

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
December 4, 1984

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

HON. MR. PICKERING: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you, and through you and to all members of this Assembly, 23 grade 12 high school students from the town of Avonlea. They are accompanied here today by their teacher Karen Bedford and Georgia Jooristy, bus driver David Prohar. I will be meeting with the group following question period in the rotunda area for pictures and then for drinks in the members' dining-room.

I would hope the group have an enjoyable stay in the legislature here and perhaps find question period informational and perhaps educational. Some days it's fairly lively, and I think this will be no exception.

I look forward to meeting with you, and ask all members to join with me in wishing them a pleasant welcome and stay in the legislature and a safe journey back home. Thank you.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. FOLK: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Minister of Education and the MLA for Swift Current, it gives me a great deal of pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly, Miss Teen Canada 1984, Karen MacBean, from Swift Current.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. FOLK: — She is accompanied by her parents, Frank and Colleen MacBean. Would they please stand.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. FOLK: — I had the pleasure of having lunch with Miss Teen Canada and her parents, and believe me, Mr. Speaker, she is a true ambassador for not only our province but all Canada. So, once again, congratulations to Karen, and I ask all members to join with me in congratulating her and wishing her best wishes.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just very briefly want to add a note of congratulations from the opposition to Miss Teen Canada. I hope your oncoming year is enjoyable, and I wish you the very best.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SCHMIDT: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to the Assembly, 31 grade 8 students from St. Henry's High School in Melville, Saskatchewan. They're seated in the Speaker's gallery. They are accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Garth Gleisinger; Mr. Tony Wihlidal, principal; and their bus driver, Mr. Albert Reves. I'll be meeting with them at 2: —30 this afternoon for pictures. I wish them a pleasant stay and an educational visit, and I would like all the members to welcome them here.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Assistance to Farmers

MR. ENGEL: — I have a question to the Premier of this province. The other day in your throne speech that opened the legislature you said that it's going to include comprehensive legislation to provide security for the viable family farms. Do you agree, Mr. Premier, that such comprehensive legislation would put cash, hard cash into the pockets of farmers? Do you agree with that, and that any legislation which would not provide hard cash for Saskatchewan farmers would be a betrayal of the promise you made in that throne speech at the opening of legislation?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, later today the Bill will be tabled in the legislature, and I'm sure the hon. member will be able to hear all about it, and discuss it in great detail and subsequent the dates, and in the days and nights ahead. So, as I've said yesterday, and the day before, and the day before that, Mr. Speaker, when the legislation is tabled, then the hon. member will know exactly what's in it.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. I wasn't discussing a Bill that's on the table. I was talking about your priority and your commitment in the throne speech to put hard cash into the hands of farmers. Do you agree that a comprehensive legislation would put hard cash into the hands of farmers?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, the legislation that will be tabled will . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — We're not talking about that legislation.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Well, Mr. Speaker, if they're not talking about that legislation, I'd like to know what they're talking about. Clearly they're talking about that legislation. They've been asking about it for the last week, and the minister will be tabling it, and he will be able to talk about it in detail, and it will have a large impact on an awful lot of people in the province of Saskatchewan.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Premier, maybe I should be talking about hearing aid legislation because the Premier doesn't seem to comprehend.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — Do you agree that what is required in Saskatchewan by farmers is some hard cash? Yes or no? Just . . . (inaudible) . . .

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member wants to talk about hard cash going into the province of Saskatchewan into agriculture. Hard cash. Hard cash.

In 1984 the province of Saskatchewan put \$13 million into the livestock industry's hands because of a drought in our province — that's hard cash, Mr. Speaker, \$13 million; 1.5 million, Mr. Speaker, in moving cattle to areas of feed; another \$0.5 million in well construction for water; \$7.5 million of hard cash to people in north-eastern Saskatchewan that had flood damage; 36 million in hard cash, Mr. Speaker, for the farm purchase program — that's young farmers across the province of Saskatchewan who wanted interest rate assistance to buy farms; \$35 million hard cash in terms of putting natural gas distribution systems across this province; in excess of \$69 million in gas tax reduced for rural Saskatchewan — hard cash that goes into rural Saskatchewan; a counselling assistance program of \$7.5 million in hard cash.

Mr. Speaker, on those programs alone we're injecting over \$150 million in hard cash into

agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan in 1984.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Speaker, I have a new question for the Premier, short question: does the Premier consider that list impressive enough that it's doing the job? Are you finished? I mean, is that where it's at? Because the farmers I'm meeting with are saying that it's not working. The cattlemen are saying that if you want a tax evasion, be into cattle because there's not, you're not going to have to pay any income tax. So the cattlemen are saying they're going to leave their cattle up North. It's cheaper than bringing them home.

There are farmers that are in trouble, Mr. Minister, and if that's what you've got for farmers, is that all there is? The question is still simple. Yes or no? Are you putting any hard cash up front that's going to work for farmers, or are the programs that you're bragging about, that you have in place, are, as far as you're concerned, are working?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, obviously I believe in excess of \$150 million annually into agriculture — that's new money — is important in the province of Saskatchewan. I also would admit, Mr. Speaker, that the brand-new federal government in Ottawa which has now removed the tax on diesel fuel for farmers worth \$25 to \$30 million annually to the province of Saskatchewan is important.

I believe, also, that the changes that you will see be made in agriculture, as a result of a brand-new federal government, will add cash to rural Saskatchewan and rural western Canada through two-priced wheat, through grain stabilization payments, through transportation changes, through all kinds of things that weren't being done before that will be done now.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, this is only the beginning because we're going to be here for a long time to get many more agricultural programs in.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — One short supplement. There's no more new money in what you're telling us. That's it. What the farmers got, they're lucky; they're finished. Live with what you're got because there's no more new money. Is that what you're telling us?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, what I can tell the hon. member, that the philosophy of this side of the House is not the same as that side of the House. Mr. Speaker, two clear examples: one, we've put \$150 million annually into agriculture that the former administration didn't do. That's number one. Number two, Mr. Speaker: we said that we would not nationalize farm land. We wouldn't say the solution would be for the government to own all the land, and that's the solution opposite. Any time they look for a solution they say the government will come out and buy the farms. Mr. Speaker, land bank was not the solution in the 1970s, and land bank is not the solution in the s. Farmers want to own the land. They don't want the government to own the land. It's a different philosophy. They don't like it, but that's the way it is in the province of Saskatchewan today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A further question to the Premier. I'd like to ask the Premier: would the Premier agree that a foreclosure moratorium or a debt moratorium is just a first step in any comprehensive plan to save Saskatchewan family farms? Obviously a foreclosure moratorium will give hard-pressed farmers a breathing space with the financial institutions. But is it not, in fact, true that many of the farmers out there need hard, cold cash, and to have a comprehensive approach to it, your government has to be including not only a moratorium on

foreclosure, but additional cash to the farmers?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — I obviously believe that the farmers in the province of Saskatchewan needed cash because we've given them an extra 150 million this year alone — 150 million brand new cash.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of the drought we have initiated programs that put hard cash into the hands of farmers. As a result of the flood we did the same. As a result of those two programs we have co-operated with the federal government to get more cash through grain stabilization, through the removal of taxation on farm diesel fuel, to changes in freight rates, to a two-price system for wheat. Mr. Speaker, as a result of what we have been aware of, we have put in excess of \$150 million in cash.

If you add up what we've done, and the federal government is doing and is prepared to do, you're looking at 200 to \$250 million in cash annually in the province of Saskatchewan as a result of our appraisal of what's going on in agriculture.

MR. KOSKIE: — Supplemental to the Premier. Would the Premier agree that any foreclosure moratorium that is not, in fact, followed up by some financial assistance to the farmers, would, in fact be a betrayal of your government's promise to introduce, first of all, a comprehensive plan to alleviate the problems and, secondly, that you would open up the provincial treasury in order to protect the family farms.

Is it not, in fact, if you only go one step, it would be a betrayal of the very things that you have been indicating to the farmers of this province?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, we went on yesterday talking about various programs, and my hon. friend from Quill Lake said it took him two and one-half years to figure out what was going on with respect to certain programs.

We've been working very hard, for example, in the energy business to put it back to work, and finally the NDP appreciate it. They've even adopted the program because it worked so well.

Mr. Speaker, we have put \$150 million in cash — \$150 million in new money into agriculture. And the hon. members, my friends opposite, won't even admit that \$150 million of cash has gone into agriculture. And I've just gone through it. Direct cash right through to farmers; right through to them if they're a livestock man; right through if they've been flooded out; if they're receiving any programs with respect to water; if they're looking at programs with respect to natural gas, or farm purchase programs. The hon. members know — you could add it up — that's hard cash, \$150 million that they never put in. They never put that extra money in there.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we have asked the federal government if it will do the same. And the federal government is now agreeing to do the same. It's agreed to remove the tax off farm fuel, which I'm sure they must agree with, but they don't give us any bouquets for that. So we're looking at in excess of \$200 million — \$200 million in extra cash that's going into agriculture in Saskatchewan this year, and next year, and every year, as a result of this administration and the brand-new one in Ottawa.

MR. KOSKIE: — Further supplemental, Mr. Speaker. Can the Premier reassure the farmers of Saskatchewan and confirm here today that, at the very least, his government will introduce a moratorium on foreclosure, but in addition, a \$30 per acre payment to those grain farmers hardest hit by extreme weather conditions, a new farm operating loan guarantee which will be effective and will provide farmers with the same quality of loan guarantee that you're prepared to do to the Bill Hunters, the Husky Oils, and the Manalta Coals of this world?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. KOSKIE: — Will you include a 32 cent per gallon rebate to the farmers on fuel, like they have had for two or three years in Alberta? Are these the kind of cash injections which you are prepared, in your comprehensive approach to dealing with the crisis in the agricultural field today?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, with all respect to my friends across the legislature, I don't think that they heard me say we've put \$150 million in cash, in agriculture. And I didn't even mention some of the programs, Mr. Speaker. \$150 million in cash that the former administration never put into this province. Brand-new money, absolutely . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Well, I'll ask the members opposite if they even spent \$35 million in rural Saskatchewan putting in natural gas. They didn't do that. I'll ask them if they ever provided a farm purchase program with 8 per cent money. They never did that. I'll ask them if they ever removed the tax on gasoline. They never did that. I'll ask them if they ever provided \$48 a head, Mr. Speaker, to the cattlemen. They didn't do that. I'll ask them if they ever removed the tax on the home quarter. Mr. Speaker, they didn't do that. I'll ask him if farmers ever . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. When the members ask long, drawn-out supplementaries, and long, drawn-out questions, you're going to get this kind of answer. I would ask, also, that the members retain a bit of decorum in the House because you can't be heard from either side.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I make the point, Mr. Speaker, . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. Proceed.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I make the point again that we have spent in excess of \$150 million annually in cash in agriculture in Saskatchewan in 1984. Now my honourable friends know that I can describe that in general terms, and I have, in general terms, and some specific. Obviously if they want more details on more cash and more programs in agriculture, I can turn to the Minister of Agriculture, and he can go through detail by detail by detail, program after program after program in agriculture. And if they want more details in cash in agriculture, I'd be glad to let him respond.

MR. KOSKIE: — Final supplemental, Mr. Speaker, a very precise and short supplemental. I want a short and precise answer, Mr. Premier. My question, Mr. Premier, is that in your throne speech you indicate that you intend to bring in a very comprehensive package to deal with the problems of saving viable farms. I ask you, will you define to us what you mean, in that Speech from the Throne, by comprehensive? Is that a regurgitation of what you alluded to in your answers up to now; or comprehensive — does that mean something new?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, comprehensive simply means this: what we are doing today, plus what will be announced today, plus what we will do in the future, is comprehensive.

Crow Benefit Payments

MR. LUSNEY: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Premier. Mr. Premier, I would ask you to be honest and open with the people of Saskatchewan at this time. This question deals with the government's position put before the Gordon Hall committee of inquiry on Crow benefit payments. This committee has been meeting with groups throughout Canada, governments and groups. Alberta presented their position to them, I believe it was in October. They made it public. Their position was favouring payments to the producers. Manitoba presented their position a few days ago. They made it public. They favour payments to the railways. Mr. Premier, you presented your position to the Hall committee a number of weeks ago, and you haven't made it public. What is the position of the Government of Saskatchewan on the Crow benefit payments?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I didn't present a position to this inquiry, or to whatever it was. I believe the Deputy Premier did, and he knows it in detail, so he can respond.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, are you saying that you are not aware of the position you took in the brief you presented to the Hall commission, and you are asking the Deputy Premier to answer for you?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, this administration has a very high regard for the concept of ministerial responsibility, unlike the previous administration where the Premier had to answer for everything because he didn't have enough bench strength to carry the ball.

So, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the position put to the Hall committee on method of payment, since I carried that particular ball for some time, I'm prepared to give the House, as I have many, many times before — as I have many, many times before, Mr. Speaker — and our position hasn't changed.

Our position has, and always has been, and is today, and will be tomorrow, that the method of payment in the absence of consensus . . . and well, I believe that the United Grain Growers has been the voice of reason in this whole debate. I agree with them, and we agree with them, that in the absence of consensus, and since no impact of any method has been properly analysed by anyone, that we favour, Mr. Speaker, a 50-50 concept in method of payment.

Feed Stocks for Cattle

MR. SVEINSON: — Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much. The question I have calls on the bench strength of the government, and that bench strength being the Minister of Agriculture.

This morning Larry Butler, the extension veterinarian for the Western Veterinary College in Saskatoon, flagged a problem that just basically it's one of the symptoms of the disease that is affecting the agricultural industry today in Saskatchewan, and it outlines the starvation of cattle which happens every year, apparently, in January and February to some degree, but this year it is happening unusually early.

My question of the minister is: is he aware of the problem, and what are the solutions? We realize that in the province today we have a very low quality and not a great quantity of feed. Has the Government of Saskatchewan outlined programs that will alleviate this typical situation?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question, and as it relates to cellular degeneration and other conditions that might affect cattle and/or other species of livestock, given that they may not be getting proper nutrition. Certainly I can't say as that I personally have had any recent reports of it. It is not an uncommon condition if we do get severe winters and, in fact, winter feed is not available. And, of course, that is exactly what was behind the thinking of not only this government but the governments of Alberta and Manitoba and, I'm happy to say, the new federal government when we put together a \$60-million program to assure not only that the producers would have feed supplies for their overwintering beef herds, but as well to enable them to get the kind of feed stuffs that, in fact, would carry them through the winter without suffering malnutrition.

MR. SVEINSON: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Has this government arranged for feed banks or the like which will ensure that feed stuffs of a good quality are available to the stock growers in this province over the next several months when this situation will be a problem?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Speaker, this is a situation that we started addressing some several months ago. Number one is in the early spring when, in fact, pasture and water were the problems out there, we put programs in place — and the Premier alluded to them earlier today — to help producers move their cattle to pastures that did have, in fact, some grass and as well

to develop some water. And we've given those people the option of leaving those cattle up there this year where there is, in fact, lots of feed rather than move them back and then truck the feed back down. The business of running trucks back and forth across the province was the NDP's style of helping the cattle producers, and there was one thing that we heard was not to do that again.

In so far as additional measures, as I mentioned earlier, we have undertaken the livestock transportation program, or the prairie drought program really, but the other point I would make in so far as feed banks, if you like, some several months ago we instituted a feed and forage listing service — some many months ago — and that list receives wide distribution. It's updated either bi-weekly or monthly, and it lists not only pastures that's available but feed stuffs, whether you have some for sale or you want to buy some, and as well feed grains. And it's distributed throughout all R.M. offices, and as well ag rep offices. So it's widely distributed. It's a new service that we've been very happy to provide for producers in this province, given that we were facing a drought, and distribution of feed within the province is the key thing.

Television in Committees

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, a question for the Premier. It has to do with the proceedings in the Assembly that have been taking place for the last two years where television has been included as part of a new arrangement in the Assembly. Given the fact that yesterday, Mr. Premier, we got notice that the Crown Corporations Committee will be resuming its meetings tomorrow. I wonder if you can give us assurance that the television coverage which has been taking place in the House, and which has been argued for two and a half years by the opposition, will be included in Crown Corporations Committee tomorrow at the meeting that takes place?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I can't give him that assurance. If I recall it correctly, that the members opposite were not in favour of it at all, so I would question why they're asking for it now.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier if he has any idea or understanding of the process that took place by which TV came into this Assembly. It was an agreement of all members of this Assembly, and I think that I would like to find out from you whether or not you agree that television should be included, and radio, in Crown Corporations Committee in this province.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated it we agreed that the television would be in the legislature, and that's all we agreed to. The position of the former administration on the other side was that they didn't want it anywhere near Crown Corporation. They never did. They wanted the Legislative Assembly. We brought it in, and here it is.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. Order . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . I'm going to caution the member from Shaunavon, for the third time, that when I'm on my feet there is to be silence in the Chamber.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 1 — An Act respecting the Security of Farm Land in Saskatchewan

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill, An Act respecting the Security of Farm Land in Saskatchewan.

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

MOTIONS

Rule 39

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Before orders of the day, I would rise under Rule 39 of the Legislative Assembly Act to put forward a motion, and I would like to just briefly outline what the motion will say. Basically, we in the opposition have been arguing in the committee of Crown Corporations, in the committee of the Board of Internal Economy, as well as in the committee of communications, that the extension of television into the committees in this legislature, that being Public Accounts and Crown Corporations, should, in fact, take place.

Mr. Speaker, I firmly believe that you and other members who were here prior to the election of 1982 will remember the debate and the vote that took place in this Assembly that allowed for television to come into this Assembly. It was a vote unanimously carried by the Assembly, contrary to what the Premier of this province would have alluded to in question period, and it was voted on and passed. Part of that agreement was that a study would take place, and the Board of Internal Economy would recommend to this Assembly the procedure that should be followed in that committee, and that a meeting on April 2, 1984, a resolution was passed which outlined, and agreed to by that committee by all members at the meeting, that Crown Corporations should be held this Assembly and should be televised.

Mr. Speaker, without further ado I would move that a motion following the lines of the following, with leave, be moved. And the motion would say:

That this Assembly agree that it is in the public interest that the proceedings of the Crown Corporations Committee be fully accessible to the press, and further that the Assembly direct the commencing tomorrow morning, December 5, 1984, the meetings of the Crown Corporations Committee shall be conducted in the Legislative Assembly Chamber and that the legislature's television facilities be made available for the press with respect to Crown Corporations Committee proceedings.

MR. SPEAKER: — Does the member have leave to proceed? Leave has not been granted.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

MR. THOMPSON: — I am pleased to rise today and participate in this throne speech debate, this debate on the Conservative government's outline of policies and priorities for the year ahead.

For my constituents, Mr. Speaker, for the people for northern Saskatchewan, and for all the people of our province, this Conservative Speech from the Throne was a major disappointment — long on talk but short on specifics. In all my years as a member of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, I have never seen such an empty throne speech. No positive concrete proposals to deal with the severe job crisis which exists right across Saskatchewan in every community.

This is a throne speech, Mr. Speaker, of a Conservative government that is confused and frightened — confused by its lack of clear central purpose, confused because of no leadership by the Premier; confused because their huge and expensive cabinet, the largest in Saskatchewan's history, cannot agree among themselves, cannot identify clear priorities and cannot accomplish anything. An empty throne speech from a Conservative government that is

badly frightened — frightened by the huge deficit that they have piled up in less than three years; frightened by their inability to set a clear policy direction; frightened because they realize the people of Saskatchewan are frustrated and angry at expensive Conservative patronage for big business and the friends of the Conservative Party; and frightened because of the results of the recent federal election.

I'm sure all members remember how just a few short months ago the Conservative Party and its friends were predicting a Tory landslide in Saskatchewan. The New Democrats vote would disappear, they boasted. Saskatchewan would vote solidly for the Conservative Party. In fact, at the time of the largest electoral sweep in Canadian history, Mr. Speaker, the Conservative tide stopped in Saskatchewan. In Saskatchewan the Conservative Party got a smaller proportion of the popular vote than in any other province in Canada.

In Saskatchewan, the New Democrats got a larger proportion of the popular vote than in any other province. Why? Simply because at the time of a massive Conservative sweep across Canada, the people of Saskatchewan stood out and said, "Don't let them do to Canada what the Devine government has done to Saskatchewan." And that's why they're frightened, Mr. Speaker. That's why they were frightened away from their plan for a provincial election this fall.

As I listened to their throne speech the other day, Mr. Speaker, and thought about it afterwards, I noticed a policy drift of this government, a government which is drifting like an empty canoe on a lake; drifting first this way with the wind, then drifting around again, drifting in circles with no clear direction.

Two years ago we were told by the government that Saskatchewan was open for big business. We all remember the slogans and the ads and the propaganda telling us that Saskatchewan was open for big business. Mr. Speaker, I have an article here that comes out of *The Province*, a newspaper in British Columbia. "Don't overlook small-town Saskatchewan." And this was put out by Saskatchewan Tourism and Small Business, Hon. Jack Klein, Minister. And it goes on to quote:

Don't overlook small-town Saskatchewan as a place to live, as a place to do business, as a place to start a business.

Then they list the towns in Saskatchewan that are looking for new business opportunities to come in. And I just want to quote one town. There are many here, but Humboldt, for instance, Mr. Speaker — this article in *The Province* in Vancouver says that Humboldt needs a new department store, a new convenience store, a health spa, orthodontist, an optometrist, and a dentist. And the list goes on and on to the communities all across Saskatchewan. And this is what we've seen in newspapers across Canada, this particular one from a newspaper in Vancouver.

But they don't like to boast about that any more, Mr. Speaker. They don't like to tell us that the Conservative Party and the Conservative government are open for big business, because they know that Saskatchewan working people are angry and fed up with the Conservative gifts to big business, to the CPR and the banks, to the bond dealers, and the big oil companies. Their open for big business has now been abandoned as their slogan, and they're almost embarrassed to mention it any more. So now as they drift around in search of a new slogan, they call it policy.

The Conservative government like to talk about records. But they have a very selective list, Mr. Speaker, and the list does not include some of their records that ordinary people are concerned about.

A record-sized cabinet, the largest, most expensive in the history of Saskatchewan. A record-sized budget — spending more than \$8 million a day. A record-sized deficit. In less than three years, Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government of Saskatchewan has turned around \$140 million surplus to almost \$1 billion deficit in less than three years.

The Devine government's billion dollar mortgage on the future of Saskatchewan — record-sized give-aways to big business, to big oil companies, to the Alberta mining companies. Record unemployment. Unemployment in Saskatchewan last month was higher than it has ever been since the great Depression.

Records. Record welfare rolls. More people on welfare than ever before. Just one small statistic that we see here. And unemployed employable case-load has increased by 73 per cent from 1982 to 1984 — increased by 73 per cent. Individuals who are unemployed but are employable and are looking for work and have no stamps so that they can go on unemployment insurance, so they end up on the case-load of Social Services.

Record bankruptcies. More than 2,200 businesses, farms, and consumers forced into bankruptcy since the Devine government took office.

It is records like those, Mr. Speaker, which have made this government so confused and so frightened, and since the Conservative members now seem embarrassed to tell us about their open for big business slogan, and since they prefer to tell us about their record, I invite them to at least recognize some of the most significant records their poor performance has achieved.

I should now like to turn for a moment, Mr. Speaker, to the biggest gap in this throne speech, and what I believe to be the biggest gap in this Conservative government policy. And that, of course, is the government's abandonment of northern Saskatchewan. Quite simply, this government with its huge, arrogant majority, with its power centralized in a large cabinet in Regina, has turned its back on the people of the North.

When we look through this throne speech, Mr. Speaker, do we find any indication at all that this government understands northern Saskatchewan, that it cares about northern people, that it supports northern farmers and northern communities, that it's sensitive to the needs of northern men and women who want jobs and who need jobs? Unfortunately, the answer is no.

Mr. Speaker, the people of northern Saskatchewan do not ask much from their provincial government. They ask only to have their dignity and their traditional family and community relationship respected. Respect and opportunities — Mr. Speaker, that's all they ask, all they need. But instead they find this PC government has simply turned its back on northern Saskatchewan, turned its back and walked away.

We know of the serious health problems in northern Saskatchewan, and yet there is no mention of the serious problem that we have in the far North regarding health facilities. Since Uranium City is no longer a major centre any more, we now know that the hospital there is coming very close to closure. With less than 200 people left in Uranium City, continually I have asked the minister to take a look at a different community or a different way of delivering health services, rather than the services that they deliver on a basis first come, first served, or however they can get there.

(1445)

And we have instances where I indicated in this House that there was going to be some horror stories happening in northern Saskatchewan, flying individuals out on an emergency basis. And earlier this fall, Mr. Speaker, we did have a very serious incident when an aircraft left Saskatoon on an emergency flight to Uranium City, and just over Beauval ran into a bird which came through the window. And it's very fortunate that the pilot and the young nurse on that aircraft were not killed.

This is the type of situations that we have in northern Saskatchewan. This is the type of

situations that we have been asking the Conservative government to take a look at seriously and to solve these problems.

I want to quote from another situation that we have in northern Saskatchewan, and this is a little closer south. And it's regarding trying to get health services for some of our senior people who live in northern Saskatchewan. And I'm going to quote from one particular case of a senior citizen in her 70's who is a diabetic and has to take insulin every day with a needle, and she just can't do that. So what happens? We have a health centre. We have public health nurses in the community, but they're not available to the senior citizens because if they start giving insulin shots to one senior citizen, as they quote, then they're going to have to do it for all the senior citizens, indicating that the senior citizens of this province don't really deserve that kind of service. So what do they do? The results of the questioning indicate that there is a breakdown in communications among most of the concerned people. They're going to set up a committee up there. They get an individual who has no health background to give the needle to the senior citizen when their daughter happens to leave town.

And the minister indicates that:

I am satisfied that the arrangements had been made which had been agreed to by all to ensure Mrs. Moberly would receive her insulin shots during the period that her daughter had left town. Mrs. Clark did not leave on the day that she had planned to go. On the first morning, assuming that the arrangements that had been made would not work, she gave her mother her daily insulin shot. A short time later, the person who was to have provided the insulin shot that day came to give it and discovered that it had already been done. Later, and for several following days, Mrs. Clark was seen to be around Buffalo Narrows.

Seen to be around Buffalo Narrows. This is a letter I'm quoting from the Minister of Health.

Some time later Mrs. Clark did leave Buffalo Narrows for two or three days, (not sure), but did not advise anyone she was going. Because of the lack of information, no one gave shots to Mrs. Moberly, who had a minor reaction, but who was quickly stabilized.

This is the kind of health services, Mr. Speaker, that we are receiving in northern Saskatchewan today, and this just cannot be tolerated.

I want to now quote from Hansard of today, Mr. Speaker, and I want to quote from some of the statements that were made by, I am assuming the new minister in charge of northern Saskatchewan, the member in charge of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, as I'm going to quote here. He was indicating last night, indicating to the legislature, that he now was speaking on behalf of northern Saskatchewan, and I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that if he is speaking on behalf of northern Saskatchewan, I sincerely hope that we will expect to see some results because, as of today, we most certainly haven't seen any results.

But he indicates that he has travelled your area extensively, roughly 10 years ago, and he indicated that that was done as a lawyer, and I suppose that makes him an expert critic on northern Saskatchewan, and takes that responsibility away from the hon. member from Meadow Lake.

"But we all know that it was" — and here he's quoting last night about the big disaster with DNS, the department of northern Saskatchewan. They went into northern Saskatchewan and took a chance, and built homes and created jobs and put in services that the citizens of northern Saskatchewan needed and deserved, rightfully so. But he says, well, that it was a colossal mistake. And I'm quoting from the hon. member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake, the minister in charge of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation: "But we all know that it was a colossal failure."

The reason it failed, Mr. Speaker, is that the precision of programming was not designed by Northerners or anybody that really knew anything about the North. What he was indicating was that the northern people had to have more say in what was taking place in northern Saskatchewan.

So to show you the contradictory point here, Mr. Speaker, just in the last couple of months the Department of Parks and Renewable Resources decided that they were going to appoint a new director of fisheries. And the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake is saying that Northerners want some say. So they appointed a new director of fisheries. And we all know that there is many millions of pounds of fish that is produced in Buffalo Narrows. We also know that Meadow Lake is a service centre for the far northern communities where the fishing is taking place, but that there is no commercial fishing whatsoever in the Meadow Lake area — very, very minimal.

But what does the Conservative Government of Saskatchewan do? They station the director of fisheries, who is responsible to the commercial fishermen in that northern area, in Meadow Lake, where he has his home in Meadow Lake and goes back and forth to the North where the fishing is. So, I'm just showing you . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, it's a service centre, Mr. Speaker, and I want to indicate that if it wasn't for the citizens of northern Saskatchewan north of Meadow Lake, that the Meadow Lake community, business community, would not survive. But what is taking place is everything is being centralized in Meadow Lake, and they are forgetting about the North once again.

Well, the minister of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation indicates that people up North need to have more say. They are the ones that know how to develop their resources. Just about three weeks ago the commercial fishermen on Ile-a-la-Crosse, who had a small portion of their summer limit left, wanted to get an extension for the winter because one, they had no jobs; two, they had no income, and they had no stamps to draw unemployment. But they felt, by the fishing that they had done, that there was a sufficient number of fish in that lake to warrant a 50,000 pound extension for a winter fishery where they could have had an income. So the new director of fisheries, who is stationed in Meadow Lake, drove up to Ile-a-la-Crosse and indicated to the fishermen that they didn't know what they were talking about, and that they could not give them an extension. So there the fishermen are sitting with no work, no unemployment stamps, forced on the welfare rolls.

I want to quote a few more interesting points here by the minister in charge of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, Mr. Speaker. And I'm quoting here again the hon. member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake. The interesting part of what he said, Mr. Speaker — and he's talking about the elderly gentleman that he was interviewing up in northern Saskatchewan — was that there were cattle being raised, there was farming in northern Saskatchewan, there was trapping, there were various small industries.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what the minister of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation is saying to this legislature is that there is no more cattle being raised in northern Saskatchewan. And I take exception to that, because there is just as many or more cattle being raised up on the Ile-a-la-Crosse farm as there ever has been. And that's the community that he was speaking out of.

There was no farming; there was no farming, he said. And I want to indicate that due to the NDP's progressive programs, we now have a wild rice industry in northern Saskatchewan that is booming. And I consider that farming. There was no trapping. The minister of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation — and I am quoting from Hansard, Mr. Speaker — and he says there was no trapping, there was no small industry. And I say to the minister, he went into Ile-a-la-Crosse, comes back down to Regina, and says that there's no trapping taking place in northern Saskatchewan.

That is another statement that he has made that is totally untrue. There is lots of trapping taking

place in northern Saskatchewan. Granted, it's a tough year; there's heavy snowfall. There's not as much fur as there was before in some areas. But let me tell you, the citizens and folks in northern Saskatchewan who always did trap are still out trapping, and they will continue to trap regardless of the statements that you make in this provincial legislature.

And he goes on and on, and I'm going to quote from Hansard what the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake was saying here last night to the legislature. "Now it appears, Mr. Speaker . . . " and he's saying that there's no trapping and there's no farming — nothing is going on in northern Saskatchewan any more:

Now it appears, Mr. Speaker, that the former government simply flew into town one day, and said, "Well, no, you need a 40-hour a week job year-round."

I tell you, that is the truth, Mr. Speaker. There are a lot of citizens in northern Saskatchewan — hundreds and hundreds of them — that would most certainly like to have a job that they could go to work for eight hours a day and be guaranteed that they could work for a full year.

What is taking place right now? You hire them to fight fires when it's convenient. When it's not convenient you bring in large water bombers from Ontario, paying millions of dollars to an Ontario firm who owns the water bombers, and bring them in, and you don't hire the local people. That's what you've been doing. You have stand-by crews. You talk about tourism. There's lots of room for tourism in northern Saskatchewan, but we need to keep these people working.

But what you are saying is, no, that's not what it's going to be. We're going to bring in the water bombers from Ontario at millions of dollars; we're going to lay off the stand-by crews which could be working year-round and should be working year-round — 30-hour week, year-round jobs. Putting three occupations together for the year isn't the way we'd like to see it, and while we're thinking it over we'll build you a house which was designed in Regina and, Mr. Speaker, simply didn't work.

And that's right. We did build houses. We built hundreds and hundreds of houses in northern Saskatchewan for people who needed the houses, who really needed them, and people who are suffering up there because in three years, Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Government of Saskatchewan has constructed 47 houses in all of northern Saskatchewan . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'll get back to that. Somebody on the other side indicated that they can't afford the payments. Well, I say that is right. When you don't have a job and you're on welfare and you're being cut back and you have no security, sometimes it gets pretty hard to make them house payments, and that is what's happening in northern Saskatchewan.

And then he goes on, the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake, and he says, "And, Mr. Speaker, there wasn't anything for them in town except houses." In fact, Mr. Speaker, right now some of the communities strive for the accommodations . . . (inaudible) . . . but because it's a make-work program.

What he is saying, that they moved out of the country to come into the communities where they could have a good home, they could have sewer and water, they could put their children in school. That is the reason why citizens in northern Saskatchewan move into the communities. No different than the farmer in southern Saskatchewan who has moved from the smaller towns, who are no longer there, into the larger communities where they have the type of services that their children deserve. But you're saying the only reason they moved in is because they were going to get a new house. And I say that that's the type of statements that the citizens of northern Saskatchewan do not need, Mr. Speaker.

And then he went on to say that things are really booming up north, especially in the minerals. A new gold mine was opened this year. I'm not too sure. I can't argue that point, Mr. Speaker,

because I'm not aware of a new gold mine that's opened and is producing. "New gold mine was opened this year" — quote from Hansard by the minister of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. Then he goes on:

Well, Mr. Speaker, we do not have a good record in this province as far as junior resource companies establishing themselves in Saskatchewan, because they didn't feel very safe in Saskatchewan.

(1500)

And in fact I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that some of them still do not feel safe. He is saying to the business community, he is saying to Saskatchewan that because of the Conservative policies — and they have been in power for three years — that there is no development by small business because they feel it's unsafe to develop in this province.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the Conservative members, you have to start taking responsibility. You have been the government for three years and yet you make statements like this in Hansard, that because small business is not developing is because they feel that it's not safe to develop in this province because "the next provincial election may elect a New Democratic government."

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that when the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake indicates that business does not feel safe to start up in Saskatchewan, that is true, but not because of the possibility of a New Democratic government. It's because of your policies over the last three years. And I can tell you that when the next election rolls around you will see the small-business people starting to flourish again in this province.

"I believe, Mr. Speaker," and I'm quoting once again from the minister in charge of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation out of Hansard:

I believe Mr. Speaker, that all the northern Saskatchewan people are asking for are economic opportunities similar to the opportunity of those people in southern Saskatchewan, because we're all Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker.

That is right. That is right, Mr. Speaker. That is what the people of northern Saskatchewan are asking for: economic opportunities, opportunities the same as in the South. You have 8 per cent unemployment in southern Saskatchewan and you're getting all excited. We have up to 95 per cent in northern Saskatchewan. And I think that the statement that you just made, Mr. Minister, is a right one. They want economic opportunities. They want some security. You have been in government for three years, and I say you are not giving them that.

I'm going to move on now, Mr. Speaker. I've spent enough time discussing this. There's much more that he said in Hansard last night, and I will get around to some of his other, the housing needs in the North and things like that, a little later in my speech.

We now know, Mr. Speaker, that there is a serious unemployment problem in Saskatchewan. And one just has to take a look at the new job creation agency that has been established by the Conservative government and you know that they, as a Conservative government, realize that they have a serious problem in Saskatchewan with unemployment. And why they took three years or close to three years to realize that there was this problem, and now they have decided that they are going to ask the member, the Hon. Attorney General, to head up this here agency and to try and solve the problems probably to make things look a little better in this province, and maybe have a provincial election in the next year or nine months.

But when we take a look at the job agency that started up and the announcement that they were going to have a winter works program, Mr. Speaker, this goes to show you just how the Conservative government really thinks. Here we have had winter for over two months in

Saskatchewan. We're living in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, not British Columbia. We've had snow and ice and cold weather for over two months.

Now on the first part of December, the Conservative government announce that they are going to start a winter works program. It hasn't been announced yet. And we all know that winter works programs should be operating now. There are a lot of folks out there who you are putting this program in for, who would like to have a cheque for Christmas. And I ask you how they're going to get a cheque for Christmas, how they're going to go to work when the details of the program haven't been announced. There has been nothing, nothing, done today. The communities don't know what it entails, and as a result, when Christmas rolls around this year, the unemployed in this province are going to be far more worse off than they were two or three months down the road, because they are not going to be . . . They are going farther and farther in debt, and they're waiting and waiting for your proposals to come forth, and they are not.

And there's no encouragement. There was a proposal that came to the Conservative government from a group in Big River who said, "We will set up an industry in Big River and we will use our own money if you will just agree to buy the power." An industry that they claim — and I have no reason to question that — that they claim that it would provide immediately 500 jobs to that northern region. And they indicate that they are not getting the support of this Conservative government. As a matter of fact, it got so bad that the vice-president of the Conservative Party had to leave the Conservative Party to go to the Liberal Party. It's like jumping from the frying pan into the fire, I admit, but that's what he did. He said, "I'm not getting any place here," so he joins the Liberal Party.

But I want to say that I'm looking forward to what is going to take place in your employment agency. I said before and I'll say it again, Mr. Speaker, you are concerned in southern Saskatchewan about an 8 per cent unemployment rate. Let me tell you, the folks in northern Saskatchewan are extremely worried about unemployment rates that are up to 95 per cent! And you add that the unemployment problems that we have in northern Saskatchewan, to the fact that a lot of citizens up there can't make their house payments. As one of the Conservative members added across the floor, "They're not making their payments." That's right. And they are concerned about that.

They are concerned about the way the payments are asked to be made. Some of them pay a little amount; some have to pay more. Some of them where there's no ceiling, they've gone up to just about \$1,000-a-month payments on their houses. Then what happens? The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation comes in with their officials, go to the individuals who are having problems and say, "Look, why don't you surrender your mortgage?" Mr. Speaker, give us the house back, give the house back to the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, and then you can rent it from us.

They're actually telling the citizens in northern Saskatchewan who have built fences and who have put grass in their yards and who have made many improvements on their houses, that you shouldn't be a home owner — that you shouldn't be a home owner, that you should be a renter.

And that's what the officials of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation are doing in northern Saskatchewan today. They're going to the home owners and saying, "Look, give up your mortgage. We'll rent you the house back." They're trying to make renters out of them.

If we take a look at the house construction that we've had in northern Saskatchewan . . . I indicated before that under the Conservative government there's only been 47 houses built in just about three years — 47 houses. And I would assume, I would assume that some of them 47 houses were started under the New Democratic government — not 47 starts.

And this is what's happening. Leaders in northern Saskatchewan, mayors of communities, town managers, are saying it's a serious problem. And I'm quoting from the Star-Phoenix of November

28th, Mr. Speaker, and I'm quoting from the town manager of La Loche.

La Loche village administrator, Doug Gailey, says you can find three-bedroom homes containing 25 residents in that northern metis community of about 2,200.

Twenty-five citizens — 25 individuals living under one roof. That goes to show you just how fast the housing program has deteriorated in the three years that the Conservative government had been building houses.

It reminds me of exactly the same situation that we had under the Liberal government from '64 to '71. And in '71, when the NDP government took over, I went into communities and I saw 28 individuals under one small roof. I saw three families under one roof. I saw families just waiting for spring so that some of them could move out into tents.

We're now getting the same situation again. And I say to the minister of the Housing Corporation to get up there and get some houses built and solve the problems that Northerners are having.

And here's another quote from the Housing Corporation:

In the North, about 5.5 million . . . (no, excuse me) . . . But SHC spokesmen counter that accumulated arrears on government-built homes in the North are about \$5.5 million. Until communities like La Loche get their problems under control, we just can't afford to go in there and build any new homes.

Until they get their problems under control, Mr. Speaker. I say it's up to this government to go into La Loche and provide them with some jobs, provide them with some economic stability, so that they can make these payments that you say they are in arrears. And that's why the problem exists. And I say that this has to be done.

The same with the nursing homes. The citizens in there, Ile-a-la-Crosse — and the minister just came back from a trip to Ile-a-la-Crosse — that community has requested a nursing home. There is not one nursing home in northern Saskatchewan, not one. And the minister indicates . . . And the community had requested that the 10-unit home that they have there now be turned into a nursing home because they are now building some new senior citizens' units. And they need it. They need it.

But the minister indicates that their request for 10, because it's a 10-unit building, not to be turned over because it's too small. He indicates that the only way that it can be done economically is to have 30. And then he goes on to say that the problem will solve itself, because I understand that the hospital in Ile-a-la-Crosse provides three long-term-care residents with beds in the hospital in all northern Saskatchewan.

And I want to say, Mr. Minister, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there are senior citizens who need nursing homes that are scattered from North Battleford, Prince Albert, Big River, Meadow Lake, in them hospitals. They are being looked after in the homes by families, and I say that we need nursing homes, and I think that it's about time that the Conservative government took a serious look at this and got up there and built a nursing home. It can be centralized in Ile-a-la-Crosse. There's no problem with that. But it most certainly is needed.

Talk about the problems up in the North and so many people going on welfare and the welfare reform. And I see young people, and this is discouraging to me to see young people who are forced onto welfare by a policy of reform in the welfare department of this province. They get a government grant, some individuals, the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, to build a fish plant in Buffalo Narrows. Young people who are not on welfare, some of them just graduated out of grade 12, went down there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to try and get a job. And what were they

told? They were told, "Yes, we will give you a job. Are you on welfare?" And the young individuals would say no. They'd say, "Sorry, we can't hire you. You've got to be on welfare. Got back to the Social Services department and get on welfare. Come back, we'll give you a job."

And that is what has been done up there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is welfare reform, and that is taking place. And I've seen it take place. Then they go back and they work on the project for \$5 an hour. That is what the Conservative government calls welfare reform. I call that slave labour.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

(1515)

MR. THOMPSON: — That is a corrupt policy that is forcing young people who have just finished their grade 12 education, who should be able to go out and get a job, to go on welfare and then you can go and work on these projects for \$5 an hour. What a future that they have. What a future under a policy like this. And that's taking place. That's part of the welfare reform. Individuals who . . .

And in Saskatchewan, in the southern part of this province, for the first time in history, we have food banks. Never before in this province has there been food banks, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Or maybe in '29, '30, and '31. Food banks. Soup kitchens that are flourishing. Individuals who are coming to get a hot meal. This has never happened in this province before. But I tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's happening now.

What can be done to solve these problems? And I indicated what the problems are, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But I want to present to this legislature, and to the Conservative government, some things that can be done and that should be done in northern Saskatchewan. And the minister of Saskatchewan housing, he agrees. He said, let's get at 'er. I say that, number one, a public housing program and a repair program and senior citizens' nursing homes, get them under construction. Provide the houses that they need and the jobs that are needed.

Number two, support the commercial fishermen. We know that the commercial fishing industry could be a big business in northern Saskatchewan. But all our fish is being taken out of northern Saskatchewan, trucked to Winnipeg, and processed in Winnipeg, Manitoba. That is something that has to be changed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it should be. The fishermen should be allowed to take that fish into the plants and it should be filleted in northern Saskatchewan, and then citizens of this province can enjoy a fresh commodity that they desire, and it would most certainly solve a lot of the problems in northern Saskatchewan.

And I think another thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, some conditional contracts. When housing contracts were awarded in northern Saskatchewan, you put out the public tenders, somebody from Prince Albert or Regina, and all over — Saskatoon, are getting the contracts. Have some conditional contracts that indicate that so much of a percentage of Northerners will be hired on, on these contracts. It's not taking place today. Everything is going to the South.

Support for tourism. Most certainly tourism in northern Saskatchewan can be big. And we have to have that type of support. We need some campsites and stand-by crews to be working year-round. But you have to put your mind to it and do it.

Fish enhancement. We have to make sure that the waters in northern Saskatchewan have an abundant supply of fish, not only for the tourists, but for the commercial fishermen. And I ask this government to take a look at lakeside hatcheries and go into northern Saskatchewan and develop them. You've had success — we've had success in the Big River area and Delaronde Lake, and it can be done in all northern Saskatchewan where we can have the lakeside fish hatcheries and make sure that we have an abundant supply of fish for the future of the North.

I also want to say to the Conservative government and ask you to enforce the surface leases on uranium mines in northern Saskatchewan. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a surface lease in Cluff Lake and at Key Lake. At Cluff Lake, two weeks ago, the 50 per cent of that labour force, 56 per cent was Northerners, and that is good. And I was up there and I seen a lot of happy individuals who were working. But you go to Key Lake, the largest mine in the world, and you find that there is only 26 per cent Northerners working, and it's going down.

And the Minister of Saskatchewan Housing, the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake says why. Last night he admitted why. He said there's not enough training programs. And I want to tell you, you've been in for three years. The mine was officially opened only two years ago. So then why aren't you solving the problem?

We had programs in the community college that were training more workers to go into work. That is no longer taking place. And I think you better take a look at your programs to train people to take these jobs, if that's the case.

You have another mine at Rabbit Lake. And I ask you to negotiate a surface lease up there so that we can get Northerners in there. And I also ask you to take a serious look at the underground operation that's taking place in Cluff Lake. That is contracted out, and does not apply to surface lease agreements. There are 70 miners working in that underground operation, and not one is a Northerner. Not one, because they're not governed by the surface lease.

And I ask the minister to take a serious look at that and say to the contractors who are up there doing the underground mining, "You abide by the surface leases and give Northerners an equal opportunity." We're not asking for too much. You'll find very few Northerners who are working in the potash mines in southern Saskatchewan. We're not asking for any share of that. All we're asking for is an equal share to the mines up in northern Saskatchewan.

And I think it's time that you, as a government — you've been in power for three years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, — start taking the blame for some of the problems that's happened in this province today.

We have unemployment . . . When the NDP left power, it was at 4 per cent. Now it's at 8 per cent for the individuals who are registered, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And let me tell you, there are a lot of people in this province who are not registered. So I would suggest that that 8 per cent is closer to 10 than 8.

And that's why we have this dramatic increase in welfare, because of the economic conditions. That's why we have a lot of problems on the farms today, because of economic conditions. Let me tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are hundreds and hundreds of farmers in this province who supplemented their farms by working in the forest industry, working in the oil patches, and working on highways, all over this province. They had jobs to supplement their farms. And that is another reason why so many young farmers are having problems, financial problems today, because there is no jobs for them any more.

Let's take a look at one of the big blunders of this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the most vicious blunders that . . . And that is the Department of Highways. Last year we had a budget. The Conservative government brought down a budget. The next day the Minister of Highways gets up, and what he does, he fires 250 individuals in this province — highways workers — fires them the next day after you bring in the budget. And I tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's 250 families that were literally destroyed. Some of them had worked for 20 and 30 years, had no idea they were going to lose their job. And what happens. They lost it.

And that firing is still taking place. That movement of people . . . Engineers are moving out. They're being replaced with consultants. Engineers who used to do the engineering work are being replaced with consultants, and I would guess to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at twice the cost

of the engineers that were in this province.

Then what do they do? They announce after they fire the individuals that they're going to auction off the Highways equipment — a large portion of the Highways equipment. Forty million dollars worth of highway equipment — equipment valued at \$40 million. It would take \$40 million to replace that equipment — equipment that was well repaired and in good shape, because nobody can say that the Department of Highways never looked after their equipment. It was in good shape.

So what did they do? They sold off \$40 million worth of equipment for less than \$6 million, laid off 250 individuals and disrupted their lives to no end, and that's in the name of progress. And that's what's happening.

Now you see some of the highway improvements, and it's a joke in some places. The only highway improvements is a new sign, a blue Tory sign. And you go up into the highways. That's what I got in northern Saskatchewan. My highways are re-numbered with nice new blue Tory signs. And that is their highway improvement program for this year.

And it doesn't end there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Last year the Conservative government in their wisdom decided that they were going to sell the drag-line. They're going to sell a drag-line for \$30 million and then lease it back for 30 years. I could have bought that drag-line. I have no money, but I could have borrowed the money to buy that drag-line with a contract like that, a sweetheart contract. And that's not the end of it.

Now, a year later, they announce that they've sold the whole coal-mine to Manalta Coal from Calgary. Mannix Construction out of Calgary has come into our province and bought for \$200-and-some million the whole coal mine, our coal mine. And now they have got a contract from the provincial government, or from Saskatchewan Power, to sell coal back for the next 30 years.

That is what's taking place in this province. And I want to ask: what's next, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Well, they may want to sell to their friends the Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation. That's been rumoured. I think it would be a bad mistake. They might want to sell some potash mines and that has been rumoured. And I say that's a bad mistake. They may sell off Saskatchewan Forest Products' mills, and that's a rumour, and the Minister of Energy says that's a good idea. So I would suggest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the next on the block and the next sale is going to be Saskatchewan Forest Products' mills. It's possible that SGI may be up for sale . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . One just doesn't know what's next.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the NDP party, I want to warn the Conservative government, we New Democrats will fight any move by the Conservative government to sell off Saskatchewan's future. We will fight with all the power that we have, and I can assure you that the power that we have now is surprising, as far as the Conservative members are concerned. And I tell you when the next election rolls around, we'll be on the other side of the House, and we will be making the decisions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will not sell off Saskatchewan's future, and we will fight with all our power to maintain that future for our people. And I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the acid test will come when the Premier gets the courage to call the election, and I am sure Saskatchewan voters will do the same with the Devine government as they did with the Anderson government 50 years ago. And that's exactly how things are going, and I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as soon as they call that election you are going to see a repeat of history. You are going to see a repeat of history of 50 years ago, and that's the only time we ever had a Conservative government, and let me tell you they were a good government compared to what's taking place with this government here.

In conclusion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will only say that the throne speech, like the policies and performance of the Devine government, has been a frustrating disappointment for the people of Saskatchewan, and particularly disappointing for the people of northern Saskatchewan and the people throughout my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, because this throne speech reveals a Conservative government which is confused and drifting, because of its total and inadequate commitment to provide job opportunities for the people of Saskatchewan, and because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it clearly indicates that their government will continue to turn its back on the people of the North; for those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I will obviously be opposing the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. PETERSEN: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I've been listening to the speech from the member from Athabasca with some interest, and some of his points are fairly interesting. Most of them aren't too factual, though.

I'd like to open today with some quotes from the Leader of the Opposition in his response to the Speech from the Throne yesterday . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'll get back to the member from Athabasca after a while. Give me time.

(1530)

To quote the Leader of the Opposition from Hansard, page 49, December 3:

Mr. Speaker, during the session of the legislature just ended last week my colleagues and I warned repeatedly of a growing farm crisis.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that outlines perhaps why the NDP lost the last provincial election. It was just during the last session of this legislature that they realized there was a growing crisis. He goes on to point out that their caucus developed a four-point program . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, here it says "four." Make up your mind, is it four or six? They play jiggery-pokery . . . Good. I believe that.

The members of the opposition pointed out that interest rates are a little too high. Okay. They went along to say that farmers need protection from foreclosures. Fine. Fuel taxes were exorbitant, and so on and so forth.

The truth is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, almost a year and a half before they started to realize that these were problems, this government had acted. We had started programs that would help young farmers get back on the farm. Our farm purchase program, Mr. Speaker, has put 3,500 new farmers on the farms. Compare that with their record of 10,000 family farms lost during their administration.

I think, today, the Minister of Agriculture introduced a Bill which is an Act respecting the Security of Farm Land in Saskatchewan. I think we've covered off their second concern, and that's protection for the family farm. Fuel taxes — fuel taxes is an area that this government acted on immediately upon taking office. It was worth \$120 million to the people of Saskatchewan to have that fuel tax removed each and every year. We also urged our federal counterparts to remove the tax on farm fuels, the federal tax on farm fuel I should say, and as soon as a Conservative government was elected in Ottawa, that, too, took place.

Last year, pardon me, last session, members of the opposition came to realize we had a little problem in agriculture. There were problems there. Good for them; they realized it at last.

This government, and, indeed, Tory governments all across Canada have been outlining that

concern to the federal government for a couple of years now. We have a small committee within our government that deals with agricultural issues, elected members. We call it our agricultural caucus. Alberta also has a committee set up along the same lines.

And in the spring of 1984, Mr. Deputy Speaker, elected Tory MLAs from the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba got together for a think-tank session. We spent three days together. We went through a number of issues. We outlined areas of concern. Two of them, two of the biggest ones was the cost-price squeeze that farmers are going through, and fuel taxes. We urged the then Liberal government for a pay-out from the grains stabilization program and we urged them further to remove the federal fuel taxes from farm fuel. That, Mr. Speaker, was two of the items on our agenda.

We took those items to the federal Tory party, to the then elected MPs, and we said, "Can you work this into your program when you form government?" And they said, "Yes, we can." And I'd like to think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that our actions helped to push the now Tory government in Ottawa into acting on the two things of great concern to us: an immediate pay-out from the grains stabilization program, and the removal of federal fuel taxes.

And if the Leader of the Opposition had been watching, or if he was a farmer, indeed, even if he was from Saskatchewan, he may have taken a greater interest in agriculture; he would have noticed that farmers did receive a pay-out from the federal grains stabilization program. They got it. We have assurances that we will have further pay-outs. And if he'd been noticing, there was a reduction in the fuel taxes.

If you take a look at our provincial programs on gas taxes, it has been stated by members of the opposition that our removal of the fuel tax in Saskatchewan didn't help farmers. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that the member for Rosthern yesterday used that term called horse droppings, and perhaps it shows what they are saying in its truest terms. It does help farmers. The removal of that fuel tax from the trucking industry in Saskatchewan allows transportation of our products at a cheaper rate.

The can of beans you buy in the store in your small town, it arrives there in a truck. It doesn't come piggy-back. It doesn't come mule train. It doesn't come on a train. It comes on a truck. And there was fuel tax against the diesel fuel that that truck burned.

School buses that haul our children to school had a fuel tax placed against the fuel they burned. Talk about indirect taxation, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Rural municipalities had to pay fuel tax on the fuel that they used in their construction equipment and their maintenance equipment — another indirect tax. We took those off. We saved R.M.s possibly 20 per cent of their maintenance budget by removing that fuel tax. Fuel was one of their biggest costs.

I hear members talking about the deficit, and that's an interesting thing. Members of the opposition, members of the NDP party, talk about deficits in one breath, and then in the next breath they call for more programs, more money — where's the cash, where's the cold hard cash? Reduce the deficit on one hand and increase programs on the other. Where is the money?

Well, maybe it goes back to deficits. Where is the money? I think yesterday one of the government members spoke briefly about deficits, the deficit in Sask Power, for example. And I think he outlined very eloquently how the NDP, when they were in government, used Sask Power to balance the budget. They used Crown corporations to balance their budget. They mortgaged the future of the children of this province in order to balance their budget. They cooked the books.

It's an interesting concept, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I assure you, you can balance your budget

that way for the time being, but sooner or later the end comes. You have to pay it back; you have to pay it back. There is no free lunch, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You have to pay back what you borrowed.

The NDP now sit there sanctimoniously and cry about a deficit. Our Minister of Finance has come out with honest budgets, straightforward budgets that reflect what this government is doing. He does not scurry around in back corners, cooking books, having two or three sets of books.

And it was fairly interesting earlier today when a member of the NDP stood up and introduced a motion calling for television cameras in Crown corporations. When we had just taken over government and were in public accounts and Crown corps, they didn't want television cameras in there at that time. And do you know why, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Because we were going through their books, and we were going to come up with some cooked books.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they can't make up their mind what they want. It's very interesting to watch the members of the opposition trying to dodge it now, but the fact remains . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I hear comments from a rat that joined a sinking ship.

Members of the NDP have stated in their reply to the throne speech that this government has not acted, and I'd like to quote further, if I may, from the Leader of the Opposition in some of his meanderings that he undertook yesterday. And one of those meanderings had to deal with crop insurance. And I'll quote again, December 3, page 50, Hansard, second paragraph, Leader of the Opposition:

With respect to crop insurance, farmers who have crop insurance claims should get prompt payment and not the snail's pace action that too many farmers are suffering from now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. PETERSEN: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I spoke on that matter earlier in the week, and I pointed out to the members of the opposition that indeed crop insurance was working very quickly, very rapidly, and very efficiently, and as a matter of fact, it was doing better than it did under their administration. But the NDP weren't listening. Or perhaps the Leader of the Opposition wasn't in his chair and he didn't hear it, and a couple of other members from their caucus were not in their chairs and they didn't hear it. And they haven't read Hansard, so I'll repeat it for their benefit.

They accused the minister of doing very little. They accused the minister in charge of crop insurance of not doing his job properly. Fair enough, fair enough. Elected members are subject to criticism. Whether it be true or not, we still have to bear that criticism. But they went further, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They not only insulted the minister in charge of crop insurance, they insulted the very people who work in crop insurance. They insulted their integrity. They insulted their work ethic. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's despicable. That's low. And as a matter of fact, I think I should call for an apology from the Leader of the NDP to those people who work in crop insurance.

. . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Shaunavon tells me he's ready to give up. Does that mean we can expect a by-election in your seat momentarily? Okay. Just so that you've got it straight, I'll give you some figures so that the next time you are tempted to question the minister in charge of crop insurance you've got your facts right.

Well, after insulting the members of the Crown corporation, crop insurance, they went on and said that there had been no increases in staff. And that's not true. In fact, there was a 28 per cent increase in field persons in trying to deal with the serious agricultural situation we find out there today.

In 1982 there was only 237 field staff; 1984 we've got 290 field persons. We've tried to take care of a bottle-neck in head office by bringing in some experienced field staff on occasions to deal with the heavy work-load encountered in the main office. We've constantly monitored the grading stations to try to reduce bottle-necks there. This year we've had more than 75,000 grain samples processed to the middle of November, and that compares with 50,000 in 1980 which was the previous bad record year under an NDP administration. I think that speaks quite well for the people who work in crop insurance.

By the middle of November, in 1980 under the NDP administration they had only processed 17,500 claims — pardon me, 12,000 claims. In 1984 under our administration there was 17,500 claims processed by the middle of November. That puts \$80 million out there for farmers to use, \$80 million. Earlier in question period members of the opposition questioned the Premier about cold, hard cash. Well, \$80 million is cold, hard cash in anybody's language. I don't care where the money comes from, it's gone right to those farmers who need it the most, the farmers who were affected adversely by weather conditions this year. I think that the minister in charge of crop insurance, and indeed the people who work in crop insurance, deserve praise, not the opposition's scorn.

(1545)

I think we're going to go on to some other programs that this government has introduced. The Leader of the Opposition yesterday talked about a comprehensive program after you put in a moratorium. This government has had a comprehensive program in place to help agriculture since we took office, and it's been working. And again I have to go back to the prime example: 3,500 new farmers out there on farms that have been helped through our farm purchase program. In 10 years of the NDP administration there was only 151 new farmers who owned their own farms. It's a disgrace.

The Agricultural Credit Corporation is another interesting area that I think we should mention today. We took a program that had been mismanaged, mishandled, and used for political purposes, and turned it into an efficient engine for the furthering of agriculture in Saskatchewan. We took that program and renamed it the Agricultural Credit Corporation. Now, the legislative amendment and regulation initiatives reflect the new face of agriculture in Saskatchewan, not the old face, not the old worn out one, but the new face of agriculture, the real face of agriculture here, not something that's been dreamt up by a bureaucrat in the back office, or one of the NDP policy sessions, but the real face of agriculture.

We changed the corporation's current interest rates that were 10, 12 and 14 per cent, and took them to 8 per cent, 12 per cent.

We increased the maximum loan from \$200,000 to \$350,000 — brought it into line with our farm purchase program. We raised the cut-off point to 300,000 from 185,000 net worth.

We put in the cut-off for eligibility in off-farm income at 35,000, a change from the previous 18,000. This allowed more new farmers who were hard-working, who had a lot of initiative, who had previously been limited to only 18,000 off-farm income to help them to start up their farms. It allowed them to go out and earn 35,000. They can go out in the oil patch and work for four or five months; their wife can hold a job, and they can still qualify under this.

We do not want to be known as the government that puts down individual initiative. We want to be known as the government who enhances individual initiative. And I think we've done that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Also we included financing for intensive agricultural operations so that they could buy the land that their operation was situated on. They could buy up to one quarter section per individual

now. Previous to this, you could put up a hog barn, you could put up whatever you wished in the way of intensive agriculture, and they wouldn't loan you the money to buy the land on which this was situated. That didn't make too much sense. We changed it.

We went on and made another change. Previous to our government's taking over, you could borrow money if you wished to feed rabbits, but you couldn't borrow money to feed cattle. Now I don't know what the rabbit population of Saskatchewan is, and perhaps the opposition has some numbers on that — maybe the member for Athabasca could undertake to do a commission and get us those numbers back — but I dare say the domestic rabbit population did not come anywhere close to that of our cattle population, and it didn't make much sense to feed rabbits, and not cattle, so we changed it.

You can borrow money now for feedlots. You can feed cattle out. And that's part of our program, to enhance the cattle industry in Saskatchewan. We've gone along quite a ways in that area. We've even introduced the Livestock Investment Tax Credit. And I have a little pamphlet with information on it, and I think members of the opposition should take the time to read this, and if they have any inquiries, perhaps they could call the numbers listed on the back of this little brochure. But briefly the program itself would give you a tax credit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a tax credit of \$25 per steer, heifer, or virgin bull. If you had swine, \$3 per head. If you had lambs, \$2 per lamb.

That investment tax credit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was to try to encourage people to invest in agriculture. You don't have to be a farmer to qualify for it. You can own cattle, put them in a feedlot, get your tax credit, and the person operating the feedlot will make his profit from charging you the custom feeding. That makes sense to me.

We're increasing jobs out there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by doing that. People from all over the province have been investing in this and, indeed, I understand people from the Shaunavon constituency have even looked into this, and I think some of them have invested, as well.

Perhaps the member from that area could look into it further. Of course, he very seldom goes down to an ag-rep office and gets any information, but if he would have, he would have noticed that in the ag-rep's office there is an abundant amount of information. As a matter of fact, there's information on all subjects, and irrigation is one of them.

The government put together programs to enhance water supplies in the province, and they're got it all in a handy manual, Irrigation for Saskatchewan. It can be obtained in any ag-rep's office. It goes through all the various items that you might want to delve into — the procedures, the resources, the economics, soils, soil types, water, water legislation, types of crops, research, maintenance, and I'm sure the member for Shaunavon would find it very interesting if he'd take the time to look it up.

In keeping with our policy to try to help the livestock industry in Saskatchewan, besides trying to encourage people to invest in it, we've initiated a feeder-to-finish stabilization program. It operates in conjunction with the cow-calf-to-finish program.

And this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is exactly that. It's a stabilization program. It's not an assurance program. It's a stabilization program. It's meant to try to take out some of the very, very lows from the market and provide a little stability out there.

There's been a lot of criticism of it, and there's been some concerns with it. There have been some suggestions by the NDP that the pay-outs aren't high enough, but it was never designed as an assurance program. It was designed as a stabilization program to try to steady the market. And it certainly wasn't designed to bail out everybody that's in the market; it was designed to stabilize it.

In keeping again with our programs for enhancing livestock production, we've tried to keep the sheep industry alive in Saskatchewan. We've done that through our lamb assistance program — paid out \$208,000 to 246 producers.

Earlier in the day the Minister of Agriculture was asked: what have you done to help the people in Saskatchewan who have starving cattle? We went into an explanation of our feed grain and forage-listing services. Those programs have been co-ordinated by the Department of Agriculture through rural development. You can get the lists in any municipal office. And if the member was concerned about starving cattle in Saskatchewan, as the minister pointed out, he can go to one of those offices and get that list.

Tax relief is another area that this government has been working in, in trying to assist agriculture in its current cost-price squeeze. We instituted the Home Quarter Tax Assistance Program that put \$11 million into the pockets of Saskatchewan farmers. That's cold, hard cash. It's a very good program.

Utility rates, benefits from utilities: — this government came to office and froze Sask Power's rates for a year. We froze them. The NDP had been raising them, raising them, and raising them year after year, sometimes three increases the same year. It was getting a little bit difficult out there. We froze them for a year.

We went further and lived up to one of our election promises that the member for Quill Lakes is so fond of quoting to us from the little handbook for party politics, and we removed the education and health tax from farm electricity.

We went further in that area. Farmers were becoming increasingly conscious of their escalating costs for energy. We instituted a rural gasification program — not one that was done with political motives in mind, but one that was done for the benefit of the farmers of Saskatchewan, one that was a comprehensive program, one that started at the most common sense point and worked from there. And it has worked, Mr. Speaker. Thousands of Saskatchewan farmers now enjoy the benefits of having natural gas on their farms. It heats their houses, heats their shops, runs their grain dryers. Indeed, we've got a couple of pilot projects using natural gas to run other forms of farm machinery — tractors, for example.

We went a little bit further. We provided low-interest loans to farmers who wanted to extend the use of natural gas on their farm to a grain dryer. We loaned up to \$3,000 at 8 per cent.

Now if that's not helping those farmers, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what is. Yet the members from the NDP opposition, day after day after day, preach their doctrine of doom and gloom and despair. I'd hate to sit amongst them. I'd hate to sit close to them, as a matter of fact. It's sometimes disgusting simply to sit across the floor from them — doom and gloom, day after day after day. They must believe it, Mr. Speaker, because they preach it. There has not been one positive thing that the members of the opposition have come up in the two and a half years that we've sat here as government. Indeed, the Leader of the Opposition couldn't even congratulate the member from Riversdale in her election win yesterday unless he had to throw in a slur on her character. I think that's fairly disgusting.

Pardon me, Mr. Speaker. Agriculture, Mr. Speaker, has been assisted in the province of Saskatchewan. It has been done so in a comprehensive and well-ordered fashion. When regional disasters strike, we have acted quickly and effectively, and in consultation with the people of the area in question. And I speak now of the north-east flood situation that we found ourselves in earlier this year.

In June it became obvious that many farmers had reseeded for the third time. It was still raining, no end in sight. Our government said, fine, this is your second bad year. We've got a program in mind. What do you have in mind? Let's talk about it. We'll see what we can come up with.

(1600)

So in accordance with that, we contacted R.M.s. R.M. officials, volunteered to fly out and meet with them, to drive out and meet with them, to meet with them anywhere they wanted to meet with us. We asked them: do you think it's advisable to meet with us? Would you like to meet with us? A couple of R.M.s said no, we have a little concern, but it's nothing unusual. That's fine. There's guys further north that have got a bigger problem. We don't have to meet with you. So fine, we didn't meet with a couple of those R.M.s. We went on and met with several others, discussed their problems, listened to their concerns, and came up with a comprehensive program to help those farmers in keeping with our government's actions in the past.

And there was a couple of things that were in question there. We had been accused, as a government, of not being able to act quickly when there was a need for swift, prompt action. Well, I think we allayed that fear. We showed that the Saskatchewan government could move quickly when there was a disaster like the north-east flood, and we did move quickly.

The other point that was in question was that too often I had heard the comments from members, and from private citizens, that the government always acts to help those guys in the south when it's dry, or the government always acts to help those guys in the west, but they've never helped us guys in the north-east. It was an unprecedented action on the part of the government. Very little provincial aid had ever gone into the north-east previous to this government's acting on the north-east flood situation. And our actions did alleviate the problems there, Mr. Speaker, but those are short-term things, those are short-term things. They helped out the day-to-day operations of those farmers, gave them hope, and kept them going. But it's not going to solve all the problems that we have in agriculture. And, indeed, I think it's rather unfair to expect any government to solve all the problems in any one sector, whether it's agriculture or what have you. Our administration has been attempting to undo the damage done by the previous administration, but we can't do it all in two and a half short years.

That \$7.5 million that went into that north-east area has helped thousands of farmers there. It also helped small businesses in that area. Members of the opposition are very, very quick to criticize our treatment of small businesses, and indeed, I think, the member for Athabasca went on at some length today about small businesses. But the fact is, Mr. Speaker, that by assisting farmers, we have assisted hundreds of small businesses who would otherwise not have been able to continue.

The members of the NDP don't understand business, obviously. It's fairly, fairly simple. You see, farmers buy things from small businesses from these communities, and if they don't have any money to pay for the things they get, the small businesses will go broke. So you have to make sure that farmers have money otherwise small businesses will go broke, dealerships, food stores, clothing stores, so on and so forth. I hope they got that.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Maybe you'd run through it once more for them.

MR. PETERSEN: — You think I should run through it once more? No, we'll let them read it in Hansard. Those small businesses were very, very happy to see this government act so swiftly and so promptly. It meant that they, too, would survive along with the farmers.

And again in the south, we suffered a drought. It's rather a strange occurrence to have a flood in one part of the province and a drought in the other, but that was the situation we found ourselves faced with. And again, again we acted promptly on that. We provided assistance for people to move their cattle to pasture because as everybody knows it's four times more efficient to move a cow to the feed than feed to a cow. So that's what we did. We provided assistance. The ranchers in the South brought their cattle north to pastures, and they were very happy that we were helping them do that. They were very, very pleased.

Those same ranchers, Mr. Speaker, will also benefit from our programs to help them purchase feed or whatever they feel they require to maintain their operation. Our \$48 a head for people in the affected areas will alleviate a lot of the concern that farmers and ranchers in that area had, and small businesses as well.

AN HON. MEMBER: — The members over there don't have cows. They don't understand.

MR. PETERSEN: — Is that true? The members over there don't have any cattle? I see.

AN HON. MEMBER: — The member from Shaunavon has oil.

MR. PETERSEN: — Well, if they have oil, they don't really need cattle.

Furthermore, at the same time that we moved cattle from the South to the North to pasture, into community pastures that had abundant feed for the cattle, we froze the rates for community pastures. We didn't increase them. We held them. We held them below what the PFRA pastures are at, what the federal ones are at. We're 2 cents a day per head cheaper. We're \$2 per annum per cow cheaper on breeding fees than the PFRA.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it that isn't helping farmers, I don't know what is. And you might say, oh, 2 cents a day, that's not very much. Or \$2 a head, that's not very much. But if you've got 50 head and they're fed for 100 days, that adds up. And it doesn't sound very glamorous.

And I apologize to the members of the NDP opposition for not being very glamorous because we're common sense. We deal with the little day-to-day things, and we build on them, like you build a wall out of bricks. One little piece at a time. We don't suddenly come out and announce some great wonderful program that's going to save the world. We build slowly. And we suffer their criticism for that because we aren't very glamorous. I apologize for that. We'll try to do better.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Don't apologize.

MR. PETERSEN: — A member behind me said, "Perhaps we shouldn't apologize." Let me think about that. I'll decide later.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I could go on about agriculture and, indeed, I may return to it in an hour or two. I'm not sure.

But I'd like to talk about jobs and job creation programs. Contrary to popular opinion, the people in my constituency don't all live in farms. They don't all live on farms. Some of them do live in small towns, albeit, I think the biggest town I have has got 1,500 people in it, and by standards of Saskatoon or Regina, that certainly is a small town. But, Mr. Speaker, in those small towns, in two and a half years, a strange phenomenon has occurred.

When I was campaigning in 1981 and 1982 in the election of 1982, I could go down the streets of Foam Lake, and I could count 12 empty buildings. 12 empty buildings that at one time did have businesses in them. But slowly, from 1971 till 1982, they went out of business. They went down the drain. They gave up. They quit. They went broke. But there was 12 empty buildings there.

Since the election of 1982, I have been informed by the mayor and her council that there are at least 18 new businesses in Foam Lake, 18 new businesses. Some of them hire two or three people. That's amazing, Mr. Speaker, because, to hear the NDP talk, everybody in Saskatchewan is wringing their hands and crying and nobody has any optimism. Nobody's going to start anything. There's been no job creation. Nobody's set up new businesses, and the country is going down the drain.

Now, that doom-and-gloom attitude has not penetrated to Foam Lake. Indeed, an attitude exactly opposite pervades the air there. Eighteen new businesses don't start up unless they've done their prospectuses. Unless they've done some feasibility studies, they don't just suddenly decide, well, we're going to start up today. These people that have started those businesses see an opportunity to grow, see an opportunity to expand, and they're doing that.

The town of Wadena — I counted 21 new businesses there the other day as I drove through, and I'm sure there must be at least 10 or 12 that I've missed. Twenty-one new businesses, 22 new businesses, 18 new businesses — that's the story in many of our small towns.

Indeed, my home town of Rose Valley, it's got 586 people in it, a whole 586 people. At one time we didn't have a lumber yard. For about five, six years we didn't have a lumber yard. Now we've got two. There's been eight new businesses start there in the last two and a half years. This is not doom and gloom. That is not despair. Obviously the NDP's message isn't reaching my constituency, and it's no wonder, considering the candidate that they've got there.

But why, Mr. Speaker, why is that happening? Under the NDP they preached and they practised centralization of government, centralization of services. Centralization and bureaucracy were their two key phrases. And those small towns that I've just told you about had services pulled out of them under the NDP administration. Indeed, they did. My home town of Rose Valley had the Sask Power office torn right out. We lost one family. The guy had five kids. To a small town of 586 people that's quite a blow. But they're recovering, they're recovering from 10 or 11 years of the NDP being in power. They're working at it. It's a slow, uphill grind, but they're making it, and they're confident they're going to make it.

Part of this is due to programs that this government has instituted. The ministers of this government have put far-reaching programs into effect. Our opportunities program, our directions in the social services area — trying to get people off the social service welfare rolls and get them some training and put them to work — is actually taking effect. It's working; it's happening. Our efforts to get young people out there, get them some experience, get them working, that's happening.

Our investment tax credits, our venture capital programs, all those things are allowing people to go about their own individual business without government intervention. And they're doing it, Mr. Speaker. They're going ahead. They are building businesses. They are starting them up again. They are putting new ones in place. They are hiring people, creating jobs.

I did a tour of my constituency for three weeks. I hit every town there. I talked to about 500 people that I have a list of, and countless more that I just talked to for a minute or two, and in all that time I did not come back with people who are dissatisfied with this government's operation. There were areas where they said we could do a little better but, all in all, they were happy with the job we were doing. That's more than could be said for the NDP opposition. I wonder when the last time one of the members of the NDP went out and went through one of their constituencies. You have to do it town by town. You can't just fly over them.

(1615)

Mr. Speaker, I could continue, and I would dearly love to go into the area of wild rice because northern Saskatchewan is not the only area that produces it, but there are other members who would wish to speak at this time, and my throat is getting very sore as I'm suffering from a cold, so all I can say at this time is I support the Speech from the Throne. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MARTENS: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me an opportunity here today to show my

appreciation to the people of the Morse constituency for nominating me and selecting me to represent them. It also gives me an opportunity to compliment the member from Riversdale for moving the Speech from the Throne, and also the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood for seconding the motion.

I want to today just speak about my constituency. I want to do it from a number of areas so I've chosen, first of all, the Department of Highways as a beginning point. I took it upon myself to find out from the people of the constituency exactly what they wanted and what they needed, and the first priority I put on the agenda for myself and for the constituency was building and paving a section of the No. 43 Highway from Pambrun to just east of Vanguard. Now that was a very good piece of road for the community and the people there really appreciated it. The extension of the '84-85 program will complete that road, and I want to just say that it's upon the recommendation from the town of Vanguard and from the R.M. of Glenbain and also from Whiska Creek, and they were very happy that I consulted with them on where the location should be.

I want to also add that in '83 the No. 1 Highway was extended beyond to west of Swift Current, about 15, 17 miles. It was resurfaced. The east lane traffic had the highway resurfaced. The westbound traffic had new paving put on. So it's made travel there a lot better.

They also resurfaced Highway No. 32 from Success to Cabri which was about 20 miles, and it increased the benefit to the people of Cabri in travelling to Swift Current for parts and repairs and things like that. It helped the people of Cabri and they're very thankful for that.

Also, they did some repair work, Mr. Speaker, and resurfacing on the highway from Gull Lake south to Shaunavon. They did about half the distance there. And that was also an asset to the constituency. It also was an asset to the people in Shaunavon. The other thing that they did, the Department of Highways took over the grid and park access road from Gull Lake to Cabri, and that was a plus. It was a well-built road that the municipalities had taken over and made into a park access, and the Department of Highways saw fit to take that over.

During the summer if you travelled along the No. 1 Highway you probably saw and had to be diverted in your traffic through the city of Swift Current, and adjacent to it the Department of Highways did a major reconstruction on the concrete on the bridges in the city of Swift Current, and just adjacent to it there were 10 bridges there that were resurfaced, and I think that is a credit to the Department of Highways. I appreciate what the minister has done.

And, to continue, they have started working on some of the repair program from Diefenbaker Lake, going south to Stewart Valley and they're going to keep on for . . . Well, they were cut short this year by the weather, and they'll probably finish it next spring.

I think that what I would like to say about the highways is that I appreciate the minister's response to the needs of the area. He's done that very well. I would also like to say, Mr. Speaker, that the No. 1 Highway has, on its east and westbound lanes, some areas where the traffic is some distance apart on the road between here and Swift Current, and the connecting roads that were put into place to take the traffic between these two highways was not very adequate. And the former administration had made kind of a verbal agreement with the municipality that they would, as soon as the grid road adjacent to it was constructed, they would provide the funding for that road in between. It was about two and one-half miles of road. So, together with the Department of Highways this summer and the Department of Rural Development, we put together a package so that the municipality will be almost totally compensated for that stretch of road and the rebuilding, and they were very happy with that.

And they're pleased that they could work it out with the Minister of Highways, and also with his Legislative Secretary, the member from Rosthern, who travelled out there and met with the R.M. council and with the associate deputy minister, and put together an approach to take to that

municipality so that they could approve it.

I also want to compliment the Minister of Highways about his safety program. I think he's been sensitive to certain needs, and it has provided a way for the . . . at least my children on school buses to travel safely, other families, and that's a concern. He's also expressed some sympathy and concern for other things like freight, and hauling freight, transportation of various kinds.

I want to change now to agriculture, Mr. Speaker, and mention a couple of things that I think I appreciate about what the Department of Agriculture has done. The Department of Agriculture . . . I'm just going to list a number of them, and I want to itemize them, and I'll dwell on a few of them.

I appreciate the fact that this government, together with the government in Ottawa today, have taken a look at the farm fuels. I think that's done a very good thing for the people of Saskatchewan. They took some initiative from our government and dealt with that.

The home quarter tax is going to also provide about \$14 million to the people of Saskatchewan, the 7.2 million to the people in the north-east, the \$1.5 million to transport cattle from the south-west, and that's a positive thing for my constituency and those to the south of me.

The money that went into developing wells into the Sask Water Corporation has also been well received, and it has been pleasantly . . . They were surprised that it was there, and people were glad to get a part of that action.

I'd like to compliment the government for dealing with the method of payment for the cattle producers in the province. I think that was a very well thought out program. It, in my opinion, far exceeded the value that was placed on the program that was implemented on a transportation subsidy.

I also want to compliment the government, and especially the minister of crop insurance, for their changes in their program. They're major changes, and I believe that they have, and are continuing to work to improve the process and deal with the problems that come along, like individual coverage.

And in my area, and along Diefenbaker Lake to the east, the forage pilot project was well received this year, and I appreciate the minister's flexibility in dealing with some of the problems we had there.

And I know that the people who have talked to me from my constituency have appreciated that too. I also think that the coverage of winter wheat and other grains is an asset on development of a comprehensive program for the crop insurance program.

I want to just take some time to look at a number of things in the farm purchase program. I really believe, Mr. Speaker, that the farm purchase program has provided this province with one of the best programs that has ever been developed in agriculture. It has given access to young people to begin farming, and I think that that's a credit.

I just want to outline a number of things that I think are important, and this relates to my constituency and these figures come from my constituency. I have 12 municipalities in my area, and the average of those 12 receiving rebate is \$46,931. That is, the municipality has access through the farm purchase rebate to their farmers of \$46,931. That's almost \$50,000 for every municipality in my constituency.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is a very important thing in my believing that those people in agriculture are being helped. The average age is 26 years. It's a young farmer starting out. The average net worth is 103,000. It isn't very big. It's maybe a quarter and a half in value, and that isn't very large

in any man's opinion.

The other thing that I think is extremely important is that 51 per cent of the people are doing this within the family. It's a transfer within the family, and I think that is one of the points that we wanted to address when we started the whole program. I think it's extremely important. It's a vital issue.

I had over a hundred loans in my constituency that were addressed on this basis, and I want to acknowledge that the program has worked well. It started out with a few problems, and we've got those worked out. And since then I've only had compliments from people who have had to deal with the program. The people who administer it have also to be complimented on their approach.

I want to just say one more thing about that: that the arms-length or the family transactions in my constituency and those in the province are very much the same. The arms-length transactions are about 46 per cent. So we have begun to do what we should have been doing in 1971, but never really had the chance.

Another issue that I want to discuss is the area of the dairy strike. I had a lot of phone calls when that was going on because the dairy industry is a very important part of the framework of my constituency, and I really believe that they felt that we needed to do what we did. I received support from them, and they called on a number of occasions and told that they needed help, and I'm glad that the government acted with the haste that they did. I just want to say that they appreciate it, and I appreciated the fact that they were prepared to support me.

The interesting thing is that in the whole debate that related around that strike, the critic for agriculture from the NDP was not allowed to even get up and speak about it. And I think that that's a very negative factor in relating to the thoughts that they have in that party. And I'm sure that the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg would have been prepared to address it from a positive point of view, too.

I want to say that the feeder-finish stabilization program is active and well. And I know that there are a number of people in my constituency who use that. And they also have suggested to me that there are some problems with the cow-calf one, and we all recognize that, Mr. Speaker. And I sometime wonder if we shouldn't suggest to the opposition that they should bear the burden of the implementation of some of that cost.

(1630)

Counselling assistance for farmers — that helped a number of people in my constituency and I'm pleased about that. The lamb assistance program that we put in — that helped quite a number of sheep ranchers in my area and I'm glad that the government responded in a positive way there.

I want to say something about the feed, grain, and forage listing service, about the access of a back-bencher to providing input into the direction that a government takes. I had a call from a constituent of mine relating to whether the government was going to be prepared to pay out any money to transport cattle and I said, well, I would see what I could do. I met that day with the deputy minister of agriculture and I said to him, I said, could we implement a program where we add to our forage and feed listing service a service that would say here's a pasture, rent it? And he said, we're going to do that. And two or three days later, that's what was happening. And it was a response from a constituent, to me, to the deputy minister, and was put in place. And I appreciate that with the Department of Agriculture. They've worked well with responding to the needs of the people out there.

The feeder association program, I think, is something that this province has needed for a long time. We have, in this province, exported calves for so long it's an ingrown thing with us. We

move those calves to the eastern markets; we move them to the South; we move them into Alberta; and we just don't seem to be prepared to feed them here ourselves. And I think, as this idea becomes a part of the grasp of the people who are in agriculture in the cow-calf business and in the feeding business, I think it's going to access a lot of potential to the province of Saskatchewan.

The Livestock Investment Tax Credit is also going to be an initiative, and the government is going to be working to continue to develop that program. The Agricultural Credit Corporation, as was mentioned by the member from Kelvington-Wadena, has done a lot of good for the people of Saskatchewan, and I appreciate that. They're working to expand their program, and I think that that's also good.

I want to just say a little bit about the lease program in agriculture for the branch that has been known as lands branch. When I was working with some aspects of that, a lot of the things that were being done were . . . the farmers and ranchers were being slowly throttled and they were being pushed into a narrower and narrower box all the time.

When the department was under the administration of the former government the people who had had ranches and had a lot of times been placed on those ranches, not by design but by circumstance they had been placed there, the municipalities in the '30s had suggested to some of these ranchers that they take those lands and that they keep them and that they administer them and then they wouldn't have to pay taxes; they wouldn't have to pay the arrears — just so that the land would be used. And some of those places had become bigger than what people in other parts of the province had thought. And some of those places were now being pushed into that small box that they couldn't exist. If they wanted to transfer, they couldn't do it. There were just so many things that were negative to that development of that ranching area in the South and in the south-west.

And so when we were elected, it became a part of my responsibility, because I knew a lot of the people, to suggest to the government some changes. And I'm proud that the government had made those changes because they have developed an area of the province that is prepared to expand.

And one of the things that I would like to say is that we have made some changes, Mr. Speaker, in the lease policy on surface rights to ranchers and leaseholders on their surface rights, as it relates to oil pipelines and sort thing. I want to say, also, that not only is my constituency affected, but a lot of the south-west and a lot of those areas even in your constituency, Mr. Speaker, to the north. And I think that the people, when they see this, are going to be pleased.

The lands branch did some looking into finding the people who could contribute some suggestions. We met with them and they, from that, developed a program that I think the people of Saskatchewan are going to be proud of. We have elected a pork marketing board in this province. I think that's a plus. We changed it from a hog commission to a marketing board. The producers are in control of their own direction there and that's the way that the thing should be going anyway.

I want to change just a little bit. I want to talk a little bit about health care. Health care has been said by the people in opposition that we're "agin" it, and that's just a total misuse of the truth. And what I would like to say is that we have, in the Morse constituency, done a number of things in the health care system that I think are kind of good, and I'm kind of proud of them — initiated by the people and developed by the people in the constituency.

We have had an upgrading of the senior citizens' home in Herbert. They also have a nursing home there that needed upgrading. And the two of them have been done. We've added a respite bed for the hospital in Cabri. We've added a respite bed for the town of Vanguard. And what I really think is a good move is the minister has just about completed the building of a new

nursing home in Central Butte. And a lot of the people from Central Butte who came to Herbert to use the facility will now be able to move back, and it'll allow room for some of that expansion from these older people into that home that weren't able to get in there before. I think that's a very positive thing.

The past year has been a period of growth and development for another area, Mr. Speaker, and that's Sask Water Corporation. I really feel that the development of this corporation to work in the field of developing water is probably the one single thing that has been put in place that is completely different than any other jurisdiction that there is as it relates to water in any part of Canada. It's unique and I think it's very capable of delivering the systems and the water development in the province to a far greater extent that was available before.

When viewing the development of the Sask Water Corporation and what it should be doing, there were at least 11 different departments that were affected. There were four major ones and, besides that, Mr. Speaker, there were about 44 pieces of legislation that in some way were indirectly affected by a change in the direction of the water. So, when a town or a farmer or a village came looking for development prospects, what did they have? They went to this department or they went to that department and they went to the other one. And when they came home they were all tired. Now what they can do is they can go to their area. There are six in the province. They can go, for example, in my area they go to the city of Swift Current, and we have people there, staff on hand, who can deal with their deep-well problems. They can deal with their irrigation problems. They can deal with their urban and town's water and sewer problems. And I think, Mr. Speaker, it's a step forward, and it's a major step. Where we had one person looking after all of the provincial agricultural concerns as it related to water in Swift Current, we now have five. And the program is going to be expanding to develop more and more of that as we go along.

I want to just say a few things about energy that are, I think, extremely important. In my constituency was one of the first developments of oil in the south-west. It came in Fosterton, and through the years we've had ups and downs in the business, and most of those ups and downs were forced by the economic demand of the provincial government. If the demand was severe, then production went down, and it just fell apart. And that's the situation that was there in 1980 and '81 and '82, and that's the kind of thing that I think what our figures today point out, is that in the south-west we've had a total, as of November 16, of 517 wells drilled.

The interesting part, Mr. Speaker, is that there were 392 wells that were drilled that were gas, and I think that for the development in the south-west that is a key thing to the survival of the area and a service industry to the oil patch. People have mentioned to me that they're busy, that they're working hard, and in 1981, Mr. Speaker, when I was nominated and was seeking election, oilfield services was a bad thing to be in. Truckers who were hauling water were just not doing anything. As a matter of fact, they had to go look for work in agriculture to just pay the bills, and they weren't being paid. And I spoke to that same trucker the other day, and he said, "We need another year of this to get back to the place where we were," because of the drag on their economic position that they had been in.

And that's the kind of thing that those people really need, is they need this kind of development, and we need that kind of fresh input. It provides jobs. It provides security.

The other thing that I was going to say about energy is that the government has really done a good job on the Husky Oil upgrader at Lloydminster. I want to compliment them on that, and wish them every success as they continue to work with that. Also, the new grade energy incorporated upgrader here in Regina, together with Federated and the provincial government and the federal government — I think that that's a very positive thing for the province of Saskatchewan to develop these kinds of things.

One of the things that relates to gas and energy and oil is the fact that natural gas is being made

available to the farms in my constituency, and the Sask Power Corporation have done an admirable job in dealing with those kinds of programs, co-ordinating the development, and it's coming to the place, Mr. Speaker . . . The first year the people said, well, I don't really know. And now they're knocking on doors and they're saying, look it, I need that program, I need that development, and I want to get it done. It also has provided a dimension of job creation that I think has helped for the people of Saskatchewan.

I want to just outline a number of things . . . a number of areas that have received grants from Culture and Recreation. And I want to show my appreciation to the Minister of Culture and Recreation. The town of Cabri has received a grant. The town of Glenbain, they got a grant for their hall. The Morse curling rink got a grant. The Simmie arena got a grant to put their boards in their skating-rink. Pennant skating-rink has gotten a grant. The Stewart Valley school had a community hall and a school gym combination that they got a grant for. Hodgeville had a grant for their ice plant. And the town of Wymark had a skating rink. Now this may not be significant to a lot of you, but it certainly is to them, and I think that that is a part of a record of accomplishment for the people of Saskatchewan, to provide for my constituency, and I appreciate that.

I want to say two things about the area of negative implication from some of the resolutions that I read from NDP Commonwealth, and one has to do with abortion. I'm not in favour of what they say in their resolution. I am not in favour of their attitude regarding their resolution. And I don't think that that's a good idea at all.

The other area that I want to address is the area of what they call the inheritance tax. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's an inheritance tax. I think it's a widows' and orphans' tax. Because what you have, when the mother of the family dies, you don't have any estate settled. When you have the father die and an estate has to be settled, the widows and the orphans, those two groups of people, are the ones that pay. And that's the kind of thing that they're prepared to do on farms in Saskatchewan. We're just trying to get rid of capital gains tax as fast as we can. Why do we want to put on an inheritance tax or a widows' and orphans' tax on the farms in Saskatchewan? I think it's a negative thing to have in . . . even to be in favour of it. I think it's disgusting.

(1645)

I want to compliment the Minister of Agriculture in one other area, and that's to do with his Bill. I know that it's going to be difficult for some of the members of the opposition to swallow. I think it's going to be . . . it's like a lump in their throat. We took a number of things that we seriously considered when we did this, and one was that we did not want to have agricultural machinery dealers put into receivership because we were dealing with a piece of legislation that was as severe and as pointed as this one is.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, that, if we would have followed what they had suggested, we would have done that. Many people who you know in your constituency, and all of us in rural Saskatchewan know, would have had a lot of implement dealers who would have just gone right down and been nothing. And we don't want to do that. We just want to be very careful how we handle these kinds of things, and I appreciate what the Minister of Agriculture has done in providing that legislation today.

These are some of the areas that I believe, I want to say, are a good part of what the Conservative government had done in my constituency, and I've been a little lengthy perhaps in dealing with those things, but they relate to the government and its record of performance. And dealing with the Morse constituency, the people are happy that the government is dealing with the things the way they are. And so it's with a great deal of pleasure that I am going to be supporting the motion for the Speech from the Throne.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.

Correction: — In Hansard 3A, December 3, 1984, paragraph 2, line 2, instead of "rights to life" the speaker intended "Human Rights".