

EVENING SITTING

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 5 — Building Independence Program

Mr. Forbes: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this resolution. This is one that's very important and very timely for all people of Saskatchewan, I think of all people of Canada.

When we talk about poverty this is a huge issue. Last Wednesday when I was back in my constituency on some business, the evening, this was one that people talked about — the face of poverty in Idylwyld. And I think it's one that we can all relate to right across this province.

To me, I strongly endorse the idea, the initiative of building independence. I think this is one that speaks to people who are facing tough challenges and it speaks of the community where we support each other. And I do get worried about some of the things that were said today in the House. To me this issue really talks about dignity, respect, and about community, and how people become full members of their community and how we act as a community relating to other people.

Before I get too much into that though, I do want to say that I am alarmed, I am really alarmed about the Sask Party's discussion today, the opposition's points that they've raised regarding this. The first thing I'd like to say is the simplistic point of view, as if it's just about welfare. And this is much more than just welfare.

We're talking about different people who are trying to connect to their community in a meaningful way, but because of the situation they find themselves in they can't do that. We're talking about young people. Last Wednesday night I was talking to a young man who was facing challenges, a brilliant young man facing challenges of what it's like to connect to our community but for various reasons he couldn't do that.

We're talking about disabled people and how do they connect to our community and contribute in a meaningful way. But we're also talking about families, families with two members at the head or just a single, single mom. Those are really important issues.

So I get alarmed when I see the simplistic approach here about building independence. I'm also alarmed about the barriers, and it seemed this afternoon the only barrier that the opposition could identify was about taxation and more tax cuts would answer the question.

And this is much more complicated about that. It's about child care, it's about supports, it's about education, all of those things. And I want to talk a little bit more about that later, but I think those are important issues, Mr. Speaker. And it's not just about a simple tax cut.

Mr. Speaker, too, I think this is an important issue and it's one that we shouldn't play too much politics with. And I am really proud and I think it's quite an accomplishment that for 88

months this province has had a reduction in the social assistance numbers.

And yet we heard this afternoon that people were questioning how accurate those were; and if they have different numbers I would sure like to hear them. But I think we need to be fair and say that we are making progress in this area. This is very, very important.

What I really found alarming was the discussion today about . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Three-alarm? Well here's the fourth alarm — D-day. Mr. Speaker, what is this D-day? What is the D-day that the Leader of the Opposition speaks about?

Well, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if D-day is denial day — denial that there's poverty in this world and that we really have a challenge and we have a responsibility. And I get worried when I think of what the other . . . the opposition will do on denial day — denial day. Is that when they will deny that there's poverty in this world and then cut the Department of Social Services by \$50 million?

This is their plan — to cut it by \$50 million and they will do it because they're denying the existence of poverty. And that really worries me. It worries me because this sets up the scenario of cutting \$50 million. They cut the taxes. This is what they say will bring in the jobs.

But how do we pay for the other services? Is this the first step to selling off the Crowns, selling off SaskTel? Is this their answer for building independence? This is a worry to me and this is what people in Idylwyld and right across this province are worrying about. What does it mean about building independence for these people? So I am really worried about this.

But before I go too far this afternoon, I was reading a book about what is poverty and I would like to quote from this book. It's a book by the National Welfare Council. Now:

Poverty is usually measured in terms of income, but people can also be impoverished by the lack of access to other resources, by social exclusion and . . . the stress of insecurity.

And that, Mr. Speaker, too many people face every night and every day in this province. And this is what I'm worried about — our province becoming a province of haves and have-nots. And this is why the building independence initiatives is so important and that we endorse it, that we realize this is a complex issue and we need to make sure that we put our best resources towards supporting families, young people, and disabled people in this area.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Forbes: —

Lack of access to other resources is often closely associated with poverty. Safe, adequate, and affordable housing is critical. It's not just a matter of physical shelter (it says) because housing is also a site of economic activity where

food is produced, children are raised, self-employment can be generated and community ties are built.

Once again the politics of the exclusion is not, is not acceptable. We need to be able to connect to the community. It's very, very important.

For adults and children, poverty can also mean loneliness and exclusion from sports, recreation, culture and other activities around which individual confidence, friendships and other positive social relationships are built. For children (Mr. Speaker), especially, this can have long-lasting effects.

And again this is why we need to endorse the building initiatives . . . building independence initiatives. It's very, very important.

Now this, this book was actually a national publication and it was released just in this winter. So it talks about how does poverty cost Canadians. Well we know it costs in terms of money, but it also costs in terms of human misery and it doesn't make good economic sense.

Now they go on to talk about four or five main issues that where we can feel the cost in our communities, and the first one, Mr. Speaker, is in health. Health is a big issue for people facing poverty every day. Again and again population health researchers I quote have shown the importance of income in social status. Even when people have all the basics, such as adequate food and shelter, the higher their income and status, the better people's health is.

It goes on, Mr. Speaker, and I quote:

At birth, children from the poorest neighbourhoods in Canada have a life expectancy between 2 and 5½ years shorter than that of children from the wealthiest neighbourhoods. Children from the poorest neighbourhoods can also expect to spend more of their lives with disabilities and other health problems.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this really shows how important it is that we take the building initiatives program seriously. This is a critical issue. It goes on to say, not only for children is it a problem, it's also for the parents.

And parents at the lower end of the scale showed the effects of living in poverty. They suffered increased stress and poorer functioning with their children and higher levels of depression, both of which are bound to have serious effects on the capacity of parents to take the best care of their children.

Mr. Speaker, it's a critical issue and we need to support this initiative.

Again, and this is one that we all face and we talk a lot about, is the high cost of justice in terms of the role poverty plays in it.

Spending on justice and crime is another area where we are putting a great deal of money . . .

Now this pushes young people, and particularly young people, into crime instead of helping them stay out of it. And it's largely related to poverty.

Mr. Speaker, it's a well-known fact in Saskatchewan we're really wrestling with this problem, and it's one that we have to take seriously. We know we have one of the highest rates of young people put into jail or incarceration, and a lot of that is caused because of the issue around poverty. And in those who are arrested, detained without bail, and given the harshest sentences are people with low incomes. And they don't have family connections, education, steady employment and other labels of respectability that will help them out in these times. And it's really important that we give them support.

Again, another issue, another area of high cost in terms of poverty is human rights and human development. Now in terms of . . . this is an interesting quote in terms of social exclusion. The report on the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples:

The costs associated with the economic marginalization of Aboriginal people (in Canada) were estimated to be at \$7.5 billion in 1996. Of this, \$5.8 billion was estimated as the cost of foregone production because Aboriginal people are not fully able to participate to their potential in the economy and \$1.7 billion for extra expenditures on remedial programs to cope with social problems.

Again, a huge cost.

And, Mr. Speaker, the one that I think is truly tragic is focused around child development. And this is because children are our future, and this is where we need to intervene so that the cycle of poverty can be broken, so they can be given the resources to make their lives as full as they can. And that revolves around health, revolves around education, and it revolves around the social skills so they can feel like they can contribute.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what do we need to break out of this poverty? And this to me really parallels how this province is tackling poverty through building independence. It talks about leadership and political will, and we see that leadership and political will, especially in the Department of Social Services and how they've worked over the past three years fine-tuning this program so today we can feel pretty proud of an excellent program that enables people to connect to their communities by being full members of their community.

It talks about a comprehensive and holistic planning process. Well this is a really good example of how we work together with communities, planning ways to beat poverty, and also building on success.

Here's a three-year story of how we built continually, refining and refining a program that truly meets the needs of people who are facing some of the harshest challenges in our society.

And the last point these people make is that you must start with families with young children. Again this is the best place to start. It's the one where if you put resources you can see the best results — maybe not tomorrow or the next day but in the long run. And we see that through education, opportunities for the future. And that's really the key.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say it seems that today when we were talking, the opposition seemed to focus on the fact this seemed to be an urban issue. And I was surprised that they didn't talk about how people in rural Saskatchewan were facing serious issues as well in terms of the working poor, declining . . . declining income, that type of thing.

And so I was surprised at that because this is a program that's designed to meet all needs, or to meet the needs of all people in Saskatchewan if they're part of the working poor facing issues.

So what are the three parts? We have the Saskatchewan Child Benefit program, that's critical; the family health benefits program; and the training allowance program. That's really, really important. So this is a well-thought-out, well-thought-out program.

Now I'm particularly delighted to see that Social Services is taking the lead and refining this program one step further by announcing four specific initiatives to help with people on social assistance. The call centre, job first, first steps group sessions, and then transition planning services. These things together help people connect with their community through meaningful employment. It's a first step in the right direction.

And these four things are designed to work as additional job supports. It supports their families, youth at risk, and people with disabilities.

First of all the call centre, Mr. Speaker, is the first point of contact for people for information and services, so that they can find out what kind of services there are so they don't have to take the next step and go on social assistance. Here the job first sessions, which provide low-income people with access to job opportunities — it's a first choice before becoming involved in the welfare system.

(19:15)

As well they're providing the first steps group sessions, which provides new clients with information about other programs and how they might serve as an alternative to welfare. Clients also receive information about social assistance and their rights and responsibilities under the social assistance program. And as well, the transition planning services which are very important. They allow workers more time to assist clients with planning for independence.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I talked earlier about the opposition's simplistic views about barriers. There are many barriers for people getting their first job or getting jobs in a meaningful way. What are some of these barriers? Well it's child care and including the whole area around early childhood development, improving . . . improved standard and affordability of housing, and I was particularly delighted to hear the initiatives around low-income housing mentioned in the budget.

Expanded employment and training supports, that's very important; opportunities and supports available for people with disabilities, recognizing that there are specific ways we can help people with disabilities; and support for youth to ensure they have the education and skills to join the workforce. This is important that we recognize young people. We need their

support . . . we need support so they can enter the work market in a meaningful way. And the northern initiatives — very important. Okay.

So these are some of the barriers. How are we going to meet these barriers? Well through job coaching, mentorship, post-employment supports, training on the job, and working with communities to develop connections and linkages so that there . . . so people have those supports so they can connect.

Now my colleagues on the government side have talked specifically around budget initiatives and I just want to review those. So here's, in this budget, we've allotted about \$1.3 million for employment support projects.

Job services for families — \$400,000 to assist families on social assistance to secure and maintain employment.

Jobs services for youth — \$380,000. And this is to assist high-risk youth under 18 years of age with transition to adult and for independence. And this program will offer a package of enhanced employment supports including financial support to obtain adequate housing arrangements, job coaching, on-the-job training, and job readiness and life skills.

As well, a half a million dollars — \$500,000 — in new funding to assist persons with disabilities currently receiving social assistance so that they can feel part of the labour market. And this is really, really critical. So we are meeting those needs and I think it really is important.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know earlier on in the day we've alluded to a couple of articles where the opposition, the Leader of the Opposition, has talked about some of these . . . what his view is on building independence and around his way of dealing with people and poverty. And again he would say that he would:

. . . get employable people living on social assistance back in the workplace by imposing a "D-day" on their assistance cheques.

And so again, this D-day. What is this D-day?

Now in this article in *The Leader-Post*, on October 2, 2001, Sask Party lists out its platform and here it talks about:

. . . on the chopping block is the \$25 million to \$50 million he wants to trim off spending by changing the welfare system.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this alarms me and concerns me and I know it concerns many people in this province. What does this mean . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Discontinue. Discontinue day. There you go. All right.

In the same article just right above it he was talking about how we should not be ideologically bound to maintain the Crowns as they are now. So here we keep seeing this Crowns and cutting the social services and I wonder what are the connections here.

Further on in this article when he's talking about 25 million, \$50 million off of the welfare system, Ken Rasmussen, assistant dean from the University of Regina Faculty of Administration is

quoted as saying:

“The talk of spending increases and tax reductions are really all smoke and mirrors,” Rasmussen said.

Whatever the promises, the Saskatchewan Party’s platform is little more than a high school popularity contest when the next election is called, he said.

Again promises and promises, and how does it all add up? It really worries me. It concerns me.

So, Mr. Speaker, what are the accomplishments of this government? Well we really are tackling poverty head-on and we’re looking at this challenge. It’s a real challenge and we’re not denying it. It’s there. But because of this head-on approach we can say that we’ve had 88 months, consecutive months of decreasing numbers of families on social assistance and that’s a key, key thing.

Our philosophy is more integrated. It’s a holistic approach to building the capacity of individuals and families for independence and self-reliance and it’s one that emphasizes the principles of inclusion and citizenship, not of exclusion and haves and have-nots. It’s really important that we include all members of our community.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that another key part is behind every number for our government is the face of someone who has returned to the workforce and has gotten back their dignity as a productive human being. And we celebrate each and every one. This is critical.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion I just want to read this quote from . . .

Poverty is costing all of us dearly. Some costs, those of personal human suffering, are simply incalculable but they are . . . (nevertheless) preventable. Other costs, the more economic ones, may still be very difficult to calculate precisely. What really matters, . . . (though) is not that we put an exact number on the cost of poverty. What we as a society need is to set clear goals, compare the benefits to the costs over the short and the long term, evaluate our progress and understand that we get what we pay for. The foundation for a sustainable high quality of life does not come cheaply. But let us invest wisely now, for the public good and the positive results that will benefit all Canadians.

And I think that applies for people here in Saskatchewan. We realize this is an important issue and I appreciate the fact that this government has struggled hard for three years to build such a fine and well meaning . . . a program that hits right on target, building independence.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would stand in favour of the main motion but not in favour of the amendment. So thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to enter debate today. It’s been very interesting as the member from Saskatoon Idylwyld has mentioned. The

observations he made with the Saskatchewan Party members have contributed towards this debate, and I’ve certainly noticed some very interesting comments coming from the government side of the House also that I’d like to mention as my address goes on.

Mr. Speaker, this motion put forward speaks of 10,000 fewer children growing up on social assistance in the province. Now, Mr. Speaker, I remember when building independence was initiated by the government of the day and it was applauded by a great number of people. And it was applauded because in fact most people believed that people in an independent state are much better than being dependent on the state.

So, Mr. Speaker, I applauded this but it does stand to reason that if the building independence program with the employment supplement part of it is going to in fact be feasible and workable, that employment supplement area or strategy has got to work.

That’s very logical. However I’ve been hearing from a good number of people throughout the province that are bringing in complaints about employment supplement, about them not being able to in fact draw from employment supplement when they feel that they are entitled to it.

So what good does it do, Mr. Speaker? What good does it do to bring in a program when in fact the people out there in the province that are expecting that they are qualifying for this program are indeed not doing so a good portion of the time?

Mr. Speaker, I’d like to quote from a letter from one of my constituents regarding the employment supplement programs. Part of her letter sums up by saying this:

If these programs such as employment supplement are out there to help and assist low income families such as ourselves until we can get back on our feet, and we are under the understanding that this is what these Saskatchewan programs are here for, yet we have been turned away from all of the programs. We are very discouraged and also becoming awfully stressed out, wondering where the next dollar is going to come from just to live, let alone fill the order that is outstanding for our children’s needs.

So, Mr. Speaker, here we have a program replacing the original program with children being entitled to social assistance. Here we have a program that is not necessarily and always working for the people of the province. So, Mr. Speaker, I challenge the government to make sure that when they put forward a program to the people of Saskatchewan, to the families of this province, that they in fact are fair with these people and they do divvy out to the people the kind of funding that is put in place for this.

Mr. Speaker, child poverty is a very serious issue. No one is going to dispute that, and no one will dispute the fact that the best poverty fighter is a job, and a good paying job.

The problem is, Mr. Speaker, that this government does not have a good record when it comes to creating jobs in this province. The NDP’s (New Democratic Party) ’99 election platform promised more jobs. In fact the members opposite

know that the NDP promised to create 30,000 new jobs. But reality is, Mr. Speaker — and this reality is based on fact — the NDP have lost 24,700 jobs for this province, almost as many as they promised to create.

And so I'm wondering, Mr. Speaker, exactly where these people who are making a transition from social assistance to the job market, where are they going? We've lost that number of jobs. Where are they going to find the jobs? And I'm wondering what tracking mechanism the government has in place to determine whether these people are gaining permanent, full-time employment in this province or whether they're actually leaving the province.

When people work, Mr. Speaker, they gain valuable experience and skills that can lead to better jobs, hopefully allowing them to eventually break the welfare cycle and build independence.

The Saskatchewan Party agrees with that philosophy, and so we do agree fundamentally that the general concept of the building independence program is a good idea. And we realize that the barriers to employment must be addressed if people are truly to find financial independence. So we are applauding efforts to improve education and training for social service recipients when they happen.

Mr. Speaker, earlier in this session, the member from Cannington referred some questions to the Minister of Social Services, and these questions were about rate increases to the general public or to businesses for services rendered by the department in this 2002-2003 fiscal year.

And so in response to that question by the minister from Cannington, he received from the department this answer. The first one was on the graduated rent scale that will be introduced for calculating social housing rents. And I ask the minister, or the member rather, from Saskatoon Idylwyld to pay attention because he just mentioned that social housing was important in order to help people that were struggling in this province, people that were low-income.

What did the minister, his very own minister in his government, replied to the member from Cannington was that there may be or there will be a rent increase for social housing beginning September 1, 2002.

So here we're talking about the issue of affordable housing. People in low income brackets have been for some time, for 10 years, addressing this, talking to this government about this very important factor, and what do we have? An NDP socialist government that is now going to increase the rent on some social housing. Now I hope that the member from Saskatoon Idylwyld has paid attention to that because this is an answer that was given by your very own Minister of Social Services.

Mr. Speaker, the other question that was relayed to the Minister of Social Services is:

What is the projected increase or decrease in projected revenue taken in by your department through these fees and charges in 2002-2003 fiscal year?

So through the graduated rent scale, according to the Minister

of Social Services' answer, there would be an estimated increase of \$1.7 million. That seems to be \$1.7 million now that people in low income brackets are not going to be having to their advantage.

(19:30)

One other question that was very interesting to me, that our member from Cannington put forward, was, what service reductions or program cuts will occur in 2002-2003 in this department? The work placement program will be eliminated, so skills training benefit reduced \$2.2 million. I mean, how is this supposed to be better for placing people in jobs, for job placement? This government, Mr. Speaker, contradicts themselves. Their programs and their announcements of programs contradict in fact what they're really doing.

Mr. Speaker, so what we agree fundamentally that the building programs . . . independence program, rather, is a good idea, we do have to take issue with the government on just in fact how they are putting this program forward and how they are behaving as they are making people of the province believe that they are going to be benefiting and that they will be able to stay off social assistance, when in fact the opposite is turning out to be true.

The loss of jobs in this province . . . With the loss of jobs in this province, Mr. Speaker, I wonder just how sustainable this decline in welfare rolls is going to be in the future. And I've noticed that since the inception of the Saskatchewan employment supplement the government's budget for this plan has steadily increased — another contradictory happening here — which means there are more low-income people in the province who need help.

If it wasn't for this plan there is a good chance that the number of welfare cases in this province would be increasing. So on the one hand, the employment supplement is a good thing if it keeps people off the welfare rolls or if it allows them to make the transition to the workforce. But on the other hand, as I've said, Mr. Speaker, these people still need government assistance, and the only way to make them independent is to have a healthy economy with good paying jobs so they can support their families.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to highlight a case of a woman again that had . . . her situation was brought to my attention. She wrote to us saying that she was a single mom with three children, she was on welfare but upgraded her education, and she was fortunate enough to find a job. However her gross monthly income, which is used to determine whether or not she qualifies for the employment supplement, is just over the limit of \$2,000 per month, so she does not qualify for the program. Her children need glasses, dental work, and medication and she gets no help with any of these things because she is just over the gross income cap. So she does not qualify for family health benefits.

And she writes to us and she indicates that she was better off on welfare because by the time she pays her rent and transportation, food for her children, her utility bills, and other costs of living, she believes that she's worse off. Worse off because if she earned a few dollars less on her gross income she

would receive the employment supplement, which no income tax is paid on, and she would receive benefits for her children from the family health benefits program.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I understand that programs need capitations and the government doesn't have unlimited resources. However, the reason I bring this case up is because this government must also consider how other policies, things such as power and energy rates, affect people who are on low incomes and affect people's abilities to be independent.

Mr. Speaker, just today I had a phone call from my constituency of a low-income family that spoke to me, almost in desperation, of the 43 per cent increase in SaskEnergy rates, wondering how they were possibly going to make it go in this province with all the increased rates. Now these rates don't only apply, Mr. Speaker, to medium- or high-income families; they apply to low-income families also, and low-income families are having to contend with them.

Let's look at some of the other things, Mr. Speaker, that possibly the NDP government should be looking at when they're considering assisting people on low income or people that are trying to get into the job market. Presently, Mr. Speaker, the federal government, along with the provincial government, are negotiating talking about a commonwealth migrant workers program.

Now we all know that in this province First Nations people, Aboriginal people are having a more difficult time getting into the workplace. The commonwealth migrant workers program, Mr. Speaker, will in fact assist people into training — mostly immigrants the way it sounds — into training in order to work at the intensified livestock operations. But First Nations people, Mr. Speaker, according to the information I have, seem to be sidelined with eligibility to get into this program.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture has talked to some First Nations people about this and he made some remarks that were not very hopeful for First Nations people to be able to receive entitlement to getting into this program. And I just ask him today as he sits across from me to make sure that he considers First Nations people's eligibility for this program because it would help them a great deal.

We're talking about helping people into the job market and off of social assistance and this would be one very, very beneficial way to do it.

Mr. Speaker, before I close I just want to refer to some remarks from members opposite about the fact that rural families also are eligible for the employment supplement program. And I want to remind those members — I think it was the member from Saskatoon Greystone, as well as the member from Saskatoon Idylwyld — that mentioned that the Saskatchewan Party, or members opposite in opposition, did not consider speaking of farm families that need to have some supplement, that need to have assistance.

Well I would remind those members — and I don't believe the member from Saskatoon Idylwyld was here when this building independence program was announced — before it was finalized, there was no provision for farm families to receive the

employment supplement. And it was only, Mr. Speaker, because members of the opposition, and I was one of them, brought up to the now Premier, who was then the minister of Social . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order, please.

Ms. Julé: — It was the then minister of Social Services that hadn't even considered farm families. And had it not been for the opposition bringing up the need to look at farm families who were in need of employment supplement because of low prices for farm commodities, because of the many factors that can cause net profits or even gross profits for farmers to go down, that government of the day, that NDP government, Mr. Speaker, would not have even considered farm families.

And if they don't want to listen to this, they can go back in *Hansard* and they can look at the *Hansard* debate and find out that this is in fact very true.

So, Mr. Minister, I cannot and will not agree with the motion put forward by the member from Saskatoon Greystone, but I will certainly condone and agree with the amendment that was made by the opposition. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, I'll be making some comments of course on the success that we had in the building independence program as well as dealing with the . . . and in that sense dealing with the issue of poverty in this province.

I'll be making some comments in relation to what others have said about this province, you know, some information in relation to the policy as well as the program, and also the record of the impact of this program.

But I'll also make some comments because I heard some statements by the Sask Party member from Humboldt and also from Saskatchewan Rivers, and I would say that the information that she gave just recently was not true, not accurate. And when I look at the record this hits . . . this poverty not only is an improvement in northern Saskatchewan, it's not only an improvement in the cities, it's an improvement in the rural areas. For that member to come out and say that it didn't talk about the farm families is completely inaccurate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — For the record I would like to state this for what other people have said from the province of Alberta. Of course the member from Saskatchewan Rivers was getting a little bit worried about being called the Alberta envy party and made that point, you know, during his speech this afternoon. But of course they're always saying that everything is great in Alberta and nothing happens here in Saskatchewan. It's a point the Saskatchewan Party makes which is that they're not very, very proud of this province; they're always talking about Alberta.

Now this is what they say. Not everything in Alberta, of course, not everything about Alberta is definitely wrong, and of course I see this editorial that was written in Edmonton. Now this editorial was written in Edmonton on June 18, 2001. You know

a few years after our . . . (inaudible) . . . strategy on our building independence program, and this is what they said. It's called "The Saskatchewan Advantage." It says, quote:

The soul of a nation, or any other group of people can be seen in how it treats the most disadvantaged.

It also says, quote, and of course this is a report from the Canadian Council on Social Development:

(Saskatchewan) Between 1993 and 1998, Saskatchewan cut the incidence of poverty among single-parent families from 51 to 20 per cent.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — And he also says that from a values viewpoint . . . this is what the writer had to say:

Eliminating child poverty is crucial for any society that respects the dignity of all people.

Now when I looked at that, I wanted to of course cut into the aspect of the record.

An Hon. Member: — Don't yell at us.

Mr. Goulet: — Now the person says, don't yell at us. To me, I'm very proud of this province. I can yell on what we succeed in regards to this province while the Saskatchewan Party remains quiet about achievements that we do have.

Now this is what . . . this is what I'd have to say in regards to the caseload. Now on the caseload, a lot of people don't realize that the welfare rates have dropped. The numbers have dropped substantially, not only in regards to the urban areas and the rural areas but also in northern Saskatchewan.

The member mentioned something about Aboriginal people, and of course in northern Saskatchewan over 70 per cent of the people are Aboriginal. And in that sense, a lot of the record in regards to the success of our program shows very clearly that it impacts Aboriginal people, contrary to the statement the member from Humboldt stated.

Now when I look at it, we have approximately . . . in 1994 there was 41,000 cases in this province. This year in March there was 30,815 cases, a decline of 25 per cent. But in terms of each case there's of course beneficiaries. There are children in the families, and when you count the adults and the beneficiaries and the children, the number rises.

In 1994 we had 83,120 beneficiaries and that dropped to 56,074 by March of 2001. This is 27,000 less people on the welfare roll than we had in 1994. So it is good news not only for the people of the cities but the rural and northern areas as well.

(19:45)

On a more detailed level on stats, the member was talking about the Athabasca region so I'll pick one community on the Athabasca region. And what we do have . . . in just the year from March 2001 to March 2002, last year in Buffalo Narrows

the caseload was 602. It dropped by over seven and a half per cent to 556. Good news in Buffalo Narrows.

Now in my constituency, we have La Ronge. In a year, we had . . . last year, 414 people on caseloads, this year we had in March 358, a drop of thirteen and a half per cent. Now that to me is what you call a successful program in the war against poverty.

Now I notice that the members from across, and I notice this idea, the war on poverty idea came from the United States, you know, during the post-'60s period. And I notice that when the Grant Devine government came into play, they of course had not a war on poverty. They had a war on the poor. I mean they hired special police to go chasing the poor with Grant Schmidt. So all they did was go after the poor, assuming that 13 billion, the 15 billion that they spent going in the hole was going to the poor which was completely wrong because in many cases, it was tremendous amount of mis-expenditures on the GigaTexts in the business side to many other areas of special . . . to some of their friends in their own regions.

Now when I look at this . . . I'd like to quote directly from the Saskatchewan Party policy when I talk about the Saskatchewan Party because some people say, well it's good to talk about the fact that the Sask Party changed its name so that . . . They didn't like to be called the old Tories, not that they were really ashamed of what they did but it wouldn't be a good vote-getter if they were still called the PCs (Progressive Conservative).

Now what I see here is a Saskatchewan Party policy, and it says, and I quote. This is what Hermanson told *The Leader-Post*, and it's a quote from October 1 of last year, of 2001. It says:

Also on the chopping block is the 25 million to 50 million he wants to trim off spending by chasing the welfare system.

So he was going to take 50 million people away from the poorest of the poor in this province. Now I'm listening to the speeches this week about seniors and the poor, and you could . . . it sounds like all of a sudden they're compassionate. But who believes them when you know that this is what their Saskatchewan Party policy was in October 2 of 2001?

Of course somebody that's listening in will say well, that's last year. We must have a new policy; the Saskatchewan Party must have a new policy. Well here's the one that was done on Thursday, March 21, 2002. I'll say that again, March 21. It seems to be that it's only less than a month ago that he made this comment.

Now talk about the war on poverty, and the war on welfare recipients, this is what . . . and I quote from the *Humboldt Journal*, from the member for Humboldt. This is what Hermanson said:

. . . get employable people living on social assistance back in the workplace by imposing a "D-day" on their assistance cheques.

Now listen to the words on this:

... by imposing a "D-day" on their assistance cheques.

Now, that to me is a war on the poor. And this is the type of a strategy that the Saskatchewan Party has followed in the footsteps of their old friends, the Devine PCs, and Grant Schmidt who used to send the welfare cops out there to chase around in the ... and I don't know, but from all over the place in regards to the province. From north rural areas and the urban areas, and making, you know, special ... hiring special people in the bureaucracy to go and chase people down.

So that's the record in regards to the Sask Party. Now I know that people would like to get at those ... at the number that I gave in regards to the drop on the number of welfare beneficiaries in this province, so I'll say them again.

In 1994 we had 83,120 beneficiaries in regards to the welfare system. And in March of this year we had 56,074 — a drop of 27,056 — 88 months of welfare numbers dropping in this province.

Now when you look at the facts, Mr. Speaker, there's many other programs that we have done. We've had the Saskatchewan employment supplement, and it helps lower-income people to do ... from their wages, their hard earned wages, they have money from self-employment. And in many cases, you know, the costs are there for them to deal with, and there's related costs of going to work and so on. So we have a top-up amount of money that we provide so that their subsistence basis is a lot better.

We also have provincial training allowance because everybody knows that a lot of people prefer to have a training paycheque than a welfare cheque over the long run. And in many cases it provides that independence of getting out of welfare, getting the training, and moving forward. And in that sense we have this provincial training allowance.

We also have the child benefit program which assists the lower income families on raising their children. We have basic food, health, clothing, and personal needs.

On top of it all we have, of course, the special program in relation to health, and we have the health benefits going out to a lot of the working poor. And in that sense, our program is one of the best in Canada. And as our member says that we are indeed the best. And in many cases from where we were at with the police approach of the Devine PCs — later changing their name to the Saskatchewan Party — and now the Saskatchewan Party is saying much the same thing on adding a D-day on assistance payments.

It shows why in many cases a lot of people, whether it is seniors or the poor, they don't trust what the Saskatchewan Party has to say, because they know what the whole strategy is, because all they ever talk about is cut taxes, cut taxes. As they talk to the business community, that's what they say. When they talk to people out in public, they say, oh we'll spend money on that. Spend money, and that's exactly what the Devine strategy was.

So, Mr. Speaker, I guess in regards to a commentary on the North, there was some comments made by the member from Saskatchewan Rivers. I'd like to say this. In the past 10 years,

when the welfare rates went up during the Devine period ... the welfare rates have gone down during our time. And we've also improved our employment records.

In the mines, we used to have approximately 500 people working in the mines, and we topped it up a couple of years ago and went as high as about 1,000 people working in the mines, of which over 80 per cent were Aboriginal people. And again that was a top level strategy.

On the business development side, we included the \$20 million worth of contracts that they used to have during the Devine Tory years, to over \$200 million worth of contracts to help out not only in regards to the employment side but the business entrepreneurial strategy as well.

And I must say that the training side was very important on our North. When we come into government there was approximately 1,000 people that were on post-secondary education. And now last year we had over 2,500 people in post-secondary education in northern Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — So again, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to make some comments in regards to supporting of course our motion and also against their amendment. And I think that in many cases I would like to close off by saying this.

(The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.)

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I made a quick summary in Cree and of course members from the NDP and the coalition government said, egosi, egosi. And of course for the members, for the public at large it means hear, hear, or it's good, you know, what it is that you are saying.

So again, I support our motion and go against their amendment, and now with that I'd like to move to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

Motion No. 6 — Loss of Confidence in Premier and Cabinet

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think this is really ... Mr. Speaker, I'm always ... (inaudible) ... that as MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) we need to speak on from time to time. The one we have tonight I think has become more critical as time goes on, and I'd like to explain why it's become so critical.

But before I do that, I do need to read the motion, and the motion is as follows:

That this Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan have lost confidence in the current Premier and cabinet.

You know, Mr. Speaker, a number of years ago when we went around the province and we visited various people, they would say: why are these NDP doing this? Why do these socialists have these ideas? And then the questions changed after a year or so, and they said to the Saskatchewan Party, what kind of

plans do you have? And we told them and they liked it.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we just finished off some 40-some meetings across the province. And not as a Premier's little bus tour went where they went and got a quick picture taken and tried very hard to get a picture in the paper — which usually wasn't very successful — and then they'd run down the street a little bit. They were so hard pressed, so hard pressed, Mr. Speaker, to find people to talk to that when I was in the office in Prince Albert from the minister of . . . or the MLA from Sask Rivers, who walks in there but one of the NDP MLAs on the Premier's bus tour. Couldn't find anyone to talk to. He thought surely the Sask Party MLAs would at least be civil enough to him, he could come walking in and talk to us. And we did; we did. And then we showed him the door and he climbed back on the bus and left.

(20:00)

Well, Mr. Speaker, as I've said, in those 40-some meetings — in those 40-some meetings — people asked us what our plans were. We told them. And there's been a real change in what people are saying now. They start off saying, why are these socialists doing these crazy things? Then they said, what are the ideas the Saskatchewan Party have? Now they're asking, when's the next election? We get that everywhere we go. When's the next election?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — I was at a fundraiser for Sask Rivers in Prince Albert a couple of weeks ago. And we had one or two people who spoke to the group and as soon as the word election was mentioned, there was a round of applause because people are waiting, they're begging for the next election to get rid of these people. Because for years — for years — they've asked, why are these socialists doing these crazy things?

Now they know there's another option. They know what our plans are; they like those plans; they want the election.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan have lost confidence.

I need to bring something to the attention of the members of the House. The recession sinks Saskatchewan economy. This is the root and centre of why the people of Saskatchewan want an election, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan economy is sunk. We had a recession.

What happened in the rest of Canada, Mr. Speaker? Did they have a recession? No, they didn't; no, they didn't.

The Saskatoon paper did a very good job when they outlined this. They put up a set of graphs, Mr. Speaker. And on those graphs they showed what was happening in other provinces. And you have the line that's there which means the economy at that particular point didn't grow and didn't shrink. Every single province, including the one, the Maritimers that we make so much fun of, their economies grew this last year. Only one province had a negative growth — Saskatchewan.

I'm proud of this province, Mr. Speaker. Every member on this side is proud of this province. But we are ashamed of the job

this group across is doing, where they've led this province. The only province in Canada to have negative growth — the only province.

And it wasn't as if there wasn't a drought in Manitoba, as if there wasn't a drought in Alberta. Oil prices affected both the same way. Even British Columbia, where these people are now talking about British Columbia that had that NDP government that ran the whole province into the dirt. In fact is, if I'm right, I think the past premier there is in a few problems of his own with how he ran government. After that whole long session, do you even recall when Mrs. Barrett's fat boy was in charge? All of these individuals, they ran that province into the ground. And yet, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the reports, British Columbia did better than Saskatchewan in spite of all the things that are happening there.

This NDP government, Mr. Speaker, doesn't have a clue what to do. They have no hope. They have no plan. This morning in question period, Mr. Speaker, we got up and we asked questions to the Minister of Health with what he's doing with the seniors, and his only answer was sort of, well what's your plan?

Surely when you're in government, you're in government to govern. But not this NDP group over there. They're not here to govern. They're here to take their cheques home and hope that no one catches them at it. The people of this province have caught them at it, and they want another election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — They have absolutely no idea where to go. I recall the speeches we've had over the last numbers of weeks and years that I've heard from the member from Cumberland. Has he ever presented a plan for this province? Not one single time has he presented a plan.

Over all the years that I've heard his speeches, it's been a diatribe against this, that, and the other thing. But does he set forth a plan and say, this is what we're going to do? He has never done that, not one time. After he's been on his feet with that kind of diatribe for about 30 minutes, 45 minutes, then he's at a loss for what to say, and he slips back into the '80s.

Those are the only two worlds that he has, Mr. Speaker, the only two worlds that he has. And his seatmate over there from Regina behaves much the same way — from Regina Victoria — exactly the same thing: has no ideas, has no plans, has no hope. But he can go back to the '80s. It's the only life that he has, the only life that he has. We are in a different century and in a different millennium than where these NDP are at.

They need to wake up. They need to realize what this province needs. They need to give some hope to the people of this province. We've had this recession, Mr. Speaker. What has that caused? What has that caused? We have had thousands of people, thousands of people leaving this province. Our population is lower than it's been since the 1930s.

This building that we're in tonight, one of the most beautiful legislative buildings in this country, a large legislative building, built because Canada at that time said this is going to be one of the biggest provinces in Canada; this is going to be the place

where growth will take place; this is the place where the poor and the hungry of the world will be able to come and find work and find jobs — that's what everyone thought. And then a short decade after that, a couple years later, we ended up with an NDP-CCF (New Democratic Party-Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) government, and ever since then people have been leaving this province. And I have the member from Cumberland again trying to move back into the '80s. But we've had people leaving, and they leave and they leave. That's thanks to this particular government.

The people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, have no hope in this government. They have no hope whatsoever.

GDP (gross domestic product) declines 1.9 per cent in 2001. Not only did people leave this particular province — they're looking for work — we're short on taxpayers. We just finished debating another motion, Mr. Speaker, a motion dealing with those individuals who have become disenfranchised, who feel they're not part of our society, and as a government, we need to take care of them.

But what has happened, Mr. Speaker? Those individuals have no hope because that NDP government has not created any jobs for them. They have no plan to create any work for them. We ask them what their plans are, and the cabinet ministers get up time and time again. What's your plan, they ask us.

We've put our plan out, Mr. Speaker, and that's why we keep getting the same response from people all over Saskatchewan. Call an election. When is the election going to come?

Mr. Speaker, we had an election some years ago. We had an election some years ago. You recall what happened in that election, the one that brought all of us here. They had less votes than the Saskatchewan Party, and very few people at that point thought that was going to happen. With the change in attitude that's happened the last couple of years, we can expect a landslide. We can expect the back two rows to be gone, to be gone, Mr. Speaker. Back two rows to be gone.

What are they doing for Saskatchewan? What are they doing for Saskatchewan?

Let me turn to another thing from Tuesday, 2002, April 23. That's today, Mr. Speaker. It's from Saskatoon, and the heading is "Catholic school taxes set to jump." Let me read the first paragraph, Mr. Speaker.

The Saskatoon Catholic school division has produced a draft budget that will add \$27 to an average homeowner's tab, yet the division will still end up spending less than it did last year.

Now how is this possible, Mr. Speaker? They're going to raise more money in taxes and they're going to have less to spend. They're going to raise more in taxes; they're going to have less to spend.

We've had the minister of Education, Mr. Speaker, over the past week or two, get up in his seat and say, guess what, we're giving all this extra money. Well they've moved a little bit of money in one place and taken away a whole lot in another

place.

That's why, in Saskatoon, what's happening. They're adding \$27 to an average homeowner's tab, and the division will have less to spend than it had last year.

You've seen the headlines in the paper, Mr. Speaker. Saskatoon: dozens of teachers are going to have to be fired. And surely the members from the opposite side should be paying attention because they do have a lot of ex-teachers on that side. They should know what that's like to think that their jobs might be gone. And why is that happening? The school board there very definitely said it's because of underfunding of this NDP government. That's why those teachers are being laid off, Mr. Speaker.

Now we've had one of the union people from the Saskatoon city teachers' association say, let's have a big rally in front of the doors of the school board. In fact . . . is maybe, we can attend a meeting and impress them how upset they ought to be. They should be in these galleries over here because it's the minister sitting over there, Mr. Speaker, that's responsible for cutting back on those amounts of money going to Saskatoon.

It's that particular minister that's responsible for dozens of teachers that are going to be fired in Saskatoon. It's that minister sitting over there, Mr. Speaker, that's responsible for having those students in larger classrooms than they've ever been in before. That's where the responsibility lies.

That's why this motion is so important. The people of Saskatchewan have lost confidence in the current Premier and in his cabinet. And there's an example of what the minister responsible for Education has done: cut funding all over.

Now we know what's going to happen with the RMs (rural municipality), Mr. Speaker. The rate of taxes that the people in rural Saskatchewan are going to have to pay are going to go up many times more than even the ones in the cities. They've cut that back. They've played with the mill rates. They play with all sorts of things. At the end of the day the taxpayers have to pay more, and we're going to have teachers laid off across this province.

Mr. Speaker, we'd look at something else that's critical in this particular province. We need to look at health care. We've had the Minister of Health up numerous times, most recently, Mr. Speaker, question period today and yesterday, involving long-term care fee increases.

Now we did have one of the members from Saskatoon get up and say, oh but that's not one of the five pillars. So we can take old people who just have no opportunity to take care of themselves, we can take their last dollar away from them because it's not part of the five pillars. I thought that was supposed to be a party of sympathy, a party of a social conscience.

There is no social conscience there, Mr. Speaker, or else they wouldn't be taking the last dollars out of the pockets of senior citizens that have no way of protecting themselves; that have no way of coming and sitting in these galleries and asking these people to show some sympathy and to have a social conscience.

Let me take a little few items from this particular chart, Mr. Speaker. Let's see what happens. If we have . . . let's start off with a monthly income of \$1,000. A monthly income of \$1,000. That, Mr. Speaker, is not very much. That's not very much. That's an annual income of \$12,000.

Now they used to have to pay . . . what did our seniors used to have to pay before long-term care fee increases? They used to have to pay \$831. That's gone up, Mr. Speaker. That's gone up under this government. That's hard to believe. Someone who's taking home \$1,000 a month. But, Mr. Speaker, the Premier says these are wealthy people, and the Premier is an honourable man.

Now let's just add a little bit to that. Let's say that their income just jumps a whole lot to \$1,800 a month — \$1,800 a month. That's what most of the teachers that I talked to, on the other side, what they will get in a pension and probably more when they retire. Now their increases — this is \$1,800 a month now, Mr. Speaker, \$21,000; that's awful close to the poverty line — their increases go up 26 per cent; 26 per cent. But the Premier says, they're wealthy; they're rich. And the Premier, we know, is an honourable man.

Let's just raise this a little more, Mr. Speaker. Let's say in the eyes of the NDP these people are really rich, they're taking home \$3,000 a month — \$3,000 a month; probably about a third or a quarter what the cabinet takes home. Now their increase in fees is 68 per cent — 68 per cent. But the Premier still says these are wealthy people — these are wealthy people. And the Premier as we know, Mr. Speaker, is an honourable man.

They keep going on up till you get to the maximum. And those increases are 148 per cent — 148 per cent. Now we have a pretty good idea what a 100 per cent increase is. What is it? It's a double.

(20:15)

So if you take the amount that these people had to pay — our senior citizens in long-term care — we double it, take half of the original amount, slap it on top of there again, and say you can pay it because you're wealthy, is what the Premier says — and he's an honourable man. This is disgusting, Mr. Speaker, absolutely disgusting that we would take our seniors and do that with them.

That's the same place, the same place that these NDP tend to go during election time. And they pull their cars up on election day and they try and drag them all out so they can vote for them. Well it'll be interesting to see how many they'll be able to drag out this time after they've taken their fees and put them up almost 150 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Their social conscience is not there. They have no social conscience. They have no social conscience.

And there's the member from Athabasca starting to chirp from his seat. He should be quiet over there and be ashamed of what his government's done. He's one that halfway through that chose to come across from the opposition, Mr. Speaker, where he could have protected the seniors, where he could have protected the old people of this province. But instead he went

across over there to get a cabinet salary and now he goes ahead and says it doesn't count, it doesn't matter. It's shameful, Mr. Speaker. It's absolutely shameful. In fact it's a whole lot worse than that.

We know very well what happens, Mr. Speaker. In this particular province, along with the work ethic that's there — and this province probably has the best work ethic of any province in Canada — along with the work ethic comes the knowledge that you need to save for tough times, particularly all of those individuals that sort of came through the '30s, remembered some of that, and that mentality hasn't been lost for a generation. So that when you make some money, you save some because times could get tough and they could get difficult.

So many of our seniors have something saved up. All of them tried; many of them managed to do that.

So what's this government doing now? Well we found out this morning, Mr. Speaker. What's happening is that when they get that income, this government not only takes 50 per cent, which is what they used to say they were going to take — they actually took a little more, Mr. Speaker; it was close to 60 because of the way the income tax situation works — now they say they're going to take 90 per cent.

But the 90 per cent is not off of 100 per cent. The 90 per cent is off about 125 per cent which means that when these seniors get a cheque from their RRSPs (Registered Retirement Savings Plan) or some of their other dividends that they're getting back, from money they've set aside over a lifetime of working, this NDP government with no social conscience whatsoever is going to take more from them than they get on a monthly basis — more from them.

We already know they're only left with 100 or \$200 per month to take care of clothes, some travel they might want, they might want to buy some gifts for their grandkids, and for medication, Mr. Speaker — 100 or \$200 is all they were left.

Now these people are going to take more from them than what they get from their dividends. And they say they have a social conscience.

The people of this province, Mr. Speaker, are sick and tired of this NDP government. They have no confidence in the Premier; they have no confidence in any of the cabinet.

When we asked those questions on health the other day, finally after probably a dozen questions the Premier got up and agreed that he was going to underline, this is the path they had taken, this is where they were going to keep on going, and yes, if you're taking home \$1,000 a month you are a wealthy person.

Well the province just can't wait to vote him off as the weakest link, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — It was probably one of the NDP's only chances to get out of this mess they were in. We know they're embarrassed. We get copies of the same letters they get from the seniors, from their children, saying that this is outrageous

what this government's doing. We get copies of those letters. They stand there and they act as if they've never heard of this; oh, it's only one or two. But we do get copies of them.

Now the Premier had the opportunity to sit there as he did day after day and avoid getting up and answering question, to say, well I guess if we realized we actually did something wrong, I can get up and as the leader take some responsibility — take some responsibility and say to the people of this province, yes this was our plan; we realize it's hurting the seniors of this province a whole lot more than we thought it would, so let's reverse it. We'll just roll it back;, we'll roll it back.

And it really, Mr. Speaker, matters not how they were going to try and balance the budget, which actually wasn't balanced but that's another issue why the people of this province want to get rid of them. It really matters not how they were going to fiddle with their figures at the end of that time.

The people of this province would have said that is a good thing to do. And the Premier could have gained a lot of credit for the next election. Not enough, Mr. Speaker, to win an election but he could have gained some. He might have been able to win Riversdale one more time.

But instead he stood there in his spot and he said, no, we've made up our mind, we're moving on ahead; we're going to take over 100 per cent of the senior people's income that they have, and we have no problem doing that because we are socialists. It matters not how it hurts people as long as it's philosophically on their side.

And I think they must have gone back to the *Regina Manifesto* that talks about having a control of everything in the province. And so the Premier said, hey there's something we don't have control of — we can't get our little hands on all the RRSPs and all the dividends in the province. This is how we'll do it; we can get our hands on some more money that belongs to someone else. And sure enough, the Premier unfortunately took his own advice and the bad advice that he gets from other people.

Friday, April 19, end of last week, Mr. Speaker, "Care home fee increase said cowardly" — cowardly. I couldn't have worded it better myself, Mr. Speaker; it is cowardly. Because who do they pick on? As I said earlier, not people that can fill up the gallery over here and let them know how they feel about it; not people that can stand out on the lawn, come kick down the doors of this particular building and say, we want to be heard, we demand to be heard. No, that's not who they pick on. They pick on the seniors, the individuals who can't do that, who are in senior care homes, who are hurting.

Let me read a paragraph or two from that particular article, *The Leader-Post*, Mr. Speaker, Friday, April 19, 2002:

Member after member on the opposition side rose to berate the government's decision in the spring budget to raise the maximum charge to special care home residents. The maximum charge went from \$1,561 a month to \$3,875 . . .

And we read that off and they said we're fearmongering. Well I should hope there's fear to be mongered because there's no telling what these people will dream up. Who would have ever

thought that a socialist government would try to balance its budget on the backs of the elderly and the sick — who would have ever thought it? There is no fearmongering there. That's exactly what they're doing, that's exactly what they're doing. The member from Cumberland sits there and grins, Mr. Speaker. What a shame, what a shame.

Let me read another paragraph: "When this budget was announced . . ." And it's dealing with one of the individuals, "(her mother) was devastated." This is a lady who's in a senior care situation. "This budget leaves \$166 a month . . ." There are teenagers who get a bigger spending allowance than that. But this isn't just spending allowance; part of it is personal expenditures. But it also includes the amount of money for drugs and we know very definitely that seniors are heavy users of medication, and that has to come out of the 166. And this lady goes on to say, "My mom pays over 320 for these expenses alone."

Well, Mr. Speaker, maybe some of the schoolteachers on that side, or the Premier who used to count the tithing, maybe he should just do a little bit of math over here. Subtract 166 from 320 and he hasn't got enough to live on. That's the situation, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier has put the seniors of this province into. "This will take all of the money my dad saved in RRSPs and retirement funds." That's the money this government is clawing back at over 100 per cent for every dollar they get, Mr. Speaker. It's a shame.

"Health Minister John Nilson responded by saying the Saskatchewan Party was fear-mongering." That's what I was talking about, Mr. Speaker. And he says, "What I would say to these people who are listening on the televisions . . ." And it seems like the only ones they want to talk to are the people on television. They should be talking to the people in seniors homes. Where we get this information is that we have a phone number, Mr. Speaker. All the mockery in the world.

So you have these people in intensive care situations and our senior homes and they're supposed to use a phone number to phone the Premier and do what, Mr. Speaker? Do what? Just say, please, Mr. Premier, could you send some more money? I don't think the chances are there. We had the Health minister this morning get up and say, well if these things don't work out there's some ways we can review this possibly. Now there's no assurance on that.

When this socialist government reviews someone asking for a different point of view on the help they're getting, they get turned down more often than not. Are they going to go ahead and be afraid of some senior in a home? I doubt it. And so that is cold comfort, Mr. Speaker, cold comfort to the seniors of this particular province.

Mr. Speaker, this is a made-in-Saskatchewan recession — a made-in-Saskatchewan recession. And fact is I think the seniors, if they were back in their younger days, would be filling this legislature saying, this is not how we want to live when we retire. But they've put that into that.

This actually, Mr. Speaker, is two-tier care at its absolute worst — two-tier care at its worst because they're going to take the money from those people who've saved something and they're

going to take over a dollar away from them for every dollar they get in dividends. Two-tier at its very worst.

This is the group that always said, no they don't want two-tier government, they don't want two-tier health care, they don't want two-tier anything. They've created it — they've created it. Look at all the things in health care that people have to pay for. Look at all the things they have to pay for: eye care, dental care.

They want to get an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging). Where do they have to go? Out of province. They can wait a year over here. Mr. Speaker, you could be dead in a year. And yet they say, no, over here in Saskatchewan it's a year to wait for that and you should be thankful when you get it in a year, Mr. Speaker. You should probably write the Minister of Health a letter and say thank you that I only had to wait a year, that it wasn't a year and a half.

And then they send them off to Alberta and these people pay for it on their own. Well it's fortunate probably, Mr. Speaker, that there are some people left in Saskatchewan with enough money to do that. It's unfortunate that they have to do it. The fortunate part is it makes the list, the lineup shorter for those who can't go and get it done there.

But not only do they send some people off to Alberta to get it done, make other people wait for a year. The MRI sits without any people being checked out for most of the day — a 24-hour day — during which time they put pets and farm animals into it. Can you imagine that? The thing is sitting there not being used by the people. We have a year-long lineup, and they've got time for pets but they haven't got time for people. Where's the priority of this government? Where's the priority?

There is no social conscience there. This is a group of hard-hearted NDP politicians who are power hungry and all they want is to maintain power as long as they can. And the people of Saskatchewan are saying, enough already; let's give us an election; let's get them out of here.

That's why this motion is in front of us this evening. The worst job creation record in the country — 24,000 fewer people working in Saskatchewan than in the 1999 election, 24,000 fewer people working. Those are people who are not paying taxes. That means we don't have a surplus of jobs. So the people we were just talking about earlier on today who would like a job know they have no hope because the number of jobs go down.

And what did this NDP government that's supposed to have a social conscience, Mr. Speaker, promise in 1999? They promised 30,000 new jobs. Now had they kept their promise, those 24,000 people that are now out of work — probably left the province for Texas, or Manitoba, or British Columbia, or any other place but Saskatchewan — would be here paying taxes, and we would have 6,000 more people working and paying taxes to take care of the health care, the education, the roads, the highways, the farm economy, all of those things.

(20:30)

Speaking of farm economy. Mr. Speaker, most people in this province have a rural background. Even though there are more

people living in the cities now than in rural Saskatchewan, most of them have a rural background. Now what has this NDP government done for them? Well they've been in charge for a decade. The very first thing they did, they took and tore up the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) contract. Then they went ahead and took and sent that money back to Ottawa. There were millions of dollars there, Mr. Speaker, millions of dollars, a quarter of a billion in fact. Let's round it off to what it is — a quarter of a billion dollars sitting here, federal money waiting to get matched with provincial money to turn the rural economy. That group tore up the contract, sent a quarter of a billion dollars back to Ottawa and said to the farmers, we are responsible, and we care, and we have a social conscience.

Not true, Mr. Speaker. There is no social conscience on that side. They do not care for rural Saskatchewan. They do not care for the men and women and children who live on those farms. It's a cold-hearted brood over there, Mr. Speaker.

Then along came another plan. So they put in place their own crop insurance plan, and they fiddled with it one way or another, and it kept getting worse. People didn't want to sign up for it. Then a year or two ago, Mr. Speaker, they had a pretty good idea. They did have a good idea. They said, let's put spot loss into the whole crop insurance thing because farmers will like that. So if they get hailed out in a particular area, they can go ahead and get some help for that particular area. So they went ahead and did that, Mr. Speaker, and a lot of rural people, farmers, signed up. Farm families said, this is a good idea.

Now having said that, what did they do this year? They pulled it right out. They pulled it right out. They took one of the better ideas they've had . . . And we've got one of the members from Saskatoon who's saying it's about this size. Well the idea was a whole lot smaller than that, but it was still not a bad idea. But they pulled out the spot loss hail concept. They pulled it out. So now what are they doing? Now what are they doing with the whole concept? That means a whole lot of people, a whole lot of people, now will not have the coverage they need, will not have the coverage they need.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it gets worse. It gets much worse. Then they came up, and they dreamt up the idea that what we're going to do is we're going to let people gamble — not that we don't have enough gambling already — but we're going to let people gamble on where they want to have their hail insurance based on rainfall. So they said we've got 80-some weather stations across the country, not just in Saskatchewan. You can actually, Mr. Speaker — think how bizarre this is — be a Saskatchewan farmer and bet on a weather station in Manitoba or in Alberta.

They missed Alice Springs, cause we're quite sure it wouldn't have rained over there. It would have been a good bet, Mr. Speaker. Why didn't they put in Alice Springs? Where's the Minister of Agriculture? He should have done that.

Anyways, they put that plan into being and said you can go ahead and pick whichever rain station you want, buy your insurance on the rainfall in that particular weather station, and then you will or won't get any insurance depending on how much rainfall there is over there.

Now what do they do next? They said oh, but we've got to keep

this betting even. So now what happens is they only allow a certain number of farmers to bet on a particular rain station.

So if you have a rain station on your quarter section — remember there's about 80 of them around the country — if you have one on your quarter section, and by the time you're going to buy your insurance the quota's full on that one, you couldn't buy insurance based on the rainfall on your own quarter, Mr. Speaker.

How utterly stupid. You have to bet on some . . . on a rain station on your neighbour's land and hope that he has a crop failure so that you can collect something.

What a bizarre way to run a province — what a bizarre way. As it was called, very well by one of our members, it's a loopy little lottery, Mr. Speaker. It's a lottery — it's a lottery. It's not very big, it's little, and it sure is loopy.

That is part of this whole thing, Mr. Speaker. Recession sinks Saskatchewan economy — recession sinks Saskatchewan economy. They're actually creating a recession.

Farmers should have the right to be able to buy an insurance policy that covers the land they have, the crops they have, the rainfall they're going to get on their land, and the land they farm. But not from this particular government — not from this particular government; has absolutely no idea what they're doing.

Our population, Mr. Speaker, is the lowest population in 20 years — in 20 years. Now how could that happen? How could that happen? It could only happen when you have an NDP government in charge.

They had an NDP government in Ontario. You recall that government. Bob Rae ran the biggest debt that this country has ever seen — Ontario, Bob Rae. We've got the same kind of government over here.

They had the same sort of thing in British Columbia with Mr. Clark and his predecessors. We know exactly what happened there. They ran up the debt. They did all kinds of funny things with their finances. They bought aluminum ferries that gobbled up a log and the whole thing just left people adrift out on the ocean. The most bizarre things that can be dreamt up, this government will think up.

BC (British Columbia) had its aluminum ferries that couldn't go through a log or two. We have our GRIP plans that are torn up. We have our rain stations in other provinces, we buy our crop insurance on. Just absolutely no idea how to run a province — no idea.

That's why the people of Saskatchewan, when we come to a meeting and we mention the word election, they applaud and they say, we want it now; we want to get rid of the NDP; give us an election. They want an election; they're pleading for an election.

Mr. Speaker, let's look at that budget. Let's look at that budget. There was a time the previous premier came into this particular position and he made a lot of commitments about how he was

going to deal with the province's finances. And he got a lot of support from that. And grudgingly, Mr. Speaker, some of us gave him some support on some of his initiatives as well.

He was going to make sure they didn't run into any debt. He was going to pay off some debt. It was going to be a balanced approach. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it may seem hard to believe — it is to myself at times — I did actually vote for one of his budgets once, Mr. Speaker. I did vote for one of his budgets. I told the people in my constituency and they said, that's fine. In the next election they sent me back with a bigger majority. So they realized you can have common sense; you can vote in favour of a budget that even the NDP creates.

That, Mr. Speaker, was under a different premier. We didn't have this kind of a budget from that premier. Roy Romanow budgets — you knew they were going to be balanced. You might not be happy with the amount of money spent on education or the amount of money spent on health or the amount of money spent on roads or the amount of money spent on social services or on prisons or on policing. But you knew, at the end of the day, there was no fiddling with the budget as far as it being balanced. It was balanced.

Now under our present Premier, what have we got? Every single budget is a deficit budget and our debt is going up. And he fiddles with figures, Mr. Speaker. He juggles them around. Look at the plan that he has for his growth in education. Oh yes, he and the minister of Education get up and say, we have this plan to build schools. Is anyone opposed to it? Well, motherhood and apple pie — we're not opposed to the building of a school. But let's check how he's going to finance it. So he'll tell us one day, absolutely no, I'm not going to go ahead and create any more deficit budgeting; I'm on the same line as Roy Romanow was. No, he's not.

He's going to tell the school boards that you can . . . Excuse me, Mr. Speaker. There's absolutely no way that this government has the money for it. So here's what they do. Follow this, Mr. Speaker, follow this because this is important to see how they play with the numbers. He says we're going to create another Crown corporation.

We have some 70-some Crowns, Mr. Speaker. Is there anyone in this House that can list all 70-some Crowns, or is it 80 by now, 80 Crowns — 84 Crowns, I'm told. And that's from the people who know, Mr. Speaker — 84 Crowns. There's not a person on that side that could probably list half of them.

So they create another one and they say okay, this is what'll happen. This Crown will go out and will make a loan. They'll get some money from someplace, and then the school boards can go ahead and get the money from this Crown, and then the school boards can build schools because that's good. Mr. Speaker, no one disagrees.

Now let's take a look at what happens with the money. Let's look at what happens with the money. It was funnelled through . . . maybe laundered is the best term — I think I'll use the word laundered, Mr. Speaker. It was laundered through — it was laundered through a Crown. It was washed, Mr. Speaker, it was washed. It came from the banks and then was washed through the . . .

An Hon. Member: — Mr. Speaker, point of order.

The Speaker: — I ask the member from Moose Jaw North to state his point of order.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, there have been numerous rulings including some recent ones that have come from the Chair, Mr. Speaker, regarding the use of excessive language which suggests ill motives and excessive language.

And I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that when the hon. member opposite refers to laundering money and makes . . . and then pauses to make a special emphasis of that reference to what is clearly understood in this country, Mr. Speaker, to be an illegal act, I suggest that he has become excessive in his language and that it is, well some would say offensive, and certainly violates the decorum for what is acceptable behaviour in terms of conduct of debate in this House.

Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member truly believes that, he does have vehicles that are available to him and that language of that nature is clearly not acceptable. And I would ask you, Mr. Chair . . . Mr. Speaker, to rule it out of order and require the hon. member to withdraw the remark and apologize to the House.

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly, I've taken, during the . . . I thank, first of all, the member for Moose Jaw North for raising the issue. A quick perusal of Beauchesne during the time that the member was making his statement shows that there — order, please — shows that there are no precedents using these particular words.

Nevertheless I do believe that the idea that the member from Moose Jaw North has brought to the attention of the Speaker indicates that this could be interpreted in a way where it could be legal. So I would simply advise the member at this stage to desist from using that type of language so that the debate can proceed in an orderly manner.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So they take this money as coming from the banks and they work it through the Crowns. And we've called it a fudge and that's been acceptable all the way through so we'll continue using that. So they fudge this thing through there. And it reminds me a whole lot of making fudge where the stuff is warm and sticky and gooey, and we don't know what happens as it comes through the system.

Then the school boards get it. They will have to pay it back to the Crowns. Now that all sounds nice and neat and simple. However it's this NDP government that is going to want to take credit, is going to want to take credit for the building of those schools. However when we look at their budget, it's not going to show up in their budget anywhere.

The minister of Education is going to say, look how frugal I am, look how frugal I am. You know, I've managed to spend some more money on a few things, but you know we've kept it all nice and the budget is balanced, and all those kinds of things. However that Crown, which will probably be Crown number 85, Crown number 85 if they create a new one, Crown number 85 now has debt.

But the way this government deals with their finances, Mr. Speaker, it's not going to show up on their sheet. It's a bit like borrowing money from dad, you see. Who's going to pay it back and when do you pay it back? We know how that works, but dad's caught with the debt. Well this Crown's going to get caught with the debt — the Crown's going to get caught with the debt. And this government's trying to avoid looking as bad as they really are with the way they run their budget.

Every single school, every single hospital, every single thing that's being built in this province with money that's coming through that Crown system is debt, has to be paid back by the people of this province. And it is essentially a deficit budget, something the Romanow government never did, they didn't even try to do it in devious ways. They might have done other devious things but when it came to their budget, Mr. Speaker, it was a solid document; it was a solid document. Not any more. Under the reign that we're under now, Mr. Speaker, under the reign that we're under now, this is not the way it's happening and it's not going to be happening.

(20:45)

Mr. Speaker, it's scary to know that this government is taking us down the worst road that any government in Canada has been in and there's been many a bad ones. It's the same road that Bob Rae took Ontario down — the same road that Bob Rae took Ontario down and increased the debt in Ontario to unbelievable limits, and they're still suffering underneath that.

It's exactly the same road that BC NDP . . . Clark took their government down and created massive debts in British Columbia. And now we have our present NDP government going down exactly the same road. Surely they could have learned, surely they could have learned from what happened, what their brethren did in Ontario and in British Columbia. They love the word brethren. This is one time they ought to call those people their brethren, they ought to call those people their brethren, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is probably the most disconcerting thing to people in this province. When this budget came down and this Premier presented his budget, people of the province said, well let's just see. There's been some hanky-panky before; let's see if this one's fudged or what's happening with it.

They've now come to realize after all the numbers and the statistics and the directions and the fiddling that we've presented to them, Mr. Speaker, they realize . . . everybody in this province realized this is a deficit budget and our debt is growing. In one form or another our debt is growing.

And that's another reason when we go to all those 40-some communities, and we go to our fundraisers in Prince Albert, and we mention the word election, they say, we want it now. We have to have it now before this government gets another chance to put up another budget that's going to be a deficit budget and the people who can stand it least are the ones who suffer.

We had a speech earlier on today from the member from Cumberland who should have been one of the people most concerned about this, because he mentioned, Mr. Speaker — and he's right, he's right — that unemployment in his

constituency was unusually high, higher than it should be. You shouldn't have 40 and 50 and 60 and 70 per cent of your people unemployed. And I agree with him on that.

But why can we not create opportunity down there? Because this province has no money. We have no money because they've chased the taxpayers out of this province. They've chased them out of here. All those people — 24,000 people, Mr. Speaker — those are taxpayers that are gone. Their children who would have held jobs, who would have gone to university here, created more opportunity, they're gone.

And so when the member from Cumberland is concerned about unemployment in his constituency, he should be concerned because the situation is not good at all. But he should get up in his place and tell his brethren, Mr. Speaker, that it's time they change a few things, that it's time they grow some industry to give business an opportunity to create jobs because as we have jobs, Mr. Speaker, we will have taxpayers. And as we have taxpayers, this government and this province will have money for the programs that we need so badly.

And the member from Cumberland has got up in his place year after year and blamed everyone else but himself and his brethren for their short-sightedness. It's time they look at their plans and say, what's happening? How effective is it?

Twenty-four thousand jobs, interesting . . . Now we have the member from Regina Elphinstone doesn't want to be a brother with the member from Cumberland. We knew there was dissension in the ranks over there. We hear that. We see it when they come in and they sit in their little groups and they chat. Now he tells the member from Cumberland he doesn't want to be his brother. Well how bad can you guys be split over there? How badly can you be split? Surely your socialist . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I would remind the member from Rosthern to continue to make his remarks through the Chair.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government has managed to try to get close to balancing its budget. In the Romanow days, they did. Now they're not. They've done that by downloading. They've done that by downloading. They need to go back to their towns, their cities, their municipalities, and say exactly what has the effect been of the last 10 years of NDP socialist government.

And every single one of those, unless they probably hold a party card and used to be an MLA over here, every single one of them, Mr. Speaker, are going to tell them downloading is what is killing the towns, the RMs, and the cities. We have a situation in all of those organizations that was never this bad before. That's why the taxes are going up.

We have these people, and we just had a bad situation last year with a water scare in North Battleford. We remember Walkerton. We sat back as people in Saskatchewan. We said that could just happen in dirty, factory-ridden Ontario. This would never happen in Saskatchewan because look at our maps, particularly if you get a map that has a lot of northern Saskatchewan on it, and you see all the fresh water up there — just would never happen here. Then it happens in North

Battleford.

It happens, Mr. Speaker. It happens because there wasn't enough money given to communities for infrastructure. Every single town, RM, and city is going to tell us that.

There is a city, the city of North Battleford, a beautiful city, that the MLA representing it will tell you, Mr. Speaker, should have been the capital of Saskatchewan. I would debate that; Rosthern would have been suitable. But having said that, it's still a beautiful city and had that water scare. Thousands of people sick, 7,000 people, Mr. Speaker, 7,000 people sick in a small city in Saskatchewan because of this government's downloading and its negligence. Their testing wasn't done as it should have been done.

That's why when the report came back as to who was to blame . . . yes, there were some goofy things like when you have a discharge station on the wrong end of your intake pipes. But that was built probably during a socialist era as well. They probably can't tell good water from bad water.

But having said that, had that funding remained as it should have been, North Battleford would have had the opportunity to go ahead and improve their infrastructures as it should. They wouldn't have had that bad water. The testing would have taken place as it should have been.

And again, as I said, Mr. Speaker, the motion that I'm speaking to talks about lost confidence in the current Premier and the cabinet. It's the cabinet responsible for water that should have made sure that testing happened, and it didn't happen — 7,000 people in that particular city waiting for an election to turf out this government, waiting for an election. They knew it was going to happen. We asked questions all along.

Downloading on one level of government after another. We drive down the streets of our cities, and the roads are poor. Most cities have some sort of a pothole contest in spring to see who has the deepest pothole. Well yes, our weather is one that sort of makes having good streets a little more difficult. Cold weather and ground heaving creates a few things. But there isn't enough money to make the upkeep and the maintenance so that the potholes and the cracks and the ruts aren't there as they are today. That's because of the downloading of this government.

They try to balance their budgets on the backs, as I said earlier on, the sick and the infirm, on top of the RMs and the towns and the cities. That's how they try to balance their budget, and they've done a disastrous job of it, and every area of this province is suffering because of this NDP government. It's mismanagement of the purest sort. It couldn't have been done better or worse, which ever term you want to use, Mr. Speaker, unless you had Bob Rae or Glen Clark in charge, the only other two individuals that were in the running besides our Premier for mismanaging an economic system as badly as they've done it . . . right here.

Looking again, Mr. Speaker, looking from an article in the, in the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* — and I've been talking from time to time about the election call — by Les MacPherson:

Calvert's election call can't come soon enough . . . (can't

come soon enough). Not that it probably is needed or it'll be interesting or it'll be a watershed. Things are so difficult in this province that the election call can't come soon enough.

Well it says reliable sources tell Mr. MacPherson that the Premier is alerting his troops to be ready for a fall election. Well we don't know whether or not that's going to be the case. What this article does say, it's needed. It's needed. He talks about the same little jaunt around the province I spoke of earlier, this so-called bus tour. And I like what he calls it here, he says:

A polka band can manage a bus tour. A third tier minor hockey team can manage a bus tour. We should expect a bit more from our Premier than the bus tour that he tried to run and mismanaged so badly.

Okay let's look at a few or for a few other ones. It says that campaign pamphlets are being distributed across the province by the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour. You remember those; they came to a number of our households. We saw them around — pure election rhetoric, pure election rhetoric, a fundraising agency for the NDP.

I'm glad he said it, Mr. Speaker, so I didn't have to, but he couldn't have said it better. The pamphlets condemn the opposition's Saskatchewan Party for not being friendly to workers. And he says that's a good one: under the NDP, workers are packing up their families and leaving Saskatchewan in unprecedented numbers — 24,000 of them, Mr. Speaker, 24,000 left this province, unprecedented numbers. That's what they call a worker-friendly group. They're supposed to be friendly to the workers. They're supposed to be their brethren. They're supposed to be their union buddies, brothers and sisters. What do they do with them? They make sure they run the province in such a negative sort of a way that 24,000 of them have to leave this province to find some other way to stay alive.

Mr. Speaker, what's particularly disheartening about this is that this province, that this province at one time, was the place in the world where people came that didn't have jobs. Most of our forefathers were given an opportunity here and were thankful for that. Were given an opportunity — there were pictures. And, Mr. Speaker, you may be aware of these having been a schoolteacher in your days, the pictures that were sprinkled out . . . throughout central Europe.

And on those pictures it said come to Canada — to the prairies. And it was a nice little picture of a little white house with a green roof, a little hip-roof barn, and a windmill. And people thought this is the opportunity; this is what we'll get when we come to Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, they did get a bit of a surprise, because many of them were just loaded off from one side or the other of the railway track to keep the Americans in or out of Canada.

And so they found out it was a rather cruel environment to go ahead and start your first year, your first winter. But they survived. They persevered. And they came and they came because this was the land of opportunity. Hard work would pay

off, Mr. Speaker, — hard work would pay off. Diligence would pay off. Saving would pay off. And they came here, and they were diligent, and they worked hard, and they saved.

And now this NDP government took 24,000 of them and shipped them someplace around the world. And then said, now we've lost the income from 24,000 taxpayers. And they said we'll take it off the backs of our sick and our elderly — thousands of them. Sick and elderly, who had saved money by working hard, by being diligent, by being thrifty, by being frugal. And these people took the money right out of their pockets when they no longer could fight against it.

It's a shame, Mr. Speaker. It's an absolute shame that we would treat our seniors that way. An absolute shame.

Mr. Speaker, Les MacPherson goes on, and he makes this statement:

You have to wonder how much more unfriendly to workers a province could get.

How much more unfriendly they could get.

Well, I'm sure those 24,000 workers are, wherever they are today, say rah for the NDP-CCF, they raised the minimum wage in Saskatchewan. Well they probably couldn't give a sweet tweet, Mr. Speaker, because they're gone. They've been chased out.

So the NDP thought they did a good thing but they've chased the people out of the province. That's the way they work.

(21:00)

Mr. Speaker, I heard some boos on the other side when I referred to Les MacPherson. Let me relate to someone else. This gentleman is known for really cutting down to the core of the message, Mr. Speaker — Randy Burton "Straight Talk," "Bright future optical illusion — call an election." Call an election.

And then there's a photo of our premier, Mr. Speaker. It reminds me much of my little chat I had earlier on about the Crowns and I'll read a few of the lines from Randy Burton "Straight Talk." "Bright future optical illusion — call an election."

A survey conducted last year by Canada West Foundation showed that fully 70 per cent of this province's university graduates intend to seek careers outside the province.

Mr. Speaker, that's 70 per cent, 70 per cent — 70 per cent. That's where they intend to go. Now I have a cohort of some people over here from Prince Albert saying how many stayed? We know how many left. We know how many left — 70 per cent. This is frightening, Mr. Speaker, it's frightening for a number of cases. It's frightening because we have spent 12 years putting these young people through elementary and high school — 12 years.

The Minister of Education, when he gets a chance to speak some year, can tell us what it costs to give 12 years of education

to one of our students in Saskatchewan. It's tens of thousands of dollars. We spent that on those kids and we don't regret it, Mr. Speaker. We're proud of the children of this province, we're proud of them.

Then we sent them to university and we subsidized them, and there's always the debate about how much we should or shouldn't subsidize them. But we subsidized them and we're still proud of those kids because we know they're the best. They're the best because they've helped make many other provinces great in this country.

They're probably responsible for making Alberta as good as it is, Manitoba as good as it is, Ontario as good as it is. They've gone all over the world. Mr. Speaker. Seventy per cent of those young people were going to look out of the province for work.

Now that's not the end of the problem, Mr. Speaker, that's not the end of the problem. Those 70 per cent didn't just necessarily leave, because once they have left, once they have left there's a tendency to bring along their brothers and their sisters because they'll phone home and say, guess what? I got a good job in Texas, I got a good job in Brandon. I got a good job someplace else. And you know there's a job here for what you can do. And before you know it, Mr. Speaker, mom and dad want to come along.

You go on the western side of the province, Mr. Speaker. And you and I are fortunate, Mr. Speaker. We live about in the middle of the province. It doesn't affect us quite to the same extent as it does when you draw a line let's say from Swift Current, North Battleford and the people that are moving out of province from those areas. It's very, very easy for them to do because they know as many people on the other side of the border as on this side, so they have friends all over. You and I, Mr. Speaker, may not have the same number of friends . . .

The Speaker: — I would just ask the member for Rosthern to please not involve the Speaker directly in the argument of his debate.

Mr. Heppner: — So, Mr. Speaker, the bizarre thing is we're used to — the last 10 or so years of this NDP government — people leaving. They promised 30,000 new jobs; they chased 24,000 out.

Now, Mr. Speaker, follow this. The students leave, their parents leave, and their grandparents really want to stay. And then along comes this NDP government and increases their fees up to 150 per cent. Remember, Mr. Speaker, that's doubling the fees that they had the month before, taking half of the original fee and stacking it on top. In fact, you remember one of the examples I gave, Mr. Speaker, where they actually have less money than what they need. They've got about \$160 left. They've got \$266 of expenses. They are in debt, so they may have to leave.

Furthermore, they find out that when they get money back from their dividends, as I said, Mr. Speaker, and from their RRSPs, this NDP government is going to take over 100 per cent of that money away from them. And so we do have some of those people saying, we may have to move. We don't want to move. I have my spouse in a seniors' care situation. I don't need to be

there, but I can see what's happening, so we may have to move.

The government, Mr. Speaker, has letters. The Health minister has letters on file with exactly those stories. He knows that's happening. The Premier, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has those same letters. He's aware of them. What have they done? Nothing. We've brought this up day after day, we read letter after letter, showing how the people, the seniors, are suffering. And this government has done nothing. They've been given opportunity after opportunity; they've turned it down.

Randy Burton, "Straight Talk": "Bright future optical illusion — call an election". And there's the gentleman that should call the election.

Okay 70 per cent were looking for work elsewhere. Nearly half of that 18- to 24-old age group the province is so proud of enrolling in university intends to leave Saskatchewan the first chance it gets. The first chance it gets.

There's an attitude problem here, Mr. Speaker. There's an attitude problem. This NDP government has created such a negative attitude in this province, it's unbelievable.

All you have to do is look at their favourite newspaper, *The Western Producer*. Go to the back, find the index under the ad section, the classifieds, look under auctions and you will find tens and dozens and dozens of farm auctions. Those farmers are not moving off the land and having some young person come on to it. Those farms are becoming abandoned because of the attitude this NDP government has created.

They have created an attitude of negativity that it's impossible to think that anyone could create that kind of a negative attitude, that people would actually leave this province that is so beautiful, that people would stop farming the land that is so fertile.

There are few things that farmers enjoy more, Mr. Speaker, than walking out in their field and bending over, and you see this when you talk to them. They won't stand in a field with their hands in their pockets for very long before they'll bend over. They'll pick up some of the soil, they'll rub it in their hands, they'll let the wind blow some of it away to see how much of it is chaff, how much of it is ground and soil. They love the soil. Farmers have loved in the soil in this province for a century — a century.

And now this NDP government is chasing those people off the land. They see no hope there.

I talked earlier on, Mr. Speaker, about the people who came to Canada, people who came to Saskatchewan with hope in their eyes, with young families that they hoped would be able to go ahead and start farming as they did. And it happened for one or two generations, Mr. Speaker.

And many farmers turned over their land to other young men and women and children, and they helped in many kinds of ways. They would sell it to them with no down payment. They would sell it to them with no interest and basically just, when you have some good years you pay something; if you don't that's fine. There were many, many farms sold to young people

on that basis.

Not anymore, Mr. Speaker. The seniors moving off the farms know they're going to need every single cent they can so they're not dying out in the streets with this NDP government. They know the way this health care is, the way they take care of their seniors, the way they raise their utilities, the way everything is going up under this NDP government.

They're going to need every cent they can possibly muster to stay alive themselves. And even if they could help, and even if they would help, how many young people are actually going to say, I want to start farming in a province where this government says we have a lottery for rain and you bet on a rain station Alberta or Manitoba?

How many are going to say, we're going to go ahead and start farming in a situation where they've taken out spot loss — it doesn't exist any more — where, when a government makes a deal with farmers, they tear it up. That was probably the worst sin of them all, Mr. Speaker, to break that trust with our farmers, the people who produce the food for us, that produce food for the world; a thing that we all take pride in, Mr. Speaker, that we consider ourselves the breadbasket of the world, that the hungry people of the world can look to Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan farmers to produce food for them.

What did they do? They downloaded on them. They raised their taxes. Mr. Speaker, all you need to do is go to some of our farm families and say, what has happened with your taxes in the last few years. There was a time, Mr. Speaker — there was a time, Mr. Speaker — when you asked what the taxes were on a quarter of land and the number would be 100, 2, \$300, \$400 maybe. That's now gone over a 1,000 and we're looking at the next 1,000.

That's only in the last decade or decade and a half, Mr. Speaker. For a 100 years there was very little change. This NDP government, in 10 years, has caused the taxes to go up for rural people in rural Saskatchewan more in the last 10 years than in the previous 100 years, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — That's the kind of negative attitude they've created. And we wonder why there aren't young people who want to get into farming when someone tells them our taxes have gone up more in the last 10 years because of the socialists than the previous 100 years. And I've talked about negative attitude. That's what this NDP government has done. They've created a negative attitude all over this province.

Mr. Speaker, I well recall, and many of the members of this House do as well, when PST (provincial sales tax) was just a few percentage points, very few percentage points. Then along came an NDP government and you know what? A year had barely passed, ballots were barely cold, and we were at 9 per cent — 9 per cent. And we wonder why we have a negative attitude when people say we can go across all kinds of borders, any direction — north, east, west, south — and we're going to have lower PST rates than in Saskatchewan. And then a few years later along comes this NDP government and they say

well, we're going to have to reduce this a little bit because we're going to bring down taxes to create a better attitude. So how do they reduce it? They brought it down a bit; then they widened it a whole lot, expanded it a whole lot into many other areas.

And fact is, Mr. Speaker, there was a budget not long ago. It was two or three years ago. The NDP brought down and they said: guess what? We're going to save the people of Saskatchewan taxes. And by the time the Saskatchewan Party finished going through that budget to see what it actually said, there was an increase in taxes, an actual gouging, an actual gouging.

And you know what? I have another member from Regina back there saying that doesn't matter. He says it doesn't matter that you've increased a lot of things in taxes, that you took a lot of things that hadn't been under taxes and now you're taxing it. It created a lot of costly red tape, red tape, Mr. Speaker. The money of this . . . And we need to talk a bit about red tape. And we have one of the schoolteachers from Saskatoon on the red side over there saying oh, there's black tape and red tape and all sorts of tape. Well, Mr. Speaker, the one tape I'm . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order please. Order please. We did come to what I would call convention in the House that there are certain words we would not use in the House, and I would remind the member that one of those words was the word red, and I would ask him to simply not to use that, to withdraw that statement . . . Alongside with other words that we should not be using in this House. So I would ask the member just to withdraw that particular statement.

Mr. Heppner: — Okay, I withdraw that, and I must admit it's sometimes hard not to discuss this, but I won't. So we're going to go on maroon tape.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have this situation. We're in Saskatchewan, and we do have people coming in from out of province. It does happen. There are people who look at Saskatchewan and realize what all of us who live there understand. This is a land of opportunity. There should be opportunity here. How can you have so much arable land and not have opportunity? How can you have more potash than most any other place in the world and not have opportunity? How can you have uranium and not have opportunity? How can you have all this forestry and not have opportunity? There's opportunity all over the place in Saskatchewan.

(20:15)

So people do come here looking for that opportunity. Then they find out, Mr. Speaker, that there is red tape around this province like you wouldn't believe. This government could very easily take care of that. And here's a good idea. They'll probably pick it up right away, and that's fair enough. The people of this province know what the plan of the Saskatchewan Party is, and so if they steal one of our plans, Mr. Speaker, if they take one of our ideas, as they did with ethanol — everyone in the province knows that — we really don't feel bad about that anymore because our plan is out there, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan Party's plan is out there. People know what it is. They know what it is in detail.

And so when we lay out the plan and the NDP out there decide to cherry-pick one or two of them, that's okay, Mr. Speaker, because those plans are good for the province of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when these individuals come to Saskatchewan . . . Let me just pick the dairy industry. There are a lot of people who come here and say there's a good place for a dairy. We've got water, there's lots of land. And land is a big thing, that's important. And I'm thinking of an example of an individual that came to my constituency, Mr. Speaker, and . . . Look who's all chirping on the other side. All of the people who don't know one end of a cow apart from the other one, Mr. Speaker. And they want to get involved in the debate about dairy farms. Well, Mr. Speaker, they will have an opportunity and they can convince us they can tell one end of a cow apart from the other. The two key numbers you need to understand are four and two. That'll help you tell one end apart from the other.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when they came from British Columbia to Saskatchewan, and they came here because of the opportunity of buying a good-sized plot of land, which they said that's what we're going to need because we want a large operation and we're going to need that to take care of our waste. And that's good; we can do that in Saskatchewan. They can't do that in the Lower Mainland in British Columbia; there isn't enough land there to maintain that kind of growth.

Now it would have been very nice, Mr. Speaker, if at that particular time they could have come up to one of the ministers . . . Recall the motion we're debating, Mr. Speaker, that there's a lack of confidence in the current Premier and cabinet.

Okay, let me continue on that. They should have been able to come to one minister and say, I want to come to Saskatchewan, I want to start a dairy, now what are the hoops? That minister should have said, I'll put you in contact with one person and that person will cover the whole gambit of all the things you have to take care of.

Not so, Mr. Speaker, not so. Not with this government. There was hoop after hoop after hoop after hoop they had to jump through. And when he thought he was almost finished, then someone else would come out of this bureaucratic woodwork created by this NDP regime and say, oh no, but you have to do something else. You have to do something else before you can get this dairy going. Eventually he did get it going. Very frustrated.

I'm glad he persevered because he brought literally millions of dollars into this province, and expertise, and his wife, and two kids. He brought them all to Saskatchewan and I'm glad he's here.

But what is his attitude? I spoke about attitude a minute or two ago. His attitude is this is not an easy place to get going. You got to be tough and mean and miserable to get through this government and find out what you all have to do. It's a bit like the old-timers I talked about before. You've got to be determined like you wouldn't believe. You've got to be about as determined as a settler was a 100 years ago to get through the red tape this government creates. It's a shame.

He has a bad attitude about that. And when he talks to his friends back in British Columbia, many of whom are thinking of coming to Saskatchewan to start a dairy, to start a feather operation, any one of those sorts of things, he's going to tell them but when you come here you're going to get caught with a lot of red tape. It's a bad attitude created by a bad government, and it's time we need a good election, and get a good government back in here. It will be a Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, Straight Talk. We need to call an election. "Bright future optical illusion":

Rather than taking advantage of short-term windfall in oil and gas revenues to reduce debt and cut taxes, (let me quote here) Calvert chose to jack up spending by some 7.5 per cent in last year's provincial budget.

Even at the inflated level, he missed the budget targets by . . . (half a billion dollars).

Half a billion dollars. Mr. Speaker. Randy Burton I believe does not have a Saskatchewan Party card and he says, he missed it by half a billion dollars. That's not just peanuts, Mr. Speaker. That's a lot of money. That's half a billion dollars in a province that doesn't even have a million population thanks again to this NDP government — half a billion dollars.

Listen to this sentence, Mr. Speaker:

No government in this province has miscalculated so wildly since the mid-'80s.

That's how they run their government along with Bob Rae, along with Glen Clark. That's the company they keep. That's the company they keep.

Mr. Speaker, we need to talk a little bit about Justice. We need to talk a little bit about Justice. We had, Mr. Speaker, at the last election, promises made and I've brought a few of those to the House today. The one promise that I dealt with was the number of jobs they were going to create and we know how wildly askew that went and we have to review that. Create 30,000. They lost 24,000. So we have to keep that in mind. That's the mindset. That's the negativity that this NDP government is creating in the province of Saskatchewan.

So when we come to justice, the Premier stood up and he said yes, justice is a concern for this province. Therefore we will go ahead and ensure that we will hire 200 more police officers. That election was a long time ago, Mr. Speaker. The people of this province think it was a very long time ago. In fact they think it's prime time for another one, Mr. Speaker.

Commitment made, 200 police officers. Now let's look a little bit about why that statement was made. Why was that statement made? Because under this NDP government in the last decade where they've been totally in charge, Mr. Speaker, totally in charge, we have become the car theft capital of Canada, the car theft capital of Canada.

Now you have to put that in perspective, Mr. Speaker, with what I said earlier about the people who came to this particular province and worked hard and worked diligently and worked intelligently and saved their money and were honest, community-minded people. Now how come three or four generations later does even the minister's car get stolen, even the minister's car get stolen?

And maybe one of the reasons that the people of this province have no confidence in the ministers, they figure surely the Minister of Justice who knows how many cars are stolen would protect his own car more than that. Or possibly it was a government car, and it belonged to the taxpayers, and he said so what, who cares?

But anyways these people, Mr. Speaker, who created this province, who worked so hard, now a hundred years later this province, built up by these kinds of people — honest, hard working, community-minded people — now we are the car theft capital of the world. And it happened in 10 years under an NDP government. There is no one else to blame for that. The programs were there. The plans were there. The philosophy were theirs.

Everything that was going to happen during those 10 years, they have to take full responsibility for. And what have these socialists given us? Car theft capital of Canada. Mr. Speaker, that is a shame. That is a shame in the truest sense of the word. Now, Mr. Speaker, car theft capital of the world. Let's just think about that a little bit. That means in the city of Regina when you park your car somewhere there's a better chance of it being stolen than in Vancouver, or Toronto, or Oshawa, or Halifax. This is where it's going to get stolen, Mr. Speaker.

Some time ago, Mr. Speaker, during the summer months when I was in Regina for a bit of a tour of duty here, I stayed at one of the hotels in town and was having breakfast there. And a lady kept getting up at breakfast and running to the window. And this happened quite a number of times and the waitress, wondering what was the cause of this behaviour, said to the lady, is there something wrong?

And the lady said well, I'm from out of province, I'm from Ontario, and I hear that cars get stolen here a whole lot, and I'm worried about my car. A tourist coming to visit Saskatchewan has found out the reputation given to us by this NDP government; can't even have a breakfast in peace, Mr. Speaker, but has to go run to the window to see if her car's been stolen.

It's worse than the Old West where you just sort of threw your reins over the hitching rail and hoped your horse stayed there and someone didn't scare it. At least you know the horse would probably be alive and well when you found it at the end of the day. When these people steal the cars, they don't usually find them in good condition. Car theft capital of Canada, Mr. Speaker.

That's not the end of it, Mr. Speaker. That's nowhere near the end of it. We're now starting to lead the country in arson. In arson. And we'll see these little headlines all over the paper. The newscasts will say, last night the fire department report . . . had to report at the sight of so and so many fires.

Most of those fires, Mr. Speaker, were arson. And we have chirping going on from the other side; they should be ashamed of themselves and they should feel sorry for the people whose cars, whose sheds, whose homes, whose churches, Mr. Speaker, have been set on fire.

In Saskatchewan it's a more serious situation than in any other province in Canada — arson. Under the 10 years of the regime of this NDP government, they're the ones that have done that. Car thefts, arson, break and entry, Mr. Speaker, break and entry.

And again we have the member from Saskatoon chirping as if it isn't her fault. Who else creates the economic situation that makes people contributing members of society? It's the government of the day. This government of the day has failed. They chased out 24,000 people. The rest of the people left here can't find work. They're left with a negative attitude. They're left in poverty. What other choices do they have, Mr. Speaker? What other choices do they have?

That's the situation, that's the attitude, that's the mentality, that's the environment this NDP government has created for them. And they should be ashamed of themselves. They need to be ashamed of themselves, Mr. Speaker.

Now that promise of 200 police officers. And the Justice minister just reminded me of that and I thank him for that. Some time ago, Mr. Speaker, some time ago when we checked the members it was 42. Well you would think when you make a promise on something where you're already the car-theft capital of Canada, and you've a problem with break and entry, and you've a problem with arson, and they say we have two more years. So in other words what they're telling us, Mr. Speaker, is we really don't give a care how many cars are stolen, how many homes are broken into, how many places are set on fire. We have two more years; let the games begin.

What a rotten, cheap attitude from the NDP. They just said it right over there. You heard it, Mr. Speaker, I heard it — we have two more years. What a shame. They've had two more years and those crimes are going up and this government isn't doing anything about it.

Some time ago 42 police officers were all they had created, 42. Now even if they kept their promise of 200 it would be way short, Mr. Speaker, way short. Why would it be short?

On average 41 per cent of our police officers could retire today. We have a senior police officer. They're getting up in years — 41 per cent could just go ahead and sign the letter, hand it in tomorrow and say I'm retiring. They're going to do that in the next couple of years, Mr. Speaker. In the next year or two or three or four or five, they will do that. And those will be hundreds of police officers. And 42 is by no means, is by no means even going to start to fill that gap, Mr. Speaker.

Now recently we heard they added about another dozen or so to that. So they're somewhere about a quarter to their promise. They're already halfway through their mandate and they had the gall to say, we've got two more years. Let the fires burn, let the break-ins happen, let the cars be stolen. What a negative attitude, Mr. Speaker.

Is it possible that those kinds of people were actually elected to this legislature who would say we have two more years and so who cares?

(21:30)

Mr. Speaker, the motion that's being debated here — the people of Saskatchewan have lost confidence in the current Premier and the cabinet. They have lost confidence, Mr. Speaker. They have lost confidence. When we stop to think of how many people have had something burned on their block or their community, have had a car stolen, have had a break-in take place; I am sure, Mr. Speaker, there is not one of us in this House that doesn't know one of those. And yes we do, because we know the Minister of Justice who had his car stolen.

Everyone in this province, Mr. Speaker, knows someone who's had one of those crimes inflicted on them. And this particular government has the nerve to say we have two more years so let it continue. That is a shame, Mr. Speaker, that is a shame.

Mr. Speaker, then the Justice minister says, well we're going to do something about this. We have between 30 to 80 hard-core car thieves around, so we're going to deal with this. So he comes up with this really special plan. Now you have to understand this. This is probably 30 to 80, so let's round it off to about 50, it's in the middle there somewhere. So we've got these people who are car thieves spread around Regina and the Minister of Justice says in his wisdom, I'm going to hire — ah, what is it? — four, six social workers and these people will solve the problem.

Now here's how he's going to do this. Half of them will have an office job. The other half are going to try and control 50 car thieves — 50 car thieves. Now here's they do this, Mr. Speaker. Here's how they do this. These car thieves are supposed to be at home at a certain hour of the night — and one of the mothers spoke very eloquently to the minister the day his car was stolen; I was there, I heard it — and here's how they check up on the car thieves. This is how the Minister of Justice takes care of car thieves.

So they're supposed to be at home at a certain hour of the night. So then one of his . . . minister's employees dials up the phone, in this case it was a young lady, phones up this young lass and says, good evening, are you home? Yes, I'm home. That's fine, click. Job's done. And the young lass — out the door. Out the door to go commit another crime.

And the minister had a severe tongue-lashing from that mother, that this government wouldn't give that mother any of the tools she needed to help rehabilitate her child. He got a tongue-lashing from that mother and he should remember that.

That is one of those people who is waiting for an election, Mr. Speaker, to get rid of this government, to change some of the things they're doing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — They want to get rid of this government.

So these very few social workers are going to make those phone

calls and are going to change a difference in the number of car thieves. Now there has been a decrease in the number of car thieves, but not because of that plan, not because of that plan.

They took a number of those young, hard-core car thieves and just took them off the street. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party had a plan, and I told you we had a plan. Our plan talked about what's been called boot camps— boot camps.

Now we have the minister saying we should put the cars in jail. Well isn't that a typical NDP socialist plan. Don't deal with the criminals, rather take the objects of crime away.

An Hon. Member: — Send them to Moose Jaw.

Mr. Heppner: — Send them to Moose Jaw. That was plan number one, but it didn't work.

So anyway, we presented the plan of a boot camp where you would take these young, hard-core car thieves, we would put them in a camp where they're taught responsibility. They're taught self-respect for themselves, which is one of the things that's very important. Under an NDP government there's none of that. You need to teach them respect for themselves, so they would have so much respect for themselves they would say, I wouldn't do this sort of a thing because I'm a person of value, I'm a person of importance, I'm a person who has something to contribute to my community. Why would I go steal a car? They would learn that at a boot camp.

They learn respect for themselves, respect for others, respect for other people's property.

Now what was the criticism of this Minister of Justice and the whole cabinet row? Mr. Speaker, what are we debating? We're debating a lack of confidence in the current Premier and the cabinet.

This particular Premier and cabinet tried to mock the boot camp situation. In Ontario, Mr. Speaker, they had a form of boot camp. Their repeat offender rate for young people, Mr. Speaker, was 50-some percent — 50-some percent.

They instituted this boot camp. Repeat offenders dropped 20 per cent. Fact is, it dropped more than 20 per cent depending on how you play with the figures. It dropped from 50 per cent, down to 30 per cent — almost half.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are more examples we can use. British Columbia used to have a boot camp. Their effective rate . . . and I spoke with people who worked there. This doesn't come out of the *Readers Digest* which is where they take their policy from. Their repeat rate for young offenders was 25 per cent — 25 per cent, Mr. Speaker, in British Columbia, 30 per cent in Ontario; 50 per cent with this minister.

Half the people going through his plan are repeat offenders, and we're supposed to feel secure. Our seniors are supposed to feel secure. Our business people feel secure. I doubt it, Mr. Speaker, when we know that under this person's system, half the people will reoffend.

And what did this NDP, front-row, cabinet minister respond to the whole thing? Oh, they'll have to do push-ups, and they might get yelled at. First of all, boot camps are not set up with a primary purpose of push-ups and being yelled at. But I can assure you when the young people in there who are car thieves aren't toeing the line, just to go ahead and say, well you disobeyed today. You messed up your room. You didn't help with the work around here. Therefore we'll turn you loose for a day just to steal a car. Maybe you'll come back and be rehabilitated.

That's the way these people work. They turn them loose again. They turn them loose again, so they steal another car. And then they say, well I guess that didn't rehabilitate you; we'll turn you loose again. We need a camp that teaches some discipline, teaches some self-respect for themselves, for other people, for responsibility. There's none of that.

Mr. Speaker, I asked the minister the other day whether he'd informally, voluntarily, on his volition — and not because of any of his actions — visited some of the correctional centres that we have in Saskatchewan. Now he tells me he's visited them all. Well, Mr. Speaker, those of us who visited them in those situations, we know that is not a situation that's likely going to rehabilitate anyone. It's not going to rehabilitate anyone.

Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, what's one of the things that I saw when I visited the correctional centre in Saskatoon. Walked out on the playground where they've got some recreational facilities. That's the same place where that big hole was cut in the fence and all the people escaped and ran across Warman Road, and they took them a long time to catch them. You will recall that, Mr. Speaker; you live in Saskatoon. Now those particular individuals, when I looked at this recreational area, there were coloured flags, all the same colour tied to every recreational device in the correctional area. And I asked the person giving the tour, why is this taking place? Well we have gangs in here, and I guess it's the gang who's now . . . take in this case, it was a black cloth. The gang that is represented by black, they've taken ownership. They've won authority around the correctional centre.

Mr. Speaker, we're trying to rehabilitate young people, and we've got gang situations with winners and losers in a correctional centre. Let's get something going that's going to work. Let's pick up something that has worked. It worked in Ontario, it worked in British Columbia.

And then people will get up and say well this is going to cost you a whole fortune. Mr. Speaker, we spend \$241 a day per person on people in our correctional centres. Ontario in their boot camp situation spends 214. They run a better program with better success for less money. It works, it has worked, it is working, and it will work here when a Saskatchewan government takes over.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — And they're waiting for an election so we can get rid of this government and do something positive and clean up some of the streets and make this a safer place to live. A safer place to live, Mr. Speaker, for those people who've

worked hard all their lives, who are now retired, living in their homes and they have to read the newspaper and they see there's arsons taking place, there's break and entries taking place, cars have been stolen, one thing after another has happened.

They want to feel safe and they ought to feel safe, Mr. Speaker, because they're the ones who built this country, they're the ones who built this province, they're the ones who've taken care of us, they're the ones who deserve a whole lot more respect than what this NDP government has given us over all of these particular years, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you would think after all the time that this government has been around, they could've done their own research on that. The research is there. It is published. But you see they're looking for some opportunity to get out of it. Why can't they create something positive? They've had ten years — ten years. Surely in ten years, Mr. Speaker, someone over there could've created a system that would work. They can't.

The NDP is totally incapable of a positive idea that's going to work, that's going to build this province, that's going to create opportunity, that's going to create safety and security for the people of this province. They're totally inept. They can't do it. There's not a good idea on that side — not a good idea.

Mr. Speaker, the whole justice scene needs to be reviewed. We need to look at, as I mentioned, the interaction with youth in our province, we need to look at policing in our province, we need to look at the funding for that, and that is something that has to be done.

Mr. Speaker, there's a very good program that's being developed voluntarily, not because of government, but in spite of government. And I think we have to mention that very often, Mr. Speaker, things happen in Saskatchewan in spite of this NDP government, Mr. Speaker.

There are a group of individuals working on a collaborative approach to marriage breakdown. Now let me explain that a little bit, Mr. Speaker.

That approach basically says that when a marriage is breaking down, instead of going through the courts, hiring your own lawyers, creating a lot of ill will, fighting over the spoils of the marriage, you sit down together and you say this isn't working. How can we break this up as amiably as possible without hurting ourselves, our kids, our families, our neighbourhoods?

There's an idea that just exists out there on its own. Why aren't they working with it? Why aren't they supporting it? It's a good idea. It's a very good idea, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, a bright future is an optical illusion under this government.

There's a possibility for a bright future but it will be under a Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — We have a plan. Our plans are definite. They've been presented all over the province. They presented to

record numbers in our cities.

Our leader, Mr. Speaker, our leader has spoken to larger groups in our cities than anyone else has in history that can be remembered, Mr. Speaker, presenting our plans. And it gets an excellent report from everyone that's there. Why in two or three years have the numbers that come out to a leader's dinner grown to that number?

Because they want to hear the ideas. They are hungry for a positive approach. They are hungry for ideas that work. They are hungry for ideas that make sense, and they're hungry for an election, Mr. Speaker — they're hungry for an election, Mr. Speaker.

Our ideas are presented at those meetings. They were presented at the 44 meetings we held around the province, Mr. Speaker. They're good ideas.

We have ideas as I mentioned, on how to deal with the justice system. First of all, that commitment that the NDP had for 200, that's an idea that ought to be kept. That's a very minimum — that's a very minimum.

We will present and we have presented all around the province, Mr. Speaker, eight different points. Eight different points on how to grow this province.

Now the NDP looks for eight ways to maintain power. They're power hungry and nothing else. Power hungry and nothing else. Why else would they have taken in two Liberals who mocked them without end and given them, and given them a cabinet position with cabinet perks? Why else would they have done that, Mr. Speaker, except that it was the only opportunity they had to hang onto power?

(21:45)

This NDP group wants nothing but power. They care not for the province. It was said very definitely today — and you heard them, Mr. Speaker — when they said, who cares about crime, we have two more years to try and solve it, two more years, and who cares in the interim — one of the most shameful displays by an elected representative that I've ever seen here before, with the exception of one or two other ones that were mentioned the other day, but we'll talk about those displays at a different time.

Mr. Speaker . . . okay, Mr. Speaker, let me continue. It says . . . and we were talking about this particular government that's not going anywheres, and I see them squinting. It reads: "Bright future optical illusion — call an election," and I'll read the rest for you:

So we see his government (this is our Premier) operating on two tracks simultaneously — one of them promoting government rule and economy, the other one tearing it down.

So the government wants to get involved.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know if you watched the news tonight, but you should have. There was a good article that came on out of

Yorkton. And we have an individual in Yorkton, as has happened in many other places in this province, that puts in security systems, and he is very upset. He has basically spent his life in electronics, things related to electronics. He has a security system installation company in the city of Yorkton. Now there used to be three, Mr. Speaker — there used to be three other ones — and along came SaskTel in all its wisdom and said, well if we don't install security systems, who else would?

There were three other companies doing it, Mr. Speaker. SaskTel comes in. Two of them shut their doors. This one individual says, I would like to keep on serving the people of my community. I'm a community-minded person. I get involved in what happens in the community. I care for the community. I know them. I want to stay.

So what did . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . and the people across use the word communicable. Well I think the way SaskTel is behaving in this case is almost a communicable disease because they went up to this business person and said . . . the term they used was partnership. We would like to form a partnership. Partnership is socialistic lingo for we want to take you over. We want to buy you out or we'll grind you into the dirt. The NDP call that a partnership, but it's not a partnership. It's just, pure and simple, an unfriendly takeover.

So they'd gone up to him and said, we want to take you over, because that's what it was. He says no, I've spent my life doing this. I want to stay in this community, I want to help in this community. And now what's he doing, Mr. Speaker? Every year, and it's sometime in March or April he gets this form that has some blank lines on it and numbers and boxes and coloured paper. It's called your tax form. And he fills out this tax form and he finds out that he owes some income tax because he's a good business person. And he ships some off to Ottawa, and he ships some money off to Saskatchewan, and he finds out that this gets filtered back through SaskTel and he's actually competing with his own money. Mr. Speaker, can you imagine that? Competing with your own money.

It's like a father and son saying, well son, I'll buy you the same business I have and see who can run the other one out of business the first. We would say it's got to be the most stupid, ignorant, self-deprecating thing we can do. And that's the way the NDP behave. Let's get together and see who can kill each other economically the first. That's the way they behave. And this has happened all over the province.

I believe the first one took place in Swift Current. Then they moved to Saskatoon and they tried the same trick over there. We're competing time and time and time again with our own taxpayers, their own tax dollars. They have to compete with that. Who else but with an NDP could do that?

Mr. Speaker, another heading dealing with the election. *Star Phoenix*, Saturday, March 16 — that's not very long ago — 2002. Probably by one of our best known sages in the province — best known sages in the province — Hugh Arscoff. We've all heard of him. We've seen him because when you see him once you never forget him. People in Saskatchewan love him. He's full of wit and wisdom and only wit and wisdom — other than the NDP over here who are full of a lot other things

besides wit and wisdom.

Now, he's talking about joint action. And I'll have to read a part of this to you, Mr. Speaker, because this is good stuff. He's talking about a coalition. He says:

A coalition has kept the NDP in power and only a coalition will remove them from power.

And he's talking about the way these two Liberals sold their political souls to the NDP and now they're sitting in cabinet. And they have the nerve to defend the socialist position that I've talked about for the last hour or two, Mr. Speaker.

Creating the negative attitude, the anti-business attitude, chasing thousands of people out of the province; not creating opportunity; making our students want to leave the province; taking money from our elderly, from our sick; putting debt in the Crowns. No end of mismanagement and these two Liberals have the nerve to go over them and join them.

Matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, there are three. There are three. You will recall very definitely that one of the other members from Athabasca also joined them in order to get into cabinet. And we know how well that worked because as soon as he got a hold of the department we had the North Battleford water situation. Those two went right together, hand in hand; responsibility is there. It's a statement that was made, a coalition kept the NDP in power and only a coalition will remove them.

And he says . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . yes, I said that already and will say it many more times:

You began by stating that, after business success, you had considered moving to Calgary or Arizona . . .

This is talking about the present Liberal leader, the present Liberal leader. And the letter is entitled, "Dear David Karwacki:"

. . . you had . . . (decided to move) to Calgary or Arizona, but . . . (you thought) you could be more help to Saskatchewan through provincial politics. You then sought and won the Liberal party leadership.

And then he says that Mr. Karwacki explains his thinking. So we need to get this so we understand it: "The Liberals were different. The Liberals had the right answer."

And that's not on the political spectrum, Mr. Speaker, let's make sure we have that right.

The Liberals had the right answer. Saskatchewan was ready for a change. The polls indicated it was the Liberal party the people wanted. Liberals had principles.

You were asked why you were spending so much time running down the Saskatchewan Party . . . (must have something to do with principles, Mr. Speaker, right?)

. . . running down the Saskatchewan Party when the real and common enemy was the NDP . . .

But I don't imagine he could do that because three of his brethren are sitting there in cabinet. So that gets close to home.

. . . the real and common enemy was the NDP and why you were spending so much time attempting to resurrect a dead political horse when a live one was available (Mr. Speaker).

The people of Saskatchewan know there's a live, political horse available. They want to ride it to victory in the next election and get these people out of there.

When asked if you would consider a coalition with the Saskatchewan Party, the answer was a loud and definite, "No way." The word coalition has been a dirty word to Liberals since the "defection" of Jim Melenchuk and Ron Osika to support the . . . (Liberal Party or the NDP Party).

Unbelievable.

Then Mr. Arscott . . . remember he's full of wit and wisdom now, let's follow this. And he continues in his letter and he says, "You, sir, do not know your history." And if anything we know with Mr. Arscott, he knows a lot about history. He's a history buff. When Mr. Arscott speaks on history it's important for us to listen:

You, sir, do not know your history. I have been where you are and have made the same mistakes you are making now.

Consider the general provincial election of 1964.

There's a few of us remember that. And the rest of you who don't remember it, now need to learn about it.

The Liberals were on the ascendancy and they pleaded with the Progressive Conservatives to join them. Together, they had the opportunity to permanently unseat the NDP.

Well, the PCs didn't do it — they didn't do it, unfortunately.

These are exactly the same reasons or justifications you give us now, 38 years later. You are a replay of the past, and that has repeatedly failed us.

There have been 15 provincial general elections since the first CCF victory in 1944 (15).

Now, Mr. Speaker, if we want to know why this negative attitude is there, why this negative attitude is there, we have to underline what Mr. Arscott says in this situation. Fifteen elections — more of them won by the NDP than not — almost all of them with only a handful. I think two or three, did they actually win with a majority.

It's just the way they snuck into power this time. Fewer votes than the Sask Party but they're in government. Just snuck in. They've done that time and time again. They have never had the public support. That's why they fight so hard to hang onto power, because they know they're not going to get it from the public.

Mr. Arscott says 15 provincial elections since the first CCF

victory. Now we know why Saskatchewan is in the situation we find ourselves in. One CCF-NDP premier after another one has led this province down this same path toward a lack of growth, toward a negative attitude, toward exporting our young people. Tommy Douglas was barely elected and the ballots weren't even cold, as I said earlier on, and he chased oil companies out of this province.

The record is there; we know it. Once they were out of province, what happened shortly after that? They did a major oil find in Alberta. They would have found all kinds of good stuff in Saskatchewan if we hadn't had that start with the CCF.

This NDP government has exactly the same mentality and it's gone on election after election after election — 15 times Mr. Arscott tells us. Now we know why we're in the state we are and it's time we had an election and get rid of this government.

In 13 of the 17 . . . here's the number I told you about, Mr. Speaker.

In 13 of the 17, the opposition exceeded the CCF/NDP totals, even reaching as high as 62.36 per cent of (the) total votes.

Saskatchewan is not a socialist province.

We just have a socialist government. This is a government the people want to get rid of because we're not a socialist province. We don't want to be a socialist province, and we want to get rid of this socialist government as soon as we can. That's why we need an election, Mr. Speaker, that's why we need an election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Saskatchewan, and I read this over again for the members opposite who don't always listen:

Saskatchewan is not a socialist province. It is a free-enterprise province. Too many have voted with their feet, given up and moved away.

Twenty-four thousand since the last time we had a provincial election; 24,000 voted with their feet and said if we can't get rid of the government, I guess we'll have to leave. Shameful, absolutely shameful, Mr. Speaker.

They've gone and not just the young people . . .

And notice who's repeating what I said earlier on, Mr. Hugh Arscott, the man of wit and wisdom:

. . . but many senior citizens who have left to be closer to their children. We are hemorrhaging people . . .

They're not just sneaking out. We are hemorrhaging people. And notice what else he says, Mr. Speaker. It's important, and I'm sure the socialists opposite missed it: we're not just hemorrhaging people; we are hemorrhaging wealth, Mr. Hugh Arscott says.

Because with these people goes wealth. With these people goes skills and opportunities and people who would contribute to our

communities. We've lost all of that. We've lost all of that. And with that we didn't just lose the individuals who are counted on a census. We've lost the wealth that they would have created. The wealth that would have built our roads, would have built our schools, would have ensured proper care of our seniors, and all the things that we want to do in Saskatchewan because we love our people. We love our young people. We love our seniors. It's something that this NDP government, without a social conscience, doesn't know how to do because they're just concerned about hanging on to power.

We can't keep doing things the same old way. We must have change. It is not a question of politics; it is a question of survival.

And he goes on to discuss with Mr. Karwacki, what he should do to ensure we get rid of the NDP socialist government. Well I'd like to read this sentence one more time:

We can't keep doing things the same old way.

If we do we'll hemorrhage another 24,000 people before the next election. We need an election now to save our young people, to save our seniors.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to move the motion and I'd like to read it:

That this Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan have lost confidence in the current Premier and the cabinet.

I so move, and it's seconded by the member from Moosomin . . . from Cannington. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(22:00)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am more than pleased to rise to second this amendment. And I would like to compliment . . . this motion . . . I would like to compliment the member from Rosthern for very succinctly putting the thoughts of the people of Saskatchewan together.

His words were very profound. His words were very much to the point. And as I said, Mr. Speaker, were very succinct. Mr. Speaker, there are a good many things that we could talk about, about why the people of Saskatchewan have lost confidence in this government. Led by the member from Riversdale, Mr. Speaker, it's a continuation of the government of the previous member from Riversdale with some significant changes though, Mr. Speaker, with some significant changes.

Things that would not have taken place under the previous member from Riversdale, Mr. Speaker, things like the attack on seniors. Mr. Speaker, we have seen an unprecedented attack by the NDP to people who have said for the last 50 years they were the great defenders, Mr. Speaker, the great defenders of those less fortunate in society.

And yet in their desperation to hang onto power, Mr. Speaker,

they have turned on the very people that have supported them these many years. They no longer care that those seniors in the nursing home are still the same ones that are sending a small portion, Mr. Speaker, of their old age pension to support the NDP party. And, Mr. Speaker, that is going to get a lot smaller once the NDP get their hooks into that little remaining income that those people have. Mr. Speaker, there will be very little left when the new fee structure goes in place for the seniors in our nursing homes.

You know, we talk about various jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, and what their tax rates are, what their tax rates are. You know, the NDP like to say that you need a progressive tax system so that those at the bottom pay the least amount and those who have the greatest income pay the most amount. And so you have various percentage levels of income tax. You have 25 per cent, 33 per cent, 49 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Well this government, Mr. Speaker, has gone beyond the bounds of any other government.

They were taking a fixed amount, Mr. Speaker, and then adding another 50 per cent tax take up to the maximum of \$1,500 a month. But that wasn't good enough for them because, Mr. Speaker, some of the seniors still had income. They still had enough, Mr. Speaker, to pay for their cable TV. They still had enough to go for coffee, Mr. Speaker. They still had enough to buy a gift for their spouse. They still had a little money, Mr. Speaker. That could not be allowed to continue.

They were wealthy people, Mr. Speaker, according to the Premier. And so, Mr. Speaker, what can they do? What can the NDP government do? How about the supposed wealthy people who are earning greater than \$12,000 a year? Well what they do, Mr. Speaker, they change the tax rate. They maintain the fixed amount at the bottom end and then change the tax rate.

And it's not a 25 per cent tax, Mr. Speaker; it's not a 50 per cent tax which was in place before. It's a 90 per cent tax. No one else, Mr. Speaker, charges 90 per cent taxes. It's even worse, Mr. Speaker, than the rates charged by loan sharks. They don't charge 90 per cent a month but this government is going to charge seniors 90 per cent a month, Mr. Speaker. It's usury. That's the term that's used when loan sharks are charging those kinds of rates, Mr. Speaker, but when governments do it's simply called taxation.

Mr. Speaker, not only is it 90 per cent on your gross income, it depends what kind of income you have. If you have dividend income of any amount, be it \$100 a month or \$1,000 a month, the rate there by the time the calculation is completed, Mr. Speaker, is 112 per cent. So you owe more money than you actually took in. Now that is NDP economics, Mr. Speaker; you owe more money than you could even earn.

You know, I don't know why they just don't say on the form when you apply to go into the nursing home it's . . . how much do you earn, give it to us. And just get it over with. That, I believe, would make the form simpler, Mr. Speaker. That's why the people of Saskatchewan have lost confidence in this government.

If there was one group in society, Mr. Speaker, that the people expected the NDP government to have even a mediocum of

compassion for it was for our pioneers. It was for our seniors. It was for our mothers and fathers, Mr. Speaker. Our grandparents. But the NDP, the government, backbenchers, the cabinet, Mr. Speaker, have abandoned them all. Every single one of them in a nursing home, Mr. Speaker. They are taking virtually every cent they have.

Mr. Speaker, the government opposite, the Minister of Health, said that oh no we're not going to touch their assets, Mr. Speaker. But once you hit 69 years old and you have to cash in your RRSPs, both the principal and the income they have earned become income to you. And so your savings, the principal of your savings, now becomes income, now becomes taxable at the 90 per cent tax rate, and you lose most of it, Mr. Speaker. That is what this NDP government will do to stay in power, Mr. Speaker. That is what they will do. They will take the money away, Mr. Speaker, from seniors.

Mr. Speaker, there's a columnist, an editorial writer in this province, that I think hits the nail right on the head. And its the *Waterfront Press* from Lumsden, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Lucien Chouinard is the editor, and his column is called "Shoot the Bull . . .". And, Mr. Speaker, the title of this particular article is called "Voodoo Economics".

And I would like to read some of his comments about the government's budget that they brought down earlier this month, part of which is the gouging of senior citizens income, Mr. Speaker.

And so Lucien says:

So what's the problem? Now that they want to use that money they have to borrow it.

Talking about the government's fancy slush fund, Mr. Speaker, the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. He says:

Essentially Saskatchewan is now running a deficit. According to the government of Saskatchewan this is an accepted accounting practice.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I kind of recall back in late '91, early '92 when I was first elected here, Mr. Speaker, the NDP government had a commission. It was called the Gass Commission, Mr. Speaker, and it talked about some of the practices of the previous administration, some of their funding, Mr. Speaker, of school construction. It talked about how it wasn't proper, how it was the wrong way to budget by having a separate account for the construction cost of schools by providing mortgages over extended period of time and bringing them in bit by bit, Mr. Speaker.

And lo and behold, what does the Minister of Finance do in this budget? What does the Premier, resident of Moose Jaw, representing Saskatoon Riversdale, Mr. Speaker, what does he do?

They form a new Crown corporation to do the very things that the Gass Commission said was wrong, Mr. Speaker. The very, very same thing. The things that a good number of those members stood in their place both during the '80s, throughout the early '90s, and condemned, Mr. Speaker, are the very

practices they're using today.

So, Mr. Speaker, the things, as my colleague from Swift Current said, the things they beheld are the things they have become. Mr. Speaker, they're copying them — they're copying them. And fact is, Mr. Speaker, they're very poor copycats at it.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to carry on with some of Lucien's words. And he says:

Let's put this in laymen's terms. At the end of the month you have a couple of hundred bucks left in your account. You decide to take (your) money and pay down your mortgage. Now how do you explain this to your spouse? A) you have \$200 left in your account and you're saving it for a rainy day; or, B) you have no money left in your account but you've paid down some of the mortgage.

Most of us are in . . . to carry on with Lucien's words:

Most of us would use option B. But let's say we have used option A like the government did. When (your) spouse went to use the money and found the account empty, would he or she feel they had been lied too (sic)? Probably.

Lucien goes on to say:

Why didn't the government just come out and tell us the truth? Could it be that they thought it would make them look bad because it meant that they were once again running a deficit?

Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chouinard has the government figured out. He understands their financing methods. He understands their explanations, Mr. Speaker. While they may very well say they have a savings account, there is no money in it. So when they take money out of it, Mr. Speaker — such as if you have a line of credit — you have now accumulated a debt; a debt that you use to pay down another debt perhaps, Mr. Speaker, but you're still left with a debt because there was no money.

Mr. Chouinard goes on to say to the Premier:

. . . your ship is sinking. It appears that new leaks are springing up much faster than you can plug the old ones. Maybe it's time to abandon the old ship and start building a new one which reflects the modern world. The days of Tommy Douglas economics are no longer relevant. It's time to move on.

Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chouinard has it figured out, and it's too bad that perhaps the member from Regina Lumsden doesn't read the local Lumsden paper, Mr. Speaker, and gain an understanding of what the real people in the world are saying about this government and why they have lost confidence in them, why they believe it's time, Mr. Speaker, for an election.

Mr. Chouinard also has another very good article. It's called, "The same old show." And again, Mr. Speaker, the title of his column every week is called "Shoot The Bull . . ." by Lucien Chouinard, editor of the *Waterfront Press*. And it goes on, Mr. Speaker, to talk about . . . it's pretty simple.

The economic environment in this province is not exactly stellar. I'll lay things out for you (he says.) If you haven't figured it out yet, every cash dollar starts its life in the hands of a private enterprise.

In the past, this may not have been a big issue. Lack of transportation and communication meant that you started a business in Saskatchewan; you likely stayed here. The same went for working people. Most people stayed and work close to home. Only the truly adventurous made the trek to work in another province.

Fast forward to today. Transportation and communications have made our world a lot smaller. Businesses and people are much adventurous and go where they get the best deal. That deal may be in Alberta, Ontario, the US (United States), or anywhere across our little blue planet. To stay in the economics game, an area must be competitive, both tax- and labour-wise.

(22:15)

So what's happening in Saskatchewan? Our government is running the same old show. It's still governing the same way it did back in the days of Tommy Douglas. The problem is that the captive audiences of businesses and entrepreneurs that Tommy and the boys had, have become really tired of forking over their hard-earned dollars and have moved on.

The businesses left are paying a bigger and bigger share of the pot, and eventually they, too, will get tired and move on.

Mr. Speaker, Lucien goes on to say:

In Saskatchewan, if Saskatchewan is ever going to get out of the economic doldrums, major changes will have to take place. For one, we need more taxpayers. To do this, we need more privately owned businesses, not Crown corporations, not government workers, but people who are willing to make it on their own.

And how do you get these people here? You have to create a business-friendly environment. This means lower taxes, less government interference, and the promotion of private enterprise. This runs contrary to the socialist ideals many held in this province. Many cling to these ideals like passengers dancing on the deck of a sinking Titanic. In the face of certain destruction, they are denying anything is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, every show eventually comes to a close. The Tommy Douglas show is long in the tooth, no longer has a paying audience. It's time for the new show that will raise the paying audience, the taxpayers, to its feet. If it doesn't happen soon, the curtain will come down on Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we're not prepared to sit by and allow the curtain to come down on Saskatchewan. We believe in this province. Mr. Speaker, there's not a member on this side of the House at least, who doesn't believe in Saskatchewan and believe that it's not too late to turn it around.

But to do that, Mr. Speaker, is going to take a bold and imaginative step, something the government opposite has not

presented in 10 years because, as Mr. Chouinard says:

They're still operating on the economic plan for 1944.

An economic plan, Mr. Speaker, that has failed since 1944. We had, Mr. Speaker, about a million people in 1944. Today we still have a million people but we have a whole lot less taxpayers, Mr. Speaker, and our prospects, while looking good in 1944, are severely diminished and are dropping out of sight.

Mr. Speaker, there is one way to turn this around, and that's what people are asking for. They have lost confidence in this government, Mr. Speaker. They have lost confidence in the Premier. They have especially lost confidence in the cabinet ministers who continually fail us, Mr. Speaker, investing in things like SPUDCO (Saskatchewan Potash Utility Development Company), Mr. Speaker; providing deficit budgets, Mr. Speaker; failing the people of North Battleford with their water; gouging the seniors, Mr. Speaker, on long-term care; not protecting us from car thieves, Mr. Speaker. All of those things are failures created by this government.

And, Mr. Speaker, as people pick up and move out of this province, the last thing they see as they cross the border, in whatever direction they're going, Mr. Speaker, is the failure of the Minister of Highways because the last thing they see is another pothole as they cross the border, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, they see the failure of the Minister of Agriculture to provide for agriculture. They know of the destruction of the GRIP program. They know, Mr. Speaker, how ... The Minister of Agriculture from Saskatchewan has lost the confidence, not only of the people of Saskatchewan, but of the federal government. They can't even talk to Minister of Agriculture in Ottawa. And the fact is today, it turns out a program that the Minister of Agriculture believed would provide 1,500 permits for access to water in this province, Mr. Speaker, for drilling wells, digging dugouts, it turns out is only 800 because he failed to be able to communicate with the Minister of Agriculture in Ottawa.

You know, Mr. Speaker, people are desperate for water in this province, and the minister fails to be able to deliver even a minimal program of 1,500 units of assistance and comes up with 8 because he can't talk to the Minister of Agriculture in Ottawa, Mr. Speaker. That's a very sad comment, very, very sad comment on the abilities of this government.

Mr. Speaker, and if there is one last cabinet minister who has failed utterly and dismally in providing for this province, it's the member from P.A. (Prince Albert) Northcote, the minister of Economic Development. I don't know why it's even called that, Mr. Speaker, because there is no economic development in this province.

You know, today in my mail, I got a fancy little brochure that said, "Major projects in Saskatchewan." Well most of those major projects, Mr. Speaker, are pie-in-the-sky dreams, projects that have been on that list time and time and time again. As long as this government has been in power, those same programs, those projects have been listed and yet they have still failed

to even turn the first sod, Mr. Speaker. They're pie-in-the-sky dreams and nothing more than that. But yet, Mr. Speaker, they continue to brag about them.

That's their economic policies, Mr. Speaker, economic policies that do not provide any assistance, do not provide any jobs. If they did provide jobs, then perhaps this government would have succeeded in reaching its goal that it set out for itself in 1999 when it last ran for election, an election which my colleague from Rosthern pointed out a number of times that the government opposite, the government party opposite, received fewer popular votes than did the members on this side of the House.

But they promised in that election, Mr. Speaker, that there would be 30,000 new jobs created in this province by the time that the next election rolled around. Well, Mr. Speaker, they've lost 24,000. They now face a deficit of their promise, Mr. Speaker, of 54,000 jobs.

Fifty-four thousand taxpayers, Mr. Speaker. Can you image the benefit to this province that 54,000 taxpayers would add? You know what, Mr. Speaker? That's almost 50 per cent of the people that pay taxes in this province, that pay in more in taxes than they collect back from the government, Mr. Speaker. That's almost 50 per cent more.

If the government was successful in creating those 54,000 jobs — not that the government should be creating the jobs, but rather creating their environment to create those jobs, Mr. Speaker — but if we had those 54,000 jobs, it wouldn't be necessary to gouge the seniors in the nursing homes, Mr. Speaker. It wouldn't be necessary to raise the tuition fees for students, Mr. Speaker, in our universities and post-secondary education classes.

It was just related to me the other day, Mr. Speaker, that students in university look at those students that remain in this province and don't leave as losers, Mr. Speaker. That is how bad it has become under the NDP government. When their classmates look at anyone who stays in Saskatchewan as a loser, Mr. Speaker, that's unacceptable. That's unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, that's the kind of attitude that needs to be changed, and the members opposite are not capable of making that change, Mr. Speaker. They are stuck in the time warp of the 1940s. The only view they see, Mr. Speaker, is in their rear-view mirror. Their only policies are a half a century old. And they have failed for that entire half century, Mr. Speaker, and they will not succeed in the future.

Yes, there are a good number of people, Mr. Speaker, who are very, very interested in the debate tonight because they have made up their mind, Mr. Speaker. And when you go across rural Saskatchewan, when you go across urban Saskatchewan, when you go to any corner of this province, it doesn't matter, Mr. Speaker, whether it's downtown Regina, downtown Saskatoon, whether it's downtown Alida, or any rural municipality, there's one question, Mr. Speaker, on the minds of everyone in this province. And that is: when is the next election?

They know what they want to do, Mr. Speaker, they know. They just want the opportunity to get rid of this government, Mr. Speaker. That's all they're waiting for, Mr. Speaker. They're waiting for the opportunity to get rid of this government. And it doesn't matter, Mr. Speaker, whether it's the cab driver, whether it's a nurse, whether it's a school teacher, a farmer out on his tractor, or the waitress at her job, they all want a chance to express their opinion, Mr. Speaker.

adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30. I wish everybody a pleasant evening.

The Assembly adjourned at 22:30.

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order, please. Order. Order. Order.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the . . .

The Speaker: — I'm sorry, members, I'm having difficulty hearing the speaker and the speaker right now should be the member for Cannington. Order, please. Order. Order, once again. Order, please.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are as anxious as the members on both sides of this House are for an election, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — But the people of Saskatchewan have an idea of what they want, which is not similar to the members opposite. If the members opposite had an idea of what direction to go, they've had 11 years to do it, Mr. Speaker, but they're not succeeding.

The people of Saskatchewan want a chance to vote, Mr. Speaker. They want a chance to express their opinion in favour of free enterprise, Mr. Speaker. They want a chance to express their opinion for a responsible government — which is something that the party opposite has not accepted in 11 years.

It doesn't matter whether it was the first day they came into power or today, Mr. Speaker, they cannot accept responsibility for any of their actions.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the citizens of this province know who is responsible for the last 11 years. They know, Mr. Speaker, who to hold responsible for that, Mr. Speaker. The people of Saskatchewan, the electorate of Saskatchewan know, Mr. Speaker, how to assume their responsibility.

And, Mr. Speaker, they will — they will exercise their responsibility. And when, Mr. Speaker, when they get the chance to go to the ballot box, Mr. Speaker, they will mark their Xs in a responsible manner, recognizing history, recognizing the future, Mr. Speaker.

There's one thing the people of Saskatchewan want. They want hope, and they want a future, Mr. Speaker. And they understand that under the NDP there is no hope and there is no future for this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Members of the Assembly, it now being shortly past the hour of 10:30, this House will stand