

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

April 17, 1984

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Estimates

DEPUTY CLERK: — Mr. Sutor, from the Standing Committee on estimates, presents the fourth report of the said committee, which is as follows:

Your committee considered the estimates of the Legislative Assembly and adopted the following resolutions.

Main estimates to March 31, 1985:

1. Resolved, that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 1985, the following sum: for legislation, \$3,133,400.
2. Resolved, that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1985, the sum of \$2,872,280 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund.

Supplementary estimates to March 31, 1984:

1. Resolved, that there be granted to Her Majesty for the twelve months ending March 31, 1984, the following sum: for legislation, \$220,320.
2. Resolved, that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1984, the sum of \$220,320 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund.
3. Resolved, that this committee recommend that upon concurrence in the committee's report, the sums as reported and approved shall be included in the appropriation bill for consideration by the Legislative Assembly.

MR. SUTOR: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Pelly:

That the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Estimates be now concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

HON. MR. SWAN: — It is my privilege today to introduce to you a group of students from the Rosetown Division III School seated in the Speaker's gallery. We have 34 grade 8 students. They are accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Ford and Mr. Purcell. They will be touring the legislature and visiting with us here in Regina throughout the day.

I look forward to meeting with them at 3 o'clock and having an opportunity to discuss with them some of the things that they have seen in the Chamber, and some of the questions that they may have.

April 17, 1984

I'd ask the members to welcome the group from Rosetown.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. LANE: — Mr. Speaker, it's with a great deal of pleasure I introduce to the Assembly some students from White City Elementary School. They are seated both in the west gallery and on the floor of the Assembly. And it's, as I say, with a great deal of pleasure that we welcome them to the Assembly. They're accompanied by teachers Kim Klumpp, Jane Gorluik, Judy Leier, Sharon Benson, Lois McChesney.

I look forward, after question period, to meeting with the students and teachers. We'll have the usual pictures taken and then a chance for questions and, I hope, some answers.

And I look forward very much to welcoming the students and teachers from a very, very pretty community. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure most members have had the opportunity to drive by, or through White City. It's got the largest lots in the province of Saskatchewan and some of the prettiest homes. And we welcome them all here today.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and to all of our colleagues in the legislature, a group of students from the St. Luke School in Regina Elphinstone. They're seated in the Speaker's gallery, and they are about 27 in number, and they're from grades 7 and 8, and they're accompanied by, for these purposes, their teacher, Mr. Frolick.

St. Luke's has had a history of sending classes to visit the legislature. They've showed a keen interest, and a rather keener interest than some other schools in Regina, and I commend their practice to other teachers and other schools in Regina.

We're delighted to see them here. I will have an opportunity to meet with them for pictures, refreshments, questions, and answers after question period at 2:30. We welcome them here. I ask all members to join with me in welcoming them.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LUSNEY: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you, and to the members of the Assembly, 15 grade 6, 7, and 8 students from Hyas School. They are accompanied by their teacher, Edward Buk; and chaperons, Heather Ostafichuk and Lorne Melnik. I'll be meeting with the students at 2:30 for pictures and refreshments, and I would like to wish them a pleasant visit to Regina, and a very interesting and informative visit to the legislature; and we'll be looking forward to meeting with you later on for questions.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Separate School Teachers' Strike in Moose Jaw

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address a question to the Minister of Education. The Minister of Education will be aware that on Sunday the striking Moose Jaw teachers, indeed, offered to return to the class-room if the school board would agree to conduct a management study into the local school division. More recently, as the minister will also be aware, that the parents have also requested by way of a petition for an inquiry, and last night at the board's meeting, the chairman of the board, Mr. Dixon, said, "We agree with a management study." My question to the minister is: will you reconsider your stated position and use your good offices to take a unique opportunity here of bringing the parties together and resolving this

very difficult situation for the students and the parents in the city of Moose Jaw?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the member from Quill Lake neglected one point, and that is that there was a mediator put into place to bring both sides together, and they agreed that they would try and work things out; but they also agreed that there would be a time limit on it, and that time is Thursday — this coming Thursday. And I would suggest until that process has taken its place, and the mediator has been given an opportunity to try and reach a settlement within two parties there, that it would best be served by not debating the point in this House.

MR. KOSKIE: — A supplement, Mr. Speaker. Are you aware, Madam Minister, that even before the mediation has been tried, that the board last night at its meeting voted in favour of introducing back-to-work legislation and for binding arbitration?

How is it possible for the continuation of the actions of a board, in light of the fact that you say mediation may work? I ask you: when are you going to show your true colours and admit the unfortunate circumstances in Moose Jaw is a political ploy by your government to eventually orchestrate back-to-work legislation?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'm aware that before Sunday the board had, indeed, requested back-to-work legislation with two other . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . they also requested, before Sunday last. And then they agreed that they would give mediation a try. Judge Muir is in there now as the mediator, and I would suggest that that's where it stays until Thursday. And it was the board that had suggested a time-line of this coming Thursday.

MR. KOSKIE: — A further supplement. Madam Minister, when are you going to admit that another reason for the government's support of the board's position is, in fact, the fact that the Premier's sister-in-law, a Doreen Guillaume, sits as a member of the board? When are you going to admit that you cannot take an intervention because of the fact of the involvement of the Premier's sister-in-law on the board?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Speaker, I don't believe my ears. And I would suggest a good portion of the Saskatchewan population aren't going to believe their ears with that kind of a statement. I had indicated to you before that this bargaining issue began at the local level, and the process is laid out. Those boards are elected by local people. The dispute was one of local bargaining. That local level is to be given an opportunity as the process is laid out — be given an opportunity to try and settle their dispute for long-term benefit of that school division. As to who the board members are has absolutely nothing — nothing — to do with the process that is in place.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary to the minister. Mr. Speaker, and Madam Minister, you have said that mediation is in progress. News reports indicate that the board, not last week or last month, but yesterday or the day before, passed the motion calling for this legislature to introduce legislation which would amount to a back-to-work and compulsory binding arbitration. In your judgement, is such action by the board consistent with a genuine attempt to make mediation work on the part of that board?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that it is my position to pre-judge the action of that local board. And I would suggest it's not the role of the Leader of the Opposition. That board, elected locally, are trying their very best this week with a little bit of help through a third party, a mediator, as agreed upon by both sides, to work it out at that local level. I am not about to pre-judge that board at this time.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, a supplement to the minister. I wonder if you could inform the Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan and Moose Jaw as to how you see the mediation going at the present time, when it is reported that during the meeting where back-to-work

April 17, 1984

legislation was called on by the board, a trustee, Carolyn Scidmore, broke solidarity – board solidarity – by leaving the meeting.

She says, “I am tired of following damned rules.” She said, “That’s the electorate out there,” – meaning the parents and the students and the children who want to go back to school.

Can you tell me, Madam Minister, how you see the mediation process working in Moose Jaw at the present time under these conditions which we see in the public, when protests are being held, where children are pounding on the windows of the school to get back, and you sit on your hands and do nothing, and wait for legislation to come forward, which you will support, forcing the teachers back to work?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. Give the minister an opportunity to reply.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Speaker, we have in place by legislation in this province a body that is called the Education Relations Board, that has the powers and the authority to appoint conciliators, mediators, on their own initiative.

I don’t believe for a moment that the member from Shaunavon should be monitoring the mediation process at this point in time. The mediator will be reporting to the chairman of the Education Relations Board. That will take place at the completion of Thursday, as to the success or the lack of success of the bargaining process. And until such time, I suggest that he reserves his judgement also.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Premier. The Premier will know that from time to time he has explained his reason for not appointing a cabinet minister from Moose Jaw as being that he will represent that area in the cabinet.

I would like to know whether or not you, sir, have been monitoring the situation in Moose Jaw this week where there has been a board meeting calling for back-to-work legislation, where you have a relative directly involved in that proposal, whether or not you have monitored and are taking a position one way or the other on this issue to try to get the schools re-opened, and to try to get the teachers back to work in terms of a negotiating process, rather than the confrontation which you and your relatives are trying to force here in the city of Moose Jaw.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, with comments like that from the member of Shaunavon about democratically elected people in the province of Saskatchewan, I believe that the member of Shaunavon is not trying to help either the students in the province of Saskatchewan, or in Moose Jaw, or the democratic process.

To me, Mr. Speaker, he shows that he is at the bottom of the very barrel of political activity when he says that elected officials – when elected officials, Mr. Speaker, democratically elected – are not trying their best to look after students, look after teachers, and anything else. I would hope that he would step outside the legislature and say that those democratically elected people are not working hard for the reasons that they were elected, or the people that they were elected for.

With respect to Moose Jaw itself, I have all the confidence in the minister that she’s dealing with it in a very professional fashion, that she’s putting together a mediation mechanism that has been used time and time again, and the member opposite knows that. All he’s trying to do today is grandstand a little bit. He doesn’t give one iota of care for the students. And everybody in the province, Mr. Speaker, knows that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Premier. I think we've touched a sensitive nerve on the Premier from his area, his home area, where the people and parents are becoming very critical of this government's lack of action.

What I would ask you, Mr. Premier, is this: is this not an attempt, and will we not expect to see from your government back-to-work legislation next week, that you will bring in — you, as Premier, will bring in — to force the teachers back to work, and have working people and parents at each other's throat in the city of Moose Jaw? Can we expect to see that next week, Mr. Speaker?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — The hon. member assumes something that we can only speculate about. And he isn't allowing the mediation process to take its full course, obviously, because he would rather fight over it and raise it in the media and make it a more cantankerous issue than he would let it sit and try to be resolved. I think everybody in the province knows full well what he's trying to do.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, a final supplement to the Premier. I think that we know now what we are sitting around waiting for, and that is for your government to bring in back-to-work legislation. I say that's the reason the Minister of Education has not used her good office. That's the reason that the Minister of Labour has not used his good office . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please! Order, please! The member is asking a supplementary. Supplementaries are not allowed a lead-in, and particularly a statement such as you're making. If you have a question, proceed with the question.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister and Mr. Premier, can you tell me if we can expect to see back-to-work legislation brought into this Assembly next week? Is that not the intent of this delay by the Minister of Education in using her office to settle this dispute? And is that not the reason that the board which you have direct involvement in is voting on back-to-work legislation in the middle of a mediation process? Is that not what the process is? And can you give a guarantee that we will not see back-to-work legislation in here, and that over this weekend you and your minister will solve this problem, which you have the ability to do, in Moose Jaw?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, everybody on this side of the House, and probably in the province, except for those — you over there — everybody would like to see . . . Mr. Speaker, they would like to see the mediation process be successful. They would like to be. They would like to see it successful. I would like to see it succeed, the minister would, we all would — everybody in the province would, except you.

And the reason that they don't want to see it successful is they would try to make some political speculation out of it. Right now, people are working very hard in the mediation process. They know that there's a chance to resolve it. They know what this hon. member is raising doesn't help to solve it. And all he's doing is, Mr. Speaker, all he's doing, in my view, is insulting every member of every elected school-board in the entire province of Saskatchewan by saying that I can individually walk into a school-board and say what I'm supposed to do or make any changes. He knows better than that. I say again, I respect the mediation process. I would hope that he would do the same.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LINGENFELTER: — New question to the Premier. The Premier will well know that the problems that other boards have dealt with very directly in this province have been solved. We have a unique problem in the city of Moose Jaw with one board. And I would say to you, Mr. Minister, that that board, in having a vote on back-to-work legislation in the middle of mediation,

April 17, 1984

is not appropriate. And I would say to you that you have direct involvement in that board, and I would ask you to call on the board to come to its senses during the mediation process and get the minister involved in solving the problem. I ask you to do that, as opposed to bringing in back-to-work legislation which I believe you're planning right now to bring in next week.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — All the member opposite is doing is making a speech. He's making a speech. I've said that we believe in the mediation process. I believe that if he really was caring about the students, he would let it take place. He knows that it ends on Thursday. And he knows that. And he knows everybody in the province would like to have it resolved through mediation. I would; I hope the hon. member would.

Saskatoon Auction Sale

MR. SVEINSON: — Mr. Speaker, in the last two sitting days a debate has raged back and forth across this House on the suggested improprieties of this government with respect to an auction sale that's coming up in Saskatoon. I have spoken with many of the auctioneers that are involved with this proposal in the last two days, and they have indicated that they fairly would say, "Lay these proposals out on the table, and let the people of Saskatchewan know that there are no improprieties with respect to the proposals laid by the auctioneers in the province." I have also spoken to many people across this province.

MR. SPEAKER: — Does the member have a question? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Order! Does the member have a question?

MR. SVEINSON: — I was just getting to my question, Mr. Speaker.

I have also spoken, as I was just saying, to many people across this province who have expressed an interest, a very, very keen interest . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Does the member have a question? This is the last warning.

MR. SVEINSON: — Yes, I have a question, Mr. Speaker. And the question depends on one more short statement.

This morning on the QC open line, Mr. Kenneth Dye, the Auditor General of Canada, indicated that governments are responsible for letting the people who elect them know how they spend their money.

My question is to the Premier of Saskatchewan and the question is: Mr. Premier, do you not agree that it's in the public interest to have the people of Saskatchewan aware of the expenditures within all departments of government, including Supply and Services? And do you agree with the answers your minister gave in the last two days with respect to the commission paid on the sale in Saskatoon?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I'm . . . I'm not so sure that the hon. . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. Order. Order.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not so sure the hon. member was in the House when we were going through estimates with respect to Supply and Services. I don't know if he was. If he was there, he would have heard the answer, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, the minister responsible for Supply and Services said the way that he is operating, one: is no different than any other administration has been operating.

Number two: any individual auctioneer that proposed the tender, or got in on the process, can

come in to the Minister of Supply and Services, as they always have been able to, and say, "Here's where your tender was good. Here's where it fell down. Here was for the rest of it."

When they all decide to put in their tenders or their proposal calls, they know they're confidential, and they know that if they weren't confidential they couldn't put together their years and years and years of experience on the line, and then have it all public knowledge. You know that. Any businessman knows that.

You will submit that tender because you know it's in confidence. The best tender of them all will be selected. If you want to find out as an individual where you went wrong, you come in to the minister, and the minister says, "I'll tell you exactly where you went wrong."

Now we will protect the confidence of all those individuals that submitted their tenders, or proposal calls. But we will not make public information all the qualities, and all the attributes, of all those companies that worked very, very hard to be successful in the past.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SVEINSON: — The question, Mr. Speaker, is: does that confidence override the public interest?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, without respecting the confidentiality, we couldn't deal in the public interest for public tenders. Those individuals want confidentiality. That's why they tender that way. If they knew all their confidential information was public, they wouldn't tender.

MR. SVEINSON: — The information will be available in due course. The people of Saskatchewan would like to know whether it's in their interest to know how the money in the Department of Supply and Services is spent. My question is: how was it spent with respect to the auction sale? The question hasn't been answered by the minister. The question, Mr. Premier, you refused to answer as well. I say you're not acting in the public interest.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please.

STC's Prince Albert Bus Garage

MR. LUSNEY: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the minister responsible for Sask Transportation Company, and it has to do with an article in the *Prince Albert Herald* which states that as of May 15th you will be closing down STC's bus garage in Prince Albert. Mr. Minister, is this, in fact, what you are going to be doing as of May 15th?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what press article the member is referring to. I know we're going into Crown corporation meetings tomorrow morning at 8:30, and I will make sure that the information is there at that meeting for the member.

MR. LUSNEY: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister knows very well that in Crown corporations tomorrow morning I could not ask a question on this year, on any year, except the year under review.

Mr. Minister, are you going to be closing down the STC bus garage as of May 15, 1984?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not trying to suppress any information from any of the members in this Assembly. I am quite prepared to take notice of this question and bring an answer back to the members opposite.

MR. LUSNEY: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, are you saying that, even with the article that's in the paper, that you, at this point, do not know if you're going to be closing down this

April 17, 1984

garage or not?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Well, Mr. Speaker, once again: STC is not run by the media in the province of Saskatchewan or the news clippings that come from the papers in the province of Saskatchewan. I will get in touch with the president of the corporation and bring that information back to the member's office.

MR. LUSNEY: — . . . (inaudible) . . . question to the minister responsible for STC. Mr. Minister, in light of the news that is out there in the media, and that all the people are aware of, did you consult with the members from P.A. prior to making any decisions on closing down this garage at P.A.?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, before any major decisions are made by STC, I know very well that the president of the corporation consults with the people in the area, the employees involved. If this is to be a consultation place, consultation takes place with many people, not just elected officials.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, I assume that you are the chairman of the board, or on the board — not the chairman of the board, but on the board — responsible for STC. Did the board, at any time in the meetings that they've had, decide to shut down the bus garage at Prince Albert?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, there have been many proposals and many recommendations brought forth by management to the STC board in routes, expanding routes in the province of Saskatchewan. It's just another item, as I've stated to the members earlier. I will visit personally with the president of the corporation and bring that information back to the members opposite.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — I have a question for the Minister of Revenue and it deals with pensions for superannuates. We have refrained from answering this question until the superannuation supplementary provisions bill was filed. And I note that while last year the similar bill provided for annual cost of living allowance increases for superannuates of, in one case, \$19.20 per year, the bill which is now tabled before the legislature contains no provision for supplementing the superannuation allowances of public servants. Does this mean that there will be nothing by way of supplement for public service superannuates, widows and children?

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — No, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't mean that.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Would the minister mind repeating his answer.

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — I said, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't mean that.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. May we expect yet another bill which provides for supplementation for the superannuation allowances of superannuates, widows, and children, and if so, why wasn't it included in the first bill?

HON. MR. ROUSSEAU: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I will, frankly, take notice of that question and give you an answer on it this week.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Proclamation of The Planning and Development Act, 1983

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Speaker, together with my colleague, the Minister of Rural Development, I'm pleased to announce that The Planning and Development Act, 1983, has been proclaimed to be in force today, April 17, 1984.

The proclamation of this act represents the culmination of 18 months of intensive effort, including a detailed examination of the previous act, lengthy consultations with municipalities, municipal organizations, and the development industry, together with other organizations and the general public. This was followed by the introduction and review of the new act during the fall session of this legislature.

Associated with this act are two sets of regulations: the subdivision regulations, and the dedicated lands regulation. These regulations have also been revised following a review and a consultation process similar to that used in the review of the act itself. These new regulations are also in force as of today.

In announcing the proclamation of this act, we would like to thank all of the organizations and individuals who have contributed to its preparation through their comments and submissions. Their efforts have assisted us in insuring that this new act meets the needs of those affected by it.

Mr. Speaker, our objectives in preparing this act were to maintain and enhance local autonomy in planning matters, and to streamline the planning and development review process while maintaining the essential integrity of this process. And, Mr. Speaker, these objectives have been met. The act grants significant additional authority to municipalities and provides new, more flexible zoning techniques to enhance their planning efforts. Redundant steps in the review process have been eliminated, and time frames established for the completion of most of the steps that remain.

Also the public notification requirements under the act have been improved to ensure that all those affected by planning decisions are notified and have the opportunity to react to the proposal.

Mr. Speaker, this act is a significant new piece of legislation and, to assist in its implementation by municipal governments, we have allowed a four-month period between its adoption by the legislature and its proclamation today, to enable those who use the Act to become familiar with it.

Also during the past two weeks, staff of Urban Affairs and Rural Development have held seminars throughout the province to inform municipal officials about the act. And I am pleased to say that these seminars were attended by approximately 1,000 municipal representatives. We shall be taking further steps to assist municipalities with the implementation of this act.

Mr. Speaker, the planning and development process is a co-operative process. It involves co-operation among governments, citizens, and development proponents.

This act not only provides an improved framework for this co-operation, but has also created an improved atmosphere that is more conducive to co-operation. The openness with which we approached our review of this act encouraged all parties to make their views known, and provided a forum for the exchange and reconciliation of these, at times, divergent viewpoints. This has been most gratifying, and provides us with confidence that this new act will meet our collective expectations for continued economic development in Saskatchewan.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, the new Planning and Development Act has been proclaimed, effective today. This is a crucial step in our government's program of regulatory reform and in the creation of a legislative environment to foster further economic growth in our communities and province. And it is with great pleasure and pride that I announce this proclamation to the House today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I intend only to make very brief comments on this.

April 17, 1984

We are pleased that the minister has advised us that the act is being proclaimed. Municipal planning and land use legislation is one of the most difficult areas that a provincial government has to deal with. The legislation needs constant revision, not necessarily annually, but a constant review. We note that the legislation passed in the 1970s is now undergoing . . . has undergone a comprehensive review.

We look forward to the appropriate operation of this act. We express the hope that the minister will continue to review the operation of this act, and as its infirmities – and there will be some – are disclosed, that these can be remedied by appropriate action by this legislature. We share his desire that the planning legislation provide an appropriate framework by which we can plan our communities to make them liveable and enjoyable places in which to make our lives, and also permit appropriate developments.

We are aware of the fact that there is always some conflict between development and the . . . creating the particular ambience in which many of our citizens wish to live. These are difficult decisions. The legislation provides the framework for making those decisions. I trust it will prove adequate. I suggest that all of us keep it in view to see the areas in which further reflection would indicate that it is not working as well as we would hope.

We will be watching with interest to see how well this particular, very elaborately conceived, piece of legislation works for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan.

Law Day

HON. MR. LANE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Two years ago today, Canada's new Constitution Act of 1982 was proclaimed into law. In the wake of that proclamation, the Canadian Bar Association organized the first ever observance of Law Day in this country. At that time it was my pleasure to proclaim a Law Day in Saskatchewan, and I am pleased to say that the custom is being continued today.

Law Day is designed to increase the public's basic knowledge of our law, and the operation of our legal system. The new constitution includes the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which has increased awareness of individual rights. Along with that must come greater public knowledge of those rights and how those rights are enforced.

By the proclamation of Law Day I hope the Saskatchewan public will become aware of its rights and duties through a greater understanding of the law, and will better recognize the value of our system of law, which protects individual freedoms and makes possible a free society.

In closing, I commend the Canadian Bar Association for instituting Law Day. Credit is also due to the Public Legal Education Association of Saskatchewan for the many ways in which it broadens public knowledge of the law throughout our province. I urge the people of Saskatchewan to observe this day and take the opportunity to learn more about our legal system.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 49 – An Act to provide Counselling Assistance and Loan Guarantees to Farmers

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a bill to provide counselling assistance and loan guarantees to farmers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MOTIONS FOR RETURNS (Not Debatable)

Return No. 128

MR. LINGENFELTER moved that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 128 showing:

A copy of a report entitled Recommended Strategy for the Delivery and Utilization of Informatics Services prepared for the Government of Saskatchewan Informatics Rationalization Study Steering Committee by E.C. Kehayas, J.M. Agnew and B. Corbishley of Thorne, Stevenson and Kellogg-Management Consultants.

Those motions which stand in my name, I believe, I have the opportunity at this time to move them, and I would like to do that.

MR. SPEAKER: —. As I understand it, there are two or three things that can happen. Either they can be moved by the member in whose name they stand, or the House Leader can stand it, or they can be converted to debate.

AN HON. MEMBER: — I was up first.

MR. SPEAKER: —. No, he was up first. You called “stand” immediately. I’m sorry.

MOTION UNDER RULE 16

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I didn’t hear the second item under motions for returns read out.

MR. SPEAKER: —. The House Leader has called “stand” on items 1 and 2. That’s normally been done on others . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Order, please.

I’ll ask the Clerk to call point number 2, if that satisfies the House.

DEPUTY CLERK: — Item number 2, Mr. Lingenfelter, for return No. 129.

MR. SPEAKER: —. I recognize the Minister of Justice, as House Leader.

HON. MR. LANE: — . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I was on my feet . . . the hon. member. Stand . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. The person that gets the floor is the person that’s recognized by the Speaker, and I did not recognize . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Order, please. You were both on your feet.

It has always been the rule of this House that if the House Leader called for a motion to stand, or when the opposition asked for other items to stand, that it has been complied with.

. . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, the House Leader can stand motions, and I think the opposition has been given the privilege to stand.

And I would advise the hon. member for Shaunavon that you cannot challenge the ruling of the Chair, unless you want to do it in formal motion at another time. But you cannot just stand up and say, “I challenge the ruling of the Chair.”

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Well, Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would like . . . (inaudible) . . .

April 17, 1984

MR. SPEAKER: — The member for Shaunavon, state your point of order.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I'd like an explanation from the Speaker on how it would be that any opposition could ever get to any point on private members' day. Under motions for return which stand in my name, I can't move them. Under motions, private members' motions, which stand in our name as members of the opposition, the government House Leader could stand all of them. On the 127 motions for returns, debatable, you are saying, in making a decision here, as I understand it, that we can't move these.

And I would like to know when this was arrived at, because I want to say that this hasn't been the tradition in this Assembly. And I don't know where you're getting the instruction from that it is. Because if that were true, then under the motions that are listed here, the government could exclude the opposition from every getting to any of their motions.

And that simply is not the historic pattern of this Assembly. And I question where you're getting that ruling from, because it's not accurate. Otherwise the opposition would never have an opportunity to deal on private members' day with anything they have in the blues.

And I'm saying that after 127 questions have waited on the order paper for as long as these have – in some cases since last November – I don't think we're being unreasonable in asking that they be moved, and that we get answers, because we're not getting any answers.

And I don't know why you're trying to say that we shouldn't get answers, because that is the role of the opposition, and I'm not being unreasonable or argumentative. I'm simply saying: how do we go through the process of getting information?

MR. SPEAKER: — The point that you're raising is difficult to come. There's nothing written in *Beauchesne's*. It's mainly the practice of this House that we have to go by. And I'm going to cite to you a ruling of a former Speaker, from the 24th of February, 1967, and the ruling is this:

It has been a long-standing practice of this Assembly that a minister may ask that a written question or questions be allowed to stand on the order paper. This practice has also included the understanding that the minister will not delay the handling of the question any longer than is necessary.

That was the ruling of the Speaker at that time. There's nothing in *Beauchesne's*, I'm informed, that deals directly with it.

MOTION UNDER RULE 16

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, I would like you to explain to me what you have just called, what point of business you have just called?

MR. SPEAKER: — I've called a "Motion under Rule 16."

HON. MR. LANE: — On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. When you called "Motion Under Rule 16," the hon. member was on his feet. He has now sat down, and I suggest that he has lost his right to speak on Rule 16.

MR. SPEAKER: — When the member was on his feet, he asked for a point of order and a point of clarification. I recognize the member for Shaunavon.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to

become involved in a debate under Rule 16 of the rules of this Assembly. And when I complete my short remarks I will be moving a motion, seconded by the member for Quill Lakes, which basically reads;

That this Assembly regrets this governments' totally inadequate job-creation performance which has caused increasing hardship for thousands of Saskatchewan families, and urges that the government adopt positive concrete measures to create stable productive employment for Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, I say that I am pleased to become involved in this debate, but I think it's fair to say that it distresses and upsets a good number of people in Saskatchewan to see what has happened since April of 1982. I believe that when the election was called, and when the election results were in, that there was a feeling in Saskatchewan that somehow jobs would become an important part of this government's mandate.

But very clearly what we have seen since April of 1982 is the exact opposite. We have seen the unemployment rate in Saskatchewan double—go from 4.5 or 5 per cent to in excess of 8 per cent. In fact, the last statistic showed that we had moved from the lowest unemployment rate to that position, slightly ahead of Manitoba in terms of the unemployment rate.

I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I believe a rate of 8.4 per cent in the unemployment rate in Saskatchewan is a disgrace to the working people who are attempting to make a living at this time.

I think it's a disgrace, because I believe that the people of the province of Saskatchewan would like to be working today, as they were in the 1970s and early 1980s. I believe that when the 1970s were here, and we had unemployment rates as low as 3 per cent and 4 per cent, that what that indicated is that the people of Saskatchewan, when given an opportunity, were some of the best workers, and the most imaginative workers anywhere in the world.

And what we see instead, today, is a proposal by this government that how we're going to get people back to work is to penalize those young unemployed employables who find themselves in the unfortunate situation of being out of work, unemployed, and having to go on welfare.

And I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the solution to the unemployment problem among young people here in Saskatchewan today is not one of job creation – meaningful job creation – because if we look at the record of this government, you will know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and members of this Assembly will know, that in last year's budget here was much talk, and much made, of a 20,000-job creation program. But yet, when we look at StatsCan statistics, we find that not 20,000, not 10,000, not 3,000, but 1,000 new jobs were created in the last year.

So the government has to be aware of the fact that people in the province are suspicious when they come forward with a proposal in this year's budget which also calls for 20,000 jobs to be created. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reason that they are suspicious is reasonable. The reason that they are suspicious is because this government, in talking about job creation, is not to be believed. If we had had 20,000 new jobs created last year, the unemployment rate wouldn't have gone from 6.7 per cent or 6.8 to 8., but it would have decreased.

Very realistically, what we are seeing today is a rapid increase in the unemployment rate at a time when other provinces are coming to grips with their unemployment rate. And I would challenge the government opposite to look at some of the statistics that are coming out of places like Ontario or Toronto. We now have unemployment rates in Toronto at 8.4 per cent, while in Saskatoon the unemployment rate is running at 12.3 – 12.3 in a city which had led the country in employment in years gone by, especially since 1971 to the period of 1982.

I would like to tell the government that the people in Saskatoon, the people who are out of work

April 17, 1984

in Saskatoon, and those who are facing the possibility of being out of work, are not impressed with the Grant Devine government and the MLAs who represent those constituencies. They are in the ranks now of the highest unemployed city in western Canada. In fact, they are now tied with Calgary, which also has an unemployment rate of 12.3 per cent. And I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we need more imaginative and more thoughtful solutions to our unemployment problem than penalizing those young people who find themselves on welfare.

And I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you look at the rationale behind the taking away of welfare from a large number of young people, the reason becomes obvious. It's my contention that this government intends to drive these young people out of the province, as opposed to creating new jobs for them.

I believe that the Minister of Social Services, in studying the number of young people on unemployment, did not come up with good solutions creating employment through the industrial sector, or the small business, or farming community. But he said, rather than create jobs, we will get them to move to other provinces, or other jurisdictions where welfare payments will be higher.

And if you look at the statistics in Alberta, you will see that the welfare numbers are, indeed, higher for young unemployables. And I think the Minister of Social Services, and this government, has a devious plan to get young people to move out of the province so the unemployment rate looks better than what it really is.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think the other thing that is hidden here in these numbers, and we can carry on a long time about statistics and numbers, which really don't mean a lot unless you tie the human element to it . . . but when you talk about unemployment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you're not simply talking about a person who is out of work and gets his income from another source.

Sociologists and psychologists and people who work in that area will tell you that the process of being put out of work, regardless of age, and becoming part of the lost generation, is devastating, and in many cases people do not recover from it. And people who study the depression of the 1930s and study those people who went through that process of going through five or eight years of their lives where they were not needed by the society, where society told them that they were a burden on them, those individuals never recovered from that process and that meanness of the governments of that day.

And I would like to put forward the proposal that there are many thousands of people in Saskatchewan today – 44,000 to be exact – who are unemployed, who are going through that process now, of being disenfranchised by their community, by the peers of their society, in some cases by their families, and by their friends.

In a scenario that will be told to you by people who work with the family crisis situations will tell you that the scenario goes like this: an individual who has been the main breadwinner, man or woman, loses their job after 10 or 15 years and comes home and is very, very depressed, often turning to alcohol, or often turning to some other form of drugs to attempt to alleviate the depression and the feeling of self-worth or the lack of self-worth that they are confronted with on a daily basis. And from that it often goes downhill to where the family abuse starts. Children are abused, where the wife or one of the spouses is battered, and they will tell you that the crux of the matter is the fact that unemployment is not available to these people.

And these are not fairy tales. Well, you look at the statistics in any province in Canada, there's a direct relationship to unemployment with wife battery and child abuse. And these are not statistics that are taken from NDP records or from Conservative records. They are Stats Canada records that show that family abuse and family breakdown occur much more readily in those people who are unemployed.

And I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that a government, while they shouldn't supply all the answers to all the problems, has a definite role to play in creating employment, not only directly through highway construction and school construction, but by giving the incentive and the trust in the small business and small enterprises that has been there in the past.

And I would like to tell the government that their theme of big business, by attempting to attract big business from Tokyo and New York and London and Paris, is simply not working. The process whereby we have a bunch of middle-aged cheer-leaders roaming around the world in jet airplanes, attempting to lure big business to Saskatchewan, has been a failure. And I say that the indication of the unemployment rate in Saskatchewan today should be proof, and is proof, to the people of Saskatchewan, and should be proof to the government that their theory of attracting big business to solve our unemployment problem should be thrown out, and we should look at some things that have been tried in the past, and have worked.

I would like to go back and go over a bit of that history of the era from 1944 to 1964 when Tommy Douglas and the CCF government of that day created a belief in Saskatchewan that Saskatchewan people could create jobs, and could solve the debt problem that they were left with when they took over their office in 1944. And what they did is they built up a small business sector in this province that was second to none in North America.

Between 1971 and 1982 we can look at small businesses that were built – manufacturing plants. And I challenge the government, I challenge the government to name one small machinery manufacturing plant that has been established in Saskatchewan under their mandate. And do you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they cannot do it. They cannot name one manufacturing plant. There's not one Leon, there's not one Morris, there's not one Friggstad, there's not one manufacturing plant that has established in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would tell the government, and I have told them before, the process that you go through to create jobs in Saskatchewan. You do not go outside the province, you do not go outside the province and attempt to say to Massey-Ferguson, or to International Harvester that you come to Saskatchewan, and you create the jobs, and we will give you the money, like they have done with the oil companies.

I say to the government that what you do is you go to the rural communities where there's a dream and a vision, like there was with Friggstad Manufacturing, where Olaf Friggstad went to his shop one winter and built a cultivator, and went on to create one of the most sophisticated cultivation implements anywhere in the world.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Finance is saying it's a rotten deal, and he's broke. I challenge him to go outside of this House and tell Olaf Friggstad that he's broke. I challenge him to go outside of this Assembly and say to Olaf Friggstad, Mr. Rousseau from Regina, that Olaf Friggstad is broke. Because I'll tell you it's the vision of those kind of people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that have made this province.

It's not the CPR or the large multinationals that these people are attempting to attract, that create Saskatchewan. It is a dream of people like Olaf Friggstad, and like Leon's Manufacturing, and like Morris Rod-Weeder and the other small entrepreneurs, the Schultes of Saskatchewan, who create the employment.

And I would encourage the government to look at that record between 1971 and 1982, to see how many small manufacturing companies were set up, to see where the high tech in Saskatoon had its start, and to tell me in that area, in the area of high technology, how many new plants have been started anywhere in Saskatchewan. And I will say that there are very, very few.

And when you go down the list of the employment by industry in Saskatchewan, I think you see

April 17, 1984

what is really happening in the province. When you look at agriculture, you see the number in 1982 was 71,000, and you see today it's 80,000. And I would challenge the member opposite to explain to me how there are 9,000 more people working on the farms of Saskatchewan. They will know, and the public will know, that those 9,000 people are the young people who were working at the plants in Regina and Saskatoon and Calgary, who are coming home to the farm simply because they need a place to stay and food to eat.

And we now see the Minister of Social Services saying to those 9,000 who are living at home that they shouldn't, and they are having their rates cut to \$123 per month.

And when I look at the other areas, we see a similar thing happening. We see in public administration and in construction, where jobs have been lost. Manufacturing has gone from 28,000 in 1982 to 23,000 in 1984. And I say that the people who are existing here and working here at the present time in manufacturing should be supported by this government and, very simply, they are not.

For that reason, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to move the following motion under rule 16, seconded by the member for Quill Lakes:

That this Assembly regrets the government's totally inadequate job creation performance which has caused increasing hardship for thousands of Saskatchewan families, and urges that the government adopt positive, concrete measures to create stable, productive employment for Saskatchewan people.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — It is traditional that the seconder has a chance to speak second, and then from then on we rotate. The member from Quill Lakes.

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you for that ruling, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It should have been obvious, because we have adopted rules, but obviously the big hand of the opposition is trying to rule the government, trying to roll over the opposition. But I am pleased to join in this here particular debate, and I want to clearly indicate that it is rather unfortunate that today we come before this Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, and that we are publicly here criticizing the provincial government for so totally failing to create stable, productive jobs for the people of this province.

And one must ask what was their job creation proposal? And as the member from Shaunavon so adequately indicated, they assumed office, they held their big publicity meeting here in Regina, they invited all the members of the banks and the financial institutions across the world, and they declared Saskatchewan open for big business.

And in one single area what they have banked all of their, placed all of their cards, and that has been in the oil industry. And what has been the record there? There has been some activity in the oil industry, but I want to say that the cost of the program that they have adopted in support of the foreign oil companies is costing the taxpayers millions of dollars in royalty holidays.

Today we were discussing in respect to the Crown corporation, Saskoil. Interesting to note that under the royalty holiday program that was introduced by this government, and which they brag about, that they indicated that Saskoil produces about one-eighth of the total production. And they indicated that the royalty holiday for one-eighth of the production capacity in this province was over \$6 million.

Well, I want to say you could imagine . . . That was for one-half of a year, one-half a year. So this government has embarked on a big business philosophy, and it has been a total flop for the people of this province.

And what I want to say most of all, that when I go around this province, and when I talk to the constituents, many of the young people of this province are taking university education. Many

of the young people are training themselves in technical institutes. Many of the students are doing well in preparation for a job.

And I find that young person after young person has graduated, only to return home after graduation, and then to go from business place to business place, to employment centre to employment centre, seeking a job. And I want to say, Mr. Minister of Labour, you ought to get into this debate. The record of this government is a disgrace, and a betrayal of the young people of this province.

Certainly when we take a look at Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan is not number one in job creation. It's not number two, and it's not number three. Over the past year Saskatchewan ranks number seven in Canada. Six other provinces have a much better job-creation performance than Saskatchewan over the past 12 months. Saskatchewan has created 1,000 new jobs, while Manitoba created 14,000 new jobs in the past year.

Unemployment – here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we suffer this PC unemployment crisis with 44,000 people on unemployment, an increase of 6,000 in the past year. And what is more distressing to the people of this province is that there's over 60,000 people living on welfare benefits. The story is the same all over the province, and it's documented in each of the federal government's Canada Employment Centres: Yorkton, 6,275 unemployed seeking work; Melfort, 3,131 unemployed seeking work; Saskatoon, 21,010 unemployed seeking work, an increase of 4,100 unemployed in Saskatoon in the past year. And this same story is the same all across the province: fewer jobs; more unemployment; more threatened, frightened families, and young people.

While this unemployment crisis is serious wherever it hits, it is particularly, as I have indicated, a tragedy to the young people. It is they, the new generation, who are being hit especially hard under this Tory management, being made to pay the price for this government's right-wing philosophy and its wrong policies based on catering to the big business outside interests.

Over the past year we've had a decline in the youth labour force, age 15 to 24, from 115,000 down to 112. Over that year we've had a decline of 4,000 young people working, from 96,000 down to 92. But we've had an increase in the number of young people unemployed, from 19,000 to 21,000, and this is a tragedy.

Consequently, the youth unemployment rate in Saskatchewan is double the overall rate in the province. It's at 18.4 per cent among young people. That is just about one person in five among our young people that can't find a job in this province.

If we look across this here province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as has been alluded to, can you think of any single project or initiation by the government opposite which has provided meaningful work to the young people of this province.

I want to look, and they brag about jobs over at Nipawin that was initiated under the previous government. If you look at the jobs that we created over at Lanigan in the expansion of the mine, that was under way and initiated by the previous government. Each and every major initiative was initiated by the previous government, and the most disconcerting fact is what we had been able to build up in Saskatchewan a very, very high degree of manufacturing and processing plants.

And I think of my constituency alone. If we go into the village of Muenster, there they had manufacturing and processing of hydraulic cylinders. If you go into the small village of St. Gregor, there we had established Western Industries making truck boxes, employing young people, local people. We also had the Michael's Tarp, building tarps for trucks, and also building windows. You could go to Annaheim, and you have Doetker Industries doing a variety of manufacturing.

April 17, 1984

All of that was in place, and all of that was providing jobs in those communities and giving a base for employment. I can't name one single individual new manufacturing plant that has commenced under this administration.

I want to conclude, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by saying that there is a despair that is arising among our young people. I talk to the parents of . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — Order. The member has used up his 10 minutes. The Minister of Labour.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. For two years I've been listening to the rhetoric of the members opposite, and I'd like to put the record straight that the members opposite know very, very well that the roof started to cave in prior to April 26, 1982. And I'd like to just give the Assembly a few figures here.

Between October and December 31, 1981, 800 people in the potash industry laid off; lumbering and some carpentering businesses, 440 people laid off; farm machinery and prefabricating of metal products, 192 people laid off; miscellaneous industries, another 82 between October and December 1981.

Then in April 1982, your administration, you had 29,000 people unemployed. You're telling me that that must be acceptable, but the thing that you have to remember is that our employment figures, and the people in the work-force have gone from 445,000 to 500,000 in September of 1983.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. McLAREN: — And you can start playing with figures, but there are still people coming back home, and they are getting jobs. I don't like to see people unemployed either. And let's just have a look at some of the facts here.

What about the jobs that have been created through this government's initiatives in the oilfields? And we hear about the multinational oil companies getting all the gravy and so on, and all we have to do is look at the financial statement yesterday when \$31 million profit has been created in the oil patch. One thousand new, direct jobs in 1983 alone, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with \$500 million in new investment. And before we go on to the long list of job employment programs, I want to stop here and relate to the hon. members what the rest of the country think about our positive, progressive programs.

And from the *Calgary Sun*, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the paper states, and I quote:

Saskatchewan's golden age is dawning at last, and the petroleum industry, as usual, is in the vanguard of ushering in the present in Canada's perennial, tomorrow province . . . (Obviously referring to the NDP's reign. The paper goes on to conclude:) The boom in Saskatchewan oilfields is an unmistakable sign of a gradual return of business confidence in the wake of Premier Devine's election victory.

And while we're on the topic of business confidence, let's take a look at the NDP's views of small business, from an NDP government member, quoted in March 9, 1981 *Hansard*, and I quote:

This gentleman talks about free enterprise. That's a myth. There is no such thing as free enterprise in the country.

And from *Hansard* of November 30, 1981, an NDP government member says, and I quote, Mr.

Deputy Speaker: "I don't believe in free enterprise."

When we talked about the – or the member from Shaunavon talks about T.C. Douglas in the early '60s encouraging small business –if that's the case, then the NDP government must have changed the philosophy down the road, because that is not true.

Let's look at the PC record. Over 6,582 new applications for business licences since the PC government took office. The small business employment program has resulted in the creation of 3,613 full time jobs. All these facts prove this government's desire and proven record of creating jobs.

From another source, Mr. Deputy Speaker, views from the *Toronto Star*, and I quote:

(That) Saskatchewan's outlook for 1984 is the envy of other provinces. The Tories do deserve some worthy credit, especially for bringing the provinces oil patch out of its long lethargy. Their policies are a sharp reversal of the NDP view that the oil should be left in the ground until the price rises.

The article goes on to say:

Saskatchewan has discovered the dubious joys of boom-time service. Why is it that line-ups denote success in Canada, but inefficiency in Russia?

The Opportunities '83 program provided 2.7 million to assist all sectors of the economy in hiring young people; 4,300 students received jobs. A \$20 million tax reduction for small business was created in 1983, targeted at job creation.

Individual businesses could receive a \$5,000 tax credit for new employees; 4,000 new jobs were created. Eight million dollars were allocated in '83 for Saskatchewan jobs program in conjunction with the federal job creation program that financed 3,500 jobs.

On a small scale, but no less important, the Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation provided funds to assist MacMillan Bloedel's Hudson Bay wood plant to modernize the project, preserved 115 jobs, added another 32, and ensured 60 jobs in support operations. In health, the hospital programs and an additional 180 nursing positions in hospitals.

In nursing homes, there were staff increases equivalent to 84 full-time positions, and 47 special care homes.

On a related matter, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the dairy worker strike. The NDP was silent. The farmers of Saskatchewan lost \$250,000 a day — \$10,000 an hour for two days. The NDP said nothing to help Saskatchewan farmers and consumers. The NDP refused to support the back-to-work legislation. They sat on their hands. Then the next day in a complete reversal, they thought it was politically wise to support the farmer.

The Nipawin project – at the end of January, '84, there were over 200 workers on site; 142 of these workers were locals, another 32 were from elsewhere in the province. The total site workforce is expected to increase to over 700 workers when general civil contractor resumes its operations this spring. During the peak employment period of 1983, over 1,000 people were on the site. Seven thousand jobs in Saskatchewan last year in construction and related industries. Our natural gas program: 30,000 man-days, direct and indirect labour in 1982. Three hundred man-years in direct and indirect labour of 1983. And this year's program: 550 jobs, for a total of 2,300 man-months is being planned.

Additional benefits of the program will be increased businesses for the hotels, restaurants, service stations, etc. Type carriers, trucking companies, associated subcontracting and

April 17, 1984

construction firms will benefit from the program. Increased business for drafting, blueprinting, couriers, surveyors, inspection firms. With respect to new initiatives presented in the budget concerning agriculture, 1,600 new jobs established under the Saskatchewan Employment Development Program. Fifteen hundred new, six-month jobs expected to be created. The Youth Employment Entry Program will establish 1,150 six-months jobs. Look at all the figures, Mr. Deputy Speaker – 19,200 jobs will be created in 1984 and, Mr. Speaker, in sharp contrast to the NDP and their resolutions at their 1983 NDP convention, and we are talking long-range programs. Their resolutions dealt with the growing of bananas in the province to stimulate the economy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move an amendment to the motion under rule 16:

That it be amended by striking out all the words after the word “Assembly,” and by substituting, therefor, the following:

Commends the government for such programs as Opportunities '84, the employment Access Program, and the industrial incentives grant aimed at creating productive employment for Saskatchewan citizens of all ages.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, the . . .

MR. BIRKBECK: — A point of order, Mr. Speaker. If I understand the rules correctly, Mr. Speaker, the seconder of the amendment would have priority over any other speakers. I wonder if I could ask for some clarification on that, please.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — The point is well taken. The member from Battleford.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MORIN: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to second the amendment to this motion today, although it somewhat surprises me that we would be standing here debating this issue to begin with.

Having listened to the opposition, and the arguments that they make, I think it's fair to say that we should ask what their solutions are. And when asking that, then we could ask: do they work? And then it would be fair to compare them to our solutions on the government side and say: do they work? We have the benefit of 10 or 11 years of their government here, and I think that we can look at that and quite concretely say: here is how they would address this problem.

We also have the considerable disadvantage of being next door to the government of that same stripe in Manitoba, and we can say to them: how do you address this problem?

Well, what are their solutions? In the period of time they were in government their solution was to virtually double the size of the civil service at a time when the population of the province didn't increase. Comparing that to Manitoba, we saw, when there was a change in government there, the same attitude prevailed.

Their first movement when the NDP took government in Manitoba, their method and mechanism for economic development was to hire 600 civil servants – the first act they did. Their number two solution, the other way in which they approach the problem of employment, is to build public buildings or to build new Crown corporations.

Now they couldn't figure out how to build nursing homes, and that's put us into a chronic problem at this particular time. But they knew how to invest \$600 million into uranium mines,

which they subsequently decided they shouldn't have done, and now they should shut them down. We had Crown corporations sprouting up all over the place, and what did they do? Collectively they aren't worth today the amount of money they owe – an incredible master-stroke.

They brought in developers from out of province. They loaned them money at childishly low rates, and next door, in the province of Manitoba, they have a beautiful program which they call, I believe, the employment tax credit, which, if you have the bad manners to go out and get a job, they tax you a little more on it.

When they look at themselves and they ask, "Well, do our solutions work?" and they talk to one of their own and say, "What should we be doing? How can we be relevant?" they get answers that they don't like.

Mr. James Laxer, I believe is his name, indicated that the NDP were no longer in touch with economic policy, and I'll quote a few things from a report that the issued in January of 1984 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Laxer, I believe his name was. James Laxer. On page 3 of his report, when he's surveying the problem, he says:

The touchstone of NDP economic thought has been the encouragement of consumption rather than production, in an era in which the nation's productive system is rapidly degenerating, and the message is very dated.

On page 4 he says:

An endless succession of lack of adaptation to the social democratic thought of the past has left the NDP with an economic analysis of little value and an economic program that is a hodgepodge of contradictions and dead-end solutions.

On page 6 of that same report he said:

The central proposition of this report can be summed up very briefly. The NDP analysis and policy orientation is inadequate, and will not achieve the results claimed for it.

That's what their own people say for it.

On page 138 he says:

The key problem of the economy is mobilization of capital investment into key productive sectors.

If that's what they claim is the solution, but they won't acknowledge it, you can compare that to the budget where we have mobilized capital into the most productive sectors. "The chief policy problem" he says on page 139, "is to work out ways to direct savings of Canadians into sectors of the economy that have the most promise." And finally, on page 161 – and again we've seen it here within the last few weeks, their attitude toward the economy – he says: "The labour movement will have to abandon its historical reliance on the adversarial system." James Laxer.

All the things that we see in this House, that that group over there preach, have been termed by their own people to be irrelevant and out of date, something out of the 1950s.

But what did we do? What were our actions and our solutions? To begin with, we took the view that the best way that we could stimulate the economy in this province was to leave money in the hands of the people, and we initiated the elimination of the tax on gasoline, the sliding tax. In addition to that, we brought in programs to protect people from high interest rates. That has the

April 17, 1984

very same effect as the tax cut, by leaving more money in people's pockets.

And what was the reaction within the economy? Well, consumer demand increased, particularly for durable goods – cars, furniture, appliances, all those things. There was many more of these bought.

They talk about employment, and they say that the number of unemployed people in Saskatchewan has gone up. That's correct. It has. And during that same period of time our labour force has gone up some 55,000 people. Well, if the level of unemployment went up 4,000, while the labour force went up 55,000, then I guess the rest of the people went into jobs, and it's a marked difference from what we saw under their government. They play fast and loose with the numbers, but they know very well that the definition of unemployment, and to be part of the labour force, are key components of their argument, which they never both to make.

In order to be part of the labour force you have to be 15 years of age or older, and actively looking for work, or working. So if you're so depressed with the state of the economy, as people were under their administration, and people are under Manitoba NDP, that you give up, that you don't bother looking for work, then you're not considered to be part of the labour force. With the optimism and encouragement that's been generated in this province in the last several months, we've had 55,000 people either move into the province or come out of that state of depression and say, "It's now worth while looking for work in Saskatchewan. It's now worth while going out and finding employment."

I have the opportunity to drive back and forth between The Battlefords and here twice a week, and the number of cars that I meet and pass in those travels bearing Manitoba licence plates is frightening. If I were a member of the Manitoba legislature, I wouldn't be bragging about the low level of my unemployment, declining unemployment, because what they're doing in Manitoba is the very same thing we saw done here for 10 years by the NDP, and that's been driving their people out. They're driving their people into PC, Conservative provinces in order to find jobs.

For 10 years under the former NDP government we drove our people into Alberta to find work, and now that we're here, and we're building this economy the way it hasn't been built for 40 years, and the NDP are in Manitoba, they're doing the very same thing. They're exporting all of the problems that they're creating in Manitoba here into Saskatchewan.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say that their ideas are out of date. They're painfully out of date. Where are they? Where are the people, the ultimate judges on this issue? Where do they stand? Where do they put the NDP in their solutions? They leave them at 11 per cent in the public opinion polls – 11 per cent and falling. They agree with James Laxer that there is no relevance in their policy, that they're out of touch with the economy, that they have no concept of the way we're going.

The last thing in the world the people of this province and this country want is to ever have to live under an NDP government again. Their solutions are irrelevant and, as Laxer said in the internal party document that I quoted, they are a dead end, and they are very near their end.

Finally, what we see in the province all over when we travel around is that there's a new optimism, jobs being created everywhere you look, and a feeling that the budget which we've just finished debating in this House will do more to stimulate the growth and development of this province than any other document we've ever seen in this province. The venture tax credit, the fixed-rate financing, the Industrial Incentives Program – all of these things will stimulate employment and investment in the province of Saskatchewan in a way they never have been before.

One of the members before quoted all of the development that went on between '71 and '82. I've spoken in the House before, and I've quoted . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — It's my duty to inform the member his time has expired.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say a few words on the motion, and on the amendment.

The first words I would like to say is that the members opposite, when they make their presentation, should have regard to the fact that their colleagues and other independent agencies of government are putting out statements and putting out reports which belie what the members say in their speeches. And it's very, very difficult, I know, to say that the population of the province has not gone up, and the member for Battlefords just said, when his Premier has put out an economic review which indicates that the population of the province went up significantly in the 1970s. I don't know if the member for The Battlefords is calling his Premier a purveyor of false facts, but I think the Premier is right on this one, and I think the member for the Battlefords is wrong.

I heard him, again, say that the Crown corporations have not increased in value. If he had sat in on this morning's Crown Corporations Committee, he would have heard the Minister of Energy and Mines, the minister in charge of Saskoil, say that their assessment of the value of Saskoil was not the \$125 million that the public have invested in it but somewhere between 300 and \$500 million. That's its value, according to the minister. I know the member for The Battlefords doesn't agree with that but, in this case, I rather agree with the minister. I think the minister is on point on this, and the member for The Battlefords and other members who have argued about it are not on point.

Then I hear the member for The Battlefords and others talk about almost anything but the motion. The motion deals with the performance of this government, not about the performance of the parties in Ottawa, not about the performance of the Manitoba government, (although I'm happy to come to that), not about the performance of the Alberta government, not even about the numbers of cars in Saskatchewan with Alberta plates. And if we wanted to talk about non-Saskatchewan licence plates on our Saskatchewan roads, one would be very hard put to find any province represented with a half as many plates as the Alberta plates are, particularly on trucks which are doing construction work for our highways.

But I come back to another point, and I want to deal with this because members opposite select DBS (Dominion Bureau of Statistics) or StatsCan figures for one month, compare them with the six month later period. All of us know that unemployment in this province goes up and down with the seasons.

The only fair and reasonable comparisons are one year with the other year in the same month, and that's what I want to do. I want to take the month of March because it is the ones I have the latest figures for, and I want to point out that March over March for 10 years between 1972 and 1982, the average number of jobs increased by approximately 9,900.

That's just about 10,000 new jobs a year. March over March, StatsCan figures. And if members opposite don't believe them, they can look them up for themselves. If they prefer another month and take July over July, the results are very similar.

Now I want to look at the last month, the last month of March of 1983, and compare it with March of 1982, and we will see what this government has done, and we're talking about the performance of this government. We will see what it has done in the last year, March over March, and we will find that it has created, not 9,900, but approximately 1,000 jobs.

And these are the figures from StatsCan, the labour force survey, 71-001, for those who wish to check the figures, and they are accurate. And they show that we have created approximately 1,000 new jobs in the last year, not the 19,000 that the Minister of Labour talks about. It may well

April 17, 1984

be that their policies have created 19,000 new jobs, but by the same token their other policies have lost 19,000 jobs, or at least 18,000 because we only have 1,000 additional jobs.

Now that's in very sharp contrast to Manitoba, and I'll deal with Manitoba for a moment because they have 14,000 new jobs. And no one can argue that the Manitoba labour force has gone down and ours has gone up, because that is not borne out by the StatsCan figures as well. The Manitoba labour force has gone up more than ours has in the last year – more than ours has in the last year. This is the Manitoba labour force.

It is clear, I think, that our performance, the performance of Saskatchewan in creating jobs, is not as good as most other provinces and, measured by what we did in previous times, very much poorer. Approximately 10,000 new jobs young people could look forward to being created in the next year during the 1970s, now they're looking at 1,000.

We are asked to believe that there is general prosperity everywhere, and people can step out and get a job, and that there is so much optimism and buoyancy and enthusiasm that people are not concerned about whether or not their children are going to get jobs.

I have to tell all hon. members that isn't true. The parents in my constituency are concerned about whether their young person is going to get a job, and they just are not seeing jobs for their kids.

Members opposite suggest that the young people should go out and make their own jobs, and I don't in any way suggest that that wouldn't be desirable, but it's certainly not possible for all the young people in this province. And for members to suggest that that's the simple solution, simply go out and create your own job, is to indicate how far they have divorced themselves from the thinking of ordinary people who have 17 or 18 or 19-year old young people who they hope to see working this summer.

And my views are not shared by everybody, but they'll be shared by some people who members opposite may know. I see the member for Saskatoon Centre there, and I'd like to call to his attention the words attributed to the mayor of Saskatoon, Mr. Wright. Mr. Wright is quoted as saying just a few days ago:

The unemployment rate for the province is 8.4 per cent, while for Saskatoon it's 12.8 per cent, and that is very worrisome.

Now Mayor Wright is correct. That is very worrisome – 12.8 per cent unemployment for Saskatoon. And that is an enormous number of people who wish to work, who cannot work.

I think that a look at our performance compared with the rest of Canada – and we've already heard figures from my colleague, the member from Quill Lakes – indicates that we're doing less well. Canada has created 2.8 per cent more jobs than last year. We have just created 1 per cent more.

Last year, as I said, we had created 1,000 new jobs, but 7,000 people were seeking jobs, so we have 6,000 more unemployed than we had last year at this time. Members on the other side of the House are trying to say that this all comes about because of a great wave of people coming into the province. The facts, unfortunately for them, do not support that thesis.

There are not a lot of people coming into this province. Our labour force is not growing rapidly and, in fact, our population is not growing any more rapidly than it has for many years past. And that is rather confirmed by the mover's statistics recently reported in the *Leader-Post* on April 7, which indicates that they show that the province is suffering a net outflow of population. And that is, in fact, accurate.

Please understand I'm not saying the population is going down. I am saying that more people are leaving this province than are coming into this province. We still have some natural increase, some births, so the population will be going up modestly. But it is not going up faster, or indeed, as fast as it has done in some previous times.

No, we have got a lot of people unemployed. And it's no use for members opposite to try to give a great number of figures which will try to convince a young 18 or 19-year old looking for a job that somehow there's a job there and he's not getting it.

The facts are that it has not been harder to get a job in Saskatchewan than it is now for many, many years. You have to go back at least 10 years, and probably more, before you find the time when it was anything like as hard to get a job.

Now the reason, of course, is as already been touched upon by my colleague — there are no new industries around. The member for Regina South, the then minister of industry, went off to Europe and came back and announced that there would be new industrial plants as a result of his journey, and there are not going to be any new industrial plants as a result of his journey.

The member for Souris-Cannington goes off and says that we are visiting Austria so as to stimulate trade with Austria. We are going to set up an office there, and that's going to mean more jobs for Saskatchewan. Well, it has meant more trips for the member for Souris-Cannington, but no more jobs for Saskatchewan people who are dealing with trade with Austria, and if any member of this House can identify one job, just one job, that has come about because of that trip to Austria, which was expanding trade, I would be very, very interested in knowing what that job is.

Just let us consider where we are, compared with 1982. Mr. Speaker, even though it looks as if we have the same number of jobs as we had in 1982, . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. The member's time has expired.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. PARKER: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker I would just like to add a few comments to this discussion regarding job creation. I think it's a very important topic and one that we cannot take too lightly. I think that any government that is leading the nation consistently in unemployment still has to recognize that job creation must sit as its number one concern. Not only a province, but I think the federal government as well, has to recognize job creation as the task at hand in the 1980s.

I think if we look back, we see that basically, from a government approach, there are two ways of looking at job creation. One is by direct government infusion of money and the creation and the expansion of government, which we all recognize and notice to be the case with the previous administration. Another way is to have the government work hand in hand with the private sector, such as we are attempting to do here in the province of Saskatchewan.

And I think that if we notice a comparison in the first two years of the administration of the Progressive Conservative government after the April 26 election, and look back to the first two years of the previous administration, we see a very remarkable and distinctly different trend.

Under the NDP, the first two years under their administration, we noticed that the population of Saskatchewan immediately took a sharp drop. Somewhere in the neighbourhood of 22,000 people left the province within the first two years of the NDP coming into office. Now that has to tell us something. I think it tells the people of Saskatchewan something and, indeed, it tells people across Canada something with respect to the effectiveness of the philosophy of the

April 17, 1984

NDP. And I think it now comes to light more appropriately in the latest ratings which bring them down to a mere 11 per cent of the popularity.

Now in addition to 22,000 people leaving the province the first two years the NDP were in office, another 5,000 left the year after that. So obviously there's something about the NDP, and something about the feeling of anticipation towards getting a job, or surviving, that just doesn't mix right.

And if we compare that, Mr. Speaker, with the same situation that existed when the provincial government changed hands in 1982, we notice that in the first year and a half under the Devine government approximately 23,000 people moved back into Saskatchewan. And I think that, again, tells us something. I think that the anticipation is there, and that they realize after watching what was going on in this province for 11 years, and realizing that you just can't keep spending money and increasing the size of government as your sole means of trying to approach job creation problems . . . And I think that's kind of where we're at today.

We recognize that after taking over an administration that had the philosophy as theirs did, and trying to turn things around, it takes a little bit of time. And the people of Saskatchewan realize that. The people across Canada realize that. And I think that's the reason that more people are moving back into Saskatchewan because they want to be a part of that.

Our ability to respond to that challenge was highlighted most recently in the finance minister's excellent address when he tabled his 1984 budget. And I think it's obvious that the programs that he highlighted in that budget indicate to the people of Saskatchewan that they have a government that's prepared to work hand-in-hand with the private sector focusing on job creation as our number one concern.

And I think that if we look at the fact that one of the challenges we took upon ourselves was to reduce the size of government and at the same time tackle the problem of job creation, it becomes a challenge indeed. And I think that statistics will show that we've addressed ourselves to that problem, and that we're faring extremely well.

The public, contrary to the wails of the NDP, are extremely satisfied with the progress that's been made by this government, and the philosophy of this government in giving the private sector a chance to grow within the province and not to worry about the overburden of big government.

I think that if one looks back at the statistics that were in evidence in 1978, we see that the rate of job creation for the country was over 50 per cent higher than the province of Saskatchewan. It was lower than any other province in the nation except Quebec. And in 1979 the national rate was again higher than in Saskatchewan. But in 1982 we were the only place in Canada to create jobs, and our rate was well above the national average. In fact, we're creating jobs when the rest of the nation was not.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, if one looks at some of the programs, some of the areas which we targeted to offer assistance and offer stimulants to encourage the private sector to get involved and assist us in this massive problem of job creation – and I emphasize once again that it is indeed a problem, and it has to be recognized as such. I think it's a matter of how you approach the problem, and there are basically two different philosophies in approaching it.

The people of Saskatchewan, after 11 years of watching the previous government's philosophy fail, finally recognized the validity in getting the government out of business, and get the private sector back into business. And it does work, Mr. Speaker, and the results are showing themselves more and more every day.

The types of programs that we were able to initiate with respect to, for example, housing –

43,000 home owners benefited from our first housing program in 1983. And of course, jobs were created – the by-product of all of these programs is jobs, and that's what it's all about. The Build-A-Home program, in addition, offered the \$3,000 grant to the purchasers of new homes, and more than 6,000 people took advantage of it. When that type of program is successful, jobs are the benefit.

Even removing the gas tax – now you might not think it has a direct benefit in terms of the creation of jobs, but it does. It encourages retail sales, and it just basically puts more money, literally hundreds of millions of dollars more money back into the pockets of the taxpayer out there in Saskatchewan, which he in turn can spend locally throughout the community.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the PC government created a new five-year, \$32 million program for construction and renovation of culture and recreational facilities. And not only does it enhance the facilities that we need in the province so dearly, but at the same time it creates jobs. There's no better example of the way a government can work to assist an area that's needed in the province, and at the same time approach the problem of job creation, than in the rural gasification program which this government undertook. And there we see a situation where we're making it possible for the citizens of Saskatchewan to receive a more efficient system of energy, and heat, and fuel, and at the same time the by-product is the creation of jobs.

If we compare the types of programs that this government spent its money on, and we reflect back on the previous administration, we could see, for example, where they felt that it was important to spend \$162 million and purchase the remaining 70 per cent of the P.A. Pulp Mill. Now I suppose that did create a few jobs. But if you took that \$162 million and put it into very effective programs such as our finance minister alluded to in his budget address, you'll find that there are ways that you can get the private sector involved in programs such as the development or the purchase of the Prince Albert Pulp Mill.

And if the taxpayers of Saskatchewan only realized it, it's only within recent times that they are starting to realize that every time the NDP enlarged the size of government, they were putting the burden of that on the back of the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — It's my duty to inform the member his time has expired. The member for Athabasca.

MR. THOMPSON: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting to sit here and listen to the member from Moose Jaw North talking about all the opportunities that we have in Saskatchewan today, all the jobs that are being created, and the increase in population, Mr. Speaker. And he talks about the unemployment rate in this province as it is today under a Conservative government, and he was talking about how bad it was in the years when the NDP were in power. I tell you, I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the working people in this province would dearly love to have the old days when the New Democratic government was in power, and the unemployment rate was 4 per cent and under at all times.

Today under a Conservative government we now see massive unemployment and an unemployment rate in the province which is 9 per cent and above, and in certain regions of this province as high as 90 per cent. So I just say to the member for Moose Jaw that I'm sure that his constituents would appreciate if the New Democratic Party was in power, and we had our 4 per cent unemployment.

He talks about the increase in population, Mr. Speaker. And I can remember the ads that came out in the papers in Vancouver just after the Conservative government came to power: "Come Back to Saskatchewan." And these were Conservative ads put in by the Government of Saskatchewan telling the citizens who were living out in B.C. to come on back to Saskatchewan. Come back, come back home where all the opportunities are. Come back home to unemployment. Come back home to unemployment.

April 17, 1984

Come back home to welfare. That's what has taken place. And there's a lot of folks that did come back to Saskatchewan, and they have been fooled.

He talked about the programs that they brought, and he talked about the gas tax. And there isn't one Conservative member that gets up in this House that doesn't mention that gas tax. And I just say to you that taking the gas tax off is an albatross around the Conservatives' necks. Since you've taken the gas tax off, the highways are not being built, roads are not being built. They're not being maintained and, as a result, we have all the highway folks who have been fired –over 400 of them – and they're selling off the highway equipment. And this is progress, in the name of the Conservative Party.

It's unfortunate that we have to debate in this legislature today, Mr. Speaker, a resolution, particularly when we have such serious problems facing us and no action being taken. By any standard, it is obvious that this government's job creation record is poor. The evidence is all around us in every town, in every city in this province. A total of 44,000 people today, according to StatsCan's figures, 44,000 people today are unemployed in Saskatchewan – 44,000, Mr. Speaker. That is a lot of people who are unemployed in this province, especially at this time of the year.

And they talk about the jobs they have created, and I'm going to use StatsCan figures again, Mr. Speaker. In the last year, 1,000 new jobs created in Saskatchewan, and that's StatsCan's figures. The situation is especially serious in northern Saskatchewan, where we have 80 and 90 per cent unemployment. And this is just not acceptable, and absolutely nothing is being done by this Conservative government to solve that problem.

Young people who are depressed and discouraged, who continue to desperately look for work – all over this province you can see young people who are restless, who are getting in trouble with the law, because they just have no jobs and there's no future. And I've talked to many of them, and many of them are coming to me and asking me, "What is going to take place? Are there going to be any jobs?" Mr. Speaker, there is no jobs for the citizens of this province.

No activity in the North because of cut-backs by this government, no housing programs that create jobs. Schools and hospitals and municipal services – all cut back by this government, all projects that would create jobs.

Highways projects – and I talked about the highways projects. It's a shame, Mr. Speaker, to see what has happened to the highway program. You take a look at highways, and I tell you, they're not building; they're actually destroying. Highways that were oiled now have miles and miles of gravel strips in that highway that they've taken the pavement and the stabilized base out, and stockpiled it for next year. They tried to call this a job creation program in this budget. Mr. Speaker, it's a dismal failure. It's especially true of the Department of Highways where over 450 jobs have been lost by the Department of Highways in one sweep of the pen.

The Department of Highways is going to auction off 450 pieces of equipment that the minister jokingly was speaking in the House and saying, well, we didn't really take away jobs because these are cabooses and stuff like this. You never heard of a self-propelled caboose. And that's the words of the Minister of Highways.

I say to the Minister of Highways, yes, you don't have self-propelled cabooses. But in them cabooses you have maintenance people who look after them cabooses. You have cooks and cookees and bull-cooks who will work in them cabooses. You talk about not losing 440 jobs on your 440 pieces of equipment. I say it's more than 440 jobs, because a lot of this equipment has two people working it. They work double shifts. There are mechanics. There are engineers. There are individuals who go around and gas up these machines. There are a lot of jobs that are being lost, not just individuals that operate these jobs. It's the cooks and everybody who is losing.

I say that the 440 pieces of equipment is going to be a loss of more than 440 jobs. I say, as Brown's Auction company has said in their brochure, we have equipment that we're going to sell for \$30 million. I say if this Conservative government doesn't get . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . \$30 million, it's right in the brochure. And I say if you don't get \$40 million for that machinery, it's a shame.

You have destroyed 440 families in this province. And if you don't get the \$40 million that Brown Auctions indicate in their brochure . . . This is the company that you hired to sell off the equipment. They claim it's worth \$40 million. And I say to this government, you better get \$40 million. You better get \$40 million because you have destroyed the lives of over 400 families in this province by sacrificing a sale just to get your cash flow going.

A government, in two years, that could take \$130 million surplus and turn it into just about a billion dollar debt in two years, is a government that is reminiscent of the Anderson government of '29 and '34.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. THOMPSON: — And I say to the Conservative government on the opposite side of this House that the citizens of Saskatchewan will serve their judgement on you for the policies that you have espoused in this province today.

When you take a look at the serious situation that you have in the problem, the problems that we have in this province with unemployment, it's a sad situation when a government can overlook all the young people, all the turmoil that we have in this province, can sacrifice 440 pieces of highway equipment, 440 jobs, or more, that would go with them 440 pieces of equipment, and auction it off. And some of them over there are saying, oh, we're only going to get \$6 million for it.

I say that's a shame. I say that's misrepresentation in the advertisements that you're . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — I must inform the Assembly that the time under rule 16 has expired.

MOTIONS

Resolution No. 10 – Needs of the Elderly

MR. GLAUSER: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to address a few remarks to the needs of the elderly and at the close of my remarks I will be moving the motion:

That this Assembly commends the provincial government for the steps it is taking to meet the needs of the elderly in this province.

Mr. Speaker, it is most appropriate that we would, at this time, discuss this matter, since it follows so closely behind the health minister's estimates. And I might add, Mr. Speaker, it is a health minister that is confident in what he's doing. He is not that weak minister, as termed by the member from Shaunavon, when they were going through estimates . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You're not listening very carefully over there, but . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

We listen to remarks going across this floor from opposition members, which did little or nothing for the hopes and aspirations of the seniors. That kind of misinformation emanating from the mouths of that little group over to my right took me back to the medicare scare tactics of the old. . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. The member for Saskatoon Mayfair has the floor, and I'd like you to give him an opportunity so that I could hear him, and I would hope that maybe you

April 17, 1984

would like to hear him as well.

MR. GLAUSER: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . turn up your hearing aid.

Anyway, those kind of scare tactics as they related to medicare and how we were treating seniors are no longer valid. They no longer work. And the seniors of this province are well aware that the NDP neglected them when they were in government, and are now using them as pawns while in opposition. And that will not work either, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Health is addressing the problems that government inherited . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You're prepared to listen now, are you? It hurts a bit, I know. I think they will find it'll hurt a little bit more before I'm through here today.

Anyway, these governments that the . . . these problems that the government inherited as they relate to seniors, and I would like to share with the people of this province and the people of this Assembly, the inaction of the NDP as it relates to long term care. Now we've heard about that moratorium, but it was never really explained that thoroughly, and for the record I would like to refer to a letter of January 4, 1976. This letter was written by one Walter E. Smishek who happened to be the chairman of the treasury board at the time, and it was sent to the Hon. H. Rolfes, minister of social services. And it says, and I quote,

On December 1, 1975, treasury board reviewed the Department of Social Services 1976-77 budgetary request for construction grants to special care homes. Treasury board is seriously concerned about the level of construction occurring in the special care home sector. The level of activity proposed in the '76-77 budgetary request would result in a surplus of beds without considering the impact of a home care program.

Treasury board deferred its decision on the level of funding to be approved for this activity pending the review of more detailed information on all committed projects. Until such time as a need for additional beds can be clearly identified, and a suitable construction policy defined, a moratorium on further commitments should be enforced.

A moratorium on special care homes for our senior citizens, and this is why we find ourselves in the predicament that we are in today. And I want to talk about two particular aspects of the needs of the seniors. And one is independent living; the other, long term care.

Now in regards to independent living, to aid the senior citizens to remain independent and stay in their homes by reducing the financial burden of essential repair and ensuring safe living accommodation, grants are being provided that have been increased from \$650 to \$1,000. This program is being conducted through Sask Housing. Everyone over 65 years is eligible. And the people of Saskatchewan, I am sure, are going to appreciate this program that will enable them to stay on much longer in their homes.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Read that increase again. Is that a 50 per cent increase? That's a bigger one than 50 per cent.

MR. GLAUSER: — Oh, that's much bigger than 50 per cent.

The other aspect of independent living is the new emphasis on community support services, and I would just like to reiterate these. And it is worth the idea of providing a broader spectrum of continuing care services which promote independence and preserves links with home, community, and family.

And this new emphasis on community support is reflected in pilot projects which will stimulate

nursing homes to develop community support services such as respite care and senior day programs; financial support to the Alzheimer's and related diseases association; pilot projects for small hospitals to enable them to provide respite beds and other services for the elderly; funds to develop senior day care pilot projects to provide respite relief for families and special care to the elderly.

These initiatives, and those for nursing homes, represent an effective balance of two fundamental principles.

Another area that I want to touch on – a number of steps that have been taken to improve the health services to the elderly. And the best thing I can suggest that happened here was that with continuing care transferred to the . . . from Social Services department to the Department of Health, has done much to overcome the piecemeal approach to health care for the elderly and permit a unified comprehensive approach as I mentioned earlier. Incorporating community health services, home care services, hospital services, nursing home services, and mental health services in one department, will do nothing but foster co-ordination and avoid duplication.

The establishment of a senior citizen's bureau in the Department of Social Services will play a major role in government wide co-ordination of services for the elderly.

The other aspect of this is consultation. And this approach which emphasizes consultation, local involvement, and local autonomy. The seniors' forum in Saskatoon, for one, and the continuing think-tank in October of 1983 –and I attended that one at Qu'Appelle, and many good suggestions came out of that particular seminar and are being applied in a systematic way.

The re-establishment of a continuing care consultation committee with representation from a wide variety of concerned organizations and persons, and pilot projects for small hospitals, and small projects for nursing homes, which call on local people to identify needs and problems, and propose local solutions. A number of encouraging, positive responses have been received.

Now what about the nursing homes? The major improvement to nursing home care can be summed up in four or five sentences. And increased funding of nursing homes for construction and renovation amounting to 11 million in two years, compared with 7.25 million in seven years under the NDP. It is a significant change; 101 new nursing home beds, and 88 replacement beds for '83-84. Interest income retention policy and surplus sharing policy which is now under development, and that is a welcome one to the directors of any of the homes that I have been in touch with.

Another fundamental issue is the behavioural problem of residents, and additional funding to special-care homes for additional staff, and minor renovations, and provisions for day and night respite care. And following the review of the assessment, placement and classification work is under way at the local level to improve co-ordination of services and assessment of residents.

I'd like to say a word or two about foot care: 80 per cent of the elderly in this province have foot problems. The NDP promised that, and what were the years? 1974, an election year; 1978, another election year. And where was the program? Nowhere. Nowhere. This government has initiated and developed a provincial chiropody program, and a director is now in place and has been employed to implement the program.

Now I'd like to turn a moment to hospital services and the new thrust in that area to take care of the elderly. First of all, 500,000 to fund pilot projects for small hospitals, and many of the projects will be aimed at the elderly; 100 new positions in global-budget hospitals where many elderly were cared for; a thorough study of . . . (inaudible) . . . those problems to ensure better service for all age groups, followed by 1.6 million incremental funding to Saskatoon hospitals, and continuation of geriatric assessment unit, and a day hospital in Saskatoon and Moose Jaw – day hospitals. And all of these programs directly affect the elderly.

April 17, 1984

And then what about the cancer facilities? Approximately 60 per cent of the new cases of cancer identified each year are persons of 65 or over. Increased funding for equipment and staff – equipment and staff – 1.175 million per year respectively over a period of five years. Not just one year, but five years. It means tangible benefits for the elderly cancer patients.

The results have been a dramatic increase in the funding for construction and renovation of nursing homes – 11 million, as I said earlier. And I would like to repeat myself on that one. And seven and a quarter million in the last seven years under the NDP . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You're quite correct.

Staff increases – and this is another important area. And as I go around to nursing homes and I talk to these people . . . Staff increases equivalent to 84 full-time positions in 47 special care homes, at a cost of 1.7 million annually. Positions include nurses, nurse's aides, physiotherapists, and activity workers. A special 2 million for pilot projects in special care homes in home care for services such as respite care.

All of these measures are doing much to enhance the systems whereby people will be able – the elderly – be able to not only stay in their homes for a longer period of time, but when they do need special-care home attention, those facilities will be there.

And in closing, I would just like to talk about one more area, and that's integrated facilities. I think this is a very innovative move, and I think the minister is to be commended immensely for this particular project, one which is already under way at Lampman. They wanted this project as long ago as 1974, but nobody listened to them.

Now, as a result of that initial project, we'll be inviting applications from 17 other communities where the concept seems feasible. And as a matter of fact, they will review all proposals closely and make decisions after thorough analysis, and will not be pushing and rushing into anything without proper planning. Funding for integrated facility projects for up to 85 new beds over the next two years, together with other new beds mentioned a few minutes ago, brings the number of beds over the next two years, to 362.

Just one more comment I would like to make, and that's on the Saskatchewan assistance program. An increase of \$25 for singles and \$30 for a married couple will go a long ways to assisting people to maintain their life-style in their homes, and in conclusion I would like to move:

That this Assembly commends the provincial government for the steps it is taking to meet the needs of the elderly in this province.

and seconded by the member from Saskatoon Eastview. Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. YOUNG: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to second the motion of my colleague, the member from Saskatoon Mayfair. I should point out, Mr. Speaker, that my constituency of Saskatoon Eastview is probably the largest constituency in the province. It would have probably one of the largest concentrations of senior citizens, as well, as any constituency.

The Scott-Forget Towers, which are located in my constituency, right near the Market Mall, is probably second only to the Pioneer Village in Regina with respect to one large complex. Saskatoon Eastview also has St. Ann's Home, Extendicare, the veterans' home on Preston Avenue, Eventide Home, the Frank Eliason Centre, Stensrud and Eamer Courts, as well as the Elim Tabernacle Home on 8th Street.

I have here, Mr. Speaker, a list of some 17 things that our government has done for seniors in less

than two years of office, and I'd like to go through them for the benefit of the members opposite. My colleague has pointed out our record in nursing home construction. The dollars and cents that go with those figures, Mr. Speaker, are \$11 million in our two years, as compared to \$7.2 million in the last seven years of the NDP administration. And this, Mr. Speaker, is definitely a hard dollars-and-cents commitment to nursing home construction.

The previous administration, Mr. Speaker, was tied up in its purchasing of farm land at exorbitant prices, the construction of uranium mines, buying potash mines – everything other than the needs of the people. Their priorities were not nursing homes. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, by the words of their own minister, they put a moratorium on nursing home construction. And I think for that, Mr. Speaker, they must be condemned, and our government must be congratulated for spending more in two years than they have spent in seven years in nursing home construction.

We will be providing, Mr. Speaker, as well, \$6 million this year to expand beds and improve staff ratios in the nursing homes. Some patients, Mr. Speaker, in the Frank Eliason Centre, that I mentioned earlier in my speech, have to wait, at times, till 9:30 at night to be put to bed. They need a nurse to help them go to bed, and the staff ratios, as such, in that place were requiring some of the patients to wait long beyond their bedtime in order to be put to bed, and that's something that will be addressed with this \$6 million, Mr. Speaker.

I will also point out the Senior Citizens' Home Repair Program as one of the steps we have taken to improve the lot of senior citizens. The program, Mr. Speaker, commences on August 1st. Seniors with an income of less than \$16,500 will qualify for \$1,000 grant, and the repairs that can be taken underneath this program, Mr. Speaker, are painting repairs, insulation of the basements, siding, and things like that. And certainly this program will go a long ways, Mr. Speaker, to keep seniors in their homes a little bit longer; make their life more comfortable; and certainly every year that they can enjoy in their own homes is that much less grief and expense in the nursing homes.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Why the delay in that program?

MR. YOUNG: — There's no delay. Comin' right away.

I'd also like to point out, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Income Plan, which is for seniors outside of institutional care. Now that program, Mr. Speaker, has only had, since its inception in 1975, one \$5 increase for cost-of-living purposes. We took the initiative, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of seniors, and on July 1st the rate for singles will be doubled from \$25 to \$50; and for couples, Mr. Speaker, it'll be going from \$45 to \$75. And I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that this, combined with the federal increase, will be the largest enrichment for seniors since the old age pension plan that came into being in 1952, and for that, Mr. Speaker, I must comment our government and really have some serious doubts about the NDP's commitment. A \$5 increase in the last seven years by the NDP does not hold well for their commitment to seniors, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to also point out, Mr. Speaker, the programs initiated by my colleague, the member from Maple Creek, the minister in charge of Consumer Affairs. And that, Mr. Speaker, is a program which benefits a lot of seniors, that being our rent stabilization program.

This program, Mr. Speaker now covers all apartments that are more than four years old. Prior, Mr. Speaker, to rent stabilization, I had a large number of constituents who lived in an apartment building across from the Market Mall on Louise Street. They had experienced through the Office of the Rentalsman a 13.9 per cent increase in their rents. They felt that that was out of line, and accordingly I helped them with their appeal to the Rent Appeal Commission. Now our appeal was the last case heard before the old board, Mr. Speaker, and we were unsuccessful in that appeal. The next day, I might add, the board changed to a new board so we'll never know what would have been the results in that case.

April 17, 1984

We then . . . On their behalf, Mr. Speaker, I took the matter to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal. The grounds for appeal were very limited. We were unfortunately, unsuccessful. However, I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that if our new program — our new rent stabilization program — had been in effect, there wouldn't have been a 13.9 per cent increase. The rule is 5 per cent and, accordingly, the grief suffered by both myself and my constituents would not have come to pass if the rent stabilization program had been in effect earlier, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to also point out, Mr. Speaker, that our Public Utilities Review Committee is also a benefit to not only the younger folks out there, but also the senior citizens. We, of course, as you will recall, froze utility rates for our first year in office, and after that, now, PURC reviews all rate increases. And, Mr. Speaker, I say it has a very good record in rolling back and acting as the watch-dog for what it was intended in rate increases. This certainly benefits senior citizens in that these are some of the fixed costs that are uncontrollable, and certainly long overdue — the Public Utilities Review Commission in this province.

We were the only province, Mr. Speaker, who did not have one. And the NDP howled long and large when we were in opposition that that wasn't needed here in Saskatchewan. And now their position has changed considerably. They're rooting for it all the way. It's strange how their attitude's changed with respect to the Public Utilities Review Commission.

I would also point out, Mr. Speaker, that in Saskatchewan we have the lowest cost of living in Canada, which is of great benefit for seniors who are, for the most part, on fixed incomes, Mr. Speaker.

We have the lowest gas rates. Under the NDP gas rates increased, Mr. Speaker, 200 per cent in the last seven years. We've kept them down, Mr. Speaker, to 6.5 per cent yearly average increase.

Similarly with power, Mr. Speaker, — the lowest power rates. The NDP put them up 98 per cent in their last seven years. Our average increase, Mr. Speaker, has been 7.5 per cent.

Lowest phone as well, Mr. Speaker. And on all these fixed costs I think that these are benefits to senior citizens, especially those on fixed income.

My sixth point, Mr. Speaker, is a very small point, but certainly something that will help the seniors enjoy their later years, and that's the fishing licence fees have been eliminated for senior citizens.

Point number seven, Mr. Speaker, our major expansion of community colleges. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that this ties in to the seniors in that . . . Especially in the smaller towns, a lot of seniors take a lot of enjoyment in enrolling in a lot of the courses and programs of the community colleges. And for this, Mr. Speaker, I must again commend our government for doing something that will benefit a lot of seniors, especially, I say, in the small towns.

Now, the next point that I have, Mr. Speaker, is the health care system. It's been talked of somewhat by my colleague, the member from Mayfair. But I think that it's very obvious now, Mr. Speaker, that for the last few weeks in the House, question period and where else, there's not been a peep out of the NDP with respect to health care. They're off on other tangents.

Certainly during the election they made great bones, Mr. Speaker, and I say they virtually terrorized the old folks with their campaigning. They said, Mr. Speaker, that the Conservatives would destroy medicare if they got in. But with their enchantment, Mr. Speaker, for buying farmland and their enchantment for purchasing potash mines and building uranium mines, they let, Mr. Speaker, our health care system slip.

Before we became government we were eighth out of 10 provinces in health care spending. As I

understand it, Mr. Speaker, there was only Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia that spent less on health care than Saskatchewan, and certainly, we had the wealth, we had the resources. But the priorities of the Blakeney administration were buying farmland and buying potash mines. And in their own words, they put a moratorium on nursing homes. And certainly I would suggest they did the same thing overall in health care.

We're now, Mr. Speaker, \$1,000 per man, woman, and child. And certainly, it's very obvious that the senior citizens most often make a higher use of our health care system than younger citizens of Saskatchewan. And again, this falls onto their lap much more than the average citizen. And I think that our health care spending where it is today is very much loaded in favour of the seniors in that they do use the system somewhat more.

We had last year, Mr. Speaker, our enriched senior citizens' housing project which was brought in to build senior citizens housing in the small areas to keep seniors in their home communities as opposed to dragging them into the cities. This year the Minister of Health has announced, Mr. Speaker, a program whereby special care homes will be attached on to small town hospitals. I believe Lampman is going to be the first of 14 such projects. And certainly this is something, Mr. Speaker, which is right down the alley of senior citizens. It's more nursing homes. It's attached to a hospital in case of some acute problem they may have, and is something that the NDP, if they had thought about it, were not prepared to spend the dollars to do. This is coupled with our enriched senior citizens' housing program, certainly a big step forward of the senior citizens.

We also have, Mr. Speaker, new hospital was being constructed in Nipawin, Cut Knife, Lloydminster, and extensions to the Melfort and the Yorkton hospitals, and in Saskatoon we have a \$50 million program to assist with capital projects at the three big hospitals there.

We also have, Mr. Speaker, another item that I think is big for senior citizens, and that's our \$17 million commitment to cancer treatment. Certainly all ages suffer from cancer but, as I understand it, seniors somewhat more than younger groups. And this, again, is something that is good for the seniors in this province, Mr. speaker.

We have attempted to take on a new line and involve seniors more so in the development of policy and programs in this government, and that, Mr. Speaker, was enshrined in our establishment of a seniors' bureau, and I think that is a great step forward for seniors. To involve them in the policy formation of government is something that's been long overdue and something that the previous administration did not feel they had a worthwhile contribution towards.

We've had our senior citizens' task force, Mr. Speaker, on housing – again, a forum whereby the seniors could place their priorities and their concerns with respect to housing before the officials in charge of many sorts of senior citizens' constructions. And certainly, I think that it bodes well for our government to allow the seniors to participate, through that task force, with respect to design, placement needs, and type of construction basically, Mr. Speaker, of some of the seniors' homes.

Mr. Speaker, I think that most of all for the seniors, if there was one thing that they feel that we have done which certainly was not done by the NDP, Mr. Speaker, it's bringing home the kids, bringing home the children from Alberta and all of the other areas that they were driven off to by 11 years of socialism in this province. They're certainly coming back now. Even the member from Elphinstone, the Leader of the Opposition, notes considerable amount of Alberta cars here, and I would point out to him, Mr. Speaker, that those cars are allowed a few weeks holiday here from Alberta before they have to change their plates. And probably what he's witnessing is people coming home and changing their licence plates when they have to.

I must also point out, Mr. Speaker, that the home care program, the Meals on Wheels, that's been conducted on a volunteer basis, the adult day care, Mr. Speaker, are all things that help the

April 17, 1984

seniors again, help them to stay in their homes as long as possible.

The chiropody services mentioned by my colleague, the member from Mayfair, is also something, as he pointed out, that was promised year after year by the NDP as an election gimmick and never came to fruition, Mr. Speaker, until we came into government.

And I think the list of 17 is just pointing out the highlights, Mr. Speaker, of the things that we have done for seniors and things that I feel this House should commend the Government of Saskatchewan on and, accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in seconding the motion of the member from Mayfair.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say from the outset that I will be voting against this motion when it comes to a vote. When I complete my remarks, I'll be asking for leave to adjourn. But I think it's almost laughable that this Assembly should be debating something that talks about commending the provincial government for its steps it is taking to meet the needs of the elderly of the province.

I listened with a great deal of interest as two members from the government got up and spent the majority of their time talking about the home care program in Saskatchewan. And as well, they should talk about the home care program that was brought in by the NDP government, which has done a great deal to bring about the option for seniors to live in their own homes, as opposed to going to nursing homes.

But I would say that, as well, it would be interesting if the members would look at the budget that they have brought in in the last two years and realize that in both of those budgets there was actually cut-backs to the home care program.

Mr. Speaker, I say laughable, if it were not so sad at what this government is, in fact, doing to the senior citizens. A home care program which they would like to talk about and like to take credit for, they are undermining day by day by cutting back the grants that are given to the home care boards throughout the province. This is not something that is being made up. They need only look at their own budget to realize that in this year's budget there is a cut of 5 per cent in the home care program.

But I would like to say that in terms of the senior citizens of this province, the biggest concern that any senior I talk to today is the unemployment of young people. When I go around the province and talk to what is the main concern of senior citizens, the grandparents of this province, they talk about the employment of their grandchildren or their children.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that what the seniors of this province will judge this government on is how they have treated their grandchildren in creating employment and creating jobs for them to go to.

And when we look at the record of this government – and we spent a good deal of the afternoon looking at the problems with unemployment – when we realize that in the cities close to 20 per cent of those under the age of 25 cannot find employment, you will then understand what the biggest problem of the senior citizens in Saskatchewan is. Because these people who came here and built this province, who built the credit unions and the co-ops and the wheat pools, created employment, built the province, are not pleased with a government that would come in and raise the unemployment rate to 8.4 per cent.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I find it interesting, as well, that a government would bring in a resolution like this, when they were the government that cancelled the shelter allowance the first week they were in power – a shelter allowance which would have given up to \$100 a

month to seniors to remain in their own home. A shelter allowance which would have helped pay for the rent, would have helped pay for the taxes, would have helped pay for the utility rates, was cancelled by this government as one of their first actions when they came to power.

The second thing they did for senior citizens was to cancel the home repair program. And you will know, Mr. Speaker, that that was done in the first budget of this government.

They cancelled the home repair program and a year later they have now announced – re-announced – another home repair program, and pretend that they were the instigators and brought about this program . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

The Minister of Social Services says it wasn't cancelled. Well, what do you call it when you can't get any money to repair your home? What would you call it, Mr. Minister of Social Services? You say it wasn't cancelled. What was it? There was no program. Frozen?

You say there's no moratorium on nursing homes, yet you've built no nursing homes in Regina, where there's a waiting list of over 1,000. I'll ask you, Mr. Minister, is there a moratorium on nursing home construction in Regina?

I'll say, Mr. Speaker, there's a moratorium on nursing home construction in Regina as surely there has ever been a moratorium on nursing homes. We now have 1,200 people on waiting lists for nursing homes in the city of Regina – the biggest number that there has ever been in the history of the province — 1,200 people who are waiting up to three years.

The waiting list, according to the administrators at the nursing homes, would indicate that the waiting period is now three years in the city of Regina to get into a nursing home.

This government says it's the NDP's problem. Well, I'll tell you, after you've been in power for over two years – you've been in power for two years – no one believes you that it's anyone's problem but your own. You have not built or opened one nursing home bed in the city of Regina since you came to power.

Show me the beds that you've built in Regina since you came to power. Name me one. I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, there has not been one nursing home bed built in the city of Regina, when we have waiting lists in the thousands to get into them, where senior citizens have to wait three years to get into a nursing home.

And this government has the audacity to bring in a motion which would say we should be commending the provincial government for the good job they're doing. Well, you are the only people who would do that in the province of Saskatchewan today. A government that would promise and get votes by promising free telephones to senior citizens and then back down on that program, I say, should not be commending itself.

I say a government that cancels the shelter allowance program, which would have paid to senior citizens up to \$100 per month, should not be commending itself. A provincial government that cancels the home repair program should not be commending itself. A government that has cut, two years in a row, the home care program should not be commending itself on its programs for senior citizens. A government who raises nursing home rates every three months – has raised nursing home rates by as much as 17 per cent since they've come to office – should not be talking about all the great things they're doing for senior citizens. Raising bus rates by 18 per cent, when they look at taking rent controls off rental housing and apartments for senior citizens.

When we look at the one positive thing that they have done, Mr. Speaker, the one positive thing that you can say they have done is the Saskatchewan Income Plan, and I'll grant you that for the 2 per cent that they're helping, giving the maximum amount to, yes, the 86 cents a day will be appreciated, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister of Social Services, the 86 cents a day you're giving for 2

April 17, 1984

per cent – for 2 per cent of the seniors – I'm sure they will appreciate it.

But, Mr. Speaker, the 80 per cent who are getting nothing, the 80 per cent who are suffering under the problems of home care cuts, the nursing home rate increases, and, of course, the member will know that senior citizens in nursing home facilities will not get the increase in the Saskatchewan Income Plan – the government is not increasing their rates – but for the 2 per cent, we thank the government. But for the 80 or 85 per cent who are seeing nothing but cuts from this government, I think the judgement will come at the next election.

Mr. Speaker, I would argue as well that the increase in the dispensing fee for the drugs that seniors have to use and are prescribed by doctors, that increase in dispensing fee has gone a great ways to causing the cost of living for seniors to skyrocket. When you look at the utility rates that this government has imposed on the senior citizens in this province, you will say that this government is doing a disservice by increasing in one area for 2 per cent of the population and increasing the power rates and gas rates for all the senior citizens by far above, Mr. Speaker, far above the inflation rate in the province of Saskatchewan.

When you look at the structure that has been set up to try to get senior citizens not to apply for nursing homes; when you look at the attempt that is being made by raising home beds; I think the government should not be commending itself, but should be embarrassed to even admit that they would continually raise nursing home rate every three months in an attempt to get senior citizens off of waiting lists. Because I think that kind of an action by a government will not go unnoticed by thoughtful and caring people in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, with those words I would like to say that this group in the opposition will be looking at this and talking to senior citizens over the weeks to come.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: —. It being near 5 o'clock I do now leave the Chair until 7 p.m.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.