

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**April 19, 1983**

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**WELCOME TO STUDENTS**

**Hon. Mr. Pickering:** — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, 11 grade 7 and 8 students seated in the west gallery, from the Crane Valley School. They are accompanied here today by their teacher, Mr. Richard Strubele and bus driver, Terry Ray. I hope they find the proceedings through question period informative and perhaps educational. I will be meeting with them at 2:30 in the rotunda area for pictures and downstairs for drinks. I would like all members to join with me in welcoming them to the Assembly and wishing them a safe journey back home.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Smith:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you and to this Assembly, a group of students from Moose Jaw, Prince Arthur School, of 51 students, grade 1 to 3; and our teachers, Trena Templeton and Ruth Davis; and their chaperones, Leone Novak, Connie Shook and Linda Hoffman. I certainly hope they have an interesting stay in our Chambers today and wish them a good trip home. I ask the legislature to welcome them here today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**QUESTIONS**

**SGI Rate Increase**

**Mr. Shillington:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of industry and commerce with respect to his decision to increase the deductible on July 1, 1983. Mr. Minister, I want to suggest to you that you've gone down for a third time on this issue. To the voice of the opposition has been added the vociferous complaints of the public, and the scathing criticism of the province's commission which suggests that the whole fiasco is unnecessary. My question to you, Mr. Minister, is: will you now reconsider your headstrong refusal and delay the implementation of the increase in the deductible until a decision on the legality of your action is received from the court of appeal?

**Hon. Mr. Rousseau:** — Mr. Speaker, first of all let me say that those words come from the member who so strongly opposed the public utilities review commission concept for four years in a row, while I sat in the opposition of this Assembly. And I want to also say, Mr. Speaker, that it is a safeguard, certainly, for the citizens and the taxpayers of this province. They are pleased that the public utilities review commission is as effective as it is. To answer the hon. member's question: no. At this point in time, the answer to his question is no.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Well, perhaps Mr. Speaker, at this point in time the minister could tell us why his answer is no.

**Hon. Mr. Rousseau:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I've answered that question many times in this House, in this Assembly, and we were advised of this information this morning via the media. We received the notice of it just prior to my coming into question period this afternoon. We haven't had time to review it, and to consider the position. Certainly that there are some options available but at this point, as I repeat again what I said earlier, that at this point I am not reconsidering it. However, anything can happen.

**Mr. Shillington:** — New question, Mr. Speaker. I'd remind the minister that the decision by the public utilities review commission was taken after receiving copious material from the SGI, and after studying it for some weeks. Are you suggesting that you do not accept the decision of the public utilities review commission that the revenue increase on July 1 is unnecessary?

**Hon. Mr. Rousseau:** — I'm not sure what the question was, but I'll attempt to answer what I understood it to be. We are still of the opinion that we need the increase, if that was your question. And the only thing that can happen, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the delay in increasing the minimal amount that we were asking for is that ultimately we'll have to be asking for a lot more. So if that was the gist of your question, then that's my answer to it.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Well, I know the minister has some difficulty with these matters, so I'll try and rephrase it in a simpler fashion. You refuse to accept the decision of the public utilities review commission that additional revenue on July 1st is necessary to the corporation. The minister's having trouble hearing me because of the advice he's getting from the Attorney-General. Let me try it again. You refuse to accept the decision of the public utilities review commission that a revenue increase on July 1st is necessary. How is the public utilities review commission and the public to interpret that as other than an expression of lack of confidence in the commission?

**Hon. Mr. Rousseau:** — Well, the public utilities review commission have made a decision. If we accepted the decision as being the ultimate answer we wouldn't have made the application for the increase in the first place. If we accepted that the commission is right in not allowing any increase in the application, then it would follow that we would not have submitted an application to begin with. So I'm not going to contradict our own application, if that's what you're suggesting. All I'm saying is that the SGI application to the public utilities review commission was, in our opinion, necessary and needed to maintain a break-even, as I've indicated before. Now that we don't have that then the potential for losses exists. That being the case, and the deficit position that your government created over the period of time that you were attempting to run that organization is going to have to be addressed sooner or later. And whether that's now or next year, all it means: that if we're going to recover the deficit that your people, or your organization, or your government created in the first place, then the increase that we'll need will be even greater than what it is today. So I don't know why the member would ask me to contradict the application that we made.

**Mr. Shillington:** — New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you indicated on Thursday you felt the appeal to the court of appeal by the public utilities review commission was something that in some indirect way the opposition should accept responsibility for. Is today's refusal to accept their decision an extension of that

expression of a lack of confidence in their impartiality?

**Hon. Mr. Rousseau:** — No, I think the hon. member asking the question is having difficulty with his own questions. We have all - I've indicated that earlier today - the confidence, and we believe in the concept of the public utilities review commission. We introduced it. We brought that act into this legislature, and introduced it to this Assembly, and you, when you were government, opposed it when I introduced it. I was the member who introduced it for three years in a row, sitting on the opposite side. And you opposed it then, and when we brought it in this year, you opposed it again.

**An Hon. Member:** — So you started all this?

**Hon. Mr. Rousseau:** — So, yes, that's right. That's right, I did. If you'll remember going back three years, four years, I was the member who introduced it in this Assembly. I'm still very pleased about that. I'm still very pleased that this government followed through on our commitment because we lived up to the promises that we made, the commitments that we made to the people of Saskatchewan. So we haven't changed our position. We may not want to accept some decisions, but that's fair ball game, I would have to think.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Supplementary. Mr. Minister, why not salvage the integrity of the public utilities review commission and save the taxpayers a good deal of money and yourself a seemingly endless amount of embarrassment and accept the amendment which we have proposed to the act, which would make it clear that the public utilities review commission has jurisdiction over the deductible, something we all intended initially?

**Hon. Mr. Rousseau:** — Mr. Speaker, I am not in the least bit embarrassed by the decision made by the public utilities review commission. The public utilities review commission (and I would say it again) was introduced, passed in this legislature for a reason. That reason has been demonstrated today, or yesterday, whenever it was. And Mr. Speaker, we will assess the situation in due course. The court of appeal will make a ruling that we think will rule hopefully in our favour, that the deductible (and this is what the court of appeal is deciding on), that the deductible is in fact not a rate but part of the package, and part of the product that we are offering to the people of Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Koskie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct a question to the minister in charge of SGI. Mr. Minister, you clearly indicated to the House and to the public that you were making an application for an increase of 6.7 per cent. Now that the public utility review commission has, in fact, not allowed an interim increase, your general manager has indicated, at the hearing April the 5th, Black also said if the commission didn't grant an interim increase, the company may seek an average increase of more than 6.7 per cent at the full hearing scheduled in June. What I am asking you, is not the application that you submitted one which you were asking for the needed increase, or were you dependent at that time, that in fact you were expecting interim? Why the necessity now of changing this mission and asking for a further increase if, in fact, you were not depending upon an interim increase?

**Hon. Mr. Rousseau:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, in the first place, I haven't suggested that, that we are going to ask for a . . . change the application of the amount of the increase. However, again I want to remind the members opposite, and you, Mr. Speaker, that our application for a 6.7 per cent increase was basically for a break-even position, dating April 1 to the end of this year. We delayed the implementation of, first of all the \$500

deductible, and secondly now, we refused the 6.7. And if that is to say, Mr. Speaker, that in due course, as a result of not receiving these revenues to assist us in a break-even position under the act, that we will have to, in time, ask for much more. And that's all that we're saying. Whether or not, we make that decision to change application for June, or withdraw it all together, those are options. Those are options that we'll be reviewing and discussing with management, and no decision has been made, and if they are made, it will be made in due course.

**Mr. Koskie:** — Supplemental, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the minister then, from your answer, are we to take it that we cannot depend on your announcement as to the percentage increase of rates, that in fact you have asked for? Because in fact, you're indicating unless you got exactly April the 1st implementation, which I don't think you could possibly assume, that you had no right to go out and announce to the public that it was going to be a 6.7, when now, on your own admission, you're indicating that you have to increase it. Are you not, in fact, deceiving the public in your whole announcement?

**Hon. Mr. Rousseau:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the member is really reaching, at this point in time. Again, mathematically it makes sense that, if we don't get what we ask for to achieve a break-even, that sooner or later we're going to have to ask for more.

They also forget something else I said in this Assembly recently, and that is that the 6.7 - as I recall, I can't remember the exact phrase that I used - but the 6.7, if we were denied that increase and weren't able to implement that, that we had another option, as well. Not another option but another alternative, and that would be to try and attempt to operate even more effectively than we have been doing, and perhaps allowing making up for some of those deficiencies. But, Mr. Speaker, we have certainly reduced the cost of operation and the expenses in that corporation and it can mean a number of things, it can mean a number of options or alternatives that we may have to look at in due course.

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney:** — Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the minister in charge of SGI, and I refer to the fact that the public utilities review commission has not approved the rate increase, that the minister indicates that there will be a loss of revenue, and the minister indicates that he is considering options to deal with that. Would he advise whether one of the options is to increase the deductible still further from \$500 to a higher figure, which he constantly asserts he can do without the approval of the public utilities review commission?

**Hon. Mr. Rousseau:** — Mr. Speaker, no, that is not an option.

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister say that that would be within the power of the government: to increase the deductible beyond \$500 without the approval of the public utilities review commission?

**Hon. Mr. Rousseau:** — Mr. Speaker, that question is very speculative, and I don't think it deserves an answer.

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney:** — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the minister in charge of SGI. Would the minister give the public a firm commitment that the SGI will not be attempting to raise the deductible about the \$500 figure in the next 12 months?

**Hon. Mr. Rousseau:** — Mr. Speaker, I answered that question - to the first question

he asked. Yes, I will. We won't. That is not an option. We will not increase it beyond the \$500, and that's what you asked the first time, and I answered it.

### **Employment of Bruce Flamont**

**Mr. Yew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the minister in charge of the crown investments corporation. Does the crown investments corporation have a Mr. Bruce Flamont under contract as a consultant? If they do, what are the terms of his contract and what are the duties?

**Hon. Mr. Rousseau:** — Mr. Speaker, no, we do not have him under contract.

**Mr. Yew:** — Did you have a Mr. Bruce Flamont under contract?

**Hon. Mr. Rousseau:** — Yes, Mr. Speaker, we did.

**Mr. Yew:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Was he, in fact, terminated then because he was spending his time on public pay-roll helping to organize an alternative Metis alliance - an alternative Metis organization, the National Metis Alliance of Saskatchewan - rather than working on affirmative action programs in the crown corporation sector?

**Hon. Mr. Rousseau:** — No.

**Mr. Yew:** — Could the minister then - supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister then specify to this Legislative Assembly what the duties of Mr. Flamont were?

**Hon. Mr. Rousseau:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to answer those questions in crown corporations review committee.

### **Water Development Programs for Farmers**

**Mr. Engel:** — Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Premier. As a result of your water review committee that travelled around Saskatchewan, have you changed your position as to the kind of help you provide farmers, or assistance they'll get, or looking after their water development programs?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, we received a great deal of advice from the public in Saskatchewan as a result of those hearings. Part of the advice was the concept of a new water public utility to a large extent to help finance public projects, community projects, with respect to water . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

You want to know if you're eligible? Well, for individual farmers, we'd have to look at this specific project. I mean we've received an awful lot of very positive advice on the kinds of things we could do with water. I believe that we've identified \$2.5 billion to \$3 billion worth of water projects which don't include irrigation, so beyond that you could look at perhaps several hundred million more dollars that will be spent privately, and so forth, with respect to irrigation projects for individuals. So to that extent, we will look at each individual situation, and his farm, and see what can be done with respect to water supply and irrigation.

Drainage was another problem. Sewer was another one. So there will be several facets in terms of information that was accumulated as a result of the hearings.

**Mr. Engel:** — Mr. Speaker, I have a new question. I have before me a clipping from the *Leader-Post* from yesterday and 16 jobs were eliminated in the family farm improvement branch. Included in the job cuts are six water technician positions. Is this why you laid off 16 people at the family farm improvement branch, because the request came in for more water assistance and no need for farmers having water? A well driller was in to see me and said that cutting family farm improvement branch meant that each well was going to cost him about \$160 more because he's got to buy his supplies from a retail outlet rather than from family farm improvement branch. So I can see that. But my question is: is that why you cut the technicians positions, six technicians?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, I believe as a result of that most of the positions have been repositioned into other departments. There's a possibility that seven may not be, from the information that I've been provided. The kinds of programs and projects that the public in Saskatchewan, rural and urban, would like to have are now so much more than was provided under the previous programs. So they're very happy to hear about a new crown corporation. There's the public utility, plus 8 per cent and 12 per cent money in terms of the offers that we've provided, plus the renewed interest with respect to irrigation, as well as water supplies and drainage and so forth. So there will be so much more that will be done because there's so much more that we can be as a result of water hearings and a utility.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — In fact this is the first time that there has been province-wide hearings in the province of Saskatchewan about water. This is the first time that we've had, that we've designed a public crown corporation to deal with water - for all aspects of water in the province of Saskatchewan. Well, what we're looking at is a complete expansion in terms of economic development and the kinds of funds into water development that this province has needed for 30 years.

**Mr. Engel:** — One supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The Premier didn't seem to understand the question. There are farmers that need wells. They need technical assistance. These six or seven people that you suggested - there were six laid off and one was a vacancy, so there are seven involved - that were the technical staff that provided assistance to farmers obtaining groundwater supplies. And you say that the hearings to provide a Diefenbaker water line is something that's going to help those farmers that need individual wells. Those technicians provided individual assistance. Where are these farmers supposed to go for assistance? Who do they go to now, if they want to know, 'Can I drill a well on my farm? Is the water 2,000 feet or 1,000 feet or 200 feet?' Where do we get that technical assistance? They got it from family farm improvement branch. You laid them off. Where are they supposed to go under your administration?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — If you would like some information about water on your farm or an individual . . . (inaudible) . . . farm, two things have happened recently. One, there's a single department now, a single department, that will be looking at water, all aspects of water. The legislation will be brought forward, and that's where they can deal with it. Second, there's the construction of a water utility to also deal with water projects.

And there's an awful lot of people around rural Saskatchewan who have supported both those concepts: a separate department for water, that your administration should have had years ago; and second, a public utility to deal with water, to help finance it.

Those two issues now, those two concepts, are going to be introduced into the province of Saskatchewan for the first time, with the blessing of thousands and thousands of farmers.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Premier. In light of his statement that the 16 people who are going to be losing their jobs in the family farm improvement area, can you explain why you would dismiss them at this point in time when you just made the statement that you're going to be hiring people in another area, a crown corporation, or another department? Why wouldn't you wait until that was established and move the individuals? Why do you choose to fire 16 people who will now have to go out and look for jobs, added to the 139 that we questioned the Minister of Highways on? Why would you fire them rather than transfer them to the new department?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I can't deal with specific individuals. I've said that in this House many times in department after department after department. There's something like 29,000 employees. The minister can deal with those specifically when he's here. All I can say conceptually is that we have taken two concepts that the public in Saskatchewan have wanted: one, a new department of water, so we can deal with it all in one place; and, second, a public utility in water. And those are very popular. So any time the member for Shaunavon or the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg would like some information for water, there'll be two brand-new institutions to deal it. I think they'll find them very acceptable.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I would ask the minister who we are to inform our farmer friends, many of them who have been calling me in the last few days, who they should go to in search of information on deep-water wells in south-west Saskatchewan, which they are now in the process of beginning the drilling program. Who do they go to today before you get around to bringing in the legislation which we have been calling for for the past two weeks?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, I will get the name and the address of the local ag rep in your area, and if you want some information, I'm sure that the ag rep will be more than glad to provide it.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### **Use of Government Symbols in Constituency Newsletter**

**Hon. Mr. Currie:** — Mr. Speaker, regarding notice of question. Yesterday during question period the Premier took notice of question from the Hon. Leader of the Opposition. This question related to a legislative report that was distributed in the Wascana constituency, and in view of the fact that I am the MLA for that particular constituency, I wish to respond at this time.

I would say that I was certainly in error - I was certainly wrong for not ensuring that the finished product met the required standards. I regret sincerely that this occurred and I apologize to the members opposite. I apologize to the members of this House, and I assure them, in addition, that I shall take every measure and be most careful and

vigilant to ensure that this doesn't happen in the future.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I said in the House last Wednesday that I would review a situation that was of particular concern to me, and that was the staff positions and the deletions at the Valley View Centre. This review has been completed and I am satisfied that the staff deletions at this centre are consistent with the government's desire to protect those services to the residents there. The position deletions will proceed as planned. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, staff in my department are making every effort to assist those people whose positions have been deleted to exercise their rights under their collective agreement.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I wish to comment on the ministerial statement whereby she says that she has reviewed the situation and found that the dismissal of six or seven people at Valley View Centre are in order. I well imagine that she would agree with it when the letters of dismissal were sent out by her deputy minister, and for the record I would just like to read part of one:

I regret to inform you that your permanent position as a speech therapist will be abolished effective May 31st.

And it's signed by the deputy minister. I think that, given that, it's a little difficult for the minister to say that she was not aware. I find it dismaying that she would express shock and dismay that her department would do something like this, in one ministerial statement, and then take an opportunity to rise in the House, and say that in fact it was an order. Well, I can assure you that it was an order because she gave the directions that had happened. But I'm also concerned about the fact that as of April 5th, . . . (inaudible) . . . one day after this individual received his dismissal notice as well as the other individuals, a circular was sent out by the Department of Social Services dated April 5th. 'The applications will be received in accordance with article 902 of the CUPE agreement for the following positions: community therapists . . .' And it lists four positions, one of them including Valley View, and I find it shocking that people would be dismissed out of hand, and the day after the minister sends a circular around hiring people who may easily fit into that position if they had been given an opportunity.

I find this kind of action by the minister to be completely disgusting, where you're using people, throwing them out of work, and then going around and rehiring people who better fit the mould that you would see them fit into. And Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to those employees who are being fired out of hand, that it is not an appropriate way for them to be treated after many years of service - especially Mr. Maharaj, who has had an illustrious career, both in Canada and Saskatchewan as well as throughout the world.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### RULING BY MR. SPEAKER

**Mr. Speaker:** — Members will note that resolution no. 24, standing in the name of the



member for the Quill Lakes, proposes to discuss matters which have already been debated during the current session, and includes references to subjects substantially the same as those contained in the amendments to the budget motion which was disposed of on April 8th. Therefore, I must rule the proposed motion out of order on the grounds of anticipation. I refer all hon. members to *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, Fifth Edition, paragraph 340, page 119; and Sir Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice*, 19th edition, page 371; and to a ruling of this Chair of March 20, 1979, *Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*, 1979, page 75.

### MOTIONS FOR RETURNS (NOT DEBATABLE)

**Hon. Mr. Andrew:** — Mr. Speaker, motions for return (not debatable), 1 through 16, with the exceptions of item 5 and item 9, I move:

That they be made debate.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Exceptions were no. 5 and no. 9?

**Hon. Mr. Andrew:** — With the exceptions, Mr. Speaker, of item 5 and item no. 9. I will speak to them later.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Items 1 to 4 debate. Items 6 to 8 debate. Items 10 to 16 debate.

### Return No. 95

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney** moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 95 showing:

(1) The name of each person whose services were retained after May 1, 1982 under a written contract under which such person was paid or entitled to be paid an amount of \$1,000 per month or more by or with the crown investments corporation; (2) the date on which each written contract was entered into; (3) the amount, terms and conditions of remuneration for each contract; (4) the experience and qualifications of each person retained under contract; (5) the duties of each person retained under contract; (6) a copy of each written contract.

**Hon. Mr. Andrew:** — I would ask that this matter be referred to the legislative committee on crown corporations. It calls for a personal employment contracts for CIC.

**Mr. Speaker:** — I'm advised by the Clerk that the only choices we have at this stage are either they go to debate or they're agreed to, and the recommendation that you made is not possible at this point.

**Hon. Mr. Andrew:** — Number two, Mr. Speaker, debate.

### Return No. 99

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney** moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 99 showing:

(1) The total dollar amount paid by the Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan during the period May 8, 1982 to April 12, 1983 to

commercial airlines for airfares. (2) The name of each individual for whom airfare has been paid and the amount for each individual.

**Hon. Mr. Andrew:** — Debate.

## **MOTION UNDER RULE 16**

### **Desecration or Burning of the American Flag**

**Mr. Rybchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to speak today of a very unfortunate and shameful event that took place in Winnipeg outside the Consulate General of the United States of America, on March 23, 1983. The national flag of our neighbour, our most reliable friend, the United States of America, was burned - burned by fanatics whose thoughts and feelings are poisoned by the hatred and blind commitment to ideologies so detrimental to our supreme national interest.

Mr. Speaker, the national flag is the sacred symbol of any nation - a symbol of pride, dignity, and history. We have only to look to the establishment of our own Canadian flag. Everyone here will well remember the many months of input by all Canadians before our present flag was accepted. Now that we have our flag, I assure you that I would feel greatly offended, as I'm sure all Canadians would be offended, should some other nation burn our flag in the manner that it was done in Manitoba. No one should be allowed to desecrate such a treasure of the spirit of a nation.

And yet, several representatives of the Manitoba government dared to participate in such a profane act. Yes, Mr. Speaker, two Manitoba New Democratic Party cabinet ministers, and six other members of the Manitoba NDP government caucus, attended the anti-American demonstration. And, Mr. Speaker, I think it only appropriate that at this time I read to you the names of those NDP MLAs and cabinet ministers who participated in this sad day in Manitoba's history.

They are: the Deputy Premier and Minister of Tourism and Economic Development, Muriel Smith, MLA for Osborne; the Minister of Natural Resources, A.H. Mackling, MLA for St. James; and other members of the NDP government caucus, namely: Phil Eyler, MLA for River East; Harry M. Harapiuk, MLA for The Pas; Elijah Harper, MLA for Rupertsland; Andy Anstett, MLA for Springfield; Don Scott, MLA for Inkster; and Gerard Lecuyer, MLA for Radisson.

Surely members on the other side of this House are deeply ashamed of their fellow-member NDPs in Manitoba - ashamed of the party in which they belong. Perhaps that is why they have been so noticeably quiet about this shameful act their cohorts participated in. I would hang my head too, if I was you.

The action of the New Democratic Party will not be taken lightly by the people throughout this nation. The anti-American activities of the New Democratic Party ministers and caucus have seriously damaged the goodwill which has traditionally existed between the people of Manitoba and Canada and the people of the United States and have caused embarrassment to the people of this country.

And, Mr. Speaker, the United States government is not too pleased with this incident. It has formally protested the attendance of the two Manitoba cabinet ministers at the flag-burning demonstration. In a note to the federal External Affairs department the

U.S. government said it wanted to protest strongly the participation of ministers of the Government of Manitoba in this event. And U.S. officials said they would appreciate assurances that such official support of hostile demonstrations will not be repeated.

Two members of the North Dakota Senate have also denounced the burning of the American flag.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the comments of the American officials directed toward the Manitoba government are fully justified. And it is also my belief that Manitoba Premier Howard Pawley should have apologized immediately for the actions of his government members. But he has refused to do so.

Premier Howard Pawley admits two Manitoba cabinet ministers showed bad judgement when they attended a demonstration outside the U.S. Consulate in Winnipeg where a U.S. flag was burned. But the Premier said that he does not expect the Attorney-General's department to do anything out of the ordinary to investigate the matter. 'If there is no offence then that would be the end of the matter,' Mr. Pawley said. 'I do not want to add fuel to the fire.'

He passed the issue to Attorney-General Roland Penner the day he received a copy of the protest note sent by Washington to the Canadian External Affairs department. I cannot believe, Mr. Speaker, the arrogance of the Premier of Manitoba. It doesn't take much to admit you made a mistake, but it does take real courage to apologize after admitting a mistake. Obviously, the NDP in Manitoba lack the courage of their convictions. I would be ashamed to be affiliated with such a questionable group.

He will not apologize on behalf of Manitoba to the U.S. Consulate General and to the government and people of the United States for the unprecedented, unfriendly and insulting actions by members of the Executive Council and the NDP government caucus of Manitoba. Premier Pawley refuses to apologize because he says he cannot be held responsible for the individual actions of his minister. And not surprisingly, Manitoba Attorney-General Roland Penner, a former member of the Communist Party, I must add, stated that burning a flag is not an offence, and Premier Pawley added that if there is no offence then that would be the end of the matter.

**An Hon. Member:** — Is he a communist?

**Mr. Rybchuk:** — That's what he was.

Mr. Speaker, under the Canadian parliamentary system cabinet ministers speak for the government and represent the people of the jurisdiction they serve. They cannot divorce themselves in their public activities from that representative responsibility. Foreign policy is the responsibility of the federal government and surely the members of the Pawley government, regardless of their dislike for the present American administration, should not have aided a demonstration which resulted in a most serious insult to our best friend and ally.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, the NDP provided no action, not one word of regret. It is a shameful act on the part of the Manitoba government. Trying to save face for the province, Mr. Speaker, the Progressive Conservative opposition in Manitoba took steps to show the United States of America that not all Manitobans and Canadians stood for the unheard-of actions that occurred on March 23rd. They introduced the following motion in the Manitoba legislature, and it reads:

Whereas on Wednesday, March 23, 1983 the Deputy Premier and Minister of Tourism and Economic Development, Muriel Smith, MLA for Osborne; the Minister of Natural Resources, A.H. Mackling, MLA for St. James (and it goes on to list the other six government caucus members) . . . participated in an anti-American demonstration in front of the United States Consulate in Winnipeg, staged in support of the Marxist Government of Nicaragua and ostensibly to protest alleged United States military involvement in Nicaragua;

And whereas the flag of the United States of American was burned during the course of this demonstration;

And whereas the Premier of Manitoba and the NDP cabinet and caucus clearly sanctioned the participation of its members in the demonstration;

And whereas under the Canadian parliamentary system, cabinet ministers speak for the government and represent the people of the jurisdiction they serve, and cannot divorce themselves in their public activities from their representative responsibilities;

And whereas the Premier of Manitoba has refused to tender an apology on behalf of the Government of Manitoba to the United States Consul-General and to the government and people of the United States of America for these unprecedented, unfriendly and insulting actions by members of the Executive Council and New Democratic Party government caucus of Manitoba who freely associated themselves with such anti-American activities;

And whereas the aforesaid anti-American activities by the New Democratic Party ministers and caucus have seriously damaged the goodwill which has traditionally existed between the people of Manitoba and Canada and the people of the United States of America and have caused embarrassment to the people of Manitoba;

Therefore be it resolved that, because of the refusal of the Government of Manitoba to apologize, the legislature of Manitoba hereby tenders to the government and people of the United States of America its apology and regret for the irresponsible, inexcusable and insulting anti-American activities by members of the New Democratic Party cabinet and caucus;

And be it further resolved that, while recognizing that such activities do not represent the thinking and beliefs of the people in Manitoba, this legislature reaffirms the friendship and mutual respect which exist between the people of Manitoba and the people of the United States of America.

At the same time the following news release was used by the PC opposition:

The legislature of Manitoba will be asked to issue an apology to the government and people of the United States, because of the NDP cabinet and caucus participation in a demonstration last week at the United States Consulate in Winnipeg, in which an American flag was burned. Hon. Sterling Lyon, Leader of the Opposition, has filed notice of a resolution he will move,

asking the legislature to apologize, because of the refusal of Premier Howard Pawley to do so. The resolution noted that the participation by the ministers caused embarrassment to the people of Manitoba, and does not reflect the thinking and beliefs of the legislature and people of Manitoba.

In the debate which has taken place since the demonstration on March 23rd, Mr. Lyon has asked for the replacement of Natural Resources Minister, Al Mackling, as head of a Manitoba delegation going to Washington to oppose the Garrison diversion. He has also repeatedly asked the Premier to apologize for the participation of cabinet and caucus members in the anti-American demonstration. Both requests have been refused by the Premier . . . However, the people of Manitoba know the NDP are wrong.

Mr. Speaker, several of my constituents have discussed the flag-burning incident with me, and all of them have voiced their dismay and condemnation of such barbaric behaviour, so detestable and alien to the true Canadian mentality. My ancestors originally came from a country that has a government that practises policies that are against their beliefs. That particular government has initiated many policies that are very much opposed to by my ancestors, myself and, for that matter, by many Canadians. However, I am sure that none of us would involve ourself in such a low act as burning the country's flag to show our disapproval of their actions. Certainly we have matured to a level where we can use a more diplomatic way of showing a government of a country we disapprove of their particular policies.

I know that we still have radicals in our midst and because this is a democratic country they will be able to participate in such irresponsible acts. But certainly, government members who represent a parliament system should rise above that level taken by the demonstrators in Manitoba.

I'll be looking forward to the comments from the NDP members opposite.

I am certain that the overwhelming majority of citizens in this province would want to convey their deepest regret to the people of the United States. The people of the United States have always been warm and congenial to their Canadian visitors. You have only to meet them at campgrounds, or restaurants, motels, hotels, and they are excellent hosts. During the big game hunting season some years ago, when the Americans could purchase hunting licences more freely here, I had the privilege of meeting many American citizens. Whether it was on a hunting trail in the bush or socially at the end of the day, they were always friendly and cordial. It was truly a pleasure to be associated with them.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, Canadians and Americans have enjoyed warm relationships. Let us hope that the irresponsible and inexcusable anti-American activities by members of the Manitoba NDP cabinet and caucus have not destroyed such a relationship. Let us hope that we can reaffirm the friendship and mutual respect that exists between the people of Canada and the people of the United States of America. And with this in mind, I would like to believe that all members of this Assembly, with no exception, will support the following motion:

That in the opinion of this Assembly, differences of opinion between Canadian citizens or governments and citizens or governments of the United States should be settled by discussion and negotiation, and this Assembly rejects as insulting to the people of the United States, and unrepresentative

of the feelings of Canadians, the desecration or burning of the American flag and condemns the actions of those who acquiesce or participate in such provocations against a neighbour.

I move, seconded by Cal Glauser, Saskatoon Mayfair.

**Mr. Glauser:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with my colleague from Regina Victoria. However, it is most regrettable that we would have reason today to be discussing a provocative act performed by citizens of this country against a neighbour. As a neighbour, it is certainly better to be a Canadian than a Pole, for we have great advantage from the giant next door.

In the 1980s, we are in a critical phase of our relationship with the United States. An illusion that spurs us is that there is a solution, some understanding that would end all the conflict, settle disputes by rule of law, or perhaps do away with the laws altogether. The first principle to accept is that crisis is normal, and more often than not, therefore, no crisis.

We should be better equipped psychically and institutionally to cope with flaring rows, and at the same time to detect long-range factors which threaten the basic equilibrium we have slowly established on this continent over two or three centuries. Mr. Speaker, perhaps a better understanding of our past would equip us to cope with the relationship which is centuries old and likely to last indefinitely. Mr. Speaker, historical recollection of times and past when after accumulation of festering grievances and awareness reached the highest levels of consequences, of breakdown, there would follow the appointment of a joint commission, a conference, or an exchange with a president, a round of settlements and a fresh start.

It was shortly after war broke out in 1939 that we became closely associated with the United States in matters of supply and defence production. Mr. Speaker, another close association was to follow. The United States had not yet become involved in what was to become a world conflict, and young Americans came to this country and joined the Royal Canadian Air Force. Mr. Speaker, it is 41 years ago this month that I was training on an airfield outside this city, the city of Regina. We were a class of 20, and, Mr. Speaker, seven of those were Americans - American citizens. Mr. Speaker, every class of aircrew trainees contained many young Americans until the United States became involved following the attack on Pearl Harbour on December 7th, 1942.

Upon graduation, Mr. Speaker, some of them remained in Canada and became instructors in the Commonwealth Air Training Program. Others went overseas to join Canadian squadrons in England and elsewhere. Many served with distinction and very many did not survive the ordeal. Mr. Speaker, they were Americans who served with Canadians under the Canadian banner, which they did not burn. Becoming allies during and after the Second World War added an element of solidarity to a relationship which for centuries was . . . (inaudible) . . . cordial.

Our defence production sharing arrangements lapsed quickly at the end of the war. When there was no common cause, our natural state was revealed as competitive. As a nation, we had matured; we had come of age and had come to the realization that if we could work with our friendly neighbour in time of war what reason would change in times of peace. The American presence was a fact of life.

This presence is not only felt by Canadians but also by many other continents and countries of the world. And it continued, Mr. Speaker, following World War II and the Marshall Plan that played a significant role in assisting with the rebuilding of Europe and other states. No one took any provocative action against the United States in those days and least of all Canada, who was the greatest beneficiary, as funds from the Marshall Plan provided the ready exchange to pay for goods which came from Canada. That action had a critical effect in turning the Canadian economy around. Radicals were not standing around protesting. There were men and women who upon returning from overseas were in attendance at universities or engaged in the work-force. They did not have the time or indeed the inclination to stand around and burn a friendly neighbour's flag - a friendly neighbour, Mr. Speaker, who has always stated that an act of aggression against Canada would be considered an act of aggression against themselves and would be repelled.

Yes, American presence is a fact of life. It has long been Canada's best trading partner, and in 1978 provided 70.6 per cent of Canada's imports at more than \$35 billion, and bought 70.4 per cent of Canada's exports valued at more than \$37 billion.

During 1979 the United States directly invested \$50 billion, and this represented three-quarters of all foreign direct investment in Canada and one-quarter of all United States direct investment abroad. And, Mr. Speaker, the same year, our principal export partners were: the United States at 65 per cent; Japan, 6 per cent; United Kingdom, 4 per cent. Our principal import partners were: United States, 70 per cent; Japan, 3 per cent; United Kingdom, 3 per cent; Venezuela, 2 per cent. Mr. Speaker, with trade of that magnitude, it is only fitting that we condemn the actions of those who would be party to a provocative action against a neighbour.

That is not all, Mr. Speaker. Let us examine the figures for 1981 - a year when world economies have suffered a dramatic downturn. Our exports to the U.S.A. were 69 per cent for \$60 billion, and imports were 69 per cent or \$58 billion.

And then, Mr. Speaker, there were the neighbourhood quarrels of 1982. Hard economic times and conflicting political views in 1982 created what some critics called the worst climate of the century between Canada and the United States. Canadian politicians blamed high interest rate policies of the Reagan administration for even higher Canadian interest rates, but no flag-burning. Business men on both sides of the border went bankrupt by the thousands. Canada was criticized for overly generous social policies. Canada has protested the United States cut-back in environmental protection budgets. Acid rain in both countries caused Canadians to lobby United States legislators to take action. Americans become angry over Canada's foreign investment review agency. It has been said that our law-makers are acting like little kids on the block who see a bully and really can't cope with the bully. So they stand on the corner of the street, and throw stones at him, then run. They don't have any form of maturity to deal with the bully to convince him that things really shouldn't be done that way. Mr. Speaker, I submit that is akin to flag-burning. Canadians lashed out at the United States for influencing other nations from co-operating with Soviet plans to build a natural gas pipeline from Siberia to Western Europe. I wonder if those same Canadians had ever considered burning a Soviet flag. There are aspects of the American government's attitude towards Central America which many have found disquieting.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. I must inform the hon. member that his time has elapsed.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Koskie:** — Yes, Mr. Speaker. I want to say that as legislators, time is one of the most important previous commodities. Time to study legislation; time to review the government's spending plans in detail; time to fully debate important issues of the day on behalf of the people of this province. Today, more than ever before, there is, I think, a long list of issues which the people of Saskatchewan . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. It's a very narrow motion that we're discussing. I'd ask the hon. member to discuss the items that are in context of the motion.

**Mr. Koskie:** — I want to indicate, Mr. Speaker, that I will be moving an amendment at the conclusion of my remarks. And I want to say that before us we have a resolution - a resolution that does not in fact deal with the day-to-day issues facing this province. It is a resolution which goes to an incident over in the province of Manitoba; a resolution based on a . . . based, in fact, on an incident on the evening of Wednesday, March 23rd where about 250 people gathered outside the United States Consulate in downtown Winnipeg.

And I want to say in respect to this, this resolution which the individuals on the member's side say that rule 16, that which provides the opportunity of this Assembly to debate very important issues, I want to say that what they have placed before this Assembly is not a resolution of major concern, but rather a resolution which indeed, is a smoke-screen to keep the attention off of this government opposite.

I want to put in context the situation in which in fact led to the bringing about of the resolution. On the evening, as I said, Wednesday, March 23rd, about 250 people gathered outside the United States Consulate in downtown Winnipeg. They gathered to protest the Reagan's administration policy in respect to the Central American country, Nicaragua. There have been scores of news media reports both from inside and outside of Nicaragua that the Reagan administration is supplying arms and other assistance to the right-wing guerrillas who are waging a war against the left-of-centre government of that Central American country. And that has been a source of concern, Mr. Speaker. That has been a source of concern, not just for a few people in the world-wide peace movement, not just for the left-of-centre politicians and their supporters, but for many, many others as well, Mr. Speaker. And for the information of the Conservative back-benchers, no fewer than six congressional committees in Washington, D.C., are currently holding hearings on this aspect of the American foreign policy.

They're concerned because last December the United States Congress passed a law, the law which prohibited the Reagan administration from taking any action, and I quote:

for the purpose of overthrowing the government of Nicaragua or provoking a military exchange between Nicaragua and Honduras.

So there is concern about the Reagan's administration actions in Nicaragua and it is widespread concern, concern that goes all the way to the United States Congress. It was against that backdrop that demonstrators gathered in Winnipeg on March the 23rd, and they marched and they spoke out against the actions of the United States. Eight out of the 250 or so people who took part were NDP members of the Manitoba legislature. Two of those eight members were cabinet ministers. They, like all people



there, were exercising their fundamental democratic right of freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. And after the demonstration had broken up and most of the people had left, an unidentified individual burned an American flag. None of the eight NDP members of the Manitoba legislature who were at the demonstration knew that this was going to happen, in advance. None of them took part in the flag-burning incident and I challenge any member to bring forth the facts. All of them dissociated themselves from the actions of the unidentified individual.

So as you can see, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sterling Lyon and his ultra right-wing disciples here in Saskatchewan are basing their entire attack upon falsehood. Because one unidentified person on the periphery of public demonstration burns an American flag, everyone they say, is guilty of having burned an American flag. And that's the ridiculous position which you have to buy if you are to believe the members opposite. If you are going to buy the argument put forward by the Conservatives members are putting forward today, it's guilt by association. I haven't heard that doctrine put forward, Mr. Speaker, since the early 1950s under Senator Joseph McCarthy.

The Conservative members should be careful trying to brand all NDP members in Manitoba and Saskatchewan with guilt-by-association doctrine. They should be very careful, Mr. Speaker, because I want to say if they're going to in fact condemn all NDP members by guilt by association, then let me refer the members to some instances which in fact I think, will enlighten their thinking.

I want to say there used to be a Conservative member in the Manitoba legislature by the name of Bob Wilson. I say he used to be, because my information indicates that Mr. Bob Wilson is presently serving time in jail, serving time for drug trafficking. I want to say, because they sat with him, because the Conservative members sat with him in the same caucus does that make Mr. Sterling Lyon and the Conservative members of the Manitoba legislature . . . Are they to be all identified as dope pushers? Of course not. That's a ridiculous proposition. But no more ridiculous than what the Conservative back-benchers are trying to peddle today. And let's bring that point closer to home.

I want to give another example. Last December, the Conservative member of the Saskatchewan legislature from Canora made certain statements which were indicated to be racist statements about native people and recent immigrants to Canada. Today I want to say, Mr. Speaker, today he still sits as a member of the Conservative government's caucus in this legislature. Does that make the Conservative Government of Saskatchewan a racist government? Mr. Speaker, the government members say no. They point out that the Premier dissociated himself and his government from the racist doctrine spouted last December by the member for Canora.

Well, I want to say, Mr. Speaker, I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier of Manitoba, the Premier of Manitoba has dissociated himself and his government from the burning of the American flag, which took place on March the 23rd demonstration.

I want to say, you are telling this Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan that your Premier acted properly last December by simply making a public statement dissociating himself from a clearly regrettable act of the member from Canora, even though the perpetrator was a member of his own caucus, and still sits as a member of that caucus. How then can you suggest that the Premier of Manitoba has not acted properly? How can anyone say that the Premier of Manitoba has not acted properly? He has publicly dissociated himself and his government from an incident which happened

on the periphery of a public demonstration, even though the perpetrator was not a member of the government, but an unidentified individual.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, I trust that this Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan will see this debate for what it really is: a clear sign that the Conservative government back-benchers are out of touch with reality, that they are setting up a smoke-screen to detract from their actions here as a government. They have no solutions for our unemployment problem; they have no . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. It's my duty to inform the member that his time has elapsed.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today, also to debate this motion that has been put forward by the member for Regina Victoria. And I find it quite demoralizing that the member of the Conservative Party would take the important time of this legislature to debate an issue that has taken place over in Manitoba. And I want to first make it very clear, Mr. Speaker, that I totally deplore anyone who burns a flag, but for the member from Regina Victoria . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Thompson:** — But for the member from Regina Victoria to get up in this legislature and indicate to this House, and to the people of Saskatchewan, that somehow six NDP back-benchers and two cabinet ministers, NDP cabinet ministers from Manitoba, had anything to do with the flag-burning in Manitoba, I think totally shows their irresponsibility, Mr. Speaker.

When one takes a look at the facts surround the demonstrations that took place in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, and the burning of that flag, you will see that, yes, the six members, back-benchers, and the two cabinet ministers did take part in the demonstrations in front of the United States Consulate. But, when the flag was burnt, Mr. Speaker, they were not there.

As a matter of fact, that demonstration had broken up, the individual that burnt the flag was a masked person, did it on his own. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that no way are the eight members of the New Democratic Party . . . No way did they have anything to do with it; no way did they know that this was going to take place. They were out exercising their rights as Canadians.

And I think that it's a disgrace that the Conservative Party of Saskatchewan, and a back-bencher, would get up in this House and take precious time that we need in Saskatchewan to discuss important issues - important issues that concern the people of Saskatchewan, such as all the lay-offs that we're getting in this province, the high unemployment, the large numbers of individuals who are on welfare.

This is what we should be discussing in this situation, Mr. Speaker, today, not discussing something that has taken place in Manitoba by a masked individual, that nobody knows who done it. But they are accusing . . . They are accusing by this motion; they are accusing the New Democratic Party of being involved in the burning of the flag.

I'm sure that the 1,200 employees that were laid off at Ipsco (Interprovincial Steel and Pipe Corporation) would sooner see us as legislators in here discussing they lay-offs

and how we can get them back to work. I'm sure they would appreciate that a lot more, Mr. Speaker, than they would seeing all the legislators in Saskatchewan in here debating the burning of a flag by a masked individual.

I'm sure that the citizens in northern Saskatchewan would like to see their legislators in here, Mr. Speaker, debating the serious problem that we have in northern Saskatchewan, and new statistics that just came out today indicating all towns are 85 per cent unemployment. They're not concerned; I'm sure they're not concerned, Mr. Speaker, about a masked individual who burned a flag. I know they deplore it; I deplore it; all of us deplore that. But let's not point fingers, Mr. Speaker. That masked individual could be anyone.

But, let me say, to bring this type of a motion into this legislature when we have the serious problems that we're facing in this province today I think is a disgrace, and it's something that should not take place.

Mr. Speaker, before I take my seat, I will not be supporting this motion, and I would like at this time to move an amendment to the main motion:

That the motion be amended by striking all words after the word 'Assembly' in the first line, and adding thereto: Canada and the United States have had a long, warm friendship as trading nations, and further, that in order to maintain this friendship it is the view of this Assembly that there must be frank and open discussion and debate of all issues which concern the people and their governments in both Canada and the United States.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by my colleague from Shaunavon.

**Mr. Hopfner:** — Mr. Speaker, it seems to me the members opposite are squirming a bit. The United States government has formally protested to our Canadian government, the External Affairs department, and they protested to the fact that there were ministers and six government back-benchers attending and participating in a demonstration which involved the burning of the American flag outside the American Consulate in Manitoba - in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, these government-elected officials are a part of the NDP party of Canada, and are affiliated with the NDP party of Manitoba. They are the government; they are part of the Government of Manitoba. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we have in this Assembly eight NDP members which are affiliated with the NDP party nationally. This is what's going to bring me to a point that I want to discuss here today.

Mr. Speaker, Deputy Premier Muriel Smith and Natural Resources Minister Al Mackling, along with six of these government back-benchers, publicly were dissociating themselves from that flag-burning ceremony. But they can't do that, Mr. Speaker, because they were there. Mr. Speaker, I don't care, I don't care what the demonstration was for. The fact is that they were there.

Mr. Speaker, the air must be cleared. Some of our American friends who are senators across the border have also denounced this burning of the flag. A couple of them were quoted as saying, 'I am surprised and disappointed'; another saying that, 'I am confident that this is the action that reflects just the attitude of a few Canadians, a few Canadian citizens.' I hope this is true.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, in order that we can be assured that this Assembly is free from any affiliation with the Manitoba NDP party and the eight NDP opposition members in this Assembly must disaffiliate themselves from the national NDP party. That is the only what that this Assembly can be assured of this.

Mr. Speaker, you and I know that if the 56 of us that are government here went out and robbed a bank and we were caught, a few of us were caught (but we were all involved), we would all suffer the same consequences. And there is no difference from that in this philosophies and the beliefs of a political party.

Mr. Speaker, if we let our American neighbours believe that we, as a province, or as a country in a whole, condone this type of thoughtless action, I would be concerned that there would be a loss of trade, tourism and American investment in this province.

The NDP across the room say that we're using previous time in this Assembly to debate this resolution. Well, Mr. Speaker, we as the Devine government, the Progressive Conservative Government of Saskatchewan, have been trying desperately to sell potash, for instance, to the Americans. Mr. Speaker, you know as well as I do how important it is to sell potash to the Americans. It creates jobs; gives the government dollars in its coffers to carry on with its programs . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Mr. Speaker, I hear a hiss coming from across the room - a hiss. There's only three things that I know that hiss, Mr. Speaker. That's a goose, a snake, and a fool, and maybe one of those members opposite would like to stand to be recognized.

Mr. Speaker, we in the Progressive Conservative Government of Saskatchewan are a government and a party who are open for business. But unless the members opposite clear the air and prove to the people of Saskatchewan and of Canada that they will not be part of a party that takes pleasure in such demonstrations, we cannot as a government rest.

Mr. Speaker, in this country, democracy is the best, the most effective, and the most equitable form of government ever devised. I am thinking of ideals under which this country has developed: the ideal of elbow room for individuals, initiative and intelligence, and industry, and the rewards of these in the national climate of self-reliance - the ideal. Indeed for freedom, as we in North America know it. Mr. Speaker, a free society has within itself the weapon to curb injustice that might result from the selfish and blind use of power, which we have, evidently, been a part of by the NDP party of this country.

So when these individuals, the NDP party . . . (inaudible) . . . Mr. Speaker, to take part in this demonstration in which the American flag was burned, they must now face this weapon and live up to the consequences they must suffer. The NDP are masquerading in a country that believes in democracy. Let no one underestimate the undermining of such a political party. Mr. Speaker, this is a party that does not believe in peace. The NDP do not believe in peace, in getting along with their neighbours, or their allies. They do not believe in that. The story of the human race, Mr. Speaker, has always been war. Except for maybe a brief and precarious interludes that there has never been peace in the world. The truth, Mr. Speaker, is indisputable. You know panic may resent it, malice may distort it, but the truth is always there.

Mr. Speaker, radicals are individuals to me who hang around with their feet in the air. And, Mr. Speaker, the NDP are known to have many socialist radicals within their ranks. The burning of the U.S. flag symbolizes what socialism is all about. That primarily is in

which socialism creates nothing but hate and despair.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I feel that this is only right and proper, on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan to ask the eight members opposite for their resignation in this Saskatchewan legislature, if in fact they fail to endorse this resolution presently before them - before this House. Mr. Speaker, I in the most strongest way support this resignation. It saddens me, it saddens me to have to stand up in this House and look at the members opposite, and see that they will stand in defence of an NDP party that condones that type of radicalism, to put it in a situation where another country comes and asks if this is really and truly Canadian belief.

Mr. Speaker, it takes me back a few years. It takes me back to the years of the Vietnam war. I, as a tradesman, in the province of Saskatchewan, am one that know that there wasn't jobs available at that particular time. Well, Mr. Speaker, I wasn't one to sit on welfare or unemployment or anything. I got on the phone and I phoned down to the United States. Well, I went to work for North Central Airlines in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, the Americans did not stop Canadian people from coming into the country. They treat us like we were a brother or a sister. They gave us jobs while their boys were over in Vietnam in the war under a system where socialism had caused such despair, such bloodshed.

Mr. Speaker, we can't allow this to carry on in this country. The members opposite know fair well that if they condone that kind of stuff and they go out into their ridings, they, the people out there in their ridings, would just love to get their hands on them. Because, Mr. Speaker, they resign, and I'll tell you we will have another eight members belonging to the Progressive Conservative Party.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. I must advise the member his time is up. I recognize the member for Shaunavon.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to become involved in this debate on the rule 16 motion. I think that rule 16 motions have taken a new turn from where we have debated in the past, I think from both sides of the House, issues that were current and very relative to Saskatchewan and the economic situation which we find ourselves in. I think debating a policy or debating an issue which occurred in another province, as frivolous as this matter is as it would relate to the economy of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, leads us to wonder where such things as the Crow rate are in the minds of these people, or where such issues as the water policy is which they have been studying and touring around the province on, or, Mr. Speaker, the 60,000 people who are on welfare, or the farm fuel costs, or the many other issues which we could be dealing with rather than the rule 16 and the burning . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. I've cautioned the members that they must stay with the subject that's under discussion, and the wide-ranging debate is not permissible at this time. I'd ask the member to stay with the subject.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I will attempt to stay closer to the topic, although it's very, very difficult to because it has so little to do with anything relevant to the Saskatchewan situation. But we have attempted to establish here today that guilt by association is not the way that we should be attempting to arrange our thoughts. And the member from Canora incident was brought up and Bob Wilson, the member from

somewhere in Winnipeg, or somewhere in Manitoba. The fact that he was involved in drug trafficking, and was charged, and is now in a penitentiary has little to do with the members in this House, or the members in the Manitoba legislature. Because if you're going to have guilt by association, whether it's flag burning, or whether it's pushing drugs, or whether it's racism, that when the minister or the Premier apologizes for people who say certain things in his caucus, then we accept that.

The members who were at the flag-burning demonstration in Manitoba, the members of the caucus, the NDP caucus, have said over and over again that they had nothing to do with the incident; in fact, it occurred after the event was over.

But, Mr. Speaker, that is different than another individual of the Manitoba legislature, one Sterling Lyon, who in the debate that occurred in the Assembly, it was brought to his attention that he had been present at a flag-burning ceremony as well. The only thing, this was a Russian flag that was burned at that time, and when he was asked to comment on it, he said that was different, that Russians flags could be burned, and there was nothing wrong with it. And this from an individual who comes from a wheat-producing province who are attempting to sell their wheat to Russia, and you're talking about individuals taking positions on flag-burning incidents. I think you should check your own record a little closer before you come to the belief that you are totally pure on this. And, Mr. Minister, it's quoted in *Hansard* from the Manitoba legislature that this kind of a thought and discussion did take place, and that the member, the Sterling Lyon, the Leader of the Opposition, took that position in a different flag-burning ceremony to deal with another country.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Cut Knife-Lloyd attempted to say that because those individuals, the six MLAs and two cabinet ministers, were at the event, that somehow they were responsible for it. We could assume that the members who were unidentified could have been Conservative people who were attempting to discredit the rally - how do we know? I'm not saying they are, but they certainly could have been, and it would be just as easy for us to stand in the Assembly and accuse the members opposite of having something to do with the people who burned the flag. Mr. Speaker, the individual who burned the flag had a hood on his . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. It's very difficult to hear what the member is trying to tell the legislature. I would ask that you silence the House so that we can hear what the member is saying.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, it was getting a little difficult to hear myself and keep my line of thought going there on this most important issue.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to get back to the statement made by the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster who said that because the six MLAs and two cabinet ministers were present at a rally which was protesting war and the situation in Nicaragua, that somehow they were associated with the flag-burning.

Well, I want to extend that a little further to the example of, let's say a hockey game, where the fans in the stand are accused under the same premise of being involved, or being accused of having some connection to a brawl that occurred on the ice. Or let's say a bank robbery where the person is in depositing money - are they now to be,

under his theory, guilty of robbing a bank if they happen to be at the scene of a crime? The proposition that the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster makes is preposterous, and it will be very difficult to attempt to understand what he is referring to by accusing everyone of guilt by association.

I don't want to spend a long time on the fact that these people are speaking out of both sides of their mouth on this issue. The Bob Wilson case is well known, where a member of the then government in Manitoba, Sterling Lyon's government, was involved in a certain type of carrying on which none of us are proud of, and I'm sure that the members opposite are not interested in defending it any more than we will defend what some kooks at a protest when they burn a flag. That's not up to us to defend. But I can't understand why you people want to become so involved in it. I think it's basically because you don't want to discuss the economic problems that you have in the province of Saskatchewan at the present time.

The members mentioned that this could cause them to lose sales to the Americans of potash, but I think that they'll need all the help that they can get in trying to get back to where we were in the NDP in terms of selling potash. And because of that, the Premier's having to go on a little tour to try to bolster sales which are flagging under his administration.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote from the Manitoba *Hansard* the statement made by the Hon. Howard Pawley in terms of what his opinion was on this matter. And I quote.

I suppose we must have different views of freedom. I did not consider it to be a mob when I appeared as one of the speakers in opposition to the meddling of the Soviet Union in the affairs of Poland on the steps of the legislature. Also, Mr. Speaker, I did not consider myself to be part of a mob when I spoke against the Soviet Union's intervention in other matters in other countries, such as Afghanistan. Also, Mr. Speaker, I did not consider myself as being part of a mob when I also said I was opposed to the intervention of the United States of America in the affairs of Central America. Mr. Speaker, I also do not consider that the Minister of Economic Development and the Minister of Resources any other members who were part of a mob when they spoke out against the United States policy in Central America, which does involve intervention in the affairs of Central America.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think the record stands clear as to what the six members and the two cabinet ministers of the Manitoba legislature, their role in the demonstration against the American role in Nicaragua was. And for these members to attempt to slur all members of the Manitoba legislature and the government is a discredit to them as a government when we could be spending this very important time dealing with bills or other matters relevant to the Saskatchewan situation.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Dirks:** — Mr. Speaker, this most serious of debates is now drawing to a close, and I submit to you that we must not and we cannot, indeed, we dare not, take this matter lightly. The member from Quill Lakes has said that this motion does not deal with important issues of relevance to Saskatchewan. The member from Shaunavon has said that this is a frivolous matter, that we are wasting the time of this Assembly.

Well, I want to ask all of the members of this Assembly: do you honestly believe that if we

went to the people of the province of Saskatchewan and talked to them in the streets, in the homes, and asked them whether or not this wasn't an important issue, do you think they would say this wasn't an important issue? Of course, they would - a very serious issue. And I want to tell you why this is a very serious issue.

Those people who burn the flag of another nation, Mr. Speaker, they are guilty of an odious offence against the unwritten laws of nationhood. They are guilty, Mr. Speaker, of a monstrous political and social profanity, because a nation's flag, Mr. Speaker, is its most sacred possession. A nation's flag is its most precious symbols. And to publicly burn that most sacred of national possessions and to publicly violate that most precious of symbols - that, Mr. Speaker, is to profane and to desecrate that which is cherished by every patriot and every citizen of that particular nation.

And for this reason, Mr. Speaker, for this reason, no act is more calculated and no act is more designed to destroy amicable relations between countries and to rupture sentiments of national friendship and to exacerbate differences and to make for tension rather than peace, than the burning of a foreign country's flag as a means of protest.

And I was therefore most upset, most exercised when I heard that the flag of the United States of America, the flag of our friendly neighbour to the south, had recently been burned, before or during or after an anti-American demonstration at the U.S. Consulate in Winnipeg, Manitoba. And as a legislator, I was shocked and outraged to learn that certain members of the Manitoba legislature, certain elected members of the New Democratic Party - specifically two NDP cabinet ministers, including the deputy premier of the province of Manitoba - were participants at this demonstration.

Mr. Speaker, we are not talking about youthful protestors being carried away by some imprudent acts of irrational idealism. We're not talking about hot-headed revolutionaries. We're talking about the deputy premier of the province of Manitoba and certain other elected colleagues.

As far as I know, Saskatchewan, as far as I know, they made no attempt to halt this flag-burning. They did not immediately dissociate themselves from this event - immediately. They didn't run to the press immediately after the flag was burned and say, 'We had nothing to do with this.' As far as I know, Mr. Speaker, by virtue of the fact that they associated with people at this anti-American demonstration, whether or not the flag was burned before or during or after is inconsequential. They are now associated with the event and that is the important issue. That is the impression that has been created across this country, indeed across North America, and that's the issue that has to be addressed.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the impression has been created in the eyes of the people of North America that even though they did not put the match to the flag, they might as well have put the match to the flag, as far as the impression is concerned.

Now, Mr. Speaker, today perhaps they regret their actions. Perhaps they regret their actions. Although I wonder, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if they really do. For I have yet to hear that they have apologized for their actions and for the impression their actions have left - actions, Mr. Speaker, which are an embarrassment to every patriotic Canadian, actions which are an insult to so many of our citizens whose forefathers emigrated from the United States and came here generations ago. Actions which are an embarrassment to every resident of Saskatchewan. Those actions, Mr. Speaker, are also an affront



to the dignity of their position as elected members of Her Majesty's provincial government in Manitoba. Those actions, I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, are an affront to every member of this Assembly. Mr. Speaker, those who burned the U.S. flag and those who stood by and acquiesced have broken faith with the long and noble tradition of Canadian diplomacy and statesmanship, which instead of burning flags, builds bridges of reconciliation; instead of burning flags, buries the hatchet.

Mr. Speaker, those members of the Manitoba legislature who participated in this demonstration have set a shameful example for all of Canada. They have cast a dark cloud upon every provincial legislature in this country. The very presence of provincial cabinet ministers at such a demonstration, in the words of the *Leader-Post* editorial writer, 'can be regarded as an expression of Manitoba policy towards the United States.' How utterly un-Canadian, Mr. Speaker. They should resign.

Canadians, Mr. Speaker, have always chosen the way of peaceful dialogue to overcome national differences: the way of diplomacy, the way of restraint. Nothing, Mr. Speaker, nothing is more uncharacteristic of Canadians. Nothing is more un-Canadian than to burn the flag of the United States. Fanatical Iranian revolutionaries might burn the flag of the United States, but sensible, peace-loving Canadians would never dream of desecrating American's most cherished and sacred symbol.

To those perpetrators of this monstrous violation of the U.S. flag, we say: Hang your heads in shame. Learn what it means to be Canadian. To those New Democratic members of the Manitoba legislature who participated in this demonstration, we say: Resign. You cannot hide behind the cloak of private citizenship. You cannot divest yourself of your ministerial responsibility when it suits you. You are public figures who represent the province of Manitoba. Your very presence at this demonstration, and your refusal to apologize and to condemn the flag-burning suggests strongly that you might condone it. To Premier Pawley of Manitoba, we say: Banish those cabinet ministers who have disgraced us all. Apologize for this affront to America, lest we all come to believe that you, too, condone this hideous action. And to the New Democratic members of this Saskatchewan legislature opposite, we say: Unless you condemn this shameful act, your party image will be that of extremists, of flag-burning sympathizers. Your counsel to the people of the world will be that of public demonstrations, of anti-Americanism, of hatred for one's neighbours. You will be leaving a shameful legacy.

Mr. Speaker, I'm afraid the true colours of the NDP in Canada may now be showing. With this demonstration, the anti-American sentiments of the NDP have suddenly become blatantly obvious for all of us to witness. We have always known that the NDP have in certain of their policies been anti-American. But now the curtain has been drawn back, Mr. Speaker, and we have witnessed the full extremity of the hostile sentiments that exist in certain elements of the NDP party. And I say to the members of that party, and of their party in Canada: Take care. Your true colours are beginning to show. And I warn you: the people of Canada are watching, and the people of Saskatchewan are watching. Now to our American friends, what can we say? To our American friends I say, 'Hold your flag high. Hold your flag high.'

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Dirks:** — Hold your flag high and parade it before the nations because it is a glorious flag. It is a flag that is rich in the heritage of freedom and democracy, and as Canadians, we are indeed proud to be your neighbour.

To our immediate friends across the border in the Dakotas and in Minnesota and in Montana, may it never again happen that our friendship might be called into question. May it never be that Canadians would be humiliated and embarrassed because some naive self-seeking individuals would shamelessly desecrate your precious flag. And if they have no honour to apologize for this grievous profanity, then we apologize. Those individuals are not characteristic of Canadians. They are not characteristic of residents of Saskatchewan. Certainly not characteristic of the Progressive Conservative Party.

To the members of the Legislative Assembly I say: let us take this opportunity to reaffirm our belief in settling national differences through discussion and negotiation. Send the message to the people of Saskatchewan, the people of Canada and the people of the United States, that this Assembly is unanimous . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — I must inform the member that his time has elapsed.

**Mr. Parker:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to make a couple of comments with respect to the motion put forth by my colleague from Regina Victoria. I speak in support of the motion. I find it very embarrassing to be a citizen of western Canada and a citizen to a province adjacent to an incident such as we have related to recently happening in the city of Winnipeg.

I find it hard to understand that even after 11 years of trying to raise the walls around the province of Saskatchewan, the NDP government was unsuccessful and they should recognize that every one of the United States, every state in the United States, interacts with Canadian provinces. And when they feel that this matter is not worthy of the time that we are paying to debate it this afternoon, I believe they're sadly mistaken.

The 14 border states provide 62 per cent of the interactions with the Canadian provinces, and of that, the Midwest alone, 31 per cent. So they're certainly aware of what's going on and they're certainly aware of the disgrace and the dishonour that was shown to our American friends by the incident in Winnipeg.

In the area of tourism, for example, the Minister of Tourism herself attended this function. I wonder if she's aware of the fact that over \$2 billion is spent annually by Americans in Canada, by American tourists, and of that, \$80 million approximately, is spent in Manitoba. And if our NDP colleagues in Saskatchewan don't feel that this has any bearing on what happens in Saskatchewan, approximately \$30 million is spent in Saskatchewan by American tourists. And how would you feel if you were an American tourist considering the possibility of going north for a vacation next summer and you heard that your flag was being burned on the legislative . . . on the steps in Manitoba? Would you decide to go to Canada? Not likely.

I can understand the coolness that the members of the party opposite might feel towards our American allies and our American friends. They have a natural feeling of discomfort when in the company of American neighbours. They don't like to be associated with terms which cause them to squirm, terms such as free enterprise and private sector growth.

But I'd like to point out that trade with the United States, even with a federal Liberal government and the odd provincial NDP government, still flourishes and makes up approximately 70 per cent of our total trade both ways - imports and exports. And when we compare it to other countries such as United Kingdom's share, 3.5 per cent,

roughly, and Japan's share of 4 to 6 per cent, we see what an important contribution trade both ways with the United States makes. Exports to United States have expanded in just about every area of our production: fabricated materials, lumber, newsprint, chemicals, iron and steel, aluminium, industrial machinery and auto products. And I find that it's extremely disappointing that members of the provincial legislature in Manitoba would participate by being involved to any degree in this type of an incident.

And I'd just like to take this opportunity to fully endorse the motion put forth by my colleague, and I call on the support of the NDP members from Saskatchewan to also support that motion. There's nowhere in that motion that indicates any political alliance. We're condemning the actions that were taken, and I find no reason that we shouldn't receive full support for this motion.

I'd like to also indicate that as well as our tourism, and as well as our reliance on trade both ways with the United States, they also play a very important role in our defence. And I think it's common knowledge that without an ally such as United States, and on the terms that we are on with them, we would find ourselves in a very, very unfortunate position in terms of defending our borders.

The Americans, now that we will be soon having a Progressive Conservative federal government, and pretty well every province in Canada having a Progressive Conservative provincial government, I'm sure those figures of 70 per cent trade - import and export, with United States - will increase, and increase substantially. And I think that our American friends are now becoming aware of the fact that the borders are open, and the walls are down, and we're encouraging them to come to Canada, and we're encouraging them to come to Saskatchewan. And it's a black mark against Saskatchewan when our neighbours from the south see the type of reaction that they're receiving in Manitoba, a close bordering province to Saskatchewan.

I'd just like to say, Mr. Speaker, that the tourism and the jobs and the capital that United States sends to Canada are very, very important, and they're very, very worthy of debate in this legislature, and I find it very, very difficult to accept any excuse by the members opposite on behalf of their counterparts in Manitoba. You can call it guilt by association if you want, but it's guilt whatever way you cut it. They were there and they have to be responsible for the fact that they were there.

I think that, Mr. Speaker, the motion pretty well says it all, and it's very straightforward, and I call on members from both sides of the House to stand united in condemning this act which we find to be very shameful and very embarrassing as a neighbouring province to that type of an incident.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address a very few words on this debate because I think that the debate is itself an important aspect of the approach by the government opposite to problems of freedom. A couple of quick facts: on the basis of the facts available, the members of the legislature in Manitoba were not there when any flags were burned. Fact number two: the Premier of Manitoba made as clear as he could in the Manitoba legislature, and I will quote his words:

I do take the strongest exception to any flag-burning ceremony, and particularly the one that apparently was involved in the demonstration in front of the U.S. consul general's office.

I speak, Mr. Speaker, from the *Hansard* of the legislature of Manitoba, and I think we'll all agree that that's authoritative.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. It's my duty to inform the members that the 75 minutes allotted for debate under rule 16 have elapsed.

## MOTIONS

### Resolution No. 19 - Social and Economic Needs of Senior Citizens

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a few moments to talk on the fact of the failure of the government to recognize the economic needs of our senior citizens and its failure to provide adequate programs and services for them. I find it unfortunate that we were attempting to move through the agenda very quickly when we had thought that motion no. 4 would be the one debated in the Assembly, but having gone down very quickly to motion no. 11. I'll take a few minutes to speak on the lack of action by this government when it comes to dealing with senior citizens programs.

Mr. Speaker, the first area that we see drastic cut-backs to the senior citizens programming is in the area of the home care program. What we are finding is that in many areas the cost of home care to individual senior citizens in their own homes is having to rise and having to increase fairly drastically.

I find it interesting in reading the Swift Current *Sun* the other day. In the paper they were talking about the home care board there having to raise the rates for meals from \$4, I believe, to 4.50, or an increase of 11 or 12 per cent. This, Mr. Speaker, is resulting totally because the government has not funded that program properly since it came to government.

And members opposite will say, 'Yes, but we increased drastically the spending on home care this year,' and the numbers that they show in their estimates would indicate that spending is increasing. But I want to remind them that that increase comes after the November 24th budget which in fact decreased the home care spending by \$3 million. It's a bit of the smoke and mirrors that we've become used to from this government in terms of spending on peoples' programs. You take it away with one hand, and give it with another, like the Minister of Highways who cuts the spending in highways in the North from 6 million to zero and then announces a great program of 1.5 million. And the smoke and mirrors that we find in that department are the same as what is going on in the Department of Social Services and the Department of Health in terms of senior citizens programming.

Mr. Speaker, the home care program is a program which was established in 1978. It was a program which was established to take care of the basic needs of seniors who were using their option of remaining in their own home rather than going into nursing homes, and it is a program, and has been a program, which has served that function very well. Mr. Speaker, in fact it is the first program in Canada which is totally community-based, where there are locally elected boards which run the 45 home care districts, and I must say that those people who donate their time do an excellent job of serving the needs of the seniors throughout the province. And there are thousands and thousands of seniors who are able to remain in their own homes as opposed to moving into nursing homes or other facilities which they would have to if it were not for the services of nursing care, Meals on Wheels, a home repair program, as well as a home

maintenance program, which is provided for through that program.

But, Mr. Speaker, I say this is another example of the undermining of social programs which is taking place as a result of this government's underfunding of this program. And as the rates will increase, as we are seeing happening at the present time where meals are increasing, in many areas, by 10 or 15 per cent. The people who are attempting to use these programs will not be able to afford them. And when they're not able to afford them, the Conservative government will then say, 'Well, our statistics show that these programs are not being used,' and will begin the cut-backs.

Mr. Speaker, I say that it would be a much more honourable position if the government does not believe in social programs, simply to come out and announce that because of their philosophical beliefs that home care isn't appropriate, but they will not do that. They undermine the social programs, whether it be the dental plan or the home care plan, to the point that they are ineffective, and then they take the money away and take the program away. And I say that this is only one area of concern in terms of senior citizens programming or the lack of it.

Another area, Mr. Speaker, is in the area of nursing home construction itself. We have seen, with the shift of responsibility of nursing homes from the Department of Social Services to the Department of Health, the deletion of \$2.4 million in construction of nursing homes in the province of Saskatchewan. In the November 24th budget, there was \$6.4 million allowed for the construction of nursing homes in the province of Saskatchewan. And this would have gone some way if this trend had continued to meeting the drastic problems which our seniors face in the province at the present time.

The waiting list, for example in Saskatoon, has grown and grown quickly over the past year to the point where seniors who need level 4 care are having to wait for 4 years, or two and one-half years. And what that means is most of those people, a good part of them, will not be able to move into nursing homes, but will have to make other arrangements, much, much less acceptable arrangements, rather than move into the nursing homes that were promised, simply because in transferring the budget from Social Services to Health, the Conservative government took that opportunity as well to cut that budget by \$2.4 million.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of nursing home construction, I was in Wakaw the other night to speak to a group of concerned people in that area. They had received a letter from the Minister of Social Services saying that they should go ahead and tender their nursing home in that area. Well, last week they received a phone call from the minister's office, saying that they should not go ahead, in fact, that it should be put on hold until the funding arrangements were finalized. And I say that this is happening in a number of areas where nursing homes were promised and expected, but I think that people will be waiting a long, long time in areas like Assiniboia, and other areas who were expecting nursing homes, but I don't think that this government has much intention of moving quickly with that kind of construction.

The 144-bed nursing home which was promised for Saskatoon is nowhere to be seen in this budget. And I find that hard to believe when there are 10 members, I believe, from the city of Saskatoon who sit in the benches opposite. And those 10 members cannot put the pressure needed on this government to see that that nursing home would be forthcoming.

On a point dealing with nursing homes as well, I find it deplorable that the Minister of Social Services, last year in July, raised the nursing home rates from \$390 to \$417, in order to raise an extra \$3 million for the provincial government. Mr. Speaker, that increase in nursing home rates meant that the seniors of this province who are in nursing homes had \$3 million less to buy the necessities that they found that they needed on a day-to-day basis. And it's not surprising I guess when you look at the litany of programs that have been cut by this government and the groups of people that they choose to get their money from.

The senior citizens who are in nursing homes, of course, are unable to come to the Legislative Building, and are unable to lobby in a very effective manner, very simply because of the fact that they're in nursing homes. The Conservative government knows full well that this is an area they can continue to take advantage of. And I predict that over the next year we will see even further drastic increases for those individuals who find themselves in the nursing homes in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I find that that kind of an approach to social programming for our seniors is deplorable and something that we will attempt to make known to the people of the province in a way that the government will have to respond in terms of building more senior citizens facilities, and also attempting to maintain a rate which allows senior citizens to live with some dignity and to be able to afford some of the amenities that life can provide.

Mr. Speaker, another area that seniors are having to deal with is in the area of public assistance for the aged. I know that the minister has in many ways attempted to put a lid on the ever-increasing welfare cases that she has in the province, but it's gotten completely out of hand. I believe that the estimates show that \$171 million will be spent this year on social assistance and that many, many thousands of people are being forced onto the welfare rolls as a lack of decisions, bad decisions, being made by this government in terms of economic programs.

Today we find that there are 14,000 families, for example, who are included in the unemployed employables on welfare, which is up approximately 100 per cent from this time last year. But, Mr. Speaker, even though the welfare rolls have increased drastically, when you take a look at those seniors who require social assistance, you find that in that area there is a cut in assistance, a cut of almost 20 per cent in the amount of money that the Department of Social Services is allowing for assistance for aged.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is the exact opposite approach of what should be happening in the province. I think these pioneers who have built a province and who have built the system that we are now enjoying deserve to be able to call on the public assistance if they need it; that the Minister of Social Services should check her priorities in cutting back in that area of social assistance for those seniors who are having a difficult time and who need a little extra cash on a monthly basis.

There are other areas that the government have let the senior citizen down in. I mention only in passing, the promised free telephones which was a big issue in the last election, which is nowhere to be seen in this budget. These people will not forget that they were taken advantage of and misled at the time of the election last year. And rather than free telephones they are finding that the government is attempting to increase telephone rates by 19 per cent - not only for those of us who can afford it but also for the senior

citizens who on April 26th were promised that they would have free telephones in each and every home.

Mr. Speaker, in dealing with the senior citizens and the pioneers of this province, I think that one of the most upsetting things to them that the Conservative government has brought about is that the fact that many of their children and grandchildren are among the 60,000 people who now find themselves on welfare as a result of the misguided and ill-conceived economic strategy that this government is bringing forward. And I have talked to many of them who say that they will be able to make it even though nursing home rates are going up and telephone and power rates are going up, but what really concerns them is the fact that many of their children and grandchildren are unable to find meaningful jobs in the province of Saskatchewan at the present time.

Quite contrary to the theme of bringing the children home, Mr. Speaker, we are finding that there are no jobs for the young people of the province, no jobs for the university students who are coming out of the university at the present time. I say that in dealing with senior citizens' programming, one of the main areas of failure of this government is providing adequate jobs for the children and grandchildren of the pioneers and the seniors of the province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that in moving this resolution that I would hope that members opposite would rise as the debate goes on, and take part in what has to be a very crucial issue for many, many people in the province - those people who (as I mentioned) have built the province, and who deserve a better treatment than what they are getting under the present Conservative government.

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney:** — Mr. Speaker, I would just like to add a few words to this debate. There are a number of areas where programs of governments are inadequate insofar as the needs of senior citizens are concerned, and that is certainly true of the government opposite.

I want to touch on three or four important areas. I want to touch first on pensions, superannuation allowances, the very stuff of which a retirement is made. I would like to refer hon. members to a brief prepared by the Government of Saskatchewan in 1981 to the national pensions conference, which has some important and valuable information gathered in a convenient form. It points out that the number of elderly people are growing in Canada. It points out what I think we all know: that an adequate retirement income is the economic base on which an improved quality of life for the elderly can be built. And it points out that we in Canada are far from achieving that, far from offering to elderly people in Canada an adequate economic base. It summarizes the problem in Canadian terms in these words:

More than three-fifths of unattached elderly persons live in poverty. More than one-fifth of elderly family units live below the poverty line. More than 50 per cent of persons over age 65 receive full or partial guaranteed income supplement payments and would be below the poverty line if it were not for this income-tested program. More than 15 per cent of all old age pensioners receive the maximum guaranteed income supplement, which means that they have virtually no other source of income. Almost half of all the income of elderly persons is from the basic old age security and guaranteed income supplement programs. A much greater proportion of elderly women than men live in poverty, and the proportion of elderly persons living below the poverty line increases with age.

That then outlines in summary form the situation in which elderly people in our country find themselves.

The situation in Saskatchewan is no better than in other provinces. In some ways it is worse. In some ways it is worse because many of the people who are now elderly lived through particularly difficult economic times in Saskatchewan in the 1930s and early '40s and were not able to provide anything for their retirement years. It is no better because we have had an economy and a society based upon farms operated by owner-operators who did not in a systematic way make provision for their retirement income. There's no pension plan when you operate a farm.

Many farmers are able to buy land and to see it appreciate in value and thereby provide themselves with retirement income, but that has been a feature which has been much more prevalent in recent years than was the case earlier. And, accordingly, there are a good number of people who do not have a pension other than the government pension, or sold their land at relatively lower prices, and have seen what they hoped to be their adequate retirement income eroded by the ravages of inflation with which we are all so familiar during these last 10 years.

Now these problems are not going to go away, Mr. Speaker. The need for making provision for a retirement income for elderly people is great and is not being substantially reduced. Some progress has been made in Canada with an old age security system which is universal in its nature, not unreasonable in terms of national comparisons. We also have a guaranteed income supplement which assists some people but only brings incomes to what everyone must agree to be quite inadequate levels.

An increasing number of people are benefiting from the Canada Pension Plan. But we still have a very large number of people who have no private pension, or who have a private pension plan which is grossly inadequate. In order to strengthen the pension plans on which people will rely in short years when they retire, measures have been put forward to assist workers to be assured that their private pensions were adequate, that they didn't have loopholes, that they didn't have provisions which in effect would disentitle the person to his pension, his or her pension.

The work done in that regard has been extensive. It has been done by the pensions branch of the Department of Labour. It has been done in a way which has put Saskatchewan modestly in the forefront in Canada. Our provisions to regulate private pension plans offers somewhat more protection for the recipients under those plans than any other laws in Canada. That has been brought about by the work of the pensions branch, the pensions branch which is being savaged by the budget just introduced by the government opposite. There is no way that that pensions branch can continue the work it has done in the past and continue to offer some protection to senior citizens, or people soon to be senior citizens, with the cuts in staff which have been introduced by the government in the current budget.

Nor have we heard anything from the government opposite by way of proposals for urging the federal government to expand the old age security provisions, or the guaranteed income supplement provisions, or the Canada Pension Plan provisions. The position of the Government of Saskatchewan, so far as I am aware, is one which does not encourage further action on those fronts. The position of leadership that the Government of Saskatchewan took in the 1970s has been relinquished and old age



benefits will accordingly be less in the future than they would be if we had a vigorous government policy.

One might expect under those circumstances that the government itself would move in. If it is not going to insist that pensions offered by private employers are adequate and contain no loopholes, no provisions whereby workers can lose their benefits, then you would expect the government to increase its payments to persons who are in need. But such is not the case. I see no provisions in the budget which will serve to increase the provincial old age pension plan, the supplementary income benefits provisions which have been in force in this province for some years. So far as I'm aware, no increases are intended. The same number of dollars are to be paid, notwithstanding the fact that we all know and fully appreciated that it costs more to live this year than last, and more to live last year than the year before. Any program of income support which offers the same number of dollars in 1984 that were paid in, let us say, 1982 is a program which is being eroded. That I suggest is what is happening with respect to the government's programs for income support for senior citizens. So we see no initiative on the part of the government opposite to support either private pensions, or to increase public pensions by representations to the federal government with respect to federal pensions, or by putting money in the budget with respect to provincial supplements. I think this is a clear demonstration that, in so far as this government is concerned and its assessment of priorities, the priorities of senior citizens are not high on their list.

This lack of priority for senior citizens is demonstrated in a number of other ways. I know that hon. members have noted that grants for senior citizens' services have been cut in this year's budget. And when I say cut, I mean not that they have been increased less than 7 per cent - the average increase of all items in the budget. When I say cut, I mean that they're getting fewer dollars in 1983-84 than they're getting in 1982-83, and that is certainly a cut.

The same can be noted with respect to the programs offered by the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, and particularly the ones that benefit senior citizens. Members will be aware that the amount of money provided for grants to senior citizens to repair their homes has been cut. I think all of us say that we believe that the senior citizens should stay in their own homes. We believe that they should have the opportunity to have homes which permit them to live as normal a life as possible. We believe, or say we believe, that money ought to be provided by the state, by the province in our case, to senior citizens so that they may have an opportunity to fix up their home, and thereby perhaps be able to stay there a few more years, rather than moving to some sort of sheltered or nursing home accommodation. None the less, notwithstanding the fact that we say that, we are providing less money rather than more, less money in the budget which will be under discussion in this House from time to time.

The same is true for money provided for the rehabilitation of existing dwellings. That is not all for senior citizens. Certainly not, but some of it is. And to that extent, there is less money to assist senior citizens to stay in their own homes. Similarly, there is less money to assist people who are wishing to convert their homes to deal with a disability. Where some person is physically disabled and still wishes to stay in their own home, there has been a grant program under the home improvement for disabled persons program, which grant program has been cut back.

Now, of course it is true, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that not all disabled people are senior citizens. But a significant number of people who are suffering from a physical disability

are senior citizens. A significant number are people who would wish to have their home converted in some way to make it possible for them to live in their own home with their disability, whether it be the installation of a wash-room on the main floor, or an elevator, a little personal elevator, or one of the other devices which have become much more common, and which have permitted people to deal with their disabilities. That grant, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has been cut back, and I think that shows where this government's priorities are.

It is generally the case, Mr. Speaker, running through this budget as my colleague, the member from Shaunavon has indicated, that there is a cut-back in those non-government organizations which have served senior citizens, and there is a cut-back in the direct programming offered by the government opposite.

All of this suggests to me, Mr. Speaker, that while the government opposite asserts that senior citizens and their concerns are a priority, and while undoubtedly they are providing some additional funds which will be used by senior citizens, perhaps in general hospitals or elsewhere, the support programs which have been developed in this province over many years, and under more than one government, are not being added to, but in fact are being eroded.

I can only express my regret at this. I express my regret in personal terms, and I express my regret in financial terms. Dealing first with the finances, I cannot help but believe that in narrow financial terms, we are better off as a society if we provide support for senior citizens so that they can remain in their communities, and in many cases, be very active contributing members to their communities.

And in personal terms, and these are much more important, I express my regret that we are not acknowledging that we have a substantial duty to make life for older people a rich and full life, and to provide the support which is necessary, the support in human terms, and the support in financial terms.

I think we're all becoming much more conscious of the fact that the programs which have been in place and which have done such a good job in the past need to be not cut back and not run at their current level, but rather need to be augmented. I think particularly of ways in which we can find, ways that we need to find, to provide financial support for people who have not been in the work-force. We are aware, of course, of the position of disabled person, but more particularly, people who have been the housewives, or have - whether male or female; they're overwhelmingly female - who have made their life in looking after the family and the household, and who have not, therefore, been participating in the work-force, and who, therefore, do not have a private pension plan provided through an employer, and who therefore do not have a Canada Pension Plan - those persons are ones who most deserve our attention.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no simple and easy way to solve that problem. Many people have addressed the question of how we could provide Canada Pension Plan coverage for persons who are homemakers, and we have not come up with the right answer. But this does not mean that we should not be pursuing it. We are troubled by the fact that the Canada Pension Plan seems to be the appropriate vehicle, but on the other hand, the Canada Pension Plan was thought to be an actuarially sound - or more or less sound - pension plan, and was not thought to be a vehicle for providing benefits to persons who need the benefits, but who have not been contributors.

All of us are aware - if I may indulge in an aside - of the fact that the economic and the financial soundness of the Canada Pension Plan is being called into question, as in the United States the social security plan there is being called into much more vigorous question. So clearly we need to address that. But we need to address the collateral problem of how we provide for the money in old age for persons who spend their lifetime as homemakers. That has not been addressed.

I don't expect the government opposite to come up with a solution to that difficult problem. I would have expected that they would have addressed some of them, that we would have heard some statement of policy, that we would have expected, or we would have heard them make some follow-up statement of policy, similar to the one that was made two years ago by the previous government. We have not heard that. And not only have we not heard it, but the persons who were working on those very real problems in our society are by and large going to be dispensed with. Their services are going to be dispensed with by the government opposite, and we will not have an opportunity to have this government address what are real and pressing issues in our society.

These can, Mr. Speaker, be sometimes stated only in financial terms as perhaps I have been doing, but they are very real personal problems as well. And they surround the delivery of services in the whole area of social services. I refer hon. members to a clipping which was in the *Star-Phoenix* on April 8th. And it's a story of an elderly woman who simply did not have any place to go. And I'm not being particularly critical of the government opposite. If it had happened three years ago, I think she wouldn't have had a place to go either. I am not suggesting that there's been, in this case, a substantial dereliction of duty on the part of the government opposite, save only to say that we need to continue to examine ways to deal with the increasing number of senior citizens who are somehow falling through the net of security programs which we have erected in this province and in this country.

The elderly woman, it says, was wearing only a nightgown and slippers when she fell on the neighbour's doorstep a few months ago, in the middle of a winter night. It goes on to tell her story and a story of a very real personal tragedy it is. It points out what I think we all know: that an increasing number of people living longer are creating some serious problems for our special care institutions.

A particular narrow problem which we need, I think, to address is what sort of institutions we offer for people who are, in a mild way, mentally disordered, and who therefore have difficulty being cared for by regular nursing homes. My memory is slipping as to whether these people are categorized as level 4(a) but I believe that that's the right designation. It doesn't matter what we call them. They are people who have some mental infirmity usually associated with old age. I think perhaps the largest single group would be people who are suffering from Alzheimer's disease, or maladies of that nature. They present a very real problem for society. There is no question that we need to look at what we should be doing.

I'm sure you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and other hon. members, have been approached by citizens who are in nursing homes, or where relatives are in nursing homes, and had raised with you the difficult problems that are presented when a resident of a nursing home has some mental problem - not such as would require them to be confined in an institution because they might be a danger to society but rather problems which caused them to be an annoyance, and perhaps a substantial annoyance, to other members who are in that nursing home, to other residents. Again, I suppose they are people who may have a number of maladies but perhaps Alzheimer's is the commonest.

No one can suggest that this is not an increasing problem in our society. In another age, many of these people would have died earlier because of diseases like pneumonia, which used to sweep through the elderly population. That age is now gone, and we need to address these problems and they're very real problems.

Unfortunately, I have not seen any indication that the government opposite is prepared to grapple with those problems, is prepared to perhaps have special wings in nursing homes for dealing with the people with these particular problems and thereby providing relief and succour for other patients in nursing homes who are not so afflicted.

I could, Mr. Deputy Speaker, continue at some length on what I think are the shortcomings of the programs of the government opposite. I could mention the reduction of social workers in rural areas, which is unquestionably going to affect adversely senior citizens in rural areas, who are frequently major consumers of the services of social workers. I could mention the cut-backs in the welfare system, what the ministers please to call 'common sense,' which affects all persons on welfare, and a goodly number of those people are senior citizens.

I won't burden the House with a full recital of what I consider to be the shortcomings, what had led to headlines such as this one: 'No Provincial Grant Means Special Seniors' Program Dies.' That one has to do with the unique senior citizens service in Saskatchewan operated by the Yorkton Society for Involvement of Good Neighbours. That is typical.

I won't outline all of them, but I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and to all members of the House: throughout this government's programs run a thread of cutting back on the services to people who need it most, many of them senior citizens; throughout this government's programs runs a thread of saying that other things will be emphasized, that the concerns of senior citizens will be de-emphasized. And, accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I wish very emphatically to second the resolution of my colleague, the member for Shaunavon, when he says:

that this Assembly regrets the Saskatchewan government's failure to recognize the social and economic needs of our senior citizens and its failure to provide adequate programs and services for them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Birkbeck:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say a few words on this motion moved by the member for Shaunavon, keeping in mind that the member of Shaunavon was the former minister of social services.

**An Hon. Member:** — With emphasis on 'former.'

**Mr. Birkbeck:** — Former minister of social services. And we, Mr. Deputy Speaker, know where the former minister of social services is now, and but for another political party in his riding saving him he may not be here today, none the less.

I find it unfortunate, quite frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the opposition would choose to move such a motion. We on this side of the House and the Department of Social Services generally, up until very recently under the very competent direction of

our hon. member for Swift Current, and now under the very competent direction of the hon. member for Indian Head, and notwithstanding those two hon. members, a government that has not made just a commitment to social services, but to everyone in Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and to the seniors in particular.

I really do feel, as I sit here and listen to the former premier and the former minister of social services moving such a motion and condemning, quite frankly, this government's failure to recognize the social and economic needs of our senior citizens, and telling us that we've failed to provide adequate programs and services for them.

Now, that's the motion, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to really emphasize that I'm very disappointed to see these members move such a motion, because I would think that sooner or later the hypocrisy of the opposition would cease, somewhere along the line it would have to stop. I've been looking for that. Every day when I sit in here, and I look across there, and I remember sitting there in opposition and what it was like when they were 43 strong here, 44. They had a Speaker and he wasn't in on the votes. I recall what that was like. And I said to myself, well, you know, I can sit here and criticize and be cheap and chintzy, or I can put my head to the issues of the day and offer very constructive solutions to problems that are presented to all of the people of Saskatchewan, and in particular senior citizens.

Now the opposition knows full right well that that was the role that I had taken. It placed the government of the day in a very difficult situation to say the least, Mr. Deputy Speaker, inasmuch as I took the time to personally, on my own time, not at government expense nor at taxpayers' expense, to study the plight of the senior citizens in the province of Saskatchewan. I did that; I made recommendations to the government of the day. I had recommended that they take the care of senior citizens from the Department of Social Services and move it over to the Department of Health and apply a universal room and board fee. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you know, the previous administration just prior to its defeat on April the 26th undertook to do just that with the one exception. They removed the one care for level 4 out of Health and move that over to Social Services. I certainly disagreed with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But I felt that generally speaking, the policy of adopting a more universal fee across the board was quite acceptable because it was in my recommendations when I was in opposition.

Now this afternoon, I have heard of course the member for Shaunavon, the better part of his speech, and the former premier speaking as well. And you know, I failed to pick out of any of their comments, any constructive solutions that they would be offering us as a government. And I was really listening for that and that's why I say I'm very disappointed in the motion. I had hoped that they had moved the motion maybe in good faith. I mean, I'm not even going to go over the motion. The motion could have read far more positively. It could have read something along the lines that we, as an opposition, would like to be part of government and be part of this Assembly and providing solutions, and then proceed from that to offer one or two or a half dozen solutions to our government, and in particular to our minister responsible for Social Services, and in fact our Minister of Health as well, who is responsible for the care of our elderly as it respects our special care home beds.

Now none of that happened, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wasn't able to pick out one word, not one word. And they were bankrupt of ideas when they were in government and certainly they're still bankrupt of ideas now in opposition.

Now I say that quite frankly, this legislature really only has 56 members and it might be

fair to say that we really only have 55, since we have taken from our 56 and placed one of those in as Speaker and of course yourself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as well. And so maybe, you know, we're down to 54. But we certainly do not have, nor do the people of Saskatchewan have, the assistance in any way, shape or form of the opposition in working as an Assembly. The election is over. They don't seem to understand that. The election is over.

Now is the time for those members, as opposition members, on issues like have been identified in this motion, to speak positively and constructively. You know, it's very easy to criticize. As I said, I knew what it was like to be there. It's very easy. And I use this argument: when you're opposition, you're right all the time, but when you're in government, you're lucky to be right half the time.

Now obviously, Mr. Speaker, when they were in government, they had some problems too. Now I heard in his closing remarks, the former premier speaking. He was really, you know, disappointed that in the government of the day's announcements on policies respecting senior citizens that there were no statements like had been made by the previous administration some two years ago, he said. And wonder what were those statements he was referring to.

Well, I have some of these statements that were made by the previous administration, by the government of the day and their approach to caring for the senior citizens. And I have to take a look at some information that I have here. It's dated July 13th, 1978. And let's see what was the government of the day's priority. What was it? Now, you know, I just don't know who the Minister of Social Services was then. It might have been the member for Quill Lakes. I don't know, really. But it doesn't matter. It respects what the government's position was and it reflects on what the former premier stated. This is as he was closing remarks about their statement some two or three years ago. The only one I have in hand states that the government's position then, was:

The preference of the elderly to remain in their own homes, plus the fact that we have some 7,800 special care beds currently in operation throughout the province, has prompted government to place a moratorium on the development of any additional special care beds and focus attention and priorities on the delivery of basic home care services, including: homemaking, meal service, nursing, and minor home repairs. To this end, the department has embarked on a home care program that is expected to encompass the provincial population within two to three years.

Now, here we are in a situation, Mr. Speaker, where this government had 11 years in office. Think of that, Mr. Speaker, 11 years in office, to solve the problems of the people of Saskatchewan, and in particular, as it relates to this motion - the senior citizens and special care home beds. Now, were they able to accomplish that in 11 years? No, Mr. Speaker, they were not able to accomplish that in 11 years. What they were able to do was absolutely next to nothing, and leave us with a terrible situation, Mr. Speaker, to be borne by us now as a new government.

And here we are, only within that first year of government, still within our first year - still within our infancy, if you like, Mr. Speaker - as a new government. And I reflect as I just read this into the record, the statement by the previous government as to the policy as it relates to special care homes - a moratorium, a moratorium on special care homes.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's my first very valid observation. Now, if we move along and just take a look, and just be sure we have this, you know, Mr. Speaker, I want to be sure this point is well made. The shortage in special care home beds did not occur overnight. It occurred over 11 years while the NDP were in office - 11 years.

Now, if we can just take a look, Mr. Speaker, at some of the evidence that I have, and just point out, you know, in a very brief form, some of the direction that's been taken by this new government. And as I said, in its time when it would normally . . . a new government would be floundering to find its way in putting itself together, but it did that very quickly. And it was able to come up with a lot of good approaches to a lot of problems that we faced in the province of Saskatchewan and in particular our senior citizens.

Now, one does not have to look hard, or, you know, or far, for that matter, to find supporting evidence for this. If we just take a look at some of the province's capital expenditures on long-term care facilities in the last few years, and then bring that up to date to what we are doing as a new government. Just for the people of Saskatchewan, just for the record, Mr. Speaker, they introduced a motion, and I feel it's very incumbent upon me, and it's my responsibility as a member to set the record straight: '79-80, in 1979-80 - that was the NDP government - their commitment, 213,000; 1980-81 - that was an NDP government then, Mr. Speaker - 832,000; '81-82 - now we're still dealing with an NDP government - 834,000.

Now, this summer, what did the new government accomplish? What was their commitment, Mr. Speaker? This summer, \$6.1 million was approved for the construction of 132 new beds, and the upgrading of 197 beds to level 3 standards.

Now that is performance, Mr. Speaker. That's a commitment. And this opposition, in its debate on this resolution, has been trying to indicate to the people of Saskatchewan that we are in some way misleading the people of Saskatchewan, saying that we have a commitment to our senior citizens when in fact we have no evidence to prove that. I have just given the evidence to prove, Mr. Speaker, that we in fact do have a commitment for the senior citizens of Saskatchewan. We do have that commitment. I've just read that commitment into the record.

The people of Saskatchewan are concerned about dollars and cents. That proves whether you have the commitment or not. The commitment is there far and ahead, head and shoulders above what the previous administration's commitment was.

**An Hon. Member:** — Quite a difference, compared to . . . (inaudible) . . .

**Mr. Birkbeck:** — Yes, as the hon. member for Weyburn says, it's quite a difference. It's quite a difference between our position and that of the previous administration - a moratorium on special care home beds, a moratorium.

In my riding along, Mr. Speaker, if, in this term of office, I am only to put one bed, just one special care home bed in my riding, that will be a 100 per cent improvement over what they were able to do in 11 years. They didn't put any nursing home beds in my riding, and as the record would indicate, Mr. Speaker, it's one of the, if not the highest per capita people over the age of 65 of anywhere in the country, let alone Saskatchewan. And you weren't able to put one bed in there in 11 years. And you still have the audacity to stand there in opposition, the former premier, the former minister of social services, and condemn this new government for failing to make a commitment

to senior citizens.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you know, as I said at my opening of my remarks, I wonder when the hypocrisy will end with this opposition. Possibly I shouldn't concern myself about it because the more it continues the longer they'll be in opposition, and the longer we'll be in government, and the more the people of Saskatchewan will benefit because of it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, province-wide . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member for Athabasca is making a few comments, and he's wanting to know, you know, what more I can tell him. He's quite enlightened by what I've said so far, and he wants me to enlighten him a little further. And here's some more enlightenment for the member for Athabasca.

Province-wide, we have approximately 68 beds per 1,000, which indicates a generally adequate supply. The key problem - now I want you to listen to this - the key problem seems to be the distribution of these beds with, you know, some districts having as few as 26 beds per 1,000 population of people over the age of 65.

Now we are working to rectify that imbalance. And I say that's an imbalance, Mr. Speaker, and I want to point out very clearly . . . And I can understand why some of the members in the opposition don't want to listen too closely. And I'm sorry that the member for Shaunavon isn't here right now, but it won't matter much because the record will be conveyed to him. I'm sure the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, who's just coming into the House, might like to pass on this very interesting information to his neighbouring constituency colleague, the member for Shaunavon.

And if we look at some of the figures as it relates to the numbers of beds per 1,000 people over the age of 65, and if we take it on a constituency basis, and it's pretty interesting . . . And keeping in mind that we didn't create this situation; it was not created by this government. It was a situation, Mr. Speaker, that was created by the NDP government in opposition, when they had, as I said, those 11 years to right that imbalance that we're now trying to correct and make right for the people of Saskatchewan, make right for our senior citizens.

Now let's take a look at the figures: Shaunavon, 98.44 beds. That's how many beds they had in the constituency of Shaunavon - 98.44 beds per thousand people over the age of 65.

Now, let's just take a look at another NDP constituency at that time - Humboldt, 87.78. Now, let us compare that. Let us compare that. Now the member for Shaunavon just come in, and I'm not going to run the figures by him. He knows how many beds he has per thousand people over the age of 65. I just ran the figures by for the member for Shaunavon in case he would like to disagree with me - it was 98.44. All right.

Now then, what are the figures for a Conservative riding at the time? And we could take the now Minister of Health. Thank goodness that Health has been saved. We have the Minister of Health, the hon. member for Indian Head-Wolseley. And how many beds did the member for Indian Head-Wolseley have? Now just how many? I want you to hear. I want you to hear, the member for Quill Lakes. This compares - 26.31 - 26 beds. That's how many was in a constituency, a Conservative constituency - 26 beds.

Now then, they had 98 in Shaunavon . . . in a member for Shaunavon - 98 beds in his



riding; 98 there. Up in the former minister of finance's constituency, the member for Humboldt, the former member for Humboldt, you had 87.78, and in the now Minister of Health, who was a Conservative member in opposition at that time - 26 beds.

Now that's an imbalance, Mr. Speaker, that was created by the NDP when they were in government - an imbalance. And again I reflect, and I say, and they have the audacity to stand there in opposition and criticize us as a new government for our commitment to the senior citizens of this province, Mr. Speaker. Now I say that it's very disappointing. It's very disappointing for the members of this House. It's very disappointing for the people of Saskatchewan. In particular, it surely must be very disappointing for the senior citizens of our province.

If it wasn't bad enough that they had to get over the statement made by another former premier, who was as well an NDP member, when he stated during the election campaign in '78 respecting medicare: 'Don't let them take it away.' Now he scared senior citizens; he literally scared them and I think that was unfortunate. And now they're using the same tactics trying to scare the public, scare the senior citizens into thinking that the Progressive Conservative new government is not a compassionate government, is not a caring government, is not a committed government to the many problems of the people of Saskatchewan.

Now we know on this side of the House, the people of Saskatchewan know - they knew on April 26th and they know even more now - with the commitments that have been made in the budget, Mr. Speaker, that we in fact have made a very substantial commitment in these regards.

Now I see members in opposition, Mr. Speaker, indicating that, you know, the poll is going down for the Conservatives. Well, again I recall when I was in opposition, the former attorney-general used to do that all the time - give us the old thumbs down and, you know, next election bye-bye Larry and so on and so forth. Well I'm still here. I seem to have an awful lot of company with me on this side of the House, but I don't see the attorney-general. Where is he? Well, I would just on that note, Mr. Speaker, I would caution the member for Shaunavon, while he's sitting there in his pious way, indicating that, you know, we're going down and giving the old sign down . . . I would caution him, Mr. Speaker, I never did that when I was in opposition. I leave those decisions to the people of Saskatchewan. And I would just caution you, Mr. Member, I don't think you ought to get into the same practice as the former attorney-general did.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have made a lot of valid points, but I have just begun as it respects this motion, and subsequently, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.