

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
December 5, 1984

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

HON MR. MUIRHEAD: — Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure to introduce to you, and to the members of this Assembly, 20 students, grade seven students from Mortlach, from the constituency of Thunder Creek.

They are accompanied, Mr. Speaker, by their teacher, Mrs. Crosbie, and their bus driver, Mr. Jack Johnson. They are sitting in the West gallery, and, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the legislature to greet this here group in our usual manner in wishing them a very good day in the legislature, and a good trip home. Thank you very much.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. KLEIN: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As their member for Regina North, I'm delighted to introduce you, to you and to the Assembly, my little friends and neighbours from grade seven and eight of St. Timothy School. They're sitting in the Speaker's gallery. They're accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Bresciani, and with a good Italian name like that I assume he is related to an old, dear friend of mine, and we'll talk about that later.

I will be joining them for pictures and drinks, assuming that the government whip will allow me the privilege of leaving the House.

I look forward to your questions later. They'll probably be a little more entertaining than what you'll get this afternoon, but none the less I hope you have a very interesting and enjoyable experience this afternoon, and I ask all members to welcome them to this Assembly.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Financial Assistance for Farmers

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the Premier, and it concerns the problems faced by farmers that are being addressed, in part, by the Bill before us — the band—aid bill, as it's sometimes called.

Mr. Premier, your government promised a comprehensive plan to help family farmers, and promised to open up the provincial treasury. Now, we have before us Bill No. 1 dealing with the foreclosures on land. May we expect Bill No. 2 dealing with foreclosures on equipment and cattle, or Bill No. 3 dealing with cash for an interest write—down, so much needed by so many farmers?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to Bill 1, obviously it's designed to restructure the financial basis in agriculture and to restructure debt. And it does not apply to machinery or to various other things except for land, for one simple reason: small business in the province of Saskatchewan needs all the protection that it can get. And if we provide operating money through one Bill and it provides an opportunity for people to pay small business, whether it's a machinery dealer, whether it's a storekeeper, whether it's the tire shop, or whether it's repairs and parts and so forth, that's extremely important.

When we're looking at protecting rural Saskatchewan, we have to look at both small business as well as agriculture, Mr. Speaker. So the combination of the two is extremely important. We looked very, very carefully at this, and we said, "If we protect the farm land — provide a breather so people can have at least 13 months to restructure — then we will find that they can also have cash to pay various kinds of other operating costs that they may have, and particularly to protect small business that is in rural Saskatchewan, that needs the protection at this time. And if we said there's no payment to anybody, then many, many, many small businesses would be in jeopardy.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The Bill which you are introducing to provide for a moratorium was similar in form to a Bill introduced last April, and since . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — No, no.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — I'm happy to hear members deny that because I'm about to deny it as well, but the essential fact is that since the time you rejected a moratorium last April, 300 farmers have gone down the tube. What is your excuse to these 300 farmers who have lost their farms because you acted in December, rather than April?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, if we go back . . . Mr. Speaker, if we go back and look at where the problem started, the problem started with high interest rates. Mr. Speaker, if you look at the interest rates in 1980 to 1981, 1982, you will find interest rates in the province of Saskatchewan were running being 18, 19, and 20 per cent for agriculture, Mr. Speaker. And obviously, in 1982 we said that we were going to provide 8 per cent money to farmers, running \$35 million, and so forth.

What led to the problem, Mr. Speaker, is when the interest rates were 18 per cent, 19 per cent, 20 per cent in this province in 1980, 1981, and 1982, the government of the day, they did absolutely zero. Nothing at all. Mr. Speaker, we ran on a program that said those interest rates are going to have a negative impact on home owners, on farmers in this province. The previous administration did absolutely nothing.

Yesterday I spent a great deal of time talking about \$150 million of hard cash that goes into agriculture right now that didn't go in there before. As a result of 18, 19, and 20 per cent interest rates, the previous administration didn't do a thing. It got people into an awful lot of problems, so when you find that you have one crop failure as a result of the compounded problems based on high interest rates, people are in trouble.

We looked at that situation, and we said three things: one, we have to protect them in terms of interest rates, and we have the \$35 million a year at 8 per cent money; two, we have to make sure that the land is protected; and three, not making the same mistakes of the past, we have to make sure that small—business, farm machinery operators, and dealers, and repair shops, and grocers and so forth in small town Saskatchewan is protected as well, and that's why the Bill is structured as it is today, and not the way somebody else did in the past.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Problems of Machinery Dealers

MR. ENGEL: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I suppose it's great for the members opposite to applaud when somebody's an entertainer, because it looks good when the Premier sticks his foot in his mouth. It looks real good.

You just got done saying, Mr. Premier . . . and I have a question, a new question, Mr. Speaker. You just got done saying that you are going to protect people from 18 and 20 per cent interest. A farmer that makes a loan on buying a tractor . . . Listen. A farmer made a loan in 1982 on a tractor that's worth \$100,000. Today, today that implement dealer has to repossess that farmer. The finance company, Case finance, John Deere finance, is carrying that tractor. When the farmer

repossesses it, the dealer has to put it on his own books.

Last night a dealer told me he repossessed six in the last two weeks — cost him 22,000 bucks for the rest of this quarter for that financing. Why aren't you protecting him? Why doesn't this moratorium say that farm machinery cannot be repossessed? And then the finance company — Case finance, John Deere finance, the companies across Canada, not in Saskatchewan — will then be stuck holding the bag and not the local dealer?

If you want to protect the local dealer, why don't you include the local dealers under this legislation?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I believe that my hon. friend understands only too well that if you put on a moratorium, as was put on in 1971, dealers will lose their businesses, and he knows that, and they did in 1971—72.

Mr. Speaker, the reason that we applied it just to land is that if somebody is in a situation, and he can't make his land payments, and he wants to restructure — and he should, and the wheat pool writes letters, and many other people, that now is the time to restructure your debt, and that's what this bill does — then that money, to the tune of 300 to \$400 million maximum, in the province of Saskatchewan, can go into paying bills in rural Saskatchewan.

Now if you want to put machinery dealers out of business, you want to put small business out of dealers, you just say nobody has to pay their bills, and you'll find that nobody will pay their bills, and you'll have people dropping like flies in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when we're talking about doing something against 18 per cent interest rates, 19 per cent interest rates, and 20 per cent interest rates, I want to remind the members opposite, and my honourable friend, that the 18 and 19 and 20 per cent interest rates were 1980, 1981, and 1982, and that caused the problem today. And nothing was done about it. We didn't hear boo about it, and people were getting caught in that trap,

That's why we brought in 8 per cent, 13.25, and so forth. Today they're going down. Interest rates are going down, and we all hope — I'm sure everybody in this province and across the country hopes — those interest rates continue to go down and down and down and down, and we will watch them go down.

And we will all cross our fingers and hope that they go down. If they start looking the other way, we have moved before, and we will look at it again. But obviously they didn't.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — A short question for the Premier. You're a farmer. When you buy a tractor and you don't have the cash and you're borrowing money, do you borrow it from the dealer or from a financial institution? Answer that question.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, every farmer knows, and anybody that's in the machinery dealership business knows, that there is no real protection for those dealers, if you put on a moratorium. Every financial institution and everybody else will go after them, will go after them, Mr. Speaker. And they will be vulnerable. They were vulnerable in 1982 and they were vulnerable before and they would be vulnerable today.

I repeat, Mr. Speaker, what this Bill provides for those people that may need to be restructuring, is access to restructuring plus access to 13 months cash that they would normally be putting on

their land. That cash can be used for various kinds of seed, fertilizer, equipment, repairs — all the kinds of things that a farmer may need to carry on his operation. We provide that, as well as assurance to small business that they will get some income, plus we provide 8 per cent money up to \$35 million already in the province of Saskatchewan that was not provided before.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to have those five minutes struck from the record, from our time, because he didn't answer the question. The question was: if you buy a tractor from a dealer, do you finance with the dealer or the finance company? That's the question, not this big long answer you gave us.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, the finance companies have recourse against every machinery dealer in this province, and the machinery dealers know that and the finance companies know it. And as a result, every machinery dealer that is small—business operated in the province of Saskatchewan would be vulnerable. What that small—business operator wants is cash and some payments. That's what this Bill provides. It provides him, if he's in that situation, he absolutely has to have cash, he says he can do it and he can restructure his debt and he can make his payments to small business. And small business have been encouraging us to make sure some cash gets into rural Saskatchewan.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is the Premier asserting that finance companies would have recourse against a dealer if his Bill provided that the finance company could not exercise their security? Is he asserting that? Doesn't he know that the very purpose of that Bill would be so that the finance company would not be able to claim either against the farmer or have recourse against the dealer?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, what the machinery dealers know only too well is that they will not get paid if you put a general moratorium on it. That's what they know. They know that the farmer won't pay. They know that the finance companies will go after them. They know that now cash will move in the province of Saskatchewan.

That's precisely why we designed the Bill this way, so that farmers, if they needed to, had their land protected as a consequence of not making payments on their land, could make payments in some other things. The entire rural economy depends on some of that cash flow. By us saying as they did in '72, that nobody has to pay their bills, money would dry up completely. And that isn't what the Saskatchewan farmers wants, and that isn't what the Saskatchewan farm businessman wants.

MR. ENGEL: — Supplementary, Mr. Premier. Are you saying that when you pass this Bill the farmers aren't going to pay their land bill? Are you saying that that's what this Bill does, that they don't have to pay their land bill and they can then take that money and pay their machinery dealer? Is this what you're saying this Bill is going to give them a right to do? Is that what you're saying, that the farmers are dishonest and aren't going to pay their land bills?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend knows that what this Bill does is postpone payments on the land, if the farmer needs to have it, and amortize it over the length of his payment so he doesn't have to make land payments for 13 months if he's strapped. And he agrees with that. The moratorium does that on land. Therefore, if he owes 50 or 60 or \$70,000 on a land payment, he doesn't have to make it for 13 months.

If he wants to restructure his debt with a financial institution, and we encourage him to do that, then he's got that money that he would normally spend on land for 13 months to buy seed or to make sure he's got his fertilizer or to make his payment on his machinery or make some

contribution. Or he can use it, obviously, to pay some of his land. And, Mr. Speaker, that's precisely what it's for: to give him a breather, to encourage him to visit with his financial institution to work out a restructuring program. That's what the wheat pool recommends; that's what other institutions recommend; that now is the time to restructure.

This gives the entire province . . . Every single farmer in Saskatchewan now has an opportunity to have that breather if he believes he needs it. If he wants to use it, he has it. Therefore, he has the cash that he would normally spend in that 13 months to make sure that he can get his fertilizer, put some fuel in his tractor, make some payments on machinery, or whatever. And that's precisely why we did it that way: so people could get paid; he could survive. And, in total, it runs in the neighbourhood of 3 to \$400 million a year are spent in the province of Saskatchewan on land payments. He's got access, in theory, to that much which can be postponed.

Attitude of Banks to Proposed Legislation

MR. SVEINSON: — New question. My question is to the Premier of Saskatchewan. Mr. Premier, this morning I hear from two constituents of mine who are having a difficult time arranging bank credit here in the city of Regina. In one case the loan was \$660. It was for furniture. They had offered a \$1,500 van as collateral. They were turned down this morning by the bank.

My question to the Premier is: is this moratorium on land payments going to affect the eastern banking institutions, and their attitude, for doing business as usual in this province? And have you, Mr. Premier, consulted with these institutions? And do you have the assurance that it won't affect all banking done in this province, and all credit that these banks would, in fact, offer residents of this province whether they are farmers, whether they are business people, or whether they are home owners in Saskatchewan?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to look at the specific question in detail if my hon. friend could provide me with the information of the specific details of the people who applied for the loan and couldn't get the collateral, or didn't have it, or couldn't get the loan. I'd be glad to look at it. I can't comment very well, specifically, without having that detailed information.

With respect to the impact generally — generally — on the availability of capital and money in the province of Saskatchewan, I don't believe, and I agree with the Leader of the Opposition, I don't believe that the general moratorium in 1971—72 had that big an impact on the availability of funds in the province of Saskatchewan. Certainly when we look through the '70s, land prices were going up, people were buying, and money was being borrowed.

This Bill is much more wisely designed, Mr. Speaker, in that it applies only to land, and only to farm land, and in the event the individual needs some assistance he has it available to him now. He can use the money for seed, fertilizer, or other things. I don't believe that it will have a negative impact. I've heard financial institutions responding on the media of radio, television or whatever, saying, I didn't really believe it would have an impact on the financial availability of capital in the province of Saskatchewan. I don't believe that it will either.

MR. SVEINSON: — Supplementary, Mr. Premier. My question simply asked whether or not your government, or yourself, or anybody with your government, has consulted with the banks about that potential problem, one of credit for all people in this province.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, we talked with people across Saskatchewan, financial institutions, with farmers, with machinery dealers, with constituents, with small business, with families. We've discussed the problem since last spring in looking at what kinds of things were possible, in addition to the many millions of dollars' worth of activities that we've done to date.

We come up with this solution — and let me say very clearly, Mr. Speaker — come up with this solution because banks and financial institutions, as well as good managers and farmers, were saying, "Now is the time to encourage restructuring of debt." That's extremely important. Good

operators may not have to restructure at all. Good operators that got into trouble will be restructuring. They'll be looking at it. They'll be looking at their machinery, they'll be looking at their land, they'll be looking at the combination of things, and they will restructure, and financial institutions are only too happy to work with them to do so.

There will be some where obviously it won't be worth restructuring. They are not viable. They may be bad managers, and or whatever, and those will fall through the cracks as they usually do. And we're not designing a system to protect everybody that ever farmed, and nobody suspects that we should.

For those people who can restructure debt with a financial institution, they will survive, and they will be given every opportunity to survive. What the financial institution said to us: — "Encourage that restructuring now," and that's what this does.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SVEINSON: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. If the banks — the eastern institutions that loan money in this province — if they take a hard line on the farmers in the province of Saskatchewan, are they going to, through this legislation, will they be allowed to waive the legislation in order that they can undertake to deal with the banks outside your legislation?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I believe, and I think my hon. friend would believe, that by restructuring the agricultural debt in Saskatchewan and across Canada, by whatever means, restructuring is good for the financial institutions. It's good for the farmer, it's good for small business, it's good for everybody, because if you can't carry the existing burden you've got to lengthen it out, or restructure, move on a quarter, or sell some machinery, buy something else, have it custom farmed, whatever you have to do to make sure that you can survive.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to us that we do that as Canadians now, and that's what the financial institutions have said to us.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I believe that financial institutions are wise enough lenders that they'll know that if they see a viable farm operator, a good farm operator, they're going to be lending money. People who restructure several hundred thousand dollars are going to get cash, because if one institution doesn't do it, another one will. And if they don't, you'll find farm machinery dealers who will say, "Well, if they won't give them credit, I will, because I want to move on this, I want to move on that," and so forth.

We have, Mr. Speaker, a situation where we're doing two things: encouraging restructuring, which everybody believes is appropriate; secondly, we're providing some operating opportunities for people in this province that they didn't have before.

Protection for Equipment and Livestock

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I direct the question to the Premier, and this has to do with the remark he just made that every single farmer who owed money on land would have an opportunity to redirect the payments which he might otherwise have made on the land to other creditors. The Premier will know that there are thousands of farmers in this province who have given security which covers, combined, their land, machinery, and in some instances, cattle. I want to ask the Premier whether those farmers will receive the protection of the Bill, or do they not have to make the payments on their land in order to prevent the seizure of their machinery? Is that not the case?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, obviously the Bill applies only to land. And that's what the Bill is designed to do. So if they have loans on other commodities, or other pieces of equipment, or whatever it may be, fuel bills, or on granaries or on dryers or whatever it is, doesn't apply to that. It applies only on the farm land, and that's why we can say we can address that, and if you need some cash and you don't have to, or you can postpone, or you can restructure that

payment, you have operating money to lay against other bills.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Then I take it the Premier is acknowledging that a proposal which covers only land doesn't protect any farmer who has given security on both land and equipment, and in some cases livestock, all in the same document. He is offered no security by your plan. Is that not true?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, that's not true. And I want to make it very clear. This applies only to land, but if you can restructure the debt you have in the next 13 months, on land, you have some money to use for other things. I mean . . .

Mr. Speaker, if I could . . . If my hon. friend is a farmer, if he has a land payment of say, \$100,000 a year . . . Let's say he has a land payment. Mr. Speaker, if he has a land payment and he wants to restructure that for 1985, then he can restructure that. Instead of making his \$100,000 land payment, he can use the money for something else.

That's what this is designed to do, is to encourage restructuring by farmers and financial institutions to free up, to give a breather to people who need some cash to go do some other things related to the farming operation.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is the Premier aware of the fact that many financial institutions, notably the chartered banks, have in the last several years been requiring security not only on land but also on equipment, and in some cases livestock, in order to permit farmers to obtain bank loans? And will he acknowledge that the farmer must pay that in order, make his payments in order to keep his machinery and livestock from being seized?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, if you can postpone your land payment and restructure, then obviously you have money to make some other payments. And that's what it's designed for. And it's not the same as the previous administration's Bill because we said the farmer has to help maintain rural Saskatchewan. And implement dealers and grocery stores and other people need cash. They don't need a moratorium; they need money flowing back and forth. So if the bank is prepared to restructure some of that debt for a short term, then the cash is in the community to make sure the farmer can stay viable.

And, with respect to cash, Mr. Speaker, I say once more: we are putting \$150 million in cash in rural Saskatchewan today, and that's new money that wasn't going in before, plus the federal government is putting in millions and millions of dollars that wasn't going in before in terms of cash.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Drought in Africa

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, this Assembly will be . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, I apologize for not having a copy. It's straightforward stuff. I typed it up on the way down here, and I'm sure you'll understand it, and I'm sure you'll support it.

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

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that this Assembly will be aware of the terrible plight of the people in the drought—stricken areas of Africa. It is the worst famine in that continent's history. Nearly 30 countries are located in the officially recognized drought zone. Not only do they have drought to contend with, but they face the prospects of the breakdown of their social and economic structures.

The Government of Saskatchewan recognizes that until the African people's most primary need is met, their future will remain very dim. Their success in coping with the present problem depends on our help, and that of our world neighbours. Our government also recognizes the logistical difficulties of contributors to the African problem in getting aid to where it is needed.

On behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, I have arranged, with the co—operation of the Canadian Wheat Board, the Western Grain Elevator Association, and the Canadian Grains Bank, a mechanism whereby 20 to 25,000 metric tonnes of wheat will be delivered to Africa as soon as it can be pulled together.

Many Saskatchewan farmers have indicated the desire to contribute towards the needs of the African people. Now they can.

Our government will underwrite the cost of the program estimated to be in the neighbourhood of \$7 million. This program will permit farmers to deliver grain, under a special quota, to all delivery points. The grain will be recorded as a tax deductible gift to the African famine fund.

The Canadian Food Grains Bank will be responsible for accepting the delivery, at the African point of destination, for the distribution of our grain in the drought—stricken areas. The details of the agreement will be worked out over the next two or three days by representatives from Agdevco, Canadian Wheat Board, Western Grain Elevator Association, and Canadian Food Grains Bank.

I will also, Mr. Speaker, be contacting my counterparts in Manitoba and Alberta to offer Saskatchewan service as the agency of record should farmers in their province wish to make grain contributions in a similar manner.

Mr. Speaker, I want to very appreciatively acknowledge the co—operative effort over the last several days of the Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, the Hon. Perrin Beatty, the Hon. Charlie Mayer, the Canadian Wheat Board, the Prairie Grain Elevators Association, and the Canadian Food Grain Bank.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, my first words must be of congratulation to the government for the action which they have taken to see that 20,000 to 25,000 tonnes of grain move from our province and from this area of Canada to the drought—stricken areas of Africa. The area generally south of the Sahara Desert —Ethiopia, Niger, Chad, Somalia, and for a number of other countries — are in distress, and some of them have been in distress for some period of time. I think it is praiseworthy that we respond to this call for help. I think that we, as Canadians, from the bounty of our abundance, should make available aid to people who are suffering, suffering because of crop failure in an area where the margin for crop failure is so much less than our own.

I do add this one other comment. Some of these conditions are not of recent origin. They have been known in one measure or another for two or three years. Other agencies have been attempting to mount campaigns in those areas, including agencies associated with the Saskatchewan Council for International Co—operation, and a look at their projects will indicate that some of them are in this very area. I therefore express regret that the government has decided, in the past, to reduce its contribution, over this two or three—year period when this issue was generating, from \$2.2 million to \$900,000.

I think that that is a matter for regret, and I think that we, as a province, should not only assist people in need, as we are doing, and for which I fully congratulate you, but we also ought to

attempt to see that this need does not arise and is prevented if we can. And this means a greater measure of contribution to those agencies which are attempting to prevent this sort of disaster and deal with it, and I make those two points to the government.

I congratulate you. I suggest that we also try to prevent catastrophes of this kind from arising.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: — Why is the member on his feet?

MR. SVEINSON: — I'd just like to respond to the statement, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: — There is no opportunity for each member to respond. Only leaders of parties.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 2 — A Bill to establish the Employment Development Agency

HON. MR. LANE: — I move first reading of a Bill to establish the Employment Development Agency.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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. MEAGHER: — Mr. Speaker, last evening I asked for, and received, leave to adjourn debate, being near 10 o'clock. During the evening I was struck by an interesting development, that some of my comments on this throne speech were so warmly received by members of the House, and particularly the opposition members. And I wanted to express my appreciation.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that one of the reasons that they were so warmly received was because that down deep in their hearts, in their heart of hearts, they honestly support the main thrust of this throne speech and the directions of this government.

Their own heritage, being from Saskatchewan, is working together and sharing and building on our strengths — the very things that this government is proposing. It's the only reason I can think of for them being so warm because I thought perhaps it was because I never say anything provocative. That couldn't be the reason. I don't think they believe their own words, Mr. Speaker. They use big words. Last night I had to do a little research to find out what McCarthyite was. That was hurled at us from the member from Regina North West.

The Leader of the Opposition made the comment that the throne speech was full of platitudes, so I decided I'd better look that up as well in the dictionary, and I see that platitude means

"unimportant." Well, looking at the throne speech, I see a comment here: "My government is committed to upholding the dignity of the individual, protecting our children, and preserving the sanctity of the family." I suggest they don't mean that when they say those are platitudes because that flies in the face of their own history, and certainly the history and heritage of Saskatchewan.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that all of the members of this Assembly have a challenge today to join with me in supporting this motion. I believe that that's the challenge, particularly to the members of the opposition that distance themselves as much as they can from these radicals that seem to be inserting words in their mouths, because it isn't with our traditional Saskatchewan people. So I just would like to say that on behalf of the people of Prince Albert, and the constituency of Prince Albert, I enthusiastically support the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise in the Assembly on behalf of the constituents of Shaunavon to put on the record my thoughts and some that they have given to me over the last few days as it would regard the throne speech that was delivered in this House, in the Assembly, last Thursday.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that the Shaunavon constituency is the third largest constituency in the province, one which I often feel is isolated from Regina, as it does from Ottawa, being a good distance from the centre of power in the province. And I think the throne speech, Mr. Speaker, outlined by the government, does very little to quell the worries of the people in the Shaunavon constituency. In fact, I would say out of the eight throne speeches that I have sat through, there is little doubt that this throne speech, while all of them are, I suppose by design, vague, this one has little to do with the future and a great deal more to do with the past and applauding the government for the record which one would wonder why they would want to remember.

I would like to say as well that the constituency of Shaunavon has been very patient with this government. It has been patient in Frontier where Friggstad Manufacturing who were counting on the government to, I suppose, guarantee their loans like they guaranteed the loans for Husky Oil of 390 million; guaranteed a loan for Bill Hunter in Saskatoon to build a hockey rink; or guarantee a loan for Manalta Coal at Calgary — people will know their association with the Mannix family — of \$89 million. But, Mr. Speaker, the people in Frontier were disappointed when the crunch came, and Friggstad Manufacturing needed a helping hand, that the government was nowhere to be found. As well, the employees of Friggstad Manufacturing, about half of them who now find themselves without employment — and I might add they are the senior positions of that company which were done away with, because the company that took over, of course, found that it wasn't necessary to keep managerial positions open in Frontier, decided to . . . I suppose in terms of economics and in terms of streamlining the operation — you can understand that they would not want to have two management teams in place — therefore laid off and let go a good number of employees who were the bread—winners in many families in the Frontier area.

I say the people were patient as well in the area of Mankota, where a nursing home has been on the drawing board but not gone forward for the past three years; patient in Ponteix and Val Marie, where roads have been waited for for three years; and what we have got from the Minister of Highways is 6 miles of road in the constituency; 6 miles of road in the constituency in three years.

I would like to say the most disappointed people in our constituency, Mr. Speaker, of course are the farmers, who, at the time of the last election, many of them who thought they would have an opportunity to have some input into programs, some input to getting some of their hard—earned tax dollars back that they paid in 1982 and '83, and find that the throne speech includes nothing for them. In fact, at a time when farmers in the south—west are facing a drought

such that they haven't seen since the 1930s, this throne speech is of little consequence or of little importance to them.

And I want to say, as well, about the Shaunavon constituency, Mr. Speaker, that never in the history of the constituency has it been so right in its political judgement not to elect a Conservative MLA. Never in the history of the province has the Shaunavon constituency elected provincially a Conservative member. And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that this is not unusual, because I believe that the other constituency in south—west Saskatchewan, Assiniboia—Gravelbourg, carries that same strong representation and has the same history — the Conservatives have never had the opportunity to sit in that constituency either.

(1445)

And I think that what people will understand, Mr. Speaker, is that area of the province — and it's not only the area of our province, but extends into northern Montana, where agrarian socialism, agrarian social democratic beliefs are strong — the fact that in the last election in the United States, held in November, the Democratic Party, against all the trends across the United States, re—elected a Democratic government at the state level in Montana by a three to one margin. Each and every poll in that area south of the border that borders on the constituency of Assiniboia—Gravelbourg and Shaunavon voted very strongly to return Ted Schwinden, Democratic governor, to the Montana State legislature.

And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that in large part, in large part, it has to do with a strong tradition of social democracy that has been bred in the wheatland of both the United States and Canada; and that is a democratic socialism, Mr. Speaker, that wasn't learned in a textbook, that wasn't learned in a university, but was brought into existence out of necessity.

Mr. Speaker, when the pioneers settled these areas of North America, they were dependent on one another and very quickly learned that the dog—eat—dog world of conservatives and right—winged governments did not fit the needs of the Canadian plains and the American plains.

I want to tell the members opposite that the heritage of electing democratic and agrarian socialist representation to many of the legislatures, in places like South Dakota and North Dakota and Montana and Saskatchewan, is one that during the Heritage '85, we will be proud to remember that during the last 40 years, 31 of those years were represented in Saskatchewan by CCF and NDP premiers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, that the record in Saskatchewan that was grown out of, I suppose, adversity and hardship, one that where the pioneers got together to build their houses and schools and churches and farms, that they knew enough not to take advantage of one another, or dwell on the hardships that the others had, to take advantage of it.

And out of that adversity, Mr. Speaker, developed the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, the co—operative which fought the Winnipeg Grain Exchange when the multinational attempted to take advantage of the farming community.

And during the 1930s when the banks attempted to repossess land and equipment and livestock the same way as they are today, the farmers banded together to set up one of the most modern banking systems in North America, that being the Credit Union system.

And I want to say that that heritage during the year 1985 is going to be a theme that we are not going to let the Conservatives forget. It is a proud heritage, and we will be on their side.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, I want to talk just for a few brief moments about agriculture and the promises that were made to the people of Saskatchewan by the government when they were in opposition: the promise that they would allow for the development of the young farmer; that they would support and shore up the young starting farmer. And I want to say that when they got to government, the story quickly changed, and my colleague from Assiniboia—Gravelbourg has often referred to shoring—up success.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that that shoring up of success has meant shoring up the big operators, and I would say to the government opposite that that is not the way they should be going, and in the end will destroy the rural communities of Saskatchewan.

And I think a good example of that is the Bill that was tabled in the Assembly yesterday, Bill 1, Mr. Speaker, which did nothing to protect the farming community. It was an insult to the farming community. It put no money into their hands, and I say, Mr. Speaker, will be rejected by the farming community, not only in the Shaunavon community, but across Saskatchewan.

I say that there were a good number of people out there who were believing that the government — when they would look at the bank records and the profit margins of the many banks — and I have a couple of headlines here, "450 million for the Royal Bank"; we have quotes of the Toronto Dominion profit for the past year of \$325 million — that the government would have sat down with their friends in the Royal Bank and said to them: — look, you've had a good time, you've had record profits for the past two years, but enough is enough; that they would have sat down with their friends who donate to them at election time and said: look, you're killing the rural economy of Saskatchewan.

And I believe that they would have sat down with the oil companies who have had a good time with this government. I think no one doubts . . . I don't question whether oil companies have had a easy time. They have got all sorts of advantages under this government, and I don't blame the oil companies for taking it when the government stands there with the money in the bag. But I say to you, Mr. Speaker, I would have expected this government to sit down with their friends in the oil industry and say: look, for the past two years you've had a free ride, boys. You've had a free ride and the farm economy is collapsing. And for the next couple of years we're going to take that 150 million a year we've been giving to you and give it to the farmers.

But there wasn't anything, Mr. Speaker, there was nothing in the throne speech. There's nothing in the Bill that any farmer, big or small or in between, can hang their hat on. There's not one red cent other than another red—tape administration that will set up another bureaucracy, the same as the jobs minister announces today. And I had just a moment to look at this Bill. It does basically the same thing and sets up another agency. The penalties are always there: — \$10,000 penalty for anyone who fools around with the Act and doesn't do it right. Red tape and penalties for the people who misuse it. And I say, Mr. Speaker, for those who are unemployed, and those who are farmers, there is nothing from this government, and we are very disappointed.

I say to the members opposite that if they think the main concern of the farmers today is natural gas on their farm, they are even more out of touch with reality that I would have given them credit for, because there isn't one farmer out there who's faced with the cost—price squeeze who's demanding natural gas on their farm. If you're throwing \$8,000 to the farmer to put gas into his farm and you asked him: — would you rather have the \$8,000 in cash to put your crop in or natural gas . . . ? Why don't you go out and talk to them? And you would find out that the biggest concern, Mr. Speaker, is not natural gas on the farm, but is how they are going to seed their crop, and how they are going to seed the crop when the bank or the implement companies had taken their tractor, or seed drill, or have taken the livestock that used to graze on their land.

And I say there's nothing in this Bill to support the farmer. There's not one red cent, and we in the opposition very clearly in March of last year put forward a proposal, a six—point plan by our

agriculture critic that would have done basically four things.

It would have, one, put a moratorium on debt payments, quite a different story than putting a moratorium on foreclosure. No one would ever accuse the Tory Bill of being one that is a debt moratorium. There's no mention in Bill 1 of a debt moratorium. It is a moratorium on foreclosure, and I think there is a very, very important difference between the two.

The other thing is that the moratorium my colleague talked about would have covered not only land but also machinery and livestock. And we would have had another part to that package which would have said that there should have been a 32 cent rebate on farm fuel paid out to the farmer, similar to the program in Alberta.

And there would have, as well, been an assistance to those areas where drought was prevalent, where there would have been a \$30 an acre subsidy paid to farmers so that they wouldn't lose their land, and be able to seed the crop next year.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the whole issue of payments out of grains stabilization and payments out of crop insurance. My colleague expressed concern that we still have about \$600 million sitting in that fund in Ottawa, that is rightfully the farmers', that is being held by the Conservative government and not being paid out. And who knows, it may be used as a tool in the next provincial election.

And I say that if they would attempt to do that at the time of the next provincial election, you will find the same result as the stabilization paid out by the Trudeau government, and you saw the results that playing politics with farmers' money did for Pierre Elliott Trudeau and the Liberals when they paid out a payment during the last federal election.

And I say, Mr. Speaker, that the problem in agriculture is one that we brought up last year in March. And at that time the press or no one was talking about the crisis in agriculture. But I want to tell you that since then the headlines that have come out month after month have indicated that, not only do the farmers and the New Democratic Party and now the press, but reluctantly the government, is being dragged along; no decisions being made, but only reluctantly, after months and months of people putting pressure on them.

Headlines such as: "Farm income down. Three per cent drop in income projected. Province's farm cash receipts decline. Saskatchewan prices slide the furthest. Province cash receipts drop." And we have documents here from the newspapers that go on and on about the near depression which we have in the agricultural community.

And I think one of the saddest areas, Mr. Speaker, is in the area of the young farmers and the debt problems that . . . I suppose south—west Saskatchewan is unique in that area, as well, that it seems to me that the debt per capita in our area is higher than anywhere else in the province.

I want to say that there are any number of young people who come to me and come to other members and say that they are up against a wall, that they were waiting with baited breath for this throne speech to see what would be coming from this provincial government. And I say that if the government is serious about their commitment that this is a good Bill, I wish they would come to my constituency and try to sell it.

I'll do the best job I can of trying to say how great the Bill is, but I can tell you I'm going to have a difficult time, a very difficult time trying to convince the people in my constituency that Bill 1 is a good Bill. And I want to tell you that I'll go out there and try to explain what this Bill will do for them, but I can assure you I'm going to have very, very little success.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk for just a few minutes about employment in the province, and we have heard from the member from Athabasca and Cumberland about the disaster in

northern Saskatchewan. We listened with interest to the attempt by the government to help out people who are in a desperate situation in Africa and I, too, would like to congratulate them. But I would like to say that it's not only in Africa that we have severe problems where people are facing a crisis. And I suppose it's easy now that the mass media is carrying vivid reports from those countries to do the assistance that they should have been doing last year when they were cutting back in the area of SCIC (Saskatchewan Council for International Co—operation).

But I would challenge the members opposite and the press to go up into northern Saskatchewan and to look at the desperate situation that many people are facing in that part of the world, because the situation up there is, to say the least, not great: 90 per cent unemployment in many communities; welfare cuts of 40 per cent; and my colleague from Athabasca referred to the many desperate situations that he has heard of and brought to the government's attention — lack of medical care in some communities; no nursing homes; and the list goes on and on.

I would like to say as well, Mr. Speaker, that it's my belief that unemployment and right—wing government don't happen by accident. I believe that high unemployment is a plan of right—wing governments and big business to establish a pool of cheap labour which they can call on in order to lower expectations and to lower income demands. And I say it's not by accident that in right—wing government countries where right—wing governments are in control that 10 per cent unemployment happens — not by accident, but by design.

Mr. Speaker, the scenario of lowering expectations is one of where, if you create unemployment of 10 per cent, the people who have jobs are not going to be able to demand anything from the employer or from the government. They sit quietly and they take wage cuts because they know very well that the unemployment rate, which has been raised by the government, creates a large number of people who will be anxious in order to take their jobs.

But that's not the most sinister part of this plan. I believe the worst part of the plan is the attempt to cut back in social programs for those who are unemployed, to make them more anxious to take jobs away from people who have them. And it's obvious that in Saskatchewan, and now in Canada, we have governments whose will to reduce unemployment insurance, to reduce welfare, will fit well into that scenario of building a cheap labour pool for big business.

(1500)

And I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, that I could be wrong in this, that the government may be serious about creating employment, that they may be serious about jobs, but I will believe that when the unemployment rate in Saskatchewan drops to the level it was when they took office. I will believe it when the 60 per cent increase in the number of people who are unemployed drops. I will believe it when the number of people who are unemployed and on welfare drops.

And I want to say to you that the number of people on welfare today is of staggering proportions. In Saskatchewan of 1984, for example, the most recent statistics that the government has put out, \$9,600 people were getting their living from welfare in the province of Saskatchewan. And I want to say that that compares very poorly with the record of this government. When they took over office there were 47,000 people who were getting their income or living from the welfare department.

And at that time the members opposite ran around the province and tried to convince people that Saskatchewan had the highest rate of welfare recipients in the country. I want to tell the members opposite who may not have access to these statistics that your government puts out, or may not have taken the opportunity to read them, that the record of this government of increasing the number of unemployed and the number on welfare is not a proud record.

The other story this government will try to tell us is that the problem of the unemployed is the lack of training. Well, I have never heard a more ridiculous story in my life. I want to say to you,

Mr. Speaker, that the training of people in Saskatchewan is second to none in the world, that the technical schools and universities and high schools and elementary schools in this province are second to none anywhere in the world. And to try to make people believe, who find themselves on unemployment today, that the reason they don't have a job is because they're unskilled is, here again, a slap in the face to those people who are already facing the most adverse conditions in our society.

The people who are unemployed in our province are simply people who were pouring cement or building houses or wiring buildings or welding pipelines a few years ago. And the unskilled workers who find themselves without jobs are people who were apprentices or helpers to the welder, helpers to the electrician, loading bricks, unloading bricks, screeding concrete. And there were jobs for unskilled people in the province in 1982, when this government took over.

And I want to say that I would question the minister, whoever he might be, or she, who's in charge of crating jobs and training. What are you going to be training these people to do? Can you give us a list of where the unemployment rate is in the province of Saskatchewan? Because I have a number of people in every category who are looking for jobs, who are trained.

And before you start out on a misguided program of training people for jobs, you should have a job for them to go to when they're finished their training . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's right. They should have a plan. The members opposite think that government has no role in the planning of the economy, and this is a new and interesting phenomenon for 1984.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the members opposite that throughout the world the most progressive governments and the most progressive societies in the world — Austria, West Germany, Japan, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand — have mixed economies where there is an agreement between working people, business, and their government to plan the economy. The idea of leaving the planning of the economy up to the capitalist sector went out with the dinosaurs. It went out a long time ago, leaving it up to the Bank of Montreal or the National Bank or the Toronto—Dominion Bank to plan our economy. You may want that planning to take place, and you may agree with it, but I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the majority of people in this country are not going to leave the planning of their economy up to the likes of those people.

And I say that when we talk about planning and economy we make no apologies about a government who makes tough decisions, leads as governments should, and sits down with workers and business to plan the economy. And it worked very well. It worked so well we had virtually zero unemployment in the province, and I would like someone to stand up and debate the throne speech on these principles.

I have heard now 18 members of the Conservative Party rise in this House. The mover of the Speech from the Throne spoke for 15 minutes, talked a great deal about the NDP and the lack of programs back in those days, but spoke nothing of the throne speech.

I can remember a day in this Assembly not too long ago when there was cut and thrust, and people debated such things as economic planning and job security, and where the province was going. But I want to say on this note that this House has now dropped to the lowest level that I can remember in the history of the times that I have been to this House. I've listened to the members, the 18 who have spoken for the Conservative Party, ministers and back—benchers alike, stand up in this Assembly and quote from the NDP record and from the NDP convention, but not one of them has the will to stand up and debate the throne speech.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. LINGENFELTER: — And I want to say there's a good reason for that. Because if that was my throne speech I wouldn't debate it either, because there's nothing in it.

I want to say as well, Mr. Speaker, that in the area of small business, in the area of small business there was a belief by the small—business community at the time of the last election that things would get better under a Conservative government. And I think that they firmly believed that things would get better, and there was a chance that they could have gotten better.

I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, that I believe the most disappointed group in our society today are not the farmers because farmers, I believe, are very tolerant people. The most disappointed people in the Conservative government, when I go around Regina to eating establishments, or when I go to a shoe store here in the city, the most disappointed people in this government — and I'm not saying they're going to support the New Democratic Party — but the most disappointed group are the small—business community.

Even during the Agribition this year, we had an opportunity to go to three different eating establishments in Regina, and not one of them, during Agribition, was more than half full. And each and every one of them, the owner of the establishment came and sat with us — come with us some time and we'll show you — came with us and sat down with us and said they were very disappointed in the economic performance of this government. And I would challenge you to go talk to some of them. Just make a tour around town and ask the business people how satisfied they are. Ask them whether they're better off today than they were two years ago. And I'll go with you, and we will go around and talk to the small—business people and ask them whether they're better off today than they were two years ago.

And I can tell you that the people who are laying off employees in Shaunavon, 20 in the last two months because they can't keep the doors open of the machinery dealerships, will tell you that things weren't that bad under Allan Blakeney. They may not have believed in social democracy and they may not have believed in some of the medical care programs we brought in, or home care or welfare payments, but I want to tell you that they believed in the cash ringing in the till. They believed that keeping the doors open was a fairly important part of being a small—business man in Saskatchewan. And I can tell you that the bankruptcies in this province today are at record numbers in the area of small business, and that is not happening by accident either.

So when the government sits down in caucus to discuss the guarantee of loan for Manalta Coal, and the Mannix family from Alberta, or guaranteeing the \$390 million loan for Husky, don't let any minister of finance say this doesn't affect what we can do in other areas. You who are farmers will know very well that if you guarantee someone else's loan that it affects your credit rating and what you can do for the people of the province. Don't ever believe the story that guaranteeing loans for big industry or out—of—province multinationals isn't costing the people of Saskatchewan.

I would put to the members opposite: have you ever thought, if you get going on a Husky Oil project or a project of that nature and it turns into an operation or a refinery that doesn't work, who would be left holding the bag when you've signed the note for \$390 million? Have you ever thought that through as to how that project would work and who would assume the payments? What I would ask is why you would have \$390 million for Husky Oil to guarantee their loan, and the small—business men in Shaunavon you have no guarantees for them. But what is the logic in that? And this is the kind of debate that I think we should be having in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

And it's not that I'm opposed to oil companies. They put oil in our cars and gas in the cars, and they make the world turn. But I say: why the concentration and effort, the \$150 million for oil companies who are already making record profits? I'm being sincere about this. What is the logic? What is the logic of giving money away to oil companies who are already getting record profits? What's the point? . . . (inaudible interjection). . .

Well, the members say profits are jobs. But what about the profits of farmers? The farmers have no profit. You could very easily shift half of the \$150 million then — \$75 million. Why don't you

sit down in caucus and say, oil companies don't need \$150 million; \$75 for the next year would be enough. But we need \$75 million for our farmers. Why doesn't the member for Morse stand in the Assembly and say, look, this Bill 1 that doesn't give any money to the farmers isn't good enough. It isn't good enough in Morse where I have farmers going broke left and right.

Bill 1 protects against the land being lost, but what about the Department of Agriculture who's out there repossessing livestock and taking away hog barns or feedlots, which they are doing right and left? And the member for Morse will know they are. There's no protection even from the government in Bill 1. The government continues down the road of repossessing cattle. And you will know very well in your own community that there are areas where the government, through their operation, is repossessing cattle and in an indirect way repossessing land.

(1515)

And I say to you, what is the logic of a farmer having land or grassland if the bank or the government steps in and takes their machinery and cattle? Why don't you say very clearly in caucus to the members who control the treasury benches that you want part of the money there's been going to the oil companies? When they're getting record profits the logic would have seemed to me that you'd take some of that and give it to people who don't. But there's probably something I'm not understanding, and maybe in the next speech, the person who stands up next, I will wait for it and they can tell me exactly where I'm wrong, because that's what debate is all about.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn, just for a few moments, and I don't want to take all afternoon, but there are . . . I can tell you this, there's much more to say about what isn't in this throne speech than the members opposite will tell what is, and that is evidenced by the amount of time that we take to point out the failings of the throne speech as opposed to the members opposite telling us the good points in the throne speech.

But in the area of health, I would just like to make the point that as a result of underfunding in the Department of Health, hospitals have the longest waiting lists for elective surgery that there has ever been.

Projects such as the rejuvenation of hospitals in Saskatoon where the joint planning committee recommended that \$250 million be spent, the government has come up with \$50 million. And the hospital administrators and planners will tell you that's not even enough to complete the renovations on one hospital, and so in many ways, that money is being used as a band—aid to hold the seams together and in a very direct way is being wasted.

I think that it's interesting to know that the Tories have a scheme to solve their health care problem. It's called "selling tickets." And in an article in the Star—Phoenix last week, there is an article that explains how the sale of tickets is now going to be financing the health care system in the province. The article says this:

The sale of Nevada tickets in provincial hotels will generate resources that will benefit the people of Saskatchewan in the area of health and education.

On November 15th, the lottery licensing division of the Department of Consumer and Commercial Affairs gave the Saskatchewan Hotel Association the go—ahead to sell Nevada tickets.

Now this has to be a new and exciting way of financing health care in North America.

We used to be known for something in Saskatchewan. We used to be known for the first group to bring in medicare, and the first group to set up a co—operative system that was meaningful. Well, we've set a new record. We have found a new innovative way to build hospitals in

Saskatoon. We're going to sell Nevada tickets in the hotels.

If any of you have ever watched people who are hooked on gambling or who can't control themselves when it comes to Nevada tickets, you have to wonder about the logic of a project that would attempt to solve the problems in the medical system by selling Nevada tickets. And there are other schemes. They are now being forced to be put on bake sales and lotteries. I see a 60/40 lottery that one of them is putting on. But, Mr. Speaker, there would be those who are in the planning and the health care system who wouldn't look at that kind of an operation as progress.

In the area of social services, Mr. Speaker, I want to just take a moment or two to talk about some of the things that have been happening. And here we're talking, as the member from Athabasca has talked, about the people who are least able to defend themselves.

I want to say that in the last three years what has happened in the area of help for those people who are being forced onto the unemployment rolls and then onto welfare is nothing less than scandalous in the province of Saskatchewan. It has gotten so bad that the social workers, who are the front line people for the government, took upon themselves to have a meeting and take the time outside of their regular work duties to prepare a brief for the government. They took time to come to Regina in July, not as union members, and not as a union position. It was sponsored by the Saskatchewan Government Employees Union, but it was for workers representing almost every social service office in the province.

And what they did, Mr. Speaker, is they designed a brief to the government in which they outlined the concerns that they had for families in crisis as a result of the economic downturn, about child abuse, about people who didn't have enough money to buy food, about people who were being forced to go to food banks to get food to put on the table for their children. And they said to the government:

This leaves employees shouldering unreasonable responsibilities and often picking up work they are not trained for, for example, clerical staff sometimes is required to counsel clients experiencing personal or financial crisis.

And the response of the minister, I thought, was more than unusual. It was more than unusual in that the approach that the minister took was not to say, "Look, I'll sit down with the employees and talk this out and try to get you some more staff." He took a personal attack on those people in this Assembly and said that the particular brief was the "poorest, the worst researched, the most inaccurate, distorted brief I have received from any organization in the province."

The irony of this, Mr. Speaker, is that at the same time, those same employees were getting a letter from the Premier of the province telling them what a good job they were doing. Can you believe it?

They were being told by the Minister of Social Services that with 300 case—loads, and working overtime, and doing a great job of trying to protect the families of the province, that they had distorted and had prepared the worst brief that he had received. And I say the irony of this and the hypocrisy is that the Premier had sent out a letter at the same time. The Premier of this province had sent out a "get the media" type letter to those employees, done on a word processor of course, but personally signed, telling these social workers what a great job they were doing.

And I say that kind of hypocrisy Ronald Reagan may be able to get away with in the United States. But I tell you, you're underestimating the intelligence of the Saskatchewan people if you think that kind of an approach is going to work here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, the welfare reform that is talked about by the members opposite . . . I would like to put on the record, and it's been done before, but for the throne speech record, I would like to put on that not only are the social workers opposed to the welfare cuts, but many religious people. I have here an article from the *Prairie Messenger*, by the Very Reverend Duncan Wallace, and it is an open letter to Gordon Dirks which appeared in the *Prairie Messenger*, and I would comment only by reading one paragraph, and it's this:

It's far too easy to make this sort of proposal because it does not directly affect those who have any power, any voice. Your proposals are simply an attack on the weak. It is disgraceful and shameful. Who will be next? Single mothers, the sick, the disabled, or the elderly?

Mr. Speaker, I say that the brief that was submitted by the United Church of Canada very recently, November 15th, this too was spoken out against in this Assembly by the minister when he said that there's a chance that these people who put briefs to him on behalf of churches don't represent the rank and file in the church. And in that view they talk about action that should be taken, and they point out that the needs of the poor take precedence over the wants of the rich:

The participation of the marginalized take precedence over the maintenance of the order that excludes them. The freedom of the dominated take priority over the liberty of the powerful.

Mr. Speaker, these are condemning statements, not by someone who is out politically working against the Conservative Party. These are made by very respected church people, who are church people to all of us, who are saying that you are wrong — not politically, but you're wrong in making decisions that affect the poor people in the way that you are.

The Catholic bishops — it's been quoted from many times in their ethical reflections from the Canadian conference of bishops — talk about the same thing when they say that:

This action calls for economic policy which realizes the needs of the poor have priority over the wants of the rich.

That's why I continue to harp on the issue of \$150 million going to oil companies when they're already getting record profits. There aren't any of us in here who aren't willing to sacrifice. Mr. Speaker, you who farm, and members here who get a decent salary — there's not any of us who aren't willing to sacrifice so that people at the bottom of the scale can get more. But the logic of making the poor sacrifice so that oil companies can have more escapes me, and I would challenge members opposite to get up in this House and tell us why oil companies need increased revenue when welfare recipients need a 40—per cent cut. The logic doesn't jump out at me.

And I wonder why we are attempting to change the strategy of this province that has been a proud heritage, one of caring for the neighbour and your family and friends, to one where we care for the oil companies at the expense of those on welfare. I don't understand it. And I say to the members opposite, if you are sincere about the role that you play in this Assembly, to stand up and defend the \$150 million for oil companies because I could be convinced there may be a reason why you're doing it, but stand in this Assembly and tell us why you're cutting 40 per cent off welfare to those people who are making \$340 a month and giving it to the oil companies because the logic of that simply doesn't make any sense.

I'd like to say in closing, Mr. Speaker, that I say again that it is an honour to be an elected member of this Legislative Assembly. I think from time to time the ruckus that goes on in the House that people are prone to believe that the role of the government is not an important one, and I say that the blame, I suppose, falls on all of us, that the role of elected members is not below other

people in the society, and that we should not be looked down on because the role we play is a very, very important one. The role of the government, of the Executive Council, and the members of caucus is indeed a very important one. And I challenge the members in the back rows who believe that farmers deserve more — and there are many of you who have talked to me privately who do — who believe that the welfare cuts are wrong, that you go to your next caucus meeting and you attempt to convince the people who have the power in this province that the actions of your government are wrong.

And I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, that we in the New Democratic Party — and I have mentioned it earlier in Heritage '85 coming up — have a very proud and strong record that we believe in and will be standing on in the next election, and it's not one that was brought here by foreigners or studied in a university. We have a clear record that our political party, our political party that was born in Saskatchewan; it has its roots here, and is every bit a part of our heritage of the province.

And I say, Mr. Speaker, that the people of the province, when they are celebrating their Heritage '85, will remember back to a better time when people like Woodrow Lloyd and Tommy Douglas and Allan Blakeney were premier, and will look forward to a dream and a vision like they did before, to the day when we will have a premier who will make decisions for the people who are most in need.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. GERICH: — It gives me great pleasure this afternoon to stand in this Legislative Assembly and represent the Redberry constituency and debate in a democratic way the throne speech. But before I go into the debate, I would like to change the topic for a moment. I have received much criticism, kidding, and sarcastic remarks about my colourful clothing today. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wear this red jacket because I belong to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police veterans' club. This jacket represents — and I'm very proud of it — the finest police organization in the world.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. GERICH: — It is renowned for its justice and honour, and in maintaining the right and the justice and honour of the country. But as for my red boots today — I can show the Assembly. There's a little story behind these red boots. I bought these for my honoured colleagues: number one, to remind them who the official opposition are; secondly, where they sit; and thirdly, that's where we should keep them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. GERICH: — The NDP opposition for two and a half years has preached nothing but doom and gloom, and it's rightly so for them to do so. Number one, they lost the power of government; they lost the trust of the Saskatchewan people; and they totally lost any sense of direction or motivation. They continually preach that nothing can be done without big government being involved in the everyday life of the Saskatchewan people.

To coin a phrase from a past speech of the Premier's:

Grants, subsidies, and bureaucracies won't save this country and won't save our children. We have to be strong enough and brave enough to forge our destiny with our own hands, and we will lead this nation in economic development.

What has happened in Saskatchewan in the last two years? Has anyone noticed a change? Well, you're sure to have. There's been an atmospheric change, a real atmospheric change. I think a lot of the people in Saskatchewan have felt it. The cloud of doom and gloom has lifted and

disappeared. The NDP opposition insist that it exists. I think if they were to open their eyes, they'd actually see it's quite different. And since the atmospheric change in Saskatchewan, there has also been an attitude change. And this has really shown up in the Redberry constituency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Saskatchewan people have once again shown their Saskatchewan spirit by accepting the challenge of the poor economic trends and times. These people are building and buying businesses and making them work. They have the confidence in themselves, in their neighbours and friends, and in the present government.

In Parkside, Saskatchewan, in the north—east part of my constituency, people have moved home from other provinces. They're finding work; they're doing work; they're buying groceries. The Parkside General Store is doing more business than ever before. In fact, it's hiring part—time help to keep up the pace.

The Kilwinning Trading Post along Highway 40 was purchased by a young farmer from Edson, Alberta, and he's doing well. My home town of Leask, Saskatchewan, a town of 500 people — one of the big four in my riding — the Shoprite store was just purchased by a young gentleman from Rosthern constituency. The changing hands and the new management, something like the new government here, has got the store just rolling, and it's so busy that they had to hire one more person to add to an already group of five.

The M and M Stores was purchased by a young couple from Marcelin. They hired two local housewives to help in the store to keep up with the activity.

By the way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the storekeeper, the previous owner, has moved to Buffalo Narrows, the member of Athabasca's area, and he is really doing well, and he's got four people that he's employed in the last year and a half.

The town of Leask services an area of a 40—mile radius. It's pretty well all agricultural. And in this town we have three tractor—truck—automobile garages, with very up—to—date, modern facilities. And about a year and a half ago, two young mechanics, energetic hard—working fellows, got together and they formed the Leask Sales and Service. The competition was stiff, but these two young wrench—twisters are doing well along with the other three garages in town. They believe that to earn a dollar you have to work for it, and they are doing just that.

Marcelin is a town of 260 people. It has come a long way in the last two years. A second grocery store, Ray's Pay and Save, has been opened up and it's doing well, and it's running in competition with the Co—op. The whole town is benefiting from it. This store is employing two extra people.

Just two weeks ago, I was at the opening of a new SGI office in Marcelin. Mike and Pearl Kyrk of Kyrk Agencies saw the opportunity to invest in the village of Marcelin and its district. They had faith in the people, and the people in them. Close to 100—and—some people showed up during a storm to welcome them to the town of Marcelin.

(1530)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of the Redberry constituency have the confidence in the government's actions and long—range ideas for growth and achievement.

Blaine Lake, a town of 650 people, the second of the big four, has really excelled in the last two years. One business man has spent some thousands of dollars on Main Street alone. He constructed a hardware store, a car wash, a laundromat, and an arcade — much—needed facilities for the town and the district. As a result of this, he employed two bread—winners for their families.

The M & M store in Blaine Lake has just changed owners also. The previous owner retired due to

age, and a new owner and family moved in from Rocanville, Saskatchewan. They're greatly adding to the community projects and participating in community functions.

Talk about an opportunity to work — a young couple, just last week, past employees of the Saskatchewan Highway Department, opened a pizza hut and coffee shop on Main Street, and they're really doing well. The first week in November, the Blaine Lake highway cafe at the junctions of Highway 40 and 12 was taken over by new management. The married couple are employing three extra people to serve the public. The highway cafe has some of the best home cooking in the Redberry constituency.

Going on to Redberry Lake, after which this constituency is named . . . This lake is in the heart of my constituency, and sports the Redberry Regional Park. This regional park is used extensively by the district and Saskatoon residents, as the member from Fairview can attest to.

At present there is a fish enhancement program going on in Redberry Lake, with the seeding of 600,000 fingerling rainbow trout. This program is part of a long—range resource management study carried out by this government and the Hon. Mr. Pickering's department.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Hafford, a thriving town of 600 people, also one of the big four. This town is bustling with activity. Streets are lined with vehicles; people are shopping, visiting, drinking coffee. The stores are busy; they're hiring part—time and full—time help to accommodate the customers. They're building a new skating rink and community hall complex that has received in 1983, a \$50,000 grant, and in 1984 a \$49,000 grant — two years in a row, from Culture and Recreation. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

On Highway 40 a two—bay garage with gas pumps has just opened up last year on the outskirts of Hafford to help serve the district and highway travellers.

Now referring to the hon. member from Shaunavon and his remarks about the doom and gloom in Saskatchewan, it shows in the Redberry constituency that we're kind of excelling there. And I think it relates to the government's ideas and motivations.

Meota and Cochin. These are two little hamlets situated in the north—west of my riding in the hub of the north—west recreational centre. They boast sandy beaches, emerald blue waters, and waves of fun. It hosts the only tractor—tube races in northern Saskatchewan, maybe all of Saskatchewan.

The Battlefords Provincial Park is located just north of Cochin. It is a very scenic park overlooking Jackfish Lake. The population of Cochin jumps from 250 people in the winter to 7 to 8,000 people in the months of June, July, and August. The stores, motels, restaurants, garages, employ many, many people to handle the tourist industry during the summer months.

Radisson. The town of 500 people, the last of my big four, is located on Highway 16, the Yellowhead Route. The mayor, the town council, town administrator are active and vibrant with new ideas to promote Radisson. It will become famous in Saskatchewan later on for the Radisson sailing ship that is now on the drawing board and to be built in the near future. It is truly a town of the future based on Saskatchewan's spirit and incentive.

Borden. Borden has a population of 250 people. It boasts a hospital, store, cafe, garage, and a hotel. It's a very nice, quiet, little hamlet nestled near the banks of the North Saskatchewan River. Now near Borden there's a river crossing, quite a famous crossing. The new Borden bridge will be constructed and completed by the fall of 1985. After one and a half years in government, much work with the R.M. councils, the town councils, myself, and the Minister of Highways, work on the new bridge has started. This clearly indicates the working relationship of the present government with local governments, the MLA, etc., to build a structure needed for safety and the movement of goods.

The agricultural sector in this province is the most single important industry and factor that relates to Saskatchewan wealth and growth. Now did agriculture take a kicking in 1984? Well I can say it certainly did. We had drought in the south—west and flooding in the north—east. The farmers experienced the very extreme in both cases, but they were quick to scramble to make the best of a bad problem.

The ranchers in the south—west looked for hay and grazing land in the North. There was a program of \$1,600 per rancher to help move their herd to greener pastures, wherever. In the north—east, the flooded area, \$8 per acre was paid to these farmers to cover their operating costs — \$7.5 million in aid. They had lost their crops for three years in a row.

My government has taken significant steps to strengthen the agricultural sector in the last two and a half years, despite the recession and weather conditions which nobody has control over. Yesterday we announced a new Bill that applies to farms. It gives them the opportunity to remain economically viable.

We brought in the removal of the gas tax, which is still helping. The average farmer saves from 3 to \$400 per year. There's enough money saved to pay the premium on a house protection insurance for the average home.

Farm purchase program will help young farmers purchase land at 8 per cent for five years and 12 per cent for the next five. It's helped more farmers in the first 10 weeks than the land bank did in 10 years.

The Minister of Agriculture, the hon. member for Weyburn, and this government are always willing to listen to new and creative ideas that make Saskatchewan the best province to live in. There has been more dynamic things happen in Saskatchewan in two and a half years than 11 years in the previous NDP administration.

We must develop long—term solutions to our problems, not bandage—type, short—term. We have the expertise and the spirit of the Saskatchewan people to do so. I will support the motion because it is part of a long—range plan to strengthen Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, in representing the constituents of the Regina Wascana constituency, I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Speech from the Throne.

I would like to confine my comments to that portion of the speech which dealt with economic development. In that segment of the speech, the strategy and the philosophy indicated the future direction of economic policy of this government.

It is a policy that is worthy of endorsement. It is, in fact, an enlargement of the basics about which Premier Devine spoke in June of 1983 at Futurescan. At that, he particularly stressed a new technology, a new technology strategy, as a significant component under the umbrella of economic development.

I'm very pleased to be a part of that economic development through my responsibilities as Minister of Science and Technology. This department, the Department of Science and Technology, was conceived from a planned strategy which Premier Devine and this government developed to improve the economic scene in this province.

This government recognizes that technology is an important ingredient in economic progress,

not only for improving current export products, but for the development of new products. It recognizes that Saskatchewan can no longer rely upon the primary resources alone. We must diversify with new value—added production. We require new technologies in manufacturing and processing which will provide new and primary products of such quality and cost that they can compete in the world markets.

Our competitors have applied research to production; computer—assisted manufacturing is common in their assembly lines. Their products are extremely competitive. Failure to integrate new technology into our economy will result in reduction in our competitiveness. It will result in lagging productivity. It will ultimately result in job losses. It is recognized that our future achievement in industry depends on how well we can develop, transfer, utilize, and exploit technology.

The Department of Science and Technology was established as a centre—piece of research and development for the province. It was established for the purpose of co—ordinating, of facilitating, and of supporting these activities. About a year ago, when the legislation to establish the Department of Science and Technology was introduced, I spoke about the need for this department. At that time, I spoke about the opportunities that science and technology offers to Saskatchewan, and the need for co—ordination and for programs and for services to maximize the benefits to the people of Saskatchewan.

Today I would like to talk about what the department has done in the past year, and I am very pleased to report, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there has been considerable pay—off from the strategy which Premier Devine described in June of 1983. The departmental Act came into force on January 1, 1984. By midsummer we had assembled a portion of our staffing component. I would like to pay tribute to that small group. They have worked extremely hard and with dedication to get the department under way. The achievements of the department in a relatively short period of time is a testimonial to the quality of their efforts. They pursued their work with some very important goals in mind.

One, we wanted to co—ordinate the research being done within the government so that we could identify that which was redundant, and where there were overlaps, where there were opportunities for co—operation. In other words, the main aim for that goal was to get the maximum value for the research dollars that are being spent. Another, we wanted to support industrial development in Saskatchewan through the transfer, the utilization, and exploitation of technology. We wanted to bring about an increase in the level of federal funding for science and technology in Saskatchewan, which we obviously were not doing very well in, previous to this time. We wanted to foster co—ordination and planning in what we call the research services supply sector. By that I mean liaison between the main players in basic research, the universities, the Saskatchewan Research Council, and the public sector laboratories. We want to keep the Saskatchewan people aware of advanced technology and the implications that technology has to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I think that I can safely say that we're off to a strong start on attaining these goals. We are supporting new technology and industrial development in a number of ways. We are providing financial support directly to industry. We're developing a state of the art research infrastructure. We're providing business counselling to advanced technology inventors and entrepreneurs.

There are two main sources for the programs that we have established. First of all, there's approximately \$5 million that's associated with the research and development division of the Heritage Fund. This is used to support industrial research and development. Also there is the Canadian Saskatchewan ERDA (Economic and Regional Development Agreement) subsidiary agreement in science and technology, an agreement that was signed last summer to provide \$33.2 million over the next five years.

(1545)

I would like to take a few moments to describe some of these programs to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. These programs in the research and development fund provide assistance where there are gaps, where there is need in other sources of funding. First, an industrial research program is intended to top up funding that is available from the federal sources. Some of these programs are associated with the National Research Council's IRAP (Industrial Research Assistance Program) and the federal IRDP (Industrial and Regional Development Program). The program that we have established allows for topping up to the maximum of 25 per cent for product development.

Then there is a joint venture high technology research program which funds those projects that are of mutual interest to industry and to government. Funding in this particular program cannot exceed 50 per cent.

There is funding available for RFPs, requests for proposals, to make it possible for small Saskatchewan companies to be able to compete in bidding or tendering for contracts that they would not otherwise be able to compete for.

I could go on and mention some of the other programs. I don't choose to do so at the present time. However, I would make this comment with regard to these research and development programs which I have just alluded to: that since these programs were announced just one month and a few days ago, actually November 1 of 1984, there have been at least 30 requests for assistance in regard to these, relative to these programs, and some of these have already been implemented.

I would refer not to the ERDA subagreement in science and technology. This is the first such federal—provincial agreement to have been signed in Canada. And this, I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has some significance to Saskatchewan. It means that we are off to a head start, that we do have in some ways a competitive edge, and that will give us an advantage in helping our technology industries grow in this province, in attracting companies to relocate in Saskatchewan, and in having a head start perhaps in leveraging our fair share of funding from other federal programs.

Under the ERDA agreement, the subagreement, I would mention the two major components. One of these components is that it will attempt to improve the innovative climate in our province. The other component of the subagreement is that it will deliver support to industry ranging from marketing support, to bridging capital, to assistance for industrial establishment and expansion.

In addition, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the financial and research support that is provided through the R&D fund and through ERDA, the department provides support for emerging new firms. The Inventor Services Program went into operation April the 1st of this year. This program helps inventors who have ideas to package those ideas, to take those ideas and get an assessment to see whether they are technically or commercially feasible. Then, if the concept does have technical or commercial feasibility, then we have a new venture program for the entrepreneur to help him to prepare a business plan, to line up financing through venture capital, and generally to get the business off the ground. I am pleased to report, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that since this program has been innovated, April the 1st of this year, there have been 170 inventors and/or entrepreneurs who have been assisted.

Another priority of the department in helping industry to develop is to make available state of the art research facilities and services. To provide these, Saskatchewan Science and Technology has promoted and supported the establishment of R&D centres and institutes in a number of areas and through this has pulled in additional federal dollars into Saskatchewan.

I can safely say that we certainly have been accessing a fair share of the federal funding in the

past two years. So far, as examples, I can say that since 1982 the following have happened: at the Saskatchewan Research Council, the CAD/CAM, Computer Assisted Design and Computer Assisted Manufacturing Robotics Centre of Advanced Technology, has come into existence, and the Canadian Centre of Advanced Instrumentation; at the University of Saskatchewan, the Centre of Toxicology, and very recently an addition to the extent of some \$2 million to that Centre of Toxicology; the Linear Accelerator expansion; the National Plan Biotechnology Institute, the Hydrology Institute.

These centres and institutes add up to a total federal funding over the next five years of \$30.8 million capital and \$27 million operating. This, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was leveraged with provincial expenditures of \$1.1 million. Naturally, we will attempt to keep up that sort of pace.

To ensure that support for industrial development is delivered where it is most needed, the Department of Science and Technology has consulted, and will continue to consult with industry, with the research community, and with other government departments.

We want these programs to be industry driven. That's the way that we will get our best results. And we are seeing those results. New firms are being established. Existing firms are expanding. Some major out—of—province firms are looking very seriously at relocating in Saskatchewan. Since April of 1982, 24 new advanced technology companies have been established, thus creating over 200 new jobs, and many of these firms are expanding at the present time. Of the firms which were active prior to 1982, they are also expanding, many of them, and have expanded, creating an additional 200 or more new jobs.

Less than a year ago the statistics compiled by our task force showed that there were 2,478 employees in the 55 high technology companies in Saskatoon. At that time they predicted that these private sector companies will increase in total staff to somewhere between 4,000 and 5,000 employees — in other words, an increase of somewhere between 90 and 95 per cent in the next five years. In addition, two out—of—province companies in advanced technology have been attracted to establish in Saskatchewan.

I look forward, I might add also, to announcing the establishment of two more new firms very shortly. And when you add to that the fact that there are something like seven more firms who are discussing establishing in Saskatchewan, it looks as though some things are happening in the area of advanced technology.

All of this activity is due, in part, to the packages of financial and service incentives that have been put together in this province, reflecting the total economic strategy of our government. The packages consist of both provincial and federal funding. As far as the provincial funding is concerned, they consist of packages that are supported through the Department of Economic Development and Trade, through the Department of Tourism and Small Business, and through the Department of Science and Technology.

We don't want to take full credit for all this positive activity. The main reason, I would suggest, for this activity taking place in our province, is due to the climate that has been created and due to the aggressive and entrepreneurial spirit on the part of those people who are associated with the development of these companies.

This industry, the advanced technology industry, is an industry that is emerging naturally. It is a healthy industry, and it is growing. I refer to a wide range of high technology companies, some employing anywhere from two to 20 people, some employing over 200 people. You will have noticed that Develcon, a company operating in Saskatoon, just recently announced a prestigious \$5 million sale contract made with Nassau. S E D Systems, another company operating in Saskatoon, announced recently between a 25 and a \$26 million contract with Canadian Defence. A contract of this proportion equates with 250 person—years of employment. Another Saskatoon company, Spectron, a year ago started with two people. Now it has 14 employees. I'm

not at liberty to say, but Spectron has not stopped expanding.

The advanced technology industry is not confined to the Saskatoon area. The industry is springing up all over the province. It's here in Regina. It's in Kerrobert. In Kerrobert we have Can Carbon which started on the initiative of a group of farmers. In Kindersley there is CAPA, a software company. In Big River there is Pharmatech which produces pharmacy software. In the Tisdale area there is Prairie Flax Fibre which is developing several value-added products. In Estevan, there is Eurotech doing research and manufacturing in soil residuals fertilizers.

Obviously, Mr. Deputy Speaker, high tech industries produce jobs. In all of the instances mentioned, they have created new jobs. These are bonus jobs. They are jobs that are value-added as far as Saskatchewan is concerned. It is the function of our department to facilitate that growth and to try to remove the obstacles that will impede their progress.

I would like now to turn for a moment to our own provincial funding. Our government has been spending, over the past number of years, the Government of Saskatchewan, between 40 and \$50 million in departmental — that is in—house governmental research — science and technology.

Our Department of Science and Technology has been given the mandate to compile and analyse those expenditures and to put them together in an integrated package to take to the treasury board for reviewing. This is the first time that this has been done. It comes perhaps best under the heading of good management. We don't see the job as controlling other departments' activities, but we see it as the job of co—ordinating research so the government can get maximum value for its research spending.

We have also made progress in our goal of co—ordinating the research supply sector, and by that I mean, the universities, the Saskatchewan Research Council, and the public labs. Our major emphasis has been on filling in the gaps in the infrastructure for industrial development. We have pushed for more federal funding for the research centres. We intend to continue to do so.

We are also looking at maximizing existing facilities and expertise; existing facilities and expertise at the University of Saskatchewan, at the University of Regina, at the Saskatchewan Research Council. We have been negotiating recently with both universities to set up offices of university research. An agreement has already been signed with the University of Regina. The purposes of these offices are to market the university and research capabilities; to administer research contracts so as to get consistent procedures and performance; and to serve as a meeting ground for industry and research. We expect these offices will result in substantially increasing the level of external research contracts, as has happened in several other universities throughout Canada, and I speak of universities such as University of Calgary, McGill University, and Waterloo.

We also have begun the development of an awareness program for the people of Saskatchewan. There are issues related to technology which must be addressed: for example, the effects of new technologies on existing industries — what effects is technology having; education and training to prepare youth and the existing work—force for changing occupations; the quality of working life; the impact of technologies on women labour force.

We have been searching for information and research data. We find that much information is provided by the media but not much from the researchers. The information that is provided is relevant to an economic climate that is different from the Prairies. We see the need here in Saskatchewan to zero in on the effects that technology will have on Saskatchewan because Saskatchewan is different from Windsor and Detroit.

There is little doubt but that human change will accompany technological change. So there are many things we have to know. It's important to know where new jobs might emerge or be created as a result of adopting technology so that job dislocation is minimized.

In training our youth and the work—force, we need to know what skills will be needed so that we will not have to import skilled labour on the Prairies. In enhancing the quality of work life, we must be aware of the implications of new technology on the physical health, on the social and psychological health of the Saskatchewan labour force.

We recognize that there are fears and uncertainties about the loss and the downgrading of jobs and the need for acquiring new and unfamiliar occupational skills, so there are internal department plans for minimizing any disruption created within industry because of the installation of technology.

(1600)

The department recognizes that to maximize the benefits of new technology; it will be necessary that all the actors contribute to the solution: labour; industry; government; education. Therefore, an awareness program is a priority consideration within the department. The people of Saskatchewan must be prepared for these impacts. The program is very important, and we plan to accomplish more in this field in the coming months.

Mr. Speaker, the department, I feel, has made a good start upon its mandate in the first 11 months of operation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. CURRIE: — The key to Saskatchewan's future and to Canada's future is to maintain a competitive lead in our areas of greatest strength — our resource—based industries. Innovations in these existing industries are significant to help provide products that can compete on the international markets as well as to develop new and value—added products.

We shall continue to facilitate the research and development of new and improved products.

Mr. Speaker, through these initiatives, as well as through others, I believe that we are making a significant contribution to the economic growth of our province. I am pleased to support the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON MR. MAXWELL: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I may say it's a real pleasure for me to be able to participate in the debate this afternoon. But something that is even a greater pleasure, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out, is having the honour to represent the Turtleford constituency in this Assembly.

It was earlier pointed out, and most eloquently, by the member from Shaunavon — and I am genuinely sorry he's not here at the moment to hear this — but the member from Shaunavon, I thought, in an eloquent and sincere fashion, summed up perhaps what all of us feel about being elected representatives to this Legislative Assembly.

He indicated in his remarks what a serious and onerous task it was, and one into which none of us has entered lightly. I would say that the election of April 26, 1982, after my marriage and birth of my children, was certainly the most significant event in my life, and far overshadowed even the honour of being appointed to the cabinet of Premier Devine. So I join with the member from Shaunavon in his well—expressed sentiments, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the opposition benches, in the last couple of days, we've heard an excellent job being done of painting a drab picture in Saskatchewan. Although the debate has only started, I think we've heard just about every trite socialist cliché of negativism which NDP

minds can conceive.

In their criticism of this government, however, they have not offered one concrete, workable alternative to any of the programs the government is using to help the people of Saskatchewan back onto the road of economic recovery through job creation initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of this government's record in job creation. We have lowered unemployment through carefully planned actions, and with the co—operation of industry, where jobs are available. In fact, Mr. Speaker, there were 4,000 fewer people unemployed in Saskatchewan in October than the previous month — the biggest decrease in unemployment in Canada.

As well, there are 27,000 more people employed in Saskatchewan now than there were in April of 1982.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — And, Mr. Speaker, we continue to have the lowest unemployment rate in Canada.

To date, members opposite have indicated they would scuttle and plunder every program this government has introduced. They would like to destroy any hope for the hopeful, and reintroduce the socialist theory that all people should be dependent on the government for all things.

The NDP would reduce unemployment by increasing welfare. But, Mr. Speaker, despite what the opposition says, this government will continue to introduce and implement positive job creation programs, retraining programs, skills development programs, and any other program necessary to help the unemployed.

The opposition keeps whining that we're not doing enough, and they could do it better. If that is the case, Mr. Speaker, why does Saskatchewan have the lowest unemployment rate in Canada?

Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell you about the basic philosophy behind our job creation program. . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I was waiting for the member from Regina Centre to get into the debate from and through the seat of his pants. I always enjoy these little exchanges with him, because fortunately for the rest of us, he thinks with his tongue.

First and foremost, Mr. Speaker, a branch of the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower, the labour market planning and information branch, carefully assesses job availability to identify where jobs exist. It assesses the number of trained people capable of handling these jobs. If it determines that there is a labour shortage in any area, courses are arranged with the co—operation of the industries involved, and a sufficient number of workers are trained.

Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago there was a small graduation ceremony in Regina recognizing graduates of the joint Social Services—Advanced Education and Manpower training course which was offered under the Saskatchewan Skills Development Program. The ceremony was not large. It was certainly far from elaborate. And it involved only six dry—wall students. And it was significant. It was held on a Friday at noon, because all of them would be starting jobs at \$6.50 an hour on Monday.

But, Mr. Speaker, the important thing for these graduates was that some of them had not had a job in two years. They were living off social aid for the most part. Occasionally they would get seasonal or minimum—paying jobs that would not last.

This small course operated by my department was looked upon by those students as the biggest

thing that had ever happened to them in their recent history. One graduate said that because of the course he at last could hold down a steady job at above minimum wage. Moreover, because of this course, they have hope for the future. When they were given their graduation certificates, one could almost feel these graduates actually sensed that their human dignity was being handed back to them.

Mr. Speaker, there are many people benefiting from the Saskatchewan Skills Development Program. I could quote from some of the letters I've received about the SSDP. I'll keep these remarks very short. Quote:

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to better my education and restore my self—confidence to achieve my future goals in life.

Another individual wrote, and I quote:

I am very grateful to share this opportunity to say that this program has helped me in getting to know people and communicating with them. It also will help me in my education, which I will need later on in the future, and in my career planning.

Mr. Speaker, I could quote from many more letters of a similar nature.

Another job creation success story I would like to tell you about, Mr. Speaker, occurred late last fall . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Would someone get a plumber? There's a drip over here in the House.

. . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I think the member from Regina North West has opened his mouth once again to change feet — or is it to change parties? I think you're rapidly running out of parties, my friend.

Mr. Speaker, if I may return to a success story and leave the story of failure over on the third—party bench where it belongs. Another job creation success story I wanted to tell you about occurred late last fall.

Department field representatives at La Ronge found out that the wild rice crop would be one of the biggest in the province's history. Trained harvesters would be needed to take that crop off. Quickly, a course was put together to teach new methods of mechanized harvesting. More than 50 people enrolled in the course. Immediately after graduating, nearly all of them were earning about \$2 for every pound they harvested.

Now using mechanical harvesters, one person can reap between 200 and 400 pounds of wild rice a day. Because not all the wild rice ripens at the same time, the harvest lasted about two months. More than one million pounds of wild rice was harvested in the La Ronge area, and that's not bad money from a 10—day training course.

Those are just two of the many success stories I could relate to you, Mr. Speaker, about the job creation initiatives of the government. In our job creation efforts, major emphasis is being given to help those who are traditionally unemployed. Special attention and quick approval are given to job creation projects that will benefit people who previously would have had only a social assistance cheque as their sole source of income.

More than 1,300 jobs have been created by the Department of Social Services under its \$9 million Saskatchewan Employment Development Program. All these new workers were former clients of that department.

The Department of Advanced Education and Manpower, co—operating with business and industry, is developing and expanding courses in areas where skilled worker shortages exist. All

sectors of business, big and small, are being monitored by the labour market planning and information branch to determine where job opportunities exist. We feel we must help people be prepared for employment wherever there is a job.

Finding there was a shortage of short—order cooks, a 12—week course was initiated at the Saskatchewan Technical Institute in Moose Jaw for a dozen students. This will enable the 12 former welfare recipients to seek gainful employment in cafes, hotels, or at resorts.

Representatives of high technology industries told the labour market planning branch they had jobs for electrical technologists. A two—year course will be established this year at the Advanced Technology Training Centre in Saskatoon to help fill the need. The one—year electrical technology program has been expanded to allow students to earn their technologist certificates. Already, 53 graduates of last year's one—year course have registered.

Before either of these courses was introduced, training of this type was not available anywhere in Saskatchewan. People wanting skills had to leave the province to further their education in these areas. I believe these examples clearly demonstrate the government's willingness to co—operate with business and students to make Saskatchewan's economy grow.

(1615)

To promote further growth the province has just recently signed two five—year agreements with the federal government calling for the expenditure of \$69.2 million. This money will all be channelled directly into job creation projects. Under the first agreement, \$33.2 million will be used to accelerate high tech industries in the South, creating many more jobs. These new jobs will be in an industry that has a phenomenal growth rate. One new high tech business, almost like a magnet, attracts other high tech and related businesses.

The second agreement is aimed at helping Northerners. Some \$36 million has been earmarked to create long—term employment for northern residents. It emphasizes development of renewable resource industries, and professional and technical training for Northerners.

Last year under the department's native career development program, 140 persons were taught job skills. Most graduates had jobs waiting for them when their courses finished. The courses were conducted because mine operators, local government administration, construction firms and contractors using heavy equipment, said they would hire trained people. The success rate of these courses was so astonishing that another 140 natives are already enrolled in special classes offered under the agricultural and rural development agreement.

Turning to another topic, a Statistics Canada report this summer showed that nearly nine out of 10 students not planning to return to school this year were working. Considering that many of these former students had only been on the job market for a few weeks with practically no work experience, this indicates the province has a workable job creation program. During that past summer the student employment program, Opportunities '84, helped to create 4,570 jobs. This program created employment in five main sectors, business, farms, local government, non—profit organizations, and regional parks. These jobs provided much needed financial help for students wishing to further their education.

Major changes have been made in my department over the past year. These changes have been made to tackle effectively unemployment, this government's number one priority. Unlike the NDP philosophy of only providing welfare when people can't find jobs, we are retraining these same people so they can find jobs. And we're doing this in every corner of the province and for all groups of people. For example, to help welfare recipients through the Saskatchewan Skills Development Program, we provide job skills training so social assistance recipients can compete for jobs and move off welfare dependency. In 1983—84 more than 700 welfare recipients registered. Over the next two years, more than 3,500 will be given new job skills under this program.

To help the underemployed, Mr. Speaker, our community college system has been given a new direction and new mandate. Colleges now are offering job training courses, and all 16 of the colleges provide a career counselling service to help people select the right courses that will lead to improve job prospects.

To help people find jobs in new high technology industries, in June of this year the provincial government established the Advanced Technology Training Centre in Saskatoon. This centre will train and retrain approximately 1,000 workers for jobs in our growing high technology industries in the province. To help young farm people, our agricultural extension program, in 1983—84, provided upgrading opportunities to almost 5,000 farmers through Wascana Institute.

To help other rural residents through local community colleges, courses from our three technical institutes are being offered in rural areas. During 1984—85, approximately 1,400 rural residents have been able to participate in courses without having to make a long, costly, trip to the city. During this year, the Saskatchewan Skills Extension Program offered 92 courses in 29 different locations. Without this program, Mr. Speaker, many rural residents would find institute—type training too costly, and perhaps would not bother furthering their education.

To help young people, in 1984—85 this government put in place Saskatchewan Access, a youth program, an employment program, to provide for work experience to unemployed young people. By offering subsidies to employers for each unemployed youth they hire, we have been able to place over 1,000 of these previously unemployed people in jobs.

To help future students, the government is continuing the expansion of technical institutes. We're on target to achieve our goal of an overall increase of 60 per cent in the number of training spaces over the 1982 level. To help northern residents, a technical institute in Prince Albert is currently under construction. This institute will offer its first classes next fall and be fully operational in the fall of 1986. Currently, the Prince Albert Vocational Centre offers courses which will become part of the institute offering.

To help the unemployed in the far North, we are co—operating with local industries to train natives for jobs at mine sites, lumber camps, construction sites, and for agricultural jobs. These jobs would not have been available to them if this training had not been made available by this government. I want to add, Mr. Speaker, this training is not offered until after a contract has been signed with local industries in the North, guaranteeing jobs for the graduates. As I mentioned earlier, we currently have 140 Northerners enrolled in classes now under way.

I want to spend a few moments discussing some of our northern initiatives. I believe it was yesterday the member for Athabasca expressed great concern, and I believe rightly so, over his constituents. As I mentioned earlier, it's an humbling and rewarding experience we all take seriously that we're given by our constituents. The member from Athabasca is certainly no exception. And he expressed his concerns about northern programs.

I'd like to mention some of our northern programs. The northern training program, a total allocation of \$2.4 million in 1984—85. It is a more flexible mechanism than its southern equivalents in that it allows for a creative combination of contracts with community colleges, participation with the federal government, and direct contracts with employers for basic skills development, skills training, and employer—centred training.

The northern training program has four basic components. The first one is the Saskatchewan Skills Extension Program, providing for an extension of our institute program into the North through the community colleges, training this year 262 people in 26 programs at seven centres.

Second component, community college programs, which are non—institute related. These offer a variety of programs, Mr. Speaker: pre—tech training, adult basic education, skills training, personal skills development, and the provision of learning centres through programs as northern training

program, SSDP (Saskatchewan Skills Development Program), and non—status Indian and Metis program, training this year in excess of 600 people.

Industry—related programming and training is a third component. This is training offered or developed in co—operation with employers, usually with a commitment for jobs by the employers on completion of the courses; '83—84, 229 graduated out of an enrolment of 249. Projected enrolment currently this year, 245.

And the fourth component, no stranger to us, general industrial training.

In addition, my department is currently developing a northern data bank with CEIC (Canada Employment and Immigration Centre). The data bank will allow the department to cross—reference the training information with CEIC's employment information. As a result, the department will be able to determine more accurately if its training initiatives are indeed leading to employment.

I'd like to provide some example programs and services which are being provided right now. These include firstly, mining: 1983—84, 231 people trained and employed; 1984—85, 240 people projected to be trained for jobs, and I may say all but four of them have jobs committed.

Forestry: 1983—84, 113 trained, the estimates are 70 per cent are employed; 1984—85, 96 people trained, 75 per cent of them employed; estimating another 100 additional trainees in a short course.

Wild rice, to which I referred earlier: in 1984—85, 57 people trained, all employed; we anticipate 100, Mr. Speaker, for '85—86.

Pre—local government administration: 1983—84, 82 people trained and employed.

Also, Mr. Speaker, in discussing these northern training initiatives and northern programs, I must tell my friends opposite that although a great deal of taxpayers' money is involved with many of these courses, the Provincial Auditor has complimented my staff on their excellent accounting procedures. All invoices are paid on time and accurate records are kept of all financial transactions. I mention this, Mr. Speaker, because I think the people of Saskatchewan remember the DNS financial fiasco of a few years ago, where the Provincial Auditor indicated that there were not even sufficient financial records to compile an annual financial statement.

Mr. Speaker, turning to another subject, the Leader of the Opposition, in his earlier speech, alluded to university funding. He drew a comparison between his government's record and that of the Progressive Conservative government. I should like to remind the Leader of the Opposition that for the last year he was in power, his government gave approximately \$100 million in operating grants to universities. This year, the operating grants under this government to universities is in excess of \$133 million of taxpayers' money — a very substantial increase.

The Leader of the Opposition had the nerve to say we cut funding to the universities. The numbers speak for themselves — more than a 30 per cent increase in funding in two and a half years under this government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Mr. Speaker, what was the NDP priority in the 1970s? Where did all the money go in the halcyon days when all that resource money was rolling into the province? Well, \$600 million, \$600 million went into uranium mines — the same uranium mines that the NDP today are saying, "We will shut down. We'll lock the doors. We'll walk away and we'll throw hundreds of northern residents out of jobs."

Where else did the money go? Where else did the money go? Well, a considerable amount of money went into building and constructing edifices and monuments to their own glory — Kramer Place, North Battleford; J. Auburn Pepper Building, Weyburn; The C.M. Fines Building, Regina; the T.C. Douglas Building.

Oh, T.C. — where's Tommy these days? Where is Tommy Douglas? Where is the man who spent his life fighting the multinationals? Where is the man who spent all his waking moments criticizing capitalism and free enterprise? Where's Tommy?

(1630)

AN HON. MEMBER: — Husky Oil.

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Husky Oil. Tommy sits on the board of Husky Oil with a nice, fat expense account.

Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, sometimes I honestly believe that with the NDP, money speaks louder than principles.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition somehow claims to present himself as a philanthropist to the universities, a philanthropist. Well, Mr. Speaker, his words and his actions when he was in office make him out to be a scrooge.

I have a graph, Mr. Speaker, that was given to me by senior administrators at one of our two universities, and it shows the actual percentage of the provincial budget from 1971 onward which was spent on operating grants to universities. Well, Mr. Speaker, this graph shows that the percentage of the provincial government's budget spent on universities went down every year from 1971 when these people were in office, except the one year when, for certain reasons, we had the creation of the University of Regina separate from the University of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, the important thing and the most noteworthy thing on the graph, the most noteworthy thing is when we get to the years when this government took office the percentage no longer kept nosediving, Mr. Speaker; it has evened off and that descent into mediocrity has stopped under this government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — I showed a moment ago a graph to talk about actions. Now let's talk about words. Let's talk about words. I'd like to quote from a memo from Hon. A. Blakeney, premier, to Hon. Doug McArthur, minister of education, continuing education, dated February 28, 1980. And what does it say? The then premier says:

I want the planning committee to take a look at some point during the next several months at the positions the government intends to take in the longer term with respect to the universities and the vocational institutes. I am particularly interested in knowing how we intend to organize our relationship with the universities, the manner in which we intend to reduce the rate of growth of university funding.

Mr. Speaker, when we contrast the Leader of the Opposition's words with his actions and with his stated intent regarding university funding, we see he is plumbing the depths of hypocrisy.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to refer to some comments that were made in debate and I would like to pick them up from Hansard, page 52. And this quote, attributed to the Leader of the Opposition, says:

The result is bulging classes (and here's a part I would like to put in the record), students not having a choice of classes that they need to complete their courses.

Not having a choice of classes that they need to complete their courses. Well, obviously, the Leader of the Opposition is referring to the priority registration system instituted by the university administration.

There are three points here I'd like everyone to consider. The first point is: the administration of the university has been contemplating this move for two years. It is not new and it has, in fact, been in place and been used by the Faculty of Administration for the last few years. The second point I'd like to make regarding, and I quote, is attributed to Dr. Reid Robinson, associate vice—president in charge of academic development at the U of R, speaking to students — this is from an article in the Leader—Post of November 9th, and he says:

The new registration system has nothing whatsoever to do with our other current financial problems.

And further on he makes a point, and here's what he says to the students:

There will be sufficient classes for students who meet existing academic requirements.

Mr. Speaker, other administrators at the university have assured me that students who need classes to complete their degrees will be accommodated. Clearly, the Leader of the Opposition in saying — and I quote:

. . . students not having a choice of classes that they need to complete their courses.

That's what he said, he said they wouldn't get them. Clearly, in saying this, either the Leader of the Opposition is casting aspersions on the integrity and the veracity of the senior administration at the University of Regina, or, alternatively, he is trying scare tactics on the students.

Either way, Mr. Speaker, it appears to me that it is most unseemly, and indeed it's unacceptable conduct, from someone who's a former premier of this province.

By contrast, Mr. Speaker, I should like to say that in Premier Grant Devine we have a leader of whom we are bursting with pride. We have a leader who is positive, who is optimistic, who is enthusiastic. I'm proud to serve in his government, Mr. Speaker, and I am happy to support the motion. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MULLER: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly want to congratulate the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, and the member for Last Mountain—Touchwood for moving and seconding the throne speech. It's a pleasure for me to stand in this Assembly today on behalf of the constituents of Shellbrook—Torch River, and I'm pleased to be able to enter this debate, and my comments to those of my colleagues on this excellent throne speech.

My constituency is somewhat more fortunate than those of many of my colleagues, in that we did not experience the severe flooding that plagued much of the north—east, and we did not experience the drought that crippled the southern half of the agricultural belt during the summer months. But 1984 has been difficult for farmers in my constituency, and they will agree with the throne speech that future government action is required to protect our family farms.

There's one cost that has been rising substantially in my constituency. The farmers and businessmen in the area are very clear as to what the problem is. I refer, Mr. Speaker, to the property tax. In 1976 the now demised party, with its lack of wisdom, decided to introduce the new assessment procedure. This decision was made totally, completely, without consultation with those municipalities and those ratepayers who were affected mostly by it. The result has been that farmers with light land have seen their taxes double and triple. Businessmen, especially those in the car dealerships and the implement dealerships, have seen their taxes double, triple, and quadruple — these costs at a time when those individuals can least afford them.

Farmers and small—business men in my constituency are of the firm belief that the NDP assessment procedure was geared to penalize property owners and reward tenants. New farm land valuations are perceived as shifting the cost burden from the best to the worst parcels. This means that those who can least afford to pay will pay more.

I'll just stop there for a moment. I'd like to read one of the resolutions that was passed at the 1984 NDP convention.

The provincial government and the SARM should legislate the possibility of a progressive property tax for municipal purposes based on farm size and productivity.

You know, this means that if I produce more on my farm than my neighbour does, I should be taxed higher. I don't agree with that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . An NDP resolution, 1985. It was carried. I feel that we try to encourage our people in Saskatchewan to be productive, not non—productive. I believe we need production in this part of the world to keep up with the increases in costs.

I want to make something perfectly clear to the people of Saskatchewan and to this Assembly. This is not a new problem, Mr. Speaker. To begin, shortly after the new valuations were implemented in 1976, the former government realized they had a problem . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . They had more than one, but it's down to a lesser number now. What did they do? Well, they created a committee, a committee called the Saskatchewan Small Holdings Committee. It was created in 1979 under the direction of the then hon. Edgar Kaeding, minister of rural affairs. The committee was charged with the responsibility to make some recommendations for correcting some of the many inequities that had arisen through the new procedures. The terms of reference for that committee were: to define small holdings; to review the provisions of the rural municipal Act regarding assessment and taxation of properties; to recommend possible revisions to current statutory provisions; and to make recommendations to the minister concerning the method and practice of assessing small holdings in rural municipalities.

This committee held meetings with rural municipalities, with ratepayers, throughout the province. They compiled a list — a lengthy list, I might add — of some of the problems that were evident in the assessment procedure. They received submissions from individuals and groups with regard to assessment and taxation — public meetings, public hearings, 241 persons attended, 46 municipalities represented, 26 submissions presented, discussed, at nine public hearings; numerous letters and briefs received by the committee for its consideration prior to and subsequent to the public hearings. This is what happened between 1979 and '80. They took a look at what went on in other provinces. This report includes a section: "Situation in Other Provinces," and it lists what happened in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and all the provinces and territories of Canada.

We come, Mr. Speaker, to the bottom line. What did the NDP recommend? I don't really know if we can call it an NDP report; I didn't see the name of one MLA on this report. I never did find out what it costs, but it took a year and a half to put together.

Recognizing the complexity, the committee makes the following recommendations:

define small holdings — the committee has no recommendation in this matter.

That was the bottom line. After a year and a half, it says on page 36 of this Report on Small Holdings, 1980 — it took a year and a half to compile with five people on, and no MLAs on that committee. And their findings were: the committee has no recommendation.

Review the provisions of The rural Municipality Act regarding assessment practice in taxation: the committee recommends that no legislative action be initiated prior to the completion of a further study and subsequent discussions.

In actuality, this is a job creation program.

Make recommendations concerning the method and practise of assessment and taxation. The committee finds it cannot make recommendations to the minister regarding the appropriate level of taxation unless it receives further information.

This could have lasted forever. It concludes, Mr. Speaker, by saying:

It is the hope of the committee that the pilot study will provide the information on which can be based sound and responsible solutions for this very complex and difficult problem.

In that one statement alone it has made its recommendation, for it has indicated that those policies instituted by the NDP government were neither sound nor responsible.

That is the mess the Conservative government found the assessment procedure in in 1982. The horror stories of tax doubling, tripling, and quadrupling continued. That is why the member for Humboldt, the Minister of Rural Development, asked his Legislative Secretary to tour the province and to talk to municipalities to find a solution to this long—standing and very serious problem that exists.

(1645)

The approach of this government, Mr. Speaker, was not to come out with new policy and arbitrarily impose it upon the municipalities as it had been done in the past. It was not to throw the assessment procedure into an uproar by a few bureaucratic shuffles, as has been done in the past. It was rather to talk to people and find out what they thought was the real problem, and what were the proper solutions.

Let's take a look at the response. I have here an article from the weekly paper in the Moosomin constituency. That happens to be the constituency of my seat—mate. It says, "Nipawin MLA listens to R.M. assessment concerns." It goes on to quote one reeve of Maryfield R.M., who said:

The meeting with the MLA from Nipawin was very favourable. They (referring to the member from Nipawin and his two colleagues) agreed with our main concern, which was assessment. The meeting with MLA from Nipawin lasted a little more then an hour, and we had a good discussion, (said the reeve). It was very informative. It is nice to talk to those government people on a one—on—one basis every now and then. It's very different from what it used to be.

That's the bottom line. Conclusion: concentration, co—operation, listening to people.

That is the theme of the throne speech; that is the theme of this government. This government has committed itself to solving many problems, assessment being only one of them. Most of those problems, Mr. Speaker, we inherited from past governments. But this government is convinced that the people of Saskatchewan have the potential, the initiative, and the enterprise

to succeed in their endeavours if they are given a fair chance.

This throne speech says it will give you a fair chance and we will help you; that we have an ongoing commitment to improve the quality of life for our Saskatchewan residents; that we will consider and deal with the questions fundamental to the economic future of Saskatchewan residents, young or old, male or female, employee or employer. It recognizes that there are no simple answers but it also recognizes we must work together to explore avenues that will be both creative and productive. It is through a new spirit of co—operation between all residents of the province that this province will continue to lead the rest of the country in the months and years ahead.

It's my pleasure to add my support to that of my colleagues to the throne speech.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. RYBCHUK: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the MLA for Regina Victoria constituency, I am pleased to speak and support the Speech from the Throne. The Regina Victoria constituency elected me to represent them in this legislature as part of the Progressive Conservative government, led by Premier Grant Devine.

Back in the spring of 1982 when the voters of Regina Victoria elected me as part of the Progressive Conservative team, they gave me and our policies an overwhelming vote of confidence. They put their trust in us. The people of Regina Victoria were sending out a message that they had faith in the Progressive Conservative policies.

Mr. Speaker, now over two years later I can say with pride to this Assembly that the government of Premier Devine has kept the faith of Regina Victoria and the whole province of Saskatchewan. Premier Devine is a respected and trusted premier because he and his government are both true to their word. As a result, Mr. Speaker, the people of my constituency can really see the positive difference and change.

The basic philosophy of the PC government is freedom and dignity of the individual. Freedom cannot exist unless there is economic prosperity. On both counts the government of Premier Devine has been very successful.

A job, as we all know, is the first step in being well off in society. To suggest, as the NDP opposition has, that we don't care, is not only an outrageous statement, it is also simply not true. Do the NDP really think that we don't understand what it means for a family man who cannot find a job and have to sit at home with a sense of despair? Or do they think we don't understand how hopeless the world must seem for a young person who has not yet succeeded in finding their first job? Of course we know. Of course we care. And of course that is why jobs is the key priority of this government.

Caring and compassion are the Conservatives' way, Mr. Speaker. This province's most important resource is our people. That's why our government took the priority to create jobs. Every citizen who wants to work should have the opportunity to have a job. That is why there is an all out effort by this government working with business, labour, and the community groups to create jobs. We will not leave a stone unturned in creating work opportunities for Saskatchewan people, and our efforts are paying off.

Let us look at the city of Regina, for example. I am proud of the PC record here in Regina — a 600 million oil upgrader at the Regina Co—op Refinery. This upgrader will require 2,500 person—years of employment, with a peak of 1,300 employees in 1986. The number of permanent jobs necessary to sustain the upgrader's 50,000 barrel—a—day output is estimated at 1,000.

Then there's the \$63 million expansion at Ipsco. Ipsco is spending \$63 million to incorporate

some of the latest technology at its plant — expansion of guaranteed future markets, and with that comes jobs. The significant factor in this decision for expansion at Ipsco was the stable environment for business growth created by the Progressive Conservative government.

Then there was the 100 million expansion at Kalium near Regina, and this will require 280 construction workers. The province—wide boom has created a record number of new jobs in the oil industry.

Simply stated, Mr. Speaker, if you were to look at other major western Canadian cities and the employment situation in each of those cities, you would see that Regina has the best job record in western Canada. That information, Mr. Speaker, comes from Statistics Canada. And the same people at Statistics Canada provide that information on unemployment rates in each province in Canada. And I'm proud of Saskatchewan's record. We have consistently had the lowest unemployment rate, well below the national average of any province in Canada.

You can see all around you, Mr. Speaker, housing construction and new buildings. Look around the skyline of Regina. The city of Regina is really changing, and all that prosperity is because of the opportunities and the environment created by this government.

Mr. Speaker, as I've stated earlier, caring and compassion are the Conservative ways. We will make jobs a key priority throughout the new job creation agency that was announced this afternoon, and the efforts of the minister responsible for employment, the member from Qu'Appelle.

When the Premier chose the member from Qu'Appelle as his key minister responsible for jobs and employment, he picked a very talented and able minister. The minister is one of the best, and I would dare say, in all of Canada. That is how serious this government is about job creation in Saskatchewan.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, the NDP opposition would create more unemployment and human misery. The NDP said that they would close down uranium mines in the North. That would mean 10,000 jobs would be lost. The NDP would throw 10,000 Saskatchewan people out of work. That is NDP madness.

In a few moments, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out more of the examples of the NDP insanity. The NDP would raise taxes. They want to bring back the tax on gasoline. Let us compare the tax record of Premier Devine's government and the past record of the NDP. We abolished the gas tax, saving Saskatchewan families of an average of \$500 a year. The NDP used that tax to finance SGI losses, and now they want to tax the people again.

This PC government has taken the sales tax off power bills and children's clothing. The NDP had the sales tax on the power bills and children's clothing. There has been no income tax increases with this PC government. The NDP increased income taxes. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the NDP, back in the dark days of their term, taxed and taxed to feed the greedy growth of big government. We have changed that type of economic madness.

And yet the NDP has not learned from the lessons of their dark past. This same group of socialists now want to have even more government control. The NDP want to nationalize all the oil, potash, and other resources in Saskatchewan. They want, of course, state control.

Simply stated, Mr. Speaker, the NDP is drunk with wild socialistic ideals, and till they sober up, they will be in opposition forever. And naturally they will never sober up from their extreme policies.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. RYBCHUK: — This NDP opposition is part of a national party that would decriminalize marijuana and soft drugs. It is serious enough that we have drunk drivers on our road, but the NDP want to legalize drugs. Can you imagine the serious problems that society would face if the NDP had their way and these drugs were legalized?

The NDP want to decriminalize prostitution. They want to legalize hookers. When I read about NDP policy like that, Mr. Speaker, I do not take seriously anything they have to say about the family, about the protection and dignity of the family. As a family man I would never, never support such a policy put forward by the NDP.

Let me cite some more examples of the real NDP policy. The NDP is in favour of free—standing abortion clinics. Yes, they passed that resolution in convention in Regina. How could they even dare talk about family and the sanctity of life? These same people have their policy to create labour unrest in society, and by urging the unions to be more militant.

Well, some of their people know that this a recipe for disaster. They know that these socialist policies will see the NDP defeated once again in the next provincial election. The only point on which the Leader of the Opposition is right is when he said in his speech in Regina, and I quote: "The NDP government was too big, too centralized and too aloof." Yes, how right the Leader of the Opposition was on that count — too big, too centralized, and too aloof. And that is why today they are reduced to a meaningless and out—of—touch opposition.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side, the government side of the legislature, are very proud of our Premier. The Premier of Saskatchewan, Premier Grant Devine, is a man whose whole life is dedicated to the betterment of his native province and his fellow mankind.

Never in the history of Saskatchewan have we had a premier who has such a remarkable ability to govern, and to govern well. Premier Grant Devine is everything a good leader should be: he is trusted; he has vision; and above all else, he has complete integrity; and he has the ability to relate to people of all walks of life. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be a supporter of this government of Premier Devine.

Mr. Speaker, senior citizens in my constituency, for example, know of the caring and compassion of this government. Many have taken advantage of the senior citizens' home renovations program, and this government has doubled Saskatchewan income payments for single senior citizens, and substantially increased benefits to senior couples.

That caring and compassion, the Conservative way, has meant increased spending on health care. People are just amazed when we give them the fact that for the first time in Saskatchewan's history, health spending will top \$1 billion. That means \$1,000 for every man, woman, and child in the province.

And yes, Mr. Speaker, they also know that the scare tactics used by the NDP in the last elections were just that — scare tactics. And they can't trust the NDP any more.

Yes, this government cares about people. That is why Premier Devine announced an extension of the mortgage interest reduction plan until 1988. This Progressive Conservative government believes it should do all it can to shield people from the damaging economic forces beyond their own control.

So far, over 40,000 families have been protected from the high mortgage interest rate costs by this plan. That is the caring and compassion of the Conservative government, and that is the courage and conviction to bring about such programs.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of very good reasons why I am proud to speak in support of the Speech from the Throne. Allow me to review some of the reasons.

One, taxes have not increased since this government came into office. We have removed taxes, and cut some taxes.

Two, we have reduced the size of government. We believe government is the servant, not the master.

Three, there has been a record development in the oil industry. This Conservative government has brought about the two largest job creation projects in the history of Saskatchewan, upgraders in Regina and Lloydminster.

Four, our commitment to senior citizens is strong and sincere. The home repair plan and payments for seniors are examples of that.

Five, Sask Power bonds and Saskoil bonds are examples of our belief that the citizens of Saskatchewan want to participate in the development of our Crown corporations.

Six, in the area of health care, we are making Saskatchewan the leader. Our health care system will be the best in Canada. We know the importance of Saskatchewan agriculture to our economy.

Mr. Speaker, time does not permit me to continue on, but I'll tell this Assembly that I am proud to serve the people of Regina Victoria as a Progressive Conservative MLA. I am proud of our Premier; I am proud of the record of our government. And that's why I will support the Speech from the Throne.

And being near 5 o'clock, I beg to adjourn debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

Correction: — In Hansard 3A, December 3, 1984, page 71, paragraph 2, line 2, instead of "rights to life" the speaker intended "Human Rights".