

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
March 31, 1983

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

The Clerk: — I beg to inform the Assembly that Mr. Speaker is unable to be present to open today's sitting.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased at this time to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Legislative Assembly, a group of students who are visiting here from the Wilfred Hunt School in Regina. This group of students consists of 107 or 109 students from grades 5 and 6. It would be of interest to the members of this House that both Mr. McLeod and Mr. Sandberg have daughters in attendance in these classes.

Accompanying these students are their teachers, Mrs. Dickson, Mrs. MacDonald, Miss Michel and Mrs. Snell. And the principal is Mr. Mal Lindeburgh.

I sincerely hope that these students will find the visit to the legislature an educational experience. I had hoped to join this group for discussions and for refreshments following question period, but unfortunately I have some duties here following question period. My colleague, the Hon. George McLeod, has kindly consented to meet with the group to take my place.

So I would ask at this time all the members in the House to join with me in extending a sincere welcome to our special guests.

Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Department of Labour, Women's Division

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. A question to the Premier, and I hope you will grant me a little indulgence this morning, Mr. Speaker. The matter I raise is somewhat confused. The question to the Premier relates to the women's division, Mr. Premier. You've said in the House, and I want to quote your comment, 'And I said at least eight new positions will be developed in the department of advanced education and manpower, and anyone else, including the people in the women's division, can apply for them.' The accuracy of that comment was confirmed by the estimates, which said that the positions in the women's division were being cut, not transferred. In this morning's newspaper, there's an article by Mr. Gil Johnson, the deputy minister, stating the positions are being transferred and not cut. My first question to Mr. Premier is: who speaks for the government, you or Gil Johnson?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I always speak for the government.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — I take it then that Mr. Gil Johnson does not speak for the government and that the six positions are not being transferred to advanced education. Is that right?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — No, Mr. Speaker. What I said the other day, that there are at least eight new positions — new positions — and the people in the former women's division of the Department of Labour could apply for those positions. I didn't say that people wouldn't be transferred into the new department of advanced education and manpower. I mean, the new department is going to be so much more and provide so many new opportunities for equality for everybody, and we're just in the process of building it, so we don't want to confine it or limit it or isolate it to what was the women's division of the Department of Labour. And I've said that and made that very clear. So there's going to be at least eight new positions. There may be 50 new positions in a new department that doesn't even exist yet.

Mr. Shillington: — I wonder, Mr. Premier, if you are actually suggesting to the House that you knew all along that those six positions were being transferred but were being coquettish and was not telling us. Is that what you're telling us, that you knew that at the time but just didn't, just chose not to tell us that those six positions were being transferred?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — No, Mr. Speaker. I just said that — Mr. Deputy Speaker, pardon me — that we're be building a new department, and there will be at least eight new positions and people can apply for it — not necessarily just these people, but other people can apply for those new positions. So there's going to be so much more we can build and not be limited to what was there before, and most people are looking forward to that. I met with several organizations this morning, and several women discussing this, and it seemed to be extremely popular.

Mr. Shillington: — This whole process, Mr. Premier, is starting to make SGI look like a model of, of, of good administration, but let us get on to the issue, let's get on to, to the issue of substance if I might.

New question, Mr. Speaker. Do I take it, from the fact that six positions are being transferred, that you are going to have in the department of advanced manpower and education a women's division which will have a responsibility for the advancement of women in the public sector and in the private sector?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we are going to make sure that happens is not fall into the trap of the previous administration by allowing departments off the hook. Women were isolated and confined to the Department of Labour in the old administration, and now they won't be. We will make sure that there are women in the public service commission to make sure that all departments are going to participate in equal rights and equal opportunities for everybody. As well, a brand new department of advanced education and manpower, perhaps better called advanced education and employment, so that we can focus on the skills of not only men and women, but any individual in the province of Saskatchewan, so that we can be a leading province in that regard to provide these opportunities for all our people.

Mr. Shillington: — I take it . . . Supplementary, I take it then that you, you are, there will be no women's division in the department of advanced manpower and education. I

take the Premier's shaking of head to mean that there will not be.

Department of Labour, Occupational Health and Safety

Mr. Shillington: — I want to ask a new question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Labour. It relates, Mr. Minister, to the deletion of seven positions in the area of occupational health and safety. I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, how you justify this neglect of the needs of working people.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, all that I can say at this moment that we are going to be streamlining our, all our departments in the Department of Labour whether it's occupational health, or labour standards, or whatever. We have no intention whatsoever to downgrade the occupational health; in fact, we want to go the other way, but we're going to be doing it as efficient as we possibly can.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — A more accurate term, Mr. Minister, might have been 'gutted' for your department rather than 'streamlined.' But let us . . . New question Mr. Speaker. Let us take it that your department was streamlined. By way of background, let me remind you, Mr. Minister, that your department was streamlined more than any other. Could you tell this House why your department was in need of such stringent streamlining?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Any, any department in the, in government is going to be streamlined. We have no intention whatsoever to be cutting services in any of our departments. We're going to be looking after all the areas, but we're going to be doing it by working as hard as we can from 9 to 5 every day.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Pensions Division Staff Cuts

Mr. Shillington: — New question relating to the pensions division. And I could go through each subvote in your department, but I won't. But let me just deal with the pensions division. Half the staff have been cut. How do you justify that neglect of the needs of people who are facing retirement? That's the older people, not . . .

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said earlier, we're looking at all our areas. If we are cutting staff that still doesn't mean that we're going to downgrade any areas in our department. All we're doing is administrating the, the pension plans and so on, and we will be doing that.

Mr. Shillington: — Supplementary, Mr., Mr. Deputy Speaker. Are you suggesting that half the positions in the pensions division are redundant and you didn't need them? Is that what you're suggesting to this Assembly?

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't know the exact answer, but if my department said we can do it with 50 per cent less people, that's the way we're going to do it.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — The . . . Mr., Mr. Deputy Speaker, one final supplementary question to the minister. How do you suggest that you are upgrading these positions when you are in fact cutting staff? Surely by any normal definition of the term that's downgrading the division, not upgrading it.

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Speaker, or Deputy Speaker, I said at the very beginning we are not downgrading any area in our departments. We are going to upgrade them. We're going to be as efficient. We're going to cut back the expenses of our department, and, if we cut back some expenses, maybe we can reward our people in our departments for doing a heck of a good job.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Meeting with La Ronge Hospital Board

Mr. Yew: — . . . Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health. Some months ago you were afraid to meet with the La Ronge hospital board, the local elected officials of the area, to discuss your having cancelled, your cancellation of the La Ronge hospital project. My question to the minister now is: have you now met with the board and the community to assure them that you will be proceeding with the project at this fiscal year's budget?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would just like to correct the introductory statement of the hon. member to indicate that I was afraid to meet with the La Ronge hospital is the furthest thing from the truth, because, if you will recall, in January of this month that I went and met with the La Ronge hospital people, the chamber of commerce, the board, toured the hospital, and members of the Indian bands in the area. And I think if you would check my record, my friend, you would find that I have met with more boards and more people in Saskatchewan than probably your health ministers did in the last five years. So, Mr., so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I take resentment to the charge of being afraid to meet with the board. Before you make those kind of charges in this Chamber, you check the past record of the minister and then you indicate whether I'm afraid to meet with boards, because there's no board that I've been afraid to, or have cancelled a meeting with.

However, to your question, Mr. Member, I will indicate to you . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Now sometimes one just has to set a little bit of groundwork in here, and get a few things straight.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I told you, I think it was just about in the last session, and I will tell you again that I had a good meeting with the La Ronge people. I heard their concerns; I told them they would be under consideration; they are under consideration at this point in time also.

Mr. Yew: — I don't want to get into a squabble over your time spent in a community in the northern administration district, but I must remind the minister that you flew, your initial visit over there, just flew barely over the landscape of the northern administration district. My question is still: have you any intention to proceed with the La Ronge hospital as well as the nursing care home facility that was allotted and approved by the former administration?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have no intention of getting in a squabble about things either. I just want to get things straight and have the member come from the proper perspective. However, there are many communities in Saskatchewan, La Ronge being one of them, that are requesting hospitals and nursing homes. I am meeting with each and every one of them, and some of them will be getting them, within the budget constraints of this government. Now, La Ronge will be given careful consideration, along with all the rest, and I think that is dealing with the needs of people.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

La Ronge Technical Institute

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to turn now to the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan. As the minister is aware, there was another major project that was approved to proceed with the former administration, and that is the La Ronge technical training institute. I wonder, at this point in time, Mr. Minister, if you can assure the House, the people of the North, that you will proceed with this project.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, once again, as my colleague has just had to do two or three minutes ago, I'll take exception to your preliminary statement that the former administration approved a, approved a training institute at La Ronge, because he certainly did not approve that. In fact, it was, was a major issue in La Ronge that it was not approved for La Ronge. And it is still, it is still the case as the member is representing his people there now and saying we should, we should have a training centre in La Ronge.

My colleague, the Minister of Continuing Education, has, has said many times in the last few days, and the Minister of Finance, in the budget speech, talked about the emphasis we will be putting on training and retraining in Saskatchewan to train our young people and to retrain the workforce in Saskatchewan. La Ronge and northern Saskatchewan will be major beneficiaries in that.

So I don't see how you can square that with your first statement that the former administration approved the facility in La Ronge. They certainly did not.

Mr. Yew: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't, I don't, I don't wish to waste any of our valuable question period arguing a point, arguing the point when it was a fact. It was fact that we were going to have a training centre in La Ronge.

However, new question, Mr. Minister . . . Deputy Speaker. New question, Mr. Minister. Yesterday, I accused your government of shrinking the province in half. You don't recognize north of P.A. or Meadow Lake, and your government's representation of the budget presented here just a couple of days ago, you failed to announce a plan, a strategy, a development program. You talk about an economic self-sufficiency program for the North. Where is your package? Where is your economic development program?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr., Mr. Deputy Speaker, the hon. member says that he accused, he accused this government of shrinking the province in half (I believe his words were). I'll tell you, Mr. Member for Cumberland, that what we have done is, is increase the province by, by doubling the side of the province. In other words . . .

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — People of northern Saskatchewan, who have always looked to their one department, the one all-encompassing department that was into every aspect of their lives before, will now do as other citizens of Saskatchewan do, and look at the budget according . . . with all of the various departments, as everyone else in Saskatchewan will do, and under that scrutiny they will find that they will do very, very well.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Department of Highways Budget Cut

Mr. Lusney: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Highways or . . .

An Hon. Member: — Pot-hole Jim.

Mr. Lusney: — . . . maybe the soon to be more commonly known as the minister of pot-holes, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, in your recent budget, you indicated that . . . I think . . . I believe it is quite obvious that there are going to be sufficient funds in, in many areas, but specifically in highways. There is an indication in the budget that from the spring of '82 to this budget in the spring of '83, there's about a \$24 million reduction in capital budget spending. Could the minister indicate how, how he can say that this budget is going to maintain or to build the roads that the people of Saskatchewan really expect from the department? Is this not a betrayal of rural Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — The Minister of Finance unveiled a plan that was going to benefit all the people of Saskatchewan. In the department of transportation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have got an increase in the transportation budget in excess of 12 per cent, and I want to lay that out.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Garner: — We go, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the blue book for the member opposite's information — page 48. Last year, total expenditures for DHT was 197,655,520. The expenditure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for this year will be \$222,115,760, and that's what will build the roads in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, supplementary to the minister, or maybe I should say, a new question to the minister. You indicate that, that you are going to be spending more in highways. When you are adding in about 11 million of that from the traffic board, which is put into highways, I think it's easy to say then that you are going to have an increase in your budget. Mr. Minister, that increase in your budget . . . Would you not agree there's really no increase at all? If there is any increase in that budget, it is no more than maybe 2 or 3 per cent, and, with inflation what it is today, how many more roads can you build with a 2 or 3 per cent increase?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I guess we've got two points to this. We'll go to page 48 again, for the member opposite's information. Last year capital expenditure was in excess of \$108 million. This year we have \$110 million in capital expenditure. Now, that is an increase. I mean, they can play smoke and mirrors with it, but that is an increase.

The road building industry in the province of Saskatchewan are happy. The people of Saskatchewan are happy. These are roads where the priorities have been set by the people, not by the politicians. These roads are going to be built. And we're not going to be leading the people of Saskatchewan down the garden path with this.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Mr. Lusney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. When you say you increased your budget by some \$2 million, or 108 million from last year, 110 million this year, but you made a cut of about 4 million or more from the spring budget, or what was proposed in the spring of '83: Mr. Speaker, or Mr. Minister, how can you say that this year, a year later, you're going to be able to build that many more roads, when your budget has such a small increase in it? It doesn't even account for the inflation increase. How many roads can you get built on that small budget? And if you say that you are going to build a good number of those roads, are you going to have sufficient funding to put in what is one of your priorities, as you have indicated in the past, the four-laning of your No., No. 1 Highway and your Yellowhead Highway? Are you going to have sufficient funds to do that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I guess we have two points again here. Number one, it is an increase. But I think we should point out to the members opposite, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in the province of Saskatchewan we had one of the most respectable budgets in highways and transportation in Canada. And I would like to point out to the member opposite that Alberta, the province of Alberta, is having a 12 per cent reduction in their transportation budget.

Now we move over to the province of Manitoba, where their friends, the NDP, are the administration of that province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in capital expenditure alone the NDP Government of Manitoba is cutting it by 10 per cent. The Conservative government in the province of Saskatchewan is increasing the budget of transportation over 12 per cent. That's a positive step by this government.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, new question to the Minister of Highways. Is the Minister of Highways saying that because there are Conservative governments in Alberta or in Ontario, or maybe a province like Manitoba — that's been taken over by the NDPs and left with a large deficit — is the minister saying that this province should be going in that same direction, that we should be building up our deficit and we should be cutting in highway programs? Is that what the minister is indicating?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we'll try once again, maybe a little slower this time, and we won't spell it out but I'll try once again. I've pointed out that the two adjoining provinces are cutting their transportation budget, and Mr. Deputy Speaker, in Saskatchewan, and for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan, we have in excess of a 12 per cent increase in the transportation budget in the province of Saskatchewan under a Devine Conservative administration.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, new question to the minister. And again, the minister keeps talking about his big 12 per cent increase when he put in a new department, or a former department of, traffic board into highways. And it appears that it's not, or it won't benefit us any by continuing the questioning with the minister and trying to, to get some answers out of him. But I have a new question for the Minister of Highways. You have indicated to the road builders' association that you would be going in the direction of cutting work by Department of Highway crews, and trying to go in the direction of private, the private contractor, work to many of the contractors.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Mr. Lusney: — Can the minister indicate, are you going to be disbanding the highway crews, the Department of Highway crews in grading, or in road surfacing?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I guess what the member is trying to point out, and I think he's finally picked it up, that there's been a change in philosophy since we became government of this province. We believe that the private sector should have the opportunity to work and compete in the province of Saskatchewan, whether it's in putting up buildings or building roads. Yes, we are going to be moving to reducing some of the works branch that the previous administration had built up and made the province of Saskatchewan, the Government of Saskatchewan, as one of the largest road builders in all of Canada. We are going to be turning some of that work over to the private sector.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Reorganization of Government Departments

Mr. Lingenfelter: — A question to the Premier. On March 25th, you announced a, a reorganization of government departments. I have here a news release from your department. One of the areas where there was a great amount of change was in the area of supply and service and revenue, and financial services. And what I would like to know is that, as the minister who is supposedly responsible for that area has not been here for the last nine sitting days, if you can explain to the opposition, the members of, the people of Saskatchewan, as well as the constituents in Maple Creek, how it is that a, a minister, who is responsible for a new area, during the budget debate is not present in the House to answer questions on, on the new department. Is the minister away on government business and, if so, can you explain what business it is?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the reorganization . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reorganization doesn't come into effect until April 1st. It is an organization that we have outlined on paper. The departments aren't even legal yet, so the responsibilities, whether it's advanced education and manpower or whether it's the new department of transportation and so forth, will be in effect next week. The minister, the minister will be here next week to address, address the questions for a new department. The new department, the new department doesn't even exist today. It's there in theory, and the minister will be here next week to, to discuss anything with respect to the, the new department.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Sale of Potash to India

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — Mr. Deputy . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to announce today, as minister in charge of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, the completion of negotiations for the sale of 200,000 metric tons of Saskatchewan potash to India.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — The sale was made through Canpotex, the offshore marketing agency for all Saskatchewan producers. The product is scheduled for delivery before June 30th, 1983, and includes over 90,000 metric tons of product from the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. This new sale brings the amount of Saskatchewan potash destined for delivery to India in the 1982-83 fertilizer year to over 400,000 metric tones. And it is worthy to note that during the same period in 1981-82, the sales were only 355,000 metric tons — in other words, an increase of over 44,000 metric tons.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLaren: — This means we will meet projected sales for the fertilizer year in that very key market area, and we are pleased that the agreement also contains a buyer's option which provides for the purchase of an additional 50,000 metric tons. This option is to be exercised before May 31st, 1983.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I reply to the statement made by the Minister of Labour, the minister in charge of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. We, naturally, are pleased that there has been a substantial sale of Saskatchewan potash to India. We would . . . We are pleased to note that it is a sale which was essentially negotiated by PCS International and CIDA. We are pleased also that there will be jobs generally across Saskatchewan as a result thereof.

We are a good deal less than pleased that more than half of this potential market has been given by the minister to the private sector operators. They obviously will employ people, but this will . . . The, the fact that Canpotex has been given this contract which was negotiated by PCS will mean that PCS will make, make less profits. There are fewer dollars to come from PCS to this government and, accordingly, the policy being pursued and announced by the minister means fewer services for Saskatchewan people and a higher deficit than would otherwise be the case.

Introduction of Opportunities '83 Program

Hon. Mr. Currie: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House today about a new program announced by the Minister of Finance.

Before I deal with the specifics, I want to point out the circumstances surrounding the introduction of this new program. Development of our human resources is key to our economic recovery program. Indicators point to the start of this recovery. However, in Canada, the unemployment rate remains high. We are fortunate in Saskatchewan. Through actions and initiatives undertaken by our government, Mr. Speaker, we have

been successful in holding the unemployment rate down. In fact, Saskatchewan boasts the lowest unemployment rate in the country.

During economic slow-downs, Mr. Speaker, our young people are often the hardest hit. Youth unemployment rates remain significantly higher than those of the general population. Although we, in Saskatchewan, are in a favoured position here, as well, with the lowest rate in the country, unemployment of youth is a major concern of our government. Summer places additional stress on the labour market. Many students will be seeking jobs in order to finance their continuing education.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to assisting students to complete their education. We realize, however, that more is needed. It is important that students be involved in meaningful employment during those times when they are not in school. Mr. Speaker, as the finance minister announced Tuesday night, our government is taking positive action to ensure that employment opportunities are available for Saskatchewan students — employment opportunities that will assist students to continue their education, as well as to develop skills and experience that will assist in the transition from school to employment — opportunities, Mr. Speaker, that will develop our human resources.

Starting next week, Opportunities '83, the new student summer employment program, will begin creating jobs for Saskatchewan students. We have committed approximately \$2.8 million to Opportunities '83—\$2.8 million to create an estimated 3,000 new summer jobs for students during the period May 1 to September 30. Jobs created under this program will be new. They will not result in dismissal, lay-off or reduction in hours for any existing employees.

How will these new jobs be created? Our government, Mr. Speaker, will provide an employer subsidy of up to \$350 per month for each full-time student job created during the May 1 to September 30 term of the program. The subsidy will be available for a maximum of three months. I am confident, Mr. Speaker, that many employers, with this assistance, will have the resources to expand the term of employment to four, or even five, months.

Mr. Speaker, the employer base for this program is broad. We will provide subsidies to businesses, to farms, to non-profit organizations, to municipalities and other local government bodies. High school or post-secondary students who are enrolled in a post-secondary institution this fall will be eligible for employment under this program. Starting next week, Mr. Speaker, Opportunities '83 employer application forms, as well as all program information, will be available at chambers of commerce, at municipal offices and at field offices of the departments of agriculture, industry and commerce, and culture and recreation. In addition, posters and brochures will be sent to high schools, colleges, institutes and universities, to inform students about the Opportunities '83 and how it can work for them.

Mr. Speaker, this government is concerned about our students. We are concerned about assisting them to develop skills, both academic and work-related, that are necessary for successful transition to employment. I am confident that Opportunities '83 will provide student jobs this summer, and thus will assist students to finance their education.

Mr. Speaker, I solicit the support of all members. I repeat: I solicit the support of all

members of this legislature to help students find jobs this summer by approaching employers and school officials in their constituencies, explaining Opportunities '83 and how it can work for them.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that the organization for handling the program is in place. Much time and effort has been expended on the plans. I wish to express my appreciation to those who have, and will, spend many hours administering the task. With the help of the members of this legislature, we can make a substantial contribution by putting our students to work this summer.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. First of all I would like to take the opportunity to thank the minister for the courtesy of providing me with an advance copy of the statement: a practice which is not a general practice for the ministers across the way.

The other statement that I'd like to make is that I don't know who's making the statement, because today during the question period when we were discussing the question of new departments, the Premier indicated that the new departments were not legal, and that ministers were not in fact appointed today. We seem to be getting a statement from the new minister of advanced education and manpower, who yesterday refused, or recently refused to speak on behalf of the department which he wasn't appointed, and which wasn't put into place. It's very difficult, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to be able to know who we are dealing with and who is making the statements.

I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we on this side certainly appreciate any efforts made to rectify the very dismal prospects for job creation and job opportunities for the university students in this province. The minister so, so proudly took credit for the lowest unemployment rate. And I want to say that when he inherited this government, we had indeed the lowest unemployment rate in Canada, and that rate has continually been climbing ever since. During February alone, during February, the unemployment rate was 16 per cent for the age group of 16 to 24.

I want to say, for the past year, this government has delayed any action to create jobs which were needed. They cut back on the construction projects which we had initiated in our March budget in schools, in university buildings. Certainly, they also delayed any of the crown corporation sector development in the slow-down in the development of the second phase at the Lanigan potash mine, all of which would have created jobs for the students. I want to say, now this government, after 11 months in office, comes forward without even a department being created, announcing a program and the students are about to be out in a week and a half's time.

I want to say, this is too little too late, and the actions of this government is a disgrace. I want to say also, I want to say also that the minister stands up in this House and says: 'We are concerned about assisting them to develop skills — academic and work-related.' And yesterday, when I questioned him, his miserable budget to the universities for operating grants was 7 per cent. I say, Mr. Minister, we welcome your effort. We hope that you can do better than the Minister of Culture and Youth, which did nothing. We hope that you can do better than the Minister of Labour which did nothing for a year. We congratulate you for the small effort. We certainly look for more.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

POINT OF ORDER

Length of Ministerial Statements

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, on a, on a point of order, I'd like to make the, the point that the use of ministerial statements in this Assembly is, is getting, in our opinion, totally out of hand. And to make the case, I would like to point to the Minister of Labour who, on the occasion of announcing the minimum wage freeze in the province of Saskatchewan, chose not to make that a ministerial statement in the House, but instead chose to do it at 4 o'clock on a Friday afternoon, after the press and the opposition had gone home.

But this week we see him making a ministerial statement on the purchase of wire by Sask Power, and now today, on a sale of potash which was negotiated by a previous administration. And I think that the whole question of ministerial statements as, as outlined in *Beauchesne's*, points out very clearly that the emphasis should be to keep it brief and factual, and that it should be items of some importance.

The other point that I would like to make on the Minister of Education's so-called ministerial statement, is the length. And I think that to encourage debate, and to prolong the discussion, and to include things that are not factual but political, I think that we question, and we would like a ruling on that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — Ministers, ministers should keep their statements brief and factual. Also, the answers to the ministers' statements should be kept brief and factual, and the length of this period is left to the discretion of the Speaker. So I think from now on you should try and keep them brief and factual.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 6 — An Act to amend The Public Utilities Review Commission Act

Mr. Shillington: — It's with great pleasure that I attempt to bring order out of chaos by introducing and giving first reading of a bill to amend The Public Utilities Review Commission Act.

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

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATE

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE (BUDGET DEBATE)

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. Andrew that the Assembly resolve itself into the committee of finance.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, it is my intention this morning to review in some detail the budget that was introduced in this Assembly on Tuesday evening. I feel it's absolutely crucial for us to do that because, quite frankly, seldom has this legislature

heard a budget speech which bears so little relationship to the facts and figures in the budget documents.

Traditionally, budget speeches are a time for the Minister of Finance to blow the budget, the government's horn, to resort to rhetorical flourishes in describing the government's spending plans for the coming year, and often the facts and figures in the documents fail to justify the record and that's common enough. But in this case, Mr. Speaker, the budget documents not only fail to justify the budget speech rhetoric, the rhetoric in fact seems designed to hide the true impact of the budget documents.

In just a moment I will review the facts and figures which prove the point which I have just made. But first let me attempt to put this budget speech in some sort of context.

The people of Saskatchewan well remember that last March and April, Conservative candidates made a large number of campaign promises, a large number of very expensive campaign promises. But as they travelled in the province reeling off their long list of campaign promises, Conservative candidates told the voters again and again that those promises could be delivered without cutting existing programs and services, and without driving the provincial government into the red. Without cutting services; without driving the government into the red. That's what they said.

This was the double-barrelled presentation that the Conservatives used, Mr. Speaker, to convince the voters of Saskatchewan that their campaign promises were responsible, and not just pie in the sky. No program slashing; no big budget deficits.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that this document is absolute proof that the Conservatives last March misled the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — I say, I say that because even though most of the expensive Conservative campaign promises remain to be implemented — promises like the elimination of the sales tax and the 10 per cent cut in personal income tax — even though these expensive campaign promises are yet to be implemented, this budget is chock-a-block with the two things the Conservatives said would never happen: savage cuts in services and, and deficit budgeting. And that's why I say this government has misled the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Last March, the Conservative candidates spoke only of promises and not of price-tags. This March the Conservative government has delivered the bill. The taxpayers of Saskatchewan are now called upon to pay the bill, the bill for the promises made last March and April. And pay for them they will, with lost services and large budget deficits. That's the bill which was delivered to the people of Saskatchewan Tuesday night, Mr. Speaker, the bill that wasn't supposed to be there.

When I took my seat on Tuesday night, Mr. Speaker, I had spoken of the deficit, the huge deficit of \$317 million, a deficit which will in fact be larger when this government has the courage to table the annual reports of a good number of crown corporations which will reveal their mismanagement.

Now this is the second massive budget deficit. There's a little story goes around in Ottawa and it goes something like this. What's a surplus in a Trudeau budget? What's a surplus in a Trudeau budget? Answer: typographical error. But we'll soon be able to

say that about the Devine government and the Devine budgets, as the government opposite goes down the Trudeau trail of huge annual budget deficits. Perhaps, perhaps, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's why their Minister of Finance called his document, outside the House, a neo-Liberal budget — because it emulates those of Prime Minister Trudeau. Or perhaps it means that he, only that he's getting most of his advice from the member for Qu'Appelle-Lumsden or the member for Thunder Creek.

On Tuesday I tried to outline what I thought were the consequences of this policy. Shortly put, my general criticism of this budget is not that it is spending too much. Naturally I regret the need for massive increases in the spending on interest and on public assistance. But these follow from the government's decisions — the interest run on its decision to deficit finance, and the huge increase in public assistance on its decision to spend a year studying rather than creating jobs.

The money are . . . The money we are paying out for interest has gone up, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from 22 million in 1981 to 65 million in 1983 — 65 million and rising fast.

The money we're paying out for public assistance has gone up from \$92 million in 1981 to \$171 million in 1983—\$171 million and rising fast.

Given the government's policies, these expenses are regrettable but necessary. The government's spending in other areas is not too high. No. What's wrong with this government, and what's wrong with this budget is not that they're spending too much; what's wrong is that the income is too low. And it's not that you and I are paying too little in taxes. The taxes that we are paying are all going up: income taxes, \$708 million, up 16 per cent; sales taxes, \$359 million, up 9 per cent; tobacco tax, \$50 million, up 37 per cent; liquor revenue, \$125 million, up 39 per cent. No, it's not the taxes that you and I pay that are not providing enough money for this government. It's the drop in money that other people are paying. We are paying more; others are paying less.

And who are paying less? Well, the oil companies are paying less. We know that the price of our oil and gas has been going up. The price increased on July 1, 1983. The price increased on January 1, 1983, and the budget documents make this clear on page 33. The government tells us that the oil industry is now booming, that production is nearly 100 per cent, so they say. Now, if the industry is booming, and if the price of Saskatchewan oil has gone up, wouldn't you think that the total amount of money that the Minister of Finance gets from oil would go up? But not so, not so. It is down from \$710 million to \$580 million, a drop of \$130 million in oil revenue alone.

Now, much of this loss comes about, Mr. Speaker, because that the government slashed oil royalties. They will try to say that it is for other reasons, but much of the loss is theirs, of their making, because they slashed oil royalties. The government was proud to announce the sharp cuts in oil royalties. It claimed the credit. It must now accept the blame for those results: an increased deficit and major cuts in services — and major cuts there are.

The government says that the cuts are not serious. Indeed, in the budget speech there's much talk about the need to provide money for essential services. The Minister of Finance said, and I quote:

. . . this government believes there is never a right time to cut essential services (and I want you to remember that). We will defend these services

through bad times as well as good.

A little later in the budget speech, the minister said that, in his belief, the government must maintain and increase funding levels for essential government services. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take the Minister of Finance at his word. But if I take him at his word, I must believe that any programs or services that are cut back are considered non-essential by this Conservative government.

Well, let's take a moment, Mr. Speaker, to look at this long list of services, and people, which this right-wing Conservative government believes are non-essential. Let me turn to health.

The government claims to have maintained and improved spending on health. More service, not less, they say. Well, let's look to see whether this is true. Using their own figures, Mr. Speaker, and I will compare what they are providing in this budget, in staff and money, compared with what they provided in their November budget last year.

The first thing we note is that the total figures for spending have increased from 728 million to 977 million. Looks impressive. But there are new items in the health budget — home care, nursing homes, road ambulances — totalling over \$170 million. And these are not new services. They're, they've just been moved from other departments, from the Department of Social Services, northern Saskatchewan and urban affairs. They've been moved to swell the total for health. The transfer has been made to cloak the fact that there are sharp cuts in important health services, and let me list a few.

Let me turn to the care for the mentally ill. There's been a deep cut in these services: for hospital psychiatric services, 12 staff cut; for the North Battleford hospital, 14 cut; for the Weyburn Psychiatric Centre, 5 cut; for the Yorkton centre, 1 cut — a total of 32 staff members cut. And that inevitably means a lower level of care for the mentally ill.

There are by . . . And these are by no means the only cuts. Most people, most people believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that health departments should be emphasizing prevention and health education, what's called promoting health. Most people accept this approach, but not this government, not this government. They have abolished the health promotion branch completely. The jobs of 14 people who used to promote health are gone. Health is not promoted; health is demoted.

Well, take the children's dental plan. The government has already cancelled coverage for four-year-olds. Now the service is to be cut back further — 23 staff members are to get the axe — 23 fewer people delivering dental care for our young people than last year. And so begins the erosion of a health program that has given a service to Saskatchewan children second to none in North America. Make no mistake, this program is being cut in this Tory budget.

There's a, Mr. Speaker, there's a staff cut in the SAIL program, the Saskatchewan Aids for Independent Living, a 10 per cent staff cut for the hearing aid plan. A 20 per cent staff cut for communicable disease control. A cut in the staff for northern health services. And, Mr. Speaker, when I say a staff cut, I am talking about a cut from the number of people provided in the first Tory budget. And nobody can claim that there can be staff cuts in all of these health areas without cutting the level of service. It can't be done. It won't be done. And those who need health care will be the losers. They, and the services they need, have been written off by this government as non-essential services.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was amused and saddened to see the vote for the Provincial Auditor. Few people have been more vocal in asserting the need for a strong, independent Provincial Auditor than the Minister of Finance. As the activities of government become more complex, the need for a strong audit function increases.

In 1980 the auditor had a staff of 66 people. Then, because of expansion of work in 1981, this was increased to 72 people. And now, by this budget the staff is cut back to 67, a cut of five people. A reading of the auditor's report makes clear that in his opinion he simply cannot do the job with that staff. That, Mr. Speaker, has serious potential dangers. As the auditor quotes in his report:

The requirement that government be accountable is the price exacted by a democracy for the gift of power.

Any weakening of the role of the Provincial Auditor, as this budget certainly does, is a danger signal for those who believe that a government is accountable is a better government for all its citizens. This idea too is regarded by the government opposite as unimportant and non-essential.

Mr. Speaker, protection of the environment is obviously seen as non-essential by this Conservative government. When I look at the budget for the Department of the Environment I see that it has been cut, not . . . When I say cut, I do not mean it has not got its fair share of the 7 per cent increase, I mean that it has been cut in actual dollars—\$1 million less than last year, about 11 per cent, Mr. Speaker. And I see that 32 staff positions have been cut out — about 19 per cent of the total staff of the department. Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised. Most right-wing governments, like this Conservative government, admit openly that they see laws to protect the environment as a nuisance, a nuisance which should be swept aside in the interests of business expansion and increased profitability.

Perhaps nothing sums up the Conservative government's approach to environmental protection as well as the following quote from a government ad. The ad appeared last fall, just prior to the Open for Business conference. The ad asked the question:

Who should attend the Open for Business conference?

And this was the answer:

Risk-takers who can attend quickly . . . Risk-takers who can respond quickly to an unfettered government industrial strategy (note, unfettered) that affords maximum business opportunities with minimum intervention in taxation and regulatory matters.

The message was clear. This Conservative government planned to do as little as it could or plan to do as little as it could get away with in the area of environmental protection, and the numbers in this budget confirm this. The land protection branch of the environmental department which, among other things, is responsible for the management of hazardous wastes, loses two staff positions, as if we are well on top of that problem. The mines pollution control branch of the department is the branch which monitors, inspects and licenses all mines and mills in the province, including uranium mines and potash mines. But, in this budget, the mines pollution control

branch loses five staff positions and sees its funding cut by \$150,000. These are just two of the cuts which contribute to the loss of more than \$1 million and 32 jobs cuts out of the Department of the Environment. Mr. Deputy Speaker, yet another government service which is deemed to be non-essential.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the government spending plan for education is troublesome, not only for the cut-backs but also for the attitude expressed in the House by the minister yesterday. The minister defended his decision to provide inadequate funding for Saskatchewan's universities, explaining that he was faced with a difficult choice — either funding for the universities or adequate funding for the technical institutes. That's what he said: 'I had to choose.' I say to the minister: that's the wrong either/or.

The choice which your government should be making, the choice which your government should be making is this: either to provide adequate funding for all educational services or to continue the massive tax breaks for the resource companies. That's the choice. The choice shouldn't be between the Kelsey Institute and the University of Regina, but between Saskatchewan students and, let's say, PanCanadian Oil.

If that choice had been made, you . . . the minister would not have to have been forced to pick and choose between different segments in education. And we wouldn't be seeing, in this budget: a cut of over 20 per cent in assistance for the construction of elementary and high schools, which is there in the budget; a cut of 5 per cent in special education funding, and operating grants for our universities which are so inadequate in the face of increasing enrolments that they will be forced either to cut services or raise tuition fees substantially.

No government can claim that when universities are facing increasing enrolments of around 8 per cent an increase in funding of 7 per cent is anything but a cut. It is a cut on a per-student basis from even the funds provided last year, not allowing anything for inflation or new programs.

And what of agriculture, Mr. Speaker? Surely this Conservative government holds agriculture to be essential to Saskatchewan's future. Apparently not.

The budget of the Department of Agriculture has been slashed by more than \$11 million. FarmStart, which provided assistance for young farmers to diversify, has all but been bombed out of existence by the Conservative budget. Money for beef stabilization has been cut. Money to help seed-cleaning plants has been eliminated. Irrigation grants have been cut.

One of my colleagues will be going into much greater detail on this government spending program. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will have an opportunity, I know, during the course of this debate to review in detail the spending of the department, but I want to outline that one glaring omission which this budget had.

What does this government offer to deal with the rising costs that farmers face? Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the increase in costs for farm diesel fuel since this government came to office are 23 per cent. 23 per cent! 23 per cent! As the price of Saskatchewan oil has gone up twice since this government came to office, the costs of farm diesel has gone up, and this government has taken no action. There's money for the oil companies, money for CP Transport, but no money to help farmers with the cost of fuel. Now that's not true in Alberta, where the government has a farm fuel distribution allowance which rebates

farmers 31.8 cents a gallon, 7 cents a litre. The Premier often talks about his willingness to go to war to save Saskatchewan agriculture. All farmers are asking right now is for you to display a recognition that farmers are essential, that farmers are an essential part of the Saskatchewan economy, and to display that in concrete terms by putting in a fuel farm rebate program of the kind that they've had in Alberta.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I turn to another group who have been deemed to be non-essential by this government. A look at the budget of the Department of Social Services showed list after list of services that this government classes as non-essential. It's common knowledge that more and more people are seeking social services from the social services department. More and more families are under stress. More and more children are at risk. The number of cases of child abuse, of spouse-battering, is soaring, and no amount of chatter by members of the Conservative Party can deny that hard cruel fact.

And in the face of these facts, the government opposite has done these things: it has slashed the staff administering public assistance programs, even though the numbers seeking those . . . that assistance is going up rapidly; it has cut the number of social workers who are working out of regional offices; it has cut staffing our child care institutions; it has reduced staff in the institutions for the mentally retarded at Moose Jaw and at Prince Albert; it has cut sharply the social services staff in northern Saskatchewan, even though the number of cases there is sky-rocketing.

And these are not the only cuts, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Funds for community services and for senior citizens, the Senior Citizens' Provincial Council, do not get the standard 7 per cent. In fact, they get no increase at all. Inflation will force a cut in these services, community services, and the Senior Citizens' Provincial Council, yet another group who are deemed by this government to be non-essential.

There's been cuts in the money for the senior citizens supplementary income plan, and there's more. My colleague, the member for Shaunavon, will later in this debate detail other services for senior citizens, and citizens generally, which have been cut from the Department of Social Services.

Mr. Speaker, time does not allow me to detail all the cuts in government services which this budget holds. There are many, many cuts in the Department of Northern Saskatchewan ; serious cuts in the services for native people; one of the smallest highway construction programs in many years, actually fewer dollars than in the budget year '81-82; cuts in legal aid; cuts in international aid. Throughout this budget speech there are hidden cuts affecting thousands of Saskatchewan citizens, and my colleagues will outline a good number of those in the course of this debate.

I want, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to touch on one other department in a little more detail, the Department of Labour, which has been gutted and with it the protection it gave to some of the most vulnerable in our society, people who have a right to look to their government for protection, people to whom all of us owe a duty. Who are some of the people who are left out? Well, people who are on pensions which are too small, frequently women or low-paid workers who simply don't get enough in their pensions to live decently. Mr. Deputy Speaker, to help people who find themselves in this position we have programs in the Department of Social Services; to help people avoid getting into those positions we have pension laws.

By everybody's agreement, our pension laws in Canada are not good enough. We need

to make changes which will protect our citizens, and which employers can live with. This was the job of the pension benefits branch: to see that existing pension plans really protect employees, and to work for better laws and better pensions. That was the job. Saskatchewan was the leader. But now that branch has been decimated. The staff is cut by more than half. There's no possibility of that staff now doing the job that is needed for people who need their pensions protected. To this government, people who need their pensions protected are non-essential.

Let's look at occupational health. Certainly people who work in places that are dangerous have a right to expect protection. If they're injured, we help them through the workers' compensation board, but we all agree the best way to help them is to prevent the injury in the first place. That's the job of the occupational health and safety branch. The need gets greater every day as we use chemicals with which we're not familiar, and new technology with which we're not familiar. Be it herbicide chemicals or video display terminals, there are many new and different hazards in the workplace.

Again, Saskatchewan was a leader in occupational health and safety, but I fear not for long. This service has been slashed — a cut in funds, a 15 per cent cut in staff. Another group of people who are deemed by this government to be non-essential.

Now who else needs protection in our society, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Well, women in the workforce. All the statistics show that women are paid less than men, even when they do the same kind of work. We in our party believe that people should be paid for the work they do, and should have the chance to do any job if they can qualify. Whether they're male or female shouldn't make any difference. And we all know that that isn't true, Mr. Speaker, in our society. One of the main jobs of the women's division was to help give a better break to women in the workforce. But the budget ends all that, and the Premier has made clear that there will be no women's division in the new department of advanced education. The entire women's division has been abolished — axed completely, axed completely by this compassionate government. Another group of people who should be getting protection from this government, and aren't.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, running through this budget is a theme. If you're powerful or have powerful friends, your needs will be met. If you are weak and have no powerful friends, you can fend for yourself. A review of the spending plans of the Department of Labour makes this very, very clear.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, let me say this. The Premier has often described his government as a government of compassion. We've heard much talk of compassion. This budget is proof in dollars and cents as to just whom this compassion flows in favour of, and who are left out when compassion is being distributed. This is the second budget introduced by this Conservative government. The government members can no longer hide behind the argument that they wanted to do things differently, or they wanted to do more but somehow they were tied to the past. This is their budget totally, their priorities totally; and, as I said earlier in this debate, this budget presents the people of Saskatchewan with the bill for the promises made by the government opposite last March and April.

So when judging the quality and quantity of this Conservative government's compassion, I suggest the key question is this: who has benefited from these promises, and who is now being asked to pay the bill? Well, we know who have benefited: the

multinational oil companies, who have had their taxes slashed drastically; the interprovincial trucking firms like CP Transport, who now are getting cheaper diesel fuel and make no contribution to the cost of our roads; and, of course, the bankers and bond dealers who are having a field day on collecting interest on the budget deficits which are being run up. These are a few of the people who have benefited during this Conservative government's administration. These are the people who have been given the compassion of members opposite.

But who is now being asked to foot the bill? I have noted, Mr. Speaker, that the list is long: the more than 50,000 people looking for work; the more than 14,000 unemployed employables who are on welfare; the some 20,000 university students; the 60,000 workers who earn at, or near, the minimum wage, and who have had their wages frozen; the 30,000 public sector workers who have had their wages controlled; Saskatchewan's senior citizens; native people; residents of northern Saskatchewan; yes, indeed, even the four-year-olds. All these people, and many more, have lost needed services because this Conservative government has run out of money. All these people, and more, have seen their futures mortgaged by a government which used to talk about balanced budgets. All these people, and many more, are footing the bill for the government's promises of last, last March and April.

At a time when the ability of our society to give a helping hand is limited, I question the compassion of a government which says that we can afford to slash taxes for oil companies but we can't afford to have anything more than a token job creation program; that we can afford to cut taxes for interprovincial truckers but we can't afford to fund day care centres properly; that we can afford to give away potash sales to private companies but we can't afford dental care for four-year-olds. And that's what this government has been saying again and again and again. Now, that's a curious kind of Conservative compassion.

In his last speech to the United States Senate, shortly before he died of cancer, Senator Hubert Humphrey summed up what I've been trying to say here today, and summed it up very well. Senator Humphrey said this:

The moral test of government is how it treats those who are at the dawn of life, the children; those who are at the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that this Conservative government's budget fails that moral test and, because we believe it fails that moral test, we will oppose this budget, and I will oppose the motion.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it's indeed a pleasure to enter into this budget debate. It seems to be rather becoming a habit here that I follow the Hon. Leader of the Opposition. And I just want to point out at the beginning, I have always admired the capability of the gentleman opposite to put whatever facts he may have at his disposal together in a rather eloquent form. It's a gift that he has always had and continues to, to use.

However, I have noticed quite a difference, Mr. Speaker, in the, the material that the member opposite presents now than what he did when I first came into this House in 1978. In fact, I feel some degree of sympathy for the member of the, Leader of the

Opposition, because I notice that today, I should say previously, he was always blessed with a rather quick wit and had some very good jokes, which we all appreciated, irregardless of which side of the House we were on. But one is always only as good as the people you have around you and supporting you, and I, I feel some sympathy, because I don't think the Hon. Leader of the Opposition has the speech-writers that he used to have in the olden days. Because as I listened with interest today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I noticed that some of his facts were funnier than his jokes. And I feel a bit of sympathy for him.

And just to illustrate that, I noticed the Leader of the Opposition was saying, in, he seemed to be complaining that sales tax was increasing, that the revenue from sales tax was increasing, that the revenue from income tax is increasing. He was trying to guise that in such a way to mislead the people who may be listening out there in, in the radio land in Saskatchewan. Because it only makes sense, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that if incomes are increasing, then the revenue from income tax will be increasing. And also, if sales are increasing, then the revenue from sales tax will be increasing.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — That makes eminent sense to any person out there in Saskatchewan, and I tell you they understand it, and they understand it very well. And any attempt to mislead them or guise the facts is not going to work . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, one of my colleagues says that the population is increasing also. And I can tell you, that's something different, because as our, our leader, our Premier, Hon. Grant Devine, has said many times throughout Saskatchewan, that in the year that I was born, in 1936, that the population was as great then as it was when we took over from the people opposite. So I'm glad to see that the population in this province is, is increasing.

You know, one thing also that came to mind as I listened intently to the Hon. Leader of the Opposition was that he was saying at the beginning, he opened his speech by saying that the problem was the very expensive campaign promises introduced by the Conservatives. And then I listened a little longer, and the next thing he said, 'But I don't want to say that you're spending too much.' Now how do you justify, and how do you square that? How do you square that, I ask you? How do you square that thing? I also heard him say repeatedly that 'You're cut, cut, cutting them here, and cutting them there.' And all I could understand from that was that his concept is that big government is obviously better government. And I can tell you, on the 26th of April, the people of Saskatchewan said, 'That is not the case; that is not what we want.'

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — And I listened intently as the Leader of the Opposition was giving us his advice of how we should have put together this budget, his advice of the way the expenditures should have been, been put out. Well I just want to tell the Leader of the Opposition opposite that he had 11 years to practise his economic theories, 11 years to bring forward budgets, and the accumulative result of your economic theory, and your putting your money in your crown corporations, gouging the people, taxing on the power bills, resulted in your defeat on April the 26th, a massive defeat.

So I want to say to you, Mr. Leader of the Opposition, in all due respect, that people of Saskatchewan told you very plainly that they want to see a new direction. They want to see a new budget. They want to see ideas for the '80s and that's what Grant Devine

brings to this government, and that's what Bob Andrew, my seat-mate, the Minister of Finance, has brought into this budget that he brought forward on Tuesday night.

And I just want to, just so that we shed another little avenue onto this, I want to quote from the *Star-Phoenix* editorial column regarding the budget brought forth by my colleague. And it says:

In drafting his first full-fledged budget, finance minister Bob Andrew appears to have come up with a rational blueprint for the province's economy which accurately reflects the mandate given the new Conservative government . . . The emphasis on job creation is essential and welcome. In the area of health and social services, the government has demonstrated it's, it is capable of taking a moderate approach. Drastic cuts in human services to finance other programs or reduce the deficit would have been unacceptable to the majority of Saskatchewan residents regardless of political ideology.

Now, let me tell you, how did my friend and colleague and seat-mate come up with that type of a blueprint and that type of a budget? The editorial goes on to point this out.

At this point, however, the budget appears to be an acceptable document. Andrew's attempts at pre-budget consultations, through a series of community meetings (criticized by some across the way as window-dressing) have yielded a budget which responds to the wishes of the Saskatchewan electorate.

That's powerful stuff . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's government listening to the people, that is correct.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I get into the main gist of my remarks concerning the Department of Health, I want to correct a few more of the misleading statements that the member opposite has, has put forward.

He talks about the reductions in the psych services branch. Now he wants to put it out there that, that the people, the hands-on treatment of the people in Saskatchewan, the mentally ill, is being somehow pulled back. I just want to correct the record to indicate that 80 per cent of the people, of the positions deleted are in ancillary services. Those are painters and plumbers and people like that, not hands-on service to the mentally ill.

That's a reduction in administration. That's what the people of Saskatchewan wanted, not that bigger government and more people in government are better. They wanted more people delivering the same service. And that's an increase in productivity and that's what we're gearing towards.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — You mentioned the health promotions department — quickly respond to the fact that he didn't see it in the blue book. Well I want to tell you that the services of the health promotion department have been brought into the community health services branch. And you will see and if you've been watching the television and . . . you could come in; I told you I'd give you one of my smoking certificates; I think you deserve one . . . That . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . You're a non-smoker. Now that

we've . . . (inaudible) . . .

You will see health promotion enter this administration and this government, not decreased, not decreased a bit, but increased and increased because of the efficient services and amalgamations within departments, saving cost dollars for the taxpayers of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say how pleased I am, and I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance on this fine budget presented on Tuesday night. When he gave his first budget speech last fall, my colleague brought forward a budget that was received, well received by the people of Saskatchewan. Well received by the people of Saskatchewan because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was honest, it was straightforward and it was a responsible approach to the expenditure of public funds. And I think the *Star-Phoenix* editorial seconds that comment.

And this budget shows that the first one was no mere accident, because he's done it again. It continues the sound financial planning and the sound economic policies which are needed to realize the tremendous potential that we have here in the province of Saskatchewan.

I just want to comment on a few of the highlights, some of the things that makes me proud of this budget brought forward by Mr. Andrews. Everyone realizes that the major issue out there in the population today is jobs: we want jobs. What would Mr. Andrews bring forward in our budget? A nine-point job creation program. Not a job creation program in the crown corporations or building vast monuments to the government, as was the case in the past, as was the case in the past, but Build-A-Home Saskatchewan — homes for people — an extension of that. My colleague, the Minister of Continuing Education today, today indicates a youth employment program for the students of this, of this province.

Tax reductions to small businesses—\$5,000 to any small business that can create a full-time job for one year. Research and development — the use of the heritage fund for research and development and for fostering agriculture, still our number one, the backbone in our economy. The reorganization of government to streamline it to better deliver the services to the people of Saskatchewan.

I say these are ideas for the '80s. A 33 per cent in the aid to trade, so that we can take the secret of Saskatchewan to the world, so those people out there can buy our products and trade with us. And \$2 million for our native people, to develop economic activity for them. All of this while maintaining health and social service and expanding them and maintaining and expanding education, all of this within a guide-line of 7 per cent. Stack it up however you want to across Canada. We are going to be known as the prudent managers of government.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Not only number one on health, not only number one in economic development, but number one in prudent, efficient financial measures.

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Health, I'm naturally pleased to see that health care has again been assigned an important place in this budget. Setting aside the effect of

transfers, such as that of continuing care from social services to health (and, I should say, a move that is approved and supported by the people out there in Saskatchewan), the health budget for 1983-84 has risen by \$70 million over the 1982-83 budget. That's setting aside the transfers. \$70 millions.

That's an increase of 9.6 per cent, Mr. Speaker, and an increase of that magnitude during a period of economic restraint is concrete evidence of this government's commitment to improving our health care system. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to indicate that the combined total budget comes down to \$1,000 for every man, woman and child in this province, and that is a sincere commitment to their health care.

But the real story of the allocation for health doesn't lie in the total numbers, but in the way the total is put together. Mr. Speaker, the health budget for 1983-84 continues the sound basis of health care funding which was introduced in the finance minister's first budget last fall. It is an approach which effectively balances two fundamental principles, attention to essential services and responsible development of community programs.

Mr. Speaker, during a period such as this, it is vital that the first priority in health care be assigned to those areas most critical to the health and well-being of the Saskatchewan people. The budget includes several major examples of how this principle has been followed.

The most outstanding example is the major funding commitment to the Saskatchewan Cancer Foundation. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that commitment is for \$17 million over five years, including \$10 million for the construction of a new cancer clinic in Saskatoon. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be announcing details of our major initiative in this area within the next few days. However, I am confident that these funds will be of great assistance to the cancer foundation in upgrading and expanding the cancer services it provides to the Saskatchewan people. No one would deny that cancer services are one of the most fundamental components of any effective health care system, and if the allocation of \$17 million in new funds to this area doesn't reflect a commitment to be number one in health care, then, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what does.

And I listened to the Leader of the Opposition talking about savage cuts. Well, if \$17 million to fight cancer and cure cancer in this province is a savage cut then he, he or I, one of us are mistaken, and I'm sure it's, it is the member opposite.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — And I'd just like to quote a little note that I got yesterday from the head of the cancer foundation in Saskatchewan, Mr. Schwartz. This is what he said:

As chairman of the cancer foundation, I just wanted to thank you for the good news contained in the budget speech, speech last night. Things are looking very positive in terms of what the future holds, and we are looking forward to meeting with officials of your department. You came through just like you said you would — that is, listening to people, reacting to their concerns, and putting the people's money to where they can best help the health care in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, cancer is not the only area where we are making major advances. I am pleased that the budget also includes \$650,000 for the establishment of a paediatric intensive care unit at the University Hospital in Saskatoon. The lack of such a facility has been of concern to the hospital and the medical community for some time now. And we have responded to that concern in a prompt and a positive way. The establishment of the paediatric intensive care unit will relieve pressure on the existing neonatal intensive care unit and provide a valuable new treatment centre for high-risk paediatric cases.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when Her Royal Majesty Princess Anne was here last summer we had the opportunity to tour the neonatal intensive care unit at University Hospital. And I want to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you see those little babies, that without that support wouldn't have a chance, coming along . . . And I saw the pleasure, and I met some of the parents, and I saw the pleasure in their face that they could take that little baby home.

Now some of them need a little more intensive care, and that's the paediatrics, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That was brought to our attention. This government has responded to that need, a need that has existed, not just for 11 months, but a need that has existed for the last four or five years. We responded within 11 months to bring forward a paediatric intensive care unit for University Hospital in Saskatoon.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are several other areas in the hospital field where this budget will improve services and facilities.

We have provided over 700,000 for the expansion of cardiac services in Regina in recognition of the growing demand for these services in southern Saskatchewan. Those are, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the heart surgeries that can take place at the Plains hospital in Regina.

We have provided an initiatives program for small hospitals with \$500,000 allocated for this purpose. And this is for small hospitals to come forward with ideas of how they can improve their service to the people in rural Saskatchewan.

We have added over 100 new staff positions in the global budget hospitals, and have given special recognition to the . . . (inaudible) . . . of these services that the hospitals are providing. We have introduced a surplus retention formula for the global budget hospitals, which will allow them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to keep a larger percentage of any surpluses for their own use without compromising patient care. Our friends opposite thought that if the, if the hospital would have a surplus, they should take it back. How do you square that with efficient management of money? Mr. Deputy Speaker, to put it in a simple fact, if you have some dollars and you knew that if you didn't spend them all I would take them away from you, I'm sure even a fine gentleman like you might even think that he would spend them all. Such was the case of financing hospitals under the former administration — no faith in the judgement of local boards, thinking that they're going to steal the funds. Well, we don't think that way on this side of the House and we're going to let them keep those surpluses to provide better patient care.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — We have recently announced that we have committed 2.7 million to the construction of a new children's rehabilitation centre in Saskatoon in co-operation with the Kinsmen foundation. This commitment will be spread over a period of three years, beginning in 1983-84.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the 1983-84 health budget does place strong emphasis on institutional services and on capital expenditures. Now, that emphasis is reasonable at the present time. But that . . . It does not mean we are uninterested in community-based programs and in related areas such as health education. It simply reflects the basic principle that you don't go adding new storeys to your house until you've shored-up your sagging foundations.

As well, health promotion and disease prevention are fundamental to the role of all health professionals. We want to proceed carefully and wisely to add the right types of professionals in the right settings. In this regard, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to announce that this budget includes funds to begin a chiropody program for senior citizens of this province. Now, I want to explain . . .

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I want to explain to this House because I'm not sure everyone knows what a chiropody program is. A chiropody program is a program that looks after the care of the feet of the elderly people . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Now, I hear the fellows crowing on the other side that they initiated it. They initiated it. They talked about it. They cancelled the program. They had one pilot project up in the community clinics. We are expanding that in a need and in a response to the senior citizens of this province.

An Hon. Member: — The NDP were all talk and no action.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — That's right, all talk, no action, and never deliver.

Mr. Speaker, the provision for the funds for this purpose clearly shows the difference between the way this government deals with health care, and the way the members opposite tried, tried to deal with it. As early as 1975 the NDP promised a chiropody program to the senior citizens of the province — promised a program, but nothing happened. They made the same promise again in 1978 — playing with the older people. But, three years later, they still hadn't done a thing to implement these promises.

Well, that isn't the way that this government does things. In my meetings with the senior citizens' groups and in the letters I've received, there has been one consistent message: that a chiropody program is one of our senior citizens' top priorities in health care. We listened to what the people were telling us, and we have responded to their needs which they have identified.

We can't set up a full-scale provincial program within 12 months because that just isn't possible. And we don't intend to rush into something without planning it properly, but we will be initiating the necessary steps to develop a chiropody program in a logical way. And, once again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are demonstrating that our commitment to being number one in health care is not just empty words the way the members

opposite pretend it is.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to point out one more example of how this budget provides for the rational development of health care in the province. I'm referring to a commitment of \$200,000 for the improvement of crisis services in Regina. This will take the form of additional hospital beds in group homes, as well as the establishment of new supervised apartments to be run by a local community organization. And it also includes provision for improved staff training. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the allocation of funds for crisis services represents a substantial new development in community-based mental health services in Regina, and I'd like the member, the Leader of the Opposition to take note that that program is being introduced. That will probably answer his accusations about the dropping of, a plummet in psych services.

Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Health, I'm a strong supporter of health care education programs, but I think the role of the government in this area should be that of an adviser and facilitator, not that of a dictator. We should encourage people to make healthy life-style decisions, and we should help them to obtain the information they need to make those decisions. In this respect, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that our support for health education programs is being expanded this year by a grant of \$60,000 to the Saskatchewan Pro-Life for its family programs. The education programs provided . . .

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — The educational programs provided by Pro-Life and other community groups are a highly effective way of promoting knowledge about good health and individual responsibility for maintaining it.

Mr. Speaker, before closing my remarks, I would talk briefly about two other areas which are included in the health budget of 1983-84. I am referring to the ambulance program and to continuing care.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am confident that the consolidation of the ambulance program in the health department will result in better co-ordination and integration of ambulance services within our health care system. We will continue to consult with ambulance operators and other concerned groups to develop effective and efficient ambulance services in this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm also pleased by the transfer of the continuing care division to the health department. I look forward to working with our local care, home care boards and long-term care facilities to develop better mechanisms for co-ordinating their services with our other health care programs.

I am particularly pleased to note that the budget includes 2 million for new initiatives to handle the most urgent needs in the long-term care system. I will be announcing details of this funding over the next few months.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to point out that the budget includes 4 million for the construction and renovation projects in special-care homes. This means that since coming into office, this government has committed \$11 million for such projects, and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is 50 per cent more than the previous government committed in seven years prior to the election — 50 per cent more.

Mr. Speaker, if anybody wants to know how we intend to go about making Saskatchewan number one in health care, all he has to do is look at this budget. We will do it by listening to what the people tell us they need. We will do it by consulting with the administrators and health professionals who provide health care services. And we will do it by supporting the initiatives of local community groups.

Mr. Speaker, the government's economic policies and strategies are going to make Saskatchewan number one in a whole lot of areas. As our economy picks up and more financial resources become available, we will build steadily on the solid base of health care services we are now establishing. It will take time to reach our goal. We don't deny that. But under the capable leadership of Premier Grant Devine, this Progressive Conservative government is going to give Saskatchewan people the kind of province, Mr. Speaker, the kind of province they want, and the kind of province they deserve.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on behalf of my constituents in Indian Head-Wolseley, I will definitely be voting in support of this fine budget. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It certainly gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise and take part in this debate on the throne speech that was delivered earlier this week by my colleague, the Minister of Finance, a throne . . . excuse me, a budget speech that, I might add, has been widely accepted by the people of the province.

The . . . Mr. Speaker, I would like to expand on some of the remarks made by my colleague, the Minister of Health. I obviously will not be able to speak with the eloquence, and certainly not the experience, of the Minister of Health, but as a rookie member in this Chamber I would like to express the dismay that I sense in what I am hearing coming from across the floor. I believe we have experienced an obvious case of arguing both sides of an argument.

Immediately after the budget speech was delivered, the Leader of the Opposition stood in this Chamber and talked at great lengths about the fact that deficits were not desirable. We witnessed a sleight of hand show in which he took a stack of bills and put them on top of each other, spread them end to end, weighed them, did everything you could imagine. The only thing he didn't do is exactly what his administration used to do: he didn't get any of that money to the people of the province.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, since that time, when the evils of deficit financing were pointed out to us so clearly, what we have heard in question period and in the speeches (and I will simply list a few things) is an advocacy of further spending — further spending in areas such as psychiatric services, dental plan, day care, regional operations, university spending, increases in foreign aid, increases to northern Saskatchewan, advocated increases in occupation health (they want us to rebuild La Ronge, by the sound of it), highway construction, agriculture, social services, the labour department, on and on and on.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that you have to pick one side or the other. You have to either advocate smaller or no deficits, or else . . . At the same breath, it's difficult to advocate more spending, which will obviously lead to larger deficits.

They do make, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they do make one small effort to balance their arguments, and they discuss our campaign promises. And all I can assume from that is that the members opposite are advocating a return to the gas tax, removal of interest . . . mortgage interest reduction protection, a change in that young farmers can no longer buy their land. These types of things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are totally foreign to us. We would far sooner accept a small, manageable deficit than load them back on to the people of the province, as was the case prior to April 26th.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will have a considerable number of things to say about this budget as it applies to the two departments I am responsible for. But in the meantime, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

MOTION

Referral to Standing Committee on Estimates

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, just before we, we adjourn the House for the day and for the weekend, I have a, I have a motion, a referral motion, that I would like to move now, seconded by my colleague, the Minister of Urban Affairs. By leave of the Assembly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move:

That the estimates for the Legislative Assembly, subvotes 1 to 3, 6 to 7, 17, and 20 to 23 of vote 21, be withdrawn from the committee of finance, and referred to the standing committee on estimates.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Deputy, Deputy Speaker, I just want, on a point of clarification, whether or not this is the same motion that was introduced prior to doing estimates in the last session. I believe it is. But if the minister would give us that assurance, and maybe list them out . . . I'm not sure what is included here, but if they're the same as they were last time, we would be in agreement. But I'm not clear on that.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Yes, Mr., Mr. Deputy Speaker, in, in reply to the . . . It is the same motion. It's been referred in that way before, and what it deals with is the Legislative Assembly Office, the Clerk's office, and the Legislative Library. And it's a, it's a, it's a normal motion. We haven't added anything, and we, in this Easter season, we would never do something like that to you, I can assure you.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, just before we adjourn, I would like to wish all members of the House, along with their families, a happy Easter at this blessed season of the year. And we take, I believe, four days from our work here, and will be back next week. But I would say to all members of the House, Happy Easter!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to join, join the fine representative

from, from Meadow Lake in wishing all members and, and staff of the Assembly a, a, a happy and a blessed Easter.

The Assembly adjourned at 11:58 a.m.