget about revenue sharing. And people in northern Saskatchewan have for many years requested that the government take revenues that they derive from the non-renewable resource industries and put that into the development of the renewable, community-based businesses that could offer a sustainable level of employment and opportunity for northern Saskatchewan people.

And I guess trying to understand northern Saskatchewan people, we have to look back at the history of the North. And we have people that are familiar with the fishing industry, we have people that are familiar with the trapping industry, we have people that are familiar with basically living off the land, Mr. Speaker.

And then when you introduce mining and we introduce large-scale forestry, many times communities that aren't involved in the ownership aspect of these particular industries don't participate nor benefit fully from those activities. So as a result, the people of the North have been calling for many, many years of true revenue sharing in which they can use the revenues of these mines to develop economies in their community.

And one of the conditions that I had hoped the minister would have spoken about, when she talked about the northern initiatives, was a new revenue-sharing pool to stimulate the

community-based economies of communities like La Loche, Buffalo Narrows, Beauval, Pinehouse, and so on and so forth.

Again, northern Saskatchewan people do support northern development, but they want a say in how that money, the revenues of that money, is being used. Now what we've always said is that if they take revenues derived from northern development and hand it over to the community-based economic corporations, these community-based economic corporations will then decide how they wish to spend that money. Direct financing of these local economic development corporations is something that they really have been for many years fighting for.

And people can ask us, well what economies do you want to establish in the community of Ile-a-la-Crosse; what economy do you want to establish in the community of Pinehouse or Patuanak. Well really what is it, you know, what is there — just a group of people living amongst themselves.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there is a tremendous amount of ideas. And I think in essence one of the reasons why the Liberal Party was so appealing is not necessarily what we all know we have to accomplish, as you leave the how of accomplishing more jobs to the imagination of the Saskatchewan people. And in northern Saskatchewan, there is no difference. If you tell the people what we need to do, leave the how to them.

And ideas that we've come up with, Mr. Speaker, is issues like training to build . . . or have a road-building crew established to maintain and develop roads all throughout northern Saskatchewan. The effort of creating and stimulating the fishing economy. For many years, in the early years, fishing sustained many families, Mr. Speaker, and today we see that it's not as big of an employer as it once was. And so therefore the value added processes of fishing — right now, Mr. Speaker, in Northern Saskatchewan all the fish that are caught in my home town of Ile-a-la-Crosse are packed in ice and they're kept in a semi till the load is full and they're transported all the way to Winnipeg, Mr. Speaker. Now Ile-a-la-Crosse to Winnipeg by freight takes about 14 to 16 hours. Now why hasn't there been any effort with government to develop an industry that would process fish in Northern Saskatchewan? Why hasn't there been any effort in developing a fish hatchery in northern Saskatchewan to stimulate the industries that people in northern Saskatchewan are very familiar with?

And secondly, Mr. Speaker, eco-tourism. As you all know, the people of the North are all quite concerned on the value of the land. They're making sure that the land is protected. That's one of their primary functions in life, is to make sure that nature is preserved and protected. And eco-tourism is an opportunity for them once again to take people from Germany, take people from China, and take people from Canada, all throughout northern Saskatchewan and enjoy the natural lakes and the beautiful forests. And eco-tourism hasn't been given the same stimulus that it should have been.

We look at agriculture, Mr. Speaker. Several years ago, look at the community of Green Lake. They've got close to 4,000 acres of land, cleared and uncleared land, 4,000 acres, Mr. Speaker,

and they've got maybe 100 head of cattle there that are just sitting there and waiting to be sold and auctioned off. Why isn't there more emphasis and effort put into developing an agricultural economy in northern Saskatchewan? We speak about animal farming, Mr. Speaker, deer and elk. Again there's no opportunity presented in that area.

Let's talk about construction, Mr. Speaker. For many years, northern Saskatchewan has had housing that has been developed. And today we look at the fact that nobody in these communities can afford to put the money up to get bonding to build houses in their own home community. So as a result, the construction industry was never fully developed. And when you have 10 or 15 houses being built in one particular community, the only people that could afford to build those houses are people from southern Saskatchewan that had the bonding and had the money in the bank. Northern contractors were unable to participate in that part of the construction industry, Mr. Speaker.

Let's look at aquaculture — again a lot of fresh lakes; again no effort into trying to develop some kind of industry, you know, derived from either wild rice, or again I go back to the fish hatchery industry. There's been very little effort in that regard.

Again I look at the fact that most of the forests and the wood supply in northern Saskatchewan are committed to the Forest Management Licence Agreement for multinational companies that are operating in northern Saskatchewan. What happens now, Mr. Speaker, to local saw mills that could perhaps produce plywood or perhaps produce two by fours or two by sixes? It could create many jobs, sustainable jobs, over the future. And these small, community-based saw mills don't have a hope in heck of surviving if they're going to compete for the same wood supply that a multinational company has, with a legal document in its hand.

Let's look at communications, Mr. Speaker: technology, television, radio, the whole bit. Even that hasn't had much involvement or support from government. Let's look at the market gardens, Mr. Speaker — all kinds of opportunity. Why is it that the northern Saskatchewan communities, as far as Stony Rapids, get their vegetables and produce from B.C. (British Columbia) when they have all the land, a lot of land available, Mr. Speaker?

So I can go on to a number of areas in which we can look at opportunities in northern Saskatchewan, but again the budget did not address that, Mr. Speaker. Again we have to get away from the philosophy that northern Saskatchewan is a problem area for the rest of us. The fact is northern Saskatchewan is part of Saskatchewan, and like anybody else in any other riding or any other constituency, my people also have the aims and aspirations for themselves and for their children.

And these ideas I mention, Mr. Speaker, are just a few, and I know we have again about 50 million different other examples of how they could create an economy at the community level.

I guess the big point here is that I believe northern Saskatchewan consists of 140,200 square miles of this province, approximately half the land mass of Saskatchewan,

Mr. Speaker. And that's a lot of land. That's a lot of opportunity.

And yet at this day and age, Mr. Speaker, we still have high unemployment in northern Saskatchewan. We still have . . . And you know it's not with pride I say that; not with pride that anybody says that, that we still have a lot of social and economic problems and we have a high level of welfare rates.

But again you go to any parent and any guardian in northern Saskatchewan and they'll tell you, no, we do not want our children on welfare. So give us a better solution by allowing us to participate in the development of the northern economy. And, Mr. Speaker, I did not hear that in this year's budget, and this is one of the reasons why I was quite disappointed.

I guess the other part of the question is, we hear various people talking about the northern development fund. We're talking about the Northern Affairs Secretariat. We're talking about all these different initiatives that have recently begun.

One of the things that they've talked about was the CREDOs (community regional economic development organization), which I believe would be a regional economic development organizations. And one of the problems with the CREDOs, Mr. Speaker, is that they will have limited success. And that success is basically due to the initiative of local people. The reason why they'll have limited success, Mr. Speaker, is first of all the funding is low — the funding is low. As well, there is no access to large tracts of land.

You know, if you haven't got access to land, Mr. Speaker, and all you have is just the limits of your boundary, your municipal boundary in which you can operate these CREDOs, you have no influence over land, no influence over water, no influence over the policies that affect the land and water around you. And all you have is your municipal boundary to develop an economy on a limited budget. It's simply not going to do it. So again, the CREDOs may be a small, tiny part of the solution, Mr. Speaker. Clearly the larger issues have got to be addressed.

I think when people ask me, you know, how about that 4 million northern development fund that they established for northern Saskatchewan, well, Mr. Speaker, we hear of the hundreds of millions of dollars that the government puts into different companies in southern Saskatchewan. We hear of meat processing plants getting some grants. We hear of saw mills getting some grants. And we hear so many millions will create 21 jobs, or so many millions will create 12 jobs.

Well, Mr. Speaker, in half the land mass of Saskatchewan we have as the North, and there's approximately 25,000 people in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And we say because of your guy's limited involvement in business, because of your limited skills in terms of job skills, we decided to put \$4 million for 25,000 people in half the land mass of the province to help you with economic development. Well, Mr. Speaker, 4 million bucks basically comes up to about \$60 per capita — \$60 for every man, woman, and child. Now if one community had access, let's say for example, Patuanak, they got a population of 200 people and you times that by the \$60 per capita. That's what? Twelve thousand bucks. Now what can a community of

Patuanak that has a lot of aspirations in tourism do with 12,000 bucks, Mr. Speaker?

So really the budget didn't announce any of those plans. It didn't talk about a new, exciting initiative for northern Saskatchewan. It didn't talk about revenue sharing. It didn't talk about any of the above and that's where basically the big problem is with this budget.

I guess to continue on, Mr. Speaker, to more or less educate the House on northern Saskatchewan stats, in 1991 my home community of Ile-a-la-Crosse led the province in growth for all villages. That was the 1986 . . . I'm sorry, the 1991 census. It indicated that for all the provinces in the community of . . . or sorry, all the villages in the community of Saskatchewan, Ile-a-la-Crosse led that particular year in growth.

Now what you have in northern Saskatchewan is exactly a flip-flop from the southern rural centres, Mr. Speaker, where many of the rural communities have an ageing population. In northern Saskatchewan you have a very, very young population and when I was still living in Ile-a-la-Crosse and I was acting as their mayor, I noticed that 65 per cent of our population was under the age of 24 years of age.

Now that's a tremendous strain on the local municipal government, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about trying to develop some kind of strategy for the community. And what happens when you look at the fact that there's been no commitment to training, there's been no commitment to economic development, there's been no commitment to social development, there's been no commitment to highways, no commitment to health, no commitment to any new initiatives, you can sense and see the level of frustration that many northern people feel with this particular budget.

(1915)

Again I'll refer to my past job as mayor, Mr. Speaker, of course in my home community, because a lot of that, you know, background of my history is being basically felt right throughout northern Saskatchewan. One of the big problem areas again in the North is to do with the lack of economic development strategies. That we've already addressed.

The second thing is there's been no effort, no effort with this government in cooperation with the communities, to do a comprehensive social and economic development strategy. Like how much longer must we continue on with the lack of approach in terms of dealing with the community problems? And again I refer back to the commitment that the government talks about to the northern communities, and it goes right back to the point — work with northern communities to implement a sustainable economic development plan to benefit all northern people.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's been six years going on to seven years, and we're still waiting, we're still waiting. Is it the fact that the North hasn't been loud enough? We haven't been active enough?

Well that's the whole question that we have and I have for the

House, is where are we going with all this stuff? Is there a plan? And I suspect as a result of the budget placed by the Finance minister that there is no plan, that there is no commitment to northern Saskatchewan.

If there was, it would have been clear and concise. We wouldn't go back to a — excuse my language — but a measly \$4 million fund for 25,000 people. We wouldn't talk about sustainable economic development when we're not looking at the traditional resource industries that we're familiar with. Some of the examples is eco-tourism and fishing and wild rice and so on and so forth.

So in essence, the comprehensive social and economic development strategy I speak about, Mr. Speaker, was not in any way, shape, or form mentioned in the budget. And this is what we need at the community level, community based, directed to the community, when it comes in northern Saskatchewan, so that they can make a difference for themselves.

We're not asking government to come in there and be the do-all and be-all, because we know that can't work. It cannot work. So in essence, we're saying allow us the means to develop our own plan. Allow us the means to develop a comprehensive strategy for 5, 10, 15, 20 years. Allow us the technical support to put these strategies down on paper and to implement them by simply giving us our fair share of the northern resources and the revenues that this government derives from northern Saskatchewan. That is the key point, Mr. Speaker.

Again we basically identified the fact that we can't have no control over the land. We can't have no control over the training institutions. We can't have no control over the systems that are set up to service the northern people.

And our fourth problem that we have is with housing. Mr. Speaker, in northern Saskatchewan, there is no housing market. As a result, social program housing has come into northern Saskatchewan for the last 15, 20 years, thanks in part to the NDP (New Democratic Party) government of the early '60s and the '70s, but as well to the federal government in the early '60s and the '70s. But, Mr. Speaker, in northern Saskatchewan you have no housing market. So if you have a house that you spent 80,000 or \$90,000 building, it's designed for, you know, for social housing. So what happens now if I get a house and I'm eligible for social housing and a few years later I get a job? Great, you know, that's great for me; I get a job and I get to work.

But then all of a sudden the government says, well because you're working now, sir, 25 per cent of your income goes to that house. That's the intent of the social housing program. Now if my wife gets a job as well, then she as well has to pay 25 per cent of her gross income — not net — gross income. So here we are a working couple, have to pay 25 per cent of our income to house our family if it's a government house.

Now the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, is if you do a quick calculation and say we have an average salary of 1,500 each, you're looking at anywhere between 6 and \$700 per month for a house in a northern Saskatchewan community with no tax base

and no housing markets. You, over a 25-year period of that mortgage, could easily pay \$220,000, Mr. Speaker, or \$210,000. Now this is a . . . this is just an average government house.

Now on one hand we have the government saying, well we had to put in social housing because there is no housing markets in the North, but on the other hand if you work then you're going to be penalized for working because this is not intended for working people.

And I know many examples, Mr. Speaker, of people that have been working at the mine site, get decent salaries, get dinged at the end because they're making decent money. So the system of disincentives when it comes to housing in northern Saskatchewan is very, very prejudiced against the working people. It is. It's not encouraging people to work.

So after awhile you look at the housing problems and it's a no-win situation. Many times people say: well I can't afford to work. I can't afford to work because it's just not worth it. If I started working and get off welfare, I got to start paying my own power bill, my own heating bill, my own phoning bill, my own medicine bill, my own food and all the utility bills, plus I got to pay on top of this 6 or 700 bucks a month for rent. It's simply not possible, Mr. Speaker.

So in essence, really it's an issue about respect, Mr. Speaker. Again northern Saskatchewan is not Prince Albert; it's not Meadow Lake. Northern Saskatchewan is Uranium City, it's Fond-du-Lac, it's La Loche, it's Pinehouse, it's Patuanak, it's Ile-a-la-Crosse.

So housing has to be addressed, Mr. Speaker, and it wasn't addressed in this budget. There was no new plans for any new housing construction. No initiatives to deal with the housing problems of the working people. No, you know, dazzling sideshow of what they're going to do to help the current problems in northern Saskatchewan.

And to top it all off, when it comes to housing, there is no new plans for any new construction. And I've said in the House countless times, Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the North does lead when it comes to health concerns. It leads in TB (tuberculosis), it leads in cancers, it leads in all kinds of diseases because of the crowded conditions of northern Saskatchewan people.

Now members opposite may say, you know, a Liberal, is a Liberal, is a Liberal. But the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, these are facts. These are true concerns. The result of overcrowding and housing in northern Saskatchewan, of people living in substandard housing, is greatly affecting the health of northern Saskatchewan people. And this is the land that has developed many job opportunities and many profits for governments.

And the fact is, that when they talk about profits, northern Saskatchewan mining companies, and forestry companies, and tourism opportunities, they hire many, many people from Regina, from Saskatoon, from Prince Albert. I would hazard a guess, Mr. Speaker, as many as a thousand people may work in

these northern mines from Regina or Saskatoon. It's a thousand people making a living in Saskatoon, paying their mortgages and raising their families, based on northern resources.

Now when you go to the backyard of northern Saskatchewan communities, what about us? We also want to be able to participate in the benefits derived from mining. We shouldn't have to have people living in substandard housing. We shouldn't have to have problems with health and disease because we're living in crowded housing.

And, Mr. Speaker, we shouldn't have working people penalized that are trying to derive a better life for their own children. And this is why the system of disincentives in northern Saskatchewan, when it comes to welfare and it comes to housing, has got to stop. And this budget did not address that, Mr. Speaker. It did not address it in any remote way possible.

So I guess the third point is, I would encourage the government, in their future budgets, to look at a new strategy of turning those houses over to the local communities and deciding, what can you guys do with this housing stock? Arrears are piling up, renovations are not being made, new construction is not happening. And if the government can't deliver, Mr. Speaker, then perhaps it's time to give back the control of these houses to the local people in the local communities, so they can come up with their own solutions and have the government stop interfering with their initiative and their plans. And that's the whole thing.

A truly socialist government would empower communities by giving the control over assets that are in that community so they can come up with a long-term, sustainable plan for themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I can give you the horror stories of northern Saskatchewan when it comes to housing. I know many people, again, put insulation in windows during the wintertime because it's too cold. Now I talk about substandard housing, Mr. Speaker. I talk about crowded conditions. I talk about elders, you know, having to live in homes that they can afford which sometimes aren't very pretty, but they're surviving.

Now these are people, Mr. Speaker, that we should be respecting. These are people that have built a life for many people in northern Saskatchewan and southern Saskatchewan, and then when they get to a certain age, we treat them with very little respect and very little effort to try and at least have their last days in this world spent in a comfortable manner.

And, Mr. Speaker, if you want, and if any member wants, to challenge me on providing those lists and those names, I will certainly provide them.

So again the point, when it comes to housing, it's another disincentive in northern Saskatchewan to create opportunity for the northern people, and nothing was mentioned in this budget. And this is the reason why there's got to be a new and innovative approach when it comes to housing, and basically the answers lie with the communities. I don't know how clear I could be in reference to that problem.

Again, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about the road problems in

northern Saskatchewan, another area that was not mentioned in the budget. And I read a letter and I got a number of letters from people from the Dillon area. We have in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, basically six roads that need to be repaired. We have the Garson Lake road; it's a small community and he wants to be connected to the rest of Saskatchewan. It's only got about 20 kilometres of road to be built, Mr. Speaker, 20 kilometres there.

Turnor Lake, we have 30 kilometres of road that needs to be fixed, and for many years they were promised that that road would be fixed and for many years, as I mentioned earlier, they were told, the people at Turnor Lake were told, your road is on the list. But as I mentioned before, they found out you can't travel on a list, Mr. Speaker. A list is a list is a list. And that's 30 kilometres, so we have 50 kilometres of road.

Then you look at Dillon. It connects three communities and 1,200 people. They have 60 kilometres, Mr. Speaker, 60 kilometres of road to be built there; that's 110 kilometres. Patuanak, a community of 1,200 people, they have five or six wash-outs each year, Mr. Speaker, so that community is isolated and the people can't travel on these roads. So that's 80 and 110 is 190. And the Pinehouse road needs about 80 kilometres of road to be built, and that's 270 kilometres. And then we have a small stretch into Canoe Lake, which of course is another 30 kilometres.

So you add all that up, Mr. Speaker, and it's really only about 250 kilometres, that people want, of road to be fixed up. Not 2,500 kilometres, Mr. Speaker, 250 kilometres. And that would serve seven communities that have for many years been promised, been promised and promised, that these roads would be fixed. And, Mr. Speaker, after 10, 20, 30, 40 years of northern development, these roads have not been fixed.

Now I got letters from a number of students in one of the communities affected by the road problems and that's the community of Michel Village. I read one letter out, Mr. Speaker, from a young lady, here in the House a couple of weeks ago and we talked about these problems.

And one of the kids actually I talked to and he said, if I was the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly), I would fix these roads. And I said well, Mr. Speaker, I am the MLA and I wish I could fix these roads but really it's a larger question than that. He said well — again this being a small child, he still didn't understand — he insisted that the road be fixed because his parents wanted the road fixed; his cousins wanted the road fixed; his chief and his mayor wants this road fixed.

So in essence, Mr. Speaker, if you're going to promise that roads be fixed and roads be built, then follow through with your promise. Again you look at the budget; nothing in there about roads, Mr. Speaker. Very little about roads. Northern Saskatchewan, very little about northern Saskatchewan roads.

The sixth issue, Mr. Speaker, that was not addressed in the budget, which I feel you must discuss and talk about, is the land issue. I go back to the strong connection that the native community have with the land in northern Saskatchewan, and we talk about the incredible need to make people independent in northern Saskatchewan. They live in a system of

disincentives, the dependency is high, and it's not what they want. But what they need, Mr. Speaker, is they need access to land — they need access to land.

(1930)

I've got a family in Beauval that has been for many years trying to get ownership of a piece of land that they've farmed and they've raised cattle on. And for many years they wouldn't give them ownership of the land. They said, we need 12 or \$13,000 to give you ownership of that land.

Well, Mr. Speaker, a family starting out in the infancy of this farm, 12 to \$13,000 is hard to come by in northern Saskatchewan communities. But instead of us as the government saying we'll charge you 12 or \$13,000, what's wrong with us saying as government, we'll give you that land if you promise that you're going to make every effort to become independent? So either you do something or you don't. And that's really the issue here, Mr. Speaker. So far we haven't done anything.

Now the rest of the communities, be it the Metis communities or the Indian bands, they recognize the value of land. If you haven't got access to land, Mr. Speaker, as a people, then you're not going to make any significant difference when it comes to the economic or social development of your own people.

So land is such a critical issue, and it was not addressed in this budget. It was not spoken about in this budget. And really I think, Mr. Speaker, you have . . . I go back to the CREDOS. You can't have any success if you haven't got access to the land and the resources that that land holds. In northern Saskatchewan, people are the same.

I like to compare it, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that if you're a farmer and you have your yard and you have your fence and you have your cattle in your fence, and you're told you guys can survive on this little plot of land, but we don't want you guys out in those fields, you're not going to harvest that grain, you're not going to have your cattle feed on that hay, that, Mr. Speaker, is liking telling the farmers they basically have no future and that's the same thing happening in northern Saskatchewan.

The people are told that you can operate within your municipality, but don't go out on that land because that land is basically owned by the huge companies — it's Crown land and you guys have no say on that land. That, Mr. Speaker, is basically what's being said out there. So in essence, if you do want a really good comparison, I would use the farming comparison to that of a northern Saskatchewan community.

So, Mr. Speaker, land, without question, is one of the critical, critical deficiencies in development and economy in the North and this budget did not make any effort in addressing that particular problem.

I now go back to revenue sharing again, Mr. Speaker. We talked with the . . . The point, our commitment to northern communities, and again — this is my third time I'm going to be

saying it but I'll say it again — work with northern people to develop new revenue-sharing arrangements for northern communities. Well, Mr. Speaker, the only revenue sharing that the community has seen is in the form of a welfare cheque. And that, Mr. Speaker, is a revenue-sharing scheme that nobody wants for themselves or for their future.

Again, coming back from a municipal background, when I sat as the mayor in my home community, Mr. Speaker, we had all these problems. The role of a mayor in council in northern Saskatchewan is much, much more different than that of a southern municipality, Mr. Speaker. We worry about everything from health care, to housing, to economic development, to social development, to taxes, to garbage collection, and even dogs, Mr. Speaker. You know the mayor in many of these communities actually is a small king. He has all these responsibilities.

And in my particular community we approached a class of ladies that were doing some human development work, and they're there for eight months, and they asked me to come in and explain how the municipal structure worked in Ile-a-la-Crosse. But before I got to the question, I asked 10 of them, what do you think the town gets each year from the government to operate this municipality with? And I got some people writing down 10 million; I got other people writing 2 million — that was the lowest. The fact of the matter, Mr. Speaker, we got \$360,000, as a community to operate that community, from the government. And the whole class was absolutely amazed. They were totally amazed at that meagre amount of money which we're given to operate our community with was in fact so low.

So really the impression out there, Mr. Speaker, is that these northern municipalities have tonnes of money coming to them. These northern municipalities have a lot of power and control and authority. These northern municipalities have all this great energy to make a difference to their community residents.

The budget again doesn't support the municipal governments in the North. In fact next year, Mr. Speaker, we're looking at a huge cut, a 20 per cent cut. Now how much more can we afford to cut back on these small municipalities that are trying their very best to make a difference to the people they serve? These are people that feel the impact of these cuts right at the community level.

In northern Saskatchewan we haven't got the opportunity to go back to our taxpayers because our tax base is non-existent. We can't go to the, you know, to the average Joe Blow on the street saying well, we're going to raise your taxes as a business person because we need more money. Well the guy can't afford it; it's a limited market. And I know every other community that's small is going to be facing the pressure of this budget.

So in reference to the . . . instead of working with the municipal governments to come up with an aggressive new renewal plan for municipal governments across this great province and in northern Saskatchewan, we in essence are again penalizing them.

I also want to share some smaller communities who are having

actually a tougher time, Mr. Speaker, than anybody else. The community of Patuanak, the community of Jans Bay, communities at Cole Bay, Turnor Lake, Michel Village — and these are just a few in my constituency — they're having a number of problems with their water and sewer system.

The government has a capital works program in place, Mr. Speaker, to try and put in water and sewer to the communities that are eligible in northern Saskatchewan, and certainly I commend the government for doing so. However, in the small community in the small municipality of Patuanak, you know, they have increased costs as a result of running this water and sewer system. I think they've got to charge each of their persons getting water and sewer something like 90 or \$100 a month to make this thing pay off for itself. And again they want that from people that are largely on social assistance or from a depressed economy.

So what happens to the meagre 60 or 50,000 that this municipality gets? Ninety per cent of it is eaten in maintaining the roads and making the water and sewer service exist and picking up garbage. And it's touchy each month — month to month, Mr. Speaker, that's how many of these northern municipalities operate. It's not an easy job.

So the big thing here is what does a community like Patuanak do? What did they expect from this budget? They expected a new initiative, a new plan to help them with their particular problem.

And that's a point, Mr. Speaker, is we're forgetting the people that we're supposed to serve. The whole system and the whole political spectrum has turned around in Saskatchewan. It's gone flip-flop. It's gone from people serving government as opposed to government serving people. Government and politics should be about service.

And, Mr. Speaker, sometimes Patuanak, Jans Bay, Cole Bay and all these other communities, these small communities in the North and the small communities in the South, are having an awfully difficult time providing service for the people because of the cuts that this government made and the fact that the budget did not address these particular problems.

So again, Mr. Speaker, you look at the whole problem with the service to small communities in the North when it comes to municipal government — it's not there. Again, either you do or you don't. And, Mr. Speaker, it is not there.

The other point, Mr. Speaker, is on what wasn't in the budget when it comes to northern Saskatchewan, is the fact that . . . Let's look at the health care system in northern Saskatchewan. We have the community of La Loche, which has about 3,500 people, Mr. Speaker, and they have trailers that have basically been lumped together and welded and a common roof set over them and this is your hospital. And this is your hospital. This serves your people.

So I go visit in the hospital and I see seven or eight tiles taken off the common roof for fixing water and sewer breaks. I see an overworked staff. I see an underfunded health care system in that place. So what is that going to . . . The point that I make,

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to health — there was no initiative, no new initiative, no new approach in the budget when it comes to health care in northern Saskatchewan.

And that's the whole point, Mr. Speaker, is that again, if you say you're going to be a compassionate government, you say you're going to protect health care, you say you're going to protect the social programs, then do it. Do it. And the first thing I'll suggest we do is go for a visit in these northern communities. Again, it's not a problem area; it's part of Saskatchewan.

So health care in northern Saskatchewan, when you look at again the whole west side of northern Saskatchewan and the Athabasca area, Mr. Speaker, for the whole Athabasca constituency, I have not got one mental health worker, Mr. Speaker, set up in these communities to help with mental health — not one. We had one, Mr. Speaker, but somebody with infinite wisdom decided to cut that position back.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is an area that's economically depressed, and what do we do for health? We don't give no mental health support; we give them old hospitals and trailers lashed together to serve as the health care centre. We don't give them no control over the decisions regarding their health care. We don't give them opportunity and equal access to some of the resources of northern Saskatchewan. We basically don't figure they're part of Saskatchewan. We figure they're a problem area. And then we wonder why the cost of living in northern Saskatchewan, in both human costs as well as financial means, is always going up.

Again, Mr. Speaker, you look at the justice system in northern Saskatchewan. In my particular community, as I mentioned to the Justice minister a number of times, nothing in the budget came up to talk about justice initiatives in northern Saskatchewan. We don't want the whole Justice budget, Mr. Speaker; we want a portion of that budget so we can do things innovatively, things that will give us a better say in how justice is being delivered in these communities.

The average court day, Mr. Speaker, in different communities will have the judge and the legal aid lawyers flying in from La Ronge. And they'll hold court. They'll deal with 20 or 30 different cases that day. They'll have lunch, of course, then they'll fly back. And really in essence, that's our justice system, Mr. Speaker.

And it's just putting people through the cycle. There's no innovative changes, no new policies. There's no community consultation. There's no aggressive moves to involve parents, or elders, or local people in decision making. There's no effort to come there at least three or days before court to talk to people that are being charged in northern Saskatchewan. And yet that is justice, Mr. Speaker. And again the budget did not address the justice issues in northern Saskatchewan.

Finally, the one great ray of hope, Mr. Speaker, is an education. I can't say anything negative towards the education system in northern Saskatchewan, except that many times it's under-funded. Because the schools in northern Saskatchewan is the one bright ray of hope, Mr. Speaker.

I look at the community schools in La Loche, the Dene High School and the Ducharme Elementary School. This is a haven for children to go to. The school system in this particular community is just doing a tremendous job, but you're overworking that staff, Mr. Speaker, because of the economic situation in the North, the school being the only stop-gap measure that many of these kids look to for, not only development of skills and intelligence, but also as a sign of hope. So right throughout northern Saskatchewan, teachers and the school boards and the school system have been basically been saving this government's hide when it comes to not addressing the social and economic problems of northern Saskatchewan. But, Mr. Speaker, these kids are growing up and we haven't got much time. The schools can only do so much, but sooner or later the problem will surface.

So in reference to the health and the justice and the educational system in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, what the people want is a greater control over that system. They want to have a say as to how that education dollar is being cut up and chewed up and spit out. They want to have a say on how that justice is being delivered in northern Saskatchewan. And above all else, they want to have an adequate system when it comes to health care. And this budget did not address that, Mr. Speaker, so therefore I can't see any new effort being put in place when it comes to justice, health, or education.

Now the other point is we talk about the northern development fund. We talk about the lack of economic and social development. I'd like to share a story with you, Mr. Speaker, and the . . . again in the community of La Loche. For many years a local group of women and children and men got together and they met on a regular basis. They asked government, time and time again, give us a rehabilitation centre for alcohol and drugs. And they met and they constantly met, and they constantly met with different officials. We need to have a rehabilitation centre so we can cure our own people.

(1945)

Now I don't want to be a hypocrite here, Mr. Speaker. I still have the odd drink. But what I'm trying to emphasize here is, these people for years fought for a new rehab centre, a full-time rehab centre, so they can cure their own people. And the government, after hesitation and hesitation, come back and said, I'm sorry; there is no money. We have no money for your rehab centre. And less than a year later, Mr. Speaker, they built a brand-new police station. In less than a year and a half later, they built a brand-new liquor board store.

Now you tally up the costs of these two particular buildings, and I think it came close to 3 million bucks, Mr. Speaker. They have no money for rehab services.

So again, Mr. Speaker, you talk about all this stuff and either you're going to help a people or you're not going to help a people. Decide — it's A or B. It's not . . . There's no C between A and B, Mr. Speaker.

And now the latest effort, if you look at the management Act, the forestry management Act as being presented just recently,

there is more and more control being given to the department of . . . or the Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management in terms of what you can harvest from the forest. Water is becoming a resource that could be very valuable in due time. And you look at . . . for many years the people that have been collecting herbs and collecting berries and going there and collecting wildlife, firewood, and the whole bloody bit.

Now this new Act may be putting more constraints on the people in these communities. So is it any wonder, Mr. Speaker, you talk about the frustration that people have in northern Saskatchewan, and the frustration that I have with this budget, that it doesn't do anything for anybody?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, I think this big problem we have is . . . again I go back to the management Act and I shared a couple of stats with you. And this is where you can go, and I talked earlier, when I started my point, Mr. Speaker, is pick a card — any card. You pick roads; there's problems. You pick housing, and there's problems. You pick economic development, and there's problems. You talk about land issues; there's problems. Revenue sharing; there's problems.

I've got the easiest job in the world as an MLA because I have so many problems I could bring up to this House. You know, and this is the point, is I could be up here every day talking for an hour, an hour and a half. Because the big problem, Mr. Speaker, is these issues have not been addressed. The point-blank truth is these issues have been ignored. And when we talk about turning our backs on the northern Saskatchewan people, this is exactly what I'm talking about.

Now we go back to some earlier points that were raised, Mr. Speaker, about the forestry Act. And you'll notice how effectively I'm killing time here when I'm searching for a paper.

As we look at the northern . . . some of the social issues of the North, Mr. Speaker, northern Saskatchewan has 25 . . . or 21 per cent of all families headed by single parents. The provincial average, Mr. Speaker, is 12 per cent. Where is the support for the single parents in this budget, Mr. Speaker, recognizing the tremendous costs of running a household and feeding a family in northern Saskatchewan? Where's the support for the single parent? There is no support, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatchewan has the third highest number of teen mothers. Northern Saskatchewan has three times that average, Mr. Speaker. So really in essence, the population is young, and yet we're continually ignoring this particular group and not doing anything innovative and exciting or dynamic when it comes to northern Saskatchewan.

In terms of northern Saskatchewan, the provincial system has 32 schools and 29 communities, and the federal system has 17 band-controlled schools. And only 14 of the 49 northern schools offer grade 12 programming. And the average high school completion rate is 24 per cent. Are these stats that are becoming of the efforts of the teacher, or are these stats really an indication of the economic and social problems of northern

Saskatchewan? The teachers are doing their share, but they're fighting a losing battle, Mr. Speaker.

So I guess in essence you look at what I think are the solutions, Mr. Speaker, is first of all you involve all the northern Saskatchewan communities in northern development. In my particular constituency, there's the industry of forestry starting to develop at a rapid pace. And with all due credit to the Indian bands in my constituency, they have basically gained part ownership of the forest industries that operate in our particular area. And I applaud their efforts, and I think they're doing a tremendous job.

However, Mr. Speaker, the Metis communities and the non-aboriginal communities of that particular area have also been impacted and affected by the forestry industry. Many fishermen and many trappers and many people that enjoyed the forestry no longer have that option. They can't go and sit in their cabin and walk for miles and miles in forests when all the forests are gone.

So what happens now is, because you exclude one group in any region, Mr. Speaker, you create animosity between all groups. And we, as a Metis community, don't want to follow that particular path. We respect and recognize what the treaty bands have achieved for themselves. We certainly envy what effort of control they have over their lives and what the economic achievements that they have accomplished. But we would like to be treated the same, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to northern Saskatchewan. Don't forget the Metis communities in northern Saskatchewan when it comes to allowing them to participate in the economy or allowing them to become owners of some of the resource industries operating in our backyards.

I think, Mr. Speaker, we hear a lot about land claims. You hear a lot about Metis rights. You hear a lot about the Metis Act. And yet we see nothing in this particular budget that even remotely suggests that we're going to consult with these groups that come up with a new and innovative way. There's nothing in there that even suggests that there will be an effort to change the things I speak about today.

So, Mr. Speaker, looking at all these things — we talk about the budget that isn't basically there for northern Saskatchewan people; it isn't there for the rest of the Saskatchewan people, and certainly you know I'm concerned with that.

Okay, Mr. Speaker, just again I just want to apologize to the House. I did make an error when I said we had 25,000 people; we actually have 34,000 people in northern Saskatchewan. So that's going to knock down the economic development dollars that I spoke about on a per capita basis.

We cover one-half of the province, abundance of resources, and as well, now I hear that they are now test drilling for natural gas in north-western Saskatchewan. Natural gas, Mr. Speaker. And we again are travelling on inferior roads; we're living in substandard housing. We're largely excluded from northern development. We don't have any ownership whatsoever in terms of the systems that operate.

The spending priorities of this government continues to ignore

the municipal efforts of self-help. No issues are being addressed when it comes to land. No issues are being addressed when it comes to gaining greater control over social services, justice, and the list goes on.

So in closing, Mr. Speaker, I urge this government to rethink their strategy when it comes to northern Saskatchewan. You guys have forgotten what it is to live in northern Saskatchewan, but there are people up there and they really have strong aspirations. We have to put extra effort in realizing their dreams as well. They're part of this province — there's no question about that — so treat them as part of this province, not a problem.

So in closing, Mr. Speaker — I am going to pause for a drink of water here and . . . Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I just wanted to add as well, the reason why we had to have a different approach is when this government announced that they will protect social programs, I applauded that effort deep in my heart. I said it's very important that as a society we protect our weakest member. But again, you know, the anger welled up inside me, because are we really coming up with a solution by ignoring people and hearing what they have to say when it talks about a new strategy? And if I was the Economic Development minister for a day and I had 4 or 5 million in social services being spent in the community and I was going to put in a million dollars or so from my department, I'll go to the community and say look, listen, I got \$6 million here. What can we do to develop an economy here for you guys? How could you help out your fishing industry? How could we help you train construction workers? How could we help you with your tourism? How could we help with your road building course?

And that's the whole trick here, Mr. Speaker, is using our money wisely — doing things that will help people come up with innovative ways to help themselves. As government, we don't tell them what to do. We're there to simply facilitate and support.

And so basically I ask the government, and I urge the government, and I even beg the government, to kindly reaffirm their support with northern Saskatchewan. These social cuts that recently they've blamed on the federal government, really they shouldn't be blaming the federal government but they should looking at them because they're caught with their pants down. Because all of a sudden they got less for social programing, but they wouldn't have to have social program dollars if they had economic development dollars put in their 10, 15 years ago.

So again I go back to the issue of sustainable development of economies that have local control and local businessmen developing and controlling those particular income.

So in closing, Mr. Speaker, I will not belabour the points here any further. I want to say that the northern people do not say spend more money, Mr. Speaker. They say spend that money wisely, very wisely. Avoid duplication, Mr. Speaker. Protect the school system because that's saving northern Saskatchewan. We ask the government to be fair in your approach and heed the people's advice. Serve the people. That's what politics is all about, Mr. Speaker.

Can you be fair and consistent in spending? Yes you can. Can you reduce taxes? Perhaps not now but plan for it two, or three, or four years from now and you can. Can you balance the budget, Mr. Speaker? Municipal governments across Saskatchewan have been doing it for years and years and years. Some have done it without increasing their taxes, Mr. Speaker.

Can you reduce the debt? Yes you can, Mr. Speaker, and these are what northern Saskatchewan people are saying. You can do this if you have more people living in Saskatchewan, more people working, and listen more to the people of the North when they come up with these ideas.

The North leads, Mr. Speaker, and therefore I cannot support the budget presented in this legislature. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Ward: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker; you caught me off guard there. I was told the other day that great speeches do not have to be long; in fact that the Gettysburg Address was only a page and a half. This isn't a great speech, Mr. Speaker, but it does have something in common with the Gettysburg Address.

Mr. Speaker, we've been told that Canada is the best country in the world, and we've been told that Saskatchewan is the best province in that country. So it should follow therefore, Mr. Speaker, that this is probably the best budget in the world as it's presented by this government. There are those that don't agree with that in this House obviously. They have offered us many options and they've offered us alternatives. But I don't think they've stopped to add up the cost of those alternatives and those options and what they would have deleted to make that budget work.

(2000)

During the Throne Speech debate which was presented to us and spoke of opportunities for changes, Mr. Speaker, I talked about changes being a vehicle to get us from the past to the future. Well, Mr. Speaker, this budget is the engine that will drive that vehicle and it will drive it into the 21st century and get us there very effectively.

Mr. Speaker, the unfortunate part of this budget is that we have to run it on gas and not jet fuel. The former administration, Mr. Speaker, used up all the jet fuel flying high, and I think we can take that literally, that they were flying high. But even on a gas engine, Mr. Speaker, this budget does preserve the priorities of the people of Saskatchewan. The people wanted health, education, and social programs preserved. And, Mr. Speaker, we have done that for all the people of Saskatchewan no matter where they live.

Mr. Speaker, we have done that through restructuring, streamlining, eliminating duplication of services that can be provided by other agencies such as the banks and the credit corporations. This gives us the ability to deliver services more effectively.

Mr. Speaker, there are those here that criticize this budget, even

some right here in this House, Mr. Speaker. But a wise old constituent once told me there are three kinds of people in the world — those that can, do; those that can't, teach; and those that can't do either, criticize. And, Mr. Speaker, we know where that dividing line is here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Ward: — Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I don't have to criticize, thank you. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to support this budget that preserves the quality of life and gives us the freedom to choose and control our future. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to take part in the debate on this year's budget speech. I had sincerely hoped that I would wholeheartedly be able to offer my support for the 1996-97 provincial budget. Unfortunately, this is just not possible.

Mr. Speaker, we have spent the past few months listening to this NDP government tell us that they are consulting the public. We all know that decisions that affect all people of Saskatchewan have been predetermined long before people have been consulted. People see through this government. They know exactly what is going on. They are tired of it, and they are furious. You can be sure that they will not vote NDP again.

Mr. Speaker, I wish that I did not have to go back to my constituents and hear of their total disappointment. I wish that I could tell them that this government had some respect for the people of rural Saskatchewan, and I wish that I could tell them that things are going to be okay. However, I can't. I wish that the Finance minister and the rest of her party would have listened to the common sense advice given by all the people of Saskatchewan — to the seniors in their wisdom, to the concerns of the people of the North, to the concerns of farm communities. But I just do not believe that anything that this government has been told by the people of Saskatchewan has sunk in.

Mr. Speaker, this government has spent the last few months warning the people of Saskatchewan of the dreaded cuts from the federal government. The provincial government warned that things will be bad, and then they come out with a budget that is nothing but devastating. This NDP government criticized the Tories when they were in power for the increase in the provincial sales tax. But since they came to power in 1991, the NDP government too has increased our provincial sales tax. This government places the blame on everyone else and then goes out of its way to avoid the issues at hand.

The people of Saskatchewan, small-business owners in particular, told this government that the current tax policy is stifling. They have told this government that it is very hard to make a business profitable in this province due to the extremely high taxes. Has anything been done? Of course not. But the Finance minister insists that they have listened to the people of Saskatchewan. I don't know who she was talking to, but it definitely was not the people of rural Saskatchewan, nor was it the small-business owners that provide so many jobs for the

people of our province.

Mr. Speaker, while this government continues to cut essential services, which it claims are the fault of my federal cousins, the government coffers are opened up for many less essential expenditures. While welfare recipients continue to live below the poverty line, the NDP cabinet has increased, along with an increase in deputy ministers and staff.

Prior to the budget, people in Humboldt and the surrounding areas had hopes of an announcement in the budget that Highway 368 may be rebuilt. It made good sense to them that this government would see the value in this highway in promoting economic development.

These people had good, common sense suggestions. It would help the towns around Humboldt; it would help the safety of school buses on the road, of ambulances on the road, and general safety overall. And it would help economically for all of Saskatchewan.

Now we hear that the highway maintenance depot in Humboldt will be closing in July. People are discouraged with this kind of irrational judgement.

While this government continues to waste money and contribute to political patronage appointments, people like Jack Messer are getting pay increases plus shameful perks. These pay increases and perks, amounting to close to \$200,000, turn most people's stomachs, especially when these pay increases provide no contribution to the economic development of the province.

Where is the justice, Mr. Speaker? Where is the equality for all people of Saskatchewan? Many companies are suffering through wage and hiring freezes. The provincial government hires more staff, and appointees getting wage hike after wage hike.

I wonder if this government realizes the full impact of its actions on the people of rural and urban Saskatchewan today and in the future. I wonder if this government sees the damage that is done to rural Saskatchewan every time a local Crop Insurance office or highway depot is closed. And I wonder if this government sees the effect that closing schools has on not only the children involved but on entire communities.

This NDP government sees Regina as the centre of the province. Not only is it not geographically the centre, Mr. Speaker, but it is not socially, economically, or demographically the centre of Saskatchewan.

There are people from Ile-a-la-Crosse to Estevan who feel the effects of this budget. But I again wonder if this government has ever thought once about these people; about the people who elected them to represent their concerns.

This budget contains absolutely nothing that will help the situation in rural Saskatchewan. The number of food banks and social assistance dependants is rising in rural Saskatchewan as well as in urban Saskatchewan. But nothing is being done to change the trend.

The Finance minister and her entire party knows full well that more needs to be done to help the people of this province who are in desperate need of becoming more self-sufficient. Yet there is no indication of factors that contribute to an environment to create economic growth.

Possibly this government believes it to be more beneficial to them to perpetuate a bureaucratic system that serves the bureaucracy but does not serve to enhance the well-being of the people of our province.

To sum it up, this 1996-97 provincial budget provides very little for Saskatchewan's poor. It provides fewer funds for the training that people need to get off welfare. This has been done through the cuts to New Careers training. But this government has somehow found more money to pay for the administration of Social Services in Saskatchewan.

I firmly believe that the people of Saskatchewan did not tell this government to cut training funds and increase administrative costs. But the Finance minister still insists that she has listened to the people of Saskatchewan. Yes, the federal government has been blamed time and time again for the financial woes of this province. And the former Progressive Conservative administration has been blamed for the situation we are in today.

But the time has come for the current NDP administration to take responsibility for their actions. They have received windfall revenues from natural resources, gaming, taxation. They should have great financial resources, plenty to provide the essential services needed in this province. But obviously money is being used in wasteful manners that will not help the province.

We teach our children to accept responsibility for their actions, Mr. Speaker. We teach our employees and staff members to take responsibility for their work and actions in the workplace. And it is now time that we teach our government to take responsibility for its actions and the effects that those actions have on all members of our society.

The Finance minister, in talking about this budget, mentions a spirit of confidence as this province prepares to enter the 21st century. I ask the minister to find that confidence in rural Saskatchewan, in cases like Humboldt, where the highway depot is being closed and the Social Service office is being downsized. I ask her to find the spirit of confidence in northern Saskatchewan, where unemployment still sits at 70 to 80 per cent in some areas for much of the year. I ask her to find a spirit of confidence among the 25,000 children in this province who depend on social assistance to survive.

Where is the hope for these people, Mr. Speaker? Where is it? And where is the basis for a confident generation that will be entering the workforce in the 21st century? What does this budget do for our children who should be running this province in the 21st century?

The Finance minister said in her speech, and I quote:

People told us they want the security that comes from jobs

and opportunities.

Of course that is what they want. That is what we all want. Yet we see Crop Insurance offices being closed, highway depots being closed; stifling forestry legislation is imposed that threatens the thriving forestry industry in the province. There are no opportunities arising from office closures in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this budget, as stated by the Finance Minister, prepares Saskatchewan for the new century by delivering on our province . . . promises. Well I think the government will understand if I have a hard time believing that any promises made by this NDP administration will be delivered. The Premier himself has been quoted as saying that all election promises are on hold.

This government has promised to eliminate child poverty in its first term. Well, Mr. Speaker, there are more children depending on social assistance today than there were in 1991 when the NDP government came to power. This is not something that can be blamed on the former Tory administration or on the federal government. I challenge this NDP government to take some responsibility for their actions.

Mr. Speaker, this government says it will solve the dilemma of so many people needing social assistance. They put out a paper on reform. Mr. Speaker, we have had to listen to the Premier and the members opposite speaking about the dawning of a new day. Day in and day out, we watched the members opposite applaud themselves on their record of good government and innovative planning. Yet all we see are broken promises and a lack of focus on the direction their government plans to take the province.

Mr. Speaker, we hear the Premier and his colleagues brag about doing things the Saskatchewan way, and nowhere is this more evident in the Minister of Social Services's apparent pride in what they call social service reform. We hear of workfare and learnfare as though it were something new and different. And oh, remember that we, meaning they, the government, do it the Saskatchewan way, not the Alberta way or the Tory way, but the NDP way.

Mr. Speaker, much to the consternation of NDP followers, and I chance to say the member for Saskatoon Eastview, the former minister of Social Services, Saskatchewan's plan for which the members opposite now take credit was begun under the expertise and direction of the current deputy minister when Grant Schmidt and the Tories reigned. It was undertaken by the same deputy minister while he was assistant deputy in Alberta's Tory government and refined by the same deputy minister upon his return to Saskatchewan upon the election of the NDP government in 1991.

And this is what we now have, the same as Alberta; the same as Alberta. The Minister of Social Services denounced only two weeks ago that very program. So much for made-in-Saskatchewan NDP solutions and reforms such as workfare and learnfare. The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan follows Alberta's way all too often. Why not emulate Alberta's tax break, Mr. Speaker.

(2015)

I would like to point out that this government's goal to completely ruin rural Saskatchewan is going to have a detrimental effect on Saskatchewan as a whole. Our strong agriculture economy does not flourish from downtown Regina office buildings. Our potash and uranium mines do not depend solely upon Saskatoon for employees.

Our forestry industry focus on the North for its prosperity. By implementing policies and legislation to stifle these industries, this government is in effect stifling the entire province and not just the rural and northern areas. We will all have to answer in the future to the current disruption and dissemination of rural Saskatchewan.

I firmly believe that this government has no foresight with respect to the impacts that this budget has, and its subsequent policies will have, on the future of Saskatchewan. If the government did have this kind of foresight, I firmly believe that it would be a lot more careful when it considers the cuts that have been made, and continue to be made, in our rural areas.

Mr. Speaker, as an MLA who represents a rural constituency, I may be more sympathetic to the concerns of those people — to the concerns that obviously fall on deaf ears in this party. Mr. Speaker, I see the effects of this government's policies and fiscal problems every day in my constituency. Why do things have to happen, like closing of highway depots? Why? Spell out the savings to the people in Humboldt; help them to understand why. Give some rational reasoning to those families who are being torn apart because of these actions.

How is rural Saskatchewan supposed to be financially viable when all the job creating and providing opportunities are being transferred out of rural Saskatchewan? The most recent example of this is the Whitespruce Treatment Centre in Yorkton. This alcohol and substance abuse treatment facility provides services for adults and youths from across Saskatchewan as well as from Manitoba and Alberta. It is one of the finest facilities of its kind. Whitespruce employs 45 staff members in Yorkton. This spins off to 45 more families living in and around Yorkton — children attending schools in the surrounding areas and money being spent in the Yorkton area.

Well the NDP government has decided to close the Whitespruce facility in Yorkton and transfer the services it provides to Calder Centre in Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, this does not only mean a loss of 45 jobs to the Yorkton area, it also means the loss of 45 families. The children will no longer attend those schools; the spouses of the Whitespruce employees will not any longer be employed in Yorkton; and money will no longer be injected into Yorkton's economy.

This dissemination of rural Saskatchewan has effects that trickle through all aspects of our province's society and economy. Things do not occur in a vacuum in any province or country. Changes to legislation, cuts to social programs, financial problems, all affect every aspect of life in Saskatchewan. I am not saying that these changes or some changes should not be made. That would be ludicrous. But this

government needs to look at the outcomes, good and bad, of the projects that it wishes to implement. Cuts to one area of social services will inevitably affect all other areas of social services and the people who depend on them.

In 1987 when this NDP government was the official opposition, a four-member task force was formed to conduct a public review on a need for changes to social services in Saskatchewan. This study was conducted by talking to people of all areas and all income levels of our province, and to find out what was needed most and to gain some insight into how social services affect our rural and urban communities.

A document was put together in 1987 that contained some very good recommendations and some very good insights into the problems facing social service recipients. These problems continue to exist even today. It is obvious to me, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP Party heard the people of Saskatchewan in 1987; they just did not listen carefully to what was being said. Had they taken the time to listen to the concerns of the people it would not have taken them four years in government to come out with a discussion paper that is in fact not going to work.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan need an environment based on empowerment of people at the local level. Rural Saskatchewan needs to be empowered to create jobs at the local level and not to be torn apart by office closures and highway depot relocation. To add to the problems facing rural Saskatchewan today, we have excessive taxation, high utility rates, and the loss of services at local levels. The budget does nothing to address these concerns.

Mr. Speaker, the financial aspect of government does not operate independently of the rest of society. This budget affects all areas of life. Most importantly, it affects the social programs and problems that are already so prevalent in society today.

Mr. Speaker, as a province Saskatchewan faces many social problems that need to be addressed. One of these problems that is growing at an alarming rate is teen pregnancy. This is a symptom of a much larger problem, the problem of the lack of adequate educational and social programs for the province's young people. Even though Saskatchewan has one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in Canada and northern Saskatchewan has a teen pregnancy rate three times higher than the rest of the province, it surprised me greatly when there was not one mention of the problems that teen parents face in this government's discussion paper, *Redesigning Social Assistance*. This is especially disturbing since single moms and young families make up the majority of food bank users.

Teen pregnancies cannot be viewed in isolation. It is a symptom of a larger economic problem in Saskatchewan. The negative consequences of youth sexual activity cost the province about \$1.9 million a year, most of this going to social assistance payments as no one will argue that teen parents are at a disadvantage in finding work due to the often lower level of education, less work experience, and the constant and ever-increasing demands of parenthood. The quality of life that our young people experience depends on the social conditions in which they live, and the social conditions in which they live depend upon the economic conditions of society.

Due to the fact that this budget will do nothing to enhance and bolster the workforce in this province, the social conditions of our young people will continue to deteriorate, as it has over the entire mandate of this NDP government.

Teen pregnancy is not the only problem on the rise in rural Saskatchewan. Family breakdown, child and spousal abuse, as well as drug and alcohol abuse, are all on the rise in rural communities; that is, in communities that do not have the services to work with the people who need it the most. There is not only a lack of social workers, there is also a drastic shortage of crisis shelters for abused women and their families.

There is a Social Services office in Humboldt. For the past few weeks everyone has been on edge waiting for the axe of the budget to fall. This week it has been confirmed that one child service worker has had her job cut from full-time hours to less than part-time. She will be working only two days a week. In a rural area that is already short of social services and support, cutting another position is detrimental to our community. Not only will this woman and her family suffer financially due to the cut in hours and wages, but the entire community will suffer due to the loss of vital service.

This woman may choose to stay in Humboldt. But she also may choose to move into a more urban centre in an effort to find full-time work. So one more family leaves rural Saskatchewan, one more service is lost, and the chance of recruiting a qualified social worker to rural Saskatchewan for less than part-time work while carrying a full-time case-load is slight.

I would like to stress today that Humboldt is not the only rural area affected by these cuts. Towns and villages all across Saskatchewan are suffering in the wake of drastic cuts to all sorts of programs.

The problem with the lack of funding for social services affects urban Saskatchewan as much as it does rural Saskatchewan. For several weeks now, news stories have been concentrating on the problem of child prostitution in our province. Over the past several months, the Saskatoon city police and the Egadz street kids centre have been working hard to get kids off the streets. In March of last year, it was estimated that there were at least 50 child prostitutes working in Saskatoon's inner-city streets. Juvenile prostitution in Saskatoon makes up about one-quarter of that city's sex trade. This is an outrageous number and is totally unacceptable.

Last week Regina city police estimated about 100 kids are working as prostitutes. We cannot let this continue, Mr. Speaker. There is no reason that a province as viable and as economically sound as this one should let its children work on the streets. How could we let this problem get so out of hand?

Don't let anyone tell you that child prostitution is an isolated problem. It stems from poverty in our larger centres due to the lack of social programming and education. It also stems from social and economic problems in rural Saskatchewan. Kids move to the city looking for a better way of life, and they end up on the streets. We must all work together to find solutions to these types of social problems that are plaguing our young people. Pretending that the problem does not exist is an irresponsible reaction to an uncomfortable situation.

Mr. Speaker, this government desperately needs to get its priorities in order. Not only are welfare case-loads increasing, but so too is the dependency on food banks. The number of teen pregnancies is on the rise in Saskatchewan, as is the number of street kids. I ask the government, where are your priorities? The children of our province should be of utmost importance to this government, yet little is being done to ensure that they grow up in a stable and loving environment. Of course it is not the role entirely of government to give parenting and self-esteem classes, but should it not be the role of government to provide appropriate program funding in areas that are so desperately needed?

Apart from the fact that the number of transition houses in Saskatchewan is inadequate in comparison to the number of women and children who need them each year, but the number of child support workers is dwindling as well. Through this budget, half of the funding to the Saskatoon Family Support Centre has been reallocated. This means that four supervisory positions in Saskatoon have been eliminated, along with two front-line workers.

These front-line workers work with the domestic abuse outreach program that worked with abused women and children. One of the positions was occupied by an aboriginal woman who works with aboriginal abuse cases. The other woman works with immigrant women who have been abused. Now I ask this government, if they in fact are supporting aboriginal cause, if they in fact are supporting everyone in this province, why in fact would they take these kind of measures?

Another position that has been abolished is a child care position. This government claims that the money from this abuse program is being reallocated to an inner-city project that is yet to be defined. So the child care position has been abolished, leaving children from abusive homes without a means of support. I wonder again if the government has fully assessed the impact that this will have on our society.

This shift in money will have a detrimental effect on abused women who will no longer have any place to go. According to Stats Canada, one in four women have been abused, that is physically or sexually abused. This does not include emotional or psychological abuse. This tells me that Saskatchewan women are in a desperate situation. We need to be educating people on a continual basis about the causes and effects of abuse on men, women, and their children.

This government should be allocating money to transition homes and educational programs instead of appointing friends as highly paid presidents of Crown corporations. Mr. Speaker, the priorities of this government are out of whack. One transition house in Saskatoon turns away almost twice as many families a year as it accepts. This should tell us all that there is a demand for the service; there is a need, a very important need, to be able to help battered women and their children in times of desperation.

Mr. Speaker, I will close with one final remark. This budget is not a budget that has given any hope to the poor, to the people of rural Saskatchewan, to the women who depend on transition

houses in times of need. This government has done its best to ignore the social problems facing us all each day, and it is time that the government opens its eyes to the world around it. Stop ignoring the real issues and get down to the nitty-gritty in terms of programing. Our future in the new century will be better for it. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(2030)

Ms. Haverstock: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to congratulate the member from Athabasca for his comments on the budget, and to state unequivocally that it's the first time since 1991, in this House, that I've heard so many important comments made about northern Saskatchewan. And it was most educational, and I hope that people throughout the province were hearing.

Mr. Speaker, I'm here to make comments about budget '96 and please let me begin by commending the government for so carefully explaining its intentions — its intentions to cut back on spending during the coming fiscal year. And it is only fair of course that those who depend on government funding, to have a clear understanding of what they can expect in the coming year. But I do want to remind people that intentions are intentions in this case, because the cuts in spending are for the coming year, Mr. Speaker, and they are estimates of what they intend to do, not what they have done.

I should like too to commend this government for intending to maintain its funding of education and for other social programs for the coming year. Indeed it intends to increase its spending on education, on training and employment, by almost \$11 million, while its spending on health care and social services each falls by less than \$8 million. I'm sure we all believe there are more cuts than that to come.

The government should also be commended for showing a surplus of \$600,000 in the General Revenue Fund for the fiscal year just past, 1995-96. Unfortunately it had promised much more — a \$24 million surplus in that fund last year at this very time.

But, Mr. Speaker, we must not be misled by budget numbers. And I'm going to spend some time using the government's own documents in explaining why that is. They are forecasts and they are estimates — that's what budget numbers are — based on wish lists of politicians and wish lists of government administrators. They are not the cold, hard facts of reality.

For example, Mr. Speaker, budget '96 shows that during the fiscal year just ended, 1995-96, this government added — and I'd like there to be a pause here for people to grab onto their desks — this government added \$956 million to the provincial debt. Now where did I get that number, Mr. Speaker? Well I got it from the Saskatchewan *Public Accounts*, 1994-95, page 77, in budget '96.

We are almost \$200 million deeper in debt now than we were just two short years ago. And it means that on Sunday last — now just think of this — Sunday last, Mr. Speaker, on March

31, every family of four in our province owed \$3,824 more than it did on March 31 of 1995.

Even worse, Mr. Speaker, even worse, this government has added over a billion dollars to the debt of our province since March 31, 1992. And where does this come from, Mr. Speaker? Well it comes from the *Public Accounts* for various years, and from the summary financial statements as well as from the statements, from the government's own statements, on the General Revenue Fund.

Now that is more than \$1,000 more debt for every child, every woman and man this province has since the NDP formed government in 1991. Now that's a lot of debt for the people of this province, Mr. Speaker. It is — what? Well it's four months' groceries for a family of four. It's a summer holiday that perhaps people have not taken in some time. It's the down payment on a house for a new family. It's a year of children's clothes in the family. The difference between going to work in an old car rather than replacing it with something safer and cheaper to maintain.

And, Mr. Speaker, by Sunday this week, this government had increased the total debt of our province to over \$14 billion, and that too is from page 77 of their own document. Mr. Speaker, that's over \$14,000 per person — more than \$56,000 for a family of four. And my goodness, really when you think of that, that's the equivalent of two years of salary for a lot of families in our province.

But that's not all. This government is unable to bring its habits of tax and spending, tax and spending, under control. Spending grew by \$120 million during the fiscal year that just ended. Revenue went up by only \$21 million. And where did that come from, Mr. Speaker? Well I happened to get that from the General Revenue Fund and the public . . . Saskatchewan *Public Accounts* 1995-96 and in budget '96 from the government's own documents.

The \$24 million promised surplus for the General Revenue Fund this year at this very time shrank to just \$600,000 by the time the government spending for that fiscal year came to the end on March 31. In fact a balance is hardly a balance at all, and that's very worrisome, Mr. Speaker.

This government spends all it gets and then it spends more. And its promise of reformed fiscal management is not real at all. It is not responsible management, Mr. Speaker.

But how can the General Revenue Fund have a balance even though the government's spending continues to grow and there are no tax increases announced in the budget statement? Well it's because now it has among the highest income taxes and sales taxes. It has made gambling and utilities the cash cows that continue to feed its spending habits. And where does this come from, Mr. Speaker? Well surprise, surprise, it comes from the *Public Accounts* and shows up where, but in the summary financial statements and the cash flow statements.

In other words, it has turned its attention to increasing regressive levies. In other words, utility rates and what is paid into gambling gains, and they act like regressive taxes — taxing

those least able to pay just so government can feed their habit of excessive spending for themselves and their friends.

And our power rates went up again. When? On January 1 of 1996. Last year during the 1994-95 fiscal year \$356 million of net income from the government enterprises — and this is mostly Crowns and Liquor and Gaming Authority — went into the General Revenue Fund so a deficit in government spending can be transformed into a surplus. Every single family of four in this province paid \$1,424 more just so that this government could show it was possible to have a surplus on its spending. And that's hardly responsible fiscal management. Indeed most people would deem that irresponsible and they would call it fiscal mismanagement.

We see it every single month in our utility bills. And budget '96 confirms the people of this province's greatest fear. There is absolutely no relief in sight. Taxes, and tax increases by any other name, are still taxes. And government overspending by any other name is still spending too much. Is it any wonder, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Saskatchewan are angry with this government preaching to them about how each one of them must take a cut-back. They're spending so that government can continue to mismanage the money they have to pay in taxes and levies.

And then there are the jobs. Where are the jobs, is the important question, Mr. Speaker. Our labour force dropped, and the amount of employment in this province fell, on average every single year during the first half of this decade, the years of this NDP administration. It has taken this government five years before it could show the same level of employment back up to where it was before the NDP became the government in 1991. It has taken this government five years to create 1,600 jobs, and their budget '96 tells all of us in this province that they're going to create 2,000 every year now to the end of the decade. Now if that isn't one of the world's wildest dreams, I don't know what is.

Now just in case you're wondering where I got those statistics from as far as employment is concerned, and I know that they're waiting with bated breath, Mr. Speaker, it's from Statistics Canada monthly labour force survey. The high rates of tax, income, sales, and utility rates, Draconian labour legislation, and excessive workmen's compensation rates are driving our friends, our neighbours, and our families out of our province to find jobs elsewhere — jobs that used to be here that aren't here any more.

And accountants and financial management consultants and managers see it every single day with clients who are telling them that they are leaving. Our high-tech, educated children who have learned in our schools, have to go away, lots of different places. In fact just this week I heard about some leaving for Arizona for a job.

Saskatchewan now has the dream of this government and the dream of its Finance minister: low rates of growth, of income, so Saskatchewan can qualify for equalization payments, the payments which go to Canadian provinces that have few prospects for growth of their own. How very sad — the provinces that are dependent upon other provinces in Canada

for the money that pays for government services.

The data on this, on the economy, is showing rather clearly now that income is not growing anywhere near the rate of growth of our output of our exports. So the prosperity that we see in our export sector is not getting translated into income or employment in our very province. And this too comes from StatsCanada data, and the assumptions in budget '96, Mr. Speaker, also reflect what I've just said, although the interpretation of the data in the budget has been done differently. Because whoever did the budget document, looked at only some of the data — not all of it — choosing what could be interpreted as giving the message that he or she wanted to give in that budget statement.

So where is the plan to pay off our debt, Mr. Speaker? Where is the strategy to get our taxes and utility rates and workers' compensation rates down? Where is the strategy to get viable, sustainable jobs in the province of Saskatchewan? Where is the program that gets the tax dollars back into the front line of health care and into the front line of the education of our children and our young people?

Budget '96 tells us that there will be government bureaucracy, and more bureaucracy, and more, and more. It tells us that there will be more without jobs. It tells us that we will owe more, and more, and more, to cover the costs that this government has failed to bring under control.

The people of this province deserve better. They deserve responsible fiscal management that is real, not the smoke and mirrors of a government that just keeps postponing the hard decisions it promised to make. Not the smoke and mirrors of a government that seems hooked on taxes and spending; on a government that puts the burden of its own spending extravagances on those who can least afford to pay for them.

And this government's budget '96 says that it is a preparation for the 21st century. Well welcome to the 21st century, Mr. Speaker. This is a government that gives us a 1990s province that is back in the days when our best export was our people. And it gives us fiscal management that pushes out our young and old, our rich and poor; pushes out those who have to go somewhere else to make a living and raise a family because they most certainly cannot afford to do it here.

For those who can't move it signals more of the same — a province where there is no substitute for high taxes and levies needed to pay for excessive government spending, while our social programs get smothered in the dead weight of government bureaucracy.

Budget '96, Mr. Speaker, makes us think, but what can only be a fleeting thought, of what our province might be like some day, beyond the days of a government that knows only how to take from everyone to give to itself. For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I am unable to support budget '96.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(2045)

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to enter into the debate on the '96-97 provincial budget. Once again we see that this year's budget document is compiled of nothing more than hollow words and empty promises. But then again that doesn't surprise me, since the last four provincial budgets have been equally unsubstantial.

We've come to expect little from this government, but the people of Saskatchewan deserve so much more. They deserve answers to their questions. They deserve solutions to their problems and they deserve a government that listens to them. Because the members opposite, along with the members on this side of the House, we make the most important decisions that will seriously affect and influence the lives of Saskatchewan people.

So instead of passing down the same old promises year after year and instead of breaking those same old promises years after year, the government should have stepped back from overused rhetoric and looked for something with real substance.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the details of this budget, we are faced with superficial words and insecure thoughts. And I'd like to spend some time looking at three specific areas. I'd like to look at the overall general comments provincially, and as my colleagues have pointed out, I'd like to spend some time in the areas of education and post-secondary education.

When I refer to education, I will be referring to the kindergarten to grade 12 system, and of course post-secondary, as the minister indicated last night, we know that post-secondary includes not only the universities, not only the SIASTs (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), but also the regional colleges that mean so much to rural Saskatchewan.

With that, Mr. Speaker, let's take a look at rural Saskatchewan. What has this budget meant to rural Saskatchewan? When we take a look at the grants to municipalities, we see that the grants will be declining by \$20 million. When we see funding for the Department of Agriculture, we see that there is a reduction of \$60 million.

We have seen the closure of rural service centres. We have seen the closure of Crop Insurance offices in many centres, Canora being one of them. We've seen the 26, I believe it's 26, maintenance depots closed that were depots of the Department of Highways. We've seen 170 jobs removed from the Department of Highways.

We already know what the condition of our highways are, Mr. Speaker. We know that in many instances secondary highways today, after this storm, probably will not be cleared for a day or two or maybe even three. And if we are reducing the number of depots, if we are reducing the number of front-line workers out there, will that service improve or will it deteriorate? I think, Mr. Speaker, that answer is obvious — that service will deteriorate.

We have 125 jobs slashed from Environment and Resource Management. Mr. Speaker, when we look at conservation offices and we see the closure of some conservation offices like the one in Pelly, this has a tremendous effect on rural

Saskatchewan. And I want to just spend a few moments talking about what closures like that will mean for rural Saskatchewan.

We take a look at rural service centre closing, and a person who is working there, family of three, now is forced to move to a larger centre. We see the elimination of a conservation officer, the position, and that conservation officer now has to move. We see the spin-off. And in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, when one family moves and three children leave and another family moves and two children leave, there is another spin-off. And that spin-off is the fact that now probably there will be a teacher reduction because there has been a decline in enrolment. And when there is a decline in the enrolment, there is less money available to the school division.

And as a result, you will see further cuts. When you see further cuts at the school level, that translates into a business. A business will close. So, Mr. Speaker, cuts like that overall mean a tremendous amount to rural Saskatchewan. The jobs that we lose means we will lose students as well.

Mr. Speaker, overall when we take a look at how the budget was developed, we know that this process began many, many months ago. We saw people from the government indicating that promises that had been made the year previous and the budget previous during the election campaign were no longer on.

And in fact there was a doom and gloom scenario that indeed the promised funding to education, to universities, to all of the players, was going to be reduced. And in fact there might even be a negative number that was thrown out. What does that do? What it prepares the public . . . is that they are expecting the worst-case scenario. And, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately now when public reacts to a budget that wasn't as doom and gloom or wasn't as bad as they first predicted, there is complacency. There is a situation where people turn an eye and say, well it wasn't quite as bad as I thought.

What we have to look at, Mr. Speaker, is what does this budget really mean also for the local taxpayer. I see this budget as a downloading. We've heard the new words, the back-filling of the federal monies. We've talked about downloading, offloading, whatever words you wish to use. But what we see now is that the budget has continued that process, Mr. Speaker. Over the last four years, we have seen cuts to municipal transfers. We have seen cuts to both urban and rural municipalities. We have seen cuts to school boards, and there has been a tremendous amount of downloading.

And yes, Mr. Speaker, the local taxpayer has back-filled because in many instances where there have been cuts — and the local municipality, the local school board has said no, we don't want to give up program; we don't want to lose the life, the amenities that we have — they raise the taxes. And they ensure that the money is there to spend.

When we take a look at the budget that has just come down, Mr. Speaker, we see a further offloading. We see the approach that when you have people expect the absolute worst, then the bad news just doesn't seem quite as bad. The front-line workers that have been cut and will be jeopardizing the safety and

services of rural residents — these kinds of cuts, Mr. Speaker, are drastic examples of what will happen to rural Saskatchewan.

At the same time as we see the cuts, and we hear the members talk about the availability of money; how can you cut without having money. We see that indeed over the last four years revenue to this government in tax collections, tax revenue, has accumulated in the amount of \$700 million additional monies from tax revenues. That's three-quarters of a billion dollars more in tax revenue. This year alone, by the Minister of Finance's numbers, we see that there will be 100 million projected for this year over last year in additional tax revenues. At the same time, we see the fiscal problems being passed on to the local taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, to understand what is really happening in the education scene, I think we have to spend some time looking at the picture in terms of what is involved in education today and what makes up the education system that we have in this province today.

The kindergarten to grade 12 system, Mr. Speaker, is represented by 120 boards of education. These 120 boards are a combination of rural boards, urban boards, north, separate school divisions. These boards, over the last number of years, have faced from this government, Mr. Speaker, a decline of \$21 million of offloading. As a result, the grant that is now allocated to school divisions for the last fiscal year was \$353 million. 1991, Mr. Speaker, that number was \$374 million according to the documents. So there has been, there has been downloading; there has been shifting of the responsibility of education from the provincial government to indeed the local taxpayer.

I remember not too long ago, Mr. Speaker, that the numbers that were thrown about were the numbers, a 60/40 split. That education should be a responsibility of both the provincial government and the local taxpayer and that split should be based on 60 per cent and 40 per cent; 60 per cent coming from the provincial government and 40 per cent coming from the local taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is though, that as the costs of providing kindergarten to grade 12 education in the province nears almost \$900 million, the numbers have completely reversed. It is indeed a 40/60 split; 40 per cent now comes from the provincial government and 60 per cent from the local taxpayer. So is it little wonder that the local taxpayer is very concerned about further offloading.

We heard last year, and boards of education, teachers and the like, were very encouraged by the fact, that the minister had indicated that there was going to be a 2 per cent increase in grants to not only kindergarten to grade 12 boards of education, but also universities, SIAST, and the like.

If that 2 per cent indeed would have been promised to the boards and that promise kept, Mr. Speaker, that additional 7 million would not have even brought the boards of education funding back to anything close to less than 60 per cent. So we still have a massive, massive discrepancy in terms of what is funded locally and what is funded by the department.

When I take a look at the promise of the 2 per cent and I see what the actual outcome is for this year, where the minister has indicated that funding for this year will be maintained at the \$355 million range which, when we take a look at last year's funding of \$353 million and add to it the educational development fund, we see the exact same amount of money. There is absolutely no new money for boards of education because a program that has disappeared from the funding is the educational development fund.

This was a fund that was, has been, in place for boards of education to use for many, many years, and last year's funding to boards of education for the EDF (education development fund), as it is referred to, was about \$2 million. And the line item for funding for EDF this year, Mr. Speaker, is zero. So therefore that same \$2 million is now the \$2 million that is now being used by the minister in terms of saying that we indeed have an additional \$2 million increase.

We also have to take a look at all of the costs for education for this year. And we know that there is, at the moment as we speak, a negotiation process under way. That negotiation process between the government and the trustees' association of this province and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation will no doubt conclude an agreement sometimes in this year.

I quote from the address by the president of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation who, not too long ago, has indicated that there is an agreement on parts of the negotiation and that indeed a 2 per cent wage increase will be taking place in this year through a negotiated process. That, Mr. Speaker, I understand translates into the fact that a 1 per cent wage increase will take place on September 1 and a 1 per cent increase on December 31, meaning of course that that second 1 per cent has very little bearing on the cost for this year.

True to her word, the Minister of Education has indicated that the funding for that additional 1 per cent of salary to boards of education that will take place on September 1, 1996 will be picked up by the department. So she said the \$2 million has been added to the budget for kindergarten to grade 12 funding. Well when we take a close look at that, we realize that that \$2 million will be offset by the additional \$2 million in the salaries of teachers for 1996. So when we take a look at that and we take a look at the fact that the educational development fund has disappeared, the boards of education are indeed in a negative position — less and less.

(2100)

What we also see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that, as the negotiations take place, there may be additional costs. We don't know what they will be for the people of Saskatchewan. What we also know of course, as anyone who has a business, as anyone who runs a farm, that there are additional costs from the cost of living, the increase in supplies, the increase in transportation that boards of education will face.

So the reality is, Mr. Speaker, that as this budget has described the education scene, if the number breakdown last year was 40/60, we can be assured that by the end of 1996 the numbers

will be the like of 38 per cent and probably 62 per cent at the local level.

Boards of education will be looking at this budget and wondering what they will do, Mr. Speaker. Because when they looked at the number of a promise of 2 per cent last year, many boards of education said . . . and looked at their delivery of program, they looked at the number of schools that they're operating, they looked at the number of staff, and they said that that system can stay in place with the expected funding increase

So they made very little changes, expecting the promise to be kept, Mr. Speaker. But that promise has not been kept. And as a result of the fact that we are now into the month of April, boards of education who are operating on this current year know that they will be going to the end of June with very little opportunity to adjust their budget. There's no opportunity to reduce staff, which of course salaries make up a large portion of the operating expense of school boards.

So they will operate until June 30. Sixty per cent of the budget for 1996, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will have been spent. What does the board of education do knowing full well now that they are receiving less money overall for the fiscal year that we are in today? Either they go to the taxpayer, Mr. Speaker, and they raise the tax rate a substantial amount, or they make very, very serious cuts — triple the cuts, probably — that would be necessary to ensure that they can balance for this fiscal year. Because they must balance, they must balance their budgets.

Who is the loser, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Number one, the loser of course is the trustees in this province who will have to make these very critical decisions. They will be forced to raise the taxes. The second loser of course is the teachers in this province, Mr. Speaker, because now they will be the ones that will be blamed by the local public, everyone else, for having received a salary increase and now that the mill rate will have been increased.

But most importantly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the loser in this is the children of the province of Saskatchewan, for there will be, in some instances in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there will a reduction in program, there will be an elimination of some services that are offered to children right now, and the quality and accessibility of education in this province will have been reduced. And that, Mr. Speaker, is tragic.

This government has stated many times that the priority is education. And it must be, Mr. Speaker, because education, the education of our children, is the future of not only this province but of our country. This budget does very little to address the concerns for this year especially, Mr. Speaker.

When we take a look, when also take a look at the boards of education and how they operate at their own local level, there has been no move by the government to address the concerns that they have.

There are about 5,000 non-professional employees employed by those 121 boards — the bus drivers, the caretakers, the teacher assistants. If there is a salary negotiated with the teachers, of course there will be a salary negotiated with those employees as

well. Those additional costs, Mr. Speaker, will be reflected. Maybe they won't be reflected in 1996, but they will be reflected in 1997.

And let's take a look at 1997. If I take a look at the Finance minister's document for 1997, she's indicated that there will be an expenditure of \$900,000 additional grant money for education for the kindergarten to grade 12 system — \$900,000.

Mr. Speaker, when we take a look at what I just mentioned, as far as the increases in salary for teachers for '96, the increases in any other costs in 1996 for the local employees, and now we translate that full cost into 1997, it is estimated that that 2 per cent wage increase — the 1 per cent on September 1, the 1 per cent on December 31 — any local matching of salary increases for the local employees, that number will translate between 12 and \$14 million to boards of education for 1997 — 12 to 14 million.

Now when the Minister of Finance has indicated that funding for education, the K to 12 system, for 1997, will increase by less than 1 million, she is stating very clearly and unequivocally that that funding must now be picked up at the local level if the program is to be maintained.

Or, Mr. Speaker . . . or Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm sorry, if that is not to be the decision by the locally elected boards of trustees — they don't want to raise that mill rate, can't raise that mill rate because we're taxed to the max — they have to make some very, very critical decisions: close schools, lay off staff, cut programs.

Those are the decisions, Mr. Speaker. And I have heard from a number of trustees in the last three or four days who have said to me they feel that the 1997 budget is devastating to boards of education, to teachers in this province.

When I take a look at the comments of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation after last week's budget, it's very, very easy to take a look at the comment made by the president of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, Mr. Dwain Drew, and he says:

The years of cuts have taken their toll. Hundreds of teaching positions have been eliminated; class sizes are often over 35 students; vital school programs have been cut; and resource materials are scarce.

Mr. Speaker, when we eliminate the educational development fund, which was in its last year last year, when the government eliminates that program, which was a program that was used to put resources into the libraries of our schools, which was a program that was used to buy computer equipment, modern software that was necessary to provide an adequate education for all schools across — we see that elimination. We see the quotation from the president of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation that says, where are we going; where are we going when we know that these kinds of cuts are coming.

The STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation) general secretary Fred Herron says, and I quote:

The longer the government puts off restoring adequate levels of funding for children's education, the harder it will be to reverse the growing damage to our school system.

Mr. Speaker, I think this government has missed the point regarding funding for education in this province. Education is a priority. It has long been one of the larger expenses for this province, and students deserve better. So I would recommend to the government that we take a much closer look at funding for 1997.

For 1996, yes, boards of education, the teachers, the local employees — they are going to get by somehow or other. And I know that we have heard across this province, there are a number of schools that will be closed. There are a number of teachers that will be laid off and there will be positions lost. But if this plan is put in place for 1997, it will be devastating for education in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn at this time to future year, 1998-99, which is also mentioned in the budget address. Minister states that in 1998-99, there must be a \$7 million savings that will be achieved from all the boards of education in this province — \$7 million to come out of education savings.

How will there be \$7 million? What are the scenarios that are possible? Well the first scenario I'm sure, as the minister has been talking about in her regional meetings over the last number of months, is amalgamation. The projected savings done by different commissions over the last number of years has indicated that there were significant savings to be achieved from amalgamations.

And that number varies, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know that the Langlois-Scharf report initially indicated that if boards, public boards of education, amalgamated, I think there was a savings possible of 15 to 20 million. There was a further study done by the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association that it indicated that that number was less.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm hearing from boards of education that many — many — of the savings that would have been achieved a number of years ago of course, if there were amalgamations, are not possible because there are a number of shared services going on in the province. I know that there are directors of education who are directors of education for more than one school division; who are assistant directors of more than one school division. These are savings that have already been gleaned by the board of education.

The suggestion now is \$7 million. Maybe that's achievable. But, Mr. Speaker, that's achievable by amalgamation. And as I've indicated before in this House, Mr. Speaker, I encourage the Minister of Education to be upfront. To be upfront with the taxpayers of this province. To be upfront with the boards of education of this province. To be upfront with the teachers of this province.

If that is the plan, if there is a plan to save \$7 million in 1998-99 by way of amalgamation, how are we going to do it? Is it going to be done by the government with a top-down approach whereby a map will be drawn and there will be X number of school divisions left in . . . at the end of 1996 or

1997?

Or will there be criteria that will be defined? Will there be guidelines that will be suggested and then that the boards of education, the towns, the villages, the people affected, the parents, the students, the teachers, will they then have the opportunity to sit down and develop a local plan?

Because, Mr. Speaker, that \$7 million, if that is a plan, if that is the demand that this government has for 1998-99, there has to be consultation. There has to be a plan put in place that will work cohesively and try to arrive at that solution.

Option number two. How else can the board save \$7 million? Well if you look at an average salary of a teacher, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that would make approximately 200 less teaching positions. So that would be very easy to achieve, \$7 million, you just cut 200 teaching positions. But, Mr. Speaker, I don't think anyone in this province would like to look at that scenario because 200 less teaching positions in this province, that will be devastating to the programs that are being offered in all of our schools in this province, Mr. Speaker.

The other scenario, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that there be massive closures of small schools. Closures of probably between 35 and 50 — 35 to 50 small rural schools — would have to take place to achieve that saving in rural Saskatchewan because that is the only place where there is a declining enrolment. That's reality. But we've been looking in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, for some light at the end of the tunnel whereby we can find out that distance education could be a way of providing the programs in some small schools because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are many small schools in rural Saskatchewan that can't close.

(2115)

They can't close because the students that arrive at those schools already are spending an hour and a half, an hour and three-quarters on a school bus to get there in the mornings and the same amount of time to get home after school. If that school is closed and the next nearest school is 45 miles, we're now talking about a two and a half-hour bus ride one way. I'm sure members opposite will agree that that cannot occur. So we know that the options to close that many rural schools, that option is really not there in many instances.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, that if the plan of course is to look at \$7 million as a savings, to achieve that kind of savings, I think it has to be done very wisely, and it has to be done with great consultation, and the Minister has to be upfront with that plan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The plan must be known.

I'd now like to make some comments on the post-secondary education side. As the minister indicated last night, post-secondary education is broad, it's not just the universities, it's not just SIAST, it's not just the regional colleges, it's the looking at everything beyond post-secondary. I think that one statement is very, very clear here, and that is for Saskatchewan to prosper in this next century, in this next millennium, we need to ensure our residents have access to post-secondary education that is affordable — is affordable.

My compliment was given to the Minister of Post-Secondary Education when he announced that there would be a revamping of the loans to students; that indeed there was a program with the Royal Bank that loans would enable . . . that there would be a better system of operating loans for students and that there would be a \$6 million savings. But I see from the *Estimates*, Mr. Speaker, from the budget, that that \$6 million has been taken out of post-secondary education.

And that is not fair to the students of this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because as costs increase, and there is a need to increase the weekly allotment for students eligible for a student loan, as that cost increases — and we are saying now that the amount of money that is available to the entire student services area is less — we will have students, less students, being eligible for money.

Less students being eligible means that there will be tighter restrictions; that indeed students who want to get an education, who have the intellect to get an education at a university, they will not be able to because they will not qualify for that money because there won't be enough.

We must take a look at the restructuring, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Universities in this province have looked at their program. We've heard from people involved in the universities — the students, faculty — who have said there has to be a better way of delivering our program. And maybe even if we do it better, we will do it more economically. And that is good because that is the key, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We must ensure, we must ensure that the education system that we have in place today is there, not only next year, but for my children and my great-grandchildren.

And I think the plans that we look at today or over the next year, those will be the plans that will determine whether or not that university system is here. And I would encourage this government not to adopt the method of slash and burn, kill a program, kill a college, so that indeed the universities have a balanced financial position. That will not be in the best interests of Saskatchewan and that will not be in the best interests of our students.

We must also take a look, not only at what is happening at the universities but also at SIAST. SIAST is a very strong program in Saskatchewan. When we hear my colleague from Arm River talking about the demand of the agricultural sector for trained, highly skilled individuals, these people are coming out of graduation programs in SIAST, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They are the real welders. They are the people who will be employed in this province. They will be the people that will provide a tax base for the government. They will be the ones paying income tax. They will not be the ones who will be a burden to the government and a cost to the government. And we have to be careful with the SIAST programs to ensure that there is an availability of programs throughout all of the institutes.

Whether or not there is a restructuring and whether or not we start to look at the delivery of program in an efficient manner, in a more efficient manner, that has to be looked at collectively with the universities as well. We must not do a piecemeal

approach as is suggested. We must not do a review of the universities independent of the review of the SIAST programs, independent of the review of the regional college system. And if we try to do those things one year at a time, we will end up in a situation where we will have created a situation where we will not have looked at the big picture. We will have looked at little pieces in the picture and we will still have missed the big picture. So I encourage the minister to look at this one very, very seriously.

We see that the funding cuts to post-secondary education will be extensive in the next years. That is reality. We cannot look at that and say, we'll just slough that off and we'll increase the tuition fees. That can't happen. Tuition fees are the costs paid by students; they're the costs of parents and we are at the national average, Mr. Speaker. So we can't suddenly up our costs by another 5 or 6 or \$7,000 for tuition. That will not work. So the approach that I hope that this government takes is one of compassion, one of looking at the entire picture and seeing what is best for the province — not for a political decision but for an educational decision. Because that, Mr. Speaker, is why our young people will leave this province, and they will leave this province before they even get the education.

So far we've been educating people and we haven't had the jobs available for them, and they've been jumping to other provinces to get employment. But, Mr. Speaker, if we destroy our educational system we will be in a situation where we will lose our students even before we send them into the post-secondary programs. And that cannot happen.

Mr. Speaker, this government has shown, I think, a situation where they are very, very capable at mismanagement and waste. In the last short while we've seen many, many people hired, hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on consultants. We've seen re-engineering structures put in place at a cost of millions of dollars. We've seen \$2.5 million worth of expenditure for political appointments. We've seen studies done, I believe \$600,000 spent on a review of whether or not we would have SaskPower rate increases.

So there are expenditures that have been made, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this government has control over. It is a matter of making choices. It is a matter of setting priorities. And the priorities that I talk about, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are the priorities of education. We must look at education as the key.

If you identify, if you look at, the polling done by the members opposite, you will see that education and health are the concerns. Those are the concerns that have been indicated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in closing I want to emphasize one more time how absolutely crucial education is to the future of Saskatchewan. This budget that the members opposite say they support, shows what little importance they place on educating the children, the youth, the adults of our province.

Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this budget is full of government back-patting and empty rhetoric. And because it lacks any long-term, realistic solutions for the people of this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I cannot support it, because the people of Saskatchewan deserve so much more. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to get up tonight and say a few words on the budget. I know time is winding on so I won't spend probably as long as I would like to, but I'll say a few words.

I'd like to first of all congratulate you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on your election to the Deputy Chair and also to the Speaker on his election to this House's Speaker.

I also want to say a few words, Mr. Speaker, about the Watrous constituency. This is the first time that I've been able to stand up in the budget debate and talk on behalf of the constituents of Watrous. And I think most people know that that area is the centre of the province, if not the centre of the universe, and the economic activity flies on as usual from the great entrepreneurial spirit that lies in the communities.

We of course have many huge implement dealerships in Watrous, in town itself, and car dealerships. And in and around the area we have a very active Manitou Beach mineral spa, and all towns from the Watson and Quill Lakes on the north-east to right near Saskatoon on the west side down to Semans and the south, and Nokomis, and everything in between. So I'm very proud to represent that area, and I want to thank those people for the support they gave me for the third term, my third term in government, and allowing me to represent them for the next four years.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a bit about agriculture to start with, and agriculture of course, it's near and dear to my heart. I've been involved in it basically all my life and it sort of disturbs me, Mr. Speaker, to see some of the things that are happening today as far as the opposition is concerned in terms of the responsibility that they put forward — or lack of responsibility they put forward.

I want to talk, Mr. Speaker, about the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) program for just a minute, even though it is a long gone, dead program, just to set the record straight on a few things as to how the opposition carries on. Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are talking about \$12 million that the farmers had to pay back. I'll tell you if I did a vote in coffee row in rural Saskatchewan I know I'd win the vote, because most farmers, the overwhelming majority, know that any overpayments from the government have to be paid back.

In fact I give them credit, Mr. Speaker, because the overpayments . . . that they know that any bill that they want to pay back and are responsible in doing so . . . but let's just put forward a scenario, Mr. Speaker, where that \$12 million wasn't paid back, as the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party say that we shouldn't have to pay it back. My question to them, Mr. Speaker, is what would you do without?

Because in this budget we have had a mandate to balance the budget and the people of Saskatchewan have given us that mandate and we're continuing that mandate — the first province in Canada to balance the budget. Now we've got another four-year plan to keep the books balanced over that

period.

But let's just take the \$12 million . . . and even if we take a portion of that, let's say it's federal-provincial funding, let's take \$6 million as our share. I ask the Liberal members opposite, and I'm going to go to the book, to the *Estimates* book, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm going to ask the Liberal Party over there, the Liberal members, what they wanted to cut in order to make up the \$6 million that the farmers wouldn't have to pay back.

Let's go to administration: three and a half million dollars in administration. Can the Liberal members tell me if they want to cut administration? Well I don't hear much talk.

Accommodation and central services: \$2.7 million. Well we're up almost to \$5 million. Would they want to cut the administration and the accommodation and central services?

Or how about, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the agriculture industry assistance programs? This is the grants to general agricultural interests. This is things like the rat control program at \$125,000. Would the Liberal members want us to cut the rat control program? Or, included in that is the 4-H program for \$271,000. The rat control program was 125,000, the . . .

An Hon. Member: — We need rat control in here.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — We need rat control across the House. Exactly. The 4-H program, \$271,000. Could the Liberal members tell me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, do you want to cut the 4-H program? Is that one of the programs you would cut to make up the \$6 million that you thought farmers shouldn't have to pay back in the overpayment? What about the farmland leaseback compensation? Another \$250,000. Should we cut that?

(2130)

Matching grants for international aid, how about that one? — \$300,000. In fact, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you add up all the agriculture industry assistance programs, it only comes to \$4.3 million. And yet those members over there want to cut 6 million. And again I ask them, what part of this budget, of this agricultural budget, do you want to take that from?

I'd like the members who have the time to stand in their place and speak, to answer that question, because it's a fundamental question that has to be answered. If you don't want to cut something, if you don't want to have something paid back, then you have to take it from some place else.

And I could go on. The land and regulatory management, just about \$4 million. The livestock operations and land review, about \$3 million. They could take their pick. Any one of those programs or a combination of those programs, Mr. Deputy Speaker, up to \$6 million. I'd like to have them get their heads together over there and the next member should get up and say which of those programs they want to cut, because some of them are going to have to be cut if we want to balance the books and they know that.

Mr. Speaker, I hear the combined whine over there, talk about the crop insurance agents and offices. Well, Mr. Speaker, what they say is: oh my goodness, the agents are gone; we closed a few offices. What are we going to do? We're going to have to drive for miles.

Well the members should get into the 1990s and on into the year 2000, Mr. Deputy Speaker, simply because you don't have to drive any more. We want to get to a system in Crop Insurance where you can fill out a form, if you don't have a computer . . . because in the future, you're going to be using Internets. You're going to be using computers. And where you can use e-mail to get back and forth to the corporation. And I'll tell you that will be coming in the years ahead. The members know that.

We're going to get to a program where farmers can sit down at their table . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member wasn't here all day today; now he's in, and he's got lots to say since he's come back, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to see your return to keep some order in the House for this member.

The Speaker: — Order. Now, now the Speaker is not seeking helpful advice although I know that members are willing to offer it. And I'll simply ask the hon. member, the Minister of Agriculture . . . he knows that he need not offer advice to the Speaker as to how to do his job. And I'll let the Minister of Agriculture continue to do his.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sorry, I didn't mean to help you to do your job, of course.

But we want to get to a situation where you don't have to drive in rural Saskatchewan, where you can sit down at your table and get the form to fill out for crop insurance, fill out that form, mail it back to Crop Insurance office, just as it was in the past, and get back to a simple program.

Mr. Speaker, we are now developing this new program. We have had meetings around the province, 10 meetings around the province in early March. We had many hundreds of farmers come to those meetings to give advice on crop insurance and how the program should be put together. We are now taking that advice back to the Crop Insurance head office. We're going to be putting together a presentation to this government and to the federal government to develop a new program so that farmers will have a stable, secure crop insurance program. And we have to have that, Mr. Speaker, simply because it's the only program in town.

Now these members across the floor can whine, like the 747 coming in for a landing, all they want. But the fact of the matter is that we are going to have a good program and because farmers dictate, demand, that we have a good program, and we have to have some income security for farmers.

So, Mr. Speaker, that program was going to be put into place, and it's not going to be like when the Tories were in government where you're sitting on your tractor trying to figure out what the program is. Program will be in place in ample time to ensure that farmers know what's coming down the pipe for the 1997 crop year.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in Sask Agriculture and Food in general, we are focusing on economic development. We have tremendous potential in the hog industry in this province.

We are seeing south-east Asia with a tremendous economic growth — 6, 7, 8 per cent over this year and the number of years to come is the prediction. And in south-east Asia, Mr. Speaker, people over there . . . the disposable income is increasing. As their disposable income increases of course, the amount of money they have available for food increases. And it is a known fact in south-east Asia, many countries spend at least 40 per cent of their income on food.

And that bodes well for the livestock industry of this province and that is why we have such great potential in the livestock industry, and particularly in the hog industry. Hogs are a very important part of this province. We produce about a million hogs now and we would like to see at least 2 million in the near future, in the next few years, in the province.

And in the area of technology transfer — I hear the members opposite complaining about all the offices that were closed, and we did close four extension offices — Mr. Speaker, there again, with technology transfer there is little need any more, if you have the equipment — and not everybody does so you have to have a transition period, and that's what we're in now — if they have the equipment to sit in your farm office, use your computer, connect with the extension agrologist, and then make your decisions on an informed basis.

If you don't use the computer, you can still have the telephone, and you can always still drive, because as far as extension offices, there are still, I believe, 31 offices around the province.

But it's important that we make sure that we have the technology. It's important that we make sure we're setting up our technology for the future, not burying our heads in our sand like the members opposite do, saying, I want it all back.

Mr. Speaker, I want to spend a few words — and as you've noticed, I'm cutting a number of these topics a little short — but I want to spend a few moments on the Canadian Wheat Board. Now at least on one thing I give the Tories credit for over there. They are taking a stand. They say the board should go. They say the board should go and we should lose 4 or \$5 million a year that the board gives us as an advantage for premium pricing. At least I don't like their stand, but I admire that they take a stand.

With the Liberals, I haven't heard really a policy yet. Of course it's quite difficult to hear any kind of policy coming out of the Liberal Party, but I'll get to that in a minute.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Wheat Board is an integral part, and has been for 50 years, of the Canadian western, Canadian farm economy. I don't want to go into all the detail, but the people who are calling for dual marketing are calling for it for one reason and one reason only — they want to see the end of the board.

Because the philosophical argument, Mr. Speaker, does not

change and it has not changed for years. The opponents of the board continue to argue against the board. The only thing that changes is the argument. As one argument wears out and becomes dysfunctional because it's proven wrong, they'll try another argument. And when that one wears out they'll try another. And this is an ongoing saga, Mr. Speaker, that will not end. But the people in Canada today, in western Canada today, as we've seen at the western grain marketing panels, have said over and over and over again that the Canadian Wheat Board is an essential part, and a dual marketing system means the end of the board.

I see, Mr. Speaker, many people saying, well you can have dual marketing and still keep the board. Those people either don't understand the situation or care not to understand the situation because, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is . . . and I'll go over it very quickly, and the member should listen, especially the Tory members of this House. If you proceed with dual marketing, the first thing you do is you lose origination of supply. In a monopoly situation, you have to be able to originate the grain, the supply, in order to get it through a system that can be congested very easily and would be congested very easily with a multiple-seller environment. Get that material, grain, through to the export position so that the buyers can be assured that the quality is there, and the time of its delivery is there. That's one of the things the board does.

Another thing the board does, as in the what we call a KFT study — the Kraft-Tyrchniewicz-Furtan study just recently where they looked at every sale transaction from '80-'81 to 1993-'94 — Mr. Speaker, in studying every sales transaction, they found that across this piece, the Canadian Wheat Board brought to the farmers of Saskatchewan an average additional 51 cents a bushel or 4 to \$500 million a year simply because they had a monopoly situation selling a product. They sold that product on a world market. And the quality of that product, our grain, dictated that those countries around the world would pay more than the street price for that grain.

And, Mr. Speaker, if you take that away, if you take that away, then you have to think what will happen? If you take the monopoly situation away, you have multiple sellers. In a multiple-seller environment, which is dual marketing, you only have one price, Mr. Speaker. You only have one price simply because everybody wants to sell a product, and they're going to undercut each other until they get the price. That's the open-market system. You can go to Chicago futures. You can go to the Minneapolis Grain Exchange or the Chicago exchange or the Winnipeg Exchange. There's only price.

But under the Canadian Wheat Board with a monopoly, there's more than one price. There's the street price, and then there's the premium price that has been proven that we get under the system. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't know where the Tories . . . I appreciate that they take a stand at least, and the Liberals don't seem to, but I don't know what they want to get rid of 4 or \$500 million a year for, especially after they started the ball rolling and the Liberals knocked down all the 10 pins by eliminating the \$320 million a year of the Crow benefit in this province.

Now you eliminate 320 to start with, and now they want to add another 400 or \$500 million; that's \$800 million a year that

they want the federal government to cut out of western Canada. My question to you and the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, is what is the logic of that? There is no logic. So, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to go on about the Canadian Wheat Board, although it's one of my favourite topics because it's such an important instrument in this Canadian wheat economy, grain economy, that we have today. And I just ask every farmer to be sure they know what they mean when they say they want dual marketing.

And the question that they have to ask themselves — and this is where everybody interprets the polls and plebiscites and surveys wrongly — the fundamental question is: will dual marketing mean the end of the Canadian Wheat Board? Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question, for the reasons that I've stated and for many more, is yes.

And that is why when the people are asked the question, if it means the end of the board, do you still want dual marketing, that over 85 per cent of the people in western Canada say no, they do not want dual marketing.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, I agree with them. And I just hope that the Canadian western grain marketing panel who is reporting to the federal government reports favourably to that position, and that the federal minister will finally put an end to those opponents of the board, saying the board is staying.

And of course we can improve it. We can improve it. There's got to be two criteria when we improve it. Number one, it's got to be beneficial to western Canada producers, and number two, it can't be detrimental to the functioning of the Canadian Wheat Board. And those two criteria met, then we can make all the improvements we want in our marketing system.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk just for a minute about farm input costs. This is a topic that the opposition never seem to raise. And it's, I think, one of the most important topics, along with the retention of the Canadian Wheat Board, that is in western Canada today.

An Hon. Member: — What are you doing about it?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Well the member opposite says, what am I doing about it? I'll tell you I'm doing a lot more than he is. And I'll just tell him what I'm doing about it. A month ago I was in Toronto with the Ag ministers' meeting across Canada. I took down to that meeting, with Mr. Goodale and the other Agriculture ministers, an idea, a suggestion, that we put farm input costs on the priority lists.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government just came through a study. The Liberals over there keep yipping — but they just came through a study about farm input costs. Do you know what the Liberal study said? They didn't come out to western Canada to start with, your buds down in Ottawa. They didn't come out to western Canada to ask the people out here what they want. But the Liberal study said that farmers should — get this — should shop around. Well hallelujah, farmers, we got to shop around. That's the Liberal solution to farm input cost increases.

Mr. Speaker, I did manage to get it on the agenda, and the top five items that we'll be discussing in Victoria next July.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as you know, and as all members of this House know, one province alone cannot affect the system that much. But I'll tell you what we can do. We can band together with the federal government. And we can do an in-depth study as to if there's any price fixing, if there's gouging, if there's different prices for the same commodity in different parts of the country, if there's different prices for the same commodity north of the U.S. (United States) border or south of the U.S. border.

And we can make the chemical and fertilizer companies, Mr. Speaker, look over their shoulder, mind their p's and q's, and assist the farmers that way. Because it is such a shame, after a number of years of low commodity prices where farmers went for years fixing equipment trying to make ends meet, now when the prices are coming up, the input costs are eating up a significant portion of what could be profit, to get them back on their feet again.

And what are the Liberals caucus done? What have the Tory caucus done? I haven't heard a word, not one word. Maybe I can entice them from this speech, Mr. Speaker, to get up and at least ask a question in question period about input costs. But right now one of the most important aspects of rural Saskatchewan, input costs, is not even addressed by the members opposite. You hear what they talk about; they want to talk about everything else.

In fact what is the policy? Here is the question. What is the Liberal Party's policy on anything? I think tonight and over the few days of the throne speech, I'm starting to put together, I'm starting to put together what the policy is.

(2145)

And it just reminds me, Mr. Speaker, of that old, you know what happens when you play an old country and western album backwards? Well your dog comes back and your horse comes back and your wife comes back and your truck comes back. Well the Liberals, they want to play this big record backwards so that your service centre comes back, and your Crop Insurance office comes back, and your jobs come back, and your depot comes back, and everything comes back.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, that would be nice. That would be nice but that's not the real world, so quit spinning backwards. Quit spinning backwards, Liberal members across the way, and I'll tell you, you might get some credibility. Because I'll tell you, just if I sit here tonight, Mr. Speaker, if I sat here tonight for the time that I sat here and listened to the Liberal members opposite, and I had my little adding machine up and I calculated all the costs, you know: well we're going to fix every road. The member from Athabasca, he had every road in his constituency fixed, and then some of the other members had all of their roads fixed. Well if we added all that up — and then we're going to reopen all the schools that closed and we're not going to close anymore — if we add all that up.

And then we're going to reopen all the hospitals and we're going to add all that up. Mr. Speaker, you got to get your head out of the sand. It would be — we've cut the expenditures this year by \$230 million — if we add up what all the members over there . . . they're not only going to add that \$230 million back on, they'll add another 100 million at least, onto the budget of this province.

An Hon. Member: — But they want to cut taxes.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — And then they're going to cut taxes. That's exactly right. Well this is voodoo economics in the first degree, I'll tell you. It's better than Presto Manning, you know. Like old Presto says, poof, now it's gone and, you know, all your services are there and all your taxes are gone; it's magic. This is just the voodoo economics of the Liberal Party across the way, Mr. Speaker. I'll tell you, I think that the members opposite have to get a little real.

Now I know it's easy to sit in opposition and say yes, yes, yes, we should do this and do everything. But the reality is, there is no policy. I challenge the Liberal members, Mr. Speaker, to stand on their feet and dictate what the Liberal policy is. You can't have a policy of, well we're going to get your job back, we're going to get your school back, and, you know, we're going to get everything back. That's not a policy; that's a cop-out, exactly.

Now what is the policy on education? Don't give me the "give all the schools back" thing. What is the policy on education, on reorganizing to save money so that we can't raise taxes? What is your policy on municipal government? What is your policy on health care? I mean don't talk about just the give-back policy. Talk about how you're going to balance the budget, keep the services, and reduce taxes, as this government over on this side of the House has done over the last years — first government to balance the books; first government to balance the books and now a four-year plan to continue that.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to be too hard on the Liberals tonight because I know they're having a few problems over there and so I . . . and I could, but I won't be mean. But I'll tell you, I had a little day-dream today and . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . no, the nightmare comes from that side of the House. But I can just imagine, can you just imagine, the Liberals walking through the park, and we'll call this one guy Ronnie O, and we'll call the other guy Billy Boy.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Now the hon. member knows that he can't do indirectly what he's not allowed to do directly, and I'll just ask him — he understands the rules of debate — and I'll ask him to guide himself accordingly.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Okay. Well you've got a Liberal no. 1 and Tory no. 1. How about that? And Liberal no. 1 is walking through the park, Mr. Speaker, and all of a sudden out from behind the bush comes Tory no. 1, and he says, psst, psst, come on over here; come on over here. And he turns around and says, oh hi; how are you? Don't say my name, you know. And Tory no. 1, the Leader of the Tory Party, says to the Leader of the Liberal Party, he says, no, no, come on over here; come on over here. He says, you should be with me; you should be with me.

You know why? He says, because you've had a Tory membership in years, longer than you've had a Liberal membership in months. You're really a Tory. Come on over.

And then Tory no. 1 leader would say, well no, you know, I'm not one of you guys any more because, you know, you ran up the debt of this province. You're bad guys. But he says, no, no, you're one of us; you're one of us, remember? You were with us then; you helped us. No, no, I didn't help you. I'm a Liberal now; I'm a Liberal now.

And then you could just imagine this little scene walking through the park, and another little Liberal jumps out. It's the same story. Most of them have had Liberal memberships in months . . . or Tory memberships in years, longer than Liberal membership in months. But this is the new Liberal.

Mr. Speaker, you can imagine these poor little lost souls lying in bed and like, just saying . . . lie there and say, what am I. What am I? And you can imagine this big voice comes out of the sky and says, you're a Liberal; you're confused. And that's the way the Liberal Party runs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the credibility again. Because I can see the Liberal members, they lie there awake at night thinking about things to ask in question period as well . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . They don't think very hard, one of the members said.

Well the problem is they don't think very hard because lots of times — and I've got to be careful what I say — but lots of times it's the Liberal version of the truth, let's put it that way. And I've been listening to the members and it happens time and time again.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, the sad part of this whole situation is that it doesn't matter what the opposition members say — it can be fact or fiction — it doesn't matter what they say, they'll get a story on it from the press. And then the press goes out to rural Saskatchewan and cities and towns in this province.

And you know, there's a saying that I just picked up not too long ago from a senior statesman in this province, and I want to repeat it now. And it says, a lie will be around the world twice before the truth gets its shoes on. And that's the *modus operandi* of the members opposite. It doesn't matter what you say, because a lie runs around the world twice before the truth gets its shoes on. And then the people in rural Saskatchewan say, what's the truth and what isn't the truth — degrading the level of debate in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think that's very wise. And I think the members should get their act together to maintain their credibility. And to maintain their credibility they talk about the demise of rural Saskatchewan, the demise of the poor, the demise of the children. That Liberal caucus, Mr. Speaker, last year voted against every increase in social value program that we put forward. Every one they voted against. Now they stand up there and say, oh the poor people of rural Saskatchewan, the children, the women. I mean you've heard it all today and the

days in the past. Talk about lack of credibility.

Now I don't mind an opposition that stands up and criticizes me legitimately for something I've done wrong. But don't stand up there and talk out of one side of your mouth after you've acted out of the other side of your mouth a few months ago. And that's the problem that we have.

Then we have, Mr. Speaker, then we have the Tory agenda. I'm going to speed up here pretty quick — the Tory agenda, which is the Reform agenda. We see the ag programs where they're going to, like I said, get rid of the Canadian Wheat Board. They're going to go . . . this is the Preston Manning. This is the leader of the Tory Party trying to be a miniature version of Preston Manning. I've got to get those Reform votes so I'm going to come in here and I'm going to do my thing voting against all social programs, Mr. Speaker. And he's talking about boot camps and he's talking about chain gangs . . . well not chain gangs, but boot camps like in Alabama where they have chain gangs.

He thinks that the old U.S.-style programs are great. Make these folks work. In fact you know what, Mr. Speaker? In Texas today, it's legal to carry a concealed gun, and not the only state. And this is what the Tories are promoting, that right-wing, free enterprise, open, every-man-for-himself country. What a sorry state that would be — can carry concealed weapons.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, is these people have no respect. The Tories have no respect for this institution, and I have yet to form an opinion of the Liberals. No respect for this institution simply because . . . and they talk about cutting salaries, cutting pensions. They don't think . . . And they want to be like the U.S. again where every senator — not every, over half the senators and congressmen in the United States — are millionaires, and that's the only way they get to Congress.

The problem is the Tory Party is listening to the Preston Mannings of the world, the Preston Mannings of the world who say, you don't, you know, you don't have to get paid. You don't need a pension. You should do this for nothing.

Well I'll tell you that's not how it works in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker; because if it worked that way, who would you have represented? Would you have the poor people represented? No, I don't think so. Would you have natives represented? Not very many. Would you have many middle class represented? Not very many. You would have the elite in the House in Saskatchewan, just like you have in the United States. That's why the lack of regard for this institution will bring this institution to its knees, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to end by saying that . . . I want to say that we on this side of the House are preparing for the 21st century. We are on track with 10,000 jobs today, another 20,000 by the year 2000.

We have a little dilemma in rural Saskatchewan. I want to talk to the people in rural Saskatchewan in this respect, to understand one thing. You demand a service . . . we demand in rural Saskatchewan — I live in rural Saskatchewan — we demand that service is maintained. We demand that there's no

increase in our taxes. We on this side of the House have tried to maintain that. And yet we demand that all our jobs be retained.

And that's the catch-22 situation, because if you take out every government job . . . a government can't maintain this service, can't keep the taxes down, and maintain every government job in rural Saskatchewan. Because if you look at any typical town of 2 or 3,000 people, if you took out all the teachers and all the doctors and the nurses and all the government employees, you'd take out a significant portion of their workforce. And as government, we would like to retain every job in that rural Saskatchewan, but the problem is, Mr. Speaker, you can't do it all.

But what you can do is you can create an environment. And you can create an environment where those jobs are replaced. And I'll tell you, in rural Saskatchewan over the last number of years where there have been jobs cut, the rural Saskatchewan have replaced those jobs . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You'll have lots of time, Mr. Member, to get up and talk later on.

But in rural Saskatchewan we've replaced those jobs. For example, the processing, the food processing industry. A good example.

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Thank you. The food processing industry; a good example. Over 70 per cent of food processing is outside of Regina and Saskatoon. That's in rural Saskatchewan. Those are small industries like Melfort . . . like Thomson Meats in Melfort, like Drake Meat in Drake. And you can go on all around the piece. Over 70 per cent.

And that's creating the climate. And a lot of those people are exporting to the world, Mr. Speaker, a lot of them to south-east Asia. But we have a value added plan in this province. We have an innovation fund.

Well the member laughs. Okay, I'll just tell you how. We've got the agri-food innovation fund where people with new ideas and value added products can use government money, taxpayers' money — not just a hand-out like it was in the past — but use taxpayers' money to lever private money, to lever bank or credit union money, to ensure that that idea gets put forward.

Then when the idea is created and you need some equity to buy the machinery to develop that value added product, we have the ag equity fund where again we take our few dollars — we don't have a whole lot of money — we're taking our few dollars, we're focusing it on value added of primary products. We take that ag equity fund and we use it to lever private money, to lever bank and other institution money, in order that that equity is used to make that product hit the world markets.

We have the Ag Development Fund, from research development right through the piece, focusing our money again on the value added. And that's what has to be done in this province, Mr. Speaker. And with that, we will create more jobs like the value added in the meat processing industry outside Regina and Saskatoon.

And I just want to make a point about this budget. In Saskatchewan, 80 per cent of the government jobs are in cities and 20 per cent are in rural Saskatchewan. If you look across the piece, Mr. Speaker, instead of the job reduction in this budget, it's exactly proportional — 80 per cent of the job cuts are in the cities and 20 per cent in rural Saskatchewan. And that is the fair way to do things. Don't go after one sector over another. It was done very equitably and fairly.

Mr. Speaker, I know I could go on and on, but I want to end this by saying briefly: health, education, social services — the incredible offload of the federal government. And it astonishes me to see the members opposite get up and talk about education and what this government's doing in education and health care and social services.

Mr. Speaker, in this budget we've back-filled those three, \$106 million, 100 per cent. And they have the audacity, after their cousins in Ottawa have cut not only Saskatchewan, but right across the piece, to stand up and say, what are you doing in education? I mean don't they make the connection?

And I'd like them to table every letter. I'd like them to table every letter they've written to the federal Minister of Health or the federal Finance minister, let's put it that way. Table your letters saying, do not cut these programs. If you stand up in this House and criticize us for cutting, table letters you've sent to the federal government's cutting. I don't think there are any, Mr. Speaker. I don't think there are any.

Mr. Speaker, there's one reason we live in this province. Because over the years, despite a few warts in our system, we've had a CCF-NDP (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation-New Democratic Party) government with a social conscience to deliver programs to cities and towns and rural Saskatchewan, to maintain jobs and the quality of life in this province which many others haven't seen.

(2200)

We have seen this province come from a have-not province in the early years to a have province. We've got a little blip in the system but, Mr. Speaker, we are proud care-bearers of the NDP-CCF torch and we will carry that torch forward to make sure the budgets are balanced over the next four years and so that we can maintain the quality of life and do one thing that the other provinces and the other parties have not, and that is make sure that we have a job for our children when they need a job. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make my comments in relation to my support for the 1996 budget, *Preparing for the New Century*. Mr. Speaker, I'll be making my comments in relation to a comparative overview between the Liberal government, the federal Liberal government, and our provincial NDP government. I'll also be making comments, Mr. Speaker, on a situation regarding northern Saskatchewan as well as relationship with aboriginal peoples.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to start out by examining, you know, the overall question of the comparison between a Liberal government and an NDP government. As I travel throughout northern Saskatchewan and throughout the province, we see the line that is easily said, that in many cases the Liberals sound a lot like the NDP when they're in opposition, but in the end result they govern like the Conservatives.

When we look at the issue in that context, Mr. Speaker, there is quite a degree of truth in it. We look at it in regards to the biggest cut in the history of Canada since the Second World War in the area of social spending. When you look at that cut of a small province like Saskatchewan with a million people, it's \$114 million cut from the federal level in the areas of health, education, and social services.

Mr. Speaker, this cut is going to have devastating effects, a lot of people had thought. But in many cases, we were lucky, in a sense, that we had an NDP government with compassion and with sensitivity. And we looked at it, Mr. Speaker, in a sense that as we consulted the people, we listened to what they had to say. Many of the people told us that we should not govern like the federal Liberals and their \$114 million cut — 73 per cent of their cut in the area of social spending. They were talking a good line before an election but indeed they would govern like the Tories.

Many of the people I've talked to said without the Mulroney government . . . for many years Mulroney wanted to cut social spending, but he was unable to do so except to a certain degree. Many years Mulroney wanted to slash and cut the Crow rate and the impact on the agricultural community but he was never able to do it.

Many of the Liberals from across Canada were criticizing Mulroney on the issues of social spending. And they were criticizing Mulroney on the Crow rate. They made all kinds of great speeches across Canada on the devastating effect of the Tory government in Ottawa, all across . . . people all across this country.

But, Mr. Speaker, all those great speeches were never followed up with truth and action. What we saw, Mr. Speaker, is the exact opposite. What we saw was an attack on the basis of the fundamental institutions that we're starting in this province. We took the example of medicare, 1962, when we had the famous Liberal, Thatcher, breaking the door down to fight against medicare.

When we were dealing with this issue when we were in opposition in the '86-90 period, the Tories said it was medicare. The Liberals said it was medicare when we presented this issue during the federal election.

But the truth comes now, this year, when indeed the Liberals . . . have you looked at the gun control Bill that they passed? Have you looked at all the big names of the rich that paid to the Liberal Party? The rich are not touched. Not all the rich. The selected rich of the province are not touched by the Liberals. But they will attack the farmers. They will attack the poor, the middle class. They will even attack the trappers in regards to gun control.

So when you look at the Liberal strategy they may try and sound a lot like the NDP before an election, but indeed they govern and act like the Tories.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at that as well, when we look at the aspect of educational cuts and the foundation, you know, for the future, part of that cuts on our youth will be devastating. You know the youth are trying hard to go to school and become contributing members to society. And we look at people who are disabled, when you look at the cuts, a lot that hasn't come out is that the vocational rehabilitation program for disabled people were cut by the federal Liberals.

So not only did we see absolutely nothing in regards to cuts for the rich, the selected rich, friends of the Liberals at the federal level, but they would pick on, not only the poor, the middle class, the farmers, a lot of the workers, aboriginal people, but also people who are disabled. Mr. Speaker, that's the reality of the Liberal approach in regards to governing.

Mr. Speaker, as an NDP government, I was proud of our budget this time around, as I was on all the previous years we've been governing. A government is judged in many cases not only with the partnership it builds with the general population, but also the partnership it builds and the compassion it has for people who are poor, people who are needy, and people in the middle-class realms.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the NDP government in this budget has again built on that tremendous history. The CCF started it out and reflected it in the history of Canada, and we're seeing it reflected in NDP governments throughout the Saskatchewan history. And I would say, Mr. Speaker, that what we see is not only compassion but a sense of stability and a sense of change as we look forward in the future.

We see this idea of stability through our fiscal responsibility as a government. We've seen the first balanced budget in the history of Canada in recent years. We've seen balanced budget legislation in this province. When we look at the new budget, we see, four years into the future, a balanced budget. Four years of planning, so people can look ahead and see what's coming, was a very important aspect of our Saskatchewan budget.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — We see, Mr. Speaker, that in the four-year period, after the fifteen and a half billion dollar disgrace by the Tories, that indeed we will reduce our debt by 2.4 billion. The interest payments on the debt are \$850 million, Mr. Speaker, but we will have them cut in the next four years down to 750 million — a cut of \$100 million.

Mr. Speaker, that will be \$100 million to the people of the province in regards to the needs, whether in the realm of what we have been able to support this year in regards to our expenditures by taking the cuts in health, education, and social services of over 100 million and replacing it with an NDP government of over \$100 million and saving these programs.

So, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to say a few words as well in regards

to the North. I hear the member from Athabasca and I hear the member from the Saskatoon Greystone making comments about the North. But I will say I've been sitting in our legislature since '86, and I might say that what we have done in regards to northern development in comparison let's say to Alberta or Manitoba or anywhere across Canada, or for that internationally, was one of the best examples of development that you could ever see.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — We looked at the situation in regards to mining. And I would guarantee there is no place in Canada or the United States or any place else where you have 50 per cent employment of people from that area. No place.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — There is no place where you will see the training programs in a few, short period of time; in the four-year period we've had 400 people trained. And, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the high unemployment rates of aboriginal people, 90 per cent of the people that were trained were aboriginal people, Indian-Metis people from northern Saskatchewan.

I think that says a lot in regards to the fact that the multi-party training program that we had in northern Saskatchewan won a national award for excellence, and that was an example of, again, an NDP strategy in education.

Mr. Speaker, we also worked in partnership, not only with the people of the North, but with the businesses of the North in regards to Cameco and Cogema. And also we work, Mr. Speaker, with the smaller businesses of the North.

I must say that since we've become government, we've increased the number of contracts to quite an extent. But what is really important, Mr. Speaker, is the amount of the contracts. We've gone from \$12 million worth of contracts to northern businesses to \$47 million worth of contracts this year. That is a 400 per cent increase in four years. That is unmatched anywhere in the world.

When you look at the contractors, Mr. Speaker, I heard the Athabasca member talking about whether the east side or the west side were getting all the contracts and the jobs in the North. I will say very clearly that even in the far north where a very few jobs existed during Tory times, you could count a handful in Athabasca region of which the member represents. We now have over a hundred people in the training and hiring components of northern Saskatchewan.

We also see in there, Mr. Speaker, that in regards to the training component, that the west side had a new building in regards to Northlands College, right in Buffalo Narrows which the member from Athabasca represents. So when he says that nothing was done, it is inaccurate. Important things have been done in regards to the self-determination effort of the people from the west side and the partnership with the Saskatchewan government.

When we looked at the development therefore, we also saw the development on the west side. When I went to Contact Lake, just north of La Ronge, there was a tremendous success story on that. As I looked at the road constructions and Internorth, we saw companies like Internorth from the west side, and I say from Ile-a-la-Crosse, from his home town, a Metis person by the name of George Raymond owns that company, Internorth, along with Leonard Larson from Buffalo Narrows. Tremendous Metis entrepreneurs, they have the contract for Contact Lake.

(2215)

Their record of employment — they're with a general contractor — their record of employment was very impressive. Over 80 and 90 per cent of the people at different stages of development were from northern Saskatchewan.

When you looked at the overall record of that Contact Lake development, it was 66 per cent employment of people from northern Saskatchewan, in that mine. So when you look at the development you see people who have stood up, said we want to be part of development, and Saskatchewan government in partnership with the mining company said yes, it's an important state of development and that's what we will do and that is what has happened.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, I would also talk about other companies, etc. I might make a comment on Kitsaki Development Corporation, NRT, Northern Resource Trucking, I might say that Chief Cook, who also sits in on the Cameco board, represented at the highest levels of decision making on the largest uranium mining company in the world, is also the person in charge of what NRT has achieved, and that company is now the largest uranium mining transportation trucking company in the whole world.

Mr. Speaker, that is progress. That is economic development. That is real and true partnership with people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — When we look at forestry, Mr. Speaker, I could go on on another litany in regards to what has happened in forestry with Meadow Lake Tribal Council; with Montreal Lake and the computer programing that they had along with their forestry program, you know, updating the technological knowledge of their people, getting involved in the forestry sector.

I can talk about Cumberland House and their involvement in forestry in the past couple of years and what we are doing with MacMillan Bloedel and the mill over there, and the possibilities for development in that area; as well as what is taking place with what is happening with the possibilities on Weyerhaeuser. And as well we just signed, Mr. Speaker, an agreement with Green Lake, of where the member from Athabasca represents Green Lake, 30,000 cubic metres of forestry in his own area, Mr. Speaker — 30,000 cubic metres of wood.

Every year for 20 years, Mr. Speaker, that is progress. The

leadership of that community stood straightforward with us, said this is where we want to head. We want to put food on the table for our own children. We need the wood. We need to stay strong with our own families. We don't want the welfare cheques, they said; we want pay cheques like everybody else.

And, Mr. Speaker, when we listened, we then followed up with action and we signed an agreement with the tremendous leadership of the people from Green Lake in that regard. Mr. Speaker, again that is reflected in our budget.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, I could go on in regards to the whole issue of treaty land entitlement. And you look at treaty land entitlement and the problems they're having with treaty land entitlement in Manitoba. No place else in Canada, Mr. Speaker, has treaty land entitlement been resolved except with an NDP government in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we are looking at over 1.6 million acres of land to be settled. Mr. Speaker, when you look at that \$450 million agreement, the province will be paying approximately 180 million of it over the years to come. And I think, Mr. Speaker, that's a sign of commitment.

There are problems in areas in regards to the process of the implementation, but what I see, Mr. Speaker, is success. I saw the situation that was touch-and-go in Fort Qu'Appelle, Mr. Speaker, but the people went in partnership with Indian people of that area and they resolved that issue. That is a sign not only of partnership with the province of Saskatchewan and Indian people, but the community and Indian people, Mr. Speaker. That was a sign of progress. That is a sign of meeting up with the new century.

When we look at the aspect of the whole idea of Indian people, we also look at the issue of gaming. We look at the gaming issue in this province and we see the partnership that we had with Indian people and with our section on the associated entities, you know, with exhibition associations as well as charities and with Metis people. And, Mr. Speaker, people are looking at that; class it again as being a model, a model of fairness, a model of reason, a model of building a sense of stability where all peoples can work in partnership in the betterment, you know, of their community.

And although it was a very touchy issue, Mr. Speaker, we did the best we could. And a lot of people are congratulating and saying yes, that was the way to go.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — So when you look at it, Mr. Speaker, and when I heard the comments made in regards to the North and in regards to aboriginal people, I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, there is no better place in Canada than Saskatchewan. Yes, we have a long ways to go, but slowly but surely we are dealing with these issues and moving forward.

I looked at the issues that were outstanding for many years in my own community, the Cumberland bridge. We are now

talking about finishing the Cumberland bridge this year on this budget. We talked about the road in regards to Grandmother's Bay. That road is already done, Mr. Speaker.

When we look at the road to Athabasca, it'll be moving forward. When we look at the road this year on improvement and we look at the Highways budget this year on Highway 903 and also 965, there'll be improvements. These roads are in the member of Athabasca's own constituency. These are improvements in Cole Bay, Jans Bay, Canoe Narrows, and Waterhen area.

Mr. Speaker, these are important areas because the road needed to be improved in regards to the people partaking in the forestry development. So not only is there help in regards to people getting involved in forestry, but also improvements for the people, the community people utilizing the road, whether it is, you know, for better safety and etc.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are seeing development NDP-style, and it's taking the leadership, you know, all across Canada.

An Hon. Member: — Community government, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — So when you look at it, Mr. Speaker . . . One of our people said it's community, you know, business as well as government. And I think that's an important concept. And I would say that we see that again in regards to the North.

The NDP government, and I made this speech again when I was talking earlier on with the throne speech, the basics of the history of the North in terms of control was indeed again NDP in partnership with the people.

We saw the first elected board in Ile-a-la-Crosse in NDP times — the member from Athabasca's own home town. We looked at the fact that Northern Lakes School Division, the control, the largest school division in the North, done in NDP times. We look at Northlands College and the development of the three community colleges right before that — that was done in NDP times.

When you look at the fact that the development in regards to the history of control and municipalities, with that first elected government in northern Saskatchewan through a northern municipal government, northern municipal council, that was done with NDP government. The options 80 proposal which helped formulate the basis of The Northern Municipalities Act, again developed in the process of consultation with NDP government in the latter '70s and early '80s.

So when you look at it, Mr. Speaker, not only have we seen control in the education area, and the municipalities area, we're now moving in regards to health. We will have elected boards, Mr. Speaker, and I would say that it will be . . . when that happens, we will have . . . northern people will control 80 per cent of the budget of northern Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is a sign of the times. We're putting control into the hands of people at the community level. And that is exactly what the NDP government is all about. That is partnership with the people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — So in summary, Mr. Speaker, as we are preparing for the new century, we are seeing not only a great sense of stability for the people throughout our fiscal management, but we are seeing strong support for the key elements that have built Saskatchewan.

We see the key elements of support that we've seen in this budget, new dollars, a 114 . . . \$110 million in regards to health, education, and social services. Mr. Speaker, we are countering the insensitivity of Liberal governments at the federal level. Yes, they may sound like the NDP before an election. Some of them may even dance at trappers' conventions like the MP (Member of Parliament) Gordon Kirkby. He was dancing and sounding pretty good before last election. Next thing we knew, he was voting for gun control.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're seeing that in many cases the Liberals, as a matter of fact, are sounding a lot like Grant Devine. Mr. Speaker, when I'm listening to them they're exactly like Grant Devine — no taxes and no cuts. And then sometimes they shift their argument and say, let's have more services and more spending. So I guess they're a little bit different that way. They're going back and forth a little bit. But I think in most cases they still sound a little bit like Grant Devine in the sense that they try and take their right-wing agenda on no tax.

But I'll tell you something. They just mentioned that they would do Devine Grant as well, but that's their side of the argument. Our side of the argument is to build on the province in regards to education, health, and social services, and the job creation of 10,000 jobs in the province and more jobs into the future.

So, Mr. Speaker, we see our partnership with the North, with aboriginal people, in mining, forestry, treaty land entitlement, gaming, Cumberland House bridge, Grandmother's Bay road improvement, Gouldfields Bay, Jans Bay. We're seeing the work in the Northlands College in Buffalo Narrows. We're seeing northern control, in partnership with the NDP government, of the people of northern Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I think we're moving and creating a good base to face the new century.

I am proud, I think, Mr. Speaker, to stand up and say that this 1996 budget will indeed prepare us not only for this year, but for many years into the future as we face the challenges, not only the realms of education and health and social services but in economic development and jobs.

These are the bases that the people of northern Saskatchewan have elected me on. And I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I'm proud to stand up with people in northern Saskatchewan and say that the 1996 budget has been a tremendous budget in partnership with the people of Saskatchewan and the North.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Assembly adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

