

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
February 10, 1994

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a number of petitions that were circulated by the employees of the Moose Jaw Woolco and signed by hundreds of people from the Moose Jaw and area.

This petition calls on the government to resolve the problem that the employees of Moose Jaw Woolco are having in holding their union decertification vote and to protect the jobs of 150 people who work at that store.

Mr. Speaker, there are signatures on this petition from Moose Jaw, Regina, and many of the small towns in that surrounding area as well as across the province.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to table this petition today.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have many petitions today from people in the community of Moose Jaw and surrounding area, employees of the Woolco store and concerned citizens in our community.

And I won't . . . my colleague has said it all. It's a very serious matter in our community and I would like to table these petitions on behalf of those people.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Monday next move first reading of a Bill to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act (Four Year Term).

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall ask the government on Monday next a question:

Regarding the Department of Energy and Mines' changes to the oil royalty structure: (a) to date, what action has been taken to amend the negative effects these changes have imposed on the Kindersley area oilfields; (b) what is the reason for the delay in announcing the changes, being that the minister publicly promised that they would be made prior to the legislative sitting; and (c) when will these exemptions for the Kindersley area be announced?

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday next I shall ask the government the following question:

Regarding the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Commission's decision to proceed with full-scale casinos in Saskatoon and

Regina: to provide full details of any consultations that occurred including the name of each individual or group consulted; why this particular individual or group was singled out for consultation; the date and location of each meeting; and who coordinated and staffed each meeting.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly a guest who is seated behind the bar, Ms. Sally Merchant. Mrs. Merchant was elected to the Saskatchewan legislature in 1964 from the Saskatoon City constituency. Mrs. Merchant's father represented the constituency of Yorkton in 1934, and her son represented the constituency of Regina Wascana in 1975. As such this is the only family that has had three generations of elected representatives who have sat in this Chamber.

Please join with me in warmly welcoming Sally Merchant.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with a great deal of pleasure, Mr. Speaker, that I introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly, Mr. George Bonneville and 15 of his colleagues who work at the Woolco store over in Moose Jaw and who have come to the city today to watch democracy in action. They will, I'm sure, want to be meeting with some of you folks later on today.

I'd ask you all to please join with me in welcoming those folks up in the Speaker's gallery.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow and myself, I'd like to join together with the member from Maple Creek in welcoming these people from Moose Jaw here. I hope that your visit here proves to be both informative and instructional for you, and a safe trip home.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is equally pleasurable for me to introduce to you and through you to all the members of our Assembly another guest who is seated behind the bar, and that is John Gardner. Mr. Gardner was the MLA for Moosomin from 1965 to 1975, serving in the government of Ross Thatcher and the Liberal opposition of Davey Steuart where he served as Agriculture critic and Health critic. Of specific note is the fact that Mr. Gardner was chairman of the committee which chose the wonderful Saskatchewan flag of which we are all so proud today. Please warmly welcome Mr. Gardner.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the legislative Assembly, a guest who is also seated behind the bar, Mr. Lionel Coderre. Mr. Coderre served the constituents of Gravelbourg for four consecutive terms from 1956 to 1967. He served as minister of Labour and minister of Co-operation and Co-operative Development for six years, from 1964 until 1970, at which time he assumed the portfolio of Public Works. And I ask the Assembly to welcome Mr. Coderre.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to introduce a gentleman behind the bar. He was my member of the legislature for quite a number of years. He's been a competitor and I've taken a lot of lessons from him as methods used in campaigning. His name is Mr. Jack Wiebe, and I'd like the Assembly to join with me in welcoming him here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce on our behalf as well, to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, a guest who is seated behind the bar, Mr. Jack Wiebe.

Mr. Wiebe sat in this House for two terms, beginning with a by-election in 1971, representing the Morse constituency. Mr. Wiebe served under the leadership of Dave Steuart and Ted Malone, with responsibilities as Agriculture critic, caucus chairman, and House leader for a portion of that time. Mr. Wiebe chaired the legislative committee that brought television to the legislature.

Please join me in welcoming him here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me further pleasure, and of course the members of our caucus, to introduce to you and all members, dozens of very good friends and supporters who are in your gallery today. They have taken the time to come to our legislature today from each and every part of Saskatchewan. Would you please warmly welcome all of them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. May I first of all join my colleagues in welcoming the Liberal members, the former Liberal members of the Legislative Assembly, to the Assembly, and also the Liberals that the Leader of the Third Party has introduced in the Speaker's gallery. So far, I must say that it's very pleasant to see that the Liberals are still on the opposite side of the rail.

But none the less, it's good to see some people like Sally Merchant, and Mr. Gardner, and Mr. Wiebe, Mr.

Coderre. I know it's hard for the members to believe this, but I actually served with these people in the Legislature at a time when I was elected as a very young person — or I should put it this way: it should be acknowledged that they're so youthful and I'm so youthful still, that we served together at the same time. But I'm very much pleased to see them here and wish them very much continued success.

While I'm on my feet and introducing and making comments in this regard, I want to also introduce to you, Mr. Speaker, and the members of the House, two colleagues of our political party from Alberta — the former leader of the New Democratic Party and the leader of the Official Opposition. Ray Martin, member from Edmonton-Norwood, who's seated in the gallery opposite, and the member from Vegreville — Derek Fox, who was the Deputy House leader and Agriculture critic. They're here on a visit to Saskatchewan and as two former parliamentarians, I'd ask the members to welcome them, too.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. At the outset I'd just like to inform the Premier that no, that does not surprise me at all.

But anyway I want to continue on the theme of introducing political people, Mr. Speaker, since that seems to be the theme. But the people that I want to introduce are those kind that I'm sure that every member here present today and present in the past — I speak to the members of the bar . . . from behind the bar — that we all have a great deal of empathy with these people that I'm going to introduce.

Every spring, Mr. Speaker, we have spring training for those people that make us politicians look good and actually do a lot of the hard work for us. And seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, we have a group of people that are in . . . they are our MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) constituency secretaries and assistants.

And I would like to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to introduce Doreen Eagles — and if they could stand as I call out their names please — Wanda Stang, Jean Ball, Sharon Jensen, Julie Chickowski, Tina Durbin, Cheryl Hanlon, Delores Sogge, and a particular person of a great deal of interest to me is Whitney Friesen, who is my personal MLA secretary and assistant right now.

And we certainly welcome Whitney into the field, coming from being a previous Liberal youth president and has joined our team. I didn't want to rain on the member from Greystone's parade here, but I couldn't resist the opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

So I ask all members to help me welcome these people.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. If

the task is to make the member from Rosthern look good, they do indeed have their task cut out for them.

I want to join with the Premier in welcoming also Mr. Martin and Mr. Fox. Mr. Fox, by the way, and I shared an employee in common, and when my employee returned, she told me that Mr. Fox and I had a lot in common. And I can see by his incredible good looks and charming wit that I will never again question her judgement. So I'd like to join in welcoming Mr. Fox here today. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Stanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to also join in welcoming our two guests from Alberta, as both of these guests have participated in a previous election that I was involved in, and we are going to take to heart some of their counsel and what is going on in the province of Alberta. And we welcome them here, and have a safe journey home.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Moose Jaw Woolco Decertification Application

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Minister of Labour. Mr. Minister, last June employees of the Moose Jaw Woolco applied to have their union decertified. This decision was delayed for many months, and just recently their request for a decertification vote was denied.

Mr. Minister, can you please tell us why this vote was denied? Why can't the employees of the Moose Jaw Woolco simply have a vote to decide whether they want to remain unionized or not?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would respond to the member on behalf of the Minister of Labour who is in Melfort today.

And I'm able to say to the hon. member from Maple Creek that it really should not be the function of a government, no matter who the government, to decide whether a group of employees wish to join a union or wish to be decertified.

And that is why, Mr. Speaker, there is and has been in this province, and rightfully so, the Labour Relations Board which is completely independent of government and in fact is equivalent to a court in the matters that it deals with. And its job is to make sure that it protects the democratic rights of all workers. The Labour Relations Board duly handled and considered the applications for decertification. There was also a counter-application. All of this obviously takes time, Mr. Speaker, but the Labour Relations Board disposed of the matter as quickly as it could, and made a decision based on the evidence and the submissions that were made before it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, it takes eight months in Saskatchewan; it takes one week in British Columbia. Is the democratic process so much different here than there?

Mr. Minister, as you know, since the time of the original decertification application, the situation at the Moose Jaw Woolco has changed dramatically. The Wal-Mart chain bought the eight non-unionized Woolco stores in Saskatchewan but decided not to purchase the Moose Jaw store. One of the reasons given initially by the Wal-Mart officials was that the Moose Jaw store was unionized.

Now this certainly wasn't the reason the Moose Jaw employees applied for decertification back in June, but now that this has happened it is just that much more important to allow the decertification vote to take place.

Mr. Minister, the jobs of 150 Woolco employees in Moose Jaw are at stake. Your government is supposed to be concerned about this matter, according to your throne speech. Are there any steps, Mr. Minister, your government is prepared to take to allow the decertification vote to take place?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that this one point be made very clear: it is neither the role of the member opposite, nor the role of the Minister of Labour, or myself, here or at any other time, to interfere with a process that should be and is independent of influence by any members of this House or anybody else — a completely democratic process, Mr. Speaker, which provides members in a bargaining unit to apply for either becoming part of a bargaining unit and become unionized, or to apply to become decertified, as is the case here.

Certainly one would always like to have the process move as quickly as possible; I don't argue with that. But it is certainly not the role of any member of this House to make sure that that happens. It is the role of the members of this House to provide something like a labour relations board which democratically exercises its right and duly considers all of the evidence that is brought before it. And that's what the Labour Relations Board had to do in this case, and it was a very complicated case so they took a little time. Took a lot of time, I guess some people would think, but it did its job as it should be, independent of interference from anybody, and that's the way it has to be, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish I could say that I appreciated your answer, Minister, but I can't. Mr. Minister, your government has announced that it will be introducing new labour legislation in

this session of the legislature. That means that you write the rules.

The employees of the Moose Jaw Woolco wish to hold a decertification vote. Yet the Labour Relations Board is using the current legislation to block such a vote. They work under the rules that you write. Is this an area you will be addressing in the new legislation?

There has been speculation that the new legislation will make it easier for employees to get into a union with union certification. Will the new legislation also then ensure that it is easier to decertify as well, so that the rights of the employees at the Moose Jaw Woolco, as well as other employees in this province . . . have the right to the democratic choice of what they want to do, through a secret ballot?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to the member opposite that the rules which are being followed are exactly the same rules which was in the legislation when the members opposite were on this side of the House in the government; nothing has changed. They were appropriate then — and I think they were — and they are appropriate now.

If there are any changes . . . whatever changes may come in amendments to various legislation under the Labour department, that will come forward in due course when the legislation is introduced to the House. But the rules that are being applied are no different than they were prior to the change of government and they have worked quite effectively, Mr. Speaker. The policy of this government is to make sure that the people in each workplace have a right to choose and that they have a right to make an appeal.

In a democratic society, Mr. Speaker, that's the way it should be, and this group of people in this situation made an application to the Labour Relations Board to be decertified. It is not for me to comment on the work of the Labour Relations Board, but it has been made very clear in the ruling of the Labour Relations Board that the reason why it found that there was no room for decertification was because in this particular place they found that the employer had interfered in the Moose Jaw process, Mr. Speaker. That's not our choice — that is the role of this judicial body, which is the Labour Relations Board doing its job.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, I'm sorry to hear the type of answer we get from the minister, Mr. Speaker. What he is saying is that they're going to ignore the rights of people in a democracy using any kind of excuse that they can come up with. And I'll say simply this, Minister: I really don't care who brought the rules in or why they brought them in; if they're not serving the people, then they're no good. Let's get rid of them and do them over.

I suggest to you, sir, that more realistically it is the

interpretation of the rules by the new board that is different than the interpretation used by old boards. But if this board is unable to square the needs of people in a democracy, sir, what you need to do is one of two things: either rewrite the legislation so that democracy is served, or else fire the board and get a new board that interprets the rules the way that democracy demands that they be done.

Will you, sir, rewrite the rules in the legislation for the people of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I must say I'm a little shocked by the comment from the member opposite, because that is exactly the way a body which has got judicial power, so to speak, should not be handled. Just because every time the member from Maple Creek may not like what is decided by a court, he suggests we should fire the judge.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that on my part I reject that notion, otherwise the whole process is tainted and influenced. And if it's going to work effectively it should not be tainted and influenced because of political pressure from anybody.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the same minister because, Mr. Minister, you seem to be missing something here.

There are people in the city of Moose Jaw who are saying that they have not had the democratic right to vote in secret of whether they should be or shouldn't be — plain and simple. Their jobs are at risk. In the city of Moose Jaw today Joyners department store is closing, Kresge's is closing, the federal Liberals are talking about taking our air base away.

We have 150 employees talking about losing their job, Mr. Minister, and they're saying they didn't have the democratic right to determine how their workplace is ordered. And you're saying . . . you're hiding behind your board.

Mr. Minister, you write the legislation. Your throne speech says you are committed to jobs and the welfare of families in 1994. What are you going to do for those 150 families? Who have you talked to? Tell the legislature and tell the folks what you've done.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well first of all, Mr. Speaker, let me say that we too are very concerned about what the federal government might do to the air force base in Moose Jaw. And we have made very strong submissions to the Prime Minister to indicate our concern. And we would hope that the federal Liberal government is very sensitive to these concerns and will take that into consideration when it makes these decisions. But I would duly hope that Liberal members of the third party will also take that under

consideration as well and try to exercise some influence.

But, Mr. Speaker, coming back to the issue that we have been discussing here, there is, Mr. Speaker, a process which is available, always has been available, and continues to be available to any group of employees. I have a lot of sympathy for these employees in their circumstance. But that's why there is a process that is there, democratically established, to which no one should interfere. And it is because of the interference by, I am told, the employer in this case, that the Labour Relations Board brought about the ruling that it did.

Now the member opposite is saying that even though that's the case, somehow the members over there or members over here should interfere accordingly. That would not do the process any great service, nor would it do these employees or any employees in the future any great service if we begin to politicize this process. We should be above the politics.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, the folks wouldn't be here today if your government had been doing its job.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — You have stated in your throne speech that jobs, jobs, jobs are the priority. If your members from Moose Jaw had been doing their job, the people wouldn't be here today.

Mr. Deputy Premier, would you give the folks the assurance today that you would at least give them the courtesy of an interview to explain, to have explained to you the things that they have said to me and my colleagues about the faults that exist in the system. Could you at least give them the assurance that maybe something fell through the crack and you've got the time to spend with them. Would you give them that assurance today, Mr. Deputy Premier?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I guess what we're seeing here, and I say this with some regret, is the members of the official opposition trying to take a situation which has caused some difficulty for some people and try to make some politics out of it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I thought we were beyond that in the way governments and politicians work these days. At least that is what the public would expect of us. There is a legitimate process by legislation which was passed by those members opposite, which is still in effect.

It was good when those members opposite passed the legislation, Mr. Speaker. It's good now. And it should not be interfered with by politicians on either side of this House. It is a judicial process; it's a court-like process. Its integrity has to be protected in order that any workers now or in the future in their endeavours

to bring an application, their rights are protected too. The minute the interference begins their rights are interfered with and I will not succumb to that kind of pressure from the members opposite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Defective Furnaces

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister responsible for SaskEnergy. Mr. Minister, a number of my Regina North West constituents have raised concerns about a serious health risk. Many Regina homes are equipped with Flame-Master furnaces identified as having defects that could produce carbon monoxide emissions. What steps has SaskEnergy taken to alert families about the potential dangers regarding these furnaces?

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — I'd like to thank the hon. member for the first question she asks in the Legislative Assembly. I'm not personally aware of the risk with Flame-Master furnaces. We are aware of some risk with chimneys that were at one time approved by CSA (Canadian Standards Association) approval, and we do now find that some of those chimneys are in a condition where they can possibly collapse. And unfortunately there've been some deaths caused in Saskatchewan by this.

The action taken both by SaskPower and SaskEnergy is to inform the public through press releases that they should be inspecting their chimneys to make sure that they are in a state of good repair, and if they're not, they should be replaced.

There is some problem in terms of SaskEnergy going in and actually doing work, because our legislation doesn't allow that. Certainly we can inspect for safety and to make sure that the gas is flowing properly. But certainly anyone who has some problems should be contacting a certified person to come in and check out their furnace or their chimney, whichever the case may be. If there is a particular problem with Flame-Master furnaces, I'll certainly take notice of that part of the question and get back to the hon. member.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Rural Bus Services

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Throughout the province of Saskatchewan this government has foregone its responsibility to provide services at a fair and reasonable level. With hospitals being closed, rural medical practices disappearing, elderly people must travel great distances to receive services such as health care.

To the minister in charge of Highways and Transportation: at this time of financial and emotional distress, can you ensure the people of our rural areas that Saskatchewan Transportation Company will not have further cut-backs to their service?

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the member opposite. This year of course you'll notice in the *Regina Leader-Post* that STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company) had a loss of \$3.5 million, which is \$1.5 million less than last year.

And it's good news for the bus company to have a better financial picture. The member opposite I guess does not realize what debt and deficit causes to a province and/or to a transportation company. I'm very happy with the progress that STC has made, and they will continue to do so and make this company a very, very stable transportation company.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Minister, I did notice there was a loss of three and a half million dollars. And I also know that STC employees have been telling us the Crown corporation has just recently hired an additional eight to ten more people to fill upper-management positions.

To the minister: it is obvious that mismanagement exists in Saskatchewan's family of Crown corporations. In the face of rising Crown debts, you look after those families more than you look after the families in rural Saskatchewan.

Will you now give the people, the rural people of the province, give them an answer why your government is continually alienating . . . give them the assurance that you're going to provide them service that is more important than enlarging an already heavy upper management?

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the member opposite, the efficiencies that STC have completed in this one short year, the transformation of some coaches to brucks, with the sale of 16 buses — eight of them Eagle buses — and route rationalization, has saved the corporation a lot of dollars and has stabilized the company so that it can provide the appropriate service to the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Speaker, the government's argument for everything that affects the lives of the poor people in rural Saskatchewan is a financial answer. Mr. Speaker, the community of Climax has lost its hospital; the NDP threatened to gravel the roads down in that area; it was hard hit with changes to GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) and crop insurance; and now the bus service is being completely removed. Mr. Minister of Highways, when will this end? What more will you do until you're satisfied you've completely killed this community?

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the member opposite, Saskatchewan deserves a good transportation system. We will continue to be financially responsible so that we can provide a high quality of service and a good transportation

corporation in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the minister would like to keep this in the financial ballpark without admitting the pain and suffering they're causing in rural Saskatchewan, but however he's got to answer to these people.

Mr. Speaker, in a story carried in the *Shaunavon* newspaper January 18, STC official Greg Beattie doesn't rule out both Shaunavon and Eastend could be left without bus service in the future.

Will the minister set the record straight and tell us today that bus service will not be cut back to these communities?

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the member opposite, I can see very clearly that he doesn't understand debt and deficit and what it can do to the province or what it can do to a bus company. And I say to him that we either lose the corporation completely or we have a good corporation, one that we can afford.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has many traditions, as you well know. STC bus service to rural areas in Saskatchewan is also a tradition. It's another rural tradition the NDP (New Democratic Party) government has killed however.

Mr. Minister, how many more services will you take away from the people of rural Saskatchewan before you are satisfied that all that's left out there is a wasteland?

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. STC will continue to plan strategically and consult with the rural communities as to how they best can serve those communities. And they are doing that now and they will continue to do that.

But I want to stress to the member opposite that debt and deficit kills things like bus companies, and we can't afford to have that happen in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Speaker, it appears the government continues its devastation of rural Saskatchewan. With the cut-back in bus service last summer, the agent in Shaunavon lost 50 per cent of his revenues. His faithful customers have been forced to deal with private couriers.

Will the minister admit the government has again turned its back on rural Saskatchewan and will he assure the House that full bus service will continue in Shaunavon and Eastend? Give us that assurance, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I

wonder if the member opposite didn't move to the wrong party. He doesn't seem to have any realization of deficit and what that does to the province. So I would say, if he's got a better idea, he should certainly advise me.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Speaker, the government opposite of course are known to be the tax kings of Canada. Mr. Speaker, it's obvious . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I think members know that they should allow the member to ask his question and if a question is directed to a certain minister, I'm sure they will get up and answer the question.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Speaker, it's obvious by the Minister of Transportation's answers that they're more concerned about the debt than the people of rural Saskatchewan, and I ask the minister to state in the House, which is it? Which is more important? Is it solely a financial issue or do you believe there are people out there that have to have a certain level of service?

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the member opposite: that's exactly our concern — is rural Saskatchewan — and that's why we have to protect the bus company from going broke or bankrupt. That's why we make these decisions, Mr. Speaker, and I know that the member opposite realizes that it if he just would come clear and admit it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Moose Jaw Job Situation

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Economic Development. Mr. Minister, you, as the person who is supposed to be guaranteeing jobs in this province, must realize that the city of Moose Jaw is feeling a desperate situation. Joyners department store have been in our city for 80 years, Kresge's have been there over 60 years. The federal government — possibly — is going to shut down our air base.

Mr. Minister, the question I want you to answer today. In your capacity, have you talked to the Wal-Mart department store chain? Have you talked to the United Food and Commercial Workers Union? Have you talked to the various parties to look at the future of that facility and look at the future of that city to make sure that you don't have absolute economic devastation foisted upon the citizens of Moose Jaw and area? Have you made any of those contacts, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I really want to answer the member's question about jobs, and jobs particularly in Saskatchewan and in the Moose Jaw area. You will note, Mr. Minister, that obviously Saskatchewan, having the lowest unemployment rate

in 1993 of any province in Canada, bar none, that there have been a great number of jobs created in certain sectors, particularly those related to trade.

What I want to say to you, that when it comes to Moose Jaw and other areas of Saskatchewan, you and your party led this province down a road of disaster with \$15 billion in debt which has saddled the province and the government and the people of this province, as well as supporting the idea of free trade which opens us up to all the kinds of companies obviously coming here that you are talking about, including Wal-Mart. Now today you say we should be doing something about it.

I want to say as well, when we talk about projects that are coming forward, rather than being negative, what we'd like to do is hear some of the ideas that you have.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say that the Leader of the Liberal Party for example, 100 weeks ago today, promised she would bring one idea of economic development every week. She has yet to bring one idea to this Assembly. And I would like those members in the opposition to be positive about economic development . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 1 — An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act (Legislative Utilities Review Committee)

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act (Legislative Utilities Review Committee).

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 Department of Economic Development Act, 1993

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to move first reading of a Bill to amend The Department of Economic Development Act, 1993.

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

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to a guest we have in the west gallery . . .

The Speaker: — The member must ask for leave.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Do I have leave to introduce a guest?

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, members, for leave. It is my pleasure to introduce a guest in the west gallery, Mr. Mark Hislop from Prince Albert. Mr. Hislop is a businessman in Prince Albert, who has taken on the responsibility of being the chairperson of the Prince Albert Regional Development Authority — the first regional economic development authority in the province of Saskatchewan. I want the members to join with me and extend a welcome to Mr. Mark Hislop.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McPherson: — Leave for the introduction of guests.

Leave granted.

(1445)

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the legislature, Assembly, a guest who is seated behind the bar, Mr. Wilf Gardiner. Mr. Gardiner represented the constituency of Melville for three consecutive terms in 1956, 1960, and 1964. He served as minister of Public Works for three and a half years. In 1967 Mr. Gardiner was Saskatchewan's minister responsible for the centennial celebrations marking Canada's 100th birthday.

And I ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to welcome Mr. Gardiner.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Haverstock: — I ask leave, please, Mr. Speaker, to make comments on Chinese New Year.

Leave granted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chinese New Year

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to wish Saskatchewan's 15,000 people of Chinese ancestry all the best as they celebrate Chinese New Year today.

Chinese people will be celebrating the Year of the Dog by exchanging small gifts — hung bau — much the same as is the case with our traditional western Christmas. To all people of Chinese ancestry and the 1,200 who are expected to mark this occasion this Saturday in Regina alone, I would like to say, Kung Hey Fat Choy — Happy New Year.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I would want to join with our hon. member from Greystone in wishing a very special day to those people of Chinese

ancestry who will be celebrating today, and also celebrating as I understand on Saturday at Queensbury Downs. I know many of us on the government side will be celebrating with them on this festive occasion, and obviously if the member opposite intends to be there I'm sure that we will see other that day.

Mr. Speaker, it's fair to say that the Chinese people have in Canada and Saskatchewan played a very, very integral role in many areas. In areas of culture, music, investment in our province, their endeavours are legendary. And I just want to say on behalf of the members of our caucus and our government, a special wish to the Chinese community of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And the opposition, the official opposition, wants to join in in recognition of the Year of the Dog. And we also want at the same time to recognize all of the contributions that the Chinese people in this province have made, not only to the province of Saskatchewan but indeed I would go so far as to say in the entire nation of Canada. And we certainly appreciate that.

Coming from rural Saskatchewan, I think all of us from rural Saskatchewan know some people of Chinese ancestry. They are spread across the province. Every town has representatives of this ethnic group in it, and we want to just pay recognition to the fact that indeed Saskatchewan and Canada . . . I don't like the term melting pot, Mr. Speaker, but we have a large ethnic community, diverse ethnic community, throughout all of Saskatchewan and certainly all of Canada.

And as such, this mosaic of ethnic cultures is something that we are very, very proud of because they have all contributed immensely to the quality of life in Saskatchewan. And certainly at this time it is the Chinese turn to be recognized, and we want to do that at this time as the official opposition as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, as it relates to questions 1 to 10 and 12 to 18 put by the members opposite, I would request that they be converted to motions for returns (debatable). And, Mr. Speaker, further, that as it relates to question no. 11, I would hereby provide the response asked for.

The Speaker: — Motions 1 to 18, with the exception of no. 11, are motions for returns (debatable), and no. 11 has been answered.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Ms. Crofford, seconded by Mr. Whitmore.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour to reply to the Speech from the Throne today.

I want to begin by welcoming the members of my caucus. When I became Leader of the Liberal Party almost five years ago, there were no sitting Liberal members in this legislature. For the last two sessions I have done my best to speak on behalf of my constituents and the 24 per cent of the 1991 electorate who supported the Liberal vision for our province. In the last five months I have been joined by two committed and caring colleagues, and our caucus now constitutes 22 per cent of the opposition of this Assembly.

Today I am proud to represent an ever-increasing number of Liberal supporters, some of whom are with us today in your gallery, and I am very pleased to have the support of two new members of the Liberal caucus to share in that responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, as a member for Saskatoon Greystone, still the largest urban constituency in Saskatchewan, I speak for a cross-section of individuals with interests in and concerns about a broad range of issues. My constituency is close to the University of Saskatchewan and I represent more than 1,800 post-secondary students and 600 educators.

There are more than 500 health care professionals who work at nearby hospitals from whom I hear frequently about changes to health care, how those changes are affecting their lives and the lives of their patients. The Sherbrooke Centre is home to many seniors and residents who rely on the leadership of political representatives to ensure that their needs are met.

I am proud as well to represent the parents of so many enthusiastic students in public and separate K to 12 schools located within the boundaries of Saskatoon Greystone. And I take very seriously my obligations to protect their interests to the best of my abilities on all issues of concern to them.

Saskatoon Greystone is fortunate with almost 1,000 small-business people living in the constituency. And I recognize the difficulties that government policies and regulations have presented to those entrepreneurs over the past two years. Often I have brought their genuine concerns to the floor of this Assembly only to have them fall on deaf ears.

As well, I am sensitive to the concerns of the hundreds of union and non-union labourers who live in my constituency.

And, Mr. Speaker, I am most grateful for the social, economic, and cultural diversity that comprises Saskatoon Greystone, because it keeps me in touch with such a wide variety of issues and genuine human concerns as a member of this Legislative Assembly.

Our party, the Liberal Party of Saskatchewan, places extreme importance on the individual, and it is my pledge to preserve and protect the dignity of my constituents by working to achieve a high standard in their quality of life through the influence that we can have on public policy. It is that mission statement that drives the Liberal Party and it is that philosophy that serves as my guide in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, 842 days ago Saskatchewan men and women cast their votes to rid the province of a Conservative government, a government that had destroyed Saskatchewan people's pride, caused us embarrassment, and had borrowed its way into political and fiscal oblivion.

On October 21, 1991 the people made a statement that said that they wanted to protect the province of Saskatchewan from the practices of the Conservative administration. Although the public has yet to learn of the many examples of ineptitude and they weren't at that time fully aware of the wide range of deeds that had been carried out against the province, indeed even the corruption of that regime, they had clearly decided that the time for privilege for some was over and the time of unaccountable spending was over.

Today it does matter little what the Conservatives have to say or whose suggestions they espouse as their policies, because the Progressive Conservative Party's credibility registers near zero. And the people have yet to hear their three very important words from them that they are still waiting to hear — we are sorry.

The voters on October 21, 1991, also gave the current government a mandate for change, part of which was based on a promise to build a better future for our citizens. Promises are an integral part of any election campaign. The people cast their votes believing that the promises made are based on truth and good will. The NDP conducted a campaign, a campaign that not only said little, but avoided saying much in order to ensure its election.

For the first year, people were willing to accept the strategy of placing blame for everything that was wrong with our province at the feet of the tarnished Tories. In the second year of this government's mandate, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan became a great deal more critical of the actions of the New Democratic Party and they are more than justified.

Nowhere during the 1991 election campaign did the NDP unveil its plans for its wellness model. Not once did they have the courage to mention possible closures of hospitals or cut-backs in health care funding. Nowhere did they mention raising taxes and utility rates, licence fees, and a deficit surtax charge. No, Mr. Speaker, the NDP ran its campaign on the record of the Conservatives, managing to say nothing about its ill-thought plans until they had the reigns of power.

There were some promises, however — promises not

to increase taxes, broken; promises to create jobs, unfulfilled. Promises that \$4.5 billion would be enough to run the province — difficult to explain in the face of continual increases in tax revenue while government spending is still rampant. This is a government, Mr. Speaker, which seemed to give little thought as to what it would do when it got elected because its goal was power itself — power, pure and simple. But Saskatchewan people expected more, and they are getting impatient.

The most recent throne speech seems as though it were written for some other place. If one were to read this speech without knowing it was intended for the governing of Saskatchewan, one would have trouble finding the evidence in the government's actions to give us enough clues.

And why is that, Mr. Speaker? It begins with a statement on page 2, where the Premier spoke of an economic development strategy partnership for renewal which has three goals, three goals that seem clearly foreign to the NDP government. One, create a positive climate for economic renewal; two, to build on existing strengths; and three, to seek full employment. Well this is certainly not happening in Saskatchewan, not from the people with whom we speak, not from the people who give us calls.

Let's begin with the first, a positive change for economic renewal. It would be a difficult challenge indeed to find anyone who would argue that continual increases to taxation could possibly contribute to a positive climate for economic renewal. And the heavy-handed tactics of the government over the NewGrade upgrader legislation hardly sent waves of confidence resonating throughout the international and national business communities.

Two, to build on existing strengths. I argue that little has been done to identify and stake out our economic niches in Saskatchewan. After two and a half years of this government's economic strategy, I have yet to meet one person in Saskatchewan who can clearly articulate where it is this government is taking us.

Three, to seek full employment. The newspapers are full of lay-off notices and plant closures. The unemployment-wanted section is dismal, and those jobs advertised are not long term; they are not secure or high paying.

(1500)

So, Mr. Speaker, while the rhetoric may be there in this throne speech, while the rhetoric may indicate goals, there certainly is no evidence of a plan, no measurable progress in jobs or economic development.

But this has become typical of this particular administration. More than halfway through its mandate, the only sector which is experiencing real growth in salaries and employment opportunities is the political arm of government. We have seen the cabinet grow beyond the numbers which were sternly

criticized by the Premier as being unacceptable. We see a government raising taxes and fees at every turn, but continuing to spend as much on itself as it ever did.

And let's take a good, hard look at the real facts. Let's look for a moment, Mr. Speaker, at what is really going on in our province.

The government says that we have the lowest unemployment rate in the country. We heard it today in comments made in question period. They failed to mention that we now have more people on welfare than ever before. And that is fact, Mr. Speaker.

We now have 77,000 people in our province of Saskatchewan on social assistance — 21,000 more than in 1991 when the NDP were elected. That is what has happened to the unemployed in our province of Saskatchewan. Either they moved on to look for work elsewhere after getting training and education here, or they simply gave up looking for unavailable jobs and are now on social assistance.

The message delivered in the throne speech is simply misleading. There are 12,000 fewer people working in Saskatchewan today than there were in October 1991. Do you have any idea how many families that affects, Mr. Speaker? Does the Premier realize how many children depended on those 12,000 to be their caretakers? People who no longer have the dignity of employment and the ability to provide security for their own families.

You see, Mr. Speaker, there is a real danger in misleading people. For the person without a job, all this false analysis serves is to undermine the individual's confidence. They find themselves asking themselves this question: if things are so good, if things are looking up, why can't I find work? What's wrong with me? And the truth is there is nothing wrong with the unemployed people in Saskatchewan that a sound economic development plan couldn't fix. It's a four-letter word spelled j-o-b-s.

So why not level with people, Mr. Speaker? What is the point in deception? We have already seen in the last provincial election what happens to a government that twists the fiscal truth. Why does the NDP government insist that people be given an inaccurate picture of where we are? Is that their idea of building optimism?

I have come to the conclusion, based on past performance by the New Democrats in the 1970s, that the NDP philosophy is counter-productive to the economy and discourages employment and wealth creation. And it is self-evident. At a time when potash and grains and oil and gas prices in the 1970s were at an all-time high, the greatest growth in the province of Saskatchewan was where? — the public sector. Not the private sector, the public sector. It made absolutely no sense whatsoever.

And I know that the members opposite have spent a great deal of time talking about their glorious history.

Well I listened to an outstanding historian last night talk about the history of Canada, someone well-known for his roots in the NDP. And what he said was as follows. He talked about the war years; he talked about the devastation of the entire country in the 1930s as a result of the depression; and he talked about the gloriousness of this country that put itself billions and billions of dollars into debt for the war effort. And he said that there was not one province in Canada that had not been decimated by what had happened during the depression and what happened as a result of our contributions to taking care and taking part in the Second World War.

Each and every province went through a recovery from 1945 to 1962, Mr. Speaker. This is not the direct result of the magnificent input of the New Democratic Party à la CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation). This was the result of inflationary times of real growth times in our nation, something for which they want to take credit as if no other province in Canada did it, as if our nation did not do extraordinary things.

And here we are two and a half years after the Premier and his cabinet were given the mandate to put into practice the ideas they had nine and a half years in opposition, two and one half years after they were given a mandate to put an economic plan into place, and what do we have?

Well, Mr. Speaker, what we have are more promises. We have a promise to work on economic planning; we have a promise to consult with the tourism industry; we have a bureaucracy to manage provincial marketing services; we have a promise to develop a transportation policy. We have new buzz words in the speech such as electronic highway project and an information technology and telecommunications strategy committee. But no targets, no goals, no commitments other than, and I quote directly: "This could mean more high-tech jobs for the future."

But do we actually have any net gains in jobs? Do we have any new investment? Can we quantify the energy and the enthusiasm and the excitement about the climate this government has created for business to take risks and hire real people so they can feed their families? No, Mr. Speaker. We can't count the jobs or measure the investment because there aren't any.

What we do have is concern. We have concern by the business leaders that the government will bend to labour and implement yet another round of costly regulations and imperatives that will have an enormous impact on those considering expanding a business or locating here.

Why should we care about business expansion? Why should we care about it? Because, Mr. Speaker, growth equals jobs; jobs equal pay cheques; pay cheques equal self-sufficiency and pride; self-sufficiency, Mr. Speaker, equals no hungry children.

It is no idle rumour that this government's decision to introduce changes to labour legislation could negatively affect workers' jobs. I spoke with officials of a mining company just the other day who'll be forced to move their head office to Calgary if proposed changes to labour laws take place. I have talked with business owners in my own constituency who say, this could well be the straw that breaks their backs. Maybe not, but can we take the risk?

Obviously we would all like to see everyone with the salaries and benefits tossed around so generously in ministers' offices and in Executive Council, but the real world works on market forces. And the Saskatchewan markets, due to horrific tax burdens which have choked off consumer spending and investment activity, the Saskatchewan markets are far too fragile to shoulder the cross of labour standards legislation at this time.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech devotes seven paragraphs in total to agriculture. One paragraph admits that farm families have adapted to change more quickly than governments. The next six paragraphs outline the problem. While the world is passing by, this government is still, after two and a half years, promising to work on a plan.

The most insightful statement the government makes is that, and I quote: the potential in value-added processing appears limitless. Now isn't that a confidence builder.

Biotechnology is one of the most promising areas of growth we have on the economic horizon. Does this government articulate a plan to direct its development in commercialization? No. Do they propose a program that will attract the critical mass of research and development dollars to our province to back this up? No. Do they take a proactive role by adapting the tax system to attract this kind of investment activity to Saskatchewan, to ensure that we are leading the parade instead of waving as technology passes us by? No. They simply give it honourable mention and move on.

Mr. Speaker, I could dissect the entire throne speech, but I'm not sure that it would have any impact whatsoever on the few members of the government interested in hearing honest criticism. The fact is that this Assembly is not designed for input. The very fact that the public feels excluded from real participation, the very fact that there is no mechanism for true inclusion, the very fact that decisions are made in the dark, tell us all that this is an elitist and exclusionary club.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I will say it again. The people of Saskatchewan are the landlords of this building and we in it are its temporary tenants. We owe them the right to access, not just to the building but to all that goes on here.

Mr. Speaker, under different circumstances I could rise in my place and put forward a motion for action, propose a concrete solution for a problem, and ask the

government to vote for or against that proposal. But not in this Assembly. For 20 years the Conservatives and the New Democrats have carefully guarded their turf by balking at any suggestions to significantly changing the rules. For a decade, almost 12 years, until a few months ago, all decisions regarding the Board of Internal Economy were made in secret.

But Liberals have put our cards on the table from the beginning. We put our list of reforms in writing in 1991. We distributed them province-wide during the last election campaign in our platform booklet. We put reform into action by being the first party to adopt a code of ethics for our candidates and our MLAs.

I will be proposing legislation in this session that will put government to the test, to see if it isn't sincere about having constructive input into the process. And if that initiative is welcome, then Liberals will move to have much of our platform document put into action.

Mr. Speaker, let the Conservatives try to help with government reform in spite of their lack of credibility. We will continue to lead the fight for change and we will be there in the future to ensure that it happens. But the Conservatives were then and this is now.

Today we have a government that is out of step, more out of touch than it can imagine, out of sync with reality. And it is obvious to us as Liberals that the global economies that are flourishing today are those that are the least regulated and the least taxed. But here we sit in a provincial government whose favourite pastimes are taxation and regulation. Liberals want to build a Saskatchewan where risk-takers flock to pursue opportunities, a province where government assumes a small, non-intrusive role in the economy, providing leadership, true direction in setting the course, in ensuring justice, and then getting out of the way.

This government has not done those things, Mr. Speaker. This government has not undertaken change for the wrong reasons . . . it has undertaken change for the wrong reasons. They have changed health care because it was too expensive; they have not made it better. We are not even certain that they have it cheaper. As a result of implementing a health care plan that was poorly structured, a plan that had never been tested through pilot projects, this government has created a great deal of unnecessary chaos and ill will throughout our province. Not surprisingly, they have escalated feelings of rural alienation by making urban centres the health care hubs, without addressing the fears that have naturally arisen over the displacement of health care services in rural communities.

Liberals agree that health reform was inevitable and necessary. Past that, we take serious opposition to the approach of ready, fire and then aim. That is what has been used by the government planners. The last thing people needed was bureaucrats imposing decisions from on high when local community input was overlooked, overhauled, and in many cases, outright ignored. We are seriously concerned about the

implications that this will have when it is time to make changes to other important institutions.

(1515)

Mr. Speaker, it is not too late for this government to backtrack, to admit its mistakes, and to listen to the people who are trying to steer them in the right direction. Saskatchewan people understand the need for change, they understand the fiscal situation; what they cannot understand is the government's unwillingness to put its own political agenda aside long enough to listen to the genuine concerns of people being caught up in such things as the health care hurricane.

Mr. Speaker, Liberals want to see positive change and growth in our province. We are building a political movement that is based on a different foundation from traditional parties. The people who are in the inner circle of the Liberal Party of Saskatchewan are simply ordinary people who have come forward to make a difference. They have brought talents and energy and enthusiasm. They have been drawn together by philosophy, by idealism, and yes, even by anger with the actions of others. But all of us share a common goal — to make Saskatchewan a land of hope and opportunity once again.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is the difference between the Liberals and the way in which the current administration is functioning. Mr. Speaker, the NDP talk about hope, they talk about plans, and they talk about strategy. Mr. Speaker, hope is not a strategy, it is just hope. It is necessary for the people of Saskatchewan to have hope, but the government must have a plan. They must have a concrete strategy and a plan to ensure that people's hopes have a foundation, and it must articulate a vision and show real leadership. That is what is lacking in this Speech from the Throne.

The missing ingredients to the equation are as follows: goals, targets, measurability, and accountability, and paving the way for people to risk dreaming again. Every government employee, every civil servant, and every politician should have a concise understanding of what it is to be accomplished, what needs to be accomplished in Saskatchewan, and what role they are to play in reaching that goal.

Hand in hand with that knowledge should go the responsibility for delivering on their component part — the sense that they are crucial to our achieving positive results. Everyone must realize how imperative their contribution is. Then, and only then, will we be able to direct all available resources to a productive end. Only when people have a sense of direction will they be able to measure their progress and pass their confidence on to others who share their tasks.

Liberals have a different vision for government, a different vision for our province. We are prepared to face reality, to assess our potential, and to lead the way into the future with new challenges and

accomplishments. This government must soon realize that it cannot continue to create false impressions of reality, to deliver rhetoric when people need substance, to promote chaos when people need order.

The government must commit to developing an economy based less, rather than on more, government control — less taxation and more consumer spending. And more incentives to take risks if we are to have jobs, economic growth, and meaning for our citizens. The government must spend less time twisting statistics and more time acknowledging that our gross domestic product is falling and will continue to fall if we do not aggressively pursue markets that are ours for the taking.

This government must abandon its political alliances in favour of sound economic leadership, must not succumb to pressure to implement labour laws that will cost the jobs of the very people they are intended to protect.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the Premier to give serious consideration to what is missing from the Speech from the Throne. I urge him to explain why aboriginal people were rarely mentioned, hardly mentioned at all; to explain the plans to open mega casinos as his economic and employment strategy. These were not included in his presentation.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot accept this as the best work of a government that claims to be sensitive to human concerns. I cannot accept this as a vision for our economic future. As a Liberal, I cannot accept this as a basis for good government in our province of Saskatchewan.

Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition said that the government members were stuck in the criticisms of the past. I concur that their choices indicate that they are stuck in the politics and the political climate and agenda of the 1970s.

The opposition leader also stated that the Conservatives are here in the present but did not expand that comment to indicate that they would likely be around here for long; and finally, he said that Liberals are stuck in the future, dreaming of the day — and I quote — we become government. End of quote.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, that is one of the more visionary things that we will hear this session from the official opposition. Liberals are stuck on the future. We see things not just as they are but as they could be and as they ought to be. Where the NDP spend time talking about T.C. Douglas, apparently caught in the need for their own time warp, and the Conservatives divide their time between defending their indefensible past and trying to catch up to the present, Liberals are a step ahead.

Liberals have left government reform on the table for the other two parties to catch up to. Liberals were the first to propose health care reform, the first to talk about reforming the tax system. And Liberals are not

people in our society who understand that you cannot plan for the present. We understand that you cannot plan for the present because it is already here. Liberals understand that you cannot dwell on the past but can only learn from it.

And by the same token, the Conservatives cannot simply wipe the slate clean and expect people to have no memory of their government.

Liberals, Mr. Speaker, are above old paradigms that focus on politics instead of good governing. We have begun to build a movement that will serve people in Saskatchewan from wherever they place us in this Assembly, a political party determined to contribute to the well-being of people no matter what the odds or how long the journey.

To that end, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I in the Liberal caucus will make every effort to support the government when it takes positive initiatives, as I have for the last two and a half years, to vigorously oppose those actions which we feel will detract from our potential as a province, and to seek the counsel and the guidance of the Saskatchewan people in setting the direction for this legislative session.

I do wish the government well in its undertakings, but caution them to be diligent, thorough, and judicious in their work. Should they fail to do so, we guarantee that we will be here to hold them accountable every step of the way.

Jacques Cousteau said, and I quote:

If we were simply logical, the future would be bleak indeed. But we are more than logical. We are human beings, and we have faith, and we can hope and we can work.

Faith is believing in possibilities, Mr. Speaker. It is the ability to carry on with our plans or to be true to our work even though we feel discouraged or tired. If there were no doubt, there would be no need for faith. Faith is temporarily putting our doubts on the shelf and working toward our goals. It is looking at a map and choosing a new destination, getting on the road to go there, and trusting that the marks on the map symbolize a real place that we will find.

I and the members of my caucus and the members of my party have already determined the marks on the map that we will follow to our destination, which we hope will result in having the privilege of governing the province of Saskatchewan. Our road marks are the same as they have been since 1989 — openness, reform, honesty, decency, and a priority focus on good governing. We want the day to arrive again when what is good politics is good governing and what is good governing is good politics.

Until we complete our journey toward forming the government of this province, we will use every opportunity we have to restore faith and hope in the political process and in our great province. And as Cousteau said, we can work. As a caucus we are

pledged to work as best we can on behalf of all people in Saskatchewan. Since this is something that the current government is either incapable of doing or has chosen not to do, I will not be supporting the motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker, why the Liberal back-benchers didn't applause for their leader's speech but I'm sure they have good reason, some of which they may share with some people at some time.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the constituents of Humboldt, I'm pleased to rise in this legislature to congratulate the mover and seconder of the throne speech and to partake in this debate.

Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan in the last two years we've had a hard time, I would say, as government trying to correct the messes of the past. I won't dwell on that because we all know and remember too painfully what they are. The unfortunate part, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is some of the messages from the past are now coming out of the mouths of the third party, the third party that's stuck in the future, so says the leader. I'm not sure how that works but it's a little inconsistent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the throne speech that this government, our government, put forward for the people of Saskatchewan is based on the commitment that we made from the beginning when we were elected. That commitment is restoring sound financial management. And some members may say that we're stuck on finances. Well there's a bit of a good reason we're stuck on finances. I don't know how many businesses in the country don't worry about their finances because if they don't worry about the finance they don't have a business.

In Saskatchewan it's all about controlling our destiny and regaining our financial freedom. Because if you don't do that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you don't have a province. And we don't have to guess about these things because when we took over government, the difficulty we had with making payroll and the day-to-day runnings of government was so frightening. And the people of Saskatchewan really didn't know how frightening it was, but we found out when we took over. So regaining our financial freedom, We've done that, Mr. Speaker. The projected budget of \$294 million is a billion dollars less — a billion dollars less — than it was when we took over the projection.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — Now that has meant many things. That has meant hardship on people. That has meant some people losing their jobs. That has meant some people having to tighten their belts even more when they thought they couldn't tighten them any more.

Mr. Speaker, I am completely impressed by the attitude of most people in Saskatchewan. We as government have had to push people and ourselves

almost to the limit to try to regain our financial freedom.

Now I hear the opposition members . . . And the Tories don't surprise me; we've seen the history. But for the Liberal members who say they're stuck in the future, their comments are asking us to repeat the mistakes of history, to again jeopardize our financial freedom. The taxes are too high. There's no jobs.

If they'd like us to lower taxes and put more money into jobs, we could do that. We could do that and we could drive the deficit up. We've chosen the other route — diversification, partnerships with business, slowly regaining the number of people who are working in this province.

Jobs and economic development, Mr. Speaker, is parallel but not equal to the restraint measures we've had to take in regaining our financial freedom. It is difficult to create jobs, a) with government when you don't have any money, and b) for small business when we as government have asked them to find it within their wherewithal to maintain their business and keep going in this province and pay their taxes.

(1530)

It's difficult to create jobs. But the partnership process that we're going through, Mr. Speaker, the partnership for renewal program, working with communities, developing tourism authorities so Saskatchewan is a destination, we don't see the results overnight. And I'm sure the members opposite, and especially the stuck-in-the-future Liberals will understand that. But they criticize and criticize.

But what we're doing is laying out the framework for tomorrow, and obviously we're not going to jump 10,000 jobs overnight. But I tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the members opposite, and especially the Leader of the Third Party, if we don't do the homework, you won't pass the test.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — And, Mr. Speaker, exactly what we're doing — laying the groundwork, doing the background work. Slowly, steadily the jobs are coming. We've seen increases, we've seen stabilization in population. Those are the small signals, the light at the end of the tunnel that we're beginning to see.

Trade development corporation, trading with the world, emphasizing that again futuristic results don't come overnight. But they come in due time when the patterns begin to develop with organized trade through a corporation that other countries know is the instrument that they can come to Saskatchewan and use to trade with us. Single window for them, single window for the business people and the manufacturers and traders in our province. It's a cooperative approach. Everybody knows the rules.

We're looking at research and technology, another

important thing to build our future. An opportunity, Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation, Mr. Speaker, using the government's money wisely. The theory behind it is government money in, in cooperation with the community — the banks, the lending institutions, the credit unions, with groups that are involved, investment people — the government in, if necessary, to complete or begin a project. But the secret is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we require the government be out as soon as possible so that we can again use that money to start another project in cooperation in the communities to build jobs and create programs.

Those types of things don't blossom overnight. But the results, if you use your imagination, and you think about the logical pattern that's developing in the job creation process, you'll see the cornerstones being laid in many, many, areas — technology, trade, co-ops, research and technology — the cornerstones being laid.

In the mean time, we're reducing tax rates to small business to make sure that they can keep their employees or maybe hire a few more, give them that little edge, a little break. Because we know that the small-business community are the backbone of the employment community.

And as we set the cornerstones and our trade patterns begin to develop because of the insight that we've put in and the work that many of the people in the province of Saskatchewan put in, small business, we've asked them to hang on. They are. We're giving them a little bit of a break. And then they will reap the rewards. They and all the people of Saskatchewan . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well one of the members says, Liberal governments are socking it to them on taxes. I'm going to get to that just in a minute here, because it's a great illustration of the difference.

High-tech jobs — good example of Saskatchewan, and often we don't brag about ourselves enough. But it was mentioned in the throne speech and I have to mention it again, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is that Sask Telecommunications has the contract to put in all the electronics into the Chunnel between France and England. The biggest, probably one of the . . . maybe one of the wonders of the world, if I can get it out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and little old SaskTel, Crown corporation SaskTel gets the contract. Ain't too shabby.

World technology produced because in Saskatchewan we have the ingenuity, we have the people, the techniques, and we're looking into the future and developing to ensure that we can contain our jobs, create more jobs in Saskatchewan. That's the progress that we're starting to make.

And, Mr. Speaker, as well in agriculture, we laid the direction with Ag 2000. I heard some of the criticisms from the opposition benches, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well, they said, well it's nothing new. Old news. But it wasn't. It laid out the plan.

It didn't lay out a plan of let's subsidize this industry for short-term gain, or a plan that said, we're going to open it up to the vultures of the world to come in and rape the province's agricultural base. The plan was to have a structured, organized system — the beef industry, the hog industry — encouraging people not to jump into the industries holus-bolus as has happened in the past and destroyed the markets, but to look at those industries, develop their industry little by little on a plan whereby they can continue their business, keep in business, and feed a hungry world.

And recently we've seen that. The livestock industry, the numbers of cows are up significantly. It's being developed. I talked to the cattle producers and they are very optimistic. They're very happy about high prices, wondering how long they're going to last. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they are optimistic. They're building their plans for the future.

Hog industry is the same way. We saw a 1,200 hog sow-farrow-to-finish operation being opened just this week out at Leroy. That's optimism. Saskatchewan Pork International, there's room to build. Saskatchewan Pork International imports about 18 per cent of the pork it exports to Mexico and Cuba and around the world. So we're importing pork because we've already got the markets.

Well the obvious thing to do is fill the market yourself in Saskatchewan and that's what we're doing. I'm not sure where the government was before, but we fill that market from within Saskatchewan — jobs, family farms, large livestock operations, all working together to fill an international market.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've also seen the diversification into pulse crops increasing dramatically — very little carry-over in any of the crops. Farmers understanding the . . . and this was a slower process because we're all cautious about jumping into something new. But as we understand the crops that we haven't grown in this province traditionally, they are being developed and more and more acres are going to those crops. Partly of course, is the reason because the cereal prices are down, mainly. But the thing is, the result of that is going to be a more solid base of agriculture in this province.

The Farm Support Review Committee — 32 people, I believe, putting together their heads to come up with options. They came up with three options that the Minister of Agriculture can take to Ottawa to negotiate with the nine other provinces and the federal government, a farm support program.

Mr. Speaker, we are the only province in Canada that is ahead of everybody because we've already got our committee going and we've got the results of that grass roots input to the minister. And when he goes to Ottawa he can speak on behalf of the farmers of this province who put it together.

No other province is doing that. I think that bodes well for the cooperation, the partnership between the people and the government. And this must continue.

Other areas, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we must continue to work on are health and education. We have seen a tremendous lot of cooperation with the people of the province in the health area, the tough, challenging changes that are coming. But what we're doing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is providing more service, more service that would have been provided had there been no crisis in finance, because it had to be done. Douglas set it out, the beginning of the plan, and we're completing it.

Those services, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are the delivery services to the people to create a healthy population. And it's not easy, again. You just don't do everything right the first time. But I'll tell you, it's as right as it could be because we've worked with the people, developed the committees through the rural communities, asked them to identify their needs, do their need studies for the regions, asked them to put together their own regions. They're doing it and they're cooperating, with the exception obviously of a couple of political pockets which, hey, that's the way the world works.

But for the most part, the majority of the people accept that we have to improve the delivery. Because if we don't, what we're doing is spending X number of dollars on a system that is inefficient, where we could spend as much, maybe more money, on a system that's even more efficient. So the value of a dollar is going a lot further, and it's crucial. We have to protect and modernize the system; the same time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to have the cooperation of the people. And I believe we have that.

Delivering health care is as important as delivering education. In Saskatchewan, education has been a key to the population. As the immigrant population settled in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the most part they made their way through life and put their kids through school with the callus on their hand and the sweat on their brow. They worked hard. They understood education and its importance. And I'll tell you, every immigrant family, I don't care if they were from Britain or from China or from Ukraine or from wherever they were, or Iceland, understood the value of education, and their priority was to ensure their children were educated. They worked, they saved, they scrimped.

Mr. Speaker, their children were educated. And those educated children, with their parents' knowledge and background and heart, built this province up. Unfortunately some governments don't share that — or it would appear don't share that. We've seen it in history, the demise of the provincial fortunes, about the third time now. The last 10 years we have run the province into ruin. Not we, they.

So what we're doing again is trying to deliver an education system really with no money, just like the settlers did in the beginning. A little difference is there because, you know, the times were different. But basically trying to rebuild our education systems — save it, improve it — with very little money.

So we know we have to cut back. We know we have to organize the system. We know that it's not going to be the same as before. We see the trustees association passing motions to perhaps go to larger areas. Whether that's right or wrong, whether it'll work or be more efficient, we don't know for sure. But the key is they're cooperating. They know something has to change.

It's a bit disheartening to see the transient member from Shaunavon talk about buses, talk about buses, complaining that we don't . . . this cutting back the bus service. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's the attitude that destroyed this province. Because we have a choice. Cut back, organize, and become more efficient, or lose the bus.

But it doesn't seem that some people can grasp that. We all make choices and we live with those choices and we are choosing in this example of busing to try to turn the corporation into a viable moneymaking corporation so that we can expand the service. Because once you start to make money in a Crown corporation, you can expand the service.

(1545)

But if the member from Shaunavon and his colleagues had their way, as the Conservative government for the last 10 years did, which really is what he's promoting, is saying, it doesn't matter about the debt. Keep the bus. Keep everything as it was. Don't change it.

Is this the new Liberal government stuck in the future? It sounds a lot like the horror calls from the last 10 years in our history. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think some attitudes should change across the way.

And now that I'm on the subject of the member for Shaunavon, I have a few questions maybe he'll answer when he gets his turn to speak. I actually have to stop for a minute because it's kind of curious. I wonder if the Liberal leader knows or thought about where she placed the member in the seating plan, because he is literally breathing down her neck. And I think it's a good thing the Liberal member has a swivel chair because I'm sure she'll be looking over her shoulder repeatedly. At least with a swivel chair she can just turn around to watch the ambitious member for Shaunavon.

And I'm wondering, I'm wondering if there'll be a little discussion as to who sits in the front chair next week between the ambitious member from Shaunavon and the Liberal leader. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would love to be a mouse in the corner of the caucus meetings. I wonder who wins the votes at caucus. Bet you Glen doesn't win. Oh, I apologize, Mr. Speaker — bet the member from Shaunavon doesn't win. I bet the member for Greystone wins. I wonder how long that can be sustained before there are some . . . maybe a repeat of history starting to work.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to take a moment to explain to the people of Saskatchewan what they have

in their new stuck-in-the-future Liberal Party. I would like to know some time what the policy is on transportation.

Now this is quite an amusing little story. I have three clippings here. One is from September 19, 1991. The Liberal leader is quoted . . . is not quoted in the *Star-Phoenix* . . . or *Western Producer*. Speaking of the Liberal leader, the clipping says, "Grain handling and transportation." And this is the Liberal leader:

The Crow benefit should be paid directly to farmers, rather than to the railways. The Liberals generally favour less regulation . . .

And talking about the Wheat Board:

Haverstock has at times been critical of the degree of control exercised by the wheat board over the grain marketing system. She says Saskatchewan must be more self-reliant and farmers should be more directly involved in marketing their own crops.

Now the next week there's a correction in the *Western Producer*. And it says:

Editor's note: As reported last week (p. 13, Oct. 10), Saskatchewan Liberal leader Lynda Haverstock disagreed with a *Western Producer* story that described her as having been "critical of the degree of control exercised by the wheat board over the grain marketing system."

And it reproduces the part. What happened was, without reading it, was that they asked for the policy, some policy on these issues, and they were sent, I believe it was a text prepared for the Liberal leader's use in October for the farming in the '90s. So they sent the text of the speech over. And part of that text, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to read so we can all form our own opinions as to exactly what she meant. She says:

Both Manitoba and Alberta have done major studies on the impact of change in the method of payment of the "crow benefit" with recommendations on change in terms of their respective economies. The administration in Saskatchewan has done nothing.

Well if you look at those, in Alberta and Manitoba the studies were to change the current system. And she was criticizing the then Tory government for not changing it. I think maybe the previous article was very correct when they spoke of Ms. Haverstock's opposition to the current system.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I go on, and I'm quoting again from the so-called notes of text prepared by the Liberal Party for their leader.

Saskatchewan must become more self-reliant when it comes to marketing its products. The (Canadian Wheat Board) "syndrome" or "let someone else look after it" permeates the

marketing philosophy of most farmers and wheat pools, and unfortunately, the present government (speaking of the Tory government at the time) takes a "don't rock the boat" approach.

The successful marketing of all farm crops must be done by farmers or their companies or marketing boards structured to marketing commodities not regulating them, or companies with marketing capabilities. In other words, a diversified, open, competitive marketplace.

Well if I go back to the article, where it says:

Haverstock has at times been critical of the degree of control exercised by the wheat board over the grain marketing system. She says Saskatchewan must be more self-reliant and farmers should be more directly involved in marketing their own crops.

I would say the *Western Producer* has it fairly accurate. But the Liberal leader says no, you misquoted me. Well I think that's a pretty obvious trap. So then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in their benevolence the *Western Producer* invited all the leaders to put forward their positions on these things. So the Liberal leader was very happy, by the report here, that she had a chance to again explain exactly what she meant.

Well, Mr. Speaker, you can read it through and through, and the first article that appeared is the true one. But that's how this Liberal leader operates.

But here's the rub. I have looked up some of the quotes on this topic by the transient member from Shaunavon, and he was talking about transportation. And he's saying, and I quote — this is March 3, 1993:

Liberal leader says election is about more than agriculture. But what does the Liberal leader say about it? Grain handling and transportation: the Crow benefit should be paid directly to farmers rather than the railways. The Liberals generally favour less regulation in the industry.

Now this statement goes against those farmers that are writing letters from all our constituents to the private member from Greystone.

The member goes on to say . . . criticizing the Liberal leader for her policy on the Wheat Board. Well I'd like to know what the policy is right now on the Wheat Board. Is it the Shaunavon member's policy or is it the Greystone member's policy?

And can you imagine this new marriage of federal Liberal government and the three stooges across the way . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I think the member knows that that is really not adding anything to the debate in the

House and I wish he'd get back to the real debate.

Mr. Upshall: — Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry. I wouldn't want to do that.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, what is the policy? What is the Liberal agriculture policy? And as I was saying, can you imagine Mr. Goodale, the federal Agriculture critic, calling up, asking what the policy is. Well I bet you the policy would depend on who he talked to that day. So do you think there's going to be any possible influence over policy? Even though they're trying to put forward this big Liberal marriage, I don't think there'll be much influence.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to go on too long but there's just a couple of other things that I would like to touch on. The Liberal leader . . . I hate to inform the member of Shaunavon this, but I don't think it was him that attracted her. Because immediately the Liberal leader, upon going out, after she went out on her search for another member, she was eligible . . . she collects \$17,000 more — \$17,000 more immediately.

So I don't know, if I was the member for Shaunavon, if I would think it was him or me that did it, or the money. It used to be said that when they say it's the principle not the money, it's the money. Well in this case it's neither. No principle, no money . . . I mean the opposite: no principle but the money.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in addition the Liberal leader's search for an additional member cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan \$122,000. This self-righteousness of the Liberal leader about how government should be lean, tight, mean, keep its cost down, cost \$122,000 — personally \$17,000 to the Liberal leader. Can you imagine that? So I don't think it was the member from Shaunavon. I think she would have taken just about anybody.

Mr. Speaker, I want to quote one more article, one more article from the member from Shaunavon. He used to cooperate; he used to think that what the government was doing was right. In fact there are a few headlines in the *Shaunavon Standard*: McPherson supports gay rights legislation. He used to support the government.

He used to support us in other things as well. This is a *Shaunavon Standard*, Tuesday, March 30, Conflict laws is the title, by Glen McPherson. I want to read a little bit: Members will . . . he's outlining what members conflict of interest guidelines will mean. And very good legislation, the conflict of interest, it clearly identifies . . . I thought it clearly identified everything. But one of the points says:

Members will be required to absent themselves from any discussion that could be considered a conflict of interest. One of the commission's jobs will be to recommend penalties against any member of the Assembly found in violation of the Act. Penalties can range from simply ordering a member to comply with the Act or to the harshest penalty of declaring the MLA seat

vacant.

And the member of Shaunavon wrote this and put it into his paper in Shaunavon — the conflict of interest guidelines which says that members will be required to absent themselves from any discussion that could be considered a conflict.

Now before the time the member moved across the floor, from that point in time to the time he made his decision to move across the floor, the time when that member was sitting in government, the time that member was talking about conflict of interest and agreeing with conflict of interest, the question I ask, Mr. Speaker, is: was that member in a conflict situation?

Was he in a conflict situation when he was talking to his then caucus colleagues about issues that concern the province of Saskatchewan, some of them very confidential because of the business nature of government in some areas? Was he in conflict? And maybe we have to go back and tighten up the conflict of information or ask the conflict commissioner for a little ruling on whether or not this member was in conflict. Because it says he should have absented himself from any discussion that could be considered a conflict. And if he knew he was moving across the floor, Mr. Speaker, I say he was in conflict.

Mr. Speaker, there are many things that the new Liberal revival has with it that don't look like they're stuck in the future. I want to say one of them, Mr. Speaker, is one of the people — guests — in the gallery that the Liberal leader introduced as part of her delegation happened to be a former P.C. (Progressive Conservative) bagman in Regina.

Moving to the future. A new, revitalized Liberal government. Well I hear what the Liberals say but I think what they do is a little bit different.

And I want to end by saying, Mr. Speaker, I can prove what the Liberals say is different than what the Liberals do, and that's in the whole area of taxation. In taxation, I hear the Liberal leader saying we're taxing the people of Saskatchewan to death. And you can imagine, I mean you've heard it all, all the lines that she's used. The rhetoric, the tobacco, the . . . Let me talk about tobacco for a minute.

I found a clipping today in the paper; this is to do . . . (inaudible) . . . with the federal government. "Teenagers like cut in cigarette prices". And I want to quote a couple of quotes from this:

"Yeh, it's great," said 17-year-old Tina . . . who said she lit up for the first time when she was five . . . "It'll cost me less."

"With lower prices . . . more people will smoke . . .

"Less people will try quitting now too."

(1600)

I mean this is the Liberal cousins in Ottawa. The predictable results, because eight out of ten provinces said no, because of health costs as the major reason, eight out of ten health care ministers said no. Really working together.

But there's a longer story behind it, Mr. Speaker. Because there's a Liberal government in Quebec, a Liberal government that needs to be popular, so I think there was a little hand-holding going on. Because they have an election coming up pretty soon.

I wonder if the Liberal leader here agrees with that — her new politics. I haven't heard her say much — if she agrees with Liberals helping Liberals for re-election. I mean we saw a lot of that in the past 10 years with Tories helping Tories get re-elected. It destroyed us. And I predict it's the same thing here and it'll destroy us again if we allow it to continue. And if we had Liberals in Saskatchewan, the same thing would take over as we had the last 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberal leader talks about taxes. I happen to have here, Mr. Speaker, a list. This list is family income, \$25,000, \$50,000, and \$75,000 — taxes to the people in those brackets. This includes provincial income tax, tax credits and rebates, health premiums, retail sales tax, gasoline tax, car insurance, telephone, home heating, and electricity in March of 1993.

How do we rate, one of my colleagues asks? Well better than the Liberals. Because guess what? Twenty-five thousand dollar tax bracket — number one, the Liberal government of Newfoundland.

An Hon. Member: — They're the highest.

Mr. Upshall: — They're the highest. The second highest? The Liberal government from New Brunswick. The third highest? The Liberal government from Prince Edward Island. And the fourth highest? The Liberal government from Nova Scotia. The top four provinces, Liberal-governed provinces, tax their people in the \$25,000 tax bracket the most.

Now let's move over to the \$50,000 bracket. And coming in at number one spot, the first star is the Liberal government from Newfoundland. The highest tax in the category \$50,000. Second prize goes to the Liberal government from Nova Scotia; third prize goes to the Liberal government in Quebec; fourth, the Liberal government in Prince Edward Island, Mr. Speaker; and fifth, the Liberal government in New Brunswick. So in the \$50,000 tax bracket, including all those things that I listed — income tax, tax credit, health premiums, retail sales, gasoline tax, car insurance, telephone, home heating, and electricity — the Liberal governments are the five highest tax provinces in the country.

And we could move over to the \$75,000 bracket.

An Hon. Member: — I'd love to.

Mr. Upshall: — My colleague says he'd love to — yes,

so would I.

Again, Liberal government taxation. You look at Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan has organized it so that we can have the least hurt for the poorest people. The \$25,000 bracket, we're third from the lowest; the \$50,000 bracket, we're fourth lowest; and the \$75,000 bracket, we come in fourth. Organized so that as the affordability . . . or ability to pay increases, so does your tax load. That's as fair as you can get it. And that's not just a graduated income tax system, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . or Mr. Speaker, that's organized over electricity, heating, and everything else.

Now the Liberal member may . . . or leader may condemn us for taxation, but I think she should be looking at her other provinces and condemning them for their taxation and commanding our government for an organized tax system that gives ability to pay as the key to the level. That is fair and a heart . . . that's a government with a heart.

Mr. Speaker, I want to wrap up my comments by just thanking the people of Saskatchewan again, the people of Humboldt constituency, and the people of Saskatchewan in general, thanking them for their patience. I know we all . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. I would prefer if the two members wanted to converse with each other, if they went behind the bar rather than talking out . . . or outside.

Mr. Upshall: — I'm almost finished, Mr. Speaker, so maybe one of them will take over.

Thanking the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, for their patience. We have a lot as individuals to complain about — everybody. Because it's hard to move down with your lifestyle as opposed to moving up.

But I thank the people of Saskatchewan because I know they understand there is no choice. We will again see better days ahead. We will see it because this government has: one, laid out a plan for financial freedom; two, plan includes the cornerstones for jobs — far-sighted plans that will create jobs in this country in the years to come long after we are members in this House, any of us, because the plan is there, and if the road is continued, it will produce.

We have put forward reforms in health care. We have asked educators to tighten up and to try to do more with less. All these things, Mr. Speaker, are plans for a more productive and a brighter future. The people of Saskatchewan understand that. That is why I believe, for the most part, they are behind this government's actions for the direction that we're going in.

No government does everything right — every little thing right — and we won't either. But, Mr. Speaker, those little things can be corrected. The big picture is the underlying most important feature and that is restoring our financial freedom, regaining the control of the destiny we so desperately need to again make

Saskatchewan the great, great province it once was.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the people of Saskatoon Idylwyld, I am very pleased to enter into this debate on the speech delivered by Her Honour on Monday, the Speech from the Throne.

I want to firstly join with others in welcoming the member from Regina North West, the new member, to the legislature. I had the opportunity to do that personally, but I'm happy to do that now as well. And I certainly do wish her well in her work on behalf of the people of her constituency and all the people of our province. I know from my own experience, Mr. Speaker, that she will enjoy the benefit of your experience and guidance, as we all continue to enjoy it.

Sometimes . . . I just heard the member for Humboldt say that we do tend to complain a lot at times and we ourselves are guilty of being complainers sometimes and it reminded me, Mr. Speaker, of what is going on in some parts of the world such as Sarajevo and Yugoslavia and . . . or the former Yugoslavia. And some commentators in the media were saying the other day what a shame it really is to consider that 10 years ago the Olympic games were being held in Sarajevo and to see the tragedy that is going on there today and the tragedy that is going on in many parts of the world.

And in some ways the comment from the member from Humboldt reminded me that in this Chamber we have to put matters in perspective and we tend to dwell on our problems and dwell on the negatives at times in political debate and it would do all of us I think, well to remember how lucky we are to be born or to have moved to this country and this province and what a good life we really have and the good things that we have in our province. And I think we sometimes don't mention that because we're concentrating on the political differences we have and debating those and I certainly am no exception to that myself, Mr. Speaker.

I want today simply to comment on a few areas mentioned by Her Honour in the Speech from the Throne. She referred to the fact that this government has restored sound financial management to our province since coming to office in 1991. And I believe that's true, Mr. Speaker, and I'm very proud of the fact that I have been a member of that government and the fact that we are going to be on target to balance the budget of the province by 1996. I believe that that is a very significant accomplishment.

There are those who say that you can ignore fiscal realities, that you don't have to run your province like you run your household, and that attention to financial matters is really not that necessary and that we paid too much attention to it. In fact the member from Shaunavon today said that repeatedly, that we

are dwelling on the finances of the province. But the people of the province I believe know that you must, in order to build your economy and provide services to the people, you certainly have to be on a sound financial footing.

And I remember campaigning in the 1991 election and people in my constituency saying to me that they did not know why people would want to go into the legislature and go into public life in Saskatchewan at this particular time . . . or at that time because they said the finances of the province were such a mess that you would never be able to get them under control. And I think that a lot of people have been surprised in the past few years, Mr. Speaker, because the annual deficit of the province has gone from over a billion dollars to the targeted I believe \$294 million for the fiscal year about to end.

And I want to congratulate the people of the province for the sacrifices that they have made to bring that about, because it's a collective effort. It doesn't just happen because of the government; it happens because of all the people in the province. And I want to commend the Premier and the cabinet and my colleagues and in particular the members from Regina Dewdney and Saskatoon Westmount who have served as ministers of Finance in very difficult times and I think displayed some tough decision making but compassionate decision making and worked very hard in providing good leadership to get our deficit under control.

The fact that that is occurring is not known only to people in Saskatchewan. The Salomon Brothers investment house in New York in its 1993 "Budget Season & Outlook for Credit" indicated that Saskatchewan was the province most beleaguered by the rating agencies but also the one with the most impressive attempt to attack its fiscal problems. And I think that's very noteworthy.

The Burns Fry Limited November, 1993 report indicated that:

Saskatchewan's economic and fiscal performance is improving . . . Saskatchewan is on track to meet its target of eliminating the deficit by 1996/97.

(1615)

I think it's fine for people to get up and in one breath say that really financial matters are not a problem, you should ignore them, and in the next breath to condemn the government and say that there's so much more the government could do if only they were in power.

But as we all know, actions speak much louder than words. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the people are going to remember that it was this government that didn't just talk about the problem of deficit and the problem of debt, but took action to do something about it.

Now the deficit of course is the amount by which the government spending exceeds government revenues in any year, and that problem is being tackled. That is something different from accumulated debt, which is the total amount owed because of deficits in the past.

And I just want to note in passing that in terms of the debt of the province, the provincial government has been reducing taxpayers' liability in a variety of ways. And in the last 20 months or so, the government debts and guarantees have been reduced by about \$430 million. We no longer have liability to pay \$39 million with respect to the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, \$190 million in debt and loan guarantees connected with Weyerhaeuser, \$30 million on the Lloydminster upgrader, \$80 million with respect to the Crown Life deal, \$22 million regarding CanAmera oilseed crushing plant, and about \$60 million with respect to other transactions.

And this amounts to, I believe, Mr. Speaker, approximately a half million dollars per day in reduction of debt since this government took office. Now this has not been an easy task. It is in fact a difficult task. And it has involved difficult problems and decisions that are not always popular.

As I said, some have denied and continue to deny the fiscal realities the government has dealt with. They will try to take advantage of the fact that the government is dealing with the situation and making some difficult decisions, by playing politics with respect to debt reduction measures.

They will pretend that if we would only ignore this problem and be all things to all people, that the problem will go away. But notwithstanding the comments of the Liberal leader earlier in this debate, I don't believe that that is true. I don't believe that the debt situation is not important. I believe that the people know that there's a problem, they know where it came from, and they support the government's plan to deal with it.

So I was pleased to hear in the Speech from the Throne that the government will continue on its course to get the province of Saskatchewan on a solid financial footing which I think, in terms of the deficit of the province, the government has already largely accomplished.

Her Honour also referred, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that this government will continue to move forward with reform of the health care delivery system and I support that. I think that the government has taken steps that are correct and which in the long run will mean that our medicare system, of which we're all so proud, will be sustainable and strong for everyone in the future.

The other parties in the legislature are fond of saying that we should wait and study the matter further before taking steps. But the reality is in my view, Mr. Speaker, that the organization of our health care system in Saskatchewan has really been quite exhaustively studied over the last 20 years and everyone who has looked at that system has agreed

that change is needed, but up until now no one has been prepared to take any action with respect to it. Of course we had the Murray Commission report commissioned by the previous government, we had the Atkinson report in Saskatoon, and we've got the studies of the Health Services Utilization and Research Commission, and in short they all seem to support the general direction taken by the government.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that most reasonable people would agree that in times like this, if we spend any money on health — which we do; it's the largest expenditure of the government — we had better spend it wisely and efficiently. Formerly there were about 500 boards in Saskatchewan delivering health care services in hospitals, senior citizens' homes, home care community health units, and so on. And these boards are being replaced by about 30 district boards.

In my own city of Saskatoon, the Saskatoon Health Board has become responsible for three hospitals — St. Paul's, City Hospital, and the Royal University Hospital — and I believe that it is rational to consider these hospitals as one hospital system rather than separate, free-standing units, each of them competing with the others to provide a whole range of services.

And the cost savings that are happening in Saskatoon, the efficiencies being achieved, I think speak for themselves. And anyone can read the six-month report of the Saskatoon Health Board and the annual report to see what is happening there.

And I want to commend the people that are involved in that reform, Mr. Speaker, because it is not something that happens in Regina. Part of the reform is the idea that you don't make all the decisions for the people in Regina; you'd evolve control to local people. And these people on the Saskatoon Health Board and people that work within the system — from the nurses' union, the doctors, the service employees, CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees), and others — work very hard to deliver health care. And I think they're doing a very good job in difficult times.

We're not following the example, if I can call it that, of the province of Alberta, which is hacking and slashing away at the system with very little regard for the importance of a plan to sustain a public system, and where people are able if they have more money to buy private medicine such as the MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) or eye surgery. We're trying to coordinate the system but to keep it a public system. And I think the government is on the right track in that regard.

Undoubtedly there will be many problems along the way, because when you do a restructuring of a system, it doesn't always occur completely smoothly. But in the end, I believe we're going to have a much stronger, sustainable system. And indeed commentators from around the world are saying that Saskatchewan is providing an example and leadership in terms of health care reform.

I think it's noteworthy that in Saskatchewan we had before the reform 6.8 hospital beds per 1,000 people, whereas in Canada generally the number is 5.1 and in the United States it's 3.8. And I don't say that Saskatchewan shouldn't necessarily have more hospital beds per capita than other parts of the world, but I would ask the question why it is that Saskatchewan would have the highest number of hospital beds per capita almost anywhere in the world.

And after the reform of the health care system we are left with 8 hospitals per 100,000 people — 8 per 100,000, whereas the Canadian average is 3 per 100,000 people.

So when members of the opposition get up and say that somehow the government is depriving people in Saskatchewan of hospital care and we don't . . . we no longer have hospital services for people, which of course is a ridiculous and untrue statement, I think the public should ask members of the opposition how that can be, when the average number of hospitals in Saskatchewan is more than twice that the Canadian average.

In fact prior to October 1, 1993, when 51 institutions were converted to health care facilities, Saskatchewan had almost as many hospitals as the province of Ontario, which has 11 times the population. I believe that the opposition is misleading the people, Mr. Speaker, when they suggest, as has been suggested in this legislature, that somehow the government's reforms deprive people of health care, because of course nothing could be further from the truth.

They should tell people that many more hospitals are unaffected by conversions than are affected. They should tell people that the 51 rural hospitals that are affected have not been closed; they've been converted to health centres. And they will provide services which will include better emergency first response; assessment and observation services; primary-care nursing; lab and X-ray services; seniors' programs; access to travelling specialty services not now available, like physical therapy, chiropody, etc.; health promotion and education services.

And I think that when people are running around or standing up in this legislature saying that there are individuals being deprived of health care, the public will begin to confront those people with the facts and will begin to question whether a lot of those statements aren't really made for political reasons, and I think will begin to question the motives of the people criticizing health care reform. Because when you look at the people who are objective, such as the Health Utilization and Research Commission, Dr. Murray, the former dean of medicine and health care observers from around the world, they're all in pretty much universal agreement that reform of the system is overdue and in fact is very well thought out.

And I think that even though there are those who deny that reform is needed, just as there are those who deny

that we have financial problems to deal with, I believe that in the end the people will support the government and will realize that the change is necessary and that the criticism of the change usually has more to do with the political agenda and the political well-being of some of the members in this House than it really has to do with the well-being of the people of the province.

I believe that the reforms will withstand the test of time, and we will be on a much stronger foundation in health care than we were a few years ago; just as I think we're on a much stronger financial foundation in this province than when we first met here in this twenty-second legislature in December 1991.

So I wanted to say that in terms of those two areas covered in the Speech from the Throne, I'm very pleased, Mr. Speaker, with the government's performance and fiscal management and health reform. And I'm pleased that the government has indicated that it's going to continue a well-thought-out, long-term approach to dealing with those issues.

But I think we all know — and members of the opposition and members on this side have both indicated — that we have a lot of work to do in this province to rebuild the Saskatchewan economy, and to make decisions which will improve the job situation here and the income situation of Saskatchewan people. It's true that Saskatchewan has the lowest unemployment rate in Canada, but that is small comfort to people who are unemployed or underemployed. And it's not good enough for us to refer to our lowest unemployment rate. It's our responsibility to seek solutions in a practical way in wherever we can, involving communities and business people, people from labour, and farmers, and all sectors of our society to try to improve the job situation for our people.

(1630)

And I must say I was a bit perplexed listening to the Leader of the Liberal Party when she was saying that the government had no plan, because actually in the throne speech there was mention of several specific initiatives to deal with jobs and economic development. And it's available for anyone to read, including the Leader of the Liberal Party.

The throne speech said that the government would be creating, or facilitating the creation by local communities, I should say, of regional economic development authorities to enable communities to work together to promote local economic opportunities. I think that's a very specific measure and I think it's a very positive measure.

The throne speech said that a tourism authority would be created involving the various players in tourism, most of which are from the private sector, to increase tourism, revenue, and jobs in our province. And I think we all know — and if we don't know, we should know, Mr. Speaker — that tourism is a very major industry for Saskatchewan. That was dealt with in the

throne speech but I didn't hear the Leader of the Liberal Party make any mention of that or say what was wrong with that particular idea. In fact it's a very good idea.

The throne speech mentioned that we're going to create a trade development corporation with the purpose of taking our products to the world market. I didn't hear any mention of that either. It mentioned that we were developing a research and technology commercialization plan to support product development for international export. It mentioned that a transportation policy council was working toward improving access to markets and that a Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation was being created to develop Saskatchewan value added industry.

The throne speech mentioned participation in the federal-provincial infrastructure program, which actually has been in the news quite a bit lately, and it mentioned increased mining activity in the North. It mentioned a strategic planning document, *Agriculture 2000*, released by the Minister of Agriculture last year, and containing a plan to continue the diversification of our farm production and to add value to it.

Now these are all specific measures, and there were many of them in the throne speech. And I've referred to them. There are specific measures and specific plans. And I support that because that is what is our responsibility. We have to look at ways to improve the job situation and the economic situation in the province. We all know that. And we have to work at it; we have to work at it in a cooperative way.

But we have to do it in a realistic way and a practical way as well, and we have to talk about specific measures we can take — not pie in the sky. I mean it doesn't do anyone any good for somebody to stand up in the legislature without any specific measures or specific plans and pretend that there's some magic solution to everybody's economic problems or pretend that there is some quick fix, because there is no quick fix and there is no magic solution. There are specific measures that can be taken, which were referred to in the throne speech and which I've referred to just now.

We're certainly not alone in facing a difficult economic situation. I think improvement will be made over time, but it will be made step by step. We should not pretend that anyone has a quick fix. And we should look at actions rather than words.

I heard the Liberal Party say before the federal election that we were going to have jobs, jobs, jobs — sort of an echo of Brian Mulroney — and something done about the taxes and something done about the deficit. But I've been reading the papers since the federal election, and it's not that long since the Liberals took over, and already the Minister of Finance, Mr. Martin, has said that, well don't expect too much job creation because we've decided there's really not all that much we can do.

I was reading in the paper today where he was saying, don't expect too much deficit reduction because there's not much we can do in that regard either. I think we've all heard that on taxes we're not going to get lower taxes or even the same taxes, out of the Liberals. We're all expecting taxes to go up in the federal budget.

And my point isn't just to criticize the Liberals and say that — and ignore that they have a difficult problem to deal with — but my point is to say that when the Leader of the Liberal Party gets up in this House and says that somehow she has a magic solution to solve our problems if only we would come up with a plan, even though she offered a hundred weeks ago to, by now, give us a hundred specific ideas for economic development and hasn't delivered one of them, we have to remember when we're having a public discussion of these issues that the Liberals do have an opportunity now, in Ottawa, to put their words into action. But I think what we're going to find is, no plan to deal with the deficit in any realistic way, higher taxes, no real jobs planned, and things are going to go much the same.

It's fine to speak in glowing terms about the ethics and philosophy of the Liberal Party as we heard today, but I don't think we should get too carried away by that kind of rhetoric. Because what we saw this week was the public policy of our country dictated by tobacco smugglers and tobacco companies, and I don't know what kind of an example that's supposed to be from a party that supposedly believes in some kind of new ethics and new politics.

To my way of thinking that kind of action is not productive and it is not indicative of any kind of real reform and change on the political scene. It's indicative of something else, and I think there are a lot of people in this country, Mr. Speaker, that don't like it and I'm one of them. Because if we have a federal government that can't even enforce the law of the land then I think we're in a bit of trouble.

Now here in Saskatchewan, speaking of the new politics, we have one member of the Liberal caucus that was not elected as a Liberal and did not resign his seat when he had differences with members on this side of the House, and does not sit as an independent. I think the member from Shaunavon thinks that he has saved his political hide by making some kind of a timely move to the Liberal Party, but the member from Shaunavon is going to have to remember that he is now bound to explain the actions of the federal Liberal government with which he is associated.

He is going to have to explain their actions on the transportation policy and payment of the Crow benefit — whether that's paid to the farmers or the railways. He's going to have to answer for the Liberals with respect to transfer payments to the province for health and education, and he is going to answer for them on their taxation policies and deficit reduction plan.

And I predict, Mr. Speaker, that the member from

Shaunavon is going to find that it's not going to be easy all the time. And he may think that he's entered some safe political haven where his political hide will be protected but he may find out that he jumped a bit too soon.

Now of course this move by him, I don't think we should forget, has cost the taxpayers of the province a great deal of money since the Liberals in one year alone, I believe, are taking \$122,000 more from the treasury. And at a time of restraint, Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that this is a good example for the people of the province.

They want us to take less and get our expenditures under control but unfortunately they're taking much more for themselves and their party. So I think we have to work together, Saskatchewan people, towards realistic solutions. We need a practical, sensible, and hard-headed approach to decision making which in the short run will not please everyone but which in the long run will be sustainable and allow us to improve our economy.

And as I said, I believe that the specific measures contained in the Speech from the Throne with respect to economic development will help us in that regard. I do truly believe that the government is on the correct path. And importantly I know that the government is led by individuals who are honest and straightforward with the people, and honest and responsible in terms of the operation of government. So I'm quite pleased to associate myself with these people and this Speech from the Throne.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I was very impressed with the sincerity and the thoughtfulness of the speeches of the member from Regina Lake Centre who moved that the speech be received and the member from Biggar who seconded the motion. And I certainly will be very happy joining them in voting in favour of the Speech from the Throne and affirming my support for the approach being taken by this government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to rise in my place and enter into the debate on the Speech from the Throne. I too, Mr. Speaker, want to join with previous speakers both today and yesterday in congratulating the government members from Regina Lake Centre and my desk mate, the member from Biggar, for their thoughtful and their expanded response to the Speech from the Throne.

To the member from Regina North West too I offer my congratulations in the recent by-election victory and certainly look forward to looking to her contributions to this Assembly in the future.

I also wish to take this occasion to recognize this government and our Premier's commitment by honouring and acting on his word in terms of holding the by-election in Regina North West in a time frame of a six-month period. Unlike, Mr. Speaker, the

previous administrations where constituencies were left unrepresented in this province for as long as two years. And unlike the practice, Mr. Speaker, of the Leader of the Third Party, suggesting to be the mother of democratic reform but then make special provisions for those transparent Liberal principles of reforming to . . . of reform to accommodate that free spirit, to what I would suggest are really self-serving interests and are becoming more and more evident as time passes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Serby: — I also, Mr. Speaker, want to take this opportunity to congratulate you in your role as the Speaker of this Assembly in maintaining the order and decorum in this House. Within the past two years, I've had the privilege of witnessing the management of legislatures in other jurisdictions in Canada, and I have to say that your stewardship in the performance of this Assembly is to be commended. And I would go as far to suggest that possibly you could provide a seminar or two in other legislatures on procedures and decorum — now I'm not sure if they would necessarily invite you — but certainly I would like to see that opportunity put forward.

Now I know also, Mr. Speaker, that although I congratulate you in your approach and success, I know that your job has been much easier because of the well-disciplined group of government members on this side of the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1645)

Mr. Serby: — At this time, Mr. Speaker, I too wish to extend my appreciation and gratitude to the constituents of Yorkton, who have been most helpful and supportive to me personally, and certainly our government, in moulding and shaping the future of this province. The genuine support and partnerships of folks like our mayor and city council, the chamber of commerce, the economic development committees, the tribal council, and many, many other organizations and departments and groups and individuals, were in fact now helping, Mr. Speaker, to sort of bring together the fruits of our labours. And I very much want to thank the members of my community for their confidence and their support.

Mr. Speaker, through this speech . . . from this Speech from the Throne represents in many ways my own personal views and direction that our government is taking. And I was particularly moved by the reference in the speech to the two important anniversaries our province will be recognizing in 1994.

Mr. Speaker, the 50th anniversary of the 6th day of June, D-Day invasion where allied troops stormed the beaches of Normandy, strike two prolific tones of emotion for me, which I'm reminded of. First, Mr. Speaker, is of course the cooperation that we saw, nations joining each other together, overlooking their own individual ideologies, political loyalties, culture,

and philosophical differences, to form significant alliances in order to preserve democracy and freedom that we all today enjoy in this great province, in this nation, and certainly in many parts of the world.

The second reminder of course on this occasion is of a more personal nature, Mr. Speaker, as I am one of those young Canadians, in comparison to the veterans who we will be recognizing this year, whose family had to undertake a new highway in life, because our father ended up being a number whom we think about when we pay tribute to these people who helped preserve this opportunity for me and for all of us who sit in this Assembly today.

This sacrifice and this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, is one that I hold in high regard. Because today and in the future we as leaders recognize and can, from our little corners of the world, have a chance to make a difference. Like our veterans did who formed alliances and made sacrifices for the betterment of all our lives.

Mr. Speaker, this throne speech, in my view, reflects the reality of the times, where decisions have been difficult but the process that we have been on has been correct. This throne speech, I might compare to an experience of a team of mountain climbers of which our team is made up of the people of Saskatchewan.

Now we are halfway up that journey, so we take a moment to reflect and project. When we began this journey we had a plan in order to reach our goal, which would be the summit of the mountain. At the same time we knew the climb would be tough and there would be a number of tests. Our goal of course was to reach the top of the mountain together, recognizing full well that there would be obstacles as we moved along — obstacles and limitations from within our own party; obstacles from sceptics around us; and the shifting terrain on the slopes making our journey a challenging climb.

But prior to beginning that journey our government, like the mountain-climbing team, took a good deal of time to explore amongst ourselves, other professionals, and within our communities as to what the most appropriate route might be. Of course there were many suggestions and recommendations, but there were few options. We had to climb the mountain. What was clear however is that this was a monumental task and that in order to reach the summit we needed to climb together.

As we began our journey in 1991 there were voices of discouragement and hopelessness, and those voices are still here today. Many of them are directly across this Assembly floor — opposition. Because in my opinion their purpose exists, as I see it, is to paint doom and gloom, to discredit anyone who is trying to climb the mountain, because they, Mr. Speaker, have yet not learned the understanding and meaning of cooperation, community, or commitment.

Mr. Speaker, we are now two years into our journey

and I continue to hear the shrieking voice from the opposition benches, feverishly trying to understand why it is that they still stand alone at the base of the mountain while most everyone else has moved on.

It is an interesting analysis when you examine it against the journey up the mountain. When the official opposition and their folks look at the mountain, they look at one another and they say, there is no mountain, and continue to shriek, hold temper tantrums, and wander aimlessly, oblivious to the realities around them.

The official third party on the other hand, with the lonesome wanderer between them, say yes, there is a mountain. They believe the mountain must be tackled. But from what we've seen today, they have no tools, Mr. Speaker, and they have no ideas, because as of today we haven't yet seen one.

And in the Speech from the Throne that the member from Greystone delivered today in response, again a lot of old, partisan, Liberal politics. Like the Tories, criticism, rejection of the ideas, no cooperation, and a blind eye to the reality of the day. For several minutes, Mr. Speaker, she went on being critical of our job plan. But not on one occasion in that period of time was there one word spoken about the kind of opportunities that might be available that she would put forward in terms of moving on the job issue in Saskatchewan — not one.

Well two years ago and a little bit more, the people of Saskatchewan said to our team, the New Democratic . . . the team and the team of New Democratic mountain climbers, you need to lead us up the mountain out of this disaster left here in Saskatchewan. We need to pack our backpacks filled with ideas, strategies, and reform, and together aim for the top of the mountain.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be a part of that team. And in spite of the adversity of the two-year climb, I believe we are making progress. Yes, we've had some setbacks and even some casualties and we've lost some folks along the slippery slopes. We've lost some of our team because some believe that we've taken the wrong route; others believe that we've climbed too fast in this short space of time. And then there remain a few who believe that we didn't need to climb at all.

Mr. Speaker, from where I come from and what my colleagues and my friends around the province tell me, we're on the right track. Mr. Speaker, when we reflect on our journey to date, we see that our financial circumstances are better, our foundation is beginning to set, bond rating agencies, lending institutions, and even our good friends, the federal government, are acknowledging that we have a hold on the finances of this province. Our base is becoming solidified, Mr. Speaker.

And yes, some tough decisions. There have been some tax increases, cuts in funding, and reduced expenditures to some of our government departments

and third parties. However, Mr. Speaker, none of those initiatives, none of them, were undertaken without consideration of ensuring that in this province public services, basic needs, and public safety be preserved.

Consultation, negotiation, and compromise have been the cornerstones of this government's agenda, unlike the practices of our neighbours to the east and the west of us who have adopted the practice of governance by, by and large, dictatorship and policies of slash and burn.

Mr. Speaker, in the hollow, political rhetoric, dull rumblings, and misconstrued facts of opposition and third party, our province and our communities are moving forward. For example, our province enjoyed yet another year of growth in the retail sales area. And in my community, merchants tell me that as of January of 1994 sales for them are up by another percentile.

Yorkton, Mr. Speaker, in this province is one of the third largest trading centres in Saskatchewan. In 1993 our city enjoyed one of the finest years in building projects in many years. And as they report to me today, we will exceed that again in this year's levels.

Just to highlight the community's growth in 1993, we saw a new City Hall and RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) depot. We saw a new financial . . . two new financial institutions in the Royal Bank and the credit union — probably one of the finest credit union buildings in the province in our community constructed this summer — along with the beginnings of a \$10 million Superstore and a population in our city that has grown slightly.

Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan we see increased housing starts, the second lowest unemployment rates in Canada, actively and certainly increasing revenue from our resource sector. Renewed confidence, Mr. Speaker, is what I see in Saskatchewan. And this is our government . . . And that's what our government talks about because that's what is happening out there.

I say to my friends in opposition, join the team that's climbing the mountain. Start putting your energies to work to enhance and building a strong and prosperous Saskatchewan economy. Start making a contribution to further Saskatchewan's growth. The previous administration left us with lots of parasites. Lots of parasites. And Saskatchewan folks can't afford to carry you any longer.

Just one idea I suggest, one positive initiative or contribution would sure be nice from that side of the House, certainly by now with 13 of you, or collectively. And I say that because there isn't much difference in my understanding in your politics as I see it. And as the Premier said it one day, of a chicken standing on the snow changing feet as the feet got cold; different feet, he says, but the same old chicken. No ideas and no tools.

When we look in our backpacks we find a lot of ideas and we know that there's still lots to do. As we make

our way to our goal, we know that we must provide a climate for job opportunities in this province, building on our *Partnership for Renewal* document.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Serby: — And encouraging the development of economic development authorities. We know from history by just reading about the life in the early settlements in this province and the life of our grandparents as they pioneered this province, that only together they achieved greater success. So we must pool all of our resources and energies to enjoy the same successes as they did as they built this province.

Jobs for the future. We know that in Saskatchewan we are rich in technological expertise. And at a time where our information highway calls for rich, high technology, our government will strive to provide those opportunities and skills, education and training and jobs, to meet the demand of the future in areas that, Mr. Speaker, we have some of the highest expertise and trained people in the world.

Jobs through partnership with our aboriginal friends, like the development of the two uranium mining industries in northern Saskatchewan. And they're not short-term jobs, Mr. Speaker, but career employment opportunities that are achieved through the training and unemployment initiatives that have been established.

Jobs through federal-provincial infrastructure programs which will not only enhance employment opportunities in communities across Saskatchewan but will greatly assist communities in refurbishing and retrofitting some major infrastructure projects that have been on their agendas for many, many months.

Mr. Speaker, our journey also includes the assurance that Saskatchewan people will be guaranteed quality of health.

The Speaker: — Order. It now being 5 o'clock I do leave this chair until 7 p.m. this evening.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.