

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
March 20, 1986

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Private Members' Bills

Deputy Clerk: — Ms. Zazelenchuk from the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills presents the reports of the said committee which is as follows:

Your committee has duly examined the undermentioned petition for a private Bill and finds that the provisions of rules 56, 47, and 60 have been fully complied with.

Of the Saskatchewan Bible Society, South Saskatchewan District, of the city of Regina in the province of Saskatchewan, and the Canadian Bible Society, North Saskatchewan District, of the city of Saskatoon.

Your committee has also examined the petition for a private bill of Medical Services Incorporated of the city of Saskatoon.

Your committee finds that rule 60 was not fully complied with due to an error in the late date of publishing of the notice in the gazette. The error was not the fault of the petitioner, and your committee therefore recommends that rule 60 be waived and the petition be accepted.

Ms. Zazelenchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Cumberland, that the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills be now concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Hampton: — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on Monday next move:

That this Assembly urge the Government of Saskatchewan to instruct all petroleum wholesale and retail outlets to stop discriminating against their rural customers. Further, to advise the same that at no time must retail prices anywhere in Saskatchewan vary by more than 2 cents per litre, gas wars being the only recognized exception.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure today to introduce to you, and to all members of the Assembly, a group of 20 high school students from Carpenter High School in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, in my constituency.

They're accompanied here today by Keith Flanagan, their bus driver, three of their teachers, Leo Josephson, Bert

Brander, and Ron Dosdall, three former colleagues of mine, and who are their teachers and chaperons.

Mr. Speaker, these girls are here in Regina for today and tomorrow beginning the provincial play-offs for basketball, and I think it's important to note to all members of the House some of the work that's done by the High School Athletic Association and some of the activities that they do. There will be 40 teams in the city this weekend representing all divisions, 1A to 5A, and I know many of the members of this House will have teams from their various constituencies there.

This particular team with Mr. Dosdall, whom I've mentioned, since he came to Meadow Lake I believe that high school has the honour of having won, I believe, 12 provincial championships in various sports since he's been a teacher at that school. I think he should be congratulated for that, and I would wish them all well in the tournament this weekend.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sveinson: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you today, through you to the Assembly, two classes from north-west Regina. I'll introduce the smaller class first. It's a class from St. Bernadette Elementary School in north-west Regina. Their teacher, Don Zaharia, takes a very active interest in politics, and so does the social studies class who is here today. He's accompanied by Mrs. Stopanski, Mrs. Probe, and Mr. Spilchen, Mrs. Olesen, and Mrs. Glas. I certainly welcome the St. Bernadette Elementary School classes to the Assembly, and I know you'll find it very interesting and possibly very enlightening.

Also with us today is a class from the Centennial Elementary School in north-west Regina, 62 students from grade 8 who are accompanied by their teacher, Doug Bolander. Lorie Godwin and Harvey Swallow are also here with the class today. So I welcome them all to the Assembly, and I ask the Assembly to do the same, welcome them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly, a group of 28 students from the West Side Community College who are seated in the Speaker's gallery. They are down here, Mr. Speaker, on an educational tour, and I might add that the trip down here was over 500 miles to get to Regina. They are accompanied by their teachers, Linda Cowan, Karen Bradbury, Marie Taillon, Louise Pederson, and their bus driver, Ken Pederson.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to extend a special invitation to Brenda Hansen who is in the group, who is a niece of mine. I hope that this group will enjoy your tour of Regina. And on behalf of all members we wish you well and a safe journey home.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Domotor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to this Assembly, a group of students from Cudworth High School numbering 27 grade 8 students with their teachers and chaperons. We welcome them here this afternoon, and I hope they have an informative and informational meeting here and a good visit with the tour that they have established in the city. And I wish them a safe journey back home. I would like all members of the House to welcome them. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Expected Drop in Grain Prices

Mr. Engel: — I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture. Yesterday the Canadian Wheat Board advisory committee called upon your counterparts in Ottawa, the federal government, to protect the Canadian grain growers from the huge subsidies being provided to exporters of grain and farmers, both in the United States and in other countries of the world. The advisory committee urge Ottawa to make up the difference between the expected lower initial price which will be announced in a few days and the subsidized price which other producers are getting for their grain.

That kind of deficiency payment would bring Canadian wheat prices to just over \$6 bushel, this along the lines of recent resolution from the other groups, SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) and wheat pool; we could name others. Will the provincial government press your counterparts in Ottawa, you friend, Brian Mulroney, to introduce this kind of deficiency payments to protect the Canadian farmers, the Canadian grain grower, and particularly those farmers in Saskatchewan that are going to be impacted so adversely by this American announcement in particular.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I have encouraged the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board to maintain the initial prices where they are, because I believe that if we can maintain the initial prices where they are, particularly for the high grades of grain that you will see because there is a deficiency or a low amount of those grades in the world market, that we can be able to sell them and not have a deficiency in the pool.

And the second item: I said, if he can come up with additional financial money for grain producers across western Canada, that now is the time to do it. And I've talked to him personally about it, and I have suggested that he either come up with a combination of higher initial prices or maintaining the initial prices or some other source of money that can be used directly into the farmer.

In talking with American counterparts, I was in Nebraska about 10 days ago and met with former secretary of agriculture, Bob Bergland, under president Carter. And he was impressed with the fact that Canadians, and western Canadians particularly, had a western grain stabilization package that could send money out to farmers to the tune of 4.5, \$600 million at a

crack. American's don't have that. And his advice to me — as we were talking there — was saying, I think that you've done the right thing by not getting into the world market, but by providing a stabilization mechanism that the governments can contribute to and farmers can contribute to, and you've put a lot of money into western Canada and into the hands of grain producers. He is interested in that, and he said that we have, in the United States, spent billions and billions of dollars and are not curing the problem. And as you and I both know, it's getting worse; surpluses are increasing, and the farmer is isolated from the price mechanism in the world.

Mr. Bergland said, when he looked at our system, he said, I think you've got the right idea because you're sending cash into the farmers' pockets on one hand, but you're still competing better than we are as Americans down across the line and any place else in the world market.

So I would endorse anything along the lines of a stabilization mechanism that puts cash into the people's hands, on one hand, and two, makes sure that we do have some sense of sensitivity with respect to world markets.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Speaker, the question I asked is: will you support a deficiency payment? You're arguing that the stabilization program that's in place is good enough and that the last year's price was okay. If you keep that up, you're satisfied. Well we're not. The groups right across Saskatchewan are saying they need a deficiency payment, a difference to make up that amount to \$6, not level it out and freeze us in at three.

The question I asked: will you support the Canadian Wheat Board advisory who made their proposition yesterday that the federal government make up a deficiency payment over and above the stabilization plan, which we need, over and above holding the floor of the price? Are you prepared to support a deficiency payment? is what I asked you. And from your answer, it sounds like you weren't.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Engel: — The American farmer that's competing with us — and I wish I were in their place this year — they are guaranteed \$6 under their farm Bill — \$6 compared to our 3.20. Are you prepared to support at least a \$3 deficiency payment for Saskatchewan farmers? That's the question.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, there are many differences between American agriculture and Canadian agriculture. My friend opposite half the time doesn't want anything to do with the United States. He doesn't want anything to do with them. Now he wants to incorporate American farm Bills and put it right here in the hands of Saskatchewan.

I'll tell you when I was in Nebraska, there isn't a farmer in Nebraska that wouldn't trade places with a farmer in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — The programs that we've put together here — 6 per cent money for farmers, western grains stabilization, and all the other programs — this government has initiated things the state of Nebraska hasn't even dreamt of yet. And the federal programs coming out of the United States are not popular.

We're going to go to the wall for the farmers here. We have provided them with a billion dollars in operating money — something that your administration never did. And we, Mr. Speaker, will encourage the federal government to put as much money into agriculture as they can find.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Speaker, in about six weeks to eight weeks time I'll be prepared to take questions from the Premier. But right now the question is back to you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Engel: — The question today is: what are you going to do while you still have a friend in Ottawa? What are you going to do to insist that farmers get that \$3 deficiency payment?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, when I needed drought money in Saskatchewan, I phoned the Prime Minister, and I talked to him, and we got drought money in Saskatchewan. When I needed flood money for farmers in Saskatchewan, I phoned the Prime Minister, and I talked to him, and we got flood money. When I wanted the capital gains tax removed off farm land in this province, I phoned the Prime Minister, and I got it. When we wanted a new western energy accord, I talked to the Prime Minister, and by gosh, he delivered it.

Mr. Speaker, when we need assistance from the federal government, we are intelligent enough to know that if there are cabinet ministers from Saskatchewan sitting in Ottawa, we are going to exploit that connection with Ottawa. And we are going to develop all the programs and policies that are good for Saskatchewan people that the NDP never, ever could do, and never will be able to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Speaker, we're not going to get into a debate now on what the NDP could or wouldn't do. I'll do that, Mr. Speaker, when I make my throne speech debate.

The question now is: when are you going to get on the telephone and ask for the deficiency payment? If you can deliver, deliver on this one, because that's what the farmers need. They need the cash to run their operation. All the subsidies around aren't going to cover off the price.

According to the study yesterday by the panel of experts during the third annual Saskatchewan grain producers' conference said:

Prices for wheat, Saskatchewan's largest crop, could drop by another 20 to 30 per cent this coming year, the largest single drop since the mid-'30s. This will make them (the grain prices) in real terms lower than prices were during the '30s.

When your friends were in power in Saskatchewan the last time, the last time your friends were sitting on that side of the House, 50-some years ago, we had this kind of price for our grain, with the input costs they were. Will you get on the phone and save the day and get some money for farmers, or won't you? That's the basic question.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I, during our administration, have obviously got more money for Saskatchewan farmers than they've ever received in the history of the country from Ottawa. More money, more crop insurance, more western grain stabilization, more drought payments, more flood payments, more protection than they've ever had in the history of our country — during the last three years of our administration.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue to put together packages for Saskatchewan farmers here to make sure that they are treated as well as any farmers in North America, and we will have the best packages, we will have more support than they've ever seen in the past and the members opposite have ever delivered in the history of their administration.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Premier, would you mind answering the question addressed, and the question is simply this. Have you called the Prime Minister or the Minister of Agriculture and urged them to adopt a policy which would give deficiency payments to Saskatchewan farmers along the general lines recommended by the wheat board advisory committee?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I didn't have to call the minister because I talked to him face to face in Montreal last weekend, with respect to deficiency payments and other forms of income that could be directed right out here to Saskatchewan farmers. So I talked to him right across the breakfast table and said, that's the kind of things that you should do.

Mr. Sveinson: — Chicago futures, through the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, indicate approximately a 26 per cent drop in the price of grain between March and July of 1986. Is the Prime Minister willing to send a half a billion dollars into Saskatchewan to cover that shortfall if, in fact, the July prices are 26 per cent lower than those currently being received by the farmers?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — I can't speak for whether the federal cabinet is going to spend more money or less money. And the member opposite . . . I mean, I can't speak for the Prime Minister, or can I speak for any other cabinet minister there. I've said to the minister of the Canadian Wheat Board that we would like to see additional cash here going to grain farmers, and I told him that right across the kitchen table. And I can make it no clearer than that.

Housing Starts in 1985

Mr. Sveinson: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Many small builders in my constituency have brought to my attention the dismal record of this government in housing. Across this country in 1985 there was approximately a 22 per cent increase in new housing starts. In 1985 in Saskatchewan it was just negligible.

I ask the Premier, who conveniently left housing out of his throne speech, whether this government has any answers for those small contractors and individuals who depend on the housing sector for employment.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll turn it to the Minister of Urban Affairs.

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has directed a question concerning housing, and as minister responsible for Sask Housing I'm pleased to take some time to respond to his concern.

I think it's interesting to note, for the benefit of the House this afternoon, that total urban starts here in the province of Saskatchewan, housing urban starts, increased by 19 per cent in 1985.

The increase . . . There naturally, Mr. Speaker, because of the difficult circumstances in rural Saskatchewan, was not a commensurate increase in the rural areas of the province, and we certainly understand and appreciate that. Over all, units did increase in the province of Saskatchewan last year. We anticipate that there will be an increase again this year in the housing market in the province of Saskatchewan over last year, which was an increase over the year previous.

And you will recall, Mr. Speaker, that in the Speech from the Throne there was an indication that this government will, in due course, be dealing with additional programs that will stimulate housing construction in the province of Saskatchewan. I have had the opportunity to meet with the housing contractors here in the province on various occasions, and they are pleased with the prospects that present themselves for Saskatchewan in 1986.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sveinson: — New question. Just to let the House know, Mr. Speaker, how pleased they are, in 1976 in this province there were approximately 13,000 housing starts. Over the next 10 years it's dropped to 52 and 5,300 in '84 and '85 respectively. That has cost the province of Saskatchewan approximately 50,000 real jobs — jobs in the housing sector, a sector which employs one out of six people employed in Canada.

I ask the minister what he has in store for those 50,000 people who were unemployed, and whether they can expect to get back into the housing industry under the policies of this present government.

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if the member is asking the question relating to housing starts or relating to unemployment and to the development of job opportunities here in the province of Saskatchewan. If he

is asking questions about housing starts, then I have just indicated, Mr. Speaker, that in fact there has been an increase here in housing starts in the province of Saskatchewan, that there will be an additional increase again in 1986.

If he's asking a question about employment and employment prospects and the creation of jobs here in the province of Saskatchewan, he's going to have to look a long ways, Mr. Speaker, before he is going to find a better employment record and a better record for the creation of jobs than you will find anywhere except in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sveinson: — Certainly during periods of high interest rates construction does suffer. I ask the minister if he has any answer to the present problem of high interest rates and qualification by home owners in this province so they can afford to purchase existing homes and, in fact, new homes, which employ people with real jobs not increase the bureaucracy as your government has done.

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I would remind the members of the Assembly and the people of the province of Saskatchewan that it was this government, during times of high interest rates when home owners were crushed with the burden that was difficult to bear, and they were crying out for assistance so that they could keep their family home, or so that they had the opportunity to in fact build a home, that it was this government which responded and responded in spades to help the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — And I would remind the member opposite that interest rates in this country, Mr. Speaker, are lower today than they have been historically for a long period of time. And it's a new government in Ottawa which has helped to create that. And they are going down, and they are going to be going down further, Mr. Speaker. And those who think that there is any other option except a Progressive Conservative government that helps people keep their homes and purchase homes, they are sadly mistaken, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. The member has really risen on three new questions rather than supplementaries. I'm going to move on to the next questioner.

Tabling of Provincial Auditor's Report

Mr. Lusney: — I have a question for the Minister of Revenue and Financial Services. Mr. Minister, this has to deal with the Public Accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1985. Mr. Minister, has the Provincial Auditor completed his report or audit of the government spending for the last year, and will those accounts be tabled in this legislature soon, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, the Provincial Auditor has completed his report, and yes, the report will be tabled shortly.

Mr. Lusney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, could you be a little more specific of when? We have been asking you that question since last fall, the fall session. It hasn't come forward. When will this document be tabled in this House?

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Well, Mr. Speaker, thank you again. The document will be tabled in due course, and we expect it will be quickly.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, the Public Accounts have been tabled in this House, since 1971, no later than March of any given year — no later. Most of them have been December, January, and February, except for the years when you were in power, when they were tabled March 23rd, 82-83; 83-84, April 12. And this year it looks like again we will not be having these documents tabled before the next election. Why, Mr. Minister, are you hiding those documents from the people of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have nothing to hide. And it's not uncommon, as the member himself has said, that the documents, the Public Accounts, be tabled in the spring sitting. We're in the spring sitting. We're in the first few days of it, and we will table it.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, we are dealing with over \$3 billion of taxpayers' money. I am sure . . . and my constituents keep asking me, when are we going to have the opportunity to look at the expenditures of this government? Mr. Minister, will you make a commitment?

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. It's impossible to hear the question.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, will you make the commitment to this House that those documents will be tabled by tomorrow so that the public of Saskatchewan could have a look at the expenditures of this government?

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, I'll make the commitment to the House that we will table the public accounts' documents as soon as possible.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, the minister has indicated that the auditor has completed his report. The minister has indicated that his government has nothing to hide. Would he care to indicate the figure for the deficit, which those documents show and the auditor has shown, for the year ended March 31, 1985. Will you just tell us that, to the nearest 10 or 20 million?

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate that the member opposite has difficulty dealing with smaller numbers that most of us are accustomed to, but he's well aware of the procedure of this House and that the documents will be tabled, and when they are tabled, all figures in them will be published.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Minister, are you stating that there's anything which is preventing you from telling this

House what your deficit was, other than your desire to hide from the people of Saskatchewan just how monumental that deficit was?

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Well, Mr. Speaker, when the gentleman opposite talks about hiding things from the people of Saskatchewan, we could go on at great length here. We could talk about deficits hidden in the Crown corporations for 11 years while they were in government. We could talk about a certain heritage fund. We could talk about investments allegedly made that would have carried the program for this province for years and years had they only been invested wisely instead of squandered.

But, Mr. Speaker, we will have the Public Accounts of this government tabled in due course, and then they will be published, and this government then, as the people of the province will know, has nothing to hide.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, will you admit that the real reason why you won't give us the Public Accounts and the auditor's report, which you admit are ready to be tabled, is because you are going to delay the tabling of that document until after the call of an election, so that information will not be available to embarrass you during an election. Will you admit that's what you're really waiting for is the call of the election so we won't get it until afterwards?

Hon. Mr. Morin: — No, Mr. Speaker. I will not agree with that.

Mr. Shillington: — Will you then give us the date upon which you're going to table them?

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Within days, Mr. Speaker.

Road Access into City of Regina

Mr. Sveinson: — I have a question to the Minister of Highways and it pertains to access to north-west Regina on McCarthy Boulevard off of, I suppose, No. 11 Highway which would, in fact, draw traffic through my constituency into two malls that do suffer from time to time because of that traffic flow going into the downtown core of the city.

I would ask the minister if there's any negotiations with the city of Regina to accelerate that access so that traffic moving into Regina on No. 11 Highway could, in fact, filter into north-west Regina and the two malls that do a great deal of business with the city, in this city, and for this city.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not familiar with the exact location of the highway that the member opposite is speaking about. But I would say this to the member opposite. If indeed you are genuinely concerned about that access, about that highway, I invite you, sir, to do your job, come to my office. I will be very happy, very happy to meet with you at any time and discuss it fully.

Mr. Sveinson: — By way of a supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I would ask again that the minister undertake to

draw the attention to the city of Regina that he's willing to discuss the problem and that he request the mayor of the city of Regina and myself to meet with him in his office and discuss this access.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — I'll be very happy to do that, sir.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, the mayor of Regina has been heard to complain publicly, and he has said he has complained privately to you, that the level of funding provided in the last budget isn't going to permit some of these projects to go forward. Have you, Mr. Minister, responded to those inquiries from the mayor of Regina, and have you assured him that in the upcoming budget these badly needed projects will be funded properly?

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — I have not had correspondence with the mayor of the city of Regina. I do understand that he has made certain statements in the newspaper. I do also understand that he will be meeting with the Premier in the near future, and perhaps he has met with him in the last few days. I would be very pleased to meet with the mayor of the city of Regina on that matter or any other issue relating to the Department of Highways.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Appointment of Art Wakabayashi as Chief Negotiator

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I rise with pleasure this afternoon to announce to members of this Assembly the appointment of Mr. Art Wakabayashi as our province's chief negotiator on trade talks.

Mr. Wakabayashi is currently economic development co-ordinator with the federal government in Regina. He will be joining us April 14th and will serve as chief provincial representative for Saskatchewan on the federal-provincial continuing committee on trade negotiation. That committee is responsible for both bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations.

Each province, Mr. Speaker, will have a chief provincial representative to work with the federal negotiator, Simon Reisman. We are the fourth province, thus far, to name our representatives to these vital tasks, and I am very pleased to have a man of Art Wakabayashi's skill and expertise as our chief provincial negotiator. As many of you are aware, Mr. Wakabayashi is a Saskatchewan native with extensive experience in government policy formulation at both senior levels of government. It is essential that we have such strong representation on the federal-provincial committee on trade negotiations, since this subject and outcome is of tremendous importance, Mr. Speaker, to the province of Saskatchewan and to our people.

At this time, I would like to emphasize that Saskatchewan has a significant interest in both the trade negotiations with the United States, as well as the multilateral trade negotiations under the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade).

In virtually no other province do exports play such an important role in the economy as they do in the province of Saskatchewan. Our exports of grain, oil, potash,

uranium, and oil-seeds, as well as manufactured goods and services, account for nearly half of the provincial economy and almost half of the jobs.

Saskatchewan considers it imperative that Canada achieve enhanced access to new and expanded markets, particularly for its agricultural products. For this reason, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Wakabayashi's major task will be to ensure that the federal government recognizes Saskatchewan's interests and concerns in the development of Canadian objectives and negotiating strategies for the upcoming trade negotiations.

We believe, Mr. Speaker, that the initiation of the trade talks will mark an important economic milestone for Saskatchewan and for western Canada, regions whose economies have traditionally been resource-based and based on trade. This government is convinced that the freer exchange of goods and services between Canada and the United States will help to redress a long-standing imbalance in Canadian economic policy, as well as to ensure a continued high standard of living for all Canadians, and particularly those in Saskatchewan.

We are also convinced that an important opportunity to expand markets for Canadian agricultural products was lost in the last round of multilateral trade talks. Accordingly, we have taken the initiative to ensure that the trade in agriculture commodities will form an important part of the upcoming round of multilateral trade negotiations under the GATT.

Mr. Wakabayashi will head up a small secretariat of expert provincial officials to oversee the preparation of Saskatchewan's input in Canadian preparations for the talks. We look forward, Mr. Speaker, to the upcoming federal-provincial talks with optimism and with great expectation, and I am delighted that Art Wakabayashi has agreed to accept the position as chief provincial negotiator. That, in itself, Mr. Speaker, is a good start.

Mr. Wakabayashi is in the Speaker's gallery today, and I am sure that all members of this Assembly join me in wishing him well in his important role as chief provincial negotiator.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, let me add a very brief word. We support the appointment of a provincial negotiator to deal with the upcoming issues in trade talks, not only with the bilateral trade talks between Canada and the United States, but also the more general trade talks surrounding the proposed revisions to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

We believe that, particularly with respect to GATT, it is important that our point of view be put, since a very large quantity of our exports enter into world markets, some of it to the United States, but a great deal of it to other countries and we, accordingly, favour the move which will increase the knowledge of Canadian negotiators of our concerns with respect to international trade in agricultural products.

With respect to the person selected, we would support the appointment of Mr. Wakabayashi. We believe him to be a public servant who served governments of various political stripes with distinction, and we have no reason to believe that he would not serve the people of Saskatchewan well in the position to which you suggest he be appointed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 1 -- An Act respecting the Establishment and Operation of the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre for the Provision of Rehabilitation and Extended Care Services in Saskatchewan

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill respecting the Establishment and Operation of the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre for the Provision of Rehabilitation and Extended Care Services in Saskatchewan.

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

Bill No. 2 -- An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I wonder in the interest of expedience if we could refer items 1 through 17 inclusive to motions for returns debatable.

Mr. Speaker: — Items 1 through 17 orders for returns debatable.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Mr. Klein, seconded by Mr. Domotor.

Mr. Petersen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the clock ran out on the speech I was making, and I've just been reviewing some of the last words I spoke in an attempt to regain my train of thought. And the last words I was speaking yesterday was that I enjoy working with my constituents. That's something that I really need. I won't lie to them. I won't give them a snow job, and I won't try to tell them something that is unbelievable.

And in going through my notes from yesterday's speeches, I notice that wasn't characteristically true of members of the opposition. As a matter of fact one member yesterday, in his reply, made some comments about employment in Saskatchewan. And the member for Shaunavon indicated firstly that when the NDP took over in Manitoba in November, 1981, the unemployment rate was 11 per cent, one of the highest in the country, and has since dropped to 8 per cent, the lowest in the country. He also indicated, Mr. Speaker, that when the PCs took over in Saskatchewan in 1982, the unemployment rate was 5 per cent, the lowest in the country, and now is greatly in excess of Manitoba's. Well, Mr. Speaker, to put it mildly, I think that's a prevarication upon the truth.

The truth is, in Manitoba, in November of 1981, the actual unemployment rate was 5.8 per cent, and in February of 1986 the actual unemployment rate is 8.9 per cent.

Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, the unemployment rate in May of '82, when we took over from the NDP, the actual was 5.6; February '86 the actual is 8.7. Mr. Speaker, that's in direct contradiction to what the member from Shaunavon said yesterday. That member, Mr. Speaker, that member over there deliberately, deliberately left out parts of the truth, and I have just spoken them.

I'd like to give you some comparative employment figures, Mr. Speaker. In the last 12 months of the PC government 17,000 jobs were created in Saskatchewan, an increase of 15,000 in the labour force, including 13,000 increase of women in the labour force, Mr. Speaker. The last 12 months of the NDP government 1,000 jobs were lost, and the labour force only increased by 7,000. In Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, from November 1981 to January 1986, they only created 15,000 jobs, and furthermore, over the last 12 months Manitoba only created 14,000 compared to 17,000 here in Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I got those figures from the Saskatchewan Bureau of Statistics, which in turn are taken from StatsCanada labour force statistics.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that's another indication of how members opposite have tried to, shall we say, misdirect the people of Saskatchewan. They have time and time again stood up in this House and told partial truths. They have changed figures to their benefit, and they have done it blatantly and bold-facedly. And they have done it without shame, and they do it every day, again and again and again continuously, Mr. Speaker. It is something that I've had to listen to here for the last four years, and I'm getting sick of it, and so are the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1445)

Mr. Petersen: — Mr. Speaker, members opposite have continually gone on trying to impugn the character of other members of this House time and again, time and again, and they have not only done it in the Chamber, they've done it outside as well, Mr. Speaker. And it's only

by the good grace of some other hon. members that members, who are on the opposite, are not in court at the present time.

But everything in love, war, and politics is fair, I guess, so I can put up with it — I can continue to put up with it. I suppose, Mr. Speaker, after the next election when they return even fewer on their side, the opposition will be shrunk in size, I'll still have to listen to it because time and again they will continue to try to mislead the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, to get back to my constituency, I spoke yesterday of the number of improvements that have happened in the last four years and I feel proud of those improvements. And this morning I was talking to a young farmer out in my constituency who was a land bank recipient, and he talked to me back in November, and the financial institution that he deals with could no longer extend him moneys to operate on. He did not have sufficient collateral, in their opinion. He just got his cheque for 6 per cent money, \$25 an acre, and he's going out to buy his seed and his fertilizer, Mr. Speaker.

If it wasn't for this government, Mr. Speaker, that young farmer would be out of business. He is one of the opposition's beloved land bank tenants. And he's a good operator, Mr. Speaker, but he doesn't have any collateral left because the banks won't accept land owned by someone else, leased land, as collateral. You know that, Mr. Speaker — you're a farmer too. But that great bastion, that great wonderful elephant that the opposition created, the land bank, was supposed to save farmers from that. Well, Mr. Speaker, it didn't; it didn't. It was programs like our government's 8 per cent money to help young farmers get started, and our 6 per cent money to keep young farmers farming, that has helped them. In my constituency, Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, that's very, very important.

I also, Mr. Speaker, in my mail this morning, received an invitation from an elevator company to attend an opening and to officiate at it and that was from the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool in the town of Wadena. They have just completed a new elevator there, Mr. Speaker, and we're very fortunate in our area to have that company continuing to expand its operations. It's a fine company with a long tradition, well trusted by farmers.

There are other areas in the province where the farmers aren't so lucky and their elevators are going. They have a problem, Mr. Speaker. The problem that the other farmers have is that tough times because of weather, because of world commodities, prices, have caused companies like Sask Wheat Pool to close their facilities or to definitely look at temporarily shutting them down, laying off staff, and that's unfortunate.

Small business, Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, in my constituency is very, very important and it relies on the farmers, and if it wasn't for governments like ours

providing 8 per cent money for those farmers to own their own land, and if it wasn't for governments like ours providing 6 per cent money operating so they can continue to farm their own land, that small business wouldn't exist and the Sask Wheat Pool wouldn't be building an elevator. They wouldn't be constructing elevators; they wouldn't be hiring more staff; they wouldn't have their farm service centres open.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we not only have young people in our constituency, we have senior citizens as well. Many of those senior citizens have not been able to put away enough over the last 15 or 20 years so that they can afford private nursing or that they can afford someone to come in and look after them, and yet, Mr. Speaker, they do not qualify for a nursing home because they're in relatively good health.

We came up with an interesting idea called enriched housing, Mr. Speaker, and in my constituency it's helping immensely. There's 16 units scheduled for the town of Kelliher — there's six already built. And in the town of Wynyard, Mr. Speaker, which is just adjacent to my constituency but serves many of them, there's been a new enriched housing complex being built, about 20 beds, I believe, and that's in the constituency of Quill Lakes. It serves a lot of people around there.

Mr. Speaker, my constituency has done very, very well by this government. It's done better under this government than the former administration, indeed, and I believe part of that is because I'm a farmer and I understand farmers. I'm one of them. I understand their situations. I understand how they feel. And I have a family — not a family of Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, but a real, live family with young people and old people in it. And if it wasn't for our government any number of those people would not be enjoying the types of benefits they are enjoying today.

And the members opposite are fond of crying about how tough times are, and we've heard from a number of farmers around the province, that yes, indeed, they're in trouble. And we've heard the opposition cry for years and years about how tough things were. But they never did anything, Mr. Speaker. High interest rates, '79, '80, and '81 — 24 per cent interest rates weren't abated. They never did anything.

We, Mr. Speaker, on the other hand, put together an agricultural input committee, a committee of cabinet that travelled around the province, Mr. Speaker. We spoke to hundreds and hundreds of farmers in every economic level there is. And we weren't just asking for them to tell us the same old things again and again about how tough things were or how the prices were or how low the prices were. We asked them for their solutions. We asked them what they would do. That's something that the members opposite have never, ever managed to do because they believe in centralized government, government from the top, and tell the people what's good for them.

The member for Quill Lakes loves telling people what's good for them, and if he had the guts to stand up in this House and say something instead of speaking from his seat, we might learn something. I say "might," because I

doubt it.

But that ag input committee, Mr. Speaker, that travelled around, heard a number of solutions to some of our concerns. Security has always been important to the people of Saskatchewan, especially in the rural areas, because we have so little of it. We're subject to the whims of the weather, world prices, quotas, the wheat board, and indeed plagues. Eleven years of the NDP is indeed a plague. One thing that the people out in the countryside told us was that the security that they need has never been provided by any government — not just security of prices, Mr. Speaker, but security involving retirement.

When I was campaigning in 1981 and 1982, Mr. Speaker, I talked to countless farm wives. And one of the biggest concerns that they had was: what happens to me if my husband should pass away? They didn't have any type of fund built up; they didn't belong to a big corporation that had a pension plan for them; and indeed the NDP had never done anything for them except tell them how wonderful the NDP was.

Well, Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne we mentioned a pension plan for home-makers. Mr. Speaker, that pension plan for home-makers is one of the greatest things that could ever happen to agricultural people in Saskatchewan. That particular sector of society has been denied, through no fault of their own, access to that type of a pension plan.

There's the old saw about farmers living poor and dying rich, and that may indeed be true. Farmers put back most of their income into the farm. They don't have access to government and company pension plans. They don't have oftentimes a steady source of income. Farming has been a boom and bust thing. And indeed these people want it. I've heard that; countless other members have heard it as well; and I'm sure the members opposite heard it too for 11 years, but they didn't anything about it. We are, Mr. Speaker.

Those farm wives will now be able to put a certain amount of money aside, Mr. Speaker, for their retirement, for their comfort as they grow older, for their comfort when they quit farming, in their retirement. And that's something that they need. That's security, Mr. Speaker.

That's something the NDP never gave them. The NDP said, we'll come out and expropriate your farm. That was the security they had. We'll buy some potash mines and we'll be able to own them. That's security? I doubt it. I really doubt it, and the people of Saskatchewan doubt it too. That's why they elected us in 1982. And they elected us to put this type of program into place. And it ties right in, Mr. Speaker, with our support of the family farm, our belief that families are more important than Crown corporations, our belief that without the family farm in rural Saskatchewan you won't have rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, there's another portion of rural Saskatchewan that we should talk about, and that's the young people. Those young people, Mr. Speaker, that are now in our elementary schools, our high schools, so on and so forth, had to look forward to their only opportunity

being leaving the province of Saskatchewan prior to 1982. Indeed, many of us did. I had to; couldn't find a job here. I was a journeyman mechanic and couldn't get a job in Saskatchewan. I moved to B.C., but I came back to farming. I came back to farming. And for the information of the members opposite, yes, I was a good mechanic — better than some of the members opposite were lawyers, I understand. At least I could make a living at it.

And, Mr. Speaker, countless other young people in the province had to leave too. Now these young people who are getting out of high school this year can look forward to jobs created here in Saskatchewan. The oil patch is still rolling. Thousands of jobs are being created. I know a lot of my young farmers go out to the oil patch in the winter-time or up on the diamond drills and they work and supplement their farm income. They're hard-working folks and they don't have to go to Ontario or B.C. or Alberta any longer. They can do it here in Saskatchewan.

And they can it with training, Mr. Speaker. They no longer have to leave the province or wait two years to get into our technical institutes. Our new technical institute in Prince Albert, along with upgraded and enhanced programs in other institutes throughout the province, are giving these young people a place to go to get trained so they can get jobs — jobs that are available in Saskatchewan.

And that's very, very important because those same young people are tomorrow's farmers, tomorrow's business men, and yes, even tomorrow's politicians. That's very, very, very important for us. Without a future, those people would have had to leave but now they have one.

(1500)

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite tell me that I might be back in B.C. after the next election. Well, that could be. After I'm elected I'd like to travel to B.C. to see how they're doing out there. I assure you that the members of the opposition won't have that opportunity. The best they'll be able to do is scurry home and hide their tails because they're going to lose. And they're going to lose because of the things I have pointed out today in my reply to the throne speech. They didn't care. They let Saskatchewan go down the tubes for 11 years. They still don't care, and now they're running around yelling doom and gloom, or else, me too; me too. And the people of Saskatchewan can see through that.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the Speech from the Throne 100 per cent. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Meagher: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise today and join with my colleagues in replying to the throne speech. This throne speech has been described by some as an election throne speech. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition referred to it as an election throne speech. And I have to confess that I've referred to it as an election throne speech myself. And I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I would be prepared to go to the people on the basis of this throne speech and the

initiatives that this throne speech lays out for the constituents of Prince Albert.

It is a blueprint for further development in Prince Albert and across Saskatchewan. It's designed to advance the interests of individuals and families, which is the foundation for our society here in Saskatchewan, and it's a strong foundation indeed. And I am very pleased to see that the government recognizes the family as the basis of our society, and that it is the individual and his initiatives that makes the economy grow, not government.

As an MLA who comes out of the small-business community, I am particularly pleased with a couple of specific initiatives proposed in this throne speech. The first one is the proposal to establish a code of conduct to govern the activities of elected public officials, particularly members of the legislature.

Having been myself subjected to allegations of conflict of interest, that were unfounded by nevertheless created a perception of conflict in the public's mind, I believe that this initiative is overdue. And I want to compliment the Premier for including in the throne speech this commitment, as I have requested.

This legislature, as are many other legislature and parliaments in Canada, are clearly under-represented by people from the small-business community. And I believe one of the reasons for that is the fact that they can be subjected to this kind of allegation and are hesitant to serve as a result.

If our parliaments and legislatures are to truly represent a cross-section of the public, we must rectify this situation. And I believe that this government is again taking an initiative that may be unique in Canada in addressing this particular situation.

It is not in the best interests, I submit, Mr. Speaker, of the public to be represented in Saskatchewan by schoolteachers, lawyers, and farmers, exclusively. With all due respect to all of those professions, I believe that people from the small-business community can make a contribution, and should, and are going to be hesitant to do so if they are subjected to allegations that they are in conflict every time they deal with government. Because the unfortunate reality in Saskatchewan, as elsewhere in Canada — a small-business man can't function without dealing with government.

As a plumbing-heating contractor, I am obligated to deal with government every day. I have to take out permits from the Department of Health in order to do a plumbing project. Then I have to have it inspected by an inspector from the Department of Health. And clearly the allegation can be made that the plumbing job was passed because I am an MLA, and not because the work was done properly. The same applies to installing a gas furnace. I must apply for a permit from the Department of Labour, have an inspection done by an employee of the Department of Labour. And again the allegation can be made that he passed the job on the basis of my being an MLA, as opposed to it being done properly.

So there's a never-ending circumstance for people in the

small-business community to be accused of conflict of interest. And I feel that unless there are clear guide-lines that a layman out of the small-business community can understand and comply with, without having a battery of lawyers and accountants on each of his elbows, we won't see people from the small-business community serving in legislatures, and that is unfortunate.

Another initiative in this throne speech that is particularly significant to people from the small-business community is the proposal to establish a first-ever Saskatchewan pension plan. I think that this initiative will be greeted enthusiastically by people in the small-business community who do not have employee pension plans because they're either not large enough or their employees are short-term. And I think that this plan is going to be very well received.

I particularly like the fact that it's voluntary in nature, so that it isn't mandatory, as has been suggested by the opposition NDP. That lends itself to their philosophy, but voluntary in nature lends itself to mine.

This plan will offer additional security to people who are unable to participate in employer-sponsored retirement programs, and will be available to home-makers, part-time workers, and employees in the small-business community.

I believe it's an idea whose time has come, and I believe it will be received across Canada with a great deal of interest. I believe, as well, that this will be watched by jurisdictions outside of Canada, indeed all over North America, because we have a tradition here in Saskatchewan of being innovators and leaders. We are greeted that way all over North America and I think this plan will fall into that tradition very nicely. The tradition itself is recognized in the throne speech, and the government proposed to build on that tradition, and I salute the government for that.

That tradition, while it's strong in Saskatchewan, is even stronger in northern Saskatchewan where an individual and his initiative is so important for survival and to carry on the optimism that has built northern Saskatchewan. And of course the strongest part of northern Saskatchewan is Prince Albert.

However, not unlike the rest of the cities and towns in this province, our agricultural industry is the backbone of our economy. We did last year have a somewhat different year than other parts of the province, particularly the southern part. We had a tremendous crop, but a very difficult fall. The yields were good but the crops had to be dried, and it was costly for our producers to take off their crops. But our agricultural community in the Prince Albert area is optimistic. They are survivors, they always do survive, and they will look forward to 1986 with a great deal of optimism.

This being, in just under an hour, officially the first day of spring, I expect our farmers in the Prince Albert area to start building their optimism again, as is traditional this time of the year, and they're going to tackle 1986 with renewed optimism.

Our second most important industry in Prince Albert is forestry. It has had its ups and downs as well in the past year, with some shut-downs at the pulp mill, strikes. It has been a difficult year. Many of the factors that caused it to be a difficult year are out of our control in this province, as is the case in agriculture and some other industries. The markets have been soft and these factors are things that we have no control over.

However, there is a bright spot on the horizon in forestry, and it's not a fire. And I'm pleased that the fact of the low pulp prices and the lack of demand for pulp has not diminished our hope in the forest industry in Prince Albert.

This government in fact, which is the owner of P.A. Pulp, has been seriously searching out and negotiating with the private sector for the establishment of a paper mill in Prince Albert. Such a facility would assure the pulp mill of an ongoing production requirement, and the pulp mill will still be in a position to negotiate sales of pulp to world markets as it has in past years.

Employees in the pulp mill operations and in the wood harvesting operations will find much greater security and steady employment when we are successful in upgrading the forestry operations in Prince Albert. Many, many man-years of employment will be created in the construction phase alone, and several hundred new permanent jobs will come into place once the mill opens.

Prince Albert last year was designated the forestry capital of Canada. And that did much to raise the public awareness of Prince Albert and its importance to the forestry industry.

Tourism continues to be a growth industry for Prince Albert. Conventions, divisional meetings, sporting competitions, and similar events drawing tourist dollars to our business community surpassed an estimated \$6 million in 1985.

This government has placed a high priority on tourism, and Prince Albert has responded. Tourism has grown in Prince Albert over the past three years very significantly. We have found from surveys that most of the tourists are from other parts of western Canada and that the most effective advertising we can do is word-of-mouth advertising. If we treat our tourists in Prince Albert like they're special people, they will come back, because the natural attractions of northern Saskatchewan are equal to any in North America.

Our number four industry, Mr. Speaker, in Prince Albert and northern Saskatchewan of course is mining, and it has just completed a year of unprecedented activity. Multimillion dollar expansions in the uranium mining sector have provided economic spin-offs throughout the province in employment, suppliers, and services.

A turn-around in the uranium market and the acceptance of uranium as a power source would lead us to believe that more good things will be happening in the uranium industry. Economic benefits enjoyed in Prince Albert and district from the 1985 uranium operations include 163 persons employed, at an average salary of \$30,000 per

year. Using the common multiplier of 2.8, the uranium industry has created a total of 456 full- and part-time jobs in Prince Albert and in the commercial and service institutional employment sectors.

Direct employment benefits to Prince Albert and district total \$4.8 million per year and the total economic impact of these direct salary spin-offs amount to over \$20 million of economic activity per year in Prince Albert. That, Mr. Speaker, is extremely significant for a city the size of Prince Albert. That is the economic value of just the uranium industry in our area.

Gold mining has captured the limelight for most of 1985 and will probably continue to do so for the next few years. Some very exciting activity in the gold-mining industry in northern Saskatchewan is expected this year and in the year ahead. I expect many of these companies will be doing business in Prince Albert and maintaining offices in Prince Albert, and our area sales and service outlets will be experiencing a great deal of activity.

(1515)

Current developments under way in Prince Albert which will influence our 1986 economy include completion of the Northern Institute of Technology, a \$30 million construction; completion of the Kinsmen Park waterslide development; a new restaurant on 2nd Avenue West; the Prince Albert exhibition auditorium building; completion of 1301 Central Avenue Plaza; eight apartment and condominium projects started throughout the city.

Confirmed major construction projects to commence in 1986 include a \$6 million water treatment plant expansion; streetscape construction program on Central Avenue; commercial developments on 2nd Avenue West, 15th Street East, and 15th Avenue East; and a further five condominium and apartment projects. We will also see this year the large Dubal facility and property back into use.

As well, other developments which appear imminent at this time and should be confirmed this year, if not moving into construction phases during the year, would include the levelling of the fire-damaged Revelstoke building and its replacement with a new commercial development; renovations and leasehold improvements to the Target 21 properties north of the city to accommodate one new manufacturing plant and one relocation and expansion of an existing manufacturing plant; establishment of a farm machinery dealership; several commercial and light industrial businesses by offshore investors, Mr. Speaker; expansion to one of our colleges, \$2 million expansion to the Vickers School; a new \$3.5 million separate school east of 15th Avenue East; a district Indian chief's federal office building; and a new federal government office building; the sale, salvation and redevelopment of the Molson's brewery plant; a student resident complex in proximity to the Northern Institute of Technology; several more fourplexes and apartment blocks and, depending on interest rates, probably 150 to 200 new single-family dwellings will be constructed in 1986 in Prince Albert.

Certainly the biggest project and one of the most sought

after would be the construction of a paper mill in Prince Albert. But, Mr. Speaker, pride in Prince Albert has never been higher. Our Raiders won the Memorial Cup last year and we expect them to do it again.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Meagher: — Last year Prince Albert gained a great deal of prominence and exposure by being named forestry capital of Canada. This year we believe opportunities in Prince Albert have never been better. We believe in our city, we believe in our province. Prince Albert will be the boom city of western Canada, and those individuals in Prince Albert who built this city on the basis of the social structures recognized in this throne speech, namely the family and the individuals, Mr. Speaker, they will go for it. They will capitalize on their opportunities. I believe these opportunities are made available because of this government's open for business philosophy and, Mr. Speaker, in Prince Albert we intend to go for it. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in this Assembly today to speak in this debate on the Devine government's fifth throne speech — Mr. Speaker, the Devine government's last throne speech.

I am proud to represent the people of the Athabasca constituency in this legislature, and I am proud to express here today their concerns and the issues on their mind, the issues of which they will decide the next election.

Simply put, Mr. Speaker, the Devine government has been a deep disappointment to the communities and the families in Saskatchewan, and especially hard on the citizens of northern Saskatchewan. Throughout my constituency, community leaders, teachers, working families, trappers, fishermen, they all say the same thing — we just can't afford four more years of the Devine government.

Mr. Speaker, it's quite interesting that we see this throne speech here today. I know the member from Prince Albert has completely changed, done a good job today, and I congratulate you on that. But I want to say to the member from Prince Albert that I think he's done that four years too late because the next election I think you will see a new member in Prince Albert.

I want to go back in history a little bit because I think we have to, and I see the former Liberal member smiling, who has been put in charge of the finances of this province. And I think that when a Conservative government has to get that low that they will put the finances, the trust of the finances of this province in the hands of a Liberal, then you know that there's troubles in the horizon.

The last time that we had a Conservative government in this province was 55 years ago, between 1929 and 1934. And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and I say to the other members of this Assembly and the citizens of

Saskatchewan, that history will repeat itself. You talk to citizens wherever you go in this province and they say they just cannot afford four more years of Conservative government.

What really concerns them, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the last government in 1929 to '34 went for five years. And that really scares the citizens of this province because they say not only could they not afford to have this government in for another four years, but we just can't afford to have them around for another year. This has to come to an end. And we all know what happened, and I say to the members opposite that history will repeat itself.

This is a government that's one term, but I just sincerely hope that they will do the wise thing and call the election and not go five years. Because let me tell you, this province is so far in debt, and when I get to the figures of the unemployment and the welfare rolls and the food banks, you're just going to see just how bad things have become in just four short years, what this government did.

And I think that we have to learn from history. And there are a lot of citizens in this province who remember 1929 to 1934.

Then we had the same type of government led by the member who was a very important part of that group, who is in charge of your treasury now, the Finance minister. And that was between '64 to '71 when we had a Liberal government. And we all know that the provincial treasurer, the new Finance minister, who was a part of that Liberal government at that time, was the man who master-minded, in 1971, Home Coming '71. He was the master-mind behind that and now . . . And you know what happened in 1971? It was a home-coming. It was a home-coming of the New Democratic Party. They came back after a disastrous seven years. I think history will repeat itself and you will see that the citizens of this province will not allow another term from this government.

In 1967 the citizens of Saskatchewan had an opportunity to get rid of the Liberal government, and they didn't do it. And we all remember that dark Friday after the '67 election. And your Finance minister was a very important part of that Liberal regime. Now he's looking after your finances.

I say to the member from Lloydminster: do you trust him? Well I'll tell you, I'll tell you, I don't trust him with the finances of this province, and I don't think anybody else does.

I want to refer to an article here, and it just goes to show you what has really taken place in the last four years under a Conservative government. And I'm just going to quote from this. It's in the *Leader-Post* of March 26, 1983.

An Hon. Member: — That was a good year.

Mr. Thompson: — And the member from Prince Albert said that was a good year. That was the first deficit budget that we had from this Conservative government in 1983.

And I'm going to quote for the former minister of co-operatives from the *Leader-Post* of March 26, 1983.

With the way the government is moving, we will be number one in having the most people on welfare, number one in destroying the rights of workers, and number one in destroying unions. We will be number one poorest province in Canada.

Just think, Mr. Speaker, they accomplished all this in their first year of power. Can you imagine what they will do in the remaining three years? Well, Mr. Speaker, we know what's happened in the remaining three years, and I intend to touch on that.

There's a number of statements that I have here that I will be presenting today and presenting the argument why four years of this Conservative government is all that this province can handle.

The huge, unfair tax increases on ordinary people, but huge tax breaks to big oil companies that cost this province \$300 million a year, over a billion dollars in the four years that this government was in power — over a billion dollars.

If you were to take the money that you gave away to the oil companies — and I will talk about that a little later as to just where they are and where the jobs are and the bragging that has been done by the Conservative Party over the last three years about what good corporate citizens they are and they deserve \$300 million a year of the taxpayers' money — we could have had, if that \$300 million would have been put into houses, to highways, and to hospitals and schools, we would have had people working and this province wouldn't be in the debt that it is today; a debt, Mr. Speaker, that we are all going to be suffering for and are, for generations to come.

Three hundred million dollars a year, and that's a conservative figure, Mr. Speaker. Actually if you really take a look at all the royalty breaks and the money that's gone out to the oil companies, it's probably closer to \$400 million a year. And that, my friends, is a lot of money, and we just wouldn't have the debt that we have today.

And no wonder the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, are saying that they just can't afford another four years of this Conservative government. When we talk about the oil, the way they operated and gave all this money away . . . And the member of co-ops was just asking me where the heritage fund was.

An Hon. Member: — Former member.

Mr. Thompson: — Former member. Well I want to say to him that there was a heritage fund. It was there. And now where is our heritage? Where is the 300 to \$400 million a year and all the jobs? They're gone. They're just totally gone.

Mr. Speaker, I think I have some guests in here. Mr. Speaker, if I may have the opportunity to introduce some guests.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce, Mr. Speaker, through you and to the Assembly, five students from the Westside Community College from Green Lake. They're seated in the Speaker's gallery and they're with their teacher, Mr. Heinz-Gerd Schulz. They're on another tour here of the legislature and of southern Saskatchewan. I would like all of the members to welcome the group from Green Lake.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY (continued)

Mr. Thompson: — Mr. Speaker, before I introduced the guests, I was talking about the massive give-aways that has taken place to the oil companies. but I say that we are in debt to the tune of close to \$2 billion in this province right now, and we will find that out as soon as the Public Accounts are tabled in this House. But it's not strictly . . . I'm not going to lay all the blame on the government for getting us in this debt just through oil companies. That's not all the give-aways we've seen in the last four years; that's not all the give-aways.

Let's take a look at the selling off of the Poplar coal mine to Manalta Coal from Alberta. They sold that off. They also gave a \$100 million loan guarantee to Manalta Coal, and they're from Alberta. And the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster, he says that that's a good idea to sign over \$100 million to Manalta Coal of Alberta and he says that that's okay, that we should lease back for 30 years the coal that we sold to them — our own coal — and he says that's a good idea.

(1530)

Mr. Speaker, I say that that coal belonged to the citizens of Saskatchewan. We owned it; we were mining it. We most certainly didn't need Manalta Coal to come in here and we didn't need to give them \$100 million so that they could come in here and mine our coal.

Not only that, Mr. Speaker, but the Conservative government of Saskatchewan sold them the drag-line for another \$30 million that they signed over to them so that they could mine our coal, and they gave them a 30-year contract — a 30-year control — on that drag-line. No way they could lose. And the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster figures that's a good idea, because he lives fairly close to Alberta and he figures that the Saskatchewan taxpayers should be supporting Alberta.

We have to take a look at the Pioneer Trust fiasco where the Devine mismanagement cost Saskatchewan another \$28 million — another \$28 million. That's not all, Mr. Speaker. It just continues and continues, and it gets worse and worse.

We have Intercontinental Packers up in Saskatoon who

process pigs in this province. They've been in this province operating for probably 50 years. They were running their plant at 50 per cent capacity and they wanted to expand. They wanted to expand. If there was a need, they were going to expand.

But what happened? What happened? The Conservative government of Saskatchewan — and I would imagine that the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster would approve of this one also — signed over a contract for \$21 million to one Peter Pocklington of Alberta. And we know who Mr. Peter Pocklington is. He's the man that owns the Edmonton Oilers, and he owns a packing company, and I'm sure that he didn't need no incentives to come and set up in Saskatchewan. If he thought that he wanted to set up in Saskatchewan and he has all that money that we know he has — he's got to have that, being the man that owns the Edmonton Oilers.

But what did this government do? They gave him a \$21 million loan guarantee and guaranteed him that if he set up, that \$10 million didn't have to be paid back. You gave him a \$10 million grant. And you call that free enterprise. You call that free enterprise taken we have the business in our own province in Intercontinental Packers, and then you want to start up another pig packing facility. And Mr. Pocklington just happened to run for the leadership of the Conservative Party in Canada so you gave him \$21 million to come in, when everything could have been done in Saskatoon.

Now we see them starting to build in North Battleford and they're putting out contracts without tender, and where are the contracts going? They're going to Alberta. And that has just happened in the last few days where there was a contract given out and it wasn't tendered and it was got by a firm in Alberta . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

And the member from North Battleford, if he has something to say, then why don't you stand up and say that because that's where you should be speaking from.

Mr. Speaker, the list goes on. We talk about the disasters of this province and the human tragedies, and one just has to take a look at the highway system in this province, the way it has deteriorated and what has really happened to our Highways department. And the Minister of Highways is sitting there, the new Minister of Highways. I'm sure he had something to do with the selling off of \$40 million worth of highway equipment for approximately \$5 million, and destroyed over 200 families while you were doing it. I think maybe he was — I'm not sure — but I think his firm was the auctioneer at that sale . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Well, I don't mind the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster speaking from his seat, but now he's speaking from behind the rails. I know he's got a problem with walking, so if Mr. Speaker will allow you to do that then I most certainly accept that.

But let me tell you what happened. There was \$40 million worth of highway equipment that was given away by the Conservative government and there was over 200 families who lost their jobs, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And

that's the Conservative record. That's why we're into this terrible mess that we have had in this province because you can pull off deals like that.

You don't worry about families. You don't worry about individuals who were working for highways for 10 and 30 years. No, you didn't. You hauled all the equipment from all over. You rented the space to auction it off. You got your fees for auctioneering them, and I'll tell you this province didn't get \$5 million for that \$40 million worth of highway equipment. What they got was over 200 families who were literally destroyed.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's not what the minister of Highways . . . He got up in this House and he says, well we're not really laying them off. That's what he said, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You were here. He said, we're not really laying them off, we're just transferring them to the private sector. That's what he said. And where's the minister of highways today? Just where is the minister of highways today, the man who said he was transferring over 200 positions to the private sector? Well I'll tell you; he's not even running for the Conservative Party again. I hear on the news media this morning that's he bought a ranch up in Alberta, and he's moved to Alberta. So we have to be careful, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because there is a lot of money and a lot of people moving to Alberta.

And we have to take a look at our highways system, at what has taken place in the last four years. I have a piece of road, Highway 155, which runs from Green Lake to La Loche. And that road, Mr. Deputy Speaker, had 10 miles to be completed in 1982 — 10 miles to be completed. And Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are still 10 miles to be completed. That 10 miles still has not been graded and dust-free.

Take a look at Highway 55 north of Big River, a very important link between Big River and Green Lake. In 1982 we had 10 miles of road built and dust-free. In four years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not 1 inch has moved on that road — not 1 inch. Now that there's an election coming up, we see that they're starting to take some of the right of ways, the trees away.

But I'll ask the Minister of Highways: what are you going to do? Are you going to build that road? And after four years, do you think the residents of Big River are going to believe that, just because you're clearing some bush and putting up a few pegs? That's what you do all over the province. They don't believe that.

An Hon. Member: — Fred, why don't you tell the truth?

Mr. Thompson: — I'm telling the truth. And I want to just go back, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for a few minutes. And I see the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake. He says, he's talking about the Husky upgrader, and he says it's going to go ahead. And I hope he's right. And I know that the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster hopes he's right.

But I think it's time for that member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster to get his Minister of Energy and the minister of energy from Alberta and Canada to get together and get that project announced. You keep announcing it but it's never approved, and it's still there.

And in the four years the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake indicates that there has never been one megaproject started in this province. He admits that, the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake. He's not in his seat, but that's what he says.

And I want to quote from the Prince Albert *Herald*, December 12, 1985. And I'm quoting from Mr. Dutchak. And this is what Mr. Dutchak says, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'm quoting from the *Herald*:

The expansion of Gainers into Saskatchewan secures at least one megaproject in the province, and opens the doors to new food processing.

He admits, the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake admits, that there has never been any project started under your government. He admits that the megaproject is Gainers. And he's also admitting that you paid him \$21 million to get him in here. You enticed him. That's the megaproject that you're talking about.

Then the ads. The ads, they go on and on and on, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The ads go on and on and on. And I think the member for Cut Knife-Lloydminster has been following these ads and I know that he's concerned.

And here I read in the *Star-Phoenix*, and this is February 18th of '86: "Husky decision will be made in three weeks." Mr. Price. He says it's going to be made in three weeks. I tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's five weeks ago. And I tell you, you better get that announcement made because there is a lot of citizens in north-western Saskatchewan who are hoping and praying that that project will go ahead.

And we have to take a look at Gulf Canada, and we just take a look at all the ads that they were putting in the paper. And he talks about \$300 million a year that the Conservative government gave the oil industry, the incentives to start drilling. And here's what he says: "Small adjustments pay back big in jobs and taxes."

Small adjustments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, small adjustments — 300 to \$400 a year. Their suitcases are full, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and now we have massive lay-offs in the oil industry and they are leaving the province. And I ask any of the Conservative members to stand up in this House and deny that.

I want to now turn . . . I know the member from North Battleford is in a hurry to get up off his seat, so I will not take much more time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But I want to talk about northern Saskatchewan a little more — its rich resources, its solid families and communities, its valuable traditions, and its proud people. These are the strengths of the North.

Premier Devine promised the people of northern Saskatchewan a new vision, and I'll tell you what that new vision is, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's massive unemployment and massive welfare and human tragedy. One just has to take a look at the compassion of this government when we look at the food transportation

subsidy that they took off two years ago. The Minister of Health is sitting in his seat, and I've got a little article here that relates to the Minister of Health; \$250,000 to provide fresh milk, vegetables, and fresh meat to the citizens of northern Saskatchewan — \$250,000 a year, and they took that off. They said, well, we're taking it off because the tourist operators are the ones taking advantage of it. I say that's not true.

But now the Minister of Health says yes, things are tough in northern Saskatchewan, and anybody who works up there for the government in that far north country needs a food subsidy. That's what the Minister of Health is saying. He now admits that. And he's sitting in his seat and says that that's not true. I say to you, Mr. Minister, and here's an article, and I'm going to quote. And let me quote: "Job vacancy, Uranium City, registered nurses."

Let me reiterate this, Mr. Deputy Speaker — that \$250,000 food subsidy that the Minister of Health has taken off, taken it away from the citizens up there who I say need that fresh food and vegetables and need that subsidy.

(1545)

Here I'm quoting, and I am quoting from the Department of Health:

One full-time and two part-time positions; three shift rotations; salaries and benefits as per SUN collective agreement. Benefits include . . . (And this is for nurses up north. I know it's tough to get nurses and they have a big job in that department). Benefits include: northern allowance, accommodations provided at a reasonable rate (accommodations — that's to the nurses up there) and a food subsidy.

And I say to you, Mr. Minister of Health, you say that you're not offering a food subsidy to your department, to the individuals that you're hiring. Well I say that that's wrong. It's right here in writing. You're offering a food subsidy. You took it away from the people of the North, but you know it's tough and you're giving it to your own. You're advertising and saying that that's what you're going to do. I say that's what you've done to northern Saskatchewan.

You're trying to destroy the citizens of northern Saskatchewan. And there is absolutely no compassion in this government, and that's why, when this government gets up the nerve, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to call this election, I can assure you that history will repeat itself. I assure you it will repeat itself. There will be no more . . . There will be a food subsidy in northern Saskatchewan, not just for health workers, but for everybody living in that area because we will reinstate it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — Unemployment and social assistance case-loads have jumped to unacceptable levels, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We don't have food banks in northern Saskatchewan, but let me tell you, we have people who are having a hard time to make a living up there. When

they have to go on welfare and on the part-time jobs that have been provided by this government, it makes it very tough on families. Most of the jobs in the North are 20 weeks in duration, and it's a little game that the Conservative Party is playing with their colleagues in Ottawa — 20 weeks, then they get laid off and they hire another group for 20 weeks. What does that give them? That takes them off of welfare and puts them onto another assistance, unemployment insurance, and that's what you're doing.

I think it's a shame when we go into our schools up north and we see this government trying to balance your budget, trying to cut down the deficit they have, on the back of individuals who cannot fight back.

I go into the school at Stony Rapids a couple of weeks ago and I see you've got a candidate from up there. You had your nomination convention in Beauval. All 18 people were there at that convention and nine of them belong to my party, so that shows the success of the Conservative Party up north. I tell you that Conservative convention that you had in Athabasca, that's what's going to happen to you on election day and that's what's going to happen all over this province with Conservatives.

And I went to Stony Rapids school and I see classes in one room — three classes in one room. I had the teachers telling me that there's just no way — and Mr. Deputy Speaker, you are a teacher and you know that — there's just no way that a teacher can take three classes over 30 students and try and do a good job.

An Hon. Member: — That's boloney. I taught 45 kids at one time.

Mr. Thompson: — If the former minister of co-ops would like to get to his feet. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, now we can see why the Conservative Party is cutting teachers back, because the former minister of co-ops has just stood up in this House and said that he successfully taught 45 students, and that's what the teacher-pupil ratio should be. That's exactly what he's saying, and that's exactly what this Conservative Party stands for. You just from your seat said you taught 45 students and that's the way it should be.

You're speaking on behalf of every Conservative member of this province, and I say that that's a shame. And that proves what this government is made of — guys like that. And I've no wonder that you're not back in cabinet.

And when we see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, three classes in one room . . . Then I go down to Beauval, and I go into the gymnasium where you held your big convention. And I'm talking to the teacher in there, and he has 35 students — the physical education teacher. And I said, how many classes is this? Oh, he said, that's only one. Thirty-five students. But the member from Saskatoon, he smiles; he figures 35 students is fine. But that teacher tells me that there's no way. And the member sitting behind you, he knows that you don't take 35 students and a do a good job of them.

Them days are gone. Them days were gone when the Liberal government between 1964 and '71 brought in

the same program. And you know what the teachers did to the Liberal government in '71. And I tell you, the teachers will go out and they'll be doing the same thing again, because they don't believe what the former co-op minister is saying, that 45 students is a good pupil-teacher ratio. They don't believe that. And I don't believe neither, and neither does the New Democratic Party.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — And I'm asking this government to take a serious look at what's going on in northern Saskatchewan, because you have made a mess. And I spoke about the tremendous waste that we had and why we're in this terrible mess that we today. And that is why, Mr. Speaker, in Ile-a-la-Crosse and Buffalo Narrows and all over northern Saskatchewan and the rest of this province, people are saying, we just can't afford another four years of this Conservative government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the throne speech we heard the other day was remarkable because it sounded like a tired government afraid of reality it faces, not knowing way to turn. And I think that's right when we take a look at what's happening — a throne speech that still tries to flatter Mr. Mulroney; a PC government that still tries to say, in the words of Premier Devine, keep up the good work, Brian; a throne speech, the Devine sense of misplaced priorities.

And we had an example here just the other day, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I want to turn to the election that was held in our neighbouring province of Manitoba. And in Manitoba, the last Conservative government was in, things were bad. Unemployment was down, the same as it was in . . . Unemployment was high and now we have an NDP government and they have brought that up to the lowest unemployment rate in Canada — one of.

When we left this province and we turned it over to the new minister there from Regina South, I believe, who will be no longer in this House after the next election, I can assure you that . . . But I can tell you, when this Conservative government took over this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the unemployment rate in Saskatchewan was a little over 4 per cent. We had \$140 million in the bank. That's what we left this province with. Now what do we have? Close to a \$2 billion deficit — close to a \$2 billion deficit — unemployment nearing the 10 per cent.

And the member, the former Co-op minister says it's boloney, from his seat. I ask him to stand up and say that because I was in Saskatoon a couple of weeks ago in the mall, and they were gathering food for the food banks in Saskatoon, and they were putting out ads all over radio and television for food for the food banks in Saskatoon. And you're proud of that? Well I'll tell you, the citizens of Saskatchewan who have to accept that are not very proud of it. These were men and women who had a job and were working, and now they're unemployed and they're on welfare and they don't get enough to eat and they're relying on food banks — the first time in the history of Saskatchewan that we ever had food banks.

But I want to go back . . . I want to go back to Manitoba,

and I want to show, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what's taking place in Manitoba and compare that to what's taking place in Saskatchewan. "Manitoba's population grows." Statistics Canada, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm quoting from Statistics Canada statistics:

Statistics Canada reported recently that as of October 1, 1985, Manitoba's population reached 1,072,000, up 10,300 in the past year. In addition, our population has increased by 2,100 since July of 1985. Manitoba's recent population growth is in sharp contrast to the serious decline that occurred under the previous Conservative government. During that time Manitoba experienced a population loss of almost 36,000 people.

That's in Manitoba and Manitoba's population is growing. Now I to the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*, the 31st day of the 12th month of 1985, and I quote: "Exodus from Saskatchewan biggest in decade." The biggest in the last decade.

Once again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm quoting from Statistics Canada here:

Residents left Saskatchewan at a greater overall clip during the first nine months of 1985 than at any time in the past decade, according to Statistics Canada.

The biggest decline. They're leaving this province.

The province lost a net total, (Mr. Deputy Speaker) of 4,400 people to other parts of Canada between January and October of this year.

Manitoba is growing and prospering under a New Democratic government. There we have it — Saskatchewan is not prospering, it's got high unemployment, unemployment rate dropping, everybody's leaving this province. Let me tell you when we see the statistics that are going to come out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if this oil industry, this downturn keeps up, then you are going to see a massive exodus. It's just going to continue to go. I hope that this doesn't happen, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because it's a tragedy for the province, but let me tell you, if we had all the money that we gave oil companies, it would be a lot better off.

I just want to close off, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in indicating that we, as a New Democratic government, look forward with much anticipation to this next election. I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that six weeks from now we'll be in this House debating another throne speech. I say to you that with all honesty. The Conservative members that get back, and I can tell you it won't be the member from Regina South, they'll be on this side, and we will be delivering the throne speech. We will be delivering a throne speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that will make sense to this province and will get the people working again, and we won't have all the unemployment and the welfare rolls that we have.

I look forward to that, and my colleagues are looking forward to that, and these are fundamental questions;

only the people of Saskatchewan can decide on that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I therefore call on the Devine government, when they get the nerve, to call an election, to call it, and call it as soon as possible. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is certainly my pleasure to enter into the debate on the throne speech of the fifth session of the 20th Legislature.

Although I notice by the comments of the member opposite who immediately preceded my speech, I don't know how much of his comments applied directly to actually the throne speech. In light of the comments made by the member for Athabasca, I think in all fairness to the people in this legislature and in all fairness to the people of Saskatchewan, I believe that we ought to tell the truth. And I believe we ought to cite some specific examples of the truth and the misconceptions that were put forward by that gentleman directly opposite. And I will start, Mr. Speaker, by speaking about something that I can stand here and say that I am somewhat of an authority on. And I was deeply insulted, I was deeply, personally insulted by the member opposite in this legislature here today, insulting me and the firm and the family that has build up an auction business over 30 years in this province. And he has made a statement that it was my company that bid on a government contract and conducted a government sale in Saskatoon. Now, my friends, that statement was absolutely incorrect — absolutely incorrect — and you know it, sir. You absolutely know it.

(1600)

Now, Mr. Speaker, let us turn to the precise details of that auction sale, and there was, the member opposite states, \$40 million worth of equipment. Well the value of a piece of equipment is directly related to what the buying public will pay. And that figure that you stated, sir, was the replacement cost. And certainly, if all that equipment were to be bought new on the market today, yes, it may well be worth \$40 million, but that was equipment that had sat idle for years and years — sat idle, had not moved. It was depreciated, and the buying public stood there at that auction sale and they paid what the fair market value was, and that was determined by a crowd of about 1,000 or 2,000 people. Those people decided what that equipment was worth, and not you. Now, sir, I demand an apology for the inference that our firm conducted that sale. That was incorrect, sir. Now that's the one thing, and I'm deeply insulted.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn to something else that the member has said, and here again, twisting and turning the facts. Give-aways to the oil companies, you talk about. Well, my friends, let's go out and ask the farmers of this province. Let's go and ask the farmers how they enjoy a 21-cents-a-gallon rebate on their fuel. Now if you people think . . . Do you people honestly think that that 21 cents a gallon came out of the air? Where do you think it came from? It came from

royalties from those oil companies.

When this government took over office, the oil pump jacks, the oil producing areas of this province were literally shut down, shut in. They were not working. Our government came to power and we've got the oil pump jacks working again. The oil wells were flowing, the pump jacks were working, and they were paying royalties to this government. And that is precisely where money such as the 21-cents-a-gallon rebate going to the farmers of this province has come from.

Now you people go on and on in talking about big is bad and the oil companies are bad. Well the chances are that the only way they got big was because they provided a service. And I say, my friends, that you had better apologize to the oil people of this province. And you go down in the southern part of the province and see who is working down there, see the number of farm boys that are working today in the oil patch. Now you apologize to those people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Now you people talk about deficits. Well let me tell you gentlemen here today, let me tell my colleagues here today, and let me tell the people of Saskatchewan exactly what you people did when you were in government. What you did was called creative accounting — creative accounting. Well in the business world we have another term for it. It's called fraud.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — And you, my friends, took pension plans — pension plans of the people of this province, money that were supposed to be vested in trust — and what did you do with them? You didn't put it there. We have unfunded liabilities in the pension plans of the antituberculosis superannuation plan, the workmens' compensation plan, on and on down — hospitals, teachers, civic employees. And you took their pension plans, and what did you do? You did not vest that money to the tune of about a \$3 billion deficit. So don't you stand here and talk about deficits to me.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Now furthermore, my friends, you talk about deficits. What did you do? I want to get to your creative accounting policies: the Crown management umbrella corporation handing out dividends back and forth and literally driving every Crown corporation in this province into debt.

Now do you call that a deficit? Is that creative accounting or just what is that? As I said, people in business have another word for it — it's fraud; it's absolute nonsense. And so don't you ever accuse this government of deficit financing. You people had deficits, and you know full well.

Now, my friends, I want to talk about something else. You talk about highways in this province. Now, my friends, you have cited a specific example, a specific example of some highway you would like to work on. Let

me ask you this, sir: if you were genuinely representing your constituency, genuinely doing your job, we have a new Minister of Highways here today, and my door is open to you. You're an MLA, as everyone is in this legislature. You come on in. I would be happy to chat with you about that highway. Don't stand up in the legislature and complain. Come to my office and deal with me, and I'll be happy to talk to you.

Now you talk of a lack of compassion. Now where were you gentlemen? Where were you in 1979, 1980, 1981, when the interest rates of this province and across the country were 18, 19, 20 per cent, when small-business people on their accounts payable were paying 24, 25, 26 per cent on their accounts payable? Where were you people? You were not around. You wouldn't consider doing a thing.

Where were you people when home owners in this province were paying 18 and 19 per cent on their mortgages? You didn't give a rip about those people. All you gave a rip about was your family of Crown corporations who were absolutely debt-laden. You did nothing for the families.

Where were you when the gas prices were so high? Who was it that took the gas tax off? And let ask you how many dollars that has saved absolutely every family in this province. You people stand up there and twist and turn things — you name it.

My friends, I think I shall get back to some things and address the people of the Melfort constituency who have placed a great trust in me and, I feel, will listen to me far more than the people across the floor will.

Mr. Speaker, normally I would address you and the members of this Assembly as Minister of Highways and Transportation, but today I would like to address you, not as the Minister of Highways and Transportation specifically, but first and foremost as the member of the Legislative Assembly for the Melfort constituency.

And this is a very, very important Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, and I want to be able to address my constituents as their elected member.

I remember, Mr. Speaker, back on June 18th of 1982, when I had the honour to move, and that was seconded by the member for Saskatoon Riversdale, the very first throne speech presented to this Assembly under the leadership of a Progressive Conservative government. And I remember that, Mr. Speaker. And much of that throne speech on June 17, 1982 was reinforced again on March 17, 1986.

And I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that the integrity of this throne speech we debate today had its beginning in that first throne speech nearly four years ago. And I would like at this time to direct my comments specifically to my constituents in the Melfort area. And since being elected I have enjoyed their assistance, their support, and their co-operation. And I have worked hard on their behalf, Mr. Speaker, and I have enjoyed my work, working for people because I am a representative that cares for my constituents and will work tirelessly for them.

And the people of Melfort constituency don't ask that much. They ask only that their representative and their government work by their side and work with them. They don't ask that a government work from above; not from a distance. They believe that government should be the servant and not the master. And my friends opposite, they feel opposite, Mr. Speaker, because they believe that the government should be master. And that is not the philosophy of this Progressive Conservative government. That is not the philosophy of myself.

And I pledge today, Mr. Speaker, that I will continue. I will continue to represent the views of the people in the Melfort constituency in this legislature as one who is a neighbour and one who is a friend. And I shall never lose touch with my constituents, Mr. Speaker. And we all recall the Monday night massacre, as it has been referred to, and the precise reason that there is such a small group of individuals across the legislature is because those particular people lost touch with their constituents.

And I want to thank the people of the Melfort constituency, and I look forward to serving the people of the Melfort constituency for many, many years to come. I am a young man, Mr. Speaker, and I have enjoyed my first four years in this legislature, and I look very, very much forward to being in this legislature serving the people of the Melfort constituency for a number of years.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to now turn directly to the throne speech and demonstrate that this Speech from the Throne is a document of trust. It is a record of consistency. It is a record of achievement. And it is a record of growth. This throne speech gives leadership, direction, and style. It is anchored by the concepts of protection, opportunity, and change. This throne speech is evidence that this government is as good as its word. This is the message that it carries to the people of Saskatchewan. And that is the message that I carry to the constituents of Melfort.

Mr. Speaker, the Melfort constituency is in the centre of one of Saskatchewan's most rich agriculture areas. The farm economy is the staple of communities like St. Brieux, Star City, Naicam, Melfort. But despite being blessed with that highly productive land, our farming population has not been immune to the fluctuations of interest rates and commodity prices.

When this government came to power, high interest rates were suffocating farm growth and development. And it was becoming extremely difficult for young farmers to get a start. And even more alarming high interest rates were accelerating the drift toward rented farm land under the guise of land banking. And this government took action. We no longer have that same attitude of state control of the land.

This government introduced the Saskatchewan family farm purchase program, and their program's aim was to promote the transfer of farm land from one generation to another by providing once in a lifetime low-interest loans. And the young farmers in the Melfort constituency have benefited. Since this program came into effect, more than 100 farmers have been enrolled in the program in my constituency alone. The total interest rebate to those

young farmers amounts to somewhere in the neighbourhood of 660-some-odd thousand dollars. I compare that program, my friends, to the former administration's land bank program.

Those opposite most definitely agree in state ownership of land, and that is fine; that is their philosophy. I would like to think . . . I would know that the vast, the large, majority of the people in this province did not come here to have state control of their land. That is your philosophy; our philosophy is vastly different.

I would tend to think that the founding fathers of Canada and the pioneers who came to Saskatchewan, if they ever would have had any idea that a government ever would come to power that wanted state control of the land, they would have passed legislation absolutely abolishing it. But they could not even conceive, they could not even conceive at that time, back in 1867, that a government would come to power that would want state control, state ownership of farm land. There is something about pride of ownership of farm land that is innate in people, innate in people that live in North America and in most of the countries of Europe with the exception of Russia.

Mr. Speaker, needless to say, land bank is no longer a threat today; land bank will no longer be a threat for many, many, many years to come. Mr. Speaker, that program of family farm purchase was an investment in the future of this province.

Today, Mr. Speaker, low commodity prices and high input costs have created another threat to our farmers. This cost-price squeeze has drained the cash flow of our farmers to the point where their ability to finance the seeding of this year's crop was in jeopardy. And in keeping with the consistent nature of this government, 6 per cent operating capital was provided over three years. Over 1,000 farmers, over 1,000 farmers in the Melfort constituency alone, applied for almost \$18 million in assistance.

This government said that it would support the farm economy with the provincial treasury, and the \$1 billion production loan program is proof that we have kept our word. I compare that to any program the former administration had for agriculture, and I don't even recall what they were, other than land bank was the most profound one they had. This government has committed more dollars, more dollars to agriculture, I dare say, than any government in the history of this province, or indeed in the history of the whole country.

I am extremely proud here, Mr. Speaker, to stand and talk about that 6 per cent operating capital, and I think that everybody in this whole province understands. I think everybody in this whole province understands or they should understand, that when farming wins, when the farmer wins, the whole province wins. When the farmer has money in his pocket, that money is spent in implement dealerships, and it's spent in hotels and restaurants and gas stations, and the economy flows.

(1615)

And our Premier, I am proud to say, has very much

recognized that fact. And the commitment that we have made to agriculture is unprecedented. And I am so proud to stand here and talk about that program.

Mr. Speaker, our government has made a pledge to preserve and maintain the Saskatchewan rural way of life. The farm purchase program and the production loan program have indeed protected the business of farming. And when you protect the business of farming, you have protected the interest of the entire population of this province; the quality of life in rural Saskatchewan without question has been enhanced.

I could turn to a number of more programs that our government has initiated. I'd like to talk a little bit about the natural gas service program. And I have statistics here that in the constituency of Melfort more than 500 farmers have benefited from the program.

And I was very pleased of our Premier. I was proud of our Premier when the other day at the SARM convention he announced that to the entire rural population of this province they would be granted private-line telephone service. And that program, Mr. Speaker, has been so well accepted by the public. I have been out in my seat travelling and chatting with people, and there is another program for the farmers of this province that has shown beyond a question of doubt our commitment to farmers.

Mr. Speaker, the protection and enhancement of Melfort's farm economy does not stop at the farm gate. Many small businesses that serve our farming population have also felt the effects of this government — a government that keeps its word, a government that is trusted. In my constituency alone approximately 50 businesses have taken advantage of a host of small-business programs. And the small-business people in my constituency are happy with this government; in fact, they are very, very pleased with this government.

Home owners in the Melfort constituency and throughout this province have also benefited greatly. Some 520 home owners in the Melfort constituency alone have benefited from this government's mortgage interest reduction program. The savings in interest to those home owners — those young people 25, 30 years of age, who had mortgages on their homes at 19 and 20 per cent have benefited to the tune of over half a million dollars in one constituency alone from that program.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to now turn to a program that has been outlined in the throne speech, and that is the new voluntary Saskatchewan pension plan. Here is another example of a bold, imaginative and exciting program for the people of this province.

This program is a very forward-thinking step in protecting home-makers, part-time workers, small-business employees, farm people. And each one of these groups does indeed make a valuable contribution to our society, and they deserve recognition and benefits for their contributions. And the people of the Melfort constituency welcome this bold initiative. And my office has been literally flooded — literally flooded — with telephone calls about this particular program. The people of the Melfort constituency know that they can trust this

government to deliver on its promises.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, there is the core services of our society that we, as a government, have demonstrated our trust. Health, education, and care for our senior citizens has not been pushed aside. And these core services, these fundamental services that are so important to society have been well served in the history of the Melfort constituency.

And I would like to cite examples in my constituency, the Melfort constituency: a \$7 million addition to the Melfort Hospital has been completed. And the members opposite . . . and I recall during the last campaign and I recall hearing from my colleagues about what the NDP, how the NDP attacked medicare. And they went around to the elderly people in this province and tried to scare them, and said the Conservative government would take away medicare. I remember in my home constituency, I remember politicians going to senior citizens' high-rises, elderly people that were 65, 75 years of age, and threatening them that the Conservative government would abolish medicare, and all this nonsense.

Well, my friends, there is a perfect example of unethical conduct, dishonest conduct and conduct that absolutely upsets me. This government and the people on this side of the House have principles, and those same types of principles are certainly not enjoyed by many, many members of the NDP, going around and threatening old people. And I was never so disgusted to hear such talk in my entire life!

I want to turn now to education. The members opposite say, well, not enough money is being spent on education, and what are you doing? Well, I will tell you what's happened in the Melfort constituency. Virtually every school in the constituency of Melfort has been renovated or has had additions to it, or is indeed brand-new. And I am extremely proud to tell this legislature about our record of education in the Melfort constituency.

I want to talk about another program for our seniors in the constituency of Melfort. We have a full-time chiropodist, a chiropody clinic where elderly people can go and see this chiropodist at a very, very nominal charge. And this program, this service to the people of the Melfort constituency, is a great benefit.

I want to talk about something else that's happened in the Melfort constituency. And the members opposite, the members of the New Democratic Party, talk about nursing homes and what they would do for nursing homes — going around and promising nursing homes here and nursing homes there. Well, I ask you, members opposite: what did you do for the record of nursing homes when you people were in power? I understand that there was a moratorium placed on nursing homes, that you had said that was enough. Well, my friends, I want to tell this legislature and I want to tell the people of Saskatchewan that there is indeed a great demand for nursing homes. And it was because of the lack of foresight — no long-range future planning whatsoever — that today this government has such a demand on nursing homes that is directly attributable to the lack of foresight, the lack of planning, and indeed the lack of compassion for the

elderly people of this province.

In the constituency of Melfort I'd like to talk specifically about nursing homes. We have a nursing home complex — it's not exactly a nursing home but it's a senior citizens' apartment — that was built on the main street of the city of Melfort and it houses today members of the Canadian Legion. And there is approximately, I believe it is a 24-unit, a beautiful complex where the seniors, the seniors who have served our country overseas are now residing, and there is no group more worthwhile than those people. And I am very proud to have that in my constituency.

Some Hon. Members: Here, here!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — The seniors of St. Brieux, a fine little French community in my constituency, will be having a nursing home there that will have approximately, I believe, 30 beds. And I recall the promises made by the former administration — we'll build you a nursing home; we'll build you a highway — to the people of St. Brieux. Well, no nursing home was forthcoming. No highway was forthcoming. You people had election flags or survey flags on many, many highways and they had no intention of starting them. Now the people of St. Brieux have concrete evidence today that they are receiving a nursing home. They have concrete evidence that their highway will be constructed and that will be reflected in their voting procedures.

Mr. Speaker, the senior citizens, the farmers, the small-business men, the home owner and the home-maker in the Melfort constituency know that they can trust this government. We have been consistent and we have our priorities in the right place. And we have gained the trust of the people of the Melfort constituency and I believe of all the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I set out at the start of this debate to show you and members of the Assembly that we are a government of our word. And using the Melfort constituency as an example I have shown this government to be a consistent government and a trustworthy government.

We have a Premier who is an inspiration to everyone in Saskatchewan. And I want to congratulate our Premier for his prudence and his stewardship. There is not a man, not a man around, that I admire more than our Premier; a man who shows decisiveness, who shows leadership, who shows compassion for families — not families of Crown corporations, I might add, but the real true families of our province. And every time the Premier of our province stands up to speak, whether it's in Melfort, or whether it's in Swift Current, or whether it's in this legislature, I am more inspired and more motivated that I want to be in this legislature for many, many years to come. And I am so proud to have the Premier of this province as our leader.

Mr. Speaker, as the MLA for the Melfort constituency, I want to say that I indeed support this throne speech and the motion before us now. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Katzman: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, members of the Assembly, today this speech is probably my final speech as far as throne speeches are concerned. And while I can easily spend the next hour praising the visions and programs and policies of the Devine government, I prefer instead to share some of the memories of this very special place.

In October of 1974, people met in a small hall in Warman in a contested nomination and elected me the candidate to represent the Conservatives in the Rosthern riding.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Katzman: — It was a humbling experience and yet, as all people who have decided to seek public life, I believed I had something to offer and that I could do a good job. Only time and history will show if my thoughts were right or wrong. Certainly it can never be said that Ralph Katzman didn't try.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Katzman: — Today, in 1986, I look back and ask was it worthwhile for my constituents, for the province of Saskatchewan, or Canada, or me? I hope the answer to all these questions was yes. Certainly I enjoyed life here and it has been kind to me.

When I first entered the House, Mr. Speaker, I was petrified — and I mean I was scared. Today as most of you see me, I speak on many different topics and I have conquered the fear that this place has. To those who have never been elected, who have never had the opportunity to enjoy life in this Chamber, I have words of advice. If you come to this place, treat it with respect, honour it for its traditions, but be prepared to work for the betterment of parliament and improve it.

I believe in my 11 years I have had the unique privilege of having friends on all sides of the House, be they Progressive Conservative members, Liberal members, or NDP members. These are cherished times, Mr. Speaker, times when we forget our partisan politics after we leave the debates of the House and we act simply as friends. I think more of that is needed, because you must understand the other man. By knowing each other as friends, politics aside, we at least learn to respect the member, not for what he says, but for at least that we believe he believes in it even though our political philosophies are different.

I guess my first major accomplishment as an MLA will always be with me. It was pushing for a water line that served the communities of Martensville, Warman, Osler, and Dalmeny. It was the first time that I had felt personal accomplishments in the service of my constituents.

When I came here, I chose one route of working which is my style and for me it was the right one. I believed, and still do, in negotiations behind closed doors, not in front of television cameras or press or out in the public eye. You don't get a lot of credit from the press when you do it that way, but your constituents get results, and that's what's always been the most important thing to me.

Since I have been a member, both in opposition and government, I've had school expansions, new schools, new nursing homes, and future nursing homes to come, new housing complexes, roads, and many other things that are required in a rural area to make the small communities and the rural farming successful.

(1630)

I can remember sitting down with a former minister, and he said, Ralph, you have a problem, haven't you? And I said, yes, and we have two choices. We either solve it in your office this morning, or we get up in the House and fight about it. If we get in the House and fight about it, I will have to embarrass you to the point that you either give in or I will not succeed and my constituents will not benefit. But if you don't take the risk of the embarrassment, Mr. Minister, you may be prepared to bend a little and my constituents will benefit, even though I don't get the press. And that was important. Those deals were important. I still think they are important to all members who enter this House.

It has been my experience through the years that most members are honourable ones, and most of them deal on an honourable basis on a one-to-one. I guess the most humiliating thing that happened to me in this House, and I guess I owe an apology and a thank you, was one day when I got carried away with the facts. And that seems to happen occasionally in this House.

A former attorney general, who is a good friend of mine today, came in behind Tony Merchant, who was the member for Wascana in those days, and myself, and basically wiped us up. I left the Chamber and I quote again. I said, hey, Roy, I thought you were a friend. And he said, some day, Ralph, you'll thank me for the favour.

I thought about that for a long time and I was scared to rise in this House and speak again after that tongue-lashing. But I thought about it. And what it said to me is, if your facts are right, if you believe what you say, then don't be scared; but if your facts aren't right, you're in trouble and you've asked for it.

I am pleased to say that's a lesson I have pretty well followed for the rest of the years in this House. Once or twice my credibility was stretched, and once or twice I had to wait till I got home from the weekend to produce documents that I said I had to prove I was right and prove the minister wrong.

Mr. Speaker, honourable colleagues: your task is to make sure that this House functions for the betterment of the people of Saskatchewan. I repeat: your task is to make sure this House functions for the betterment of the people of Saskatchewan, no matter which side of the House you sit on. The courtesies that you extend to each other as ladies and gentlemen is important, even though you may be opponents in philosophy. You are important examples to the people of this province, especially the young people of this province, this great and wonderful province within Canada.

In 1975, as I've said earlier, I made friends with members from all sides of this House and I still have friends on all

sides. Today it seems that there is less friendship between the parties and the members. The little hope I have for the future is that it will slowly turn around and people on both sides can still be friends. As I jokingly say, I coach a hockey team back home and one of the key people on my executive is a very strong NDPer. But we don't get into political debates at a hockey game and together we put out not a bad little hockey team in our league. And hopefully we'll get better as the years go by.

To the media listening to my remarks, I would suggest that sometimes your reporting is perceived to be biased one way or the other, subject to who is in government and subject to who is speaking. You must maintain your credibility and guard it carefully or soon people will start to say: why read that newspaper or listen to that television station or that radio? Those fellows don't tell it the way it happened. So that is an important lesson for you and also a lesson for politicians, future and present. You must speak the facts.

In terms of accomplishments for my constituency, I believe I have served the Rosthern constituency well. I hope they feel the same way.

In this House, and I don't think I'm boasting, I have probably been one of the busier members sitting on committees, sitting on different hearings, and quietly handling the constituency problems and so forth. I've derived a great amount of pleasure and satisfaction from this, and of course, while I sat as vice-chairman of the library committee under the Hon. Doug McArthur, the results of that committee are now showing forth in the rejuvenation of the legislative library.

I enjoyed my time when I sat as a member of the fire committee and I was chairman. And some of the members are still members of this House, and I thank them, once again publicly, for their assistance in what they did. It brought my ego into check during my term as chairman. You had to be neutral or the whole committee wouldn't function.

I have the permission of the hon. member I'm about to speak of to speak on this subject. I have a picture at home of the member from Assiniboia and myself in a whirlpool — it's quite a picture; and it was a big pool — just having a chat. Maybe things like that are required more often between politicians so they can understand each other and, even though there are political differences in their belief, work better for the people of Saskatchewan. We may get mad at each other on occasion, but we still understand each other and we know where each other is coming from.

Let me get back a little to talk about 1982 and the defeat of the Blakeney government and the election of the Devine government — my government — a fact which I'm very proud of.

Mr. Speaker, it was an exciting time. When I came here in 1975 we said among ourselves, the seven of us, in the next election we had to be the official opposition, then we could become government. And that is true. History shows it has happened.

It is interesting to note there were very few governments in Saskatchewan when three political parties ran that were elected on 50 per cent of the political vote. We were, because the people believed in us and they still do.

When it came time to move chairs to get our administration into place, into running the government, I was thanked after it was all over by politicians from the other side, and I refer to the member from Elphinstone. He suggested that we had done the transfer of power with dignity and regard for those who were involved. And whenever a government changes, be it 20 years from now or 30 or whatever, I hope the following example of treating all those with dignity and respect may always continue. It may not always be respect for the man or the party, but it must, Mr. Speaker, be respect for the office which they hold and which is so important to our country.

I guess my rule-breaking of those days is now going to stay forever and I hope it does, and I refer to when government was changing and I was collecting cars from all the former ministers. I informed the Leader of the Opposition that if he would turn his credit cards at the time over, but please keep the car, because I believed that a member who was the Leader of the Opposition should be treated the same as cabinet ministers. That has now become a policy which I believe should always be. It is respecting the position that the man holds and we must continue that practice. When I did it, I did it with no malice or disregard to this Assembly or our political process.

Mr. Speaker, I am accused of knowing the system of this building very well, and I plead guilty to that charge because over the years I have learned how to use it well. I think it is wise of a politician who gets elected to know how it works so that they can get things done.

Let me say on another subject, as one who will receive no benefits from changes but should be done for other members in the future, and once again, I'm talking about dignity.

It brings me to the subject of work, pay and other benefits accorded MLA's. And once again I must remember '82 when I say this. When a member is defeated or retires, we do not give him or her any time to rearrange his or her life as, for example, other provinces do. They allow several months of pay to give you time to move home, rearrange your life and find opportunity or employment. Some are fortunate and have the opportunity to have a job waiting, as I am one of those members. I think it is important we find a committee of individuals who can transcend the boundaries and understand this place and can arrange to make sure that all members that leave this place leave it with dignity and ability to have some time.

And with a little humility, I would suggest some members who could probably serve this function very well after the next election. They are the ex-member from Kindersley, Mr. Neil McMillan, a former Liberal; the ex-member from Biggar, the NDP member, Mr. Elwood Cowley; and of course myself, who from our own group has been here fairly well on. This committee, I think, could make some recommendations that only people who have been here and understand the system could make, to allow the dignity of when members change between elections.

Mr. Speaker, on another topic of responsibility, and working, and pay. In my opinion, 50 per cent of the members that are usually in the House work well over 2,000 hours a year, and 2,000 hours a year is considered a full work year in most employment. Another 25 per cent of the members in this House work well over 3,000 hours, and another group of members work around the thousand.

The House is considered to be a part-time job, and the pay was designed under that system. It is unfortunate that the pay does not reflect the real value of a good MLA. Today an MLA is paid just under \$14,000 and \$7,000 for the session. If an MLA leaves his job and does this full-time, it is rather difficult, and he must have other assistance, or his wife working, to be able to afford it.

I think that some time in the future we must correct that, but I do not know how. There are several ways, and I once again would compliment the former member from Biggar who improved many things before he left this House, compared to the way they were in 1975 when I entered, by allowing additional help for us in our constituency offices, and so forth. That has made it better.

And now I speak, not for ministers, not for legislative secretaries, leaders of the opposition, but for the back-bench members on both sides. And I recommend that maybe in the future that additional services should be provided for their benefit — not their caucuses, not their party — to assist them in doing their job, if we choose not to pay them more money so they can do it. There are methods; there are ways.

(1645)

In this session, Mr. Speaker, we have the wonderment of the WCC, and the last time we had the wonderment of the Unionest party. Mr. Speaker, those people left the party that they were elected to when they entered the House to form another party. What I am about to say, I say with no malice, but with concern for the parliamentary tradition, that a member must have the right to leave on principle and privilege when he chooses to, without going to the polls for election.

But when he does those two things, when he does for those reasons, he should not, and neither should the party that he goes to, get any financial benefits. If you leave on principle, then leave on principle. You should not get any financial benefits, and neither there should for the party you moved to, but your individual benefits as an MLA should continue.

I think that is a very important right for privilege, for tradition, and for principle, because many members have crossed the floor, be it one way or the other over history, because of principle, and it should be for principle and not for financial reward. Only financial reward should be allowed if you are elected to that party and to that position.

There are, Mr. Speaker, ways in which all members serve their constituencies well. It is simply by understanding the rules, knowing the system, that an MLA wants to get

further ahead I suggest he work within the system — learn the system, the rules of the House, the rules of parliament, who looks after what. And that way he will be able to accomplish much more than the person who I believe is always looking for headlines. We are elected here, not for headlines, but to work for our constituents, to work for our province, and that should be the foremost in our minds.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask your indulgence for what I'm about to say. There was one sad day in this House for me, and I think you were aware that I cried for the traditions of parliament that day. There must be a system in this House where parliament cannot be held for ransom, yet the opposition must have its right, and I repeat, the opposition must have its right to speak. And I refer to the famous bell-ringing session, that terrible day the doors were locked, the bells were allowed to continue to ring, and the members could not answer. That was a terrible day for tradition, and it should be cured.

Ottawa has come up with a new system, Mr. Speaker, and I hope our members would look at it in the future. The system looks interesting. The basis of it is, if there is a dispute and you can't agree, rather than ring the bells for a long period and days and days, could you agree to move to a new topic and come back when cooler minds and cooler heads can handle the dispute that you got hung up on. In that way, parliament will continue to function, and yet the opposition's right will still be protected. They call it stacking up of votes or something in Ottawa, and I would suggest future members of the House look at it.

To all of you, I wish you success in the next election, and my personal reasons and for obvious ones, I would like to see and I would prefer to see and I wish to see the Devine government and the Conservatives re-elected. I believe our party represents the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan, and I believe it is only fair that I don't pretend that I do not care who wins because obviously I prefer the party I work for and the political philosophy I believe in, and you may believe yours.

On a personal note, as many of you know, I came here in 1975, my wife and I, my wife working for the CNR as a ticket agent and we had a family farm. I left the city of Saskatoon on a leave of absence as a recreation employee. Over the years, the Lord has been kind to me, and I have been blessed with two wonderful children, and my wife has had to carry on the burden of running our farm and the several businesses that we have been involved in.

Mr. Speaker, to all the staffs of all the departments I've ever had the pleasure of working with as a legislative secretary or a member, I say thank you to the courtesies that you have extended to me over the years, and God bless you.

To my constituents I say, God bless you, and thank you for the privilege of allowing me to serve.

To my good friend, John Schriner, who's been with me since day one, I say thank you.

It is my time, when the next election is over, to go back to

my family, to watch them grow. And the road of life takes a curve for me at that time, as I leave this place which I respect, admire, and will miss. I have been privileged to choose when I leave. Others have not.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Premier, members, Mr. Leader of the Opposition, may God grant you the wisdom that you require and bless you all.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I was going to add a word of commendation to address to the House concerning the remarks of the member for Rosthern, but the House has stated it more emphatically than could I. I think that all of us here in this House sometimes conduct ourselves in a manner which belies our appreciation of the traditions which we carry on, and the job we have to do on behalf of the people who elect us.

None the less I think most of us, and I would suspect all of us, understand that what we're about is important work; not every moment of it is important, but overall it is important work on behalf of people who are carrying on a tradition of responsible and democratic government — a tradition which, as I have said many times, is all too rare in the world and that accordingly must be nourished.

The member for Rosthern has been a now long-time and acknowledged to be a hard-working and committed member of this legislature. He has served in many capacities. I am not now delivering a funeral eulogy because he is still very much around.

An Hon. Member: — Emphasis on the round.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Yes. I don't know when the election is going to be. Obviously he has some more information on that than I, and we may have battles yet in this legislature. However, I do want to commend him for his remarks, for the tenor of his remarks, and for the respect which it shows to the institution which we all serve.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to address some remarks to the House with respect to the throne speech. I would . . . I believe that I would spare the House some ad lib remarks if I asked for leave to adjourn and start it off tomorrow morning, and accordingly I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:55 p.m.