

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
November 30, 1984

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. TUSA: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce through you, to the members of this Assembly, a group of 52 students from Lipton School, under the direction of their teacher, Anita Reisdorf; Barb Bajak; Tom Johns; and Oliver Engel is also with them. They will be having a tour of the building at 10:30. And at 11 o'clock unfortunately they will not be meeting with me, but with my colleague from the Melville constituency, which is the neighbouring constituency, Grant Schmidt. I trust that the students, teacher, and chaperons will have a very, very interesting morning here in the Legislative Building. I trust that you will also enjoy question period. I ask that you welcome them.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SCHMIDT: — As the member for Melville I would also like to welcome the students from Lipton. Some of them do live in my constituency and, by reason that their member will be speaking at 11, I will meet with them for drinks and information. I'd like, also, to have the members welcome them here, and I hope they have an interesting stay.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of my colleague, Gerald Muirhead, who unfortunately could not be here today. Mr. Muirhead's son had emergency surgery this morning, and I know that all members in the House would wish Mr. Muirhead and his son the very best and a speedy recovery.

However, it is my pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, a group of students from Mr. Muirhead's constituency, from Craik High School.

This is a group of Grade 11 and 12 students who are accompanied by Glenn Hymers, a teacher; Alan Fitzsimmons, a principal; and Ralph Scholler, the driver. We welcome them to the House. I'm sorry Mr. Muirhead could not be here; however, it would be my pleasure to meet with you at 10:30 in the rotunda area, followed by a short meeting in Room 255 of the legislature.

So I would ask that all members, in Mr. Muirhead's absence, would join with me giving a very, very warm welcome to the students from Craik. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Assistance for Farmers

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the Premier. More than a year ago the Premier made a very precise promise that his government would open up the provincial treasury to protect farmers in trouble. Farmers are still waiting for him to make good on that promise.

Yesterday, in the Speech from the Throne, there was a promise of comprehensive legislation to provide security for "viable family farms." This morning farmers are asking the very simple

question: — what do you mean, sir? What is the comprehensive legislation going to mean in dollars and cents to farmers of Saskatchewan? Is your government proposing to keep its commitment by opening up the treasury? Is it proposed that there be a moratorium coupled with debt adjustment? What is your proposal to assist viable family farms, and what is your general definition of a viable family farm?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, notice has been filed with respect of pending legislation. We will be discussing it, and debating it, and going through it in considerable detail the first of next week.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. By figures which are well recognized, about 50 Saskatchewan farmers a month are losing their farms or their equipment or their livestock to banks and financial institutions. With respect, you are now offering them some promises and commitments for next week when they are looking for solid commitments on your part, and solid cash. Is your government going to declare a moratorium on foreclosures and seizures? Is that part of the package you propose to offer to Saskatchewan farmers?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that we're not discussing the Bill today, and that we will be getting into it in considerable detail. He also knows that thousands and thousands of young farmers are starting farming and beginning to farm and own farm land in this province at a much faster rate than they ever have in the history of our province because of our programs.

The combination of things that we have spent on agriculture means that we are spending something in the neighbourhood of \$150 million in cash in the agricultural sector that wasn't spent before, so we would quite be prepared to discuss the Bill when it's introduced in the legislature.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Speaker, I have a new question to the Premier. He's suggesting that farmers have never had it so good. Is your government planning on revamping the farm guaranteed loan program, or the operating loan guaranteed program that you had in place? Is that the good program that you're talking about that the farmers have had that saved hundreds and thousands of farmers you're talking about? Is that the program you're talking about that . . . Are you saying that program worked?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, we will be introducing the legislation first of next week, and we can debate it in detail. I'm not going to present the legislation today, and the hon. members know that.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Speaker, I didn't ask that question. I asked the minister, the Premier: are you saying that the farm operating loan program worked? I just asked you that question. You instituted last year, as a measure to save the farms, an emergency farm loan program. Are you saying that program worked?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, that program helped many farmers.

MR. ENGEL: — Twenty-five? About 25, too?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I don't have the exact number. I'll take notice and get the information.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Speaker, I have one more supplement on that. The administrator of that program has been on the media publicly on many occasions saying the program isn't working. The farmers can't qualify and, those few that do, the banks won't accept them. Are you going to revamp that program?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, we will be tabling legislation dealing with agricultural debt, and I said that. I want the hon. member to remember that to date we are spending in the neighbourhood of \$150 million cash annually in agriculture that they didn't spend. That's a significant amount of money that's going directly into the hands and the pockets of farmers.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the programs the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Finance and other ministers have put together for the agricultural sector, and there will be more, Mr. Speaker, and it would be introduced next week.

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A further question to the Premier. I'd like to ask the Premier: — will the government's farm program package, that you failed to talk about, will it include additional help for the farmers of north-eastern Saskatchewan since, indeed, you broke the promise previously? In June you promised the farmers of north-eastern Saskatchewan \$20 million of assistance. Since then it has been reduced to \$7 million. The Mulroney government indicated that they will only match the 7 million that you have put up — may match. What I'm asking you is: indeed, will you take a look at the desperate situation of the farmers of north-eastern Saskatchewan and keep a promise that you gave during an election campaign trying to help the federal Tories. Will you come and include in the package assistance commensurate with what you promised in June?

HON MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I cannot elaborate on the Bill or what's in the Bill until it's tabled, and the hon. members know that. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that the hon. members are doing the province or anybody else any favours by asking questions that they know that there's no answer for because, obviously, I can't speak on the Bill, and they know that. So at least the people of Saskatchewan should know that they're wasting everybody's time.

MR. SPEAKER: — I recognize the member for Regina North West.

MR. SVEINSON: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please, order, please. Order. The member that was asking question had a supplement. I'll recognize the member for Quill Lakes and take the member from Regina North West next.

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the Premier will not, in any way, outline any of the details to the farmer situation who are in desperate shape, I ask you, Mr. Premier, can you indicate any steps that you are going to take which is going to alleviate the massive problems faced by the small business people in this province? And I refer specifically to those small contractors in the building, the carpenters, the welders, the plumbers, the students that have gone to technical school and today are laying unemployed. Have you a policy to assist the small business community and get this economy rolling?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that I can't in any detail, talk about the Bill. The Bill will have ample opportunity to be debated here, and it will be when it's introduced, and we'll be happy to do so.

MR. SVEINSON: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Relating to the problems that the farmers of north-eastern Saskatchewan have experienced over the last two or three years, recently the Rt. Hon. John Turner made a commitment to the farmers of north-western Saskatchewan for \$16 million in addition to the \$8 million this provincial government agreed to put into that program. The political will of the federal government is at question here. Recently, for the Ontario tobacco industry, they passed Bill C-4 through the federal House with great haste. My question is: are the Ontario tobacco farmers any more important to this country than the north-eastern Saskatchewan farmers who, in fact, were committed \$18 million of which . . . They were committed 16 million by the Rt. Hon. John Turner, of which 8 million has been cut back. Is that the kind of commitment we can expect of this federal government to the farmers in

north-eastern Saskatchewan?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I believe it's fair to say that Mr. Turner, when he was prime minister, didn't even take the proposal to treasury board so didn't have a choice or even a chance to be paid. John Wise, the Minister of Agriculture federally, as I understand it, has presented the case before treasury board. In the event it's successful at treasury board, the payment will be made, and the commitment will be honoured.

MR. SVEINSON: — Supplementary. Can you outline the payment that will be made to the farmers in north-eastern Saskatchewan, relative to the federal commitment and the commitment through treasury board?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I couldn't hear the question.

MR. SVEINSON: — A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I didn't ask you for a commitment. I just asked you for a figure. Apparently you know the figure coming out of Ottawa that has been committed to the farmers in north-eastern Saskatchewan. What I ask, Mr. Premier, is: what is the size of the commitment? Is it the \$16 million that was committed by the Right Hon. John Turner, or has the figure been reassessed, and have the farmers of north-eastern Saskatchewan suffered as a result, and will they receive the full allocation?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker. Clearly, people in western Canada know too well federal liberal policies when it comes to agriculture, and they have been rejected for years, Mr. Speaker. They've been rejected. When you're looking at the kinds of programs that we put together in the province of Saskatchewan with the new Prime Minister in Prince Albert, we had premiers there, the Leader of the Opposition at that time, and now the Prime Minister, who said, "Yes, we will take the tax off diesel fuel for farmers." And it's the first time that it's been done for the province of Saskatchewan, in the country, whatever, of \$25 million a year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — As well as dealing with capital gains tax, and as well as dealing with freight rate changes which are very, very powerful, suggested by the Saskatchewan farmers and now in the process of being committed to, and we are very proud of that. And I would just say, Mr. Speaker, when they take their programs through treasury board, the hon. member will see the kind of commitments that are made.

MR. SVEINSON: — Final supplement, Mr. Speaker. The Premier earlier indicated that that commitment had been through treasury board, and the commitment has been made by the federal government in Ottawa to the farmers of north-eastern Saskatchewan.

Earlier, I alluded to the fact that there was a trade-off. There was a trade-off between the farmers in Ontario and the farmers in Saskatchewan, and that the trade-off was taking moneys out of this province and putting them back into eastern Canada that the farmers in this province had been committed by a previous federal government.

Now I ask you, Mr. Premier, and I asked you yesterday to, in fact with the opposition and with myself, let us put a resolution together and let us go to Ottawa with the resolution and request the commitment that was made by the Re. Hon. John Turner to the farmers of north-eastern Saskatchewan, and do it immediately.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I know that the federal government is dealing with the commitment. They told me, and they've told the Minister of Agriculture, I believe, in two meetings, that the matter is before treasury board. It's farther along now than it ever was. When Mr. Turner was prime minister, he had the same possibility to do it. So it's in the process. It's before treasury board, and I'm sure the minister will be telling us soon what the commitment is.

MR. LUSNEY: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Premier. Mr. Premier, not only didn't your program deliver the money you promised, but it also missed many of the farmers that deserved aid in north-eastern Saskatchewan. The flood control area was not contained only within the R.M. boundaries, but it extended those boundaries.

Mr. Minister, I have a letter here from the Archerwill Credit Union that states: "There are many farmers who should have received this aid and have been omitted because they are on the opposite sides of the boundaries."

Now, Mr. Minister, are you prepared at this time to consider in a new program the fact that some of these farmers have been missed and deserve assistance? And will you also indicate to them that you will be looking at farmers outside that area and providing them some very much needed assistance in the areas outside of those five R.M. boundaries?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I believe, as the Minister of Agriculture has informed the House, the Deputy Premier, the Minister of Agriculture and other ministers met with a large number of R.M. councillors in the areas. They talked about the methods. They talked about the procedure in which they could provide assistance to people, what would be the fairest. And we agreed that local people should be involved in making the decision with respect to boundaries. We talked to no end of individuals with respect to that procedure, knowing it's never going to exactly please everybody when you draw a line around an area that's been hurt. We included most.

Generally people agreed with the minister that that was the way to do it. We didn't impose it from Regina. We went out to their communities and asked them about it. They were very happy with it. I suspect some people will say that if the line didn't go half a mile the right way or too far west or too far south a quarter of a mile, or something else — but we went to the local people to draw it up. They were involved with it and very happy with it. And I congratulate those that did participate in co-operation, and this consolation . . . (inaudible) . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. LUSNEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, are you saying then that all the farmers in north-eastern Saskatchewan that needed assistance under the flood program received it?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I am saying that we worked with the local R.M.'s and the municipal councillors and reeves to design a mechanism to help the people that they thought needed assistance. We worked with them; we asked their advice; they helped us design the system. And to the best of our ability, and from what I gather from them, it worked as best as we could design it.

MR. LUSNEY: — Further supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. Mr. Premier, I have a good number of letters here, credit unions, Royal Bank, business people in that community, many letters stating that the farmers do have problems . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. Order, please. Order. When one of your own members is on his feet asking a question, the minister cannot hear what he is saying, and I think that if you want the questions to be answered, you have to give the opportunity for that question to get across the floor.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Premier, will you be prepared to indicate to the farmers of north-eastern Saskatchewan now, that you will take applications from the farmers that have been missed, and have also been flooded out and didn't receive any income this year; will you take applications from them and consider their individual cases for the farmers on the fringe areas of the R.M.'s that

you have included in that flood control assistance program? Will you take those application from the farmers in that area?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, the reason that the system was designed with local people involved is that they said it's very difficult to know where the boundary will end, and there'll always be somebody a little farther out, and a little farther out that said, "Well, I had some damage." And that's precisely the case when you look at an area that has been hurt by flood. That's why we went to local people to help us design the area. It was designed to help most of the people. They may find somebody that's 100 miles away or even 5 miles away that just didn't quite fit in, and they knew that would be the case. But they designed it to the best of their ability to provide the most help to the most people as fairly as possible, and I congratulate them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Premier, one supplement. Whose idea was it to draw a boundary in the middle of the lake? Why draw the boundary and fence in just a group and say: these are the only ones that are going to get it, and we're not going to include almost 100, or more than 100, that were missed? Whose idea was it to draw a boundary, the local residents, or yours?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I don't — and I can't recall the exact boundary by road or by slough or by lake or by tree. I mean, I'll take notice to get the boundary; we'll bring them in here and we can look at the map if the hon. member wants, but obviously I don't have at my immediate disposal where the boundary was and why it went through a particular quarter section or a particular lake or a particular anything. I'll be glad to get the boundary.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Premier, wasn't your original estimate that they needed \$20 million to cover it all?. Then you decided you didn't have enough money for 20 million and you cut it down so the area would be small enough so you'd only pay 7. Isn't that why you drew a boundary, so you could save \$13 million?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, no it isn't. Mr. Speaker, I said in Prince Albert that we were prepared to spend up to \$20 million to help those farmers, and we would assess it with local people to find out what the damage was, and we paid it on the basis of \$10 an acre, and the bill was there. If it was bigger, we would spend more money. And I said that. Or if there was more damage, then we wanted it on a per acre basis; I said we'd be prepared to do that. And I said we'd spend up to \$20 million, and it was a commitment, and we lived up to it.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — I thought I heard the Premier say that the lines were drawn with the consent of the R.M. officials in the area. Are you telling us that the R.M. officials who are outside the line you drew consented to the fact that their farmers should be excluded from the area? Is that what you're telling us?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I said in consultation with the people in that area the boundaries were drawn up. And we talked to . . . I don't know — how many R.M.s did you talk to? And how many people did they talk to? A large number. And they said, "You should sit down and let's put together a package that represents the major area that has been hurt. And that's the package that we should deal with."

MR. LUSNEY: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, did you consult with the R.M.s outside of the designated area? And what did they say if you consulted with them?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I will agree to get a list of the people that we discussed it with — who the ministers talked to in terms of the number of R.M.s, and the number of reeves, and the number of farmers and participants, in putting together this package.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, you indicated a few moments ago that you were prepared to

spend \$20 million for assistance. Are you prepared then to recognize the fact that there are problems that farmers have outside of that designated area, and will you now take applications from those R.M.s outside of that fringe area and expend additional money that you say you had set aside for those farmers?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, let's make it very clear. Around Saskatchewan there are areas that have been flooded out or dried out. I've got sloughs on my farm — and I'm 400 miles from that area — as a result of some problems.

In the south-east part of the province in my riding, Mr. Speaker, in Souris-Cannington, in the Weyburn area, there were areas that had rains that flooded out, obviously not connected with that boundary. That boundary was designed for a specific purpose to help those individuals that have been hurt time after time after time, two or three or four years in a row.

We worked with local people to set up that boundary. It obviously doesn't include Moose Jaw or Lloydminster or Weyburn or some other areas that might have had flooding problems. They had them. But we looked at the core area, the central area, with discussion with individuals there, and they designed a system to help the most people we could in that area and be fair. And that's exactly what they did.

MR. LUSNEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, are you saying, then, that the letters from the Royal Bank, the credit unions, and many of the business places, indicating that farmers in that area have been hit as hard, that farmers outside of that area have been hit as hard as the ones inside, and that they should receive some assistance? — are you saying that these people are wrong, and that you are not going to look at farmers outside of the area of the R.M. boundaries who have been hit just as severely as the ones within that boundary? Will you not give those assistance — assistance to those farmers now?

HON MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, is going to bat for the banks in the area, I would like him to table the letters from the banks and the financial institutions that are talking about this. I'd like to know what letters he has. I'd like to see them. I can't make reference to them if I don't have them. And if he would table any letters that he has with respect to financial institutions or banks that want particular kinds of information, then perhaps I could respond with some detail.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. LUSNEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, I'm sure that you have most of the letters that were written here. You have letters from the concerned people of that area. Will you not, recognizing the fact that there is a problem there, look again at that area and give some assistance to those farmers that need the assistance — not to the farmers that are far off from that area, but the ones that . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. Order, please. It's impossible to hear in the Chamber, and I'd ask for decorum.

MR. LUSNEY: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, will you not again look at that area and give assistance to the farmers that have had severe drought damage — or flood damage in that area, and provide assistance for those farmers so they can pay some of their bills and, maybe, continue to farm at least another year?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, two comments. One, I really would appreciate if the hon. member would table the letters from whoever it's from that he has and how many there are. Number two, he mentioned drought in his last question. I know he didn't mean to, but let's look at the drought line. We have a drought assistance program across Saskatchewan, part of Manitoba, and Alberta. The same problems, Mr. Speaker, may arise when you have boundaries.

You've got a severe area and a moderate area and a less than severe area. And the lines are drawn by farmers,

people in the municipalities and so forth. Somebody will say: well, I'd rather be in one side of the line or the other. Clearly, when you have designated areas for drought or for flood, it won't please everybody to the fullest extent, and farmers know that. They're happy that the government involved the farmers in designing these drought lines and in these flood lines, and we'd be glad to do it again if we have to in another season or another year.

But it's just common sense, Mr. Speaker, that no time will you find everybody totally happy with the line that you draw with respect to flood or to drought or to grasshoppers or to anything else. The R.M.s know this, the farmers know this, and you do the best you can in putting it together, and that's why we talked to the farmers in designing it.

MOTIONS

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, by leave of the Assembly, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance:

That the by-laws of professional associations and amendments thereto be referred, as tabled, to the Special Committee on Regulations.

Motion agreed to.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — By leave of the Assembly, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance:

That the annual reports and financial statements of the various Crown corporations and related agencies be referred, as tabled, to the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Motion agreed to.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, I move, by leave of the Assembly, seconded by the Minister of Finance:

That the Public Accounts of the province of Saskatchewan for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1984, as tabled, be referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Motion agreed to.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance:

That the Report of the Provincial Auditor for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1984, be referred, as tabled, to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Motion agreed to.

CONDOLENCES

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to move, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition:

That this Assembly records with sorrow and regret the passing of two former members of the Legislative Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan, and expresses its grateful appreciation for the contributions they made to their community, their constituencies, and this province.

Marjorie Cooper Hunt, who died on September 12, 1984, was a member of this legislature for the constituency of Regina City from 1952 to 1964, and for the constituency of Regina West from 1964 to 1967. She was born in 1902 at Winnipeg and received her education in Regina. A short teaching career preceded her marriage and election to this legislature, which resulted in her becoming one of the longest-sitting females, or the longest-sitting female in the province's history.

She actively pursued social issues of the day and was involved with many community organizations.

James Benjamin Hooker, who died on September 6, 1984, was a member of this legislature for the constituency of Notukeu-Willowbunch from 1964 to 1971. He was born at Lafleche in 1910 and farmed nearby for 35 years.

He was involved in a variety of community affairs, being councillor and mayor of Lafleche, president of the Thompson Lake Regional Park, and of the Saskatchewan Curling Association, chairman of the Lafleche Union Hospital Board, and of the Lafleche Community Recreation Co-operative.

As an MLA, he was active in agricultural issues.

In recording its own deep sense of loss and bereavement, this Assembly expresses its most sincere sympathy with members of the bereaved families.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to add some words to those of the Premier with respect to each of Marjorie Cooper and Jim Hooker. I served in the legislature with Marjorie Cooper Hunt for seven years, and with Jim Hooker for seven years; Marjorie from 1960 to 1967, and Jim Hooker from 1964 to 1971.

I knew Marjorie Cooper Hunt very well. She had a long career in public service in Regina before she entered the legislature, and contemporaneously with her serving as a member of the legislature.

She was active in many fields in her church, with a large range of community organizations, and I'll mention some, and it's not the full list: the John Howard Society, the Canadian Club, the Saskatchewan Mental Health Association, the Y.M.C.A., the Victorian Order of Nurses, and the Council of Women. In many of these, she served as president or another executive officer. She also served as a member and vice-chairman of the labour relations board of Saskatchewan for a period.

As the Premier has indicated, she was elected to the Saskatchewan legislature in 1952 as the member for Regina City, re-elected in 1956 and 1960, and re-elected in 1964 as the member for Regina West. And as the Premier has also mentioned, she was the longest serving female in this House since the province set up its legislature.

Certainly, Marjorie was an outstanding public figure, and so far as I'm concerned, she was a loyal colleague and a warm friend. In the party, she was much beloved. Tommy Douglas used to call her the sweetheart of the CCF. She was warmly received by members on both sides of the House.

She was a voice of conscience without conveying the slightest suggestion of being holier-than-thou. She pressed the cause of women in the 1950s and '60s when it was a less trendy cause that it is now, but she did it in a way which did not alienate anybody. She retained her sense of humour. It was a great asset to her in her struggles.

I recall her comments on Mr. Thatcher, Mr. Ross Thatcher's budget of 1966, and it was a time at which she was trying to make the case for women, and this budget came down, and she wasn't very impressed with the budget. Sales taxes were being removed from a long list of items of less than earth-shaking importance, things like buggy whips and the like. And among them, yes, was turkey saddles, a device which I am told is something to protect turkeys hens against the attention of tom turkeys. And Marjorie, having found very little to praise in this budget, opined — and you'll find it in Hansard on page 615 — that she supported this measure because, as she said, "Anything for the protection of the female of the species is okay by me." So she brought to the House her sense of humour, and she was able, therefore, to make her points perhaps more effectively than otherwise.

She was my fellow MLA in Regina City from 1960 until 1964, and Charlie Williams and Marjorie and Ed Whelan and I were a team of four. Between 1964 and 1967 the ridings in Regina were split up, and there was a Regina West riding with two members only. In 1964 Marjorie and I contested the Regina West riding on behalf of the CCF.

She was a treat to work with as a fellow member. She did extensive casework associated with welfare recipients and the like. We sat down and, as you might say, divided up the work. She did one portion, basically the welfare end, and I did the workers' compensation and the jobs end. Those were sorts of things which used to come to MLAs then, and I suspect still come to MLAs. She was a treat, as I say, to work with as a fellow MLA.

I recall the 1964 election, and it was a difficult election for our party, and we subsequently lost it very narrowly. We had as our campaign manager, Ed Cooper, Marjorie's husband, and during the middle of the campaign Ed Cooper suffered a heart attack and died very suddenly. That was very traumatic for Marjorie. One can imagine how one would feel if one's campaign manager died in the middle of a campaign, but here, when one's campaign manager and one's husband dies in the middle of a campaign, it was a very traumatic time for Marjorie. She forced herself to carry on because of what she felt as a real sense of obligation to her party and to her constituents, and, on this occasion, as on a good number of others, she showed herself to be a woman with guts.

A review of her many speeches in the legislature shows her range of interest. Her duties as health and social welfare critic in opposition matched her deep personal concerns. She spoke often of improvements to medicare, of the need for a drug program. She spoke — to say frequently is to understate it — about the need for a base hospital in Regina, the now Plains Hospital. She championed the cause of deserted wives and their difficulty of getting support payments. She spoke often of the need for better housing, and her speeches are replete with facts about public housing in Scotland and in Sweden and Toronto, always drawing analogies to Saskatchewan.

And she thought about less fundamental issues too. It harkens back to that day when I say that she favoured coloured margarine, a battle which she waged with Toby Nollet, the Minister of Agriculture, and which now seems ancient history.

(1045)

She was often far-seeing. I recall her suggesting in 1964 that Mary Batten, the Liberal MLA for Humboldt, ought to be made a judge, and that is now a fact. She is now Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench. She talked about reform to working families, to provide some income supplement for working families where the income was low. And that family income plan came into being 10 years later.

She was a thoroughly competent debater. She usually spoke from notes, which, as she said, she held in her hand because when she put them on the desk her bifocals caused consistent catastrophe. And so she held her notes in her hand, but she spoke with force, and always with a good deal of preparation.

Her speeches were models of clarity, and frequently models of elegance, and had something of a minimum of partisan fervour for the House of that day, and if she spoke in this House they would be regarded as having a minimum of partisan fervour.

After Ed Cooper's death in 1964, she married Wilf Hunt, a long-time friend of both of them, in 1967. She retired from politics following the 1967 election, which she didn't contest. But she maintained a lively interest, and she kept talking about political issues to us during our term of office between 1971 and 1982.

She was the sort of member who made this legislature a better place, who added lustre to the legislative history and traditions of our province. And I know I join with other members in expressing sympathy to all members of the family.

I knew Jim Hooker less well than Marjorie. Jim was on the other side of the House, but I served with him in the House for seven years. He was a capable and hard-working member. I had a warm relationship with Jim, as a good number of the members of our party stripe did, because Jim was an outgoing and friendly person who encouraged friendships and warm relationships with people of different political persuasions, as well, of course, as with his own colleagues.

As the Premier has mentioned, Jim has had a distinguished career of public service outside the legislature as well as councillor and mayor of Lafleche and in many other capacities.

One thinks of the organization of the Thompson Lake Regional Park, where I believe Jim Hooker was the founding president, and that regional park used to be, and perhaps still is, the most widely patronized regional park in Saskatchewan, and was certainly very much appreciated by people in the Gravelbourg-Lafleche area.

He was also active in the Saskatchewan Regional Parks Association and the Lafleche Union Hospital, an avid curler, eventually president of the Saskatchewan Curling Association.

I used to see Jim after he left politics. He continued to enjoy good health up to the very time of his sudden death. And I believe he was engaged in a golfing tournament at the time of his death. He was a person who had a distinguished record of public service, and who it was a pleasure to know. And I extend the sympathy of members of our caucus to all members of the bereaved family.

HON. MR. LANE: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in extending condolences to the families of the two members who have passed away in the last year. I did not have the pleasure of knowing Marjorie Cooper Hunt as closely as obviously the Leader of the Opposition, but she had a record of public service that has been recognized, not only throughout the province, but in particular in the city of Regina. And the city of Regina and the public school board have seen fit to more formally recognize her and that service.

Jim Hooker, I have known for several years. And Jim Hooker was, in all the time that I've known him, a gentleman. He enjoyed the political battles, but he managed to keep himself aside from them and keep them in perspective. And he enjoyed the debate and the give and take. He was always well known in that former Liberal government as speaking his mind, and I think that caused some problems — I'm not sure for Jim, or for the government — from time to time, because he had no hesitation in letting his own party members know exactly where he stood and what principles he believed in, and he argued them most strongly.

I got to know Jim a little better over the last six or seven years because he became a neighbour of mine here in Regina, and we had some enjoyable political discussions over the back fence from time to time. Jim had strong beliefs, but he argued them in a gentlemanly way and always respected those involved in the political process of any party. And as I say, he enjoyed the

process. He was a man who believed that he had an obligation for service to the people in his area and eventually the people of Saskatchewan, and I, as I said at the outset, I extend my condolences to the family.

MR. ENGEL: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to extend condolences to the both bereaved families. I knew Jim Hooker much better, and so consequently I will just make my remarks about him.

His farm bordered mine, or close to mine, and I've watched and known him all his life and his career. I knew him better as a neighbour and person involved in civic affairs than I did as a politician. He took his high school education in my own hometown of Woodrow, and his involvement in our community was something really special. I want to underline the remarks by both our leader and the Attorney General, in that he always did speak his mind and wasn't afraid to get involved in any particular matter.

In respect to Thompson Lake, I think it's worth putting some of the history in there. He not only was the first president of the Thompson Lake Regional Park, he was involved in the community that decided that there should be a dam built there and back up some water in our area, and he worked from that area on, and anybody that is familiar with Thompson Lake knows that the planning and the vision that the Hooker family had, both Jim and his brother, Bud, is something that's really remarkable.

To just underline a little bit on his ability to deal, and leave partisan politics aside: once they had a dam there, he worked together with the present government, which was a CCF government at the time, to get a regional park going in Thompson Lake; and Thompson Lake isn't only one of the largest regional parks today, but it was the first regional park in our regional park program. So I think we will remember Jim Hooker for a long time for his involvement in that area.

During a campaign one time, we happened to meet on the street at the '71 election, and the friends he was coming down the street with, he introduced his friends to me and said that I got this guy into sewer and water. And the joke of it was that maybe that's where I should have stayed, rather than get into politics.

But the very first job that we officially bid, where we needed a bond and became a bonded company, was in the town of Lafleche when their sewer and water system, and Jim used his own influence as the mayor of the town, saying, "Hey, these are pretty good, young guys," and we were able to get that job. We were low bidders, but in the competitive market that it was, sometimes it was wise to take a construction company that had some background and experience, rather than two young fellows. And I appreciate the good word he put in on my behalf, and the kind of campaign it was. It cost him the '71 election. I was here likely at his expense.

I think the remark that I remember the most about Jim was at a recent legion meeting at Lafleche, when Jim was the guest speaker, and I can still see him there with a little twinkle in his eye, and a grin, and he said then, "Old politicians never die. They just fade away."

And it is remarkable that the memory of Jim Hooker, because of his community activities, because of his influence in the community, will live on and, as far as the community is concerned, he hasn't died; he has just faded away. And I too want to add my words of sympathy to the family at this time.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to add a few words. I do not believe I ever met Jim Hooker. He left in 1971 and that was the time at which I arrived on the scene. I do know that he was well thought of by the members after '71, who had worked with him. He was genuinely liked, and Jim Hooker was referred to with a good deal of warmth and friendship. That wasn't universally true of the people who were here after '71.

I did get to know Marjorie Cooper in an entirely different way. She left in '67, and I did not know her as a parliamentarian at all or as a politician at all. I did get to know her because we attend the same church, Knox-Metropolitan Church in down-town Regina, and I got to know her rather well, actually.

My colleague from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg said that, "Politicians don't die; they just fade away." Marjorie Cooper may have passed from the scene, but she did not fade away. She was very active, very interested. I don't think I ever met Marjorie Cooper, at coffee after church or at another scene, but what she didn't have some questions about the current issues of the day. She was very interested and very active. Her questions were normally what I would describe as people questions. She was interested not in the economy, or in the deficit, or in any mistakes that the government might have made.

My colleague from Regina Elphinstone is quite right, she was not a terribly partisan person. But she was interested in the disadvantaged. The poor, the disadvantaged, the sick — that was her particular interest. And if there was a government program when we were in office, or later when the current administration was in office that she thought was not meeting the needs of the disadvantaged, the first person I usually heard about it from was Marjorie Cooper.

Sometimes people who continually nab you by the shirt-tail want to discuss issues. Sometimes these people get tiring. I never found Marjorie Cooper tiring. Indeed, I found her stimulating. I always knew that when I met her I was going to have an interesting conversation, and a few minutes later I'd leave with something and with some enthusiasm for dealing with the problem that had concerned Marjorie Cooper. She had a warm, outgoing personality. Both she and her sister, for a good deal of the time, were constituents, and both were extroverts, both genuinely enjoyed people, and people genuinely enjoyed them.

I want to join my colleagues from both sides of the House who have expressed bereavement to the family of Marjorie Cooper and Jim Hooker.

Motion agreed to

HON MR. DEVINE: — I move, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition:

That the resolution just passed, together with the transcript of oral tributes to the memory of the deceased members, be communicated to the bereaved families on behalf of the Assembly by Mr. Speaker.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADDRESS IN REPLY

MS. ZAZELENCHUK: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleagues for their support. I look forward to hearing their speeches. I know there will be many excellent ones. Today I appreciate having the honour to move this Speech from the Throne, and I always appreciate being able to be here on behalf of the people of Saskatoon Riversdale.

Before my remarks concerning the throne speech, I'd like to say, Mr. Speaker, that although it's certainly no surprise to the people who have had the opportunity to work with you in this Assembly, that the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association would have such a high opinion of you. I'd like to formally congratulate you on your recent election as President of the

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

(1100)

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MS. ZAZELENCHUK: — The fact that the 1985 conference of this association will be held here in Saskatchewan I think also indicates the exceptional way you've always represented us in that association, and we look forward to hosting delegates from 44 countries at that time.

Mr. Speaker, during a time of recession, I think people have a tendency to react negatively to things, and I think when this administration took office that we perhaps inherited an especially anxious generation because the former government was insensitive. They stood idle by when people's resources were running out. They had no real ideas for economic development of their own. So regarding the problems people were facing, they had some reactions. They had no solutions. And even their reactions were bad.

For example, the percentage of senior citizens in our province is steadily increasing. Some provinces won't be at the level Saskatchewan is already at for another 20 years. Even knowing this the NDP government put a moratorium on nursing home bed construction. Seven years prior to 1982 they put a nursing home, or a moratorium on nursing home bed construction.

Now our administration took office during recessionary times, and although we are not immune to the effects of the recession, we have become known as a province of achievement even during that time period, and this throne speech demonstrates why that recognition happened. In agriculture, in social services, in economic development, in all areas of opportunity or need, this government responded.

For example, in 1982, just prior to the provincial election when home owners were facing unmanageable mortgage interest rates, the former government, the NDP government, did nothing. Today more than 43,000 home owners have received more than \$50 million in direct cash rebates to keep their mortgage interest rates at 13.25 per cent or lower. And we have extended that program until July 1, 1988, assuring hard-working Saskatchewan home owners that they will never have to face mortgage rates above 13.25 per cent until July 1988. And we did that when we were a very new government yet, and many provinces copied that program.

I can't think of one program in 11 years of the NDP government that was copied by another province, because all they ever offered was rhetoric, and that's all they ever offered to farmers in Saskatchewan. There was no farm purchase program. There was no Agricultural Credit Corporation. There was no real drought assistance programs, no water management. There was just the infamous land bank which turned landowners into serfs.

The NDP members had the opportunity first in this Assembly to assist farmers. Instead, it seemed they were here to buy and buy and buy for their government. Well our government introduced the farm purchase program which provided mortgage rates or rebated down to 8 per cent mortgage rates for new farmers purchasing new land. Today 3,500 farmers are enrolled in that program. Nowhere else in North America have farmers been given so much support from a government.

Under the infamous land bank, in 10 years only 151 farmers managed to move from tenancy to ownership. Even more farmers than that were able to purchase their farms in two years, or I'm sorry, in 10 weeks with our program. In fact, 3,500 farmers have enjoyed the benefits of the farm purchase program in two years.

Small business, Mr. Speaker, agriculture included, is the largest source of employment in our province. Yet with the NDP government we led the nation in the loss of farms, and we lost many

other businesses too, and that was a trend that needed to be stopped.

Now certainly during an election you find out whether or not there is a general consensus you're right, or a general consensus you're wrong. But surely these facts were telling the NDP that their policies simply were not working. But they did not change their course of direction, and business was never encouraged to locate in Saskatchewan during their administration. Instead, the government felt it was necessary to involve themselves in motels, office equipment, house construction companies, packing plants — just to name a few examples — and they were considering involvement in life insurance and retail drug stores.

Saskatoon Riversdale is a labour intensive area, with some people working with large employers, some people working with small businesses. For people like themselves, they would welcome the opportunity that business provides, be it large or small. And they know other jurisdictions which show positive signs in the economy, like ours has done; other jurisdictions which initiate positive changes in the economy, like ours has done — are all places where business is supported. But the NDP were discouraging business, our largest employer in the province. They were competing with the largest employer in this province. So, in fact, the people of Saskatchewan were paying for their own job creation.

Well, Mr. Speaker, our record regarding job creation is an excellent one. Now our present level of unemployment is unacceptable to us, but we have to remember that we did inherit an unemployment level, and the fact remains that we maintain the lowest level of unemployment in Canada. And that really has been the case the entire time since we've been government. There were times when Saskatchewan was the only province in Canada to record an increase in the number of people working, while all other provinces were recording decreases in the number of people working. The state of the international economy is not our fault, but we have been faring well in our resistance to it. We have been experiencing a steady increase in population and an increase in the number of people working. In fact, in a little more than two years, we've created 44,000 new jobs. Still the NDP criticize our record in this regard.

Now I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the opposition has a legitimate function, as long as we keep in perspective the role of this opposition. Obviously it is easier for them to criticize a product than to produce the goods. Earlier this week, members had the opportunity to debate the unemployment situation. The NDP again criticized our record but had no ideas of their own as to how to alleviate the problem. I suspect that's because with socialism there aren't many options for a government, either. So it's not surprising to hear that the NDP would re-introduce the land bank. They would reinstate taxes which we eliminated. They said they would do that. They said they would re-introduce the gas tax, the largest tax cut in the history of this province. If we asked the Minister of Finance, maybe he would tell us that that might be the largest tax increase in the history of this province.

The NDP didn't understand investments, so they criticized our changes to the royalty structure in the oil industry, changes which have substantially increased exploration and production. In 1982, we set records for oil and gas drilling, and in 1983, we beat those records. In fact, in 1983 there were more oil wells drilled — or they were doubled, more than doubled the oil wells drilled in 1982. In 1984, 2,100 new wells were drilled in the first nine months, and that's another new record. This resulted in additional revenue for the province of \$193 million and the creation of 2,450 jobs.

As I've noted earlier, Mr. Speaker, our job creation record is an excellent one. However, to further improve that record, one minister, the Minister of Justice, has been assigned to establish a government agency to co-ordinate our efforts even more effectively.

Now again the NDP criticize our ideas for job creation. They criticize us for not having one minister whose sole responsibility is job creation. As ridiculous as it sounds, imagine for a minute that these opposition members become NDP cabinet ministers. Collectively they have no ideas

for job creation but one would have sole responsibility for it. How would that minister offset the loss of direct and indirect jobs related to the oil industry when the energy minister doesn't support the industry? How would that minister compensate for a social services minister who doesn't initiate a new employment development program? How would that minister offset the loss of jobs related to agriculture because the Minister of Agriculture re-instated the land bank and didn't provide adequate programs for farmers? Can you maybe imagine the catastrophe that would happen if they had a cabinet as large as ours?

Considering their beliefs, the options available to an NDP administration would put Saskatchewan right back where it was when we took office. That may mean a continuing moratorium on nursing home beds.

Earlier this year Alderman Brockelbank, former speaker of this Assembly, and Alderman Lorje who sought an NDP nomination in Saskatoon, were not in favour of allowing Circle Drive Alliance Church in Saskatoon to build a special care facility in co-operation with the government.

Well, our record in this regard, Mr. Speaker, is excellent. We built more nursing home beds in 18 months than the former government did in seven years. In the last budget we committed another \$25 million for nursing home beds. If we were to return to an NDP administration, we'd be returning to an administration that could not compete with our ideas to improve health care. I say that because I think they appeared desperate in the 1982 election and well, indeed, in the 1978 election, and that is why they say the quality of health care would suffer with a Progressive Conservative government and they said that accessibility to it would be a problem. But we certainly proved them wrong, and very quickly.

In our first budget as government, we increased the budget for health \$26 million above the last NDP budget. And it is interesting to note the former government decreased, decreased the percentage of the budget for public health in four budgets. They decreased it in four budgets, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The health budget has now reached \$1 billion for the first time in Saskatchewan's history. That's \$1,000 for every man, woman, and child. Today this government is spending more money on health care than any other government has in the history of this province.

And there are many more initiatives that we have taken in the area of health. One other important one includes advising the federal and provincial governments that we will not be introducing premiums or hospital user fees.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe the Speech from Throne we heard yesterday really shows that this government understands everything that is involved in improving our standard of living. There's an important link between job creation and skills development. One initiative in this regard: the Department of Social Services will be spending \$13.6 million to allow 3,500 welfare recipients upgrade their skills through further education.

This government believes it has an obligation to the people of Saskatchewan to take advantage of opportunities on their behalf, and perhaps nothing typifies the fact more that Saskatchewan is looking to the future than the establishment of the ministry of Science and Technology.

The government understands that government spending is not enough for a healthy economic upswing. If business and industry are encouraged to come to Saskatchewan, that will not only supply jobs, that will create a larger tax base from which business can contribute to health and social service programs.

Mr. Speaker, there are many more examples where this government has improved the standard of living for people in Saskatchewan. No one in government will delude themselves into thinking there are easy solutions to problems, but programs that only a government can initiate, and

certainly the economic climate that is set by the government, we have shown improvements in all those areas in Saskatchewan, and there's never been better economic or public response to our government programs.

I'm very proud of the initiatives of my government colleagues as illustrated in this throne speech. Therefore, it is my honour, Mr. Speaker, to move, seconded by the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood:

That a humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To His Honour the Honourable Frederick Johnson, Lieutenant Governor of the province of Saskatchewan.

May it please Your Honour:

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan in session assembled, humbly thank Your Honour for the gracious speech which Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

(1115)

MR. TUSA: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is indeed an honour for me to rise this morning to participate in the debate on the throne speech.

But before I do that, I would like to congratulate my colleague, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, for the excellent speech she has just made. It aptly demonstrates, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why the wise voters of Saskatoon Riversdale, in April of 1982, selected her as their representative in this Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. TUSA: — Also, Mr. Speaker, I would beg your indulgence to allow me to recognize my friends from Dysart who are here this morning. I see they've been able to get up after last night's activities to come and listen to the debate on the Speech from the Throne. Thank you very much.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. TUSA: — Mr. Speaker, optimism is on the rise in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan is on the move. There is a real pride in our province and all that it stands for. People are feeling good about Saskatchewan. I am pleased to report to this Legislative Assembly that throughout Saskatchewan there is a positive mood. Things have never looked brighter for our province. The future of our province is bright, and the mood of the people is good, because of the leadership of Grant Devine and the policies of the Progressive Conservative government.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to be able to participate today as the seconder of the Speech from the Throne. I am sure all members of this Legislative Assembly can appreciate the sense of honour, excitement, and pride I feel on such an occasion.

May, I, at the outset of my remarks, express my appreciation to the good people of Last Mountain-Touchwood constituency for their confidence in me as their MLA in this legislature. It is an honour to me, and a tribute to the people of Last Mountain-Touchwood, to be able to second the Speech from the Throne.

Yesterday, in keeping with a time-honoured and historic tradition, the representative of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, presented the Speech from the Throne. The Speech from the Throne represents a sacred bond between a government and the people. It is a trust. It symbolizes the very reasons why so many people have confidence in the future of Saskatchewan.

Yesterday marked the fourth time, since the Progressive Conservative government of Premier Devine came into office, that a new session of the legislature was called. In the two short years since 1982, there has been a continued record of achievement by the government of our province. Let us now take a walk down memory lane for a few moments.

When Premier Devine and his new government took office in 1982, Saskatchewan had been devastated by a big government, high interest rates, a poor business climate, rock bottom investment, and a loss of confidence. For 10 long years Saskatchewan had become paralyzed by bureaucratic government.

Saskatchewan people had never let them down, had never let down their high ideals. Their government had let down their ideals. In 1982 there was a yearning throughout the province for a return to good, old-fashioned Saskatchewan values. People said, "Let us look to the future with confidence. Let us make a new beginning." On every farm, in every town, rural municipality, and cities, Saskatchewan people said, "Let us move forward again." That was the message thousands of people sent out on April 26, 1982 when they elected a Progressive Conservative government. That was the Saskatchewan when Premier Devine came into office a little over two years ago.

Some people said it would take at least a decade to get the province moving again. How wrong they were. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has been moving in the right direction ever since. We are expanding towards new areas of opportunity for everyone, and the Progressive Conservative government is going to keep the mighty engine of this province revved up. And that means a future of sustained economic growth that is going to build a lasting prosperity.

Take a look at all the exciting records of the last two years. Saskatchewan has consistently had the lowest unemployment figures of any province in Canada, and this has not happened by chance. It has happened because we have a government that cares, a government that knows how important a job is to the dignity of a person. Job creation is a priority with this Progressive Conservative government. Since 1982 we in Saskatchewan have travelled down a road of optimism and common sense, a road to prosperity. We listened to the message from the people when they said, "Let us make a new beginning."

Instead of having thousands of people lose their homes, we offered a new beginning with the Mortgage Interest Reduction Plan. We held down mortgage rates for over 44,000 families. Instead of saying there was no hope for young couples to buy a home, we offered a new beginning through the Build-A-Home Saskatchewan Plan and put 6,000 families into their first home.

Instead of telling young farmers that in rough economic times that they had no future, we offered a new beginning through the family farm purchase program and over 3,500 young farmers have a brighter future today.

Instead of telling seniors that their best years were behind them, we offered a new beginning with the dignity and care they deserve.

Instead of telling the unemployed that unemployment was part of a national and international problem, we offered a new beginning and created thousands of new jobs in Saskatchewan.

Instead of telling people that it takes more and more money to run government, we offered a

new beginning and cut taxes and reduced the cost of government.

Instead of discouraging investment in the oil and energy industry, we offered a new beginning and created a boom with record drilling, record revenue and land sales, and two of the biggest job creation projects in Saskatchewan history, two heavy oil upgraders.

Instead of just always talking about health care, Mr. Speaker, instead of just talking about health care, we offered a new beginning with new hospitals, expansions, and modernization, a new beginning for health care when for the first time in Saskatchewan history your government spent over \$1 billion on health care, \$1,000 for every man, woman, and child.

Instead of talking about welfare reform, we offered a new beginning, and recently it was reported Saskatchewan has the best welfare system in Canada.

Instead of discouraging public participation in the Crown corporations, we offered a new beginning with Saskoil energy bonds and Sask Power bonds. With good interest rates, these programs are both very successful.

Instead of building bigger government, we offered a new beginning. Premier Devine has said he is determined to make government more accessible and relevant to Saskatchewan citizens and their families.

All of this new beginning, Mr. Speaker, is because of the principles of the Progressive Conservative government. We didn't discover our values in a public opinion poll. Our values are part of the Saskatchewan heritage.

Here in Saskatchewan the people have two choices: Progressive Conservative principles, or the doctrinaire socialist NDP. Two very different approaches. On the one hand, a government of hope, confidence, and faith in the people. On the other hand, a political party of pessimism, failed policies, and lack of faith in the people. We see all of the people in Saskatchewan as individuals. They see them only as members of special interest groups. Well, now, the NDP hopes that Saskatchewan people have a poor memory.

In recent weeks the leader of the political party known as the NDP stood before his delegates at their convention. He stood and said he had a confession to make. The member for Regina Elphinstone told his fellow socialists that yes had lost touch with the people, that yes he had allowed government to get too big, and yes families were important, and yes he had learned from the lessons of the past.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are wise enough to know that a political party and its leader can't change their colours in a couple of days at a convention in Regina. Let it be known that Premier Devine didn't set up a weather-vane on top of the dome of this building to test the wind before he started talking about the true Saskatchewan values. He has lived them all of his life.

Let the word go far and wide that the NDP are still obsessed with big government and meddling in peoples lives. The confessions of the past few weeks by the Leader of the NDP are not based on principle; rather, they are steeped in opportunism. The real NDP should be judged by their secret, hidden agenda: the policy resolutions passed at their convention. This same NDP want to restrict farm size in Saskatchewan. They want to further restrict farmers by imposing limits on production. And at the same NDP policy conference they brought forth a resolution calling for a return to the land bank.

Mr. Speaker, at their convention the NDP talked endlessly about government ownership. They said they want to create bigger and bigger Crown corporations. They want to nationalize the rest of the potash industry. The saddest part of the NDP convention, Mr. Speaker, was that it

clearly revealed their lack of faith in people. Bureaucracy and big government are better is their motto. They just don't trust the people to make decisions for themselves. The NDP decided to raise more and more money takes strange directions.

When the Progressive Conservative government removed the tax on gasoline, it saved every family an average of \$500 per year. The NDP say it will bring the tax back.

As a Conservative, Mr. Speaker, I naturally disagree with socialism. It is not my philosophy of life. It is also a fact of life that there is a political party in this province who makes socialism their philosophy.

So it is obvious to me, as well as the people of Saskatchewan, that there are two fundamental ways to look at our province. That is why I am proud of the record of the government of Premier Devine. We believe in the uniqueness of each individual. We believe in the sacredness of life. We are guided by the principles that acknowledge the supremacy of our Creator, the dignity of man, and the role of the family in a nation of free men and free women. We do not bow to the excess of big government. Government is a servant and not the master. That is why I stated earlier, Mr. Speaker, that the Speech from the Throne represents a sacred bond between the government and the people. The Speech from the Throne is a statement of your government's commitment to building our future.

Agriculture is so important to Saskatchewan that I am proud of the measures announced for farmers in the Speech from the Throne. The spring flooding in north-eastern Saskatchewan, the drought of the summer, and other problems such as tough credit and cash-flow problems, high input and low commodity prices have hurt our farmers.

Premier Devine is a bona fide farmer. He knows and understands the problems farmers face. Once thing is very clear to the Premier and this government. This government will not allow our farm families to be chased off, or forced off their lands because of a bad crop. A farmer with a bad crop is a man who looks to the future. A farmer with no land is no longer a farmer.

Saskatchewan has thousands of excellent farmers that we respect and we will defend, no matter what. That is a commitment of this Progressive Conservative Government to the Saskatchewan farmer and his family.

In a recent article in the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, Nancy Russell wrote an article with the headline: "NDP farm critic makes huge fuss." And the opening sentence to this article was:

NDP agriculture critic, Allen Engel, must think Saskatchewan farmers are stupid.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it is too bad the NDP didn't make a huge fuss about farmers when they had a chance to, and it is very obvious the NDP thinks Saskatchewan farmers are stupid. Allow me to cite some examples.

The NDP claims they are in favour of reducing farm costs, yet under their farm cost reduction plan back in the 1970s, they actually reduced the fuel grant to farmers and eventually cancelled the program. And now this same political party expects Saskatchewan farmers to believe they are in favour of reducing costs. They must think Saskatchewan farmers are stupid.

(1130)

Mr. Speaker, the government of Premier Devine is determined to see our farming community survive and flourish. We know agriculture, because we are a government made of people who know the land. For the record, I am proud to note that more than 3,500 young farmers are enrolled in the farm purchase program. Nowhere in all of North America has there been such a large number of new farm owners created in the past two years.

The Livestock Investment Tax Credit was created by this government to increase the number and size of our herds and to finish feeder cattle in Saskatchewan. The Home Quarter Tax Assistance Program has eliminated property taxes on the home quarter. Then there is the irrigation development assistance program to help farmers undertake new irrigation development.

Mr. Speaker, in time of difficulty for farmers, this government took immediate action. The north-east Saskatchewan flood assistance program provided \$7.5 million to some 1,700 farmers. The cattle movement policy assisted farmers in moving cattle to alternate pastures. The Saskatchewan Water Corporation introduced three assistance programs for drilling of wells. In co-operation with the federal government, the prairie livestock drought assistance program provided \$26 million to assist the livestock producers in drought-affected areas.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, this Progressive Conservative government cares so much about farmers that it will not stop when it comes to this very important sector of our economy. I am proud that we will introduce comprehensive legislation to provide security for viable family farms. That is a solid commitment to Saskatchewan farmers.

When it comes to farmer, Mr. Speaker, the difference between Conservatives and the NDP is that we have always recognized that farmers had to fight insects, weeds, weather, and the market-place, but we have never believed that they should also have to fight their own government. Each and every farmer in this province can count on this government now and in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this government in its efforts to create jobs. Since 1982, Saskatchewan has been the envy of the rest of Canada because of our low unemployment rate. But this government wants to create even more jobs. This is why the Premier has designated a minister responsible for employment. That is why legislation will be introduced establishing a government agency for employment.

Mr. Speaker, this government has the courage to take on the real challenge of job creation. Unlike the NDP, we do not try to make political hay on human misery. We do not try to score political points at the expense of the less fortunate in society. People want jobs. People want jobs, Mr. Speaker, not political rhetoric. That is why we are taking on the problem of job creation head-on.

The real challenge is two-fold. One, for the skilled, the challenge is to match and upgrade those skills with the opportunities in the Saskatchewan market-place. Two, for the unskilled, we must develop innovative new ideas to give hope and direction. In the market-place, we must create a free climate for business to need and hire more people. The more new pay cheques we bring about in Saskatchewan, the better off all of our fellow citizens will be.

Your government working to put people to work can only mean a better future for this province and, to date, the record has been one that all of us are proud to talk about — record job creation, a record total number of people in the work-force, the lowest unemployment rates in Canada. Today, let the word go forth to every part of Saskatchewan. We will not rest when it comes to job creation. A society bursting with opportunity, reaching for its future with confidence, sustained by faith, and the conviction that good people will flourish — these are the secrets of a strong and prosperous Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the government of Premier Devine is dedicated to the bedrock principles of faith, family, work, neighbourhood, and freedom. These values help bring us together as one people, from the youngest child to the most senior citizen. These values of which I speak can only survive if government demonstrates a continuing commitment to them.

In the area of social development, Mr. Speaker, this government will consider initiatives for people with disabilities. During the past year, this government undertook a comprehensive review of The Family Service Act. New legislation, emphasizing prevention of child abuse, family integrity, and community involvement, will be prepared. Care and compassion are the cradle of this government.

We want our senior citizens to live with the dignity and care they deserve. That is why we launched the most massive nursing home program in Saskatchewan history. But I should like to remind this Assembly that the NDP record was a freeze, a moratorium on nursing home construction.

Mr. Speaker, recently we have heard a penchant of the NDP for moratoriums, but let me say this: when they were in power, they put their beliefs into practice. They put a seven-year moratorium on the construction of nursing homes in Saskatchewan. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the NDP treated these seniors as second-class citizens. In keeping with the Progressive Conservative care and commitment for seniors, this government doubled the Saskatchewan income plan benefit for seniors.

We've boosted the number of rental units for seniors, and \$20 million was directed into the Senior Citizens' Home Repair Program. And today, I am pleased to see that our respect for seniors is shown by the announcement in the Speech from the Throne, that \$25 million will be spent over the next five years for special care home construction. That, Mr. Speaker, is our way of respecting Saskatchewan's pioneers.

Mr. Speaker, the concern Saskatchewan people feel about health care goes back to our pioneer days. Saskatchewan's tradition of providing that care is a matter of pride to all of us. In this year's budget, welfare funding reached \$1,000 for every man, woman, and child in the province. That is over \$1 billion.

The Progressive Conservative government has gone even further. We have announced we will not introduce premiums or hospital user fees. And now in this session of the legislature, Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne announced that the government of Premier Devine is committed to the elimination of extra billing in Saskatchewan. This government is determined that Saskatchewan will be number one in health care. Our commitment will make it happen.

Mr. Speaker, a strong economy means a strong Saskatchewan. Thanks to the economic policy of this government, I can proudly proclaim that the record speaks for itself. Since the election of the Progressive Conservative government in 1982, there have been record economic achievements. Allow me to cite only a few:

1. Record population growth; Saskatchewan now has over one million people.
2. Record job creation.
3. Record potash marketing.
4. Record oil production, drilling, land sale revenues; a record \$4.25 billion in two first-time Saskatchewan upgraders, the two largest job-creation projects in Saskatchewan history.
5. Record housing starts.
6. A record number of young farmers buying land at 8 per cent interest.
7. A record number of tourists visiting Saskatchewan.
8. Record public investment opportunities for families and Crown corporations like Sask Power and Saskoil.
9. Record tax increases on big business like railroads and banks.
10. A record international credit rating for Saskatchewan.
11. Record number of Saskatchewan people staying and working at home in Saskatchewan communities.

And the economic record continues, Mr. Speaker: the lowest unemployment rate in Canada; the

lowest bankruptcy rate per capita in Canada; the second lowest debt per capita in Canada; and the Saskoil bonds raised \$15 million within hours after they went on sale. To me that spells confidence in the Saskatchewan economy.

In good economic conditions, Mr. Speaker, record programs have been developed by this Progressive Conservative government, and I would like to review some of them for this legislature.

1. As I have stated already, record health care spending.
2. Record numbers of farms, towns, and villages receiving natural gas.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that three days ago I had natural gas hooked up in my own home on the farm near Cupar.

3. Record nursing home construction.
4. Record new technical school capacity.
5. Record increase in financial benefits to senior citizens.
6. Record tax reductions for people; sales tax off gasoline, power bills and children's clothing; and record income tax reductions in livestock, tourism, research, and venture capital.
7. Record reduction in government regulations.
8. Record number of home owners protected against high interest rates.

We have the lowest gasoline prices in Canada, the lowest income tax levels for ordinary families in Canada, the lowest interest rates for farmers and home owners, and we have the lowest utility rates in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has set exciting records. All of this is because of the leadership, vision, and courage of our Premier, Grant Devine. I believe in Premier Devine and in what he stands for. Premier Devine believes in the right of every individual to fulfil his or her potential as members of the family of God, not creatures of an almighty government. Throughout Canada our Premier is known as an optimist who has restored Saskatchewan's faith in itself.

We have come a long way in two short years. The weak leadership of the past has been replaced by the decisive leadership of Premier Devine. Our economy is growing together.

Think of how far we have come from the NDP years of high inflation and economic misery. The record of the Leader of the Opposition, from the day he first entered politics, has been based on the idea of big taxes, big government, and big brother. It is the same old story from the NDP opposition.

Mr. Speaker, as we begin this session of the legislature, let me remind every person here that we have a sacred trust from the people. We have, over the past two years, lived up to that trust. That is why there is such an optimism and good feeling today in our province. We love Saskatchewan and we believe in it.

(1145)

Our province was founded on the noble ideals of our pioneer forefathers. They believed in God, themselves, their families, and freedom. Together they built new homes, new churches, and new communities. They lived and worked, played and prayed together. They grew strong. They built a new land called Saskatchewan.

The spirit of the pioneers is the spirit of this government, and like the pioneers who built Saskatchewan, the Progressive Conservative government had a vision. We will make Saskatchewan a leader in the confederation of Canada.

We will work for education and training opportunities for our young generation of Saskatchewan men and women, that even our forefathers could not have imagined. We will work to make Saskatchewan a leader in health care, and will work to see our products exported around the world, and work to see a thriving Saskatchewan small-business sector. And, most importantly, we see a Saskatchewan which maintains and strengthens that spiritual fabric which makes it the best place in the world to live and to raise a family. That is the Saskatchewan spirit.

Mr. Speaker, how can we not believe in the greatness and goodness of Saskatchewan? And I do not say that lightly. Saskatchewan has surged ahead with confidence because of the Progressive Conservative government. But I do believe our best days are still ahead.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. TUSA: — Mr. Speaker, the opposition vociferously agrees that even better days are ahead.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. TUSA: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Last Mountain-Touchwood constituency, the people I represent, I want to tell you how delighted I am to be here to second the motion to move the Speech from the Throne. I have never felt more strongly that Saskatchewan's best days are ahead. With faith and courage we can perform great deeds, and in the end it will be said that this government stood, that it met the test and made Saskatchewan the best province in Canada.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I do second the motion to move the Speech from the Throne.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — First, I want to congratulate the mover, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, and the seconder, the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood, for their efforts. I congratulate them for their speeches. I don't congratulate them for their powers of analysis since it seems to me anyone who could see the document which was called the Speech from the Throne and find comfort in it is either a very careless reader or someone of extreme optimism, even more than those or that measure of optimism asserted by the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

One doesn't know where to start with some of the comments of the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood. He says that he is in love with Saskatchewan, he is in love with Last Mountain-Touchwood, and I can understand that to be the case. But I regret to say that I think he will soon find out that Last Mountain-Touchwood does not require his love. He is going to be a jilted lover after the next election.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — We have a couple of points to be made that follow from the comments of the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood. He talked about the pioneer spirit and what it has done in this province, how people have built this province working together. And I think it's useful to recall that since the day the first pioneer came here, we have not had a Conservative provincial government in this province except from 1929 to 1934, and even those pioneers would not say that those were our finest hours.

We now have another Progressive Conservative government and some of the sons of those pioneers, and daughters, some of the children of those pioneers, and grandchildren are beginning to wonder whether or not, with this issue of Progressive Conservatives, we are going to meet yet again a period of adversity for our province as we did the last time.

And certainly the comments made by the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood and by the member for Saskatoon Riversdale are in some respects not encouraging. They point out that there has been a considerable increase in training offered by the Department of Social Services, and that's good, they say. Well this training, after all, is for people who are unemployed but are employable and don't have a job.

Now, you bet there's an increase in training for those people. There always was training for people who could be employed but didn't have a job, but that training has increased substantially because the number of people who are unemployed now,, but want a job, has mushroomed, has blossomed, and naturally there are more to be trained. They take credit for the fact that they've put many, many more people on the unemployment rolls and are offering training to them. If that is what they have to reach for to take credit, then I am not encouraged at the direction that this government is going.

Let me point up another factor. There was a suggestion that nothing that has been generated in this province has been copied across Canada. Then there was talk about their health programs.

Can one think of a single major health program that was not started in this province and was not copied across Canada or attempted to be copied? Some of them aren't there yet, but they will be. Hospital insurance and medicare are familiar. Children's dentistry is beginning to be copied. The cancer program has been accepted across Canada.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Four hundred nurses off the roll in 1975 . . . (inaudible) . . .

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I have a member behind me who is putting forward some very, very remarkable propositions. One of them is that nurses were struck off the roll of hospitals in order to generate money to buy potash.

Now I think that sort of a comment is unworthy of any member, wherever he is sitting, and I would suggest that he ought to get a few facts with which to heckle, even if it is a little ungenerous of him to heckle from behind any speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: — And not from his seat.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — And not from his seat, Mr. Speaker.

So let me come back to the points I was raising. I understand that he doesn't wish to deal with the points, but I do.

Let's take the workers' compensation program which was instituted in this province in the 1970s and is now being copied across Canada. Are the members unaware of this? Are the members unaware of the fact that many things have happened in this province in the '50s, '60s and '70s which have been copied all across Canada? Are they unaware of the traditions of this province? Are they unaware of the high regard which this province is held in across Canada? Do they feel that this province came into being in April of 1982 and that everything happened prior to that was something of which they ought to be ashamed?

Well, if that is their position, Mr. Speaker, I invite them to get a little more pride in this province because a great deal has happened to this province under governments of various political persuasions of which every Saskatchewan citizen ought to be proud.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER: — Name a few.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Well, I hear from behind me again: name a few. Well, I will name hospital insurance. I know the Tories have resisted this across Canada, but they now must accept it because it is part of what Canadians are demanding.

I speak of medicare, and I was in this House when medicare was introduced, and I know that Tories opposed it, root and branch. But I say they must accept that now because Canadians across Canada have said they want medicare.

And those are two things of which Canadians have accepted the lead of Saskatchewan, and of which Saskatchewan people ought to be proud, ought to be proud.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Now I have a comment from the member for Maple Creek that says all that was done was to copy what was going on in the Swift Current health region. Who, I ask, does she think set up the Swift Current health region except the CCF government of Tommy Douglas?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Who, I ask, set up the first publicly funded medicare scheme in North America in that same Swift Current health region? Premier Tommy Douglas, that's who.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — And who spread it all across this province? Premier Woodrow Lloyd, that's who.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — And why is it all across Canada? Why is it all across Canada? It is all across Canada because Canadians have pride in what Saskatchewan people did. And among the very few, among the very few, who wish to denigrate that record on behalf of Saskatchewan people are the Tories sitting this Chamber, whose vision is so blighted that they were unwilling to give credit to those pioneers who established these programs which have been accepted in every province of Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Let me talk about some of the other things which have been mentioned. Let me touch on a couple of other things because not only are they unaware, are the members unaware of the history of Saskatchewan and of the high regard in which Saskatchewan is held all across Canada, but they are unaware of even more local events. I'm surprised when the members say that at the New Democratic Party convention we decided to do away with the gasoline tax. They might have added the fact the road fuel tax for interprovincial truckers. When I say that, it's pretty clear who they are trying to protect — it's pretty clear who they are trying to protect.

Our position is that interprovincial truckers should not be able to use our highways at no cost. When they are moving heavy loads from Toronto to Vancouver, I don't believe Saskatchewan taxpayers should be providing roads to them free, gratis. Members opposite do; our party takes a different position. We say that those people ought to pay a tax, but that Saskatchewan citizens should not. That position is opposed by the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood, and I'll defend that position on the hustings in Last Mountain-Touchwood.

I have another comment from the same member who is not in his seat, who is saying we did

away with the farm fuel rebate tax. I would wonder whether this government would ever talk about a farm fuel rebate tax. Indeed, indeed there was one in Saskatchewan. There was one in Saskatchewan which was put on at a time when the price of wheat was below \$4, and it was indicated that it would be a temporary tax until the price of wheat increased above a \$4 level. Now I want to point out to Mr. Speaker that many, many farmers in Saskatchewan would be very, very happy to get \$4 for their wheat — four 1978 dollars for their wheat — or about \$5, \$5.5 a bushel now. They would take that. They would take that. But they're getting lower prices.

And yet, in the face of the fact that they're getting lower prices, this government has not introduced a farm fuel rebate tax. Unlike the government in Alberta which pays 32 cents a gallon, this government pays zero as a farm fuel rebate tax. Zero! And I would wonder why any member of this government would want to talk about a farm fuel rebate tax when farmers who are under greater stress now than they've been for many years are offered not one cent per gallon as a farm fuel rebate tax by the government opposite.

Let me talk about the general mood of the province which the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood and the member for Saskatoon Riversdale painted. Well, they were saying optimism is on the rise in Saskatchewan, and that things are good. Well, let me tell you this. I don't think Saskatchewan people are defeated. I don't think they're down, but when I went to the Wheat Pool convention, I would not have said that the pervasive spirit was one of optimism. I would not have said that. And I invite anyone to read the speeches of Ted Turner, or any of the other officials of the Wheat Pool, and see whether you think those speeches radiated optimism. I don't say they radiated despair. I don't say they radiated despair, but I don't think optimism is the word.

I went to the SSTA convention, the Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association convention, and I heard many, many people talk. They were not down. They were not defeated, but I would have said that the prevailing spirit radiated by those people was not one of optimism. They were concerned. They were worried. And if members opposite don't detect that Saskatchewan people in all walks of life are showing concern, showing worry, then I think that they ought to talk to a few more people.

(1200)

And small-business people. I am talking with them and they are not down. They don't think they are necessarily going to have to close their doors, but I am not hearing a spirit of optimism. I was yesterday up at Mexabition, and I went around and talked to a good number of the people there who were displaying new products, asking these people who are selling products to farmers how things were going. Well, they were saying, well, we've had a good number of people come through. How are sales? Well, they're down a bit. Well, how are things going to be? Well, this farm economy is a little tight; farmers are not buying machinery.

I would not have characterized that spirit as one of rising optimism, as did the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood. Again, I am not suggesting that we are defeated. I am just saying that people are worried, people are concerned, and the Government of Saskatchewan ought to be offering them programs, not based upon some burgeoning optimism which they see — the government sees — but, rather, to deal with the worries and concerns that people of Saskatchewan — small business men, farmers, and working people — are feeling. That's what I think the government should be doing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, this is the fourth throne speech presented by the PC Government, and I invite anyone to take all four of them and read them — read them. And this one is the most shallow, the most barren, the most inadequate of them all.

And if members opposite don't agree with that, just read those speeches. The idea that came in the first couple of speeches, that we were going to do things, and things were going to happen, is over. The document talked about critical challenges and opportunities facing Saskatchewan people, and we knew that before. It admits that there are severe economic difficulties. The member for Last Mountain-Touchwood talks about optimism. The Speech from the Throne talked about severe economic difficulties. It concedes that unemployment remains a serious problem. It calls these problems immediate and major concerns, but then it proposes nothing to deal with them.

In the face of adversity the speech offers nothing but inaction. In the face of suffering, and I say there's real suffering out there, the speech offers silence. It may well be that this is the final throne speech of this government. Many, many voters out there certainly hope so, so they have an opportunity to express their view. But whether that is true or not, it offers the people of Saskatchewan a very telling view of this administration and what its objectives are.

This throne speech exposes a Premier and a government which is confused, bewildered, and almost overwhelmed by the serious challenges which are facing this province and its people. At a time when people need leadership, they are offered this throne speech, and in terms of leadership, this throne speech is a vacuum. The throne speech should have given Saskatchewan a clear, comprehensive action plan to deal with the problems it identifies: the problems of unemployment, the crisis in agriculture — and I say there's a crisis out there, even though the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood says the farmers are all optimistic — and there are certainly other important issues.

Instead, we have a document which is little more than a review and a rehash of three years of Progressive Conservative government. It's a document in history, and it's revisionist history at that. And so we see in this document the PC government taking bows for its \$7.5 million payment to the flooded-out farmers of north-eastern Saskatchewan, fresh after promising \$20 million — fresh after promising \$20 million.

And then we see the PC government bragging about the fact that it introduced a farm operating loan guarantee program in the budget last spring, and that program is being literally laughed out of every financial institution in Saskatchewan.

Now those people with a concern, and there are many people in this province with a concern for family violence, are expected to jump for joy because this government offered some briefs to federal royal commissions when they know that this government is now, and today, refusing to fund many organizations which must be funded if we're to deal with this problem of family violence. These people who are on the front line dealing with that problem don't want briefs to royal commissions; they want money for transition houses; they want money for organizations who are out there dealing with the problem and not talking about it.

The people of Saskatchewan have a very simple, straightforward question to ask the government after hearing this throne speech, and it's this: where's the money? Where's the money for job creation? Where's the money to help farmers? Where's the money to help encourage the growth of Saskatchewan small business?

No one, I think, can deny, if you believe the government, that things are good in the economy. I don't believe that, but they said the oil industry is in its best shape ever, the potash industry in its best shape ever, that small business is booming. Their coffers ought to be bulging. If they're not bulging when the oil and the potash and small business is going well, when are they going to bulging? So, if you believe the members of the government, they've got the money. Now where is it? Where is it?

Now, I suppose, we're going to hear stories like, "Wait for the budget. Wait until next March, and we'll tell you." For far too many people, next March or April is too late. And they're entitled to

know what the government is going to do about the real problems out there. They have a right to expect, now, that something be done because, after all, this is not a new problem.

Does anyone deny that in the last throne speech jobs were the first priority? Does anyone deny that in the last budget address, jobs were said to be the first priority? You've had a full year to come up with your programs. Where are they? Where are your programs? Where's the money?

Forgive me for saying that the unemployed out there do not believe their problems are necessarily solved because the member for Qu'Appelle-Lumsden, the Minister of Justice, has been given yet another title to add to the dozen or so he now has: minister in charge of Sask Tel, Saskmedia, Surface Rights Arbitration Board, on and on and on. Now we make him minister of jobs. It creates no jobs except one more for him and perhaps a few more for a few more bureaucrats.

Clearly the PC government lacks the political will to deal with the problems that are out there. The document exposed the government as indecisive, hesitant, and unwilling or unable to take charge. For the 34,000 people who are officially unemployed out there, many, many more than at any time during the 1970s or up to 1982 — keep that in mind — many more, and for the thousands who have given up hunting, this document contains only a reannouncement of the PC government's idea of creating yet another government agency.

What, I ask, did the throne speech offer? It offered that they would refine and elaborate the government's employment strategy. Mr. Speaker, they announced it as their first priority more than a year ago, and now they have to set up an agency to refine and elaborate it. What have they been doing the last year? If one year isn't enough time to refine and elaborate a strategy, how much more is likely to be needed?

In fact, since the Premier appointed his part-time employment minister on November 16th, my estimate is that about 100 more jobs have been lost in Saskatchewan. Some of my constituents worked — I guess I can still say work for another couple of weeks — out at Dad's Cookies, a factory closing down and going to close out. I haven't heard a comment from the government as to whether they could do anything about that, whether they could save the jobs.

Mr. Speaker, this is very revealing, some of the comments coming from the chairs of the members opposite. They suggest that, unless we ask a question in this legislature, it's not a problem with which they ought to concern themselves. My constituents of Dad's Cookies expect this government to see if they can preserve their jobs, whether or not it comes up in this legislature. It is your job as a government to see that jobs can be preserved, and it's not the job, it is not the job of the government simply to respond to political pressure. They have to have some concern for my constituents because they want jobs.

All I can say, Mr. Speaker, is that this early record of the part-time jobs minister speaks ill for the future. We've had a promise of a winter works program and I, frankly, was surprised at that. Anybody who has summoned the member for the part-time jobs minister knows something about winter works programs because many operated in the 1970s.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Even operated in the 60s, late 60s.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — And some operated in the late 60s. And I say this to you, Mr. Speaker: no winter works program that ever was effective was announced on the 30th of November. If you want a winter works program, you've got to put it together at least in the fall because you are presumably going to work with small-business people. You're presumably going to ask them whether or not they can do thing during the winter which they might otherwise not be able to do. You have to get out the forms, you have to get out the rules, and we have . .

If any of your small-business people in your constituency know the rules for the program alluded

to in the Speech from the Throne yesterday, I'm surprised. If you have the rules, please give them to me. I would like to know. And if you assert that they're available, I'll get them right after the session. But I bet they're not. I bet they're not. My bet, Mr. Speaker, is that those rules are not available and that we still don't know and we won't know tomorrow on December 1st, three or four weeks after winter has regrettably started, what the rules are for a winter works program.

As the Premier has attempted in the past, the throne speech tries to blame the failure on the victims. There are a massive increase in the number of people unemployed in this province. And what are we getting from the government? What are they going to offer? Training, training. Nothing wrong with training, except when somebody says that it somehow will deal with the unemployment problem, because that suggests that the people without jobs are untrained.

I would say this, Mr. Speaker: if the member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake will come with me, and I will take him to a little gathering of plumbers and pipe fitters and carpenters and electricians, and I would like him to say, "You people don't have a job because you're not trained." Journeymen construction workers who have, many of them, worked five years and 10 years, and what are they offered? Training. These people don't need training; they need a chance to get a job.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — There are many, many thousands of people in Saskatchewan who are fully trained, who have a track record showing they can hold a job, but who don't have job because of the economic performance of this government. In 1982 the basic promise was prosperity for all, and we don't have prosperity for all.

(1215)

We don't have prosperity even for the trained. Now, certainly we should have training for the unskilled. No one can quarrel with that. But what I am saying is that the government, when it tries to suggest that it is lack of training which is barring people from employment, they are being less than frank, and that's the politest words I could bring to tongue, less than frank, because I can show them hundred and hundreds of people who are fully trained, who have a good track record, who have a good work record, who can't get a job.

Well, the members opposite now suggest that these plumbers and pipe fitters should retrain. I don't know what they'll retrain for. Should they retrain to become waiters or accept jobs in the service industry? What, I may ask you, Mr. Speaker . . . And I know that others in this debate will join in this debate. They will give us a list, a list of the jobs for which there are not-trained people in Saskatchewan. And I venture to think that that's going to be a short list. That's going to be a short list. But many people would welcome the list because the people in my constituency are perfectly willing to retrain if they have some assurance that there might be a job there.

Let's turn to farmers, Mr. Speaker. What does the document contain for family farmers? The PC throne speech makes this statement:

My government intends to introduce in this session comprehensive legislation to provide security for viable family farms jeopardized by uncontrollable costs, burdensome debts, and the impact of adverse weather conditions. My government is not prepared to see the security of the family farm endangered by short term difficulties.

Well, I don't know when this revelation came upon them, that there were some short term difficulties out there on the farm, but I would have hoped that this was true yesterday and a year from yesterday, a year ago. And I would have thought, therefore, that the government would have done something to assist family farmers who are endangered by short-term difficulties. I would have wished that they would have, during this year or so, developed some policies that

they might be able to announce instead of telling us that we are going to get them in due course.

Some people might take that statement as a solid commitment, but how does it differ from the same statement we had in the Premier's televised address? How does it differ from the statement that came out of the cabinet think tank back in September when it was suggested that you were going to come up with programs? So that many people are concerned as to whether or not this type of commitment has anything more behind it than the commitment in the last throne speech, or the commitment following the think tank, or the commitment following the Premier's TV address.

Saskatchewan farmers have learned that these commitments and promises . . . You know, they've seen \$20 million reduced to \$7 million very rapidly, and I'm sure that they're wondering whether or not we're going to have a similar shrinkage in the level of commitment by the government. And I think that farmers are entitled to know just what this PC government is proposing, for whom, and what it means in dollars and cents. I am pleased to hear that we are going to have legislation next week, but we have had so many promises of what's going to happen that you will forgive me if I am a little sceptical, and you will forgive me if I think that a good number of farmers are still sceptical.

Saskatchewan farmers have been waiting patiently for action and I say they have a right to know now, in this debate, what you propose. The purpose of the debate after all, Mr. Speaker, is to consider in some detail the programs of the government outlined in the Speech from the Throne. Certainly one of the programs outlined was the farm program, and I would hope that the Minister of Agriculture, in this debate, will stand up and say what those words mean, what those words mean in specifics, in dollars, in help, for whom, and how.

Another interesting absence, I felt, from the throne speech was any clear help held out for small-business people. There are about 35,000 small-business people in the province. If the government could provide help and encouragement to this important sector of our economy, everybody would benefit. If each small business, and I know this couldn't be true, but if each small business could hire one person on the average, than our unemployment problem would be virtually solved. As with family farmers, putting money in the pockets of small business helps to generate economic growth and activity throughout the whole province.

And members opposite say, what's our solution? Our solution basically is to do what was done in 1979, '80, '81, when, as you say, the old industry was stagnant, but most of the small-business people of Saskatchewan were doing a little better than they are today . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Oh, I hear these groans. I hear these groans, but I would like any one of you to go up and down the streets of downtown Regina with me and ask which business people are doing better and which worse, and I think you will find that a significant number of them are not doing as well as they did three or four years ago. I invite the members opposite to observe the programs which then brought that measure of prosperity for small-business people, and which then brought an unemployment rate of just over half of what the current unemployment rate is.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there were a number of other issues which I think are important to our people which weren't mentioned in the document. There is the North. I saw nothing about the North or the proposal for the North. The environment and the protection of the environment — I saw nothing in that speech about the protection of the environment. I think of the working poor in constituencies like my own. I saw no comfort for them in that speech. I saw nothing in that speech that would offer any help to the universities who, I believe, are hard pressed. I saw nothing there for native people who have some special problems. I saw nothing there for injured workers and some other special groups who at least might have been spared a word or two to give them some comfort. For all of them, Mr. Speaker, there was only silence. and when you read this document you get the feeling that the PC government has decided to close its eyes, cross its fingers, and hope for the best.

This is a document which seems unable to cope, unwilling to make the tough decisions, uncertain as to how to take advantage of the many opportunities for growth which do exist in this province. And I invite all hon. members, and I invite the public of this province, to read that speech and see whether they do not believe that it is pervaded by a sense of unwillingness to make tough decisions and uncertainty as to how to grasp the nettle and make our great resources benefit the people of Saskatchewan.

There are, Mr. Speaker, many, many more things I wish to say about this document and about the government, Mr. Speaker, and, accordingly, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

HON. MR. SWAN: — With leave of the Assembly, I would like to introduce some guests.

I have a group from Glamis, Saskatchewan, a small community near Rosetown. There is a Cub pack headed by Evelyn Walker, Dennis Walker, Chester Walker, Gary Nisbet, and Joe Jerome. This group has just arrived in Regina and will be touring the building and looking at some of the features that Regina has to offer over the next little while.

I would like to welcome them to the Chamber today, and I look forward to having the opportunity to meet with them in Room 125 about 1:30 this afternoon. I hope that you enjoy your stay with us.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

The Assembly adjourned at 12:23 p.m.