

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

The Deputy Clerk: — I wish to advise the Assembly that Mr. Speaker will not be present to open this sitting.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a petition today from the people of the Tisdale, Archerwill area.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately repair and pave the portion of Highway No. 349.

Thank you.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I have a petition. I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately start work on the rebuilding of our secondary highway system to provide safe driving on what are becoming known as pothole roads; to enter into negotiations with SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) and SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) for a long-term plan of rural road restitution reflecting future needs and to provide safety for all drivers as the new trucking regulation changes safety factors on these roads.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These folks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, come from Glen Ewen, Carnduff, Oxbow, Northgate, Alameda, Frobisher, and I guess pretty much all through the communities in the south-east corner of the province of Saskatchewan. I'm happy to present them on their behalf, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy today to rise again on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan in presenting a petition.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by a lot of irate folks from the communities of Moosomin, Churchbridge, Langenburg, and Rocanville. I so present.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present petitions on behalf of citizens that are fearful for what is going to happen to the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

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

Those who've signed this petition, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are from the communities of Bredenbury and Churchbridge. I so present.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I join with my colleagues in bringing forward a petition today.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people that have signed the petition are from Churchbridge, Esterhazy, Spy Hill. I so present.

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, yes, I also rise to present petitions from petitioners concerned about the impending closure of the Plains Health Centre with their request:

That adequate funding be provided by the provincial government so that essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

Your petitioners come from Churchbridge, Marchwell, Langenburg, and Hyas.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I join my colleagues on behalf of concerned citizens of this province with respect to the closure of the Plains Health Centre, who petition this Assembly:

To enact legislation to prevent the closure and provide adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

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

And they come from Dubuc, Esterhazy, Bredenbury, Churchbridge, and MacNutt. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order a petition regarding the relocation of Highway 40 to alleviate congestion at the entrance to North Battleford, presented on October 21, 1998, has been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 12(7) is found to be irregular and therefore cannot be read and received.

According to order a petition regarding the twinning of Trans-Canada Highway in Saskatchewan so work can begin in 1999, presented on October 21, 1998, has been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 12(7) is found to be irregular and therefore cannot be read and received.

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

Of citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly praying that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to repair and pave the gravel portion of Highway 349; and

Of citizens humbly praying for the government to regulate SaskPower and SaskEnergy so as to require them to provide electricity and natural gas at affordable rates for non-profit municipal recreation facilities.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 74 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of SaskEnergy: has there been any changes in the cost formula for putting natural gas lines into farms, small towns and parks? Is there a minimum or a maximum rate? Why do some people pay \$500 while other people pay \$5,200 for the same service?

I so submit, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Reprimand of Liberal MLA

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In yesterday's paper we saw another glaring example of the differences between the Saskatchewan Party and the Liberal Party.

The Liberal MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) for North Battleford is facing disciplinary action from his leader for choosing to represent his constituents instead of simply towing the party line.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that does not happen in the Saskatchewan Party. In fact our party policy specifically calls for free votes in the legislature so that MLAs can always represent the views of their constituents. The Liberal leader criticizes his own member for seeking the views of his voters at a hastily called meeting.

We found out about this session on Friday so the fact that the member was even able to put together a public meeting on such short notice is something that should be commended, not criticized.

It seems that the Liberal leader is taking his lessons on cracking the whip from Jean Chrétien. It's a good thing the Saskatchewan Liberal leader doesn't have pepper spray.

Canoe Lake to Pinehouse Road Improvements

Mr. Johnson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the member from North Battleford gave an eloquent statement about his canoe trip to the constituency of Athabasca this summer. He urged all members to follow his example. So why, Mr. Speaker, are the members opposite sitting here in this air-conditioned room instead of being out following his advice and being in the constituency of Athabasca?

Mr. Speaker, I believe that if the members opposite had the nerve to go, they would not have to take and do it by canoe but to travel on the road to Canoe Lake that is being . . . or in Pinehouse. It's being improved by a \$5 million road improvement. Or they could travel to Turner Lake where the road is being improved by \$1.5 million worth of improvement.

Mr. Speaker, I think that it is better for them to stay here in this Assembly rather than go out and meet the people and discuss some of the real issues of the area.

Highway Contest

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As you know, we announced the worst highway in Saskatchewan contest yesterday and we are receiving many phone calls about that. I think we've even received some perhaps from the minister's office. But I'd like to read a few of the comments into the record that we have received from some of the people that are calling.

A person called in and said Highway No. 349 east of Naicam — the Department of Highways did work on the highway and now the highway is worse than ever. It's just like driving on a washboard. We were talking about Saskatchewan has the worst highways in the world but this person nominated this particular stretch as the worst in the world.

A trucker phoned in and said he drives all over Saskatchewan with his trucks and he has to repair them quite often because of it and he said all the highways in Saskatchewan are equally bad.

Another person phoned in and said the highway was repaired but the department didn't finish the job. They left a sharp drop off the edge of the highway. A truck loaded with anhydrous pulled over and went over the drop-off, tipping over. The anhydrous was spilled. The department cleaned up the mess, but they left a pile of contaminated soil sitting in the ditch. And now the highway is narrower than ever.

Highway No. 56 to Katepwa Lake is so bad that most people wanting to travel to Katepwa Lake don't even use the highway.

And these kind of comments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are coming in all day long and they're equally for highways.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Breast Cancer Month

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What do the following women have in common? Olivia Newton-John; Canadian actress Barbara Hamilton; CBC

(Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) reporter Jeannette Mathey; former America first lady Betty Ford; Regina author Gail Bowen; Linda McCartney; Julia Child; Gloria Steinem; American Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor; my former constituency assistant; and 329 out of every 100,000 Saskatchewan women during 1998?

The answer is, each has been or will be diagnosed with breast cancer. Some, like Linda McCartney, have died.

I mention this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because October has been declared Breast Cancer Month, the purpose of which is to increase awareness of this disease, and more importantly to promote the screening, education, and support programs which are available for all women in this province.

All forms of cancer deserve our attention, our research dollars, and our best support programs. Breast cancer is unique though in that it is the most frequently diagnosed cancer among women in Saskatchewan, with 680 new cases estimated for 1998.

As well, not so long ago it was almost an automatic death sentence. Even now, over 29,000 women in Canada will die from breast cancer.

And for too long it's been kept in the closet, not discussed openly for whatever the reasons. I'm happy to report that rapid progress is being made, that there is a literal explosion of knowledge about the causes and cure for breast cancer and . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, the member's time has expired.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan's Aboriginal People

Mr. Hillson: — Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, last week the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada released a report on the condition of Canada's aboriginal people taking into account income, education, and life expectancy.

It was reported that the standard of living for off-reserve natives was lower in Saskatchewan than any other province in Canada. Again, Saskatchewan has come dead last in a report on social indicators.

Last year the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations also did a comprehensive study and reported that Saskatchewan has the largest percentage of aboriginal people in Canada, and furthermore that one-third of the working-age population will be aboriginal by the middle of the next century.

Clearly one of the fundamental issues which must be addressed by our province is bringing our aboriginal people into the educational, economic, and work mainstream of this province.

I ask this government and all members of the Assembly, where is the plan to accomplish that; where is the drive, the initiative, and the will to discuss this fundamental issue?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Home Hardware Opening in Swift Current

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is an ordinary good news statement with a difference. Ordinary because it's about more economic development in Swift Current. Different because it . . . well, I'll tell you how it's different.

The old Home Hardware store in Swift Current burned down on June 10. Last Monday the new store opened bigger and brighter and with eight additional employees. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the store is downtown on Central Avenue. This will contribute greatly to the activity in the city centre.

This Saturday we will have the official grand opening. The Deputy Premier will be there. I will be there. The Leader of the Opposition has been invited, but I don't think he'll be there because of the Saskatchewan Party's stated policy of rejecting good news. That's the ordinary part.

The difference — and because this is Saskatchewan we're talking about, maybe it's not so unusual after all — the difference is that one reason Home Hardware was so quick in getting back on its feet was the help it received from other businesses, even from its competitors. One business donated a building for a temporary home for the paint store. Their competition helped unload inventory after the fire.

Growth, co-operation, success — just another normal day in Swift Current, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Successes in Cypress Hills Constituency

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well I thought for a long time that I should get up and say something, in this part of the day, good about what's going on in my constituency.

And so I was thinking, you know, maybe what I should talk about would be the big sale that we had down there. Paul Meinert of course, as many of you have heard, had died and left the biggest estate that people have ever seen.

But I thought, well that wouldn't really be fair because that's just across the line over in the next constituency and even though all my neighbours were there probably I should talk about something close to home.

So I thought I'd talk about Eastend and their museum and the great success they're having with that project and the fact that they're going to soon have it off the ground and tourism will be flourishing.

Then I thought, well maybe that's not fair because over in Cypress Hills we've got so many tourists coming to the park in this last year that the biggest problem we've got now is we don't know how to get rid of all the sewage. And so being such a great success over there, everybody would want to come and see it for themselves.

Then I thought, well that's not fair because Maple Creek got a

new council last year and as a town they're flourishing so well that everybody probably would want to go over there and I should really talk about that.

Well then I got to thinking, well that's not fair because over in Leader they've just built an inland terminal and they're doing so well over there that they built a new golf course. They've got so many people having so much fun and such a great time that they thought they'd have to have a little recreation. In the middle of that they put up a 600 sow-farrow-to-finish operation and believe me if I didn't talk about that I'd be in trouble.

So then I thought, well I've got to talk about Cabri because if I miss them, I'm in real trouble. And the reality is that they had a bumper crop.

And then I thought, well Gull Lake had a trade fair that showed that entrepreneurship and small business is flourishing so well down there that I'd have to talk about that. So, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. The member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Nutraceutical Firms Expanding in Saskatoon

Mr. Koenker: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. One of the advantages of living in Saskatchewan these days is that our vocabularies are being enriched as the economy expands and is diversified.

Here's a new one for some folks: nutraceutical — as in nutraceutical industry or nutraceutical product. According to the Webster's, people as Health Canada, a nutraceutical is a product isolated or purified from foods and generally sold in medicinal form not usually associated with food and demonstrated to have a physiological benefit or provide protection against chronic disease. Ginkgo-biloba is a nutraceutical; so is echinacea, and borage.

And presently in Saskatoon, this industry is comprised of 25 companies selling upwards of \$35 million annually in products. Consumption is growing by 25 per cent annually and it's projected to increase in North America by between 50 and 100 per cent.

This new industry is being assisted and promoted by the Saskatchewan Nutraceutical Network, an organization just founded with the assistance of the Agri-Food Innovation Fund. It's rapidly expanding and is further proof that Saskatoon and the ag-food innovation go hand in hand.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Highway Contest

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Highways.

Madam Minister, we've gotten a lot of response already for our

Worst Highway in Saskatchewan contest — a couple of dozen calls already this morning. And here are some of the early entries.

No. 31 Highway from Macklin to Kerrobert; No. 20 north of Humboldt; No. 39 from Naicam to the 35 Junction; No. 56, Indian Head to Qu'Appelle Valley; No. 40, Battleford to Cut Knife; No. 8 north of Torquay. I could add No. 8 all along it.

One trucker said all the highways are bad. Unfortunately, we had a couple of people phone in who didn't want to leave their names. And I suspect they're from the minister's office.

Madam Minister, why do we have such terrible highways in Saskatchewan? What plans do you have to fix these highways?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As I've said, I take this position very, very strongly and I take a lot of concern about being the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

And we certainly do have a transportation strategy in place which we have said over and over and which I will again repeat because I think it's worthy of repeating — \$2.5 billion plan over 10 years to spend additional dollars on our highway system in this province.

Not only on that piece, not only have we put additional money into the last two budgets, but we've also gone into the pieces in planning. And it takes important planning to set the priorities for this province, working with the communities, the RMs (rural municipalities), the stakeholders right across this province.

And this morning as part of our transportation strategy, the commitment that we've made, I was just out on No. 1 east with a bulldozer announcing the 21.3 kilometre additional twinning project that's happening on No. 1 east.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Madam Minister, this contest is drawing interest from across Canada. This morning we had calls from *Saturday Night* magazine. We had another call from the *National Post*. And I know they're calling your office too, Madam Minister. This story is going to appear in the *Post's* very first issue next Monday and everyone across Canada is going to know that your NDP (New Democratic Party) government has given Saskatchewan the worse highways in the country.

Madam Minister, a lot of people have also been calling in to radio stations to get the phone number, so I want to give it out once again. It's 1-877-326-3652. In fact CJSJ Estevan and CFSL Weyburn, your own local radio station, are now running a sort of parallel contest and they're going to pass on all the entries to us.

Madam Minister, given the tremendous response to our worse highway contest I want to give you a second chance. Will you be a judge in the contest and will you commit to fix the worst highway in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I did have the opportunity to talk to the *National Post*. I've already had that interview and I was very pleased to be able to tell them about our plan. They were also very pleased to know about the biggest pothole that I told them about in this province, the pothole of the Tory debt — in which we still spend \$2 million a day on interest — as they were taking off fuel taxes when they were still running deficit budgets which every person in this province has had to pay for, and which our families, our children, and so on have.

If we had those kind of dollars to still be putting back into our highways we could very easily address the problem quicker and faster but we are addressing, we are addressing the concern.

And they were very interested in the fact that we not only have more kilometres of highways and roads in our province, but that we've actually twinned more highways in our province per capita than any other place in Canada, that we are addressing the problems.

We're addressing the problem with dollars being spent. We're addressing the problem with good planning. And we are hoping that we can get a federal partnership in addressing the severe problem that Saskatchewan is facing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Federal Assistance for Agriculture

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture or his designate.

Mr. Minister, it took you until this week to realize and recognize there's a crisis in the farm economy. Now we have to get the Liberal Agriculture minister in Ottawa to wake up.

Lyle Vanclief was questioned yesterday by Garry Breitzkreuz, Yorkton-Melville MP (Member of Parliament), about what he's going to do to help farm families hurt by low grain prices and the subsidy wars. By his answer, he doesn't really seem to acknowledge there's a problem.

Mr. Minister, now that we've finally got your attention to the problem in agriculture, what are you going to do to get the federal Liberals to wake up? Have you spoke to Lyle Vanclief since our emergency debate on Tuesday? What specific proposals have you made to help farmers in Saskatchewan, and what are you asking for?

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm very pleased to be able to take this question today, because I think as the Minister of Agriculture has said here when we had the emergency debate here that when we debated the farm commodity crisis, that this is an extremely important issue to our government. And we were very pleased that actually the opposition then joined us in the call to the federal level.

The Minister of Agriculture and Food had been emphasizing these points at the federal-provincial industry table. And there's

going to be a meeting now called on November 4, in which he will begin to discuss this terrible income situation in which that we're facing in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Madam Minister, but it didn't seem to be such an urgent problem on Monday afternoon when your House Leader tried to adjourn this House before we had a chance to debate the agriculture crisis.

Madam Minister, your government doesn't seem to have its message straight. On Tuesday in this House, after the Saskatchewan Party called for an emergency debate in agriculture, the Ag minister presented a motion calling for cash assistance from the federal government. At the exact same time, the Finance Minister was out in the rotunda during a scrum on his priorities for funding from Ottawa and he didn't even mention agriculture.

Madam Minister, what good is it to have you talking about cash assistance for farmers when your own Finance minister doesn't see it as a priority and isn't prepared to talk about it at the Finance minister's conference? Who are the feds supposed to listen to — the Ag minister or the Finance minister?

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is interesting to say that we haven't taken note of this when it was our motion that we debated here in the House on Tuesday. Now I think again we know that our Minister of Agriculture and our government has been calling upon the federal government on this issue at every step of the way. When our trucking industry and our agriculture industry, in which there was blocks going into the American border, it was our government again calling on the federal government to deal with this immediately.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — When we look at what the federal government's response it has been, is of great concern to us. That's why this meeting again on November 4 is absolutely crucial in order to put our position forward. We see a federal government that took out subsidies like that when they could have taken them over six years. We know that we have to press the federal government. This is a serious concern to our government. Our government has done a lot of contribution and as we know that we've put more in per capita again than any other province into our agriculture sector.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Government Advertising

Mr. Boyd: — My questions this afternoon are for the Deputy Premier. Mr. Deputy Premier, your government came to office promising to cut government advertising. Yet last year your advertising budget in government departments jumped by 78 per cent. I guess there's no 2 per cent cap when it comes to spreading NDP propaganda.

Total NDP government advertising was nearly \$23 million. What happened to your commitment to cut government advertising? How can you justify spending \$23 million on NDP

government advertising when you have no money for other areas like highways or health care or agriculture?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — If the member opposite would look at the list of where the Crown corporations are headed and just check his memory as to what he advised on the issue of competition and opening up the borders to competition and deregulation — he said that we should open up the borders.

Now if he looks at where the greatest increase in the last four years has been, it will be SaskTel — a doubling from 6 million to 12 million. Why is that? Obviously because of your arguments and your right-wing arguments, Mulroney and others who you've supported when he was prime minister and you would have gone to the convention to elect him when you were a Tory and still are a Tory, competition is what this is all about.

Now if you expect SaskPower, which is now facing competition, and SaskEnergy to not advertise more next year and the year after as we open up for competition, all you're doing is saying that you want the Crown corporations to lose business so that your privatization plan could come into place. That's what you're talking about.

So the member opposite knows full well that SaskTel makes up half of all the government's advertising . . .

The Chair: — Order. Next question.

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Minister, we understand that you have to advertise in a competitive environment but why does SaskPower have to spend \$2.3 million on advertising? Who are they competing with? Only the NDP could have a monopoly and still figure they have to spend millions on advertising.

Now with SaskTel, that's certainly a different story. SaskTel sees its market share draining away like Liberal polling numbers. SaskTel spent \$12 million in advertising last year.

The question is, Mr. Minister, is the advertising working? What impact have these ads had for SaskTel? What is SaskTel's market share, and how much of that market share have they lost over the last year?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — The member opposite, because he's driven by hard right-wing philosophy, is hoping against hope that SaskTel will fail. That's what he's hoping.

But I want to advise him today that all of his hoping is not working because SaskTel and the employees and managers are doing an excellent job of keeping market share both in long distance and in cellular. They're doing a very, very excellent job and part of that of course is increasing advertising which they have to do to keep business.

The member opposite will understand that. As competition comes, as competition comes to the province, we're going to advertise more. And that will be true of SaskEnergy which announced they're now open to competition. And the fact of the matter is that we will have to advertise more in order to keep customers. It's a simple formula.

The reason the member opposite is so upset is because the

Crowns are succeeding even with competition and he can't stand that.

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Minister, SaskTel's marketing is under attack, and who's in charge of warding off that attack — the Premier's old buddy Don Ching. Is he, is he an expert on telecommunications? No. Is he an expert on long distance marketing? No. Is he an expert in NDP politics? Yes. Do you think that's how Sprint and AT&T choose their CEO (chief executive officer)? I really doubt it.

And that's why SaskTel's market share is slipping away, Mr. Minister, isn't it? Mr. Minister, you and Don Ching spent \$12 million of taxpayers' money on SaskTel advertising last year. Taxpayers have a right to know if that advertising is being successful.

If you were maintaining a high market share, you can bet Don Ching would be screaming it from the top of the SaskTel building. Are taxpayers getting good value for the \$12 million that they're spending on advertising, what is SaskTel's market share? Is it slipping?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I say to the member opposite that SaskTel and the employees who work there, the men and women who make their living in the province and are very popular with the families and business people in the province, are doing an excellent job of keeping market share. And it's my understanding that of the telcos in western Canada, Manitoba Tel, SaskTel, TELUS in Alberta, and BC TEL, SaskTel has kept the largest percentage of market share of any of the companies in western Canada, of any of the companies.

Now you say that the men and women who run that corporation aren't doing a good enough job, because you're always attacking, because you're always attacking members who are government employees.

And he also says he would roll back the salaries of government employees, including Crown employees, if he got to be premier. Well thank goodness you're never going to be premier and nor will that rump of a Tory Party ever govern this province again.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Care for Dialysis Patient

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Liberal caucus recently spoke with Gwen Martens of Boissevain, Manitoba. Gwen told us that her sister, a resident of the Swift Current district, recently was forced to move to Saskatoon. After being diagnosed with cancer, both of her kidneys had to be removed.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, she requires dialysis which she cannot get anywhere in south-west Saskatchewan. Gwen's sister had to leave her home and move halfway across the province because she couldn't get the care she needed in her own region.

Gwen says, and I quote:

As wonderful a city as Saskatoon is, it's not home and she and her husband would dearly love to move home to their

family and friends in Swift Current.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, will the minister explain why this government cares so little that it's forcing people to move in order to receive health care?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — What I can say to the member, Mr. Speaker, is I'm not familiar with this case.

I do know that the previous minister along with officials in the Department of Health have made arrangements for a number of procedures and services to be made available to citizens in various regions in the province of Saskatchewan. For instance, I understand that there is a renal dialysis machine in Tisdale and, I believe, Yorkton.

Obviously as we make our way through the whole issue of health renewal, we will need to ensure that as much as possible that services are available to citizens in their regions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mrs. Martens went on to say that she's been told it could be possible to get dialysis equipment in south-west Saskatchewan if there were enough patients to meet the department's target for making the equipment available.

She was also told that six patients are needed to fulfill the department's target. Gwen says, and I quote:

There will never be six patients when one by one they are forced to move to Regina or Saskatoon for treatment.

She also says that in her Manitoba town of Morden with a population of only 5 or 6,000, they have four machines and two spares. And we spoke with the Morden hospital and confirmed that.

Could the minister explain how they'll ever meet this target if every patient requiring dialysis has to move to the city? Just how many people have you already forced to move because of your inability to care?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated earlier, we have made arrangements for renal dialysis machines to be available in some parts of the province. Obviously here has been identified an issue in the Swift Current region.

What I can tell the member is that we will ensure that a committee is struck to see whether or not it's possible to meet the needs of this particular citizen in the Swift Current area.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Surgery Waiting Lists

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, recently a family of an eight-year-old girl from Carievale called

my office about a problem that they have with their daughter. As I said, she's eight years old and she needs a cystoscopy. And because of the poor planning of the closing of the Plains Health Centre, her specialist in Regina says she's not able to get treatment.

Now this little girl's been in pain for over a year. There's the worry about what the medications could do to her kidneys as well as the growing ineffectiveness of these kidneys. As well she is now having pain and problems going to school and being able to concentrate on her studies.

Not until my office and myself got involved were we able to even get an operation or an appointment scheduled for this three-minute day surgery which is now scheduled for the 26th of this month.

Madam Minister, could you maybe tell us what other problems we might be looking for, what other emergencies are going to be waiting to happen because of your lack and your government and your department's inability to meet the needs of southern Saskatchewan, Madam Minister. And what are you doing to ensure that more of these things aren't happening when you close the Plains Health Centre down?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well I can tell the member, and I think I certainly made it clear when the Premier appointed me Minister of Health, is that there is some things that we need to address in this province. And one of the issues that we need to address is the whole issue of waiting lists and waiting times.

At the time I indicated that we really don't have a system for waiting lists in the province of Saskatchewan. And it's really difficult to determine what kind of waiting lists we have.

I believe that we will soon be able to indicate to the public what our intentions are with this regard.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Madam Minister, I don't think that's going to satisfy the people of Saskatchewan. Certainly it isn't going to satisfy this family from Carievale.

How are we to believe what you have to say? Yesterday in this House you told us that you had 200 nurses in place. You go outside in the hallway to the media and you say, well they're virtually in place.

Madam Minister, can you tell this House today why you misled it yesterday, and how is anyone ever going to believe what you and your government have to say about health care in this province ever again.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I want to advise the House that yesterday I unintentionally advised this House that the positions that were created were all in place. I want to apologize to the House for giving this information, but I have to

also say to the members that it was unintentional.

What I will say is this. That in the spring of 1998 the Government of Saskatchewan announced \$9 million to fund new nursing positions in the province of Saskatchewan to alleviate some of the pressure that the nurses were feeling in our institutions.

What I can say to the member, if he cares to listen as I give him the information, is that some of the positions have not been filled. What I can say is that 27.5 positions within the Regina Health District are scheduled to be filled in conjunction with the service consolidation of the two hospitals.

What I can also say, as part of this business of putting new positions in, that we needed the approval of SUN (Saskatchewan Union of Nurses). And there are positions in Yorkton that have not yet been filled because we just got approval from SUN for the way those positions are going to be filled. In addition there are some positions in Saskatoon that have not been filled because they're highly specialized.

Surgical Waiting Lists

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, my question today is to the Minister of Health.

I received a call from Richard Howell of Maple Creek, Madam Minister. Richard has a fast deteriorating hip. He has one month left to walk according to one of his doctors, and painkillers no longer work for this gentleman. But he cannot get this operation because there is a quota on the number of operations of this kind that can be performed in Saskatchewan, so he's told.

Now Richard is a 59-year-old electrical contractor with a small farm and he needs to have this operation in order to make a living for his family.

Madam Minister, can Richard get this operation in Saskatchewan or does he have to go to Calgary to get it?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has come to my attention recently that we, I believe, have the highest numbers based on the demographics, of hip and knee replacement operations in the country. As well, I believe we have the second highest numbers of cataract operations in the country based on demographics.

As I said earlier to the member from Arm River, that we have identified the issue of waiting lists and waiting times as an issue that we need to address. And I hope to be able to say something on this subject shortly.

Mr. Goohsen: — Madam Minister, this gentleman, Richard Howell, would be very happy to talk to you and have you explain to him, and his phone number is 662-2164, and anybody else that wants to talk. And he said he'd be quite happy to talk to anybody about this problem. Because living over in Maple Creek he has come to realize that an awful lot of operations can be performed over in Alberta, both in Medicine Hat and Calgary and Edmonton as well, that can't be achieved here in Saskatchewan.

He would like you to explain to him why people can get operations that are not considered necessarily emergency enough in Saskatchewan but are considered emergency enough for doctors to work after hours at 9 and 10, 11 and 12 o'clock at night to perform in Medicine Hat, and yet they can't get those operations here. Would you explain that to him?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, the whole issue of waiting lists and waiting times is not only a problem that is a problem in the province of Saskatchewan. This is a problem in other parts of Canada.

I believe that Minister Allan Rock, the federal minister, has raised this issue publicly. And I understand that the various medical associations in the west are dealing with this issue.

What I can assure the member is that we will make contact, my office will make contact with this particular gentleman to see if there's any way that we can assist him in sorting out this problem for himself.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Friends for Life Program

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for SaskPower. Mr. Minister, SaskPower used to have one good promotional campaign. It was called Friends for Life. It was launched in April of 1995 to raise awareness about teen suicide and to help prevent this terrible tragedy. It was supposed to be a five-year program however it was cancelled after just three years.

Mr. Minister, your government announced this program with a great deal of fanfare just before the last election. Can you tell us why it was cancelled two years early?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I think what the question by the member raises the issue of inconsistency with that political party and caucus. Here you have earlier in question period her desk mate saying that SaskPower is spending way too much for advertising — way too much for advertising and we should be cutting back. Now you have his desk mate saying why aren't you spending more?

What I will say to the member opposite is that SaskPower is doing an excellent, excellent job of promoting safety, especially farm safety. And you will know that because they have a program that has been extremely popular in talking about farm safety, both during the busy time in spring during the seeding period and also in the fall during harvest time. So the member will know full well that tough choices have to be made when it comes to the spending of the few advertising dollars.

But what I would ask you to do is to talk to your desk mate if you're wanting more advertising for SaskPower and convince him to . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 755 — The Crown Corporation Managers Salary Act

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker I move first reading of a Bill, Bill No. 755, The Crown Corporation Managers Salary Act be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to and the Bill read a first time.

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

Mr. Boyd: — With leave, later this afternoon.

Leave not granted.

The Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Parliamentary Language

The Deputy Speaker: — Ladies and gentlemen of the Assembly, before orders of the day, I have a statement that I would wish to make. Yesterday during question period, questionable language was used by the member from Arm River . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Order.

At the time I was unsure whether I'd heard the member correctly. However, I have reviewed the verbatim record and will now rule on the matter.

At the end of his fourth question, found on page 2067 of verbatim, the member from Arm River did use a profanity which was offensive and not befitting the decor of this Chamber . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Order.

I would now ask the hon. member from Arm River to withdraw the word.

Mr. McLane: — Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the House and I withdraw the remark.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

House Adjournment

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Hon. Ms. MacKinnon.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise again today after my brief introductory remarks on this topic yesterday to get to the text of the importance I feel about us staying in this House instead of adjourning.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues yesterday talked about some of the many issues that this Assembly should be dealing with rather than heading out to the first hole of the last golf game of the

season in this beautiful weather. And it seems to be incredible that members opposite seem to be more interested in getting outside in this wonderful day instead of . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. Could I ask the government members to take their meetings behind the bar or outside.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we understand that a lot of them over there want to indeed go outside . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I thank you very much, but I don't think we should encourage them.

Mr. Speaker, at this point in time in this province's history, serious issues are facing us. And it seems to be the very wrong sort of action for the members opposite to day after day after day try to leave this House without those issues being debated.

And, Mr. Speaker, it also seems ludicrous that the only way the official opposition has . . . well the only tool and the only vehicle that we have is to try to encourage the government to stay and face these serious issues — to talk about the crisis in agriculture; to talk about the impact of the financial changes that are impacting across the world; to talk about what's happening in health care; to talk about the issues that are facing our province — is to try to talk to this issue on its own.

And so, Mr. Speaker, at the close of my remarks today, I want to remove this vehicle of having to talk and talk about this and to ask the government to get serious about presenting an opportunity for legitimate debate from both sides of the House on these issues. And I'll be moving an amendment to the motion that will allow this to happen, Mr. Speaker, on the completion of my remarks. And for the benefit of the members opposite I will read what I have to suggest as a change.

And the motion that I will move, seconded by the hon. member from Kelvington-Wadena reads as follows:

That all words after the word "That" be deleted and the following substituted therefore:

this Assembly remain in session until a date set by Mr. Speaker upon the request of the Official Opposition in order to debate important issues such as high taxation, crumbling highways, deteriorating health care, government mismanagement of Crown corporations and the serious downturn in the farm economy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if this motion or this amendment to the motion were passed, we would then have a framework under which we could sit and talk about the serious issues facing this province rather than running back outside in the nice weather and getting away from this Assembly where these issues should indeed be debated.

Mr. Speaker, I know that there are a great many of my colleagues within the official opposition Saskatchewan Party who want to talk about this very serious issue that's before us today. I am surprised that there are not people from the other sides of the Assembly who want to debate these issues as well. Because surely the issue about the farm crisis is as serious in

non-Saskatchewan Party constituencies as it is in ours. Surely the issue about deteriorating health care is an issue right across this province and not only in our constituencies.

Surely the issue of government mismanagement of Crown corporations is an issue right across this province and not solely in our own. And surely, surely the tragedy faced about our crumbling highways is something that everybody faces.

In fact there might be a real opportunity here for members opposite to nominate the worst highway in the province in our contest and be fortunate enough to have their wheel alignments happening at our expense instead of out of their own pockets. Because anybody who drives on these highways with any regularity is eventually going to need a wheel alignment, and probably more rather than fewer.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to at this time move the motion, seconded by my colleague from Kelvington-Wadena:

That all words after the word "that" be deleted and the following substituted therefore:

this Assembly remain in session until a date set by Mr. Speaker upon the request of the official opposition in order to debate important issues such as high taxation, crumbling highways, deteriorating health care, government mismanagement of Crown corporations, and the serious downturn in the farm economy.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm really honoured to be able to stand here today and to speak on this amendment. I'm delighted that my fellow constituent from the Melfort-Tisdale area has brought forward this motion to allow the people of Saskatchewan to have a voice in the legislature.

When I was told, or when the news came last weekend that the legislature was going to be called back, I had an elderly gentleman call my office and say, it's great that we're going back to work . . . that you're going back to work in Regina because there's so many things that you have to talk about. And I tried to explain to him that quite likely the government was going to just talk about one issue; they wanted to talk about back-to-work legislation, not for MLAs but for SaskPower workers, and then he would probably want to close the Assembly down again.

And he said, well I can't understand that; I thought it was important to get into the House, to get into Regina and talk about all the things that are happening in this province. And I explained to him that in Saskatchewan usually the legislature just sits once a year. In the spring the Premier will decide what day he's going to call session and we get presented with a number of Bills over a matter of a month or two, and during that time we have a little bit of chance to discuss it with groups that have input into this Bill. And then as quickly as possible, these Bills are debated and we're supposed to be going back out again.

This gentleman couldn't quite understand why we wouldn't be in here a lot more often because this is the only way that the government can see what's happening right across the province. There's a large number of constituencies that are not represented by government members — and there will of course be more after the next election — but they want to make sure that everybody's voice is heard in this province. There's people in the Kelvington-Wadena area and the Cannington area and the Moosomin area have a voice in what's happening in this government as well.

But I explained that probably we would be having to adjourn as quickly as the Premier could get this to happen. So when we had an opportunity to discuss adjournment and to discuss this amendment that my colleague has brought forward, I was just . . . I'm delighted.

I just wanted to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the good people of Kelvington-Wadena first of all did tell me how they wanted me to vote on the legislation on Monday. And unlike the members of the Liberal Party, I'm not only encouraged but I'm obligated to vote the way my constituents say because that's what the Sask Party does.

We believe that the members in this party are there to represent their constituents and we are a voice piece for those people and that's why we are here in Regina. It's kind of the unique thing about democracy. We represent the people who elect us; we don't represent a party as such. And so I'm delighted to be a member of the Saskatchewan Party.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, speaking about the amendment, I believe that I can't in good conscience go home to my constituents without talking about some of the many concerns that people have brought to me over the last few months.

One of the most important ones and the ones that affect the largest number of people in my area is that of agriculture.

And I know that it was discussed in the House on Tuesday. It was a motion that was brought forward, first of all . . . our discussion that the Saskatchewan Party wanted to bring forward. And then the Minister of Agriculture decided it was a good idea and he also put forward a news release and talked about an emergency debate. As he said, it didn't really matter who brought it forward as long as it was discussed. And it's interesting to see that it's being discussed in Ottawa right now.

But does anybody really know what's happening unless you're sitting out there on the farm and looking at the fact that your bottom line has gone down 40 per cent in the last year? We're not talking about the gross amount of money you have; we're talking about 40 per cent from your bottom line.

And then we see things like a 12 per cent increase in SaskEnergy going to be affecting people at the beginning of next month and that again comes right off the bottom line.

I hear the members from across the House talking about how wonderful the economy is doing. Sure there are some great things happening, but there are also a large number of people in this province who are really, truly suffering right now and we can't ignore those people . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I hear

members saying who, and I guess if they're saying who that means they don't have one farm family in their area.

Because those people have been hit with some very tough times — nothing that was a cause of their management, nothing that can be blamed on their management, nothing that can be blamed on what they are doing. It's the crisis — prices that have gone from \$6 in the last few years to \$2 for wheat. We have barley that's selling at 68 cents a bushel. That isn't the kind of prices that make people want to smile when they go to bed at night.

And then we have things like the hog prices. I had one of the colleagues yesterday talking about hog prices and I think that many of the hog producers in this area can tell you that they're losing anywhere from \$10 a hog to \$40 a hog.

(1430)

And that again we have a government that is encouraging hog production — Saskatchewan has lots of reason to do that; we have one of the best places in the world to raise hogs — but at the same time we are finding the government is only thinking it's the large producers that can raise hogs.

Right now we have the number of producers in this province has fallen dramatically. The number of hogs that we're selling is about the same, or a little lower actually, but the number of producers has fallen dramatically. And that's because the only people that can get backing, financial backing, are the large producers. We see government grants given to large producers but we don't see anything for a small farmer to encourage them to stay in their community or stay in that business.

I had a man who does have a hog barn. He's not one of the larger producers but he has about 400 sows, and he took 9 hogs in the other day, and out of that he took home a cheque of \$483 — for 9 hogs. That was 1200 pounds of meat, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and for \$483. That's not the type of thing that puts the . . . pays for the feed and it doesn't pay for the fuel that they need for tractors, and it doesn't do anything to encourage them to stay on the farm.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that this amendment is something that members are saying, why are you talking about this just to filibuster? Well we're not filibustering. We're trying to make sure that the government and yourself understands the importance of us being here today, and being here this week, and however long it takes till you recognize that there is a crisis out there, and there are other things to be talking about.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the other calls that I've been getting a lot on — and I think probably the government members especially one department got a lot a calls on — in the last year is the area of education. I'm sure that the Minister of Education knows the name of the town Englefeld quite well, because Englefeld is now the home of the first Protestant separate school division in Saskatchewan.

This school division came about not because they've set out four years ago to start their own school division; it came about

because the government, through the wisdom of cutbacks to education, forced the school board to decide that they had to close some schools.

The Englefeld School is not a very large school but it represents its . . . The children in this town have parents working in a number of the small industries around there. And the industry people knew that without a school it's very, very difficult to keep the people in the town, and it's difficult to attract good workers into their town and to get them to stay. People will live in a larger centre and drive out to the industry but that doesn't keep small-town Saskatchewan going.

So what the people of Englefeld did was draw a line in the sand and say that's it. We're going to fight until we find a way to keep this school going. The school did close for a year, but this year, after a one-year closure, we have the school reopened. They put in 680 hours of unpaid labour to redo the school. They painted it and cleaned it up and fixed it up and put new cupboards in it. And they're working as a community to make sure that this school can operate and can provide the education that their children want and need.

And it's not second-best education, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's very good education. They're providing . . . they have every one of the amenities that the other schools have and they have it right at home. And that's what the people of Englefeld are asking for, a chance to keep their community going.

And when they couldn't get help from government they do what Saskatchewan people do — they take it into their own hands and make sure it happens. I think it was a very tough thing for them to do because when communities have to decide, make decisions like that, it actually drives a stake between small communities. Kids that were going to school in Watson before had to decide which school do I go to.

That's not the type of thing that enhances community spirit because people have to decide. They have to pick which one of these areas they are going to be supporting, and I think it's a tough decision. It's the kind of thing that can bring a lot of hurt into the province or into an area. And there are families that actually are having tough feelings within themselves when members had to decide which school they were going to go to. And I put this blame directly at the feet of this government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, before we can go home, before we can go back to the worlds that we represent, I think it's important that we talk about the health care issue that's facing the province — not just my constituency, but the whole province.

And I'm sure as MLAs we're all getting very many phone calls about things like the waiting lists. I have a gentleman that phoned my office last week and he was told that he has an operation that is not considered an emergency operation — it's called elective — and so he can expect to wait for about a year to 14 months.

The only thing is they are telling him that if his condition worsens he could be actually in danger. He has to look after himself. He practically has to be on bed rest for a full year, but his condition is considered elective.

Again, if something happens in the meantime and it becomes an emergency, they'll take him in immediately. That's not the type of thing that you can consider good health care.

I went into one of my nursing homes last week and the nurses in that area called me over and said, June, I don't know if you've been into this nursing home very often, but we have many patients in here that require a lot of very hard lifting . . . heavy lifting now. There's very few patients in this home that aren't level 4 patients and they require a lot of physical help.

But we are so understaffed that we spend all our time running from one patient to another and we don't have the time to spend with them to let them know that we care about them as people, to listen to the tales they want to tell, to ask them how they're really doing, and to make them feel like human beings.

I think that this is another serious thing this government is doing to the people of this province. We feel like we're just a number on a list, and the older people in our province who really deserve the respect and the time and the care that we should give them, aren't getting it. They are forced into a home because they can't stay in their own home; families can't look after them. So they sit in a nursing home.

And the nurses in there care very much about them but they're very overworked and there's nothing that they can do besides run from one bed to another. I think this is one issue that this government could be discussing. We hear about the large expense of the health care system in Saskatchewan, but we have to ask, is this money being spent wisely? And is it really going to the people who need it — the older people who are sitting there, just wanting company or wanting somebody to listen to them.

I think when we talk about wellness, this government's issue of wellness, listening to people and making sure that their mental health is looked after is part of wellness. And that's not happening if the nursing staff doesn't have time to actually spend time with the people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, before we can adjourn, I think we should also discuss highways. My colleagues have been discussing the worst highway in Saskatchewan, and I think anybody who knows my area will know that three out of the nine that were nominated today were in my constituency. I feel a little picked on and I guess my constituents should feel that way. But we really do have some terrible roads.

And I can tell you, the ambulance driver in Porcupine Plain is telling me that he is now taking grid roads to the hospital because the highways are so rough that his patients are feeling like they're going to be worse before they get to the hospital than they were before they got in the ambulance. That's not saying much about the highway system in this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, also yesterday, I tried to bring up with, discuss with the Minister of Social Services, the fact that there is problems in the SAIL program — Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living program — where young people that need different medical supplies can get them unless they're under SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) no-fault insurance, and then it has to be gotten through that program.

That may be a good idea, but there's a cap on that program and young people who are injured could spend a lot of their money on just things that they need, medical supplies that they need to survive in their life, and there will be nothing extra for what they need to actually make their life worth living, to give them a quality of life.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, economic development is probably . . . it is the basis of everything we do because without prosperity, without businesses and people having some money in their pockets, this province is never going to get to where it should be in this world.

I have a gentleman that called me out to his farm on the weekend. A very proud man who showed me around his place and talked about the bees that he has and the honey that he sells and transports right across Canada and actually across the world. He talked about the pounds of honey that he could get from each hive.

And then he showed us the tree farm that he'd established 10 years ago, and he was selling the products right across Canada. And he showed us the fabricating shop that he was making some of the equipment that otherwise would have been brought in from the States. And he's very proud of this.

But his problem was the fact that his road was in such terrible shape that the trucking firms that actually have to pick up the products couldn't get to his place, especially in the summertime . . . in the spring when the water is running and the . . . actually running right across the road in two or three different places. And it makes it so tough for customers to get out there that he is losing sales.

And I think what he was trying to tell us is that he isn't asking for subsidies for his farm. He's not asking for the government to give him a handout of any type. What he's asking for is the government to do the job and to keep the infrastructure that he cannot build and support by himself, keep it going so that he can do his job and bring economic development to this area.

The government has a responsibility for highways and health care and education, and that's got to be their priority. With the cutbacks to the RMs, the RM council isn't able to provide the road that he needs, and what's happening is he's losing a lot of business, which in turn means the whole province is losing business.

My constituency has a large number of farm equipment manufacturers and they're laying people off. And these people are saying, what is the government talking about when they say there's great economic times in this province; we have increases in our utility rates, we have increases every time we turn around, and I don't have a job any more. And it's not their fault.

The government has to recognize that there are problems that they can be dealing with . . . that is their issue. And they should be looking after the three or four things that should be government priorities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also wanted to talk about the gambling problem. And I think maybe my constituency hit the news again a month or so ago when one of the people who were using the

VLT (video lottery terminal) machines became overly frustrated and got rid of a VLT machine in a very unorthodox way.

But I think it proved that there is a lot of frustration out there. And it's one of the issues that this government, even though they are themselves hooked on gambling, are not providing the leadership or what we actually need, and that is studying the social, economic impact of gambling.

This province is spending . . . the people in this province are spending \$412 an adult on gambling, and yet the government refuses to do the study that is needed to find out what actually the impact of this is on the province.

We have a Labour department that has spent \$350,000 studying stress in the family. It's an important issue because definitely there is stress in every family. With both parents working, we find that most of the people's lives are spent right now working and feeding their children, having meals, doing what they have to do in the house and going to bed. There's no life left.

I think that any family could tell you that what they need is more money in their pockets so that there can be an opportunity to have a way of life, and we don't need a study to tell us that. I think that the \$350,000 could be spent in ways that would actually allow people to keep money in their pocket.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the adjournment issue is something that can be discussed after we look at the Social Services programs in this province. The numbers of people on social services have increased by 25 per cent since the year 1991 and we have to ask why.

I think the people in this province have to look at this very important part of government. It's the third highest spending department in Saskatchewan, and none of us want to say that it's not important. It is. It would be politically incorrect, it would be something that nobody would say we can't be spending money on social services, but we have to ask why people are on there? And again are we spending our money in the very best way possible?

We have in Social Services there . . . I'm sure each of us as MLAs have had calls from the foster families, we've had calls from child workers, from community homes. We have to be concerned about the number of child deaths there are in this province. We have to be concerned about the high level of poverty in this province, and we have to address it in a way that it will be beneficial and that we can actually get people off social services and give them an opportunity to get into the real workforce and make a difference. Everybody knows that the best social program is a good job, and that's what we're asking this government to provide.

We have issues revolving around our Aboriginal citizens, with a growing disparity between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people. And I am one of the people that has . . . I consider myself fortunate to have reserves in my area. I've dealt with them. I've been out and talked to them, and they do . . . we've had an opportunity to discuss history and culture and it's a very important part of our province.

But we have to ask where we're headed to. Is there really any

opportunity to make sure that all these people are working together in one . . . to make sure that we're all headed for the same shore? Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal parents want the same thing for their children. They want to make sure that children have a future and that we have an opportunity to be going to the same shore together. We want all of our children to have a better life than we've had, and whether we're Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, there is the same goals there.

I think that right now we have a problem that we discuss racism, we discuss the fact that there is discrimination. And that's happening on both sides whether it's Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, it's a very important problem that has to be discussed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the adjournment issue can only be dealt with after we talk about rural Saskatchewan. Rural Saskatchewan is a way of life that everyone of us here appreciates because that's where we're coming from. We know that the government policy since 1991 has eroded the way of life that we appreciate in rural Saskatchewan.

When you close down a hospital, what really happens is it means our older people move to a bigger centre where the hospitals are. When there's cutbacks to schools we have young families moving to bigger centres so they can be sure that they can be close to their children if that's where they're going to be educated.

When we have cutbacks to agriculture, we find that they cannot maintain the way of life they've always wanted. The reason why they're staying on the farm is that they have to recognize that although agriculture is the backbone of the economy, it's not seen that way. And we have people that are suffering. We have people saying, even though I want to be out here, I can't be here any more because agriculture is not looked at the way it should be.

We have cutbacks to RMs and then they can't provide the essential services we need in the small towns and in our RMs. And I think that it's something that we should all be discussing before we agree to go home here today or in the next week or two and find out that we should be doing something for all the people of this province.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do appreciate the opportunity to bring up some of the concerns that the people of my constituency have raised with me. And I'm sure that my colleagues will be here this afternoon to bring up more of these issues.

(1445)

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've had the government attempt to close down debate, and that's been a rather interesting exercise. And so I think it's important that we discuss what the government's trying to do when they want to adjourn the House and go home.

Very often as we walk up and down the streets and talk to the people in our communities they ask us, well what are you doing? Aren't you in Regina? Where are you? Why aren't you there? And all those sorts of things. The answer we usually

have to give is that we sit in Regina and we don't get to start until the Premier decides that he wants us there.

And they kind of look rather quizzically as if, well aren't there things to do? Aren't there things to debate? Are there not problems that need to be discussed? Does the government not need to be held accountable for what it's doing? Do you not have any ideas that you want to present to government? And the answer to most of those things is yes.

But as we know, the way the place works, we can't get here until the Premier calls it.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we were called here on Monday to deal with a back-to-work issue. And even though we all think that we should be here in fall sessions, this happened to be one of those situations that that was not a reason that should have brought us here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There was no way that back-to-work legislation should have occurred. It should not have occurred. It should not have had to happen. It had to happen because of mismanagement.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, most of us have been in the labour force at one time or another; and we know very well when we're in the labour force how we look at other people and what they're being paid and what they do and what their responsibilities are and how they got to be where they are, especially those people in management. And that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is one of the things that brought us here that Monday.

It was the fact that when SaskPower workers looked at what management was getting, and the kind of raises they were getting, it seemed to be totally out of line with what they were getting. There was a 2, 2, and 2 agreement that was there. And I think by and large we support that especially when we look at what's been happening with the agricultural scene. And we'll say more about that agriculture scene in a while, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But here you have Sask workers looking at management and saying, well we're supposed to be held to 2, 2, and 2 and theirs seems to be wide open — wide open. No one's quite sure how much they got but we know it's a whole lot more than 2, 2, and 2. That obviously didn't just raise the eyebrows of our power workers, it raised their ire. And so it should have for two reasons: if 2, 2, and 2 is good enough to keep the people going up the poles alive, it should be good enough to keep those people making decisions alive.

And I think speaking in that vein, one of our Sask Party MLAs made a good statement a while back, something he had received . . . information he had received from a SaskPower worker. And that is when a SaskPower person goes up a pole and makes a mistake, what happens? He's finished, end of story. When Sask management people make a mistake, what happens? They get the kind of severance packages we've been talking about — the Jack Messer type of severance packages.

Well there's a big difference, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the kinds of things that happen there. A difference very definitely in the wage settlements that have been offered to the workers, the people who do the work, the people who risk their lives. And I think when we had that storm just a couple of days ago and the

workers went out and made sure power was in place, it showed where their hearts and minds were. They felt it was important to keep the lights on all over Saskatchewan. So that's one part.

But there's another part, Mr. Speaker. I have a number of retired SaskPower workers in my constituency and I meet with them from time to time. And some of them are quite outspoken. And one of the concerns they have raised to me on numbers of occasions is how come are those people in management — not people that have come through the ranks who understand how the system works, who understand the work that is being done, the difficult things of going out when it's 40 below or a snowstorm like we had and keep the power on — why are those people who have a lifetime of experience and understanding, why do they not happen to get those top jobs? Why does it happen to be people who are, Mr. Deputy Speaker, campaign managers?

There's a big difference, Mr. Speaker, between making sure that you've got NDP signs strewn all over the lawns of our cities. That's not the kind of people that we have a lot of faith in and say, okay so you can put a sign up on a few lawns throughout the city, now suddenly we're going to put you in charge of light and power throughout the province. I don't think that exudes a whole lot of assurance and confidence from the public. And they don't. And our SaskPower workers are bitter because of that. I've had that personally from retired SaskPower workers. They don't think that's the way the system ought to be run and I agree with that.

It's those two kinds of critical reasons that brought us here on Monday. Reasons that shouldn't have happened; reasons this government needed to take responsibility for. Now yes, power needed to stay on. No doubt about that. And so the legislation that was brought in after the mismanagement was legislation that had to be brought into force and we supported that. In this country where we have 40-below weather, and that could very easily happen in 30 to 40 days from now, we can't have the power go off. Power going off to hospitals, senior citizen centres, homes, farms, dairies — we can't allow that sort of thing to happen. So in view of what had happened to date, that legislation was necessary. It shouldn't have come to that but it was necessary.

So we came here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for one day. And then there was an adjournment motion. The NDP wanted to depart. And I think we'll have to change their name to the nearly departed party. They nearly departed. They almost got away.

But fortunately the Sask Party was there to say no. There are certain issues that have to be brought to your attention. There are issues that you need to be aware of, much as you would like to be nearly departed. But you need to understand this.

There are things happening in this province, but no they couldn't see anything in this province that needed a fall session, a fall sitting. There was nothing going on in this province in the mind of the NDP government that should force us to stay here and discuss and look at solutions and possibilities and problems and all those sorts of things.

So Tuesday morning, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Sask Party said, we're going to go ahead and try and carry this on. There is a

crisis in Saskatchewan. The fact is there are many of them. But there is one that happens to have hit very hard and will be hitting much harder for the next year, because it won't go away in a day or two, and its effects may be long-term enough that they'll be around for decades unfortunately. And that is the situation in agriculture.

So we said, we're going to try for an emergency debate on agriculture rather than adjourn and go home, watch the nearly departed party leave. We're going to discuss agriculture; we're going to discuss the things that happened in agriculture — the difficulties that farms are facing; what's happened to the cost of inputs; what's happened to the price of the product and the effect that the offloading of this NDP government has had on the farm families. We're going to discuss that.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, lo and behold, about an hour or so after that the Agriculture minister says, well my goodness, there is a crisis in Saskatchewan. It is in agriculture. I want an emergency debate as well.

Well we had the emergency debate and we discussed the difficulties in agriculture. And the solutions for those are not easy. They're not easy. I'm sure if they were easy we would have had it fixed by the time Tuesday came to an end.

But in order to deal with agriculture in an effective way, we need to have the federal government onside, and onside strongly. Because what affects agriculture is not something that can be fixed just within one province. Agriculture is a national problem and the problems that are in agriculture are of the national nature.

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they're of an international nature because of the trade that's been going on, because of the subsidies that are there from the United States government, the subsidies that are there from European governments, the price that our farmers are getting for their product, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has basically gone right through the floor.

And so we do need the federal government to come onside, to come onside first of all to fight for our farmers, to fight for our farmers on an international level, on an international field to make sure that those prices that our farmers get are prices that are reasonable, are prices that can maintain their operations. Because truly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are few things in our country more important than agriculture, because when the food is not on our table we will soon realize what our priorities are.

And with the way agriculture has gone in the last little while it's going to be very difficult for farmers to start next spring and say, I think we'll plant another crop and I think we'll raise some more grain. They can't do it for free and yet that's very close to what they're being expected to do.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we didn't allow the nearly departed party to go home on Monday. We kept them here for Tuesday and we had the agricultural debate and we did pass a motion to request the federal government to come onside and fight for farmers across Canada, farmers in Saskatchewan, farmers in my constituency of Rosthern. We needed that. We did that.

We also need the federal government to come onside and work

out for programs and plans in co-operation with farmers so that farmers are all on a level playing field as we know farmers in Ontario aren't. They can go ahead and sell their grain in manners that we can't.

Truly amazing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If you would have someone who has had a shoe store in Ontario and he was allowed to sell his shoes to anyone he wished in the province, we'd say that's fine. Though if you happened to have a shoe store in Saskatchewan, we will limit to who you can sell your shoes to. We would say that's utterly ludicrous.

And yet that's the way the agricultural scene works in Canada. It works in such a way that in some provinces you have abilities to sell to certain markets. Those markets are closed to you when you happen to live in Saskatchewan. And these things need to be addressed.

(1500)

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we kept the government here for Tuesday against their will. I guess figuratively speaking we could say we dragged them kicking and screaming back in the House for Wednesday, except on Wednesday they had nothing to say. And today they've had nothing to say, and I'm sure they'll have less to say tomorrow, and I doubt they'll have very much to say next week.

The government side of the House will be very quiet next week, as it is today, and as it will be tomorrow because they have nothing to say on these issues. They do not wish to speak on those issues. So the official opposition, the Saskatchewan Party, will make sure we bring these things to government's attention.

Where are those people? Where are the people who are listening? You must ask yourself, where are your MLAs, if they happen to belong to the nearly departed party. Why are they not speaking up on these issues?

Well anyway, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that adjournment motion should not have been carried through; it hasn't been; and we are continuing to bring to the government and to their attention the problems that exist in our province.

And I'd like to address a few of those as they are seen from my constituency. And I guess I have to start off with highways. It's a common theme that runs throughout every constituency. The highways in this province, Mr. Speaker, are bad. It's unfortunate, but we in Saskatchewan have a reputation for bad highways and that reputation has been built during the time of this government. The NDP government has given us that reputation.

We used to have highways that were adequate, average; they are now bad. They are terrible. They are the worst. In fact, as is already stated in Monday's paper, we'll see some national papers will be carrying articles on how bad the highways in Saskatchewan are. And again part of that is just a lack of . . . strange management, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Strange things happen not just in the Land of the Midnight Sun, but in the land of bad highways.

About two years ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I supported the

government's budget. I did that for two reasons: one of those was that there happened to be a project of a highway twinning — a section of twinning — of Highway No. 12 that goes past Martensville. A very important stretch of highway because of all the accidents and hardships that have been caused on that stretch.

So I supported the budget because of that twinning project and my constituents have been supportive of me for that. I haven't had one person phone up and say, how dare you support the government on a budget issue such as that. But it's because there were certain things in there that were key to my constituency.

So the highway is nearly completed. And then funny things happen. It's opened before it's done. The minister comes around, gets into a car and has a parade on Highway 12. The highway is opened up for traffic, but the lights at the key new intersections aren't on. There are light standards there but the lights aren't on. And fact is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to show how serious that was, there actually were some fairly critical accidents that took place in the first days of Highway No. 12 that twin section being open because the lights weren't on.

And it's very much indicative of this government — there may be somebody home but the lights just don't seem to be on. And I think the fix on Highway 12 at Martensville, much needed, was sort of indicative of that. The lights quite weren't on.

They're on now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we're thankful for that.

Highway 11: when the twinning took place, it was another important twinning that took place there. There's a intersection that comes from the Warman Road/Wanuskewin Road that links up with Highway 11. Well I'm not sure who in the Highways department created that first access curve, but the access curve was almost at 90 degrees.

There was no need for it. There's a whole lot of essentially waste land, land that's not being used where they could have put a nice gentle curve to access Highway 11 for those people who wanted to go north. But instead they had a very sharp corner — a very sharp corner — and at the start on the far side of the short sharp corner, they had light standards, they had highway signs. These were broken off at about one every two days because people didn't expect such a ridiculously sharp corner on a highway.

So the Department of Highways took the first idea to cure this and they moved the light standards and all the signs to the near side of the intersection, so when you hit the ditch on the other side at least you wouldn't take down any highway signs. Well it saved the highway signs but it was a bad intersection to start off with and that didn't cure the problems.

People still kept hitting the ditch not being aware of the intersection. Numbers of people missed that intersection and then would go on toward a stop sign and then have to enter Highway 11, not through a nice smooth curve where they could go ahead and merge with the traffic, but just drive right into it.

At that intersection, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there were two lives

lost since that twinning took place. And I am convinced it's because that curve was such a ridiculous curve.

The last two times that we've had estimates in the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've brought up that question about that particular intersection. And I received the blindest of looks from the Minister of Highways at that time, like what could be the problem? What intersection are you talking about? Totally seemed to be unaware of what was going on. However, after that serious accident that I just referred to, Department of Highways has now rebuilt that curve and done it the way they should have done it in the first place.

And I wonder, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whose head rolled in Department of Highways for that fiasco. The cost will have been definitely in the hundreds of thousands of dollars for the correction, as well as the accidents that took place. Someone should have taken some responsibility for that. And it wasn't as if the Department of Highways wasn't aware of it because the very first estimate that was taken, that was brought to their attention. But it's taken them all that time to correct it.

Those are serious problems, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is why we cannot adjourn this House. Those problems need to be brought to the attention of this government. They need to be aware of what's going on.

Highway 312, highway running east and west from Wakaw basically through to the intersection at Hepburn, has a good stretch, a good stretch, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from the Laird corner to that Hepburn intersection. That's a good piece of highway, with the one exception is that the dirt that they've got underneath the highway — the moles like it. And the moles are climbing under the highway digging out the dirt and we end up with potholes because of moles. Amazing that we're making highway out of fine topsoil. But that's what's been happening.

But the other stretch from the Laird corner through to Wakaw, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has had some repair done on it but generally the repair falls apart very shortly. It's not because the workers there aren't doing a good job. They're doing the best job with what's being given to them to work with. But that road just isn't of the quality that repairs last a long time.

An Hon. Member: — It was a Devine road.

Mr. Heppner: — And the . . . It would have been a divine road if the NDP would fix it. The NDP didn't fix it. The fact is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP took gravel from the west side of the river. They spent a million dollars making an ice road across the Saskatchewan north river to get the gravel beside Highway 312 to finish it off.

And the NDP government didn't do a thing with it. That pile of gravel's sitting there. The NDP government are the ones that spent that money. They made the ice road. They spent the million dollars and there we have a pile of gravel doing absolutely no good.

Can't finish a good highway, can't finish a highway that's needed, can't finish a highway that's being used. They can spend a million dollars, dump a pile of gravel in the middle of nowhere and say, we've done our job, done our job. So either

they go ahead and they go ahead and have potholes in highways or they dump a pile of gravel. The least they could do — the least, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these people could do — is take away the sign saying you can't remove unauthorized material. I'm sure some of the local citizenry would take pails of gravel and fill up some of the potholes themselves — would fill up some of the potholes themselves. It's a disaster. They're not finishing the highway. They spent over a million dollars on a half a fix that doesn't even start to . . .

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Trew): — Order.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. I can assure you that the noise that we just had in here isn't anywhere near the noise in a vehicle driving down Highway 312. This was well insulated compared to what you hear there. With pieces falling off, gravel flying up, and you probably saw that there was a bit of television program, news report out there, where the reeve of the RM and myself stood beside the highway and with our toes we could just pick up pieces and start peeling the whole thing off. It's a disaster.

And what makes that highway more critical, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that there's more and more traffic coming down there hauling our grain. There's a high throughput elevator been put up near Saskatoon and there's more grain coming through from the Wakaw area, from the east side of the south Saskatchewan across that particular bridge, using Highway 312. And that's gone to increase with this high throughput elevator that's there. And so highways is a main issue.

And we need obviously federal help in this area. I know the NDP government says well, we need some federal help. But anyway, we do need that federal help. But the interesting thing is from time to time we have the Prime Minister in our province — thankfully without any pepper steak, water guns or baseball bats, we've kept him out of that area. But when he is here, and our Premier talks to him, have any of us ever heard him address publicly — publicly — Mr. Prime Minister, we need money for this.

It may have been done behind closed doors with the Minister of Highways — behind closed doors where this Minister of Highways has no value. We want to hear that publicly. We want our Premier to take a public stance on this and tell the Prime Minister, you need to take some of that money you're sending out to the Maritimes and putting it over here.

So we need that. We need our Premier to speak up and get the Prime Minister on side. It's not happening. On what issues — on what issues — did our Premier take the Prime Minister to task and say Saskatchewan needs some help. Was it on highways? No. Was it on health care, publicly? No. Was it on gun control? No. On nothing. A few warm and fuzzies and then maybe they crawled off in a quiet room some place in the dark of night and discussed highways with the minister. That's possible. But who knows. Who knows?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are many things that we need to discuss before we adjourn the House and I would suggest one of them that hasn't been mentioned so far, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is this government's stance on gun control.

It has been weak and it's been another one of those situations where they've been dragged kicking and screaming into the debate. They didn't want to say a word on it. Well finally they've been dragged into it weakly. That's w-e-a-k. Because they haven't been saying something every seven days. But the other one's been feeble, feeble.

So okay finally when the other provinces said, we're going to go ahead and take the federal government to task, and we'll take this to court, and we'll see if we can declare that this piece of legislation that the feds have come up with is illegal. Well yes, johnny-come-lately, we sent our minister; and he had an idea. But it wasn't very strong. It wasn't very strong. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to discuss that more. That's why we cannot adjourn. Hasn't been discussed at all so far.

Because if you will check, our Saskatchewan presence in those debates, in our courts that just took place in which there was a split decision of three and two, our Saskatchewan position was the weakest of all — the weakest of all. It was sort of as if, well we have constituents out here in the province who are concerned about this, so somehow we have to have an image that we're actually against this gun legislation. We have to have that image.

So they played the image but have they played the effectiveness? No. We want someone out there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when we send them out there to debate that are people who understand the issue, who know what the issue is about, who are enthusiastic about the issue.

You cannot have people out there who say, well I might be caught having to enforce this gun control. And therefore for that particular reason, I'm going to soft-pedal my position. So in case I have to go ahead and be part of the enforcement, it won't be so hard on me.

(1515)

That's not adequate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's not nearly adequate. The federal government has dealt with that legislation. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm sure you're aware of the demonstration that took place on Parliament Hill — 10,000-plus people; 10,000-plus people. That's after the legislation had been passed. It shows you the strength of the concern, and the strength of the concern in Saskatchewan is as strong as it is in any province — and probably stronger.

And where are we on that issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where are we? Yes, our present Justice minister came out awhile back and said, well probably, probably maybe the gun owner shouldn't just register their guns right now. Good advice; good advice. However, not nearly enough action, not nearly enough action. Because at some point we need to make sure that those firearms never need to be registered.

And some of the arguments that the Prime Minister puts forward are ludicrous — utterly ludicrous. Utterly ludicrous. When he says, well we register cars don't we? As if we register guns, things will be safe.

That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would be something like saying, if we could ensure that every car in Saskatchewan has a licence

plate on it, then when they go through a red light nothing bad will happen. To my knowledge, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a licence plate on a car has never brought us to a situation where an accident didn't happen. A licence plate has never been the cause of an accident not occurring. And the same thing's going to happen in the firearm thing.

And I see the member from a good gun section back there, from Swift Current, looking with a furrowed brow . . .

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Trew): — Order, order. I just wish to remind the hon. member for Rosthern that the motion that we are debating here is truly a wide-ranging motion. I've read it carefully and can find . . . I've yet to find a tie-in with gun control to the motion before the Assembly, and urge the hon. member for Rosthern to return to the motion.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The motion to adjourn as it is, basically sends us all home. So the nearly departed party can go, and I guess we have to leave then too. But we don't want that to happen because there are issues that are important to the people of Saskatchewan. And that's why we're here, to bring to the government's attention what those issues are.

And I've mentioned one today already. That's highways. And there are many more that I intend to deal with today. And my partners over here in the Saskatchewan Party have mentioned other ones as well, things that their constituents are concerned about. And we need to raise these with the government. And that it is why it is so critical, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we cannot adjourn the House. We must stay here. We must have the people on the government side hear what those issues are. They don't seem to know what they are. We need to bring those to their attention.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just mention a few things about gun control; brings me to the area of justice. Very much also a Saskatchewan issue and the guns thing is underneath that. We in Saskatchewan have, one way or another, Mr. Deputy Speaker, managed to get ourselves a record. We've made a record, unfortunately, because many records aren't good. Records for break-in; record for car thefts — that's happened in Saskatchewan.

And I'm appalled by that because we've grown up in this particular province saying we're a province of people helping people. We are a province of neighbourliness. We're a province where if anything we'd like to leave our doors unlocked so a neighbour can walk in and use the phone if he needs it.

It's the kind of thing that many of us in rural and maybe even in urban Saskatchewan grew up in, where there weren't locks on doors. And now what we hear is you've got to lock your doors, you've got to bar your windows, you have to do all these things. What has happened?

Somewhere this government seems to have messed up and created that kind of environment. And what's interesting is that our two key people in the NDP government, the Premier and the Deputy Premier, represent constituencies that are the leaders in crime, not only in Saskatchewan but across Canada.

And then the one thing that doesn't amaze us then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that they don't live there. I would imagine their homes would probably look quite out of place in the constituencies that they represent. So what has happened in our province that we have those high rates?

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we need to discuss with this government some of the issues that involve crime. And youth crime, adult crime, many of those things go together in this case. So my discussion doesn't isolate one or the other. I think regardless of age but particularly with youth, we need to look at rehabilitation.

Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we rehabilitate a young person that has started down a life of crime and we can turn him away from that, we have saved that person from their own private pain for the rest of their lives. We have saved their families from that pain for the rest of their lives. And we have saved society the pain and the cost for the rest of the lives of those individuals. So our rehabilitation programs are not as successful as they should be, not as successful as the people of this province want them to be. And that is why we need to stay here in this House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and not adjourn the House, and bring these ideas to the attention of the government.

We need to, also may ensure that for those people who commit crimes there are consequences. Now in our day and age some people call consequences; some use a different word, they may use the word that this is just punishment. It matters not. At the end of the day consequences and punishment are very much the same sort of thing. But there need to be consequences, the kinds of consequences that will make people say, I don't want to commit that crime or I sure don't want to do it twice.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to stay in this House and discuss some of the ways that this government could carry out some of those programs; ways that aren't happening to the satisfaction of our constituents, of any of the constituents of those of us who are members of this House.

What's unfortunate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that members of our communities . . . we are creating community patrols. My community is one of those, my community is one of those. The cost of policing has become so high that it has become a major part of the tax structure of many of our small towns, and there are not enough police hours in a day to be around town 24 hours a day. We know that; we can't afford that.

And so what's had to happen in many of our communities across this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are there are community patrols set up — good community patrols because they are set up through our RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) with their training and a link to them. So these people do not become vigilantes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They do not drive around the town with a rifle stuck under their seats, but they're out there watching and checking what's happening. And when they see something questionable happening, with their communication systems they are provided with, they can quickly contact the police who come there and take care of that.

But what has this NDP government brought us to, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that our people in our province have to take to the streets themselves to keep their streets safe. I'm proud of those

communities and those citizens who are taking that initiative. I think it speaks of some of that neighbourliness and some of that concern that I talked about earlier on. But it shouldn't have to happen, Mr. Deputy Speaker; it shouldn't have to happen.

Let me say a word or two about some of our hunting issues. When we look at some of those issues that are involved around hunting. We've noticed that in parts of our province our game numbers have been drastically depleted.

Now any time game numbers are depleted there are always numerous factors that play into that. There are natural factors that play into that; there are management factors that play into that; and then there are human factors that play into that.

There are those who say, well we should just back off and leave nature alone. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can't do that any more in Saskatchewan. We could do that if we all moved out of the province, put a 10-foot fence around it and said okay, no more farming, no more oil, no more potash, no more power. We'll just get out and turn it back to the animals.

Well, within time it may find its own balance. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you and I are here. We're all here. And we've changed the environment in this province. And so for that particular reason, we always will need good game management.

But why are these numbers in some of the game populations fluctuating so drastically? It's because some of our management techniques are not as good as they should be.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, just to give a personal example from this fall. I was out hunting Moose in northern Saskatchewan. An individual came by without a licence, without a red cap on, without a blaze jacket on, in camouflage, in rifle season, walking around the bush. A very dangerous practice.

And yet we were there for six days, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we never saw one game management person out there checking us out. Where were they? Were they told to stay away so you don't find people in camouflage clothes out there hunting.

We need some better management techniques in many forms. We need to take better care of the game that we've got. And we're not doing that, but we need to do that.

Okay, I want to say a word or two about agriculture. Mine is an agricultural community; very intense agriculture. Because we grow, probably just about every crop that's grown in Saskatchewan, we grow in my constituency, and we grow it very well. Partly because we're fortunate of having a climate situation that we very seldom have the worst crop failures that occur in the province.

We grow those crops; we grow them well. We have very intense livestock operations. We have cattle feedlots. We have some of the biggest dairies in the province. We have a lot of bird and hog operations.

Most of those, Mr. Deputy Speaker, most of those are suffering this fall. And that is why we cannot adjourn, because there are other issues in farming that need to be dealt with.

A few short years ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government in its financial strategies, decided to offload to farmers. Now they didn't come over and make a statement from the Minister of Agriculture and say, farm friends I'm going to do it to you. But they did it. They did it by changing our educational grants from a 60-40 to a 40-60.

But the taxpayer out there now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has to pay for 60 per cent of education instead of 40, pay it from his property tax. And for some of our RMs that gets to be very, very high because of the way the structures for education work.

That tax burden, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has been put onto the backs of the farmers, and it's not a variable one. It's not one they can have options on. Every spring, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our agriculture communities can sit down and they can say, what crops am I going to grow, what are the forecasts, what will I do with my inputs? Fertilizers are high, maybe I'll try for a crop like oats that doesn't require the same number of inputs, and work through that kind of thinking to try and get a margin there they can keep themselves alive.

Yet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what happens with this offloading to the rural community through that tax structure is that every single year that tax burden is there. It is something that there isn't a single farmer can do anything about. He can't negotiate it; he can't opt out of it; he can't say, well I'll pay 150 per cent next year, 50 per cent this year because I have a lot of summerfallow. Those options aren't open to him. He has to pay them every year.

And right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at this time of year there are farmers all across this province who are worried about how they're going to go ahead and pay their taxes. Because if they don't pay their taxes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, their name goes on a tax enforcement list in a local newspaper.

(1530)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you and I overspend on our plastic and we're up to 2,000 or 5,000 or \$10,000 on our credit card, there is no public disclosure given. But when a person in our rural communities can't pay the tax on his farmland, it's published, and every person can see this person can't make his taxes on his farm.

And it's a thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that destroys the self-respect of our rural community. Not that it isn't a necessary action that RMs have to take; it is. But there's a cost there that they have no choice, and it's a cost that has risen drastically, and it's a cost that this government put there by their offloading through education.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we talk about agriculture, there are other things that we have to discuss. And that's why we can't go home; that's why we can't adjourn this House.

Big changes in agriculture and I think we're all aware of that. We've gone from systems throughout this province where most people either had a lot of summerfallow, or stuck a couple of diskers behind a tractor, went around the field once or twice, and said that's farming. It's become very sophisticated, very sophisticated.

Look at our seeding equipment that's out there, our spraying equipment; things that work on GPS (global positioning systems) where they know exactly where their inputs need to be, where their crops are coming from, what part of the field is rich in what nutrients, what the weed situation is in different parts of the field. Very sophisticated.

And some might say, well if it's that sophisticated and all this sophistication costs money — and yes, Mr. Speaker, it costs a fortune — then why not just drop the sophistication. Well, Mr. Speaker, the margins in farming are so small that the only way that there is survival out there is to use all that sophistication and hope to eke out a small enough margin to keep the family on the farm.

One of those things is hauling. And the increased distances that have to be hauled create a strain on our roads, they create a strain on the fuel bills, and on the new machinery that farmers need to haul that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to discuss with this particular government not just rail-line closures, but closures of elevators and their second cousins, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Wheat Pool is closing dozens and dozens and dozens of elevators across this land. It's having a major effect on our farm community. We need to discuss that with this particular government.

And it will be one of those places where, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we stay here and as we don't adjourn and as we continue to discuss that, hopefully we can bring that to the attention of their elevator friends and say something needs to be done here. This is too quick, this is too fast. Maybe there need to be some options that need to be put out there.

Short-lines need to be worked through. We need to look at the things that are hindering short-lines. We know what those are. We've brought it to the attention of this government many times. And they're still not listening.

Things that ensure that a farm group can get together, use that short-line track, put the equipment on there that they want to have on there, and go ahead and pay the kinds of wages and salaries that the farm community is used to paying. Not paying a union wage that comes out of Ontario for a rail-line operator because he's hauling three, four, or ten railway cars behind a converted semi-trailer tractor. Those things need to be discussed. That is why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we cannot adjourn this House.

And the spinoffs, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from our agricultural community, and the downside that's there are great. Spinoffs, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that start probably at the door of those people that are selling the inputs — the fertilizer dealers, the chemistry people who sell the chemicals, and the equipment dealers.

But the spinoffs from there move very quickly down main street of our communities. We're going to see very shortly that the clothing shops in our small towns, the car dealerships in our towns, the tire shops in our towns, are going to be suffering. They're going to be suffering because the money isn't there. And what's out there was going to have to last longer. And with that we're going to end up with layoffs, smaller margins in our

particular communities. Very difficult for our rural communities to carry through on this.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's going to carry on very quickly because when you live in a community as I do which is close to two cities, Prince Albert and Saskatoon, 30-minute drive from one, 35-minute drive from the other, many people from our area go to those cities to do a whole lot of shopping. Those cities are going to be feeling the impact as of today and they're going to keep on feeling that impact. And the impact is going to get more and more difficult as farmers find out that the price for their product isn't changing.

Not only is the price of grain going down, and I think they expected that a while back, but as you're well aware, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the price of hogs just dropped and has dropped drastically to a fraction, a small fraction of what it used to be.

And so we have these people that have hog operations who become enthusiastic because of the government's statements, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on increasing the size of their operations, now find themselves in an operation that's actually losing money.

Let me look at education for awhile, Mr. Deputy Speaker, an area in this province that I think we've always taken some pride in. We've taken pride in the quality of education and I think there has been a quality in education in this province. And I think that reputation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, probably has been with us for almost a hundred years.

It probably started in a small country school where people said, when we go ahead and send 20, 30, 40 kids to a one-room classroom and expect that teacher to go ahead and instruct in 8, 9, and 10 grades at one time, that's a pretty awesome job. And those particular teachers got some respect and the people learned to read and learned to write and learned to do their arithmetic.

And yet that's all changing. And yet the funding of this government and the way they take care of education just doesn't happen to be there.

Capital funding, there is no commitment. Hepburn School — an interesting school — they want to just get their school building set aside as a heritage site because it's a beautiful, old, dark brown brick building. And yet the floors in the portables that they have, actually people have stepped through the floors and they've had to go up underneath, put some planks underneath, prop it up with some cindercrete blocks to keep the people from falling through the floor.

Those are classrooms, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Those are not storage areas that are out there. This is where students are walking and they're stepping through the floor. Those kinds of schools, that's not where our kids should be going, to schools that are that poor.

In the town of Martensville, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a growing community. Number of students keep going up. Their school is so full at this particular point that the staff room has been taken over by the students and it's become a classroom.

And so what they do is, the staff goes to the library and sits among a bunch of textbooks, between a Walt Disney video and a Samuel Clemens text, and eat their lunch. Why? Because their staff room has been taken over by students. The thing is full to the windowsills, literally. And when they look to this government for some leadership, it's not there.

They have money for strange things. The Premier bought a new plane. He flies around the province. And the students in Hepburn have a classroom where they step through the floors, and the staff people in Martensville have lost their staff room because of the abundance of students in that particular school.

I need to say one or two things about health, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In my community we have the Gabriel Springs Health District, and we've been fortunate in that we haven't had the hospital closures that some areas have had. We have, in my community, our hospital; we still have it; we hope to keep it.

But there are people in my community, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that are concerned that this government is going to allow our community and its health region to be gobbled up by the cities, because the cities have been looking at that already. We need some assurance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the things that I probably get brought to my attention as much as anything else in my constituency are the waiting lists. I just had an individual phone me up a couple of days ago, very irate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over the fact that his mother needs an eye operation and she's going to have to wait eight months — eight months for that eye operation.

In the meantime, she can no longer read the newspapers that she likes to read. She can no longer pick up the newspaper and read what's happening in her hometown, the people that she's lived with. She's in a seniors' centre at this particular time. Those sort of waiting lists shouldn't happen.

We've had people from all parties on this side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this week bring up concerns in our health systems, and I think those need to be taken care of. We cannot adjourn at this time.

And so for that reason, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I cannot support this motion to adjourn.

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise also in opposition to this motion. As you know, we have taken the position for some time that there ought to be a fall session of the legislature.

Now certainly . . . Although it pains me to say it, I think that the members of the Saskatchewan Party have placed before this House many of the issues which demand the attention of legislators. And I will be dealing with those as well from our perspective in a moment.

But I would like to say that it has also been our position, and the position of most of the provinces of Canada, that the standard practice of provincial legislatures ought to be to have a fall session at which time government Bills are introduced and then adjourned for debate over to the spring session.

And I submit that that practice would greatly increase and enhance the quality of debate. Because what that would mean is that the members of the legislature, and the public at large, have a chance to review legislation over a period of a few months. Input can be gathered, stakeholders can be consulted, the general public has a time to react, so that when the debate proper starts in the spring we are all much better equipped to provide our comments.

Instead, of course, what has happened, I've been somewhat distressed in the two sessions I have now attended that important pieces of government legislation tend not even to appear until the dying days of the session. And the early period of the session seems to be spent largely debating housekeeping measures, amendments designed to correct typographical errors, amendments to translate Bills into French, but any consequential and controversial legislation seems to appear on the order paper at the last minute.

This has not been the practice of some other legislators. And I submit that democracy would be better served if as well as introducing the SaskPower legislation, if the government had presented its legislative package as other provinces do and then adjourned to the spring session, all members, both government and opposition, would have a chance to properly review it. And what is more important, the general public, those most affected by pieces of legislation, would have a chance to give their input.

Beyond that though, I find myself in agreement with other members of this House who have said that there are some extremely pressing issues that ought to be addressed. We know that following a barely balanced budget this spring, that unfortunately what happened was the Saskatchewan economy has suffered a downturn.

We know that agricultural diversification was based in very large measure on the Asian market which is now looking very weak. We know that the initial price of wheat and other grains has been almost cut in half. We know that in the next two years there will be dramatic changes to agricultural transportation and it is doubly tragic that those changes are apparently now going to take place at a time when commodity prices are at cyclical lows.

And I think it is unfortunate — and I say this not as a partisan comment — I think it is unfortunate that the government in the only other matter it placed before this House suggested that Ottawa should come up with some money for our farmers. Well I happen to agree with that. I happen to agree with that, but I was disappointed that the government didn't say anything about what the province can do to rescue our basic producers, our primary producers, our farmers. Surely it is something that both levels of government ought to be addressing.

Well in the *Public Accounts* recently filed we see that non-renewable resource revenue fell by \$126 million; oil, natural gas, and uranium revenue fell by 230 million. Welfare rolls increased by over a hundred million.

(1545)

We see that in order to balance the budget we needed 350 million from Liquor and Gaming. We see that Agriculture

spending actually declined by 122 million; and Economic Development expenditures were cut by 41 million; Environment and Resources also cut.

Well it seems to me if we are looking at the engine of our economy, the engine of our economy will come from two departments — Economic Development and Agriculture. And those are precisely the departments that are being downscaled.

So we balanced the budget this past year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by cutting back on precisely those areas which might have laid or which would have laid the foundation for sustainable growth and sustainable government and also for the government infrastructure that we all need and want.

My colleagues and I have talked a lot about health especially, and health expenditures. And we have been extremely concerned about the decline in health services. And I was pleased that the new Minister of Health conceded when she was sworn in, that there has been an erosion of confidence in our health system.

But the point that I would like to make is that I think we all recognize that unless the issue of economic development and taxation and agriculture is addressed, unless we have a healthy economy, we simply will not be able to finance the health, the education, the roads that we all agree in this House are key.

So in that sense, Mr. Deputy Speaker, economic development is the first priority, because without economic development there will not be proper health care. Without economic development there will not be quality roads. And without economic development our education funding will continue to lag far behind that of other provinces.

Well I said earlier this afternoon that we know from population projections that by early in the next century, one-half of our school-aged population will be Aboriginal. A third of our total population will be Aboriginal by the middle of the next century. These figures are not thrown out to cause alarm, and they are not bad things. They can be a benefit. They can be an asset. Certainly they are a challenge, and certainly it underlines for all of us in this House and in this province, the great need to bring our Aboriginal people into the economic mainstream of the province.

Because if they are in the economic mainstream of our province, their per cent of the population is certainly not a problem and should not be. It should be seen as an asset and a benefit. But they must be able to participate fully in the good things of this province and we must address the issue of the low participation in the workforce, the high unemployment at present, the lower education level. Those things must be addressed. And I don't see, I don't see the government laying out a plan for what can be done.

Now when this government took office they were admittedly faced with a financial crisis. They balanced the budget. And I think most of the people in this province give some credit for the fact that a situation was dealt with and addressed, just as I think most fair-minded Canadians are grateful to Paul Martin that we have the first balanced budget on the federal level for nearly 30 years.

Because I submit that ultimately, that ultimately there can't be any debate between left and right or Liberals or Conservatives or anybody else as to whether or not the government has to balance the books. Surely all members of this House and all thinking people concede that that's the first point. So it's been done, and let's give credit where credit's due.

But where do we go from there? Where do we go from there? Where is the vision? Where is the plan to take Saskatchewan into the new century knowing some of the challenges we are facing with the end of the Crow rate, with the end of the country elevator, with the end of the branch line?

Where is the plan to say that we are going to provide economic opportunities for our young people so that they can live and work and have families — and yes, I'll even say it — and pay taxes in Saskatchewan, because that's good too, because in that way we will be able to afford the infrastructure and the services that we all agree are needed.

Well we also know that there is a tremendous challenge in terms of taxation. Now some people would say it is a cheap way to buy votes to promise to lower taxes, but we also know that it is no longer sustainable for a province or even a nation to have a taxation level which is seriously out of step with its neighbours.

Part of living in the global economy is that ever since the Berlin Wall came down, government has no mechanism for holding people against their will. And we know that it is educated people, it is the business person, it is the farmers who are going to invest to create jobs, create economic development, especially in the area of agricultural diversification.

We know that at present Saskatchewan is a net importer of bread. We know that we import margarine and canola oil. We know that we import breakfast cereals. And we know that that's a situation that must change . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes and even the end of the Crow can become a benefit for us, as it becomes now uneconomic to ship our unprocessed products out for processing elsewhere. Let us export the processed products and not the unprocessed grains.

That is the industrial future of this province and that's what we have to address on a broad global market. We can't be looking up today and oh, Asia is the future and then find out the next day that oh, Asia's not looking so good now so that's the end of the plan. There's a large world out there and we can compete in it and we can have as strong and good a future as any other part of our country.

Well I was reading recently that one of the definitions of a Canadian is that we have a national inferiority complex. Living next door to the Americans, the most go-getting people in the world, we tend to think that we are perhaps a little bit slow, a little bit reticent, not quite as on the bit as our neighbours. Well if that is true, Mr. Deputy Speaker, then we in Saskatchewan are an inferiority complex within an inferiority complex, in that we too have to capture that idea that we are just as good, just as smart, just as hard-working, just as innovative, as Albertans and Manitobans.

Unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, some of the recent

statistics coming out do not support that in the way that I would wish. We're the only province that lost jobs in the last year. We lost population in the last year — we did increase marginally but that was less than the increase of births over deaths — but we actually lost people last year. More people left than came.

This is a matter that ought to distress us. And we know who is leaving. Who is leaving is the young, the educated, the well-skilled, the trained — precisely the people we need to fuel economic development in this province.

Well we also know that our road situation is a serious issue and the government has told us that they are budgeting \$250 million a year for each of the next 10 years. But we're not spending that. We're spending about a quarter what Alberta is on roads. And while we spend about a quarter of what Alberta does on roads, we complain about the federal government.

So let us look at what we have to do over our road system, particularly given that unfortunately we know that grains are going to be moving onto the roads from our rail system. That's not something I'm happy about but it's something we all know is coming. So instead of crying about it, let's deal with the situation.

Our Crown corporations, our Crown corporations — what has to be done, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is we have to get back to the idea of our Crowns serving the people of Saskatchewan at fair price.

There are many people now concerned about the management of our Crowns and wondering about the agenda and the purpose. Do they exist for risky foreign adventures? Do they exist as a cash cow for the government? Do they exist as a soft landing for former campaign managers? Or do they exist to serve the people of Saskatchewan? Are we going to use our Crown corporations to get involved in adventures in countries few of us have even heard of before and where rules can change on the spin of a dime, or are we going to worry about how we keep them viable and economic and providing a high level of service to the people of Saskatchewan, which is after all why they were established in the first place?

I regret to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that last week I moved a motion in the Crown Corporations Committee that the Crown corporations should not be used for political patronage nor should they be subject to political interference. Quite frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I'd had any embarrassment about moving that motion, it was that it seems to me rather self-evident and perhaps a motherhood motion. However, to my surprise, government members voted it down as . . . each and everyone of them voted against it.

So apparently it wasn't as self-evident, and trite, and motherhood a resolution as I had initially thought because it turned out, in fact, to be a very controversial motion and a motion which the government could not support. I simply assumed it was a motion which would very quickly and without debate have support of all members. But it turns out that taking patronage and political interference out of the Crowns was something that ran contrary to government policy.

Well, I think that has to be reviewed. Because I think events of

this week and what has brought us back to the legislature raised questions about the management of our Crowns. While I personally took the view that you can't have service interruptions to something as basic as power as our winter is coming, nonetheless, I think there is still some lingering doubts on the part of many members of this House, including myself, as to whether it really had to come to back-to-work legislation or whether, with better efforts and better management, this could have been resolved short of a special session of the legislature and back-to-work legislation.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I agree that the challenges before this province are very, very large and I also agree that it is upsetting when we look at some of the recent statistics coming out of the other provinces and find that we are simply not keeping pace, not only with Alberta, but Manitoba as well. And yes, in job creation many of our friends in the Maritimes are doing better than us. And God bless them. I don't begrudge it to them. But it seems to me, it seems to me that we are not second-rate compared to New Brunswick or Manitoba. It seems to me if they can do it, we can do it. We are as smart as them; we're as blessed as them; we have as much natural resources as them.

(1600)

So if it's possible for them to grow and develop and provide opportunities for our young people, I refuse to accept that that can't be done for Saskatchewan and that's not possible for us and that we have to, we have to accept the role of being the poor relations; we have to accept accommodation in the caboose.

But I say as a relatively new member, that I have not been excited about the legislation that we have seen in the last two sessions. As I say, it has been mundane housekeeping. I see little in it that is innovative, little in it that suggests vision or drive or something new to latch on to; some reason to tell our young people, hey this province has a future; we have leadership that has a plan to take up into the new millennium, and we have a plan and a vision for moving this province ahead.

That's what is needed. And we have to give that to our people, especially to our young people, if we are going to hold and develop and move forward.

Now I think that this session would have been a good time to present that plan as to how we're going to move Aboriginal peoples into the economic mainstream, how we are going to have agricultural diversification and value added, how we are going to deal with the changes to grain transportation.

And we could have had really super debates on these key issues and I think maybe, to a certain extent, we could have even gone past partisanship. Because I respectfully submit that all members in this House are in basic agreement that this is where we ought to be moving.

Well I made some reference to myself being a junior member, and so I do not wish to end without offering my personal congratulations to the member for Saskatoon Eastview. It is always pleasant to welcome a new member. And I say, I guess in one sense, particularly so for myself, because she now takes

over the role of being the rookie and I'm pleased to be able to vacate that role, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — Sophomore.

Mr. Hillson: — Okay, the member for Kindersley says I am now a sophomore. I'll look that word up after the House adjourns.

But there are serious issues; there are serious challenges. I regret that they are not being discussed this fall. I also regret that we do not follow the practice of other legislatures in this country where the government lays out its legislative package in the fall and then adjourns so the members and the public as a whole can review that package and come back at the spring session ready, prepared to intelligently and comprehensively discuss the issues; instead of, as I say, wait until we're on into late May, early June, and all of a sudden significant pieces of legislation hit the order paper. That is not, to my way of thinking, the correct procedure.

So I rise in opposition to this motion. And I encourage the government, I encourage the government to place before us challenging and innovative pieces of legislation to deal with the current issues of this province.

And if the government refuses to do so, I know that both opposition parties have and will provide more pieces of legislation from private members' Bills that demand our attention and are serious matters of public debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to join this debate in opposition to the adjournment motion for all the reasons that my colleague and friend from North Battleford has so eloquently expressed, and as has been expressed by other members on this side of the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have Bills on the order Table. Many of them have already been mentioned and presented and brought to the attention of this House. But there are others that were overlooked. There are Bills that are dealing with the quality of life for the people of this great province of ours, for the entire province.

We need to discuss the serious situation of poverty in our province. We need to discuss very seriously our education needs for all our young people — the underprivileged — not only for those who are able to financially pursue future education but also those that have a will and the perseverance to continue but, unfortunately because of their situations, are unable to.

Agriculture is certainly first and foremost. I was told in a Public Accounts meeting that agriculture was number one; in the government's view, the number one industry in the province of Saskatchewan. Yet at no time was there any discussion with respect to what plans, what economic development plans, or where in the economic development plans of this province did agriculture fit. What was this province going to do for those people that are now facing, facing some very dire circumstances.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've alluded to this in a presentation earlier in the House, and I want to refer once again to what the Minister of Agriculture said. What we need in this province is population; we need to add to our population. And yes, people come to this great province and hope to make a living. But then when they are faced with having to pay additional costs, taxes that are imposed upon them, taxes that they were not aware of previously prior to coming to this province, but have settled, have purchased land, and have established, tried to become established, and now when they want to conform to the requirements, to the licensing requirements associated with their operations, they're suddenly told that they need to pay a horrendous amount of money in taxes before they are able to continue.

That is not the way to encourage economic development. That is not the way to encourage our farming communities and people who strive at producing the food — not only for this province, but for the world.

The additional legislation that sits on the order table and begs to be debated, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council amendment for duration of this Assembly. Those are things that need to be talked about. And my colleague and friend from North Battleford had alluded to and had mentioned and indicated the urgency and the need for fall sessions, not unlike other provinces, and the purposes and the good, sound reasons for it. It makes sense to have an opportunity to review legislation over a period of time and then debate it with knowledge, with the ability to either oppose, defend, amend, make it better. And we can make some of this legislation better if we work together — not if we're consistently at odds, and not if the NDP government only wants it their way and no other way.

The surface rights acquisition and compensation amendment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again something . . . a legislation that needs to be addressed with respect to people who are involved with surface rights and that are affected by economic development, that are affected by industries that affect the quality of the land.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, The Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act, this legislation is something that should not and cannot be overlooked. Why are we avoiding debate on those very important types of legislation?

The Child Protection Act, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this has come before the House and lays on the order Table with the government refusing to want to bring it forward to have some discussions about it, and to determine whether or not that type of legislation is needed. But it is desperately needed, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Crown Corporations Amendment Act, 1998 as it relates to capital market activities restrictions; The Highway Fatality Marker Act. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have adequate legislation that demands the time for a fall sitting of the legislature in order that these important issues and this legislation may be debated.

We have talked about highways. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the most distressing issue as well, most distressing issue is our health care system. There's no question about it. We've spoken about

it. We've brought to the government's attention that there are bed crises in our health care system.

There are waiting lists, there are phenomenal waiting lists — not only in Regina but in Saskatoon and throughout the province. We have people that call and tell us that they're waiting for elective surgery. And there're distressed because their quality of life cannot be improved because they have to wait 18 or 20 months for some minor elective surgeries for their legs, for their hips, in order that their quality of life may be improved. And then be told that well perhaps in your case we'll put you on an emergency list and that means only a six- to eight-month wait.

That's unacceptable in this province of ours. We have people who are waiting for very serious medical processes who are told you have to wait six to eight months.

I'm not a medical practitioner, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I know that there have been examples of where people have not had certain symptoms detected or certain symptoms have been allowed to go undetected that have ultimately led to some serious, serious, and sad consequences.

That is not what the people of this great province of Saskatchewan deserve. That's not what the people who helped build this province and continue to support this province, that's not what they deserve.

We had a million people 40 years ago, we still have a million people, and people continue to leave. Those that believe in the province that built it, remain. We should have a commitment to look after those people. We owe them, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This government owes them. But they refuse to do anything to alleviate their suffering and their pain.

I support the opposition to adjourning this House until these very serious issues continue. We brought forward at the first session of this legislature, we brought forward to the government the need for fall sittings and we continue to demand that there be serious consideration for including fall sittings during the legislative sessions.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's with great pleasure that I get up and also disappointment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to talk today on the adjournment motion when the members opposite don't seem to want to take part in any of the discussions that are going on, whether it's from agriculture, to health care, to education, to highways, whatever it is. It's disappointing to see them not want to take part.

I'd like to start, Mr. Deputy Speaker, today talking about health care. And I think that's one of the many reasons we have to stay in this House an extra period of time this fall and address some of the concerns that our constituents have out there. And I'd like to talk to start with, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about my constituency and the people, the health care provided to that area.

Our East Central Health District, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you might well know, was served by the member for Yorkton as minister of Health in the past, and what we ended up coming out of that with was a deficit in the East Central Health District of over \$13 million; another \$3 million this year.

(1615)

And I think the member for Yorkton, if that's the kind of attention he pays to his own constituency, I can just imagine the attention that he paid to the rest of the province. He has put us in a position under the East Central Health District's health care of being in debt for many, many years and the only way that they're going to control that deficit and get it under control — the \$3 million a year that we're at now — is to cut services. They have no choice.

The health board has no other options; they don't seem to be getting any extra funding from the government to address this problem, so more cuts have to be on the way. They have no alternative.

And where are these cuts going to be? Are we going to lose specialists? We have some really good ones out in the Yorkton area. Are we going to lose more nurses, some of the ones that they say that have just been hired? Are we going to close more beds, close more wings in the Yorkton hospital and other hospitals out in our area?

And quite often when we're up in question period and we're asking questions of the Health minister and other ministers, they blame either the health boards for making these decisions, or they blame the school boards or whatever board it may be when it's not convenient to accept the responsibility for things that they have decided but underfunded or made rules that these people can't live with within the budgets that they've had.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I was elected . . . when the NDP was elected, we had a hospital in Langenburg. In fact they were raising money to build a new hospital in Langenburg. And the government seemed, when they were running for power, to condone this, in fact almost promote it. One of the first moves they made along with the other 51 hospitals they closed, was to close the Langenburg hospital. They've taken and had people laid off in our Esterhazy hospital. They've had cutbacks there. Service to my whole area has been decreased under this NDP government's power since 1991.

Now a number of these small hospitals, I believe, probably had to be closed; we couldn't afford hospitals all over this province. But when it comes to the hospital like the Plains Health Centre that probably, and I've heard this on many occasions, could have been and should have been one of the best hospitals in this province. When people that have been there and also have been in other hospitals in the two big cities have compared them, and there's fine hospitals in both Saskatoon and Regina — the General and the Pasqua here, and in Saskatoon — they still seem to come out saying, when you add everything into it, the care they received there, the treatment they've got from nurses, the care they've got from nurses, the care they've got from nurses, the care they've got from doctors, the access to the Plains Health Centre — it is without a doubt a state of the art facility.

And what does this government see fit to do by catering to an inner-city population to keep the General open? They see fit to close the Plains Health Centre which not only served the city of Regina but served all of southern Saskatchewan from west to east, the east-central side of the province, where we could get from any corner, any spot, in that area quicker than we could get to any main hospital in this province.

Now what we have left is we have to come in, whether it's in high-traffic time, rush hour . . . number one, we have to find the General Hospital; number two, we have to find parking at the General; and number three, we have to hope when we come out of the General that our car is still in one piece.

So the intelligence to this decision just keeps going down, down, and down. And it really it resembles the political patronage that this government has become so famous for. To cater to a few, they've made the many pay the price.

It was one of the worst decisions that this government has made since it's came to power, and it affects many of their own sitting MLAs. And I would believe if the election is called next spring or next fall or in the year 2000, whenever, that it is going to hurt these MLAs on the NDP side.

I think it'll hurt them drastically. It will join with all the other things that this government has done to hurt rural Saskatchewan and I would hope the people in those constituencies make them pay the price at the polls.

Another thing that they've done I believe that was one of the poorer decisions this government has made and a reason that we can't adjourn at this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was the closing of Whitespruce just outside of Yorkton.

This was a facility for young people that was next to none. It was just an excellent spot to treat young people because, should they get the urge to leave and felt they didn't want to be there no more, it was not easy to leave Whitespruce.

What did we do? We moved it to the Premier's constituency. Another example of a patronage spot catering to the people in his constituency but forgetting the usefulness and the good job Whitespruce was doing in our area and for the whole province.

I'd like to move, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to education, which is another big thing hitting our . . . every area of this province, but especially rural Saskatchewan. In my constituency, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've lost schools in MacNutt, Esterhazy. I have small towns like Spy Hill, Tantallon, Calder, Bredenbury, Saltcoats fighting for the survival of their school. And we can blame it on the numbers dropping, but I think that numbers dropping we can also blame on policies that this government has made and is making with no concern for rural Saskatchewan.

They say the quality of education — and I think I've heard this from the Minister of Education from time to time — the quality of education provided in these small schools cannot compete with the quality in larger centres. Well I disagree.

We have our grade 10, 11, and 12's go from our small communities of Bredenbury and Saltcoats into the Regional School in Yorkton. And a number of times we've had some of

the top students graduate out of grade 12 at the Regional and they've got their lower grade schooling in these small schools. So I disagree that they're not getting the same calibre of schools.

I'd like to move on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think one of the main reasons that we have to stay in here and debate is agriculture. And I find it amazing — it was totally amazing that on Tuesday morning, hours after the NDP House Leader wanted to adjourn this House, we put out a press release asking for an emergency debate on the problems in agriculture, the crisis in agriculture. Within an hour of the Minister of Agriculture seeing the release, he came out with one of his own. In fact he came out so quick it pretty near resembled ours to a T, except he forgot to mention that the provincial government was also responsible for part of our problems.

I found that amazing that it took something like that for the minister to realize there was a problem, but also realize that he was going to be under a lot of pressure if we got our debate without him being part of it, so he called for the debate.

Well it really doesn't matter. Because we at least, all parties — the third party, the official opposition, and the government members — got to speak on this important issue.

Some of the things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the reasons why we cannot adjourn this House at this time or today or maybe tomorrow or maybe next week, because of the urgency of the problem, is we go into agriculture, and some of our problems are the high costs that our farmers have to put up with now.

Whether it's the dollar we pay off a bushel of grain for freight and handling; whether it's our high fertilizer costs that skyrocketed a couple of years ago when grain prices took a bit of a rise and then turned around and dropped; whether it's our chemical prices that have also increased; whether it's high taxes, a good part and parcel caused by this government; whether it's municipal taxes because of the downloading of this government, or the downloading of the federal government for that part because they certainly are every bit as responsible if not more, than the provincial government.

What comes into play is our fuel costs, which a good part of are taxes; our licensing of vehicles; machinery costs. And our Canadian dollar is low right now and it's another thing that's helping break our farmers because we cannot compete with the Canadian dollar as low as it is if you get in a position where you have to buy new machinery.

Crown leases. Here's an example of where the provincial government could really address some of the issues provincially to help some of the farmers out that have Crown leases. After they raised the costs of Crown leases 25 per cent this spring, being and using the excuse that, well we're great guys, we should have raised it 33; we only raised it 25.

And the Minister of Agriculture said this went up because of a formula. Well I would say it's either time to change the formula or, now that prices have gone down, use that same formula to address the problems that increased it in the first place. One of the things that you could help our farmers with.

I find it amazing too that in the past decades in this province we've been through premiers that — and I could name some of them, Ross Thatcher comes to mind; Grant Devine is belittled on that side every day we turn around — but who are the farmers in this province; the premiers in this province that hollered for farmers in the past and made a mark.

They might have made mistakes in many issues and many decisions they made, but the one thing I respected every one of those people for is they remembered where rural Saskatchewan was, they remembered how important agriculture was, they remembered the part that agriculture plays in the economy in this province — that it creates probably 45 out of every 100 jobs. It's the backbone of the economy in this province.

And those premiers representing the government of the day sometimes were very unpopular in Ottawa, but hollered loud and hard for the people of this province. And it didn't just help the farmers, it helped business, it helped people living in the city that worked off agriculture and may not even have realized it.

What do we have at the present time with this NDP government and their Premier, our Premier? We don't hear a word

The other day was the first time we heard the Agriculture minister address the problem. But other than the SaskPower issue that we dealt with on Monday, we have not seen the Premier talking at all about the crisis we have in agriculture.

Now we know the Premier is very good friends with the Prime Minister, Jean. Why doesn't he call in some of his dues he has with the Prime Minister, tell him we need help in agriculture. I noticed last fall when we weren't going to have a session but the unity issue came up, a great important issue in the Premier's mind, we had a week sitting in this legislature.

But when it comes to important issues to the people of Saskatchewan, far more important than the unity issue, we aren't even going to have a session until he's forced into it to legislate back the SaskPower workers. We should have a session every fall to deal with current issues, as the members on . . . as my colleagues have said, as the members of the third party have just said.

Why don't we have a . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the member for Lloydminster says sure, why would we want to have a fall sitting. I mean why would the government want to answer for some of things they're doing. Why don't we just come in for a couple of weeks in March, congratulate the NDP members on what a great job they're doing, and go home. I mean why are we being paid?

And that's probably another good question, is why are the members on the government side so quiet now when we're discussing some of these important issues. Either they don't care about their constituents or they've been told by that same Premier, you will sit in your seat, you will not take part in this debate, you will not represent your constituents, you cannot vote by what your constituents want, you are to sit there and listen.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we are doing here is hoping

you are listening. Go back to your constituents and say, you know at least the Saskatchewan Party members are sticking up for you, my constituents — because that's why we're here.

As the Saskatchewan Party, we're not only sticking up for our eight constituencies, we're sticking up for farmers in 58 constituencies in this province, or at least the constituencies that have a rural area and farming community. Someone has to do it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have saw wheat prices drop in this province. We're down to just over \$2. We saw barley prices on the Wheat Board now drop down to oh, 70 cents or under. Oat prices are low. Pea prices have dropped.

Hogs right now, which this government by the way has chosen to really promote in this province, double the output in the last year, year and a half, without realizing that the hog market goes up and down. We saw hog producers out there right now losing 20 to \$40. And losing their shirt, I might add. Many of the smaller producers probably can't hang on to spring without help.

Cattle producers are not getting rich. The Indian Head-Milestone MLA says they aren't doing that bad. Well I don't know, I think he'd better go home and check with his farmers. I don't think they're doing any better than mine or anywhere else in this province.

Elk farmers, they're even seeing the pinch. I believe velvet prices have dropped about 50 per cent.

So the world may come to an end in Saskatchewan if we don't help agriculture pick up. It certainly might. I would suggest to the member for Indian Head-Milestone that the world is going to come to the end for him next spring when the election's called because it'll probably be the last time you'll be sitting in this legislature as an elected member.

(1630)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe another of the reasons . . . some more of the reasons that we cannot let this House adjourn at this time are to do with the Crowns. And this week we started off like that, legislating SaskPower workers back to work. And the legislation included the 2, 2, and 2, and we supported that legislation. I think we felt that it was very important that the SaskPower people go back to work and prepare power supplies for this winter. We cannot afford to have power outages.

I do find it amazing though that some of the same members over on that side that were heckling us here a little while ago for things like that, were also the same ones hollering for the union people to get 7, 7, 7 when they were in opposition — those same people. Funny how the pendulum turns, isn't it.

An Hon. Member: — I will never be in opposition.

Mr. Bjørnerud: — The member for Lloydminster has just made a very true statement. She will never be in opposition. Because after the next election when your party is in opposition — you're one of the reasons they are in opposition — you won't be here. You will not be re-elected.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the reasons we cannot adjourn at this time, and should be discussed, is the high cost of our Crown utility rates going up, going up, going up. We never see the costs going down — the prices paid for our telephone for an example. And telephone today in question period was interesting, because the Deputy Premier accused us of doing what . . . to do nothing but have competition come in. Well I don't know, I think competition is healthy, Mr. Deputy Premier. And I think long-distance rates are a good example of that.

Long-distance rates before there were competition kept going up and up. Since competition has come in, our long-distance rates have dropped dramatically. And the funny part is SaskTel realized that when the prices dropped, the people of Saskatchewan used long distance more so that the income from long distance didn't drop. Isn't it funny how competition, that dirty word in the NDP's book, is actually a good thing for the people of Saskatchewan. Maybe the other Crowns should have a sample of that.

SaskPower I believe is a prime example of what we . . . why we need competition. The rates in SaskPower have done nothing since '91 but go up. And we know why. Because of the mismanagement we've had in SaskPower, and then rewarding that mismanagement with big handouts, severance packages for people like Jack Messer, Christensen, Kram — who by the way probably took the fall for others that should have took it, ministers included. SaskEnergy rates — we just had another one with our beloved and efficient 45-day review. And as many as in some meetings one person showed up.

I mean it's a foregone conclusion. The people of this province know how valuable and how much input they have. They have absolutely no input so they don't bother coming out anymore.

SaskEnergy rates have gone up and up and up, and last summer when SaskEnergy, our gas prices went down, we were promised that they would go down. And guess what happened? They did not go down and within months we're being told we're having another increase.

Licence plates, licences, everything keeps climbing under this government and yet competition is a dirty word. And yet the one instant we saw of competition with SaskTel and long distance has probably dropped our costs in half.

Part of that problem, I guess, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and another reason why we shouldn't be adjourning and we should be discussing these things, is the patronage appointments that this government has become so famous for. And I believe it was the member for North Battleford, just moments ago, talked about the Crown corporations meetings where he moved a motion to do away with patronage appointments. And our party supported and agrees 100 per cent with that.

But as they have done all through the Channel Lake debate, they voted anything down that came close to resembling putting the people on the spot that should have been put on the spot and taken to task for responsibilities that they have had and have not accepted. They used that majority to deflect the heat that should have gone on them and didn't end up where it should have been and it ended up being really a farce. And we knew that would happen when we called for an independent, judicial inquiry.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe my colleague from Rosthern touched on this before, but it is an important issue why we can't adjourn and it's gun registration. And I know you mentioned before, maybe it wasn't relevant to the debate we're in right now but I believe it is.

Because a week ago, two weeks ago, the Premier — who has let on that he is supporting Alberta and B.C. (British Columbia) and Manitoba and the other provinces — came out and said, well the ruling three to two said no, they wouldn't go for the stopping of the gun registration, maybe gun owners should out and register.

Well I think the backlash to that and the holler from gun owners, a few days later the Minister of Justice said, come out, well just a minute, maybe we shouldn't register right away. And I think this government is sending mixed messages. Either you're behind the gun owners in this province and will support them all the way, or you're not.

And I think you're confusing these people. They thought to start with you were supporting them and now they aren't really sure. And the gun registration being one of the most idiotic pieces of legislation that we've seen in this country.

Some of the things I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know if we go back over the history of this NDP governments when they came to power in 1991 — and I'm only touching on a few I know — but we know there was 52 hospitals closed. Now one of the best hospitals in this province, which makes 53 or more, we're losing that.

A good program for an example we had in rural Saskatchewan was the RUD (rural underground distribution) program. Your government saw fit to do away with that. And I would imagine because it actually catered to rural Saskatchewan, even though it created jobs, it was a very worthwhile program, but those jobs weren't I guess in your constituencies here in the city so we did away with it.

We saw things like the NST loss of \$16 million in SaskTel; we've saw the Guyana losses of \$2 million — or maybe more. I don't think we've ever seen the end or have got anywheres near to what we lost there; there may be more. Channel Lake — 5.2 million, and maybe more gas trading losses that aren't being counted in that.

What we are doing with all the things that your government is doing is chasing, once again, our young people out of Saskatchewan. And you know really our population is not around a million people. It's actually 2 million. And how I come up with that number is that we have a million living at home and we have a million living in all the other provinces of this country.

A good example of that is our Saskatchewan Roughriders. One of the reasons they're so popular all over this country is because there's Saskatchewanites are in every city, everywhere, wherever they go.

Can you imagine if we could have kept . . . did not have a CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) or an NDP government in this province ever, and we had all . . . And

they'd probably be here because they'd have jobs, the economy would be flowing, everything would be for sure twice as good as it is now, had we not had a CCF and an NDP government most of the time.

Look at Alberta. The reason and the one reason that Alberta is doing so well is because they have never had a socialist government — plain and simple. We could even expand Taylor field if we had 2 million people in Saskatchewan because all the fans the Roughriders have would be right here at home.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, another of the reasons that we cannot let this House shut down and we certainly could not on Monday when the House Leader wanted to shut it down before we had our agriculture debate is that many people think that when agriculture is in trouble it's just the farmers. Well that's a myth and I'm sure you know that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I know many members on that side quietly realize that agriculture, when it's doing good, affects business but when it's doing poorly also affects business. It affects jobs, it affects our young people, it affects our whole economy.

I also find it amazing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when my colleague from Cannington come out with this contest he has for highways and even we didn't realize it would catch on so quick — which by the way should be a total embarrassment for this government and the Minister of Highways — the member for Weyburn was very vocal trying to deflect some of the heat that was going over there about it.

She should be the most embarrassed one in this province because two years ago that government came out and said, we'll put all this money into highways and in the first two years I believe you're 70 to 80 million short of your own predictions and that 70 to \$80 million would have went a long way.

So it's going to be interesting to see how our contest goes and the funny part is some of the calls and many of the calls are coming from your constituents. So I think you know that the problem is all over this province.

One thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I'm talking of highways and I find amazing, is that in my constituency, especially in the towns of Langenburg and the town of Kamsack, the highway runs right through those towns. And yet when they went to repave the Highway 16 this summer from the Manitoba border to Langenburg — and it certainly needs it through Langenburg — we're told that no, the funding quit on the edge of town and the town of Langenburg would pick the tab up all by themselves.

The town of Kamsack, exactly the same thing. Both towns are in the same position. The town of Langenburg, probably 95 to 96 per cent of traffic is through-traffic, never even stops in Langenburg — they don't get one cent of benefit from the people going through — and yet the taxpayers of Langenburg are being asked to fund the two kilometres of paving renewal through that town when it should be the responsibility of every taxpayer in this province. Same thing in Kamsack.

It's another one of the unfair policies that this government has and when we asked the Minister of Highways to address it she said no, that's policy, that's the way it's going to be. Well she

didn't impress the people in those two communities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do find it amazing, and I think I touched on this before, but as I look across I see MLAs that represent a good number of rural ridings. I look at the member for Lloydminster who made comments here before. That member represents many farmers and I'd like to see how that member goes home after this week when they've looked to see if she has been voicing their concerns in here and has been totally quiet. I would like to see how she explains to them that their representation is sticking up for them.

The member for Saskatoon Northeast, who happens to be a farmer, has not said one word about the agriculture problems out there, and the need for our federal government and our provincial government to act on the crisis we have out there. The member for Swift Current has been very vocal from the back but when it comes to standing in his place and saying I agree, I support putting pressure on the federal government and on our own Agriculture minister, he could put a lot of pressure on our Agriculture minister because he sits on that side. But what do we hear from him? We hear about the same amount from that member from Swift Current as when they closed the care home in Swift Current — nothing. Not one word. He's always quickly to blow his horn about the things he feels are good in that area. He forgets about the many things that have happened under this government.

I also see the Minister of Highways, the member for Weyburn, who also represents many farmers, not saying a word really, sticking up for her farmers. The member for Indian Head-Milestone, the Environment minister has made some comments but not when his mic was on. I believe the federal Minister of Agriculture is going to have a tremendously hard time hearing how lobbying like that when you're mic's not on, Mr. Minister.

Our Ag minister, for that matter. After we had the debate the other day, we've not heard one word out of him saying that he's going to go down there and lobby Ottawa, ask Mr. Vancilief . . . Really what is he going to ask? We're not sure. For sure he's going to tell him it's all his problem and the province of Saskatchewan is not going to stick behind their farmers. They haven't since they were elected in '91 and they certainly aren't going to stick up for them now from what we've seen.

I would also like to mention the Minister of Municipal Government. I would hate to forget her because here's a lady that was a reeve of an RM who knows the issues. I know she does. She represents many farmers out there and has been amazingly quiet on the issue this week when we're asking all parties to support, to lobby the federal government, to find a way to help out the farmers out of the mess we're in and the low costs.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think a number of the reasons I've said here today are reasons why we cannot adjourn. I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the province of Saskatchewan has a great amount of potential. The problem being, as I said before, that we far too often have a socialist government here that seems to hold that potential down with things like high taxes, a lot of regulations, but lack of funding for things they should be funding and they're really holding our economy back with

many of their policies.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will take my place at this time but I would urge the members opposite to take part in this debate and voice their opinion and also show their support for a number of the things that are hurting our farmers in this province. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to enter into the debate to discuss this motion and the amendment that's before us regarding the shutting down of the legislature.

It reminds me or makes me go back to while this administration was in opposition the kinds of things that they used to say and do and how they want everybody to forget all about that. When they were in opposition they used to call regularly for fall sessions, demanding that they have the legislature recalled so that they could voice the wishes of their constituents and bring the issues before the people of the province of Saskatchewan — bring it before the legislature to have open debate.

(1645)

On a regular basis you could count on the Premier, while in opposition, to get up and say exactly that. He had to have a fall session, bring forward all of the concerns, and he was as indignant as he could possibly screw up at the moment. He was always wanting to have those kinds of things. That's something that the NDP has carefully forgotten since their days of being in government . . . or in opposition, now in government.

Almost on a daily basis, almost on a daily basis in this Legislative Assembly we hear about how things were so bad before and how they're so good today, and how the debt has been run up over the years and how they absolutely take no responsibility for anything of that nature at all.

Do you remember, any of you that were here at the time, and the member from Regina — the former House Leader — would remember, and other members of this Legislative Assembly would remember, how when the debt was being run up in this province and how there was difficulties in agriculture and how there was difficulties in many areas because of a stagnant economy through that period of time.

What were each and every one of them doing? What were you saying? What was your party saying at the time? Even the former premier in this province, Allan Blakeney, said yes, there are times when we would look at running a deficit budget. There are times of need. There are agricultural crisis times in this province when we would run a deficit. That was after he was bounced out. That was after he was bounced out in 1982.

What did you say all through that time frame, from '82 through to '91? What was your rallying cry every day in this legislature? What was it that you said on a consistent basis more than anything else?

You, each and every one of you in the NDP party, every time there was a budget presented, every time there was a debate about anything in this legislature, you guys, every single one of

you, men and women, got up and said, it's not enough; we want more. We want more spending for agriculture. We want more spending for education. We want more spending for health care. You absolutely absolve yourself of any responsibility for that.

And the member from Regina . . . or from Moose Jaw Wakamow would remember those debates. I remember them very well. I wasn't in the Legislative Assembly at the time, but I certainly remember those debates that went on, each and every one of them standing up in their place. The Premier today used to do it. The Deputy Premier used to do it. All of the members from Regina that you had at the time, and the members from Moose Jaw used to do it.

Remember back in 1986, the election campaign? And the member from Lloydminster would remember that election campaign I'm sure. What was the central plank of the NDP's platform at that time? What was the central part of it? I think it was called 7-7-7. It was some hare-brained scheme. It was some hare-brained scheme if I have ever heard one. Seven years at 7 per cent on \$70,000. That's what that member used to say opposite.

Spend more, spend more, spend more. That's what the House Leader there is waving her finger at me now saying, you want to talk about those days. Yes, let's talk about those days — 7-7-7; 7-7-7. Spend more. Spend more. Spend more.

You remember that, Ms. House Leader. You remember those days when as the House leader you were talking about those kinds of things. Your party was talking about it. A billion and a quarter dollars of a promise in one fell swoop. A billion and a quarter dollars worth of promises.

The Deputy Speaker: — I would ask the member to bring his remarks back to be relevant to the amendment that we're talking to. He has not touched on anything that's been in the amendment for the last while, so I would ask him to come back to the amendment.

Mr. Boyd: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's important that we remind the members, while in opposition, what they were saying about House business and what they were saying about election campaigns, and what they were saying about fall sessions and what they were saying about adjourning fall sessions, even if there was such a thing at that time.

Each and every one of them stood up in their place and said we have to have fall sessions. We have to have more spending in this government. We want to have more for agriculture, more for education, more for health care. That's what they were saying at the time the debts were being run up in this province.

That's what you were saying, Ms. House Leader — that's what you were saying. Yes, there was debt run up in this province, and there was considerable debt and there was lots of mistakes, no question about that, being made. But each and every one of you opposite can take some responsibility for some of those mistakes as well, because at the time that the debt was being run up all of you were saying, let's even spend more.

And even the premier of the day, the former premier of the day,

Allan Blakeney, was saying there are times when it is acceptable, in his view, to run deficits.

Well now we sit in the legislature here today — now we sit in the legislature here today, and the only thing the government wants to do, the only thing that's on their agenda according to them, the only thing that's on the agenda, the people of Saskatchewan, is shutting the place down so you can go back home and do whatever it is you do when you aren't in this legislature. Spend time doing anything but the business of the House; spend time doing anything but the business of the people of this province.

Well I say to you, and I think the people of Saskatchewan support us in our view, that that isn't good enough. We should be talking about agriculture; we should be talking about health care; we should be talking about education; we should be talking about our Crown corporations here in Saskatchewan. Those are some of the issues that are before the people. And there are many, many more.

Highways is an important issue. This evening in my constituency, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's a public meeting going on with regard to highways. By rights I should be at that public meeting discussing the issues that the people want to discuss about their highways, the condition of their highways. I look at Highway 317, look at Highway 31, 307, 44, No. 21, all kinds of highways in my constituency that are in absolutely dangerous condition, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I remember hearing the member from Lloydminster comment here a little while ago about how she's getting some things done in her constituency, about how there's been some schools renovated, and about how there's been some highway construction go on in her constituency.

Well congratulations, Madam Minister, Madam . . . and I overstepped my bounds a little bit there. Thankfully, not Madam Minister . . . Madam Member. Madam Member, thankfully for the people of this province, at least in your constituency, there's a few things going on, because in mine there isn't.

And you look at, you look at all of the constituencies that opposition members look at. What's the name of that program that you guys have going over there where you go out and dole out little cheques? What's it . . . I can't recall the name of that program.

An Hon. Member: — The equity fund.

Mr. Boyd: — Equity fund, something of that nature, where each and every one of you go around and you stroke out . . . the Minister of Finance's name is on the bottom, a nice cheque to some organization — many of them, many of them, we would readily admit, deserving organizations, deserving organizations.

But you make sure, you carefully make sure there isn't an opposition member within 200 miles of the announcement. You don't even give notice of the fact that it's going to happen in any of the constituencies.

In fact you parachute into other people's constituencies and

make these grandiose announcements, and then take all of the credit for doing it. In about 200, in about 200 of these presentations to this point there hasn't been a single, solitary opposition member take part that I'm aware of — not a single solitary member has taken part.

An Hon. Member: — Don't be so negative.

Mr. Boyd: — And the House Leader says, don't be so negative. I can just imagine in opposition what you would be saying to that, Madam Minister. What would you be saying if that was happening in this province and you were sitting on this side of the House? You would be rising up in your classic style of indignation and saying that this is wrong, the opposition shouldn't be . . . or the government of the day shouldn't be doing these kinds of things — pork-barrelling with the taxpayers' dollars.

Is that something kind of consistent with what you would be saying, Madam Minister? I think that's exactly what you would be saying because that's exactly what the members of the NDP did when they sat on the opposition benches. Everything was righteous indignation, constantly berating people for doing exactly what you are doing today. That was the measure of the NDP.

One thing you can always count on from the NDP in this province is that they feel that they have a God-given right to govern, and how dare you for even suggesting different.

Well the people of this province, I think, Mr. Speaker, feel that there is a lot of things that need to be talked about right now. They don't want to see this House adjourn so that the NDP can go back to doing those same kind of pork-barrel politics that the member from Lloydminster talks about.

I don't think they want to see that in this Assembly any longer. I think they want to see things debated in this Assembly. I think they want to see the House Leader take her place and allow debate to continue.

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

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, by leave, to comply with the member's request to allow debate to continue, we ask leave to stand the clock.

Leave not granted.

Mr. Boyd: — Oh well, look at what we have here now. Look at what we have here now.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Order.

Mr. Boyd: — Isn't this quite an occasion here in this House. In the dying seconds before the closure — the normal closure — of the Assembly, the House Leader gets up and makes some hare-brained scheme about extending the hours of the Assembly.

You want to talk about . . . you want to talk about the issues?

We'll talk about the issues tomorrow and the next day and the next day and into the next weeks. You want to talk about the issues that the people of this province? Remove your motion, Madam Minister.

I would ask that member opposite, remove your motion. That would stop closure of this Assembly and then we can talk about them. We'll give you leave. If you want leave . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. The debate is not following the amendment at all and the debate is not going through the Chair, or through the Speaker's Chair, which debate is supposed to flow through.

So I would recognize the hon. member from Kindersley.

Mr. Boyd: — If this government wants to talk about the issues of the day, we'll give you that occasion. Stand up and support our amendment to stop the adjournment motion, to stop that. Stand up, Madam Minister.

Madam House Leader, if you're so smart, if you're so intelligent and you want these issues debated in this Assembly, if you're so sure of your ability to debate those issues and if you're so convinced that you have all of the answers for the people of this province. Now's your chance. Stand up and say you will support this amendment. I'll take my place right now. It gives you 20 seconds before 5 o'clock to stand up, to stand up in this Assembly and say that you'll support our amendment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It now being past the hour of closure, I move that this House adjourn.

The Deputy Speaker: — It now being the hour of adjournment, this House stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.

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