

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again on behalf of concerned citizens of the province of Saskatchewan with respect to closure of the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

And the signatures are from Melville, from Yorkton, and some signatures from Regina as well, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the closure of the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The communities the people are from that have signed the petition are Esterhazy, Tantalton, and Bredenbury, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre closure. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed the petition, Mr. Speaker, are all from Regina. I so present.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also rise to present petitions of names from people throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayers reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Kamsack, Weyburn, White City, Pilot Butte, Avonlea, and the large majority are from Regina. I so present.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise as well on behalf of citizens concerned about the impending closure of the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the

Plains Health Centre.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition are primarily from the city of Regina.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise today to present petitions of names from people throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed this petition are from Regina, from Moose Jaw, Frontier, Esterhazy, Stoughton, Bengough — all over Saskatchewan.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again today to present petitions from concerned citizens regarding the closure of the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reading as follows:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider the decision to close the Plains Health Centre.

Mr. Speaker, this petition has been signed by many, many concerned citizens from the constituency of Arm River, namely the communities of Craik and Davidson.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present petitions of names of Saskatchewan people with respect to the Plains Health Centre. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

And those who have signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from communities such as Assiniboia, Tugaske, Simpson, and a number of them from the city of Moose Jaw.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

And the people that have signed the petition, Mr. Speaker, they are from Regina here; they're from Avonlea, from Milestone, from Carnduff, from Wilcox, from Oxbow, from Moose Jaw, from Estevan, from Midale, Weyburn, Pangman, and from all throughout the land, Mr. Speaker. And I so present.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise with my colleagues today and the people all throughout Saskatchewan,

and in fact throughout western Canada, as we've found by presenting many petitions with western Canadian names on them. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed the petition that I'm holding today — pages and pages of them — are all from the Regina area and Regina Albert South, Dewdney, Elphinstone constituencies, in particular. I so present.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I am presenting nine pages of petitions from individuals concerned about budget cuts to the Saskatoon Family Support Centre. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to urge the Department of Social Services of the province of Saskatchewan to reconsider the decision to reduce the programs of the Saskatoon Family Support Centre, and to return the programs of the Saskatoon Family Support Centre to their previous level of delivery of service.

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

These individuals are not only from Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, they're also from Punnichy, Martensville, and other small communities in Saskatchewan.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 12(7) are hereby read and received:

Petitions of citizens petitioning the Assembly to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre; and

Petitions of citizens petitioning the Assembly to urge the Department of Social Services to reconsider the reduction of parent education and support programs.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you and to my colleagues in the Assembly, a group of people from Melfort, Saskatchewan. They're a group of 38 students, the grade 6 students from Brunswick School which is located right behind my home, so I see these young people regularly playing and raising Cain with the teachers who are with them today.

Mr. Gordie Manz and Mr. Denis Masurat are with them as teachers, and chaperons Jackie Rogers and Lynne Selkirk.

I would ask the Assembly and all my colleagues to extend to these young people and their chaperons a warm welcome to the legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce to the Assembly, a group of 22 grade 7 and 8 students, and five chaperons that came in from Endeavour, Saskatchewan today. Their principal, Rod Steciuk, and chaperons Adeline Mills, Debbie Blender, Neil and Elfreda Fenske, all came from Endeavour, and I'm delighted to see you, and I hope you'll learn lots today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, it's with a great deal of pleasure that I rise to introduce an important person to the tourism industry in Saskatchewan, but really right across Canada. Last night I had the opportunity, along with you, sir, to attend the Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council third annual certification recognition dinner which awarded to a large number of people from across the province, certificates for their training that they have done in providing excellent tourism service in the province of Saskatchewan.

Attending the meeting with us last night was Ray Davis, who is the executive director of the association of professional tourism from across Canada. And Ray is seated in your gallery. And I'm sure all members will want to join with me and welcome him to the Assembly and wish him best in his endeavour of improving and encouraging tourism, one of our largest industries in the country, right across the country. Ray.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to introduce to you and through you to my colleagues in the legislature, a young man seated in the Speaker's gallery. This is Greg Nesbett. He is a student at F. W. Johnson Collegiate. He's in grade 11 and he's spending the day being my shadow, Mr. Speaker. He's job shadowing to see what kind of day an MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) has.

We've already actually done some very exciting things today, meeting many of our government members, and we've also met with the opposition and the third party. I'm looking forward to spending some more time with him later on, and I would ask you to join me in extending a warm welcome to Greg, please. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Scott Collegiate Remains Open

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to commend all the people in Regina who are working together to save Scott Collegiate. News that the Regina Public School Board was considering closing Scott Collegiate sent shock waves throughout the community. Many parents, students, and teachers were worried that the unique educational programs for youths in north central Regina would be lost.

Scott's curriculum offers a unique aboriginal perspective for the

majority of its students. It has unique programs that highlight native culture, like native history and Indian art. Scott also has special re-entry programs like a day care and other services that offer incentives for students who would not otherwise be able to attend.

Last night the public school board did commit to ensuring that Scott Collegiate's doors will remain open in the fall. It was wonderful news to the dozens of people who have been lobbying the board to keep the school open.

I would like to commend all the people in north central Regina who have recognized the value of the ground-breaking program that Scott offers and who will continue fighting to preserve this valuable resource for their future in north central Regina. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with my colleague and friend from Athabasca in encouraging the people from north central to continue to work towards maintaining Scott Collegiate. And the fact that Scott Collegiate is in my constituency and is named for Saskatchewan's first premier, I think tells you something about the longevity and the service to students and families in Regina. And because it's a landmark in our educational system and especially because it now offers some unique programs and features to the surrounding neighbourhood, I'm pleased to work with, and support . . . and the support it has received in recent days.

I want to congratulate the public school board for meeting with and listening to the community groups, the parents, students, staff, who are in fact determined to keep the school open.

In making its decision to keep the school open for at least another year, as announced last night, the board recognized the value of the school to the north central community, and the board members are to be commended and encouraged for that decision.

I would also like to congratulate the parents and students who have pulled together in that community, as they do in many issues and on many occasions, to make this happen. This is an excellent example of cooperation and partnership between community and the school board, both of whom who have the first principle as the best interest of the students at heart. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Third Annual Shorebirds and Friends Festival

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Communities sometimes fail to recognize the potential tourism attractions in their own area. This is not the case in the Quill Lakes. This area has an abundance of species of birds and wetland animals which the towns and the RMs (rural municipality) of the area are promoting. Recently their third annual Shorebirds and Friends Festival doubled its attendance from last year with crowds of tourists from Saskatoon, Yorkton, Moose Jaw, and the local area.

They participated in planned activities and celebrated nature's bounty. The two-day event featured activities such as the monster marsh hike, nature tours by Kerry Holderness of Quill Lake, bird house building, and photography workshops. Those in attendance also were treated to a performance by the Fishing Lake First Nation Na-Ka-way singers, and dancers from the Pow Wow Trail.

Mr. Speaker, this weekend was another success story of rural Saskatchewan residents promoting a natural attraction and volunteering many hours of labour to promote a successful event. I would ask this Assembly to join me in congratulating the people from the Quill Lakes area who helped organize this event.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mine Safety Award

Mr. Ward: — Mr. Minister, as the Hon. Minister of Labour said on Monday, this week is Occupational Health and Safety Week. The theme of the week "Don't Learn by Accident, Set A Goal For Zero Accidents in the Workplace" is something that has been taken to heart by the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, Rocanville mine.

Rocanville has won the Canadian Institute of Mining's national safety trophy for having lost no time due to accidents in 1995. The Hon. Minister of Energy and Mines presented the award to mine general manager, Dale Jackson, at a banquet this past weekend.

This is the fourth time that Rocanville has received the top mine safety award in the country. It has also received two regional and two special safety awards. The mining industry in Saskatchewan has earned an excellent reputation regarding safety in the workplace. Statistics from the Saskatchewan Mining Association indicate that provincial mines have only one lost-time accident per 100,000 hours worked.

I would like to congratulate management and the employees at the Rocanville mine for their commitment to safety in the workplace. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Community School Coordinator of the Year Award

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much for recognizing me, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to bring news to the Assembly that my friend and my constituent, Fay Stupnikoff, has received the Community School Coordinator of the Year Award for 1996. This award was presented to her earlier this month in Windsor from the Canadian Association for Community Education.

Fay has been with the Queen Mary Community School in Prince Albert for 16 years and her dedication and hard work definitely have paid off. The students, teachers, and parents not only admire her and respect her, they also depend upon her to make learning enjoyable. Fay has always believed the objective of schools is to achieve academic success as well as teach

students how to be happy, productive members of society.

Mr. Speaker, she's also taught members of this legislature that adequate funding for community schools is a prerequisite to seeing all of these good things happen and she was very pleased to see an increase in this year's budget for community schools in Prince Albert. Mr. Speaker, students of Queen Mary Community School and indeed the people of Prince Albert are fortunate to have her as a member of our community, and I'm pleased today to join with them in offering her my congratulations on this achievement. Good work, Fay.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Govan Ram Test Station

Mr. Flavel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during Agricultural Sciences Month in Saskatchewan, I want to mention a little-known but valuable facility in my constituency which is making a valuable contribution to a valuable sector of our farm economy.

In Saskatchewan there are approximately 80,000 sheep. Saskatchewan contributes meat and wool to the local economy and is exporting increasing amounts to the United States and to Ontario. Farm cash receipts are averaging approximately \$4 million a year.

The ram test station at the community of Govan has been involved since 1989 in improving the quality and profitability of this product. Established under the direction of the Saskatchewan Sheep Breeders Association, the station runs strictly controlled tests which measure the weight gains and physical soundness of young breeding rams and then offers them for sale at the annual Grasslands Exhibition in Assiniboia.

This facility is owned and operated by Mr. Ward Mortenson, a member of the Saskatchewan Sheep Breeders Association board of directors and a commercial sheep breeder-producer for 40 years, along with being a grain farmer and livestock producer for 50 years.

Mr. Speaker, across our province there are people like Mr. Mortenson who are making their contribution to strengthening and diversifying our economy, people who seldom get the recognition they deserve. I am happy in a small way to correct that oversight by recognizing a contribution by Mr. Mortenson and the ram test station at Govan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Swift Current Scholarship Winner

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to congratulate a student from my constituency, Julie Ann Gibbings of Swift Current, who recently received a scholarship from the American Junior Quarterhorse Association.

There were 13 scholarships awarded by the association in 1995, and Julie Ann was the only Canadian who received one. She graduated from Swift Current Comprehensive High School last

year with an average of 85 per cent and is now attending the University of Saskatchewan. This year she is also president of the Saskatchewan Junior Quarter Horse Association.

I would just like to say congratulations and wish her the best in her future endeavours. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Funding for Providence Place

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health. It is yet another day and yet another meeting will be taking place to protest this government's cuts to health care, this time in Moose Jaw. Mr. Speaker, tonight, community groups and the public will gather to discuss this government's decision to break its promise of separate funding for the geriatric unit at Providence Place.

In attendance will be many people who committed both time and money to make this unit a reality, only to discover this government won't make good on its commitments.

Organizers of this event said they will gladly let the minister or the member from Wakamow speak if they come and tell everyone present they will honour their commitment of separate funding.

Mr. Minister, will you attend the meeting this evening and make it clear to everyone that you'll make good on your government's funding promise?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I believe the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow will be attending the meeting tonight, and I'm sure he will be willing to speak.

But I want to say to the member, as I've said before, that what is lacking here is an operational agreement between the district board and the Providence Place board with respect to this fiscal year. And there is only one way that this issue can really be resolved, Mr. Speaker, and that is for the parties to sit down in good faith and talk about the issue.

And the two boards have not yet had an opportunity to sit down, but I think a solution will be found at the local level, Mr. Speaker. I believe there can be a GARU (geriatric assessment rehabilitation unit) at Providence Place, but I do believe that the parties have to talk to one another. And I've been directing my efforts through officials at trying to get the parties together.

And I understand some progress has been made, and it's my hope that discussions will occur quite soon between the district and Providence Place boards. And I believe that that is the way to resolve the dispute, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Speaker, it's clear the minister doesn't

intend to keep his promise. He wants to blame everything else but his government's funding cuts. Worse yet, Mr. Speaker, he wants to avoid taking responsibility just long enough that people give up and the geriatric unit staff leave on their own.

Mr. Speaker, the people who donated millions to build this unit deserve better. They deserve an apology from the minister. Many generous people gave of themselves because they believed the government would keep its commitment.

I have a letter I'd like to send over to the minister right now. It's a letter of apology to these people. It says, and I quote:

On behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, I apologize for failing to live up to our promise of secure operational funding for this unit. I recognize that in doing so we are also failing to live up to our commitment to promote wellness and provide quality care to our seniors.

Mr. Minister, will you at least do the honourable thing and sign this letter of apology so I or the member from Wakamow can deliver it on your behalf to these generous residents whose dreams you have so shamefully stolen.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, I believe that the Providence Place board and the district health board will be committed to having geriatric assessment in Moose Jaw.

And while the member is talking about commitments and broken promises, I'd like to remind the member that this year, as a result of federal Liberal cut-backs, if we had applied, if we had applied the cut-back, Mr. Speaker, that the Liberals imposed to the Moose Jaw/Thunder Creek Health District, we would have been cutting the district by about \$2.1 million. But we back-filled for the Liberals, Mr. Speaker. And the district does have a tight budget; there's no question about that. But we back-filled to the tune of about \$1.3 million for the Liberals.

And I want to say to the member, Mr. Speaker, that the resolution to this situation is for the parties to get together, negotiate in good faith, and come to a resolution. And I'm confident that people acting in good faith will do so, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Compensation for Hepatitis C Victims

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've questioned the Minister of Health on a number of occasions in the past few weeks about Saskatchewan residents who've contracted hepatitis C through no fault of their own.

In particular I have brought to the attention of this House a case involving Bonnie Soerensen whose six-year-old son is one such victim of this life-threatening disease. The minister has indicated during questioning that Ms. Soerensen should await a response from the department.

Well, Mr. Speaker, Bonnie Soerensen received a response

yesterday, and we'll hand this out to cabinet members and I guess to the third party. She received a letter from the minister which essentially tells her if she wants any form of compensation she should sue the government. Mr. Speaker, this is the ultimate insult. What kind of a government makes such an arrogant statement?

Will the minister explain why he is treating people who are in the midst of an emotional and financial struggle with absolutely no compassion?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I would say to the member, as I have said to the member in the House repeatedly, that in cases where it is clear that a person was infected with hepatitis C by a blood transfusion, where there are serious medical problems, and where negligence is established on the part of the government, we will consider settling such a claim. And each claim will be considered on its merits.

The difficulty here, Mr. Speaker, is that you have to determine what the medical result is with respect to a person who has contracted hepatitis C. There may or may not be a serious medical outcome. If there is, and compensation is warranted which should be paid by the province, I've made it clear that we'll do that.

I said to the member yesterday when he raised this question that if the member is so certain that compensation can be announced immediately, let the member say what the amount of the compensation is. He can't do that, Mr. Speaker, because that cannot be determined at this point in time. Yet the member wants to say that I should do that at this point in time when it's not possible, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Speaker, perhaps we shouldn't expect an answer different than the one that the Health minister's providing because yet he is a lawyer and can only see a legal avenue for a six-year-old boy with hepatitis C.

Mr. Speaker, the letter that Bonnie Soerensen received from the minister yesterday states quite clearly that only if the government has been found to be legally responsible for the condition of hepatitis C victims, they will consider compensation. Does a government not have a moral responsibility?

Mr. Speaker, the only way a government may be found to be legally responsible is if the Krever inquiry makes such a ruling. The problem is it could take years for the Krever report to make its way through the court system. And time is one thing these people do not have the luxury of, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, these people are not looking for a pot of gold; they merely want a compensation package similar to that received by the HIV-infected (human immunodeficiency virus) hemophiliacs. Will the minister not stand in this House today and make such a commitment?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I have said to Ms. Soerensen that in cases where it is clear that infection was caused by a blood transfusion, that serious medical complications have arisen, and negligence is established for which the government of Saskatchewan is legally responsible, we will consider settling such claims out of court.

We are not at a point, Mr. Speaker, where medical complications have arisen in any particular case with respect to which the Government of Saskatchewan is legally responsible. I don't want to discuss the specific medical case of Ms. Soerensen's son, but I think my answer, Mr. Speaker, has been fair and reasonable.

I think what the member is doing, when the member himself cannot get up and say what the level of compensation should be, is admitting that at this point in time there is no way of determining the level of compensation. When that point in time arrives, Mr. Speaker, it will be dealt with in a fair and compassionate way.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Potential Sale of Porcupine Forest

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the people in my constituency are concerned about the application by the Okanese First Nations Band for the purchase of land in the Porcupine Forest reserve.

An official with the Department of Environment and Resource Management has said there is nothing to stop any of the 50 or more Indian bands in Saskatchewan from applying for land in the Porcupine Forest reserve. This has many of my constituents concerned, not because they don't want native ownership, but because they are afraid that access to their land will be limited.

Mr. Speaker, trappers, snowmobilers, cabin owners, and a cadet camp all want guaranteed access to the forest. As well, water bombers need to fill up at Mann Lake if a forest fire breaks out.

Will the Minister of Environment tell these people what process his government has in place to make sure a proper consultation occurs among all parties before a deal is made?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the hon. member for the question. This government is committed to settling outstanding treaty land entitlements. We are working closely with bands. We are looking at all applications. And people can rest assured that we are settling all third-party interests and working with people that use these Crown land sites that are chosen, and we're dealing with third-party interests.

And when third-party interests cannot be satisfied, the claims will not go through.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Bankruptcy Rate

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Economic Development.

Yesterday, Mr. Minister, we raised the issue of a 76-year-old Regina business here in the city having had to go out of business because they claimed taxes are too high in the province and in the city. Well, Mr. Minister, you suggested at that time that this was as isolated event.

So, Mr. Minister, the facts of course suggest otherwise, as we determined today. In the first quarter of 1996, total businesses and consumer bankruptcies were up 70 per cent over the previous year. There were a total of 532 bankruptcies in Saskatchewan through the end of March compared to 456 last year, according to Industry Canada.

Now, Mr. Minister, if things are as rosy as you claim, why are the number of bankruptcies in Saskatchewan continuing to rise?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite that on any one day, anywhere in Canada and in any province, members of the opposition could bring in companies that are not able to sustain their business. I mean this is not a very difficult role for an opposition member to do.

But I want to say to the member opposite that when you look at reports coming out from economists, the predictions for Saskatchewan's economy this year are in fact very, very bright. In fact even in the area of students' jobs this summer, I want to report to you that a report carried on CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) TV indicated that employment this year, and I quote:

That students might not have to look as hard for work. Employment offices across the province say that students looking for work are in luck. More jobs are available this year despite the bad weather in May. Saskatoon has 100 more jobs for students than they had at this time in 1995, and the Regina office says that it's doubled.

So you can predict gloom and doom all you want. But the fact is, is that last year we had one of the lowest bankruptcies anywhere in Canada, and that record stands up against any Conservative government anywhere across the country.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a supplementary for the minister. The minister, Mr. Speaker, continues to ignore the facts. And of course he tries to diffuse the issue by talking about other issues that are not directly related to the problem.

Bankruptcies in Saskatchewan, Minister, are up 17 per cent over last year. That's a statistical fact. And it's clear that your government is also bankrupt of any ideas that could help our economy. You totally ignore the fact that people are going bankrupt all around us. You ignore the fact that the reason is higher taxes, over-regulation, destructive policies like the

union-preference tendering policy.

These policies are driving businesses out of business and forcing up things like consumer and business bankruptcies. We've got a few minimum wage jobs that are available this summer. That hardly is a long-term solution, Mr. Minister.

So, Mr. Minister, what steps are you taking to bring down the numbers of bankruptcies in this province so we don't have a repeat performance next year?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the member talks about low-paying jobs. He may be referring to the announcement earlier this week of the synchrotron equipment being located in Saskatoon — 75 or 80 high tech, world-class jobs that are being proposed for Saskatoon. You may be referring to the 200 jobs that ISM 2000 (Information Systems Management Corporation) is locating in Regina.

But I don't know where that member is coming from when he talks so negatively about the province that both of us call home. The fact is, last night, in dealing with tourism in Saskatchewan — the fastest growing industry in the province; 40,000 people now employed in a billion dollar industry.

Look around you, man, and you'll see thousands of jobs being created by small business. I say again, you just have your blinders on and I ask you to look at those businesses that are being successful and get onside.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Proclamation of Bill 93

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Justice. Last night's news reported that a sex offender in Saskatoon has chased and tried to grab an 11-year-old girl, and this same man has been hanging around an elementary school ground staring at the kids. The police have been notified but unfortunately all corrections can say is that they have heard of the man and that he is meeting parole requirements.

Mr. Minister, this man has a history of sex offences, yet corrections can't release information about him because of the status of The Public Disclosure Bill. Bill 93 received Royal Assent over a week ago but you have yet to proclaim it. At the same time, other Bills given Royal Assent on the same day are already in effect.

Mr. Minister, the opposition allowed this Bill to be passed in just eight days because we thought it was an urgent issue. What is the hold-up? Why hasn't Bill 93 been proclaimed?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes, I'd like to thank the member for that question. The Bill is, as you say, in process and ready to be used. In this particular instance we have not received any request from the city of Saskatoon police. It's my understanding

that this matter is not in the category that is being contemplated for this particular legislation.

The situation is that the police have been dealing with this matter and we are being kept apprised of it. Our concern obviously is the concern in the community and the . . . I assume that the legislation will be proclaimed at the next opportunity when the Lieutenant Governor is here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's amazing that that Bill has to wait around for the next opportunity. It doesn't take much of an opportunity to sign a person's signature and get things into action. According to the Queen's Printer, they have received no notification of Bill 93 being proclaimed by the Executive Council.

Mr. Minister, will you immediately, and before something else goes wrong that you may have to take responsibility for, make an exception and allow corrections officials in Saskatoon to release whatever information they feel necessary to the elementary school and the parents of the children affected by this sex offender? Will you do that and do it today, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for the further question. There is absolutely nothing preventing the police from making public notification if they deem it to be necessary. The legislation that we have provided provides a mechanism for advice to the police. And in the interim, while we're working with this matter, it will be dealt with by the police, and we will work together with them.

The proclamation of this Act will take place at the appropriate time and we will . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Northern Saskatchewan Oil Exploration

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this week the Prime Minister was in Fort McMurray to announce a major expansion of the Alberta oil sands project. Officials in the oil industry say this expansion could create up to 44,000 jobs across Canada over the next 25 years.

All of the billions of dollars of investment will take place just kilometres away from several communities in northern Saskatchewan, including Garson Lake. Can the Minister of Northern Affairs tell me if this government is considering any plans that would help northern Saskatchewan also benefit from the incredible oil sands expansion in Fort McMurray?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, what we are doing in northern Saskatchewan . . . the member may be worried about what's happening in northern Alberta. He's looking at the tremendous mining development where we are world leaders in that development, Mr. Speaker. We are looking at the situation in northern Saskatchewan on gold and gold mining as well as

uranium mining where 50 per cent of the people in northern Saskatchewan are hired in those mines, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — When we look at the contracts, Mr. Speaker, when the Tories were around, there was approximately \$12 million worth of contracts for northern businesses. This past year, Mr. Speaker, there was \$47 million — 400 per cent increase on contracts to northern businesses, Mr. Speaker. And those businesses even come from his own community, Mr. Speaker. And I think that's a tremendous plus for the development in northern Saskatchewan.

In regards to what happens in northern Alberta, we know that the Liberal government made a mess of the development in Alberta during that time, and that's why they were kicked out of there a long time ago.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Northern Alberta will be reaping in the benefits of billions of dollars in investment in the oil sands project creating thousands of dollars, and this very government told us that eight companies was exploring for natural gas within northern Saskatchewan area.

Meanwhile, just across the border around Garson Lake, people are suffering from staggering unemployment and many live in crowded, poor housing conditions. And the one thing they ask for is a road, a road that could possibly open a lot of opportunity to oil industry in northern Alberta because oil exists in northern Saskatchewan. Now it is time for the government to tap into some positive economic growth for northern Saskatchewan.

Will the minister commit to making the development of the Garson Lake road a priority so we have some opportunity and some possibility of benefiting from the oil exploration happening in northern Saskatchewan as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, again the commitment of this province is one of the best across Canada in regards to development, especially in regards to roads. I'll have to remind the member, Mr. Speaker, that Cumberland bridge, the \$6 million bridge, is going up. We have to look back to Grandmother's Bay road, Mr. Speaker, there was no road to that community before. That road is being done.

In his own constituency on the . . . Athabasca road is going to go up. In regards to the area, in the forestry area section around the Canoe Narrows, the road is being improved. There was five kilometres started in regards to Garson Lake put in by the province and not a penny by the Liberals. Mr. Speaker, this province is committed whereas the federal Liberals are lagging far behind.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Business Credit Checks

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I asked the Minister of Economic Development a very straightforward question to which, of course, I did not get a straightforward answer. So today I'm going to give him another chance, but I'll just simplify the question enough so he can understand it.

Firstly it has to do with regulations for businesses, and secondly it concerns businesses who want to move here, as well as existing businesses. Mr. Speaker, if a credit check is undertaken by a firm like Dun & Bradstreet, the business owner can never find out who has requested the financial information. And they can only find out what information was given if they pay a substantial fee. Even the NDP (New Democratic Party) government in British Columbia has removed these oppressive regulations.

Mr. Minister, will your government take the first step towards the cut-backs in government regulations promised in your *Partnership for Growth* and remove these regulations?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Speaker, if I could quote from a document here today. I want to say that the title of this article is: "Saskatchewan businessman paints rosy economic future". This is a small-business lobbyist by the name of Dale Botting, and I want to quote. I want to quote what Mr. Botting says about the economy of Saskatchewan.

"I believe we're on the verge of great and glorious things," Botting told 80 people at a diversification seminar in Moose Jaw on Thursday. We're about to claim our place in the sun.

And he goes on to say that Botting said there is an entrepreneurial revolution in small business, referring to Saskatchewan. With 103,000 self-employed people here, all of our 8,000 new jobs created since 1992 have been created by small business.

So I want to say to you, Ma'am, even Dale Botting, my friend, is supportive of our plan. Why can't you get onside?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership

Ms. Draude: — I look forward to seeing what answer the minister will give me tomorrow on the very same question.

The Minister of Economic Development has made a number of promises in the *Partnership for Growth*, one of them being the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership Inc. to develop export potential for this province. It will cost the taxpayers over \$2 million.

Mr. Speaker, a few days ago the north Saskatoon businessmen association signed an agreement that will accomplish the same goals and will cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan nothing. A businessman from Guadalajara, Mexico, says it is encouraging to witness a well-organized mission to Mexico from private

business organizations without direct government involvement.

Mr. Speaker, what tangible goals have you set for this STEP (Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership Inc.) program that will give the people of this province confidence that it is the right way to spend their money?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member opposite to understand that the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership is not a government agency. It is an agency of a partnership between business, partially funded by business, and the movement of our trade development agency out of the department of government and over to a hybrid organization made up of private and public sector people.

It's supported by people like Robert Hawkins from Humboldt, a private-sector person who has trade connections around the world; Milt Fair, with the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, former CEO (chief executive officer), has been directing for two years the establishment. And it's based on recommendations from the private sector, including the good folk from the chamber of commerce and the business community in the community we refer to — of Saskatoon.

It's exactly what you are proposing: a private sector-driven trade organization. So we finally agree on something; only you misunderstand what we're doing in economic development.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. McPherson: — Before orders of the day, Mr. Speaker, I ask leave for the introduction of guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the Legislative Assembly here today, some 46 people in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, from Assiniboia. They're here today, the seniors, on a mystery tour, and what better place to come on a mystery tour than to the Saskatchewan legislature on a day when some of the events are occurring.

I ask that the Assembly welcome them here and give them a warm round of applause.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

MOTION UNDER RULE 46

Request for Commission of Inquiry

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I rise pursuant to rule 46 to ask leave of the Assembly to engage in a

debate of urgent and pressing necessity. And I have the motion

...

The Speaker: — Order, order. If it's acceptable to the member, I think there was another member who wishes to request leave to introduce guests. Would it be permissible to acknowledge another member and then recognize the Leader of the Opposition?

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — With permission, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — Mr. Speaker, through you and to you to other members of the Assembly, it's a great pleasure that I have as guests today 11 grade 9 students from the Bjorkdale School. Accompanying them are Gwen Hebert, teacher, and chaperons Diane Berger, Francis Tremblay, and Deanna Whitford.

And I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker, if you've ever been to Bjorkdale, but it's a beautiful community. It's located in a valley, very picturesque, in the best part of the province: the north-east part of the province, Mr. Speaker.

I know that you will enjoy your visit. Make your questions very easy for me this afternoon and have a safe trip home. So please join with me in welcoming our guests today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MOTION UNDER RULE 46

Request for Commission of Inquiry

The Speaker: — I will recognize the Leader of the Opposition and ask him to advise the House as to the reason he believes that priority of debate should occur and to advise the House as to the motion he wishes to introduce. Order.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The motion that I request leave to debate is . . . I have it. Do I have leave to read the motion, Mr. Speaker? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, the motion reads:

That this Assembly call upon the government and particularly the Minister of Justice to recommend to the Lieutenant Governor in Council that an order in council be approved appointing a member of either the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal or Her Majesty's Court of Queen's Bench for Saskatchewan, such member to be selected by the Chief Justice of Saskatchewan, to act as a commissioner for a commission of inquiry to inquire into and report on the fund-raising and closely related activities of the registered political parties of Saskatchewan, together with any informally connected or informally related organizations which have assisted the registered political parties in such activities during the years 1982 through to and including the present;

and further, that the terms of reference for the commission of inquiry should be as shown in schedule A of this resolution;

and further, that the commissioner be authorized to engage the services of such counsel, accountants, clerks, reporters, assistants, technical advisers, and other experts as are necessary or advisable to aid the commission in carrying out its responsibilities;

and further, that all political parties who have been registered under The Elections Act during the period of the inquiry have standing at the commission of inquiry;

and further, that authorization be given for the payment of reasonable travel and sustenance expenses in accordance with the tariff of travel and sustenance expenses approved for employees of the public service, and that authorization also be given for the payment of the costs of the inquiry, including the expenses of inquiry counsel and counsel to the registered political parties with standing at the inquiry;

and further, that the Department of Justice be authorized to pay honoraria and expenses of the commission, and further that the terms of reference set out in schedule A of this resolution be subject to amendment upon the recommendation of the jurist appointed as commissioner. The terms of reference, Mr. Speaker, the commission of inquiry, will have the responsibility . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The terms of reference aren't part of the motion. The Leader of the Opposition . . . Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. McPherson: — A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — What is the member's point of order.

Mr. McPherson: — The point of order being that the terms of reference in this particular case are part of the motion.

The Speaker: — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for providing me a copy of his written motion so as to be able to follow. And the motion is signed below the part that he's just completed presenting to the House, and therefore I find the point of order is not well taken.

The . . . Order. Order. The Leader of the Opposition has given notice to the House for the rule 46 motion he wishes to present and leave is required to proceed to debate. Is leave granted?

Leave not granted.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Order. All hon. members will come to order. All hon. members will come to order. Order. The Chair was unable to hear the Clerk being able to call the order, and I'll ask for the cooperation of the members.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTIONS

Extended Hours

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I resume my debate on a number of issues facing northern Saskatchewan, and certainly the motion that we have before us is contrary to what we feel is proper business of government. And therefore I think it's important that we take the time to understand the implications of this particular motion and to really challenge the intent of good governance.

When I last left the legislature, Mr. Speaker, we were speaking on the fact of a social health effort, a social and mental health plan, planning problems of northern Saskatchewan, and certainly the density of the population in northern Saskatchewan.

And I go back to a point that the situation with the density in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, it's 2.4 per cent of a person per square mile, so you can see the tremendous amount of land that's out in northern Saskatchewan and the small population. And you look at some of the significant problems happening in many of the communities, and then you begin to wonder where the relevance of this particular motion fits into good governance and spending the time to understand the issues of northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I bring you to some of the other problems that we need to work on as government, as opposed to going through the motion, is the fundamental belief that as an MLA you have — and certainly as a Canadian citizen — you should have the fundamental right to express your opinion. I think that's very, very important.

And when you have motions of this nature, expression of opinion is contrary to good governance and certainly contrary to trying to get as much of a cross-section of Saskatchewan people's concerns and issues addressed through this Assembly . . . And unfortunately that isn't allowed in this particular hall.

The Speaker: — Order. Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — With leave, Mr. Speaker, to introduce a guest.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to members of the House a very special person in my life. I just recognized her moments ago in the gallery — my aunt, Ruth Fauser.

Aunt Ruth was one of the women who helped to nurture me, and I'm hoping — in my youth — and I'm hoping that all the members will recognize what a wonderful job that she did over the years that we interacted together.

So I ask all members to give my aunt a very warm welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTIONS

Extended Hours (continued)

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again in reference to some of the discussion we're going to have in reference to northern Saskatchewan problems, I think the key thing as government is people look to governments of all stripes to try and make a difference in their lives.

And the key thing here is we must get away from the political agendas and the political games that are being played in order to serve the people that elect us to do so. And a motion of this nature certainly is, I feel, contrary to what the intent of good governance is all about.

Mr. Speaker, I bring a few things in northern Saskatchewan, a few of the population stats that we spoke about earlier. In 1991 my home community of Ile-a-la-Crosse led the province in growth for all villages. It had a 256-person increase. And what that signifies, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that northern Saskatchewan communities have a great number of young people, a great number.

And when you have one community leading the whole province in growth for villages, that goes to show you that the trend in northern Saskatchewan is actually having more children born in some of these smaller communities. So basically we have to address these issues before we could go into any other area.

So in reference to the large population of northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, we look again at the situation of housing. And I wanted to explain to you, there was a study commissioned several years ago speaking about housing and the study indicated that they were at least 600 units behind. The study was initiated by the Provincial Metis Housing Corporation. We got some information — it really wasn't a formal study; it was more or less just an assessment, Mr. Speaker — and what that shows you, Mr. Speaker, is you have a totally young population, very many kids, and you have an economic situation that the North has and you complicate the matter by the lack of housing.

So you can see that the housing situation is certainly not appealing nor is it supportive nor is it conducive of good governance when you're not providing service and benefits to the people that elected you.

So in reference to housing, the three areas we talk about is the value of housing in northern Saskatchewan — I spoke earlier how the markets in northern Saskatchewan do not support a market-based system in terms of housing delivery. A person that is working simply cannot get the banks to come into the North to build houses for them. It's considered high risk.

There's no sales to indicate any kind of housing market.

So again the working people are being severely penalized. And as well, the people that are supposed to be cared for under the social programs are also being penalized because governments have not been taking a long-term approach to planning for housing needs, Mr. Speaker. And I feel that this is what governance is all about, this is what government is all about. But certainly they're shying away from that particular responsibility as a result of this motion.

So in reference to the housing situation, Mr. Speaker, they're short, significantly short. La Loche is one community that is suffering a tremendous amount of strain because of this particular problem. And we all know when we have a breakdown of control and we have a breakdown of support, naturally people are beginning to wonder, you know, where in the heck is their government. So La Loche is one particular community that really significantly could benefit from a very exciting and innovative strategy when it comes to northern housing.

And this is the reason why I spoke this morning about the \$4 billion industry in the oil patch in Alberta and its close proximity to Garson Lake and La Loche, is the fact that perhaps we could tap into the natural gas market and perhaps we can get some of the benefits to flow from the oil exploration possibilities and therefore the social program . . . the social safety net wouldn't be the only thing that we'll look at for northern Saskatchewan.

I think the housing situation, aside from Buffalo Narrows where they have some sales — and of course, you know, you have to really to congratulate the community for trying to fight back, to set up a housing market — is in general a lot of the northern communities are really trying hard to find ways of delivering houses. And the innovation and the work and the determination of many northern leaders in trying to get the housing situation resolved is certainly not being matched by government.

When you have motions of this nature for extended hours for a simple political purpose, you really begin to question what's the value of governance and why aren't they listening to what people are saying out there.

So again housing and the situation in northern Saskatchewan, there's a need to do a thorough assessment, Mr. Speaker, of how our elderly people are living. Many of them are living in homes that shouldn't be lived in.

And I make a reference to a particular gentleman in Buffalo Narrows, Alex Shatilla. He's an elderly man; he's worked most of his life. And he's bound to a wheelchair, Mr. Speaker. And he's got to put insulation in his windows in the wintertime because of the cold air. He lives on fixed income and also he has to be in close proximity of his oxygen tank. He's on oxygen on a constant basis.

(1430)

And, Mr. Speaker, being an elderly, disabled individual, Mr. Shatilla has seen very little support from the housing situation. And he's very concerned about that, Mr. Speaker. He's went so

far as to suggest that the government do a thorough examination and inspection of these houses to make sure they were properly built in the '60s and the '70s, and if they weren't properly built in the '60s and the '70s that this problem should be rectified right now.

Because Alex, like many other seniors in northern Saskatchewan, they live on fixed incomes. They try and help out their family as best they can. But to have senior citizens live in dilapidated houses and houses that aren't kept in very good shape and houses that aren't insulated properly, it really begins to wonder where was our compassion gone. You know, where is our sense of being, and certainly where's our sense of responsibility as a government when you see types of this action take place in northern Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, from the single persons, from the working persons, from the elderlies, and from the family people, we can see housing is one enormous problem — one enormous problem, Mr. Speaker. And really I think it's high time that the government put the housing problems and the housing situation of northern Saskatchewan on the front burner and start coming up with some very solid recommendations and some very solid directions in conjunction and in cooperation and certainly with the blessing of the northern people and northern leaders so that we can begin to solve this problem over the next 5, 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things we have to look at too in terms of how can the North benefit more from development and how could the North help with the housing situation, with the highway situation, with the social and economic situation, with all the situations that we speak about, one of the biggest things that we've been asking for for many, many years — and the northern leaders should be commended for that — is revenue sharing, Mr. Speaker. We see that a number of mines are opening up in northern Saskatchewan, a number of mines, and they talk about the \$8 billion of potential mine happening in northern Saskatchewan — McArthur River mine. You begin to wonder. \$8 billion — that's a lot of money, Mr. Speaker.

Then you ask yourself, as northern residents, where is that money going. Well, Mr. Speaker, it comes south, Mr. Speaker. It comes many times with the companies, and a portion of it I admit does stay with some of the northern contractors. However the huge majority of that comes south, or it goes to the foreign companies where the . . . or foreign countries, where some of the companies are from, to be used elsewhere.

But certainly, Mr. Speaker, northern leaders have, for many centuries it seems, have been asking the government for revenue sharing. This goes back to the Bayda inquiry and certainly also to the Mitchell inquiry in which we spoke about revenue sharing and the need to have more benefits flow to northern communities.

So what we're saying, Mr. Speaker, is we don't want the welfare dollars coming back to the North as a form of revenue sharing. Mr. Speaker, we want some exciting economic planning. Mr. Speaker, we want some innovate social program planning. And, Mr. Speaker, we want some control and say over some of the northern dollars that are developed at the expense of Northerners and for the rest of the province.

So one of the things that we looked at certainly was the Northern Revenue Sharing Trust Account. From my memory and from my recollection, I believe that the Northern Revenue Sharing Trust Account was set up in the early '70s to do exactly that — to take a portion of all the revenues from the North and put it in the one common pool, and then the northern municipalities would access this pool for infrastructure needs.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Northern Revenue Sharing Trust Account is certainly still in existence today, but there are certain limitations on that, Mr. Speaker. I know from my municipal background that if you wanted to buy, say, perhaps a grader, you'd have to first of all put this in a five-year plan in terms that one community wants to buy a grader. Now that a community has decided that, you got to submit this plan to a municipal department and the municipal department has to look at it and make sure everything is okay. Then they write back and said, get three quotes and make sure this is right, or do you need it, and all these questions.

So in essence, the Northern Revenue Sharing Trust Account should be . . . instead of being so constrictive and so restrictive to just simply capital projects, they should start adding to the whole pile and start putting more money into that so they can start expanding into social development, into economic development, into infrastructure needs, and so on and so forth.

I think the key thing here with the Northern Revenue Sharing Trust Account, Mr. Speaker, is that the northern communities and northern leaders, and certainly the northern people in general, want to have access to more control over some of the dollars that are being channelled into northern Saskatchewan so we can find innovative and better ways to look after our highways, and certainly build houses and certainly create jobs and certainly create a social planning process.

So in essence, just to give you a quick history, several years ago the provincial government announced that they would be taking \$8 million and putting that into northern water and sewer projects, Mr. Speaker. Well — lo and behold — this was not any new money they found. They simply used revenues, the dollars, that were saved up in the Northern Revenue Sharing Trust Account that was used to fund these water and sewer projects in northern Saskatchewan.

But somewhere along the line, we forgot about Stony Rapids. So not only did the provincial government use revenues from northern Saskatchewan that they said would be used as a capital planning of the communities or the capital projects needs, but they then went back into the Northern Revenue Sharing Trust Account, took \$8 million out of there and said we are announcing brand-new water and sewer expansion plans for northern Saskatchewan.

Well on the surface, Mr. Speaker, that looks great, and many people applauded that, and many people said that was great. However, Mr. Speaker, what the people of the North also knew is that \$8 million that they took here actually came out of the Northern Revenue Sharing Trust Account, an account that they had no control over, an account that was set up for them. So in essence, the northern people did set up the water and sewer

systems on their own, and certainly the provincial government took credit for it.

I think the key thing here, in reference to the Northern Revenue Sharing Trust Account, I think that the people of the North want to have more say on that, Mr. Speaker. They want to have more control on that, Mr. Speaker. They're hoping that they'll be able to have a wider role in terms of how northern revenues are being allocated, how they're being collected, and certainly, Mr. Speaker, what the intent of some of these dollars are.

And some of the other perspectives we look at in reference to northern issues and northern lands, we can talk about housing. We talk about the population growth. We talk about the Northern Revenue Sharing Trust Account.

The other thing that was quite incredible, Mr. Speaker, was when the government announced the fact that we are committed to the North. Here is \$4 million. Well, Mr. Speaker, \$4 million to 32,000 people that are having severe economic and social development problems actually adds up to roughly about \$60 per person. And, Mr. Speaker, there is very little that you can do to come up with any kind of economic and social planning for \$60 per person. No community, no community and no department of government, can ever do anything with \$60 per person for a bunch of small communities.

So how do you expect northern leaders and how do you expect any Metis or first nations' leaders to do anything of any significance if they haven't got the dollars or the commitment from government to do so?

The biggest thing in northern Saskatchewan that we've been talking about for years has been land, Mr. Speaker. And the government's economic strategy . . . they spoke about economic strategy. They said, we are setting up CREDOs (community regional economic development organization) in northern Saskatchewan. And I believe that CREDO stands for community regional economic development authorities or associations or organizations. And what the intent there is to have two or three communities get together and we would fund you so many dollars per year. You guys devise a plan amongst yourself as to how you want to get an economic project under way.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the northern people and northern leaders decide to look at this and try and work with it. But they knew in their hearts and their minds that there's going to be very little funding, there's going to be very little government involvement, very little commitment to it. And so they say, okay, what have we got to work with? We've got — what — \$12,000 here to start off with, to get this thing all set up. That's going to be a significant cost. That'll help. And next we have \$40,000 to hire a staff and perhaps get an office somewhere, and this person will work for all three communities and we'll try and do things as best we can collectively and together.

Well, Mr. Speaker, obviously it didn't work because some people are trying it, and I sincerely admire their fortitude because, you know, they're bound and determined to do something on their own because they know government is not going to do it for them, so they're using this very small tool to

try and get this economic planning going. And I kind of have the analogy that it's like giving somebody a wet noodle to take off a boat. You know it's just not going to work. No matter how tight you tie that noodle to pull off that boat, the noodle's going to break.

So in essence, you look at the CREDO's perspective . . . and CREDOs are of no value, Mr. Speaker, unless you have significant dollars. And the second part of the equation, Mr. Speaker, is if you have access to land. Because land holds resources, land holds opportunity, and land of course holds a lot of potential for things like tourism, like fishing, and like forestry development, and so on and so forth.

So really the whole issue is in reference to land. And as long as you have CREDOs as the answer to some of the solutions to northern Saskatchewan, well I'm sorry, the wet noodles aren't going to help us solve the problems, and certainly aren't going to help us fix the bolts of the economic machinery that is lacking in northern Saskatchewan.

I guess, Mr. Speaker, and when we talk about land and the Metis perspective, for many, many years, if my memory serves me correct, to the Manitoba Act of 1875 — and I could be corrected on this date — there was a lot of negotiations in which they agreed to set aside 1.4 million acres or hectares of land for the Metis people. That was part of the Manitoba Act, I believe in 1875, and this was bound in writing, and it was all determined that that was going to happen.

And for many years ago, what happened at that time was many Metis people did get scrip. They did get scrip in terms of the land that was in, kind of, the agreement process to be transferred to the Metis people. And of course this scrip was certainly gobbled up and purchased by a lot of land speculators, and as a result the Metis people in those days were totally used and certainly they were not aware of the ways of the land speculators. And as a result, much of the land was taken back from them.

So, Mr. Speaker, from the Metis perspective, 1.4 million acres of land was set aside for them in the Manitoba Act of 1875; today, Mr. Speaker, there is no Metis land. There may be a few little patches of a few hundred acres, but that's it. So in essence, when you talk about land, Mr. Speaker, the Metis certainly have a lot of perspective and a lot of leeway and a lot of legal avenues in which they can pursue to try and get some of their land back.

And this is the key thing, is if you're going to have a people develop themselves, you certainly have to have access to land, and control of land is one of the key components of any plans to try and redevelop their economies and certainly help their social needs.

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. McPherson: — With leave, Mr. Speaker, for the introduction of guests.

Leave granted.

(1445)

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I see we have some 42 students from the Coronach School in the east gallery today, and I'd like to welcome them here today through you and to the Legislative Assembly.

They're grade 5 and 6 students, and with them we have teachers Michelle Olson and Kathy Hiltz. And I believe later on today we will be having some photos and drinks and a bit of discussion as . . . what they're viewing here today in the Legislative Assembly. I ask that all members welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ADJOURNED DEBATES**MOTIONS****Extended Hours
(continued)**

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So going back to my earlier point about the Metis perspective is we must understand the historical perspective if we're to understand what the Metis Nation and the Metis people are fighting for. It's not an issue again of us looking at the issue of saying, well the natives, all they want is land. See the direct relation, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that you've got to have land to do anything.

It's much like being a farmer. If you just have a farmhouse, then that's going to give you severe limited opportunity to become a very successful farmer. Well northern communities is the same; if you haven't got access to land and all you have is the farmhouse, in many respects what the municipalities, you know, might be compared to here, is the fact that you don't have no access and control of land outside of your farmhouse and naturally you're not going to have much of an opportunity to develop a brand-new economic future for yourself, for your family, and for your people.

And secondly, Mr. Speaker, we again add insult to injury when we talk about the Metis perspective and certainly the Metis people and the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan when we hear the government of the day talking about revenue sharing in terms of the gaming situation.

Again we're seeing that the Metis people are getting significantly less than any other organization in the province. Not only do they have to wait extra months for their revenues to flow in to keep their operations alive, but they're really at the control of government. And that's not fair to the Metis people, not fair to the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan where they got to continue waiting on governments to provide a service and provide their operations. I think it's an insult to the Metis people. I don't think it's very fair to them, and I think this government's got to start being more professional and more accountable to the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan.

If they say that they're going to be in the pamphlet, and the

pamphlet certainly talks about commitment to the Metis people and to the Metis cause . . . and yet we see that a lot of the action that they're doing is contrary to supporting the Metis cause. So I urge the government to clean up their act and get things straightened away and start doing your job of respecting the Metis people, you know, and that's the whole thing. It goes down to land. It goes down to accountability. It goes down to all the avenues of just the simple, basic point of respect. They talk lots about what the actions should be, and the member across is calling me and asking me different questions. The point is that they know; they're aware of this situation. They're aware of how ill-treated the Metis have been in the last several decades.

So in reference to the point of the Metis Nation, begin to look at them not as a cultural group, Mr. Speaker — certainly they're proud of their culture and they're proud of their history — but more so look at them as also as a government, because they have governing aspirations. They have self-government on their block of, you know, all the negotiations that they want to begin with this government.

And why I'm referring to that, Mr. Speaker, is when you see motions of this nature calling for extended hours so you can ram business through without dealing with the issues I speak about today, then really we're not governing properly. We're not being a solid government. Government is here to serve the people; we must get through our heads. And at times I wonder just how thick our skulls are when you can't hear the message time and time again.

So really begin to deal with the Metis on an even perspective. Begin to deal with them on a respectful basis and talk about government. They are a government, Mr. Speaker. They're trying very hard to develop their own governance. And when you throw in the aspect of financial support, throw in the aspect of control of land, you throw in the aspect of respect in terms of government to government, you're throwing in the fair and even treatment to these people, and then you will see the imagination and the strength, Mr. Speaker, that the Metis have to really develop their own systems.

They're much as capable as the first nations people in doing so. So what you have is you have two aboriginal groups that are doing really well for their people and eventually become a self-sufficient, proud nation. And this is what they're trying to accomplish, Mr. Speaker; they're trying to accomplish that.

And for the life of me, as government, I don't know why we keep delaying, delaying, delaying. And the question we ask is why. Why do we wait? And that's a question we've been asking ourselves for many, many years.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Metis perspective — land, government to government, respect and pride, and all that thing — it's all in there. And they've met time and time again. So if the government says they're not aware of it, then really I think they should be ashamed. The fact is they should be aware of it and they should start taking action and start getting serious.

The other point of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is in northern Saskatchewan the dynamics of the community, I guess the

demographics of the community as well, see that many of the communities outside of the reservations and certainly the other land that the treaties are going to be getting, most of the communities are Metis people.

And many of these Metis people of course become mayors and they become councillors or they become business people, they become teachers, they become lawyers, and they become . . . many of them have become doctors and businessmen as well.

In fact a Metis classmate of mine, Mr. Speaker, is now a brain surgeon in Calgary. And certainly there's also a couple classmates of mine have become teachers and one has become a very successful businessman. And I was the least educated one in the whole bunch so I became a politician.

But the thing of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is what the situation clearly shows is that if you challenge people and you recognize their ability and you recognize their limitation as a compassionate, intelligent government, you will then put in long-term solutions with their cooperation and come up with a new plan, a new strategy that can change the current direction that we're on — a direction of dependency, a direction that has no pride, and a direction that just counts on government for every answer.

Governance is not about power, Mr. Speaker. It's about empowerment. And this is the common message and the common theme that many, many people of northern Saskatchewan and certainly many people from the Metis and the first nations side speak about.

So in reference to the Metis and first nations and all the different, individual groups out there that are of aboriginal ancestry, they're asking government to have a fresh perspective. They're asking government to do differently, do things differently. Treat them differently. Treat them with respect.

And that's the whole key thing that we're asking for here, Mr. Speaker, when we're talking about northern Saskatchewan, and the reason why motions of this nature are contrary to good government, because it's more politics than business. And this is why we've got to get over this stuff, Mr. Speaker.

Again in northern Saskatchewan, some of the scenario that the people have been looking at . . . And we know that the constitution is involved with the Metis and is involved with the treaty and the Inuit. Well the constitution recognizes those distinct three aboriginal groups — the Metis, Inuit, and treaty.

Well the Inuit issue has certainly been settled significantly and so has the treaty. But, Mr. Speaker, again the Metis is being kicked back and forth between a provincial and federal issue — well it's a federal issue; or it's a provincial issue.

And we hear the Minister of Indian and Metis Affairs saying, well we can't deal with them because we're in the courts, and we can't deal with them because it's a federal issue and here they're stuck in limbo. So in the meantime, what do we do?

As a province, I believe we should become aggressive. We should say, okay, it is a provincial responsibility, we'll try and

get some federal support and federal dollars to address these issues. We will take the first large step. We'll become aggressive. We'll address these issues.

And this is what they're asking, Mr. Speaker. They're not asking us to talk about motions of this nature to try and prove our point of power and government in control.

So again the Metis perspective: give them land, give them the opportunity to develop themselves, and you will see, Mr. Speaker, they will certainly rise to the occasion. They know self-government means a lot of responsibility. They know that self-government means setting the highest standards for themselves. They know that you cannot hide your weakness behind self-government. You must show your strength if you want to self-govern. And that's the whole process and the whole theory and the thinking behind many Metis people, Mr. Speaker — along with self-government comes a great amount of responsibility.

So, Mr. Speaker, the key thing here is that we must not forget — and we'll never forget — the Metis perspective in terms of the aboriginal issues.

The third matter, Mr. Speaker, we need to speak on that could have some immediate impact to the northern communities is the community development scenario, and we talk about how the dynamics of a community is affected by certain actions. And I don't want to keep going back to any particular community because many northern communities are the same, but when you have a community that's situated and located in northern Saskatchewan, relatively isolated and no employment — unemployment's quite high — and you have social problems and you have economic problems and you have all these problems all milling around in a certain small section of property, what you see happen, Mr. Speaker, is you got to look at each individual effect on that community to determine what their role is in terms of the growth of the community.

And when the governments come in and they say, well we're going to have the government deliver all kinds of services, social services, justice, health care, education, we're going to develop . . . we're going to deliver all these systems to you guys, what that immediately does, it disempowers people to make decisions over their own lives, and as a result, it's not their system. So they kind of sit back and they wait for the government to try and do everything, and the government knows that they're not going to do everything, and they can't do everything.

So when you look at the community development scenario that we often speak about in northern Saskatchewan, what we're saying is, give us more and more control over those institutions. Gradually if you will, gradually start empowering people, setting up their own local police force, setting up their own educational system, setting up their own justice system, their own economic system, and their own social system.

And a good perspective I always use, Mr. Speaker, when I talk about community development, is again, several years ago there was a study to determine exactly how much money La Loche actually was costing the province. And I don't say it, Mr.

Speaker, to try and penalize the community, because lord knows, they need as much help as they can get. But they went so far as to say, to police the community, to provide social services, and to provide housing and to provide justice and to provide health care to the people there, you're looking at about 17 or \$18 million per year — a significant investment, Mr. Speaker.

Well the question we have, Mr. Speaker, or I have, is after 15, 20 years of 17 to \$18 million invested into the community — that's almost \$200 million — and why is it, after 10, 15, 20 years, Mr. Speaker, why is it that we still have the economic problems that we have in that community today. And the simple reason, Mr. Speaker, is that the people at the local level are in no way, shape, or form in charge of the allocation nor control of those dollars; that the local people have no control or in charge of any of the land surrounding these communities.

So in essence you're tying the northern people's hands by not recognizing their abilities and certainly not hearing the aspirations of many Metis leaders, many first nation leaders, many of the women and the children that are involved in these communities, and certainly many of the people in general.

So when we talk about community development, Mr. Speaker, it's really doing a comprehensive planning — a planning, an economic plan. That is not taking place at this point in time. There's a few communities, I must add, Mr. Speaker, Buffalo Narrows being one of them; Beauval being another one of them; La Loche is trying to get into it as well. So there are some communities that are really trying to do the community development planning in which they want to say to themselves, okay, we're here now in 1996; where do we want to be by the year 2000?

Well really they're starting the whole process on their own, Mr. Speaker, and I really admire their efforts. Because they realize they've taken the bull by the horn and they said the government is not going to do this for us. So with their meagre amounts of dollars that many municipal governments get, they are trying to really get the system going. They're practically trying to pull themselves up by the bootstraps, Mr. Speaker, but this government doesn't even give them the boots. So that's the whole thing.

The key thing here, Mr. Speaker, is when you look at the community development scenario, you say, what ways and shapes and forms can we raise revenues? Because obviously you need revenues to operate a government in. And if you don't have those extra revenues, then basically you can't do anything.

So they look at the business opportunity, they look at the taxation issue, they look at the land lease issue, they look at expansion, they look at the government, they look at all these scenarios, and it's a tremendous challenge, Mr. Speaker. These people are people that come from their own families; they got jobs, and yet councillors and mayors got to leave their families, leave their jobs, to travel and to try and design and develop a future for their communities. For what? For a lot of headaches and no support.

But, Mr. Speaker, the surprising thing I must say to you — and

it's an inspiration certainly to me and should be an inspiration to all of Saskatchewan people — in spite of the many problems and in spite of the fact that they have no support, many elections in these northern communities you often see and hear 19 to 20 people applying or vying for six council positions. So certainly, Mr. Speaker, there is no apathy when it comes to aspirations of many northern people.

(1500)

And these competitions, being involved in three of them since becoming involved with the municipal politics, I can tell you that they're pretty competitive. No mayor — hardly any mayors — get in by acclamation. It's really . . . it's always a race and it's always a horse race. People are just back and forth, saying this is what we should do, this is what we should do and so on and so forth. And the vision of many of the northern mayors and northern leaders is just incredible because they really are committed to the process.

So when we talk about community development, Mr. Speaker, I go back to the earlier reference — that you've got to empower the communities more. They've got to be able to have the tools and they got to have the support of government. They got to have the environment to exist to really make a change in their lives.

They have the most to invest. They have the most to win. So they're the ones that are going to work the hardest and commit the most to this process, not governments, and it's time the governments start accepting that responsibility of turning more control over to the people. That, Mr. Speaker, is the message when you talk about community development as a whole.

The other aspect affecting the community development scenario, Mr. Speaker, that we often hear about is in reference to education. And I hear the Education minister saying that they're spending \$27 million in northern Saskatchewan. It's a significant budget, Mr. Speaker. It's a significant effort.

And I think in reference to education, I really can't say anything negative about education because the people there . . . a lot of local people are in charge. And the only thing that we're afraid of is, as long as they don't start tinkering with the system too much. Because if you start forcing amalgamation on some of these northern schools and some of these northern educational boards, then you're taking away the very element that we've been asking for in justice. You're taking away the very element that we've been asking for in social services and economic development and planning and so on and so forth.

So really the school systems always could use some improvements, but you don't improve anything by forcing amalgamation or cutting back budgets. This is, Mr. Speaker, a human challenge in all of us, to see if we could really do something differently for the North. And educational efforts in that regard is certainly appreciated. And we must look at the situation of actually turning more and more control to local people and in every regard.

So I really flag the concern that amalgamation, when it comes to education, is not acceptable. It's going to be challenged

because all you're doing is you're taking control away from the northern people, and that's not what they want. They clearly want to be more empowered to do things for their future and for their children.

And I speak about different graduations that I've attended and I see a lot of hope in the parents, Mr. Speaker. But really, you know, are we misplacing that hope in saying that education could be our saviour?

Well, Mr. Speaker, education is power. And if the government is really, truly bent on empowering people, then they will not tinker with the education system. They'll leave it as it is, if not improving it to have more local control and have more educational plans to have some of the kids go out to post-secondary opportunities. Which leads to the next issue, about post-secondary opportunities, Mr. Speaker.

Many years ago when the mining sector first came in northern Saskatchewan, they had Justice Bayda, I believe, travel throughout the various northern communities talking about the potential impact of some of the Cluff Lake mine and some of the other mines that might happen.

And at that time, Mr. Speaker, they said, do Northerners want these mines? And I can remember I was 13 years old at that time attending such a meeting in a town hall in Ile-a-la-Crosse and I was sitting in the back with a bunch of other kids. And I could hear them saying, if the North wants these mines, it will come out and there'll be a lot of opportunity, if these mines happen. You guys will see better things, better days.

And, Mr. Speaker, at that point in time as a 13-year-old lad, I knew that they're building the road and fixing up the road in our region for the specific purpose of that mine. They were punching a hole through to the Cluff Lake mine.

Now it was an insult to the northern Saskatchewan people to have them think that we didn't know what the plan was. And if every Northerner said no, those mines would have still proceeded.

So again, we're not saying that we're against development. I'm certainly pleased to see the employment opportunity and the revenues generated as a result of the mining activity in northern Saskatchewan. That's not the point here. The point is, that don't insult the northern people's intelligence because they know what's going on.

The other important . . . When they spoke about the opportunities of the mine, they talked about the post-secondary opportunities, that they would develop an institution, a northern educational institution, that could teach all the people the different sciences that they would need to apply for these bigger and better jobs at the mine site.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that institution and that educational institution was never built. It was never built, Mr. Speaker. And I go back to the points of Buffalo Narrows. The Westside Community College is losing funding on a constant basis in spite of the increase in mining activity.

So you can see where the sceptical attitudes comes from Mr. Speaker, as we've seen this process before. We've been there before and we're aware that if you make a promise, you must follow through. You must follow through with your commitment.

Had that institution been built as per the recommendations of the Bayda inquiry to have that institution built somewhere, the post-secondary institution, you would see not 50 per cent being forced on the industry by this government. You wouldn't see 19 per cent being an acceptable ratio from the PC (Progressive Conservative) government in the early '80s. What you would see, Mr. Speaker, is you would see 80 to 90 per cent of the northern people working at these mines. And that, Mr. Speaker, was a crying shame that we lost that post-secondary institution at that time.

The other fact that we have to look at when it comes to education is we must try and amalgamate the northern industries with the southern opportunities in terms of maximizing our workforce, our skilled workforce — when you see the mining sector saying, well we need a technician or we need a lab tech. And of course to be a lab tech you've got to have your maths and sciences.

And again we go back to the earlier point when we talked about the educational problems, that only 24 per cent of the kids that start out in kindergarten actually get to grade 12. So if you only have 24 per cent of the entire population that's in grade 12, and you can't take the ones that went off to school and went to work in other fields, you see a very small amount of people that are actually eligible for the higher-paying jobs that need the arts and sciences in the mining field.

So as a result, what you see is that the 50 per cent that the government speaks about and brags about openly really is a concerted effort on behalf of the mining companies. They're really trying hard to do this. But the other aspect of the problem is that the government should start doing some serious thinking of their own about putting in a post-secondary institution somewhere in the north-west and somewhere in the north-east to really hit hard on the arts and sciences, and to continue pushing that through year by year by year, and not taking an ad hoc approach to training our people and our young, educated graduates to a point where they are able to take over these jobs.

So is that possible, Mr. Speaker? Well yes it is possible. Distance education and the technology that has been introduced in the recent years, everything is possible, Mr. Speaker. We now have televised degree and certificate credit courses that could be delivered through satellite. And we have something like 12 centres in northern Saskatchewan that now deliver satellite educational programs and then you could see that the opportunities are there. So we have . . . from the technical perspective, it's certainly possible. From the employment perspective, it's certainly possible.

Now the next part of the equation is the mining sector appears to be wanting to try and employ as many northern people as they can. So what does that leave? It leaves the government now to put in comprehensive, long-term educational planning that is status-blind, that is status-blind, Mr. Speaker, to try and

match the graduates coming out of these schools, the very small number of graduates coming out of these schools, to put them into high-paying, well-paying jobs at the mining sector, the forestry sector, and the tourism sector, and so on and so forth. That's the strategy. The only component missing here, Mr. Speaker, is the ad hoc approach by government when it comes to the post-secondary training of many of our young graduates.

You look at the other . . . When I mentioned status-blind, Mr. Speaker, and the reason I go back to the training, also to community development, is in northern Saskatchewan you have wide-ranging interest in terms of the different people that live in the community. You have your Metis, and then you have your Bill C-31, and then you have your status, and then you have your non-status, and really all these people have different headings. And then you have your non-aboriginal population.

Well when we talk about educational efforts, we've got to make sure that these educational efforts are status-blind. Because many times when you have somebody that has just been reinstated as a treaty, many times the band itself cannot take these people in because they haven't got the adequate revenues to care for that person. So many times the Bill C-31's — the people that are trying to get their treaty status, the status that they rightfully deserve to get back — they try and get that back and there's no way that they're able to do so.

So really you look at the status situation, Mr. Speaker, and the non-status situation, it's really unfair treatment of people. And in the North, if you're going to do anything with economics or social development or educational planning, then you must make sure they're status-blind and make them community based. Because in essence, what you're doing is you're treating all people in the northern communities, the aboriginal communities, on an equal basis. If they choose to live in Ile-a-la-Crosse most of their life, then they should be considered an Ile-a-la-Crosse resident.

And this is where it goes back to the point, is there are certain issues where you should have your aboriginal ancestry confirmed for the purpose of rights, and certainly land claims. But certainly on the effort of community development, it should be a status-blind effort.

The other particular aspect we're talking about when you look at the educational aspirations, is recently in our region, the Athabasca area, we had six Head Start programs that were started, Mr. Speaker.

And what Head Start programs, from what my memory serves me, if it serves me correct, is what they do is they take these preschool kids into a learning class, and they're with their parents. And they spend more time with these young kids, talking about responsibility, talking about caring for themselves, respecting the teacher, being aware of the challenge.

And although it's a bit too early to determine the exact success of some of the Head Start programs that the federal government is initiating and supporting in our particular region, what we can determine, Mr. Speaker, from other sources and other studies, is that this Head Start program offers a significant

advantage to young kids entering kindergarten. And that's exactly the intent of the name, Head Start, is it gives these young preschool kids a head start into educational opportunity. Give them a chance. Make them realize that the badness out there, in and around them, should not affect their attitude, and the challenges of going to school every day are simply challenges that they have to overcome.

And I will certainly share the results with the House once the findings of those six particular groups of Head Start programs have on the impact and effect and the success of the educational efforts of the northern teachers and certainly the board of educations that try and deliver education in the North.

So in essence, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the Head Start program, the federal government recognizes that this has a tremendous opportunity. And I urge the provincial government to match that initiative.

And we talk about cut-backs from the federal government to the provincial government; well in the same essence we ask them to do what they're doing as well when it comes to Head Start programs. Look at the whole-case scenario, Mr. Speaker. Because when you have a child that's a young, impressionable child and he's living in a crowded house, and his dad isn't working, and there's other problems in the community, it's so very easy for him or her to go on the wrong track. This Head Start program is putting dollars directly to him or to her to tell her that look, a lot of this isn't your problem; don't let this affect your attitude.

And the Head Start program is, I think, going to be one of the more positive approaches to northern Saskatchewan. And it is only a trickle, Mr. Speaker, of what is needed to really begin to address the social development problems of northern Saskatchewan.

Now I guess the other point we speak about in terms of education is you must make the effort to look at the challenges of not incorporating, but making our educational system more flexible in its approach. You have to try and get a new and exciting way to deliver education in northern Saskatchewan, a way in which people can learn about community development; a way in which people can learn about business development; a way in which people could learn about social development; a way that people could learn about electricity, about plumbing, about carpentry, about auto repair. You know, you should make it a wide-ranging list of opportunities for many of these students that go into our school system.

(1515)

If it's kindergarten to 12 with the standard type of curriculum, then of course the trends will continue. Just look at the outside of the school system — you have housing problems, you have poverty, you have a lot of social problems, you have a lack of control, a lack of empowerment of the people. Naturally you're not going to feel good about yourself.

So in essence you talk about the whole process of trying to incorporate every child into the school curriculum and making a definite advantage of saying, all 300 or all 400 of these students

that are entering my school system, we'll have a place for them. We're not going to outline their life. But if you could see that they're not geniuses in *Hamlet*, then obviously they could be a very excellent carpenter. Let's use that ability. Let's incorporate their talents into ensuring that we maximize their opportunity and certainly educate them along the way.

And it is our strong belief in the basic perspective that community development has the simple philosophy that in every woman, man, and child there's a special gift that that person could use to contribute to the community as a whole — whether that child or that woman or that man is gifted in speaking or is gifted in writing or is a good hockey player or is a kind person.

Like we all have different qualities about us, and this is what the intent of the community development scenario is, is to try and use all the goodness of people to build a brand-new system. And once the goodness of people are flowing, then you can see, that if you give them control and access to all the resources and opportunities around them, all that positive energy of people will come together as one solid force that could change that community within the 5-, 10-, 15-year period if not sooner.

So the perspective here, and the attitude that they must take, Mr. Speaker, and the attitude that they do share — but governments don't share — is that there's nothing that you cannot fix in northern Saskatchewan communities if the communities put their mind to it and the government makes a commitment to do so. And that's the common bottom line when it comes to community development.

And the other factor, Mr. Speaker, in education is that there's so much more that we could become and there's so much more the government could do. Not with cutting back or amalgamating these schools. Not with forcing more rules and regulations. Not from excluding the history of the Metis and the history of the aboriginal first nations people, and certainly not by showing them no respect in this day and age of 1996. Housing is a lack of respect. Lack of water and sewer is a lack of respect. Lack of respect for the Metis is prevalent. And all these problems certainly hit home, and they do have a drastic effect.

And I make out the earlier point, Mr. Speaker, is that northern Saskatchewan people, be it if they're German, if they're Polish, or if they're Metis, if they're in first nations, these are Saskatchewan people. These are Saskatchewan people. We mustn't look at them as native people. These are Saskatchewan residents.

They vote in provincial elections and many of them contribute to the tax base. Many of them have children, they have grandparents, and they have hopes and dreams and aspirations. They're much like you and I.

And I still can't for the life of me believe why this province and this government, and certainly ourselves as an Assembly by playing silly rules and motions of this nature, cannot make a concerted effort to help out 3 per cent of the provincial population that occupies half the land mass of Saskatchewan.

It's not an insurmountable challenge, Mr. Speaker. It's a very

easy task. And you go back to the point, as life goes on, many of the native people, they count on their elders. The elderly in the northern native communities are so valued for their opinion because they see where they've been and they sometimes lose hope. But they never show that they've lost hope, because they want their grandchildren to do well or they want their children to do well as well. Every elderly in Saskatchewan and Canada want to see their child or their grandchild do well.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the native people and the northern people of Saskatchewan have the same dreams and the same aspirations. And how could you kill a dream? Well, Mr. Speaker, you can kill a dream by providing no housing. Mr. Speaker, you can kill a dream by providing no respect for the Metis and Indian cause, and certainly by no respect and support for the native people of northern Saskatchewan.

You know in the whole situation, we ask, is how much longer can we take this madness? And like any other culture, and like any other race and like any other peoples, we do have our bad apples. There are certain occasional people that really don't respect the native way; don't respect life in general. And we're not immune to that as well, Mr. Speaker.

But we ask the people of Saskatchewan and certainly the government to not judge the people in general on the actions of a few. There are many people that have made some impact on northern people's life. There are many positive people.

I cannot begin to give you the names of the thousands of women or the thousands of volunteers in these northern communities or the thousands of names of the men that have volunteered for hockey, that have volunteered for bake sales, that have gone up and supported the person that may have lost a loved one. They're all good, kind, compassionate people.

But does the media pick up on that? Does the media show a kind person helping somebody out by giving them a pie when he's short of food? No, Mr. Speaker, we don't see that. And when you get involved with politics, you are supposed to make an effort to change things for the betterment of the Saskatchewan people — all Saskatchewan people, including the northern native people. And you can't do that by stifling the business of this House by motions of this nature.

This is simply about politics, Mr. Speaker. It's not about serving the people. And this is where the government's got to get their act straight. They're here to serve the people. They're here to empower people. They're not here to follow their political agenda. This is about people, Mr. Speaker. It's nothing more than that.

The other factor that we have to look at, Mr. Speaker, is in reference to women in business. And in northern Saskatchewan this is an oxymoron. There's not too many women involved with business. And I hate to use that phrase, Mr. Speaker, because really in northern Saskatchewan the two groups that need a lot more support are the business community and certainly the women as well.

Women are the strength in many northern communities, especially the grandmothers. They're the ones that I used to go

to when I was mayor and I made a mistake. And I'd go see them, and they'd say, oh you're human. You know, don't do that again, or else I won't vote for you — that type of thing that you always see. They give you strength. And we need to begin to recognize and appreciate that strength, not by constantly using it when we need it, by giving them back some of the support that we've taken off them for many, many years.

That's the important thing, Mr. Speaker, is to understand the power of women in many of these communities, because that's one force that you cannot mess with. And a good example of that, Mr. Speaker, is when I was mayor of my home community. I tried to say, well I believe we need to be a healthier community, so I'm going to cut back on the bingos. Well, Mr. Speaker, I bumped into a bunch of women that were quite concerned on the issue. And to say the least, certainly this mayor backed off. And I backed off pretty fast because they said, unless you can provide some other alternative of entertainment and support system, then you leave our entertainment system alone right now.

So you know that there's power there. There's organization. And I think in essence that all the women really are in control of the community and the men are just along for the ride.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Belanger: — And the second point, Mr. Speaker, is at least at that point in time as mayor . . . and I guess the point I'm trying to make here is we did allow debate, we did allow consultation, and we did realize we were wrong. And we knew that if we said no, we're going to do this and that's it, that we weren't serving our people, we weren't serving the interest of those particular group of people. And this is where governance is all about.

It's time that politicians and government begin to realize that they're here to serve the people. They're here to make the world a better place to live. And if you're not in this for that specific purpose, then you shouldn't be in this building, you shouldn't be in this building talking about things.

I guess the other thing that needs to be addressed when you talk about community development — and I spoke about education and I talked about the Metis perspective on housing — is youth in sport. Mr. Speaker, when I was a young lad — I again refer to my background because I'm more familiar with mine — the fact that I had many of the older people saying, oh you kids are bad; you guys are not doing things right. Nowadays I'm saying that to many of the young people.

And I believe the young people . . . that we've lost the young people. In today's society we have been so consumed by other matters that we feel are pressing, that we've lost touch with the young people. And a community development model, a community development effort I speak about, would specifically address solid strategies that will just attack the problem.

Why do you expect that the young people are doing what they have, you know, what they have been doing. It's because that they lack the support at the community level. And you talk

about family breakdown, you talk about the violence, you talk about the social problems, you talk about the lack of support, and above all else, Mr. Speaker, you're talking about the lack of recognizing problems.

And if we don't put major effort and major strategies behind supporting our youth and developing an alternative for our youth, you can basically kiss tomorrow good-bye, Mr. Speaker, because tomorrow is going to be worse than today unless we begin to do specific measures.

And this is not a liberalism attitude, Mr. Speaker, when I say we must work with these kids, because the only alternative we have for these kids at this point in time, Mr. Speaker, is jail or probation. There is no discussion on how to discipline these young people. There's no aggressive young offenders program in which we can make sure that the ones that continue breaking the law are paying for their price, and the justice system has got to play a critical role.

So the key thing here is an innovative approach again of governance.

This government should have a youth protection Act that they want to put into place and that they want to speak about. This government should have a community development Act that they want to work on and speak about. This government should have a Metis Act in which you want to get these issues resolved.

All these Acts should be for the specific purpose of serving people and coming up with exciting and innovative ways to govern. That's what this is all about, Mr. Speaker, is trying to help the people who need help, not to help the ones who don't need help.

One of the key things when we talk about youth is, we have been working on a program back again in my home community of trying to get some of the young offenders in the community involved in this disciplinary program. And it works for some; it doesn't work for others. Again, they're all individual people.

And what we asked was a bunch of former army people to come into our community and to work with these young people. And these army people were of course the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires. And they brought in three instructors and they talked to 12 young offenders. They said, from now on you guys have a choice; you've got to be with me or you're in jail. And of course the young offenders took the army guys.

And let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, after three months of those particular drills, they taught them respect, they taught them coordination, they taught them friendship, and they taught them discipline. And when the community . . . when they had their graduation, they had exercises outside the community hall. And of course we watched all that. And you can see these 12 graduates marching in unison and doing all these drills.

And, Mr. Speaker, we counted; we had over 300 people out that day to watch this drill and this accomplishment. And those 12 young people, who were probably some of the worst people in the community, today now, Mr. Speaker, you can sit down with

them. Many of them have become productive.

So our point is, in reference to really helping out the youth in northern Saskatchewan and throughout the land, is to begin to stop paying them lip attention . . . or lip-service and start giving them real attention by programs that different youth can fit into. And never take, never take the situation, Mr. Speaker, that one size fits all, because certainly it doesn't fit all, and we have to understand that.

You look at the situation of sport, Mr. Speaker. Aside from sport, when we talk about northern development and community development aspects, sport also plays an important role. Because sport also builds discipline and also builds esteem and also builds a sense of belonging. And many young people really get involved with sports as a last effort to try and belong somewhere or do something.

And in northern Saskatchewan, much like in many other northern communities, hockey and softball and volleyball and basketball and curling and all these sports, they have many young people involved. And that, to a large extent, Mr. Speaker, has also been a saving grace.

So in reference to sport development in respect of the sporting system again, you look at what's being committed to the sport development in these northern communities and I can almost guarantee you that it's a very, very small percentage of many towns' operating budget because they simply haven't got the money.

So you talk about community development, you identify where the youth are active in, and they're active in sports. So try as you might, Mr. Speaker, you cannot figure out what the young people want. They know what they want and you have to do that.

(1530)

So in essence, as government I think they should start introducing Bills to deal with youth, they should start introducing Bills to deal with women's issues, with business issues, and sporting and cultural issues, and certainly all the other issues that go along with governing, as opposed to wasting time on matters of this nature.

Mr. Speaker, people are tired of waiting for governments to do things for them. They're trying their very best to go on their own. But they need a government with compassion to understand these issues. And this is what this is all about, is re-energizing and realizing once again what governance is all about. It is about compassion, Mr. Speaker.

So again, going back to some of the points that I want to raise and share with the House in reference to the justice system, Mr. Speaker. You look at an article here, Mr. Speaker, that I wish to share with any of the members opposite, and it talks about "Early releases frustrates judge." And this is an April 9, 1996 article in the La Ronge *Northerner*, and where a provincial judge has publicly expressed his frustration with the crumbling credibility of the justice system last Thursday. Now this is a provincial judge talking about the problems of, you know, the

justice system in the North.

Because we know, because we know, Mr. Speaker, there is not enough effort in northern Saskatchewan and because we know that we're not doing enough about community development, then you can see even the judges are frustrated because they know they have to put these guys in for a certain amount of time, and then they have to be released early because there's no room for anybody else.

So instead of going through the constant basis of throwing our youth into jail and having to release them and reoffend in the community and then going back into the jail as soon as a bed opens up, and the system just goes round and round and round and round . . . And then you have a provincial judge getting up and saying openly and publicly that he's frustrated by the early release program because it's not effective in terms of rehabilitating these young people and showing them that they do belong.

And I can hear the member opposite calling on me to say something extra. Well let's see what else I can say about that.

If you want, and I quote: "If you want shorter sentences and fewer people in jail, just don't ask for more time behind bars."

You know that's the whole thing, is what he is saying, that basically fewer people in jail doesn't really mean that you're going to save the justice system a lot of money. It just means that you had to put the money elsewhere in more proactive plans and certainly to understand what the problem is.

And that's the whole point in my discussion here, Mr. Speaker, is I can't for the life of me understand how this motion is going to help the governance of this province. For the life of me, I cannot understand how this motion is going to help the governance of this province when you have all these problems and all these situations that are not being addressed. It's all about open and accountable government and it's all about making sure that we do things differently.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the people of the North and the northern people, and the northern youth especially, are very tired of going around and around in that circle. And in fact they got through the system so often that they don't even respect the system any more. Going in front of a judge and getting a sentence is like going to pick up a loaf of bread, you know. And if anybody says, no, Buckley, we don't believe it's true, well, Mr. Speaker, I share with you that as a member of a very large family, I have two brothers that are involved heavily with that system.

And I can see what happens. I've lived firsthand in northern Saskatchewan and I've seen the bad situation. I've not come out of a \$200,000 home and driving a \$30,000 car and coming to work here. Mr. Speaker, I've been involved with these communities and I know what I speak about. I've lived there. I've lived that life and I know exactly what we need to do. And we need a government that is bound and determined to serve — not a government that is bound and determined to play games to get through the politics of this session.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, I go again to another commentary by Scott Boyes, who is also with *The Northerner* rather. And Scott says, “sentences do three things” . . . (inaudible) . . . And again quoting the article: “Protect society by imprisoning a criminal, deter the offender and act as a deterrent for others considering crime, and hopefully rehabilitate the person.”

Well, Mr. Speaker, I really want to underline the point of “hopefully rehabilitate the person.” Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to put, do not rehabilitate the person because there is no dollars for that, Mr. Speaker. And we’re doing this in spite of the \$8 billion mine that is going to be happening in McArthur River, in spite of the \$4 billion tar sand that’s happening right next door, about 40 kilometres from Garson Lake, and in spite of the forestry development and the tourism development and of the thousands of jobs created in Regina, Prince Albert, and Saskatoon at the result of the northern mines.

And yet, what do we ask for, for 3 per cent of the people occupying half the land mass in Saskatchewan? Social and economic justice, Mr. Speaker. That’s what governance should be about and that’s what politics should be about.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if any of the members across the floor wish to see copies of these, I can certainly share them with them. And this is a provincial judge. I don’t want to put anybody else in the predicament where we’ve hired a judge to do this for us. And that’s the key thing that we have to look at.

Now as we continue along this path of understanding what the northern people are — and I only speak for the Athabasca constituency, Mr. Speaker. Maybe I’m wrong in assuming that province-wide, we should consult with people; we should try and do things every day in this House to try and make a difference in their life, to try and improve their road or fix up their health care problems, or we should do everything in that nature to try and serve the people to the best of our ability.

Now that’s what I believe a politician should be and that’s what I believe this House is all about. Now if I’m wrong, then I’m obviously in the wrong place, Mr. Speaker. I should not be sitting here because certainly the aspirations of the people in the North are certainly, are trying to rely on having that particular job done.

Now the other situation with justice, Mr. Speaker. You look at the way justice is being delivered in Saskatchewan. The judge, at this time that I speak about, flies into all these northern communities or drives in from Meadow Lake to sit in there and do, in terms of the justice system, do kind of an assembly line process. And he flies in with the Legal Aid lawyer, they come in together, they have lunch together, they go into the court-house and they go through the assembly process. Okay, you’re guilty, and on and on and on.

So what happens there, Mr. Speaker, is the justice system is not being delivered properly when you’re trying to rush through one day; when the cost of delivering the justice in the North is really not being considered in terms of having a fair type of trial. Now

we’re not saying that many of the people that do go to the court system are not guilty. A huge . . . many of them are. But the real thing is that we have to look at how the justice system interacts with the community, and certainly how the actions of some of the young people in these northern communities are impacted and affected by some of the housing and some of the social and economic problems of northern Saskatchewan.

Those that offend the law in northern Saskatchewan and those that offend people should seriously be made to pay back in some way, shape or form. We’re not suggesting that we be very lenient. I’m saying that we should have an effective justice system, Mr. Speaker: a justice system that recognizes that you can’t fly in and deliver justice one day a week and a justice system that really respects what the problems are in northern Saskatchewan, and what the youth are going through in particular, and certainly a justice system that does not force early releases because they haven’t got enough room for the other incoming prisoners. This whole system is frustrating and the whole system is maddening.

So, Mr. Speaker, the question we have is whether this government is prepared to spend \$35,000 on incarcerating a young individual or whether the government’s prepared to spend \$35,000 per person in these communities to try and develop a social plan and a social project to change the outcome of their lives. That, Mr. Speaker, is what it’s all about. It’s about good choices. It’s about good government. And it’s certainly not about business of this nature and motions of this nature.

So, Mr. Speaker, I spoke about how we need to have economic and social development work hand in hand when you look at the community. In La Ronge I understand . . . It’s a boom town, La Ronge; it’s doing, you know, quite well. And one of the problems that the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) have there is many of the members won’t come in to La Ronge to replace members that are leaving in terms of transfers. And I think the problem there, Mr. Speaker, is a classic example of how you have to have social development interact with economic development because of the problems that can be created on the social development side. You know, you can have all the economy happening, all the jobs, all the money happening, but you’re certainly going to have a lot of the crime and the problems that usually follows some of these towns that start to boom.

So in essence, northern Saskatchewan . . . And I reassert my earlier point, Mr. Speaker, is that you’ve got to have social development along with economic development under the auspices of community development to really build these communities from the ground up. And this is why we go back, and we always call for direct financing of local economic and social development agencies because if you direct finance these groups . . . many of these ladies’ and women’s groups in the North and the town, you know, they take the extra effort to try and change things at a local level with no support.

And something as simple as this, Mr. Speaker, could really change the outcome of many youth, of many families, of many men, women, and children. So if they have the investment, Mr. Speaker, they will take the time to make sure that their people

do well. And if it is not the government's responsibility . . . But where the government is not helping out is by turning over control and giving adequate resources to do so.

We all know — every single member in this House knows — that unless you look at these scenarios and look at these issues, then nothing can change in many communities. And that's right across the province. And whether you think that we're right or wrong and how you go about it is, you know, certainly up to you to explain your position. But believe me, the people in the North believe that community development in terms of better control over our lives is exactly what they've been calling for and asking for.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think the key thing here is that to understand again each of the communities' perspectives and the impacts and the effects on the communities and the lack of the Metis recognition and some of the misunderstanding that happens as a result of government's indifference to people. That's got to stop, Mr. Speaker.

When you get up and when you speak as a member of the Legislative Assembly, you're speaking on behalf of your people and you must have that fundamental freedom to express your opinion. You don't have to have agreement or consensus in the House, but if what you say is correct and what you say is, to a large extent, supported and substantiated with facts and what you say certainly is what you believe in, then shouldn't we as government put these things into place?

Shouldn't we as government determine that we are going to do this in this fashion, and as government, we're going to not even look at party lines? We're going to simply do this to serve the people?

This is what we're speaking about, Mr. Speaker — about governance. Like, we're here to make a difference to Saskatchewan people. We're here to make a difference to the Athabasca people and to the Cumberland people and to all the people across the great land. But in order to do that, Mr. Speaker, we must have a government that understands what the people wants.

And I refer to the situation of the last election where we only had a — what? — 60, 70 per cent turn out just because people are tired of waiting for government to come up with creative solutions. They're tired of the politics of the situation.

So really, Mr. Speaker, there's a huge gap of people out there that are really waiting for government to start coming up with some exciting and innovative ways to deliver services and benefits to those that deserve service and benefits — and especially to our elders, especially to the elders and the people that have built this province, Mr. Speaker. Those are the ones that we have to look at.

And whenever I see an elderly person and I think about some of the things that they've gone through in life, well really, they sacrificed a tremendous amount, Mr. Speaker. The elderly people in this province sacrificed a tremendous amount, and have we got an elderly support program? Have we got programs specifically for the elderly to help them with the tax situation,

with the housing situation, with any other health situation that they have, that we specifically targeted the elderly people? No we haven't.

And these people, Mr. Speaker, I've got stories from back home of how they sacrificed and how they endured many hardships, hardships you and I might not see for the rest of our lives. But the elderly people are really, Mr. Speaker, are the people that built this province and we cannot treat them any better than kings and queens of this land.

Mr. Speaker, you know we want to make sure that . . . and this is some of the reasons why we are fighting on the situation in northern Saskatchewan — is many of the elders really are doing their fair share. Many of them are looking after their grandchildren and looking after a house. And how much more can we expect of elderly people to try and sustain our communities?

(1545)

So, Mr. Speaker, motions of this nature do not substantiate or constitute good government, Mr. Speaker. Really good programs for the women, for the elderly, for the children, for the youth, and for the communities, and for the special interest groups we have in the North — that constitutes good government, Mr. Speaker. And this is why we have to make sure that we don't play games of this nature to try and get through our political agenda and not serve the people, you know, in any shape, way, or form.

I've got a quick little report I wish to share with the House, and I imagine they have a copy of this report. And it really talks about the far northern communities, and it talks about the high costs of life in the far northern communities I talked about earlier. And I said I'd have more facts for you guys today in reference to the barge service.

Just to quickly, you know, give the rest of the MLAs a reminder of what I spoke about yesterday . . . is in 1997, the barge service to the Athabasca Lake communities, which includes Uranium City and Stony and Camsell, will not be getting service any more. And we have to make sure that there's some way, shape, or form that this provincial government go up to the far northern communities and talk to them about how they can become part of the solution to make sure that the far northern communities — the five far northern communities of Uranium City, Camsell Portage, Fond-du-Lac, Stony Rapids, and Black Lake — will continue having transportation of food, gas, and of supplies that they need to survive. In 1997, the last barge will be done its work in that region, Mr. Speaker.

And clearly, you look at the freights, the annual freight volume in terms of tonnes, and since 1989 the demand for freight has actually doubled. So we know that the population in the communities in there is growing. So if the freight demands in the far northern communities are doubling and then they're discontinuing ferry barge service to the far northern communities in 1997, how are you going to make sure the people have access to food and to supplies and to heating fuel and what not?

Really we haven't been as proactive as we should be. And again goods shipped to eastern communities of Lake Athabasca as a percentage, 1985 there's a 60 per cent; 1989 it was at 86 per cent. So you can see that also goods shipped are being increased.

And certainly in terms of the freight volume — and if anybody wants to have a copy of this, I can certainly send it over — and growth of general merchandise, freight tonnage transferred by points north, freight forwarding, has actually increased from 1987 from 1,232 short tonne to 2,176.9.

So you can see as we go along, Mr. Speaker, the incredible increase of the goods and services that that are needed in the far northern communities. Yet 1997 is only a year away and we haven't done anything successful, haven't done anything innovative. We haven't gone out there to talk to them to see how we can improve the service.

And I guess to quickly explain why we're cutting back in that particular area, Mr. Speaker, is in the fact that the Canadian Coast Guard will no longer be dredging the river on the Alberta side to make sure the barge gets through so they can deliver this good. They're hoping to have a road built up from points north into Wollaston Lake.

And what does the government contribute to that, Mr. Speaker, to this road? They contribute \$1.5 million for a 150 kilometre road. I don't know what kind of a road you can build for \$1.5 million, but really the people in the far North, we must not forget about them. We must remember the costs that they have to incur. And furthermore, you look at the fact of the situation is that they might even have their goods and services cut off because of the problem of not recognizing their special needs.

So this is what government is all about, Mr. Speaker. It's really about making sure that we have proper service, we have proper respect, and we have proper attitudes developed for the Saskatchewan people.

It all goes back to my simple philosophical point that you're in here to make a difference. You're in here to speak on behalf of your constituents. You're in here to compromise at times in terms of trying to get a consensus going. But the bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is you're here to make sure that there is some voice and some reason and some logic and some understanding of what your constituency is about.

And I've spoken on that for quite some time, and I'm hoping that today the priorities and the issues of northern Saskatchewan communities are understood by many more members of the House. And I know I could go on here for several more days, Mr. Speaker, but really I wouldn't want to wear out my welcome because it's not in my system to wear out my welcome.

Mr. Speaker, just quickly on the *Partnership for Growth* document that we got from the government in reference to how we need to spend more time to consult with people. And you look at the motion. It's contrary to what government should be all about. And even the *Partnership for Growth*, when the admission was made that there was no grand strategy for rural

Saskatchewan, well, Mr. Speaker, there wasn't even the mention of northern Saskatchewan.

And then we talk about the \$4 million that was allocated to northern development fund. You know the restrictions of the northern development fund, and the problems associated with northern development fund really has to come into question.

And the reason why we need to go to local control, Mr. Speaker, is you've got to ensure that there's administrative control when you talk about allocation of economic and social development dollars, and you can't control it from a regional basis as well as you can control it from a local basis. And I've got, you know, a background somewhat knowing how to get involved with regional efforts in trying to create a forestry opportunity, and I know the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, is you've got to have good, solid administrative . . . and it's got to be local control, so the local people have the final say in how you do things. Regional approaches do not work, Mr. Speaker.

So in essence, the *Partnership for Growth*, you look at item number 16, "Maximize economic and employment opportunities for Aboriginal peoples." You look at the whole thing about ". . . sectoral job training initiatives to prepare Aboriginal peoples to enter the work force."

Now what really is questioning to me, Mr. Speaker, is what exactly does that mean? It's a nice fancy term; it got a lot of wide open-ended suggestions. But what it should say here is, by a certain day we as a government who are really supporting the aboriginal people will guarantee that we will have 3,000 people of aboriginal ancestry across 10 Crowns and 10 departments, and we will continue increasing that number — no number but just a general statement. And that's what I mean about aggressive planning, Mr. Speaker, aggressive planning and taking the bull by the horn and being very innovative and very exciting.

And I also talk about improving coordination of government economic development initiatives in northern Saskatchewan. And then it says, "Establish the Office of Northern Affairs to: . . . develop support networks for northern businesses." Well the best support network you can develop for northern businesses is you take Uranium City and Stony Rapids and Camsell Portage . . . is first of all we would give them food, for example. And we could give them fuel, for example. And we could give them subsidies to have businesses get into construction, or other businesses that need subsidies, you know, to live.

And I talk about \$1.13 a litre for gas. I talk about \$2-and-some-cents for a quart of milk. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's how you can improve plans for northern Saskatchewan, is you give them the support. But the amazing thing is I go back to the earlier example I use . . . is that you could use. You can buy a 40 ounce of whisky same price in Regina as you can in Buffalo Narrows, but you can't buy the same price of a quart of milk in Regina that you can in Stony Rapids. It doubles.

So where is the priority here? And this is what I'm talking about when you talk about governance . . . is really start thinking a lot with your heart as opposed to just with your

wallet because all the cuts are doing is just devastating people. And the thing is that we haven't talked about this thing for the last one or two years as northern residents. This thing has been going on for year after year after year after year. And granted there's been some inroads made. Certainly I'm not saying they've been totally forgotten, but certainly we have to make sure that we don't become complacent and that we forget about northern Saskatchewan.

Because if there's anything that you guys want to do as a governing body and certainly myself as an MLA, is to walk out of this building with a feeling of satisfaction that we were able to make a significant difference to 3 per cent of a population that occupied half the land mass and had an incredible amount of social and economic problems. We were able to provide some economic and social justice for those people and treated them as equals, in terms of meeting some of their housing demands, demands of fixing some of their roads, of talking about water and sewer for Stony Rapids, of developing a forestry and mining and natural gas industry, with their support and with their involvement.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's what it is all about — it's about service to your people. And if you're starting to forget that, Mr. Speaker, then what are we doing in this building? We're here to express our opinion. We're here to represent our constituents and we're here to serve them. And that's why it's got to be really flip-flopped. We got to start thinking, who put us in power? It was not the policies. It was not motions of this nature. It was certainly not the powers that be out there that want to control people.

Mr. Speaker, this thing is about expressing your opinion, defending your constituents, and making a difference. And if you can't do all three of those issues, then really we have to really examine what governance is all about, and certainly what our role is all about.

And I guess in closing, Mr. Speaker . . . I've been up here long enough to try and explain to you what I think is necessary to try and educate the people in this particular building of what's happening in northern Saskatchewan. The majority of the population, 97 per cent is in southern Saskatchewan. No question about that. And the economic might and the economic opportunities in northern Saskatchewan, we can't forget about that as well.

But, Mr. Speaker, you look at the whole situation is that when government can use their economic might in a compassionate basis to try and make sure that they can serve the people of the north-west and of the North in general, then really you can sleep well at nights.

And I think that's the whole intent that I'm trying to do, is to make sure that anybody in the North that asks me, what did you do to try and serve us, is I explain to them, I hopefully educated them on what the role of an MLA is supposed to be.

I guess the other point is I'd like to share with the House here is a plan, and again we look at the economic impact study and preconstruction technical engineering analysis for paving the runway at Points North Landing. Now what that is simply

saying, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that we're going to develop the North more. And some of the things we look at in terms of the very economic opportunities I spoke about, when we talk about tourism, people say, well tourism, that has some limited opportunity. You know, why should we try and put money into tourism? There's not much opportunity.

Well, Mr. Speaker, you look at the value of the Saskatchewan outfitting foreign earnings compared to selected Saskatchewan goods and commodities, okay? You look at almost \$12 million a year.

Annual value of Saskatchewan export — it beats ag machinery, canola oil, telecom and computer equipment, processed beef, mustard seed, and even flour. Saskatchewan outfitters really outperform those particular areas when it talks about the annual value of Saskatchewan export.

So really tourism, Mr. Speaker, is something that we have to look at. It's a particularly very exciting and a low cost option. You don't need a pile of money to develop a lake and a bunch of streams . . . (inaudible) . . . they're all out there. So in reference to the points we raised, you know, you really have to look at the opportunities.

So in closing, Mr. Speaker, I thank the Assembly for their time. I think the key thing here is that we want to make sure that they understood where Garson Lake was; that they understood where Camsell Portage was; they understood what the road issues were; they understood why we need the health care centres in La Loche.

They understood about the Westside Community College in Buffalo Narrows, the tourism opportunities in Beauval, and the day care centre that the community built on their own. They understood about the Head Start programs, the Metis issue, about the land issue. That they understood about the housing issue, about the social and economic justice issues. So they understood about . . . oh, I forgot about five more.

(1600)

So the situation that we talk about in northern development, and again I'll state the point, is that we as northern Saskatchewan residents do support the development of the resources. We know that there is a lot of rich deposits, but we ask the simple fact that we have more control and more revenues to finance our own dreams.

And that's the visionary government that says, yes, we will take revenues from the non-renewable industries operating in northern Saskatchewan, such as mining for uranium and mining for gold and mining for diamonds, and take a portion of those revenues to develop community-based economies in fishing, in agriculture, in manufacturing, in tourism, in forestry, so that the northern Saskatchewan people can develop an economy on their own.

We'll take a portion of that to talk about the social development issues so that the justice system and the cost of justice goes down, and that we'll do more to empower them over the control of land. We'll formalize the Metis Act. We'll make sure that we

coordinate our efforts in northern Saskatchewan and give them above all else a better say, more control, and really good, solid, long-term financial support to accomplish their goals. Because the biggest thing, Mr. Speaker, is empowerment of people, and some of these things I speak about will exactly do that, and some of the examples we spoke about, whether it be in housing or whether it be in transportation or business.

You know, I urge every member in this House to go North, spend some time, and ask the members of various communities, what keeps you here? And they tell us, we've been here for many years. This is my home community, and we love the land, you know, and all our friends and families are here. So we're not going to pick up and leave; we're not going to have a bunch of ghost towns in the North. People are there to stay.

So if they're there to stay and they refuse to follow the path to urbanization that many people are, then respect them for their pride, respect them for their dignity and their staying power. Because this is where they want to live, that's where they want to raise their children. So let's give them the best of all worlds for where they choose to live. Because really where you live is really what you're all about, and they're aware of their historical significance and their historical past.

And I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that when time comes along I know that many ministers have travelled to northern Saskatchewan and have been involved with northern Saskatchewan and have visited northern Saskatchewan and have friends in northern Saskatchewan. Just ask them, are these problems? And the people will certainly say yes, these are problems.

So in closing, Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly delighted to stand in front of you to discuss the motion proposed by the government regarding the extended hours. I'm sure the members opposite are equally as delighted to get my viewpoint. And you know, we're certainly not here as individuals, we're here as collective people trying to do the best to serve government. And this is the reason why we're standing here today.

And the big thing is, Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that when it comes to northern Saskatchewan that the fundamental point of respect and the fundamental point of making sure that we realize that these are Saskatchewan residents is what we ask the government of the day to recognize. And this motion does not do that in any way, shape, or form.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I sincerely thank you for your time. I'm going to end my comments here and I urge all members of the House to make every effort to educate themselves on not only the northern, but the native and Metis issues; to understand about the housing issues. And the list goes on and on and on. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to take a couple of minutes to explain the motion, Mr. Speaker, and the debate that's before the House.

It was on Friday that the Government House Leader proposed a motion to extend the sitting hours of the legislature from the

usual sitting hours which ordinarily would be from 2:30 until 5 p.m. and then . . . from 1:30 until 5 p.m. and also there are sitting hours from 7 until 10:30 on Monday and Tuesday evenings, but not on Wednesday and Thursday evening.

And the House Leader proposed that the MLAs, as we get closer to the end of the session, that the MLAs would extend themselves a little further and come to work earlier and work longer hours so that we could accomplish the debate and the work that's necessary to bring the House to a close.

We're into day 66 today. Ordinarily a session would take 70 to 75 days. And it was our estimation that we needed a few more hours, at the rate the debate was going, a few more hours in the day to carry this through.

The hours used by MLAs at the early part of this session usually require considerable planning and meeting time. After about 50 days, pretty well the planning sessions and the consultations that are needed are usually done. And that is quite common practice, and has been common practice for this legislature to voluntarily extend hours. And this was asked for by the House Leader of the government and refused on the part of the opposition, at which time the motion was put.

So right now the motion that we are debating really is the motion simply to extend hours so that the members of the legislature would come to work here in this room at 10 o'clock in the morning and work until 12:30, and then extend and maintain the same hours in the afternoon from 1:30 until 5, and then once again, from 7 till 10:30 in the evening, Mondays through to Thursday. And it would also extend the Friday hours from not just working in the morning from 10 to 1, but also from 2 till 5 in the afternoon. And this way the debate could be carried forward and completed in a reasonable time, keeping in mind that it costs about \$30,000 a day to keep this legislature going, over and on top of the governance that's done ordinarily.

Now the members opposite had asked for time to debate health issues. I want to bring to your attention, Mr. Speaker, that if you look at the proposed agenda . . . any member is able to get this agenda. The agenda that we have proposed here is, upon the passing of this motion, we would proceed directly to four Bills that deal with health: The Health Districts Amendment Act, the Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Amendment Act, The Health Facilities Act, and The Crown Foundations for District Health Boards Act.

Those are in adjourned debates. Members can take as long as they want on there to debate, and if they want more hours, we could extend them probably, with leave, be willing to do that . . . followed by the estimates for the Department of Health. So the government is quite willing to proceed to offer a lot of time, all the time that is necessary to debate the specific topics that the opposition has asked for.

And then there are, after that, there still are several items to pass. There are several Bills that are in Committee of the Whole stage, and there are several other estimates that need to be brought to a close, including the Minister of Finance's estimates, including the Premier's estimates, where the question and answer process can take place.

The opposition members, however, have chosen not to debate those, by their action, and have chosen instead to debate a motion about the extending of time, which tells me they really do not want to come here early in the morning, like most Saskatchewan people, and earn their keep full time. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I am delighted to stand here and talk to the Assembly, and I'm delighted to have the opportunity to tell why we want to debate this motion. And it's not just so that we can . . . we're afraid to get out of bed in the morning. I assure you we put in lots of hours, and we're quite willing to put in lots of hours. But we want to talk about the items that the people in our constituency are asking us to talk about. We don't want to spend our time looking at some Bills that don't make any real difference to the people at all. There are health Bills that make a big difference to the people of this province that are going to affect us for very many years.

I wish I had the gift of talking, like the hon. member from Athabasca, but I'm afraid you're going to have to listen to what I have to say because I, like you, was elected by about 15,000 people in my constituency, and they felt that I was the right person to be here telling you what their interests were. And I think that when you look at this chair you're not supposed to be looking at me, you're supposed to be looking at the fact that somebody out there thinks that there's somebody that should be representing people in that constituency and bringing some very important items to this government.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. I'm having difficulty hearing the hon. member for Kelvington-Wadena. There are a number of members that clearly want to enter the debate. When the member for Kelvington-Wadena takes her place, others will be allowed to enter this debate. I ask members the courtesy of hearing the member's debate.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the people of this province, they're asking, are they truly represented by a government who is setting the agenda, right down to the very time of when we're going to debate every Bill; how long we're going to debate every Bill; and when they want to go home for the end of session? We are quite willing to sit here all summer if that's what it takes to make sure the people of this province are truly represented, and what they have to say is being said.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — I have to ask you if the government is . . . I have to ask if the government is actually scared of something. Why is an agenda set so tightly that we don't have the right to bring up . . . to talk on the Bills that we feel are . . . have to be said. And there are lots of people out there that are banking on us to bring forward some very important items that this government has refused to look at.

I think this government is trying to control every aspect of people's lives, and especially their money. And I have to add to

the list, the health and the education and the highways and every aspect of our province's life out here. And I think that we feel like we are just puppets on a string.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think this government either sees nor cares that there's 16 of us on this side of the House not sitting here just because we like the chairs. We're sitting here to represent people, and we want to make sure that the government knows what they have to say.

Do you know that there's 240,000 people of this province represented by the 16 of us on this side of the House? That's one-quarter of the population in this province is actually represented on this side of the House. And why are you trying to ignore us?

I don't know if the people actually remember, that on election day last year only two-thirds of the eligible voters actually came out to vote. And that wasn't because they were happy — that was because that they were so tired of what was going on over there, they just gave up hope.

And if you do a little of bit of quick math there, and I don't know how many of you can do this, so out of the 66 per cent that were elected, only 47 per cent of you voted NDP and that means you actually are governing with less support than the NDP are in B.C. (British Columbia) right now.

I think we have a government who thinks they should control the length of debate, the day of the debate, and the orderly passing of Bills that will affect the lives of everybody in this province.

Mr. Speaker, it's a very sad day for me and for the all the other new MLAs who are elected and believe that we came in here thinking that we could really make a difference. I don't believe that we can make a difference if we're told that this is what you can do on this day and this is the amount of time that you can do it in. I don't think that what's the people of this province actually elected us to and that's not what we're paid to do.

I think they actually thought that we could influence some of the decisions that were made in this House, and I haven't seen that happen in the last 63 days or however many days we're been sitting. We've come up with many amendments, we've come up with resolutions, we've come up motions, and it just depends if it's something that suits the government's idea of importance whether we get to vote them or not.

Otherwise they're voted down, they're totally ignored . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. I know we all feel that we have much to say in this debate, and I again urge members to take their place in the debate on the conclusion of the comments from the member who has the floor right now.

(1615)

Ms. Draude: — Thank you again, Mr. Deputy Chair. I guess I understand that the member from Athabasca had some very interesting points, some different information to give to the members opposite. The information that I have is from a rural

aspect. But there are many of you on that side of the House that represent rural Saskatchewan and I think that you are now, through me, given an opportunity to say some of the things to the government that maybe you can't say because you are part of government.

We as opposition have to make sure that the government looks at every Bill and every estimate from every angle so we're making the best use of every dollar of this province, so that we can be sure that we are governing people to the very best of everybody's ability.

I had one of the members opposite the other day tell me that good government took good opposition. Well maybe you don't think we're good opposition but we are trying. But we can't be good opposition if we can't have an opportunity to speak and bring forward the things that the people of this province want us to say.

One of the big things in my constituency — I'm going to talk about many of them, but I guess my critic area of Economic Development is something that I'm going to leave to the end, because as a small-business person in this province, I think that there are many things that the Minister of Economic Development and I have differed on in the last many years, probably one of the main reasons why I'm standing here.

But I think first of all I'm going to tell you something about the reason why I was elected or why I decided to run, and that was because of the health issue in this province. The hospital closures in this province, the 52 hospital closures, may have seemed like an insignificant number to you, but in rural Saskatchewan and in my constituency, it closed the hospital in Spalding, and closing that hospital meant that my parents moved to Calgary. That closure is the reason why I'm standing here today.

Because I think of people that have built this province and gone away to war. They've done everything that they can to make sure this province grows in the world. I think if they can't even spend their last years in this province and being looked after by our health care system, we're doing something really, really sad.

The Spalding Hospital was closed. Just last year we closed the Rose Valley Hospital. There's cut-backs in Porcupine, and now I'm hearing about cut-backs in Wadena. And every day I get people sending me letters and asking, aren't we going to be able to do something.

Well, Mr. Deputy Chair, this motion is something that bothers me because I think by passing this motion, the government is not going to allow us to bring forward some of the things that the people are asking us to do. I think that health care is the most important aspect of our lives in Saskatchewan, something that is out of our control when it comes to dollars. The government has to look after health care and education. And that's the first thing they ruined in this province, and they started it four years ago and they're still on the trail.

On paper, closing hospitals may look like a fiscally responsible thing to do. However fiscal responsibility is not the whole issue and it's not why we're sitting here. We must remember there's

also a human issue when we come to closing hospitals. We've been told that in an emergency the very first hour is the golden hour, which is vital to patients, yet the closure of hospitals, and ambulances having to travel further, is something that we have to relate to every day.

Living in rural Saskatchewan, other factors have to be considered as well. There's the distance from the hospitals, the conditions of the roads, which everybody admits is absolutely terrible, and we also have to consider the weather conditions.

In the city, if there's a blizzard in process, Emergency Measures and emergency personnel can still get out to help people and to get them to a hospital in a very short time. But in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Chair, and in a total white-out condition, it becomes hazardous for people to even leave their homes, let alone get an emergency vehicle out to help people, travel the hour and a half, or however long we're expected to take now before we can get to a hospital. That's not fair.

Many of our surgical procedures are done in city hospitals, yet we've been told that hospitals like the Plains will be closing — a hospital which did surgical procedures and other medical procedures at a time when waiting-lists are growing in other hospitals. And now we hear that hospital is going to be closing. I don't understand how we can say that we're looking after our people in the health care issue when we continue to cut back on our medical facilities.

Do we accept health care standards that tells the mother of five in my constituency, with children eight years old and younger, that she's been placed on an emergency surgery list that could take up to a month before she's called. And are we going to help pay for the person she has to hire to look after her children while her husband is out doing the spring work? This mother has her regular work to do and looking after her children, and she must cook for them and provide meals for extra men. And who's going to help her out? Nobody cares in the cities, because in there it's just a matter of getting somebody over for two or three hours a day. That doesn't happen in rural Saskatchewan.

Closing hospitals and cut-backs is putting more stress on our health professionals who are doing the very, very best job they can under the circumstances. It's ironic that Saskatchewan's health definition is "a dynamic process involving the harmony of physical, mental, environmental, social, and spiritual well-being." Health enables individuals and families and communities to function to the very best of their ability within their environment. Many health professionals are concerned that the personal aspect of health care in hospitals is disappearing. From the above description we can determine health is more than just administering medicine; health is a sense of well-being. And that sense of well-being is being eroded in rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the recovery, helped or hindered when our nurses don't have time to listen when a patient needs someone to talk to? I think nursing care involves more than just giving them needles or giving them drugs. It also takes some talking to people to make sure that they're valued as human beings. And with the health care cut-backs there are now, our nurses are

little more than just robots. All they can do is just perform the actual medical duties and they don't have time to treat people as human beings.

Do we want a health care system where a family member has to be available to look after somebody when they're in a hospital bed? In my constituency, a friend of mine had to take time off of work to — as a nurse — to look after her daughter who had just had a baby in the hospital.

While her daughter was in the hospital, she bathed the mother and the baby, and checked the IVs (intravenous) and gave the medicine. Once the nurses knew that the mother was actually a nurse, they encouraged her to come and spend the whole day there and they even asked her to spend some of the evenings. After three weeks, her daughter was well enough to go home and that meant a two-week separation away from the dad.

This constituent is upset because the lack of nursing care made it impossible for the mother to have a real relationship with her baby when the baby was first born. And I think that's something that will have a detrimental effect to the mother and the child, and it's not something that our wellness system is supposed to be encouraging.

Recently the media carried a story about a report that found a trend to release mom and baby from the hospital 24 hours after a baby is born is causing problems. Moms are encouraged to breast-feed their babies but are being released before they understand what's happening when it comes to breast-feeding.

Many newborn infants are returning to hospitals because they're dehydrated. Dehydration in infants and small children can occur very quickly and it can mean death. In our rush to close hospitals and cut the use of acute care beds, we are willing to sacrifice the lives of newborn babies.

This is the kind of things that are happening when we don't have a chance to bring the problems, the issues that are affecting people, right across the province to the floor of the Assembly. And that's what we are taking this opportunity to do right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We want to make sure that every aspect of people's lives in our constituency and in this province is brought forth to the floor of this Assembly. If that means we sit here till Christmas, that's fine with me.

Closure of hospitals has had a huge impact on the elderly within my constituency. Many do not drive and they are now an hour or more away from the hospital. If they don't have a family, who's going to drive them? Who will drive them on a daily basis if their spouse is in the hospital? Do we expect them to take a hotel or a motel room just so that they can receive the medical help that they need?

In a discussion paper on the detriments of health prepared by the Saskatchewan Provincial Health Council, they state three broad areas determining health. First of all was the social environment consisting of family, friends and communities, health care, class, status and power, leisure, work, and childhood experiences. The individual consists of mental hardiness, genetic and biological characteristics, individual behaviours, values, and spiritual well-being. And physical

environment of the naturally built environment.

And how are we meeting the demands when we close our hospitals and care homes and force people to travel outside their community for acute care? If we look to the definition of health established by the Saskatchewan Provincial Health Council, are we actually meeting what the elders of our community are needing? I don't think so.

Closing hospitals in rural Saskatchewan will place undue hardships on seniors who must find alternative ways of getting to medical centres. Some towns do have transit buses to take the elderly and handicapped to neighbouring towns, but can they afford to use it? One town in my constituency charges \$80 to go to the two larger centres which are only one hour away.

Many seniors are just on old age pensions and they can't afford these extra charges. What is their alternative? Are they going to have to leave their towns or villages they've spent their whole life in and move to a larger centre away from their family or friends? That's what's happening when we cut back on our health care and we don't recognize the importance of it.

Many of our rural hospitals that have been closed have changed to wellness clinics that open from 8 till 5. Once again in theory this may have seemed like a good idea, but in Spalding it proved that this is actually a failure.

Spalding Hospital was closed and it was converted to a wellness centre with an observation bed and a doctor and a nurse on call 24 hours a day, and then a lab tech that came in five days a week.

But you know what? Many of the emergencies don't occur between 8 and 5. A patient would have to call the centre, and then a call would be sent forward to an RN (registered nurse) who would assess over the phone whether the patient could wait until office hours or if they should proceed to the wellness centre where then the RN would have to meet them and then they'd call a doctor. All this takes time.

Talking to ambulance attendants in my constituency who are faced with taking a patient to a wellness clinic, many opt to transfer them to the nearest centre where medical personnel are found on hand 24 hours a day.

I heard a while ago that people were amazed that actually people weren't using the small centres as much; they were going to the larger centres. I don't find this surprising at all. Why would they bother stopping at a small centre when they know they're going to have to wait for a couple of hours to get the attention they need, when they can go on to a larger centre and get help immediately? It's a vicious circle that's causing the closure of more hospitals, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The doctor has left the Spalding-Naicam area, and Spalding wellness clinic is no longer available for emergency care. It's only open two days a week for laboratory services. This experiment in the wellness clinic was a failure.

And yet now they've told Rose Valley to do the same thing. A special care home was closed on April 1, and the hospital was

closed and we turned it into another wellness centre. I imagine that they mustn't be learning from their mistakes, because this is only about 30 miles away and we're going to be trying the same thing.

Rural Saskatchewan is entitled to expect the same health care services as their urban counterparts. I have here a letter that was sent to the editor of the *Star-Phoenix* on February 29. It was sent from Ted Cardwell of Saskatoon. He talked about cancer, that it can be beaten; they did it in their family. And the health board doctors restored his vision:

I am grateful for these services. (And) I am willing to pay what it takes to have them continued.

But I want my friends and my relatives in rural Saskatchewan to have the same services in the same way our family received them.

Government must fund the services to the point that Saskatoon Health Care Board does and not cut back anymore. The fat is already out of the system.

The Saskatchewan way does not (mean closing) . . . rural hospitals and then refuse these families access to specialty services in Saskatoon.

Our medical costs are not out of line. Our costs are well below the almighty Americans. And we have a health system that works.

Keep it lean but (don't keep it) . . . mean. Do not cut services and do not cut people. (There's) enough (cuts) already.

I do not want someone from North Battleford or elsewhere to have cancer and no nuclear medicine to find it nor to have a scared mom with a problem newborn and no medical geneticist to diagnose it.

We can do better.

Am I alone with these views?

I think that he's not alone, Mr. Speaker, and I think that people of this Assembly should realize the importance of the health care and what we are doing to the people of this province.

I think that we must recognize that people are lost when they're trying to figure out what they should be doing with their health care in rural Saskatchewan. I have a letter from the village of Fosston who wrote to the minister in September asking him to reconsider the closure of the Rose Valley Integrated Care Facility.

The village of Fosston depended on the facility at Rose Valley for medical services as well as for long-term care for its seniors who can no longer be cared for at home. The village council realizes that cuts in health spending are needed in order to maintain a viable health care system. The council feels that it is not in the best interests of the people needing level 4 care or for their families to be sent

to care facilities in a community where they'll be among strangers and cannot be visited by their family and friends.

(1630)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we get these letters from all over the province, from people who are scared that what's happening to them is going to make the last years of our seniors not happy years. I think that they have a right to expect more.

The next problem that I see in rural Saskatchewan that is facing people who have to decide where they're going to be making their homes is in the field of education. I brought up in the House a number of times the fact that Annaheim School is going to be closed, or they're threatening closure of at least the high school this fall.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is something that upsets very many people in our area, and I think that it's something . . . another reason why the opportunity to speak here today and debate the motion about extended hours is very important.

The people of Annaheim wrote to me, as they wrote to the Minister of Education with their concerns. And I'm delighted to take this opportunity to read to you some of these letters and make sure the Assembly understands what cut-backs to education is doing.

Annaheim is the home of Doepker Industries that actually employs over 250 people. It is the lifeline of not only that community but probably for an area of 40 miles around it. Annaheim has never had a railway. They have had very industrious, hard-working people. And they have people that are looking to build a home out there, but they have to decide, is it something that's going to be viable? And one of the points that they will be . . . in making their decision will be, can we raise our family here?

Closing the school in Annaheim means that there will not be homes built in rural Saskatchewan. People will opt instead to decide to build in Humboldt or in Melfort, and drive out. That's just another nail in the coffin of a small town in Saskatchewan, and I think it's very unfair.

I have a letter here from Pauline Holtvogt who says:

Dear Mrs. Draude, I am writing to you in regards to the possible closure of the Annaheim school. Our high school is being threatened now, but its only a matter of time before the whole school . . . (will be) shut down. The loss of our school would be a real detriment to our entire community. I believe it would hurt (the) industry in (our) town and . . . (probably) even our store and (our) post office. I think we should be trying to save rural Saskatchewan, not crush it.

I believe something could be worked out with the unit board if they'd . . . be willing to listen. Any help you can give us . . . would be very much appreciated.

I have talked to the unit board, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and they would love to be able to help this town, but they don't have the money. There's a saying that says, the golden rule — those who

have the gold makes the rules. And it's really true. And that's what this government is. They are deciding where the money is going to be spent and I guess, maybe being that . . . giving them that little bit of power or a lot of power is what they're asking for right now.

I have a letter from a Bernarda Kunz at Annaheim that says:

We are very concerned by the talk of closing part of our Annaheim School. . . . as grandparents and (as) taxpayers (I) think . . . we have a very good school system in our community.

Our rural communities are struggling to stay alive and by removing part of our school children (taking children) to larger schools is only destroying all we have worked for (all our lives).

Why does the minister of education through its superintendents and unit boards insist on bussing our students miles & miles away from (our) home? It only means . . . it'll cost extra (tax) dollars and we can see no reason for . . . (it).

Please accept your responsibility as our elected representative and . . . (see what you can do about it).

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's what I'm trying to do. I want to make sure the Minister of Education recognizes what's happening when we cut back funding to rural Saskatchewan.

Ken and Jane Junk from Annaheim also say:

I remember as a young student in the 1960's when the idea of "Bigger is better" became the policy of the government of that time. It meant the elimination of the smaller school(s) and bussing students to larger centers, nearly . . . (closing) the Annaheim community the loss of their school — that was called "Consolidation."

Today, in the name of "fiscal slashing" our Annaheim school is again the target of attack. One can't help but come to the conclusion that the decision makers don't realize the awful damage and frustration that they inflict on the community with their down-sizing policy.

Ours is a very stable and progressive community and has every reason to be optimistic about the future. Quite a number of well-established businesses are located in our district (but we) require labourers, these are . . . always young families with children who are necessarily concerned about educational facilities, we have them now but are concerned about keeping them.

It was through the efforts of the local boards and our parents in the 1960's that we have the school systems we have today. Today it falls on us as parents and local boards to make sure (that) they remain intact.

We have the benefit of hind sight to back to our demands — (of) what a mistake it would have been to destroy what . . . (is becoming) the most flourishing small rural communities in Saskatchewan by removing the most

important component (of it, and that is) our schools!

Thank-you for your consideration . . .

Mr. Speaker, I think that the Assembly should recognize that this is the kind of information that makes a good government. They have to be listening to the input from each person in the province because that's why they were elected. People on this side of the House are bringing forward the other point of view to make sure that they are a good government.

Mrs. Annabelle Frank from Annaheim says:

I am writing in regards to Annaheim High School and Annaheim School in general.

We have had a school in Annaheim since the early nineteen hundreds, and I don't know why our children should have to sit on a bus for three to four hours a day to go to a school in a larger area, just so that they can build a new and bigger school there. (The facility we have in Annaheim is a good facility.)

I feel that it (would be) in the best interest of our children to keep them closer to home and in a smaller community, away from drug sellers in the school hallways, and a lot of other corrupt gangs . . . that are in larger schools.

We are not paying seven to nine hundred dollars school taxes a year to have our children in that kind of environment.

I feel the Teachers and Parents are not doing their jobs properly anywhere (else).

Teachers . . . are getting paid too much for the teaching . . . and Parents should be teaching their children right from wrong. I do believe some children need a spanking now and then if they do not listen after a couple fair warnings, and if this doesn't work, there should be other things to try . . .

Thank you for your time.

Mr. Speaker, I think that even the grandparents are getting in on this debate, and people in rural Saskatchewan are out there because they want to be. Nobody's making us stay in rural Saskatchewan. But the health care and the education is what we are expecting from this government. And I think that's what we have a right to expect.

Mr. Speaker, Jane Niekamp from Annaheim also says:

I am writing to you in regard to the proposed removal of . . . high school grades in our school due to budget cuts. I feel the proposal will have a detrimental effect on our community.

Without our school, who would want to stay in our town (and) or even want to move here if their children would have to ride a . . . bus for long periods of time mornings and afternoons to get to school in a larger centre.

Our businesses would also suffer because no one would want to move here. Also no one would be (able) . . . to start up a new business in a town that has no school.

I think it's time . . . (this) NDP Government opens its eyes & takes a serious look at what they are doing to rural Saskatchewan! Once it's gone, I . . . (know) you will never get it back (again).

I think that's the point that we're trying to make, Mr. Speaker, is that when we ruin this fabric we've got out there right now, we can't ever get it back again. Rural Saskatchewan has the way of life that people all over the world are looking for. I see people leaving Regina and Saskatoon at 4 o'clock on Friday, as soon as they can get out of the cities, and they go out to rural Saskatchewan to find the way of life . . . to live what we have all the time, or we're trying to have.

And by closing down the health and education which is the basic rights of people, there isn't any reason . . . people are trying to find that. I think that we're being unfair to the whole community and to our future generations by ruining rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I have a letter here from Dave Niekamp at Annaheim:

I am writing to you in regards to the proposed removal of some (of our) high school grades in our school. I feel this proposal would have a detrimental effect on our (whole) community.

It was suggested to the division board to cut the Industrial Arts Program in the Humboldt Division. (It was) . . . stated that (the board) . . . did not see this program being cut and yet in the same breath (said) . . . that young adults working (in our) . . . industry such as Doepker . . . (should) . . . not be . . . (concerned with closing of) schools.

As an employee of Doepker Industries in the village in charge of hiring, I can honestly say that any person who would get experience in working for a couple of hours after school will be a much more qualified welder than anyone who goes to industrial arts for a few hours a day. The students hired there gain a work ethic that cannot be taught in industrial arts classes.

Our kindergarten to grade 12 ratio is among the best in the Humboldt School Division, and yet the board wants to bus the students to Muenster and to Lake Lenore. Neither of these towns have a thriving industry such as Annaheim. The government of today is always stating how to keep the population in rural Saskatchewan. So tell me how they're doing this by closing the high school in a town that has an industry employing 250 people, year around.

Would you move to a town for employment if your children could not go to school in the same town? I think not. The board also states that Annaheim School was not big enough for more students. This is simply not true. When I graduated in '72 we had double the student population in the same existing school that we have now.

Before anyone closes Annaheim School, I think the people of the community are entitled to the same solid financial figures showing us where we'll be saving money as taxpayers by closing our high school as opposed to closing . . . (the one in) Lake Lenore.

Mr. Speaker, there's many more letters and I . . . maybe some of the members across are not interested in hearing what these people have to say, but I think that they have a right to be heard.

Mr. Speaker, the motion that's before us states that we should be following an agenda that the government is directing. I think that the government's direction means to ram through the Bills that they consider important and not giving the people of the province a chance to actually look at them carefully and make sure the government sees all sides of them. So I think by having this opportunity to speak to them today, the people are getting that chance.

Kathy Hilbert of Annaheim says:

Our town is in the midst of having our high school removed from our town. The town I am speaking of is Annaheim The town is centrally located in the Humboldt rural school division Our students will be bussed 15 to 20 minutes to various towns (like Lake Lenore or Muenster)

The reason we are losing our school is because we are short of funds. Some . . . towns within the school district have not paid their taxes.

Annaheim (only) has 333.00 of outstanding taxes (period) . . . (while some other towns have over \$21,000 and some have as high as \$90,000) of outstanding taxes. It does not make sense to me why we should be losing our school because we have paid our taxes. Is it not the duty of everyone to pay their taxes. Taxes help pay for schools, roads, health care, etc. If no one (paid) . . . their taxes where would we end up?

Our school has been managed . . . well. Our students have done excellent work: winning scholarships and doing well in sports. Now they want to take (it) . . . away from us when we have done everything right.

Our town itself will suffer because people will be running in all directions. Our store, (our) credit union, etc. will lose business because people will not have time to stop. People are not willing to move to Annaheim because they have heard (they) . . . will lose their school. If we could some guarantee of the school staying open for years to come we could have more students coming to school here. Please help us in our fight to save our school. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I think that some of the other people that have written to the Assembly have written to the Minister of Education as well. But just in case she hasn't had the opportunity to read all of these letters I think I will make sure that a couple more of them are read.

Mr. Ted Kunz from Anaheim says:

I am concerned by the possibility of removing some of our students from our Anaheim School. I feel it is a grave mistake and extra expense if they go through with (these) . . . plans. We have everything here in place at the present time. If they bus those children to neighbouring schools they will have to expand . . . (somewhere else.)

We have a thriving manufacturing industry namely Doepker Industries right here in our town, who employ 300 employees at the present time, and they're still expanding. Whose families will keep up the enrolment? I really believe that our children and the entire community will suffer if they go through with their plans.

In your discussion with the Minister of Education please convey my concerns.

(1645)

Mr. Speaker, I think that the Minister of Education should be told what the people in this province are saying. She is responsible, not only for the children in urban Saskatchewan, but also for the children in rural Saskatchewan. We have a responsibility to keep the whole province alive.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the letter written by Peter and Arlie Knelson from Anaheim also should be read:

I have been very concerned about the talk of closing our high school in Anaheim.

My husband and I along with our five children moved here two years ago. It was the country life and small town atmosphere that attracted us here.

I like my children going to a smaller school. They get good schooling and a lot of one on one contact. They are recognized as an important individual not just a number.

I would be very disturbed and (very) sorry if we lost any part of our school (system) here.

I think our community has a lot to offer and people will stay here because of the industry we have. Also new families are continuing to move here. I think closing any part of our school would be "jumping the gun" just a bit at this point in time.

Mr. Speaker, I think that there's some of the points that we should be making and I want to make sure I make. The people in my constituency have been asking me about the promises made by this government. So we've taken a few minutes to write down some of the promises and I want to see if they've actually been kept.

On August 21 the minister of Health said:

The opposition NDP is going fight these health care cut-backs and these changes to medicare. It's going to fight the erosion of the principles of medicare. I feel rather

certain we'll be having a change of government next time around, and then this public isn't going to have to worry about these problems.

That was said by Louise Simard in 1989.

Well, Mr. Chairman, I really believe that we had a change of government and we have lots of problems now. I think the people of the province would attest to that.

In March 1988, our now Premier said New Democrats would continue the fight to restore social programs such as medicare, the dental and drug plans, to their former place of leadership for Saskatchewan. Mr. Chairman, I don't understand how our Premier could make a statement like that and then find out that this isn't at all what's happening when he's in government.

Again the minister of Health, Louise Simard, in 1991 said, "Why should the sick and elderly carry the burden for your PC's (Progressive Conservative) incompetence — for the PC's incompetence." I think right now we're carrying the burden for the NDP incompetence.

We have a broken promise . . . in 1987 the *Star-Phoenix* quoted Romanow saying, "Romanow promises to restore the prescription drug plan and the school-based dental program." That was said on November 9, '87. The prescription drug plan, the deductible amount in 1991 was \$125; the prescription drug plan deductible amount in 1993 is \$1,700. It seems to me that restoring the drug plan meant restoring some dollars for the government from the taxpayers of this province again.

In the Saskatchewan . . . "The Saskatchewan Way — it's working" . . . in the 1995 election platform said: hospitals will always be there when they're needed. Well we have 52 rural hospitals have been closed, the Plains hospital is scheduled to be closed in 1997, and how do you judge when 52 hospitals across this province are no longer needed?

Mr. Speaker, there was a promise, a commitment, to the Indian and Metis people. The NDP pamphlet authorized by John Messer in Regina:

New Democratic government will work with the Metis people to address outstanding issues of land and economic development. As a starting point we will recognize, with Metis people, a new Metis Act.

I haven't talked to the member of Athabasca about this but I'm sure if this would have occurred he would have been delighted to tell us about it.

Our commit . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I've been listening for some time to the remarks by the hon. member for Kelvington-Wadena and as the hon. member knows, her remarks must bear relevance to the motion that is on the floor and being considered by the Assembly.

And I know that the hon. member for Kelvington-Wadena will want to assure the Assembly that her remarks are relevant to the

motion before us, and I'll ask her to demonstrate the relevance of her remarks by tying her remarks to the motion that's in consideration before us.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I do want to assure the Assembly that I am directing remarks relevant to this motion because I want to make sure the people in this Assembly are aware that, by not being able to debate in an open forum, the way the government is doing with this motion, will not allow us to have the thoughts and the ideas that the people of this province brought forward to the Assembly. That's why we were elected. We have to make sure that everybody's viewpoint is heard. And I want to make sure that the people of this province that we are representing are well heard.

November 20, 1989 a caption in the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* said:

Roy Romanow capped off the NDP annual convention pledging to eliminate poverty in his first term in office.

Well I've been talking to the member from Humboldt and I think that the whole Assembly knows that this is one promise that has not been kept. In fact the poverty rate in Saskatchewan has not been eliminated; it's going up all the time. There are more people on welfare now than there ever have been. I know that it's a concern of the government, but it's obviously still a broken promise. It's not something they've been able to get under control.

And I think until everybody in this province is heard at all times, I think when we have a government that's quite willing to ram through motions that will limit the time of debate on certain Bills, especially important Bills like the health care Bills, we're not having an open and accountable government.

We also have a promise in November 16, '89 that said, if the NDP is elected in the next provincial election, their goal was to end poverty. It also said, "The New Democratic Party will work to get rid of food banks," said Pat Atkinson, October 3, 1991. This is quoted . . . I apologize . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Now the hon. members knows that she's not permitted by rules of the Assembly — Order! — to make reference to the proper names of members who are currently seated in the Legislative Assembly. I want to remind the hon. member of that rule and ask her to abide by it.

Ms. Draude: — I apologize. The Minister of Education stated, if elected the New Democratic Party would work to get rid of food banks.

Also the Premier stated on November 16, '89, "eliminating poverty is a priority for the New Democrat members of this legislature and will continue to be the priority of this New Democratic government."

Also the Minister of Education said on December 8, '89, "constituents told me that they cannot take any more of these heavy tax and utility rate increases. Indeed they would like to see some of these increases rolled back." In 1989 that was a

statement that was made, and I haven't seen anything rolled back except our cars in the highway holes.

SaskEnergy rate increases since the NDP took power has been 16.6 per cent. SaskTel line rate increases since the NDP took power is 15 per cent. SaskPower rate increases since the NDP took power is 9.1 per cent.

We have a promise that said a New Democratic vision for the future, the election '91, that the Premier and the New Democrats will improve benefits and services to seniors under the Saskatchewan prescription drug plan. By June 1993, the Saskatchewan drug plan had already been eliminated.

The Premier also said on January 6, 1994, since coming to office, this administration has done the job of turning this province's finances and economy around.

Well I'm not sure where they turned around to, but it hasn't been to the point where people are fully employed. We haven't seen hundreds of businesses started and lots of people having jobs. In fact the job numbers that have been coming out have indicated that we are one of the provinces with the lowest number of job opportunities in this country.

The accumulated provincial deficit in 1991 was \$7.738 billion and the accumulated provincial deficit in 1993 was \$10.218 billion. I don't really think that's turning this economy around.

Mr. Speaker, when the people of this province elected us as opposition, they wanted to ensure that we would have the time and we would take the time to ensure that all the problems of this province were brought forth to the government and that we would represent their interests. And we are going to do that. We are going to make sure that every one of the promises that this government has made is brought forward to the Assembly, and the broken promises will be repeated until the government admits them.

The Premier said on October 5, '91 that the PST (provincial sales tax) is not going to be around after October 21, if we're in power. In 1991, the provincial sales tax was 7 per cent. The provincial sales tax today is 9 per cent.

We also heard from the Premier on October 5, 1991 that they would ease the tax burdens for ordinary families. The annual tax increases since 1991 for an average family of four in Saskatchewan is \$2,300. That's from the Association of Saskatchewan Taxpayers.

Another one of the MLAs stated that the NDPs wouldn't raise any personal taxes for four years. That statement was made on May 21, 1991. Saskatchewan income tax as a percentage of federal tax in 1991 was 50 per cent. Saskatchewan income tax as a percentage of federal tax in 1993 was 55 per cent. Mr. Speaker, that is an increase. I'm sorry; I don't know how that cannot be seen as an increase.

I know when the government took over, they accused the Tories of having a larger debt than was seen, than was intended to be, but we still are seeing this government spending thousands of dollars and hundreds of thousands of dollars. That is not what

the people of this province is asking them to do.

Mr. Speaker, there's been a number of hits to rural Saskatchewan that I think it's important this government recognizes. Over the last year, the NDP government has made many choices, and all too often the rural programs, rural offices, and rural jobs are hit before their urban counterparts.

The SaskPower offices were cut. We had 17 offices closed. Not only will jobs be lost, but safety and services for rural customers will be threatened. This is a letter from SaskPower on February 7, 1996. SaskPower rates . . . the NDP government went along with SaskPower's proposal to raise farm power rates by 12 per cent. This included \$4.95 for a reconstruction charge while non-farm residents only had to pay \$2 for the same charge. I never could understand why it was thought that because they were farmers they should be paying something extra. I think that what our farmers have to offer to this province and to the viability of the province is something that's always been underestimated by this government.

The rural underground distribution program was cut this year. Gone is a program that provided rural areas with modern, buried cables that greatly improved farm safety and rural jobs.

Also there was the STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company) bus fares. The NDP government placed a 5 per cent increase on STC fares. These buses travel out to communities in rural Saskatchewan. Almost all of the 230 communities they serve are rural. This fare increase will hurt students and seniors who rely on bus services — the same seniors that have to use buses to get into the cities for their medical services.

In 1994-95 the NDP government balanced the budget ahead of schedule by taking \$188 million from the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) program. While grabbing this \$188 million for farmers, they also chose to leave at least \$50 million in retained earnings sitting idle in the liquor board account. The government decided to break a 1995 election promise in which they said they would never send out bills for GRIP overpayments worth about \$115 million. The *Leader-Post* said that on January 17, 1996, and Saskatchewan *Debates and Proceedings* on March 31, 1995.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the crop insurance cuts . . . the NDP government closed eight crop insurance offices in Wynyard, Wolseley, Wilkie, Kyle, Carnduff, Outlook, Melfort, and Canora. At least 154 people lost their jobs when these closures took place. The government sacrificed farm service and rural jobs in order to save \$5 million. Many more cuts are coming. This money could have been saved by cutting the CCTA (Crown Construction Tendering Agreement) rather than cutting rural services.

The government has suggested that amalgamating local governments would help. The minister in charge of Municipal Affairs had many discussions with the municipalities, with SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities), and SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association), and I understand that this was taken off the government's agenda for this time. And I think it's one thing that we can thank this government for, and the fact that rural Saskatchewan

is actually listened to.

Rural people must pay more to get on to Internet. For the same basic services, rural users only get three hours of free time while urban or on-Net users get 20 free hours. For many hours, and beyond those given in basic packages, rural people must pay as much as twice as much per hour.

And the highways . . . despite the already dismal state of highways, we'll expect more cuts in the provincial budget. The Highways budget has already been trimmed \$212 million in 1991 to \$177 million in 1995. Many highways are already in deplorable shape. A report in 1994 for the department suggested cutting as many as 22 maintenance crews, making our highways even more unsafe. Rural people depend on good road system for their safety as well as their economic well-being. Does this government plan on getting . . .

The Speaker: — Order. It now being 5 o'clock, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.