

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

April 16, 1985

EVENING SITTING

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE (BUDGET DEBATE)

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. Andrew that the Assembly resolve itself into the committee of finance and the amendment thereto moved by Mr. Engel.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying before we adjourned at 5 o'clock, we discovered that the kind of help to which I'd referred was desperately needed. My colleagues and I found that out clearly when we travelled in this province, listening to people's concerns, during our series of "families under distress" round table discussions. We visited 11 communities; we heard from high school students, from senior citizens, from unemployed single parents to long-time family farmers. We heard from clergymen and those who are providing care to those under emotional and economic stress. It was an interesting experience, and one that I think none of us will soon forget. It was a way to put a human face on the statistics which we had debated in this legislature during the spring and during the fall. It's something that I strongly recommend for members opposite. Get out into the real world and listen to real people and their problems. Hear from them and their ideas. It would do members opposite a lot of good, and would have prevented the kind of travesty to which I have referred this afternoon.

I want to take a few moments to discuss our findings from that series of round table discussions. As might be expected, people told us of a wide range of issues and concerns, from their own personal experience. Young people told us of the hopelessness and despair that is all too common among their generation — no jobs, no opportunities, no sense that the government, in Regina or Ottawa, care about them or their problems or their future. A young woman in Prince Albert, who was well educated, with a Commerce degree, but still forced by economic circumstances to work at minimum wage, summed it up this way: "Lots of people my age are scared when they look at the future because it's impossible to see what's going to be there for them."

In Swift Current, a minister told us that young people today have become almost tragically pessimistic about their own future and the future of our world. In Yorkton, a high school student expressed more eloquently than I ever could the anxiety felt by her peers and class-mates as they uneasily face an uncertain and frightening future, with limited education and training options and even more limited job prospects.

In Lloydminster, a school board member told us that, "I worry so much about the kids when they get through school now. So many of them are committing suicide because they haven't got a job and just don't know which way to turn." Stress on young people — a whole generation being condemned to a future without opportunities, a future without hope.

And we were told about alcoholism rapidly increasing among the young and the not-so-young. In Yorkton, a representative of the a Parkland Alcohol and Drug Abuse program told us that the client load has increased by 100 per cent in the past year. That's right, a 100 per cent increase in the alcoholism case-load. She told us that, "We are finding more and more young people who are actually alcoholics by the time they reach high school. A large part of it is attributable to the economic situation. As the economics break down and more stress is put on people, they will use alcohol and drugs to cope with the frustration and disappointments."

And she also stressed, as did many others in communities across the province, that the provincial government's aggressive encouragement of alcohol advertising on radio and TV was a significant contributing cause of increased alcohol abuse. I think it is accurate to say, Mr. Chairman, that at all 11 of our meetings the question of alcohol advertising was raised, and at all 11 meetings it was universally condemned.

In every community, of course, the talk, sooner or later, got around to the intense pressure being felt today by so many farm families. With input costs so high, with commodity prices so low, with no assistance or help for things like property taxes and fuel costs and interest rates, we were told again and again about how those factors put stress on family farms. Moreover, in many cases, in many cases unemployment is a direct and major contributing factor to the stress on family farms, where we are often told of cases where young men and women, who have left home to go to work in the city, were now back on the farm since they had lost their jobs — helping out on the farms when they really should be, and really want to be, working in the towns or in the cities.

We were told of cases — and I believe that every rural member of this Assembly will be familiar with some of these — where a one-income farm is now having to support not one family, but often two and sometimes three. Where the son or daughter can't find work they come back home to the farm to help out until the economy turns around. A middle-aged farm couple, now with their grown son and his family living with them as well, a one-income farm trying to support two families. Families strained; frustration, tension, anger; in short, more intense family stress.

Farmers told us of the isolation and loneliness of a farmer undergoing economic hardship. As one man put it, it gets so you have nowhere to turn, no support left, no answers, just blind alleys. Or as one farmer in Swift Current said, after reviewing the farm economy and lack of government help, "Sometimes I feel I am just totally helpless."

Time and time again, farmers spoke feelingly about their worries that the next generation of young farmers won't even be able to get a start. In Lloydminster, in Swift Current, in Weyburn, and elsewhere, we were told of their worry that the younger generation simply won't be able to get a start in farming. A way of life is disappearing, they said.

And people in several communities told us of deteriorating health care. The provincial government's underfunding of hospitals and nursing homes, they said, is causing long waiting lists, shortages of nursing staff, and a threat to Medicare.

In Yorkton, a priest from St. Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church said, "There are people on waiting lists for a number of months, and there is space available, but they say there is no money to subsidize the hospitals. As a result, there are a lot of people who are depressed and suffering innocently. There are doctors who are willing to help their patients," he said. "They don't have access to beds."

Nurses told us of their understaffing and overwork, too few nurses on the ward, too many patients. The nurses have become seriously concerned about the level and the quality of professional care they can give in such underfunded hospitals. As one nurse put it, "Nurses are run off their feet. They just don't have the time. That's the problem, and the reason is the government in Regina just won't put more nurses into hospitals."

Stress on health care workers, stress on patients and their families, and stress on the families of seniors who have tried and tried to get a nursing home bed. But still, none are available.

In several centres, we were told about the deteriorating quality of education in Saskatchewan and how that will severely hamper our children as they prepare to live out their working lives in the 21st century. Both parents and teachers and trustees are worried. They care about students, and they care deeply. But they have come to realize, as one teacher put it, that the government

down in Regina is all talk and no action. Don't they realize it's our future that they are refusing to invest in?

We heard about the tragic and desperate pressures of families forced out of social assistance because of unemployment. In one community more than 40 per cent of the school students were from single parent families and most of those were on welfare, and that community did not lie north of Prince Albert.

They told us about welfare cut-backs, how it is not a war on poverty but a war on the poor, how the welfare cut-backs have forced young people to crime, to prostitution, drug dealing, and robbery. We met some especially eloquent welfare recipients from Moose Jaw. "How I wonder," one said, "how I wonder when they lost the true meaning of government." One of them said, "Government is supposed to be by the people and for the people but not against us." Another participant said, "If the government can't provide the basic needs for its people then it's not a very successful government."

In La Loche, the community leaders wondered out loud how they could possibly prepare a generation of children for the future when it was a welfare generation, with no opportunity, no chance, and no hope. They told us about the food banks, a clear and obvious message to the provincial government that poverty is widespread and growing. The welfare cut-backs are attacking the victims, not the problem, that the provincial government is abdicating its social and moral responsibilities. The government is providing no moral leadership, as one United Church minister said. They told us of the loneliness, the isolation, the lack of self-esteem, the depression, the illness, the rage, and the despair that sets in among victims of poverty — the victims of the economic system, the victims of unemployment, and particularly the victims of the welfare reform.

In nearly every community, we were told about how the provincial government's underfunding of community-based social service agencies is making it more and more difficult for them to meet their rapidly growing case-loads. More social stress, more family breakdown, and fewer resources to deal with these problems at the local level. Finally, we were told over and over again that people don't need short-term, make-work projects. They want real jobs; they want to be truly productive and be members of the larger society, to contribute into it just as much as they receive. Short-term, make-work projects of the sort we have seen in this budget aren't the answer, they say.

Those then were some of the major themes and issues that people told us about — some of the cases of social stress, the examples of families trying to cope under this severe psychological and economic pressure. Those were the symptoms. The causes of the problems were fewer, three major causes, in fact. First, of course, is unemployment. It touches every community across this country and in this province, and touches almost every family. Jobs and job security — surely the most single, pervasive and the most fundamental cause of family stress in Saskatchewan today. The government reports the growing number of unemployed but it does not report the growing number of broken hearts and broken homes.

Secondly, of course, is the severe financial crisis facing farm families, once again a widespread major problem which is causing so much anxiety, so much pressure, and so much fear. The Devine government will tell us about the growing number of farm bankruptcies and foreclosures, but who is to tally the broken dreams and the broken lives?

The final major problem identified to us, by those we visited across the province, was provincial government inaction. All talk and no action, as one man put it. A government, whose first and only priority has been big business — open for big business — but which has failed in its promise to address the need for jobs, the farmers' need for real assistance in time of crisis. A government which attacks the victims, not the people. That's what the people told us: unemployment; crisis for farm families; insensitive provincial government.

There were some things we did not hear, Mr. Speaker. They did not tell us that they thought working families should pay more in taxes. Young people did not tell us they thought we should pay more in taxes on used cars while the oil companies get off easy. Senior citizens, and the farmers, and the working people, did not say they wanted this budget to take away their property tax rebates, this pickpocket budget.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I went out to the people of Saskatchewan in their communities, and we listened to their concerns, listened to their examples, and heard their dreams, and we are much richer for that experience. I would commend it to the Minister of Finance and the Devine government.

They had a computer game, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to help them plan their budget, but they should have listened to the people instead of their silly game.

(1915)

Based on that experience of listening to people share with us their ideas about how to deal with family stress, we have reached some conclusions and set forth some basic policy provisions, which we'll be carrying forth in the next election, principles which are shared by New Democrats across Saskatchewan, principles which are the basis for the positive New Democratic alternative, principles which will guide the next New Democratic government: (1) a commitment to full employment — jobs and job security for all; (2) a commitment to fairness, to equity — fairness for all, not just the favoured few; (3) real help for those in need — concrete support, concrete financial assistance for hard-pressed family farmers; (4) a commitment to compassion, for working together, caring for each other. That is the tradition in Saskatchewan, and it's a proud tradition.

Government action to redress the social and economic problems, not attack the victims; a commitment to helping people to help themselves through decentralized, local, community-based social service agencies, which are the ones who know firsthand what the real problems are in the homes and lives of their clients; and a commitment to restore and protect the basic services needed in our society — quality health care, education for our children and their future — services which are needed, services which this government has eroded.

Some pretty basic principles shared by New Democrats and obviously not shared by the Devine government. A vision of a brighter, better future for Saskatchewan, and a commitment to make that future a reality.

From what I've said, Mr. Deputy Speaker it will be apparent that I will be voting in favour of the amendment and against the main motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BOUTIN: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BOUTIN: — As always, Mr. Speaker, I take great pride and honour to stand in this House to represent my people in my constituency of Kinistino.

This past week, I was back in my constituency on the weekend. And today I thought I would like to report to this legislature the comments I heard back on coffee row. People told me that they respect the courage of the Minister of Finance to take a realistic approach to the budget . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Members of the opposition finished there so that maybe you can learn something this evening?

The same people told me that they would rather see their tax dollars invested in agriculture, jobs and job creation, and education, and health. I am pleased to tell this House that my constituents support the wise fiscal management of this Progressive Conservative government.

Mr. Speaker, the people in Kinistino constituency do not want to return to the old ways the NDP had. The NDP attacks this government also for creating jobs. Well, I can tell you, people would rather have a good job than hand-outs from the government.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP talks about the budget management, but yet they would do so foolish as to close all the uranium mines and mining in this province. Do you know what that would cost the taxpayers, Mr. Speaker? Six hundred and thirty million dollars every year. Yes, \$630 million, or \$2,343 for every family in Saskatchewan. Not to mention that it would put 10,000 people out of work. That is not economic common sense, Mr. Speaker. That is what you call economic madness.

Let me tell you a little more about the NDP economic madness. They spent \$415 million on potash corporations. That cost every family in Saskatchewan \$1,600. Given the chance, the NDP would spend taxpayers' money to set up a provincial undertaker. They would purchase all the down-town property in Saskatchewan and lease it back to the business people there. They would buy, first, CPR, Mr. Speaker. Then they would buy the credit unions, the banks.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is the NDP policy I'm speaking of, policy brought forward at their conventions. What it means is to have, to hold, and to control, Mr. Speaker. That's their goals. And they call it — and you know what I call it? The NDP madness. Economic madness. The people of Saskatchewan, the people of my riding of Kinistino, Mr. Speaker, would rather have the economic common sense of the Progressive Conservative Party.

The people of Kinistino respect our Premier. They know how hard Premier Devine has worked to make Saskatchewan a prosperous province to live in, and which we have today, Mr. Speaker. And they also know that the Progressive Conservative government will work building for the future. Mr. Speaker, we, as the Progressive Conservative government, are looking towards the future. Why are we looking towards the future? Because we want to build Saskatchewan. We want to develop Saskatchewan. That is what this budget does. The establishment of the special five-year funds for the key areas of education, health, job creation, and health care for a total of \$1.5 billion is part of that building, Mr. Speaker.

In education, school grants for 1985 and '86 are increased 10 per cent by \$35 million. For small-business people we have set up a new program to write down interest rates as low as 9 and five-eighths per cent, Mr. Speaker. This program will really help our small business in every community in Saskatchewan.

Spending on health construction is going to be around 36.9 million this coming year, and all of this has been done while at the same time, Mr. Speaker, in a time of deficit, the deficit itself has been reduced. Yes, reduced by \$100 million, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is what we call a good budget. A budget takes a good leadership, a budget of this kind to have, like that of our Premier. Our Premier is everything a good leader should be, Mr. Speaker. First and foremost, he's not tired and rusted; he is trusted. He has a vision. Why does he have the vision? Because he has compassion — compassion for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Why? Because he loves Saskatchewan. He has earned that reputation as a Premier with good common sense.

Then take a look at the Minister of Finance. The national press has described him as the most capable finance minister in all of Canada. He, too, is a man of vision, Mr. Speaker. Good leaders make for good government. That is the main reason that I am very proud to sit as Progressive

Conservative MLA.

Then let us take a look at the opposition side. Let us take a hard look. Take the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker. The NDP leader lives in the past. He is repeating old policies over and over again — rejected policies, Mr. Speaker.

The NDP leader is out of touch with the people of Saskatchewan. And I listened to his budget speech. He went on repeating old NDP policies, policies that have been rejected by the public, rejected by the people of Saskatchewan. No wonder they only have the support of only 17 per cent of the public in the latest Gallup polls. And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that is why they lost so badly in Thunder Creek.

Now I want to return to the reason why we are here at this time. This excellent budget introduced by our finance minister is the reason that the people of Kinistino constituency are very proud of this government, Mr. Speaker. They're proud not only for the good budget this government has brought in, but also Kinistino is in a rural riding, Mr. Speaker, and in rural ridings people want to know what the budget does for farmers, small business. I can tell this House that the farming community is happy with our budget.

The family farm purchase program is another good example of a good program that has been brought in for farmers. Over 1.2 million acres of farm land have been purchased by farmers. Now this program has been extended by this budget for another year.

Our agriculture minister has won the confidence of our farmers with the programs his department has announced. But, Mr. Speaker, the only thing the NDP wants to do for farmers is bring back the land bank, and also restrict farm size. I ask this House, Mr. Speaker, I ask how could anyone be in favour of the Agricultural Development fund, of \$200 million which is being put into this fund? Who can be against it? The NDP seem to be against it. They have proven that in their budget debates. In this budget year alone, Saskatchewan will spend \$112,273,480 on agriculture.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BOUTIN: — That works out to \$432.81 per family in all of Saskatchewan. That is nearly twice as much as what they are spending in NDP Manitoba on agriculture, and Manitoba has a larger population than Saskatchewan. So we can see the attitude of the NDP towards the farmers. The NDP, Mr. Speaker, they just don't care, they just want to make everybody else pretend, and especially the farmers of Saskatchewan, that they do care. But they just don't care.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to the subject of health care. Like members opposite were mentioning nursing homes, but I won't go through all of them. But, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has a special place in the health care history of Canada, in all of Canada, indeed of North America. It was our Hon. John Diefenbaker and the Hon. Tommy Douglas that fought for years to get medicare. The Progressive Conservative government under the leadership of Premier Devine has gone over the \$1 billion mark in health care spending. This is \$1,000 for every man, woman, and child in this province. Now our Minister of Health has announced \$300 million in the health capital fund. Over the next five years, there will be record construction and renovation of health care facilities. Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan is leading the way in health care and will continue for many more years to come.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BOUTIN: — Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about jobs and job creation. A job, as we all know, is the first step of being well off in society. Being out of work hurts people in many ways. As a government, we recognize that. Why did we recognize that, Mr. Speaker? Because we care and we understand. That is why this Progressive Conservative government established an

Employment Development Agency. Some 44,000 more people now have jobs today than three years ago when this government was elected. Now we are putting \$600 million into the employment development fund. Saskatchewan can be proud of that fact or of the fact that for the three years of Premier Devine's government, the unemployment rate has been lower, lower than any other province in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, today there is a spirit of good feeling, yes, of good feeling all over Saskatchewan because people believe in the future of Saskatchewan. Turning around our economy did not happen by accident. It took a combination of good leadership and a determination of Saskatchewan people to achieve that goal. The Progressive Conservative plan of action has made people confident of the Saskatchewan economy. The budget introduced by our finance minister, Bob Andrew, is part of that plan of action. It is a budget that people in Kinistino constituency agree with, Mr. Speaker. It is a budget I support on behalf of my constituents of Kinistino.

(1930)

Mr. Speaker, I will be voting to support the budget as introduced by the Minister of Finance, and as always, I want to reassure my people of Kinistino constituency that I will continue to represent them as individuals to the best of my ability. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the occasion of this very historical debate that has taken place in this legislature, I would like to say a few words about the budget speech the Minister of Finance, the hon. member from the Kindersley constituency, has presented to this Chamber. But before doing so, I would also like to thank the people from the Wilkie constituency for allowing me the opportunity to represent their views and their comments in the Saskatchewan legislature. With their support, I shall continue to give my very best as their voice in this Assembly, and I shall continue to represent the part of the '80s, the '90s, and the future, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the party of Grant Devine and the Progressive Conservatives of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a party that represents common sense. It is a party that sense we can build a better way of life right here, right now, and it is a party that keeps its commitments to people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the budget presented last week to this Assembly shows common sense leadership, commitment, and building a better way of life for the people of Saskatchewan. This is something the people of Saskatchewan expect from a government, and this is something the people of Saskatchewan rightly deserve. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Progressive Conservative government knows that this year the people of Saskatchewan are not expecting miracles. The people of Saskatchewan are being very realistic. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan have stated their priorities like never before.

Employment is one priority they place high on their list. And I think this budget fairly and reasonably gives hope and opportunity to those seeking employment in the province of Saskatchewan.

Another priority lies with our great economic strength. The people of Saskatchewan are unshakeable in their belief that the primary source of our wealth is agriculture. The people of Saskatchewan say that we must maintain confidence in agriculture, and that we must never abandon the values of the family farm operation. And I think this budget demonstrates the government's commitment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to agriculture.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan say that we must not mortgage our future. I

should add that the people of Saskatchewan are not talking about dollars and cents in the traditional manner. What the people of Saskatchewan are talking about is the education of our children, and everyone's right to free medical services in the province of Saskatchewan.

The people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, want this government to provide the very best health care possible, and they will not settle for anything less. After all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our children are our future. And our senior citizens should reap the rewards of a lifetime spent building our great province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Finance in the Saskatchewan legislature is to be congratulated on this budget. He has travelled a difficult road in preparing this budget, but he has succeeded in balancing people's priorities with very limited resources. He has not mortgaged the future of our children or our health care system. And he has restored confidence and opportunity by funding common sense programs for the unemployed and our family farm operations.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this budget goes beyond the bricks and mortar of government and this very Legislative Chamber. This budget is . . . (inaudible) . . . and feeling of people and priorities, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the budget of the Minister of Finance bears witness to the kind of common sense leadership so necessary during these times. The budget estimates for the Department of Highways and Transportation are supportive of the main priorities of this government.

But before I begin to detail the Highways and Transportation budget, I want to give the people of Saskatchewan some assurances. For three years now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have made it a policy to consult the public whenever and wherever a major decision is at hand. I just want to say right now that I will continue that into the future, and take into my confidence the opinions of the people of Saskatchewan, and to receive their direction.

Just as the Minister of Finance consulted with the people regarding their spending priorities, I, too, will continue this popular practice of public consultation. As I said two years ago in my budget address, no longer will politics take priority over the delivery of the transportation services in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a promise made is a promise kept by a Progressive Conservative government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, the public consultation process has assisted this government with accomplishing industry and community input into legislation now before this Assembly regarding the transportation of dangerous goods, draft legislation that will be introduced in this spring session that will govern the use of all-terrain vehicles, and common sense re-regulation of our highway transport industry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the public consultation process goes much farther than legislation and regulation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the School Bus Safety Review Committee takes its direction from those parents, school trustees, and school bus drivers who have a direct stake in bus safety. The safety of our children is always number one. Thanks to the input and direction of these people, the importance of school bus safety has finally been recognized in the province of Saskatchewan.

Through such bold and innovative steps, Progressive Conservative government has outfitted every school bus with a stop-arm device; promoted school bus safety like never before during the Saskatchewan Safety Council's school safety week; and published the first ever bus driver's handbook.

And then there is the family of Saskatchewan road builders, Mr. Deputy Speaker. For many years, this industry was made to play second fiddle to the tune of big government. Now the industry knows that this government has confidence in the private sector; more importantly the industry knows that I will listen to their concerns.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few examples of the public consultation process at work. A government that takes direction from the people never has to worry about where it is going, and public consultation shows the way. The people of Saskatchewan have my commitment that I shall continue to ask for their direction, using the public consultation method.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to the employees of Saskatchewan Highways and Transportation. I want it on the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the men and women of this department deserve a great deal of praise. I am almost pleased, and very pleased with the unsung men and women who, day in and day out, provide one of the best levels of highway service anywhere in the Dominion of Canada. The people of Saskatchewan are better off, thanks to their dedication.

A prime example is a seven-day-a-week winter maintenance policy introduced by our government last year. Department staff have carried out this policy faithfully and it couldn't have come at a better time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have just gone through a very long, cold, and hard winter. We've had two major snow storms. One actually closed most of the entire highway system in the province. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is worth nothing that in less than 24 hours after the February 8th blizzard, our main highway systems were open and operating to the motoring public. And to the employees of the Department of Highways and Transportation, on behalf of all of the members of this legislature, I would like to thank those employees very much for a job very well done.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, I would now like to focus on a number of the main highlights from last year. As you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker last year was dominated by mother nature. One of the worst droughts in recent memory hurt our farming community. On the construction side, winter came very early. On October 16th, a foot of snow fell right across the province. For all intent and purposes, the construction season came to an abrupt halt.

Still, Mr. Speaker, it was a successful construction season for Highways and Transportation. Last spring, during this very same speech, I made a commitment to start every project announced by the year end. Thanks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the road builders of Saskatchewan and the hard-working employees of the department, of the 89 projects announced last spring all were started — all of the 89 projects, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What it points out is that a promise made is a promise kept — which is something very foreign to the opposition in this Legislative Assembly.

In the area of safety, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 1984 was indeed a banner year. In May of 1984, the School Bus Safety Review Committee released a final report on their 1983 public hearings. One of the recommendations in that report suggested that school units have their new school buses outfitted with the stop-arm device. The Government of Saskatchewan, after reviewing the report, took the stop-arm recommendation one step further. On August the 1st, 1984, the member from Regina South, the minister responsible for SGI, and myself announced that the entire provincial school bus fleet would be outfitted with the stop-arm device, and the cost of this safety upgrading would be picked up by the Saskatchewan Auto Fund.

Believe me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was a banner day for school bus safety in our province. What was a small step for children riding a bus was, in fact, a giant step for school bus safety in the province of Saskatchewan.

By January 1st of this year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the entire 3,500 provincial school bus fleet had been outfitted with the stop-arm. And I would like to share with you some of the comments I received at the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association) annual meeting last November.

People from every corner of the province had nothing but praise for the stop-arm. They also were unanimous in their agreement that school bus safety was finally receiving the attention it deserved, and there was general agreement that the high profile school bus safety now enjoyed must never decline. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it will never decline with a Progressive Conservative government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these comments I have just given you were representative of the feelings that came forward at the SSTA annual meeting last November. And I feel they are representative of the way parents, teachers, school bus drivers, and concerned citizens feel about school bus safety in the province.

In terms of transportation service in the province, I can't think of any one year where more positive developments took place. After a long absence, air service to the province's north-west was returned. Regular Norcan flights between Saskatoon, North Battleford, and Lloydminster now connect one of the province's fastest-growing regions.

At the national level, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Pacific Western Airlines announced regular air service between Saskatoon and Toronto, and Regina and Toronto. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this has given the people of Saskatchewan much-needed competition, a choice of additional air carriers, and seat sales — which all add up to savings for air travellers.

As for train service, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we finally witnessed the return of the VIA passenger service. And I would like to thank at this time the efforts of Transport 2000 for their direct input and consultation that took place in enabling us to retain that train service for all the people of this province.

This Progressive Conservative government is very happy to have played a part in attracting this additional service to the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We shall continue to work with all interested parties toward improving transportation services.

I should also note that in October of 1984 we officially opened a new stretch of four-lane between Indian Head and Qu'Appelle. We have now gone over the half-way mark in four-laning in the Trans-Canada, and that deserves to be mentioned as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Probably no other area of responsibility weighs more heavily on the Minister of Highways and Transportation than that of the safety of the travelling public of Saskatchewan. Each year the experts tell us that we can expect that a certain number of travellers will never reach their destinations. But there are signs of encouragement that the drivers of Saskatchewan are responding to our efforts to reduce traffic fatalities.

Even though there are more vehicles in Saskatchewan roads and highways than ever before, even though the total number of miles driven in Saskatchewan has steadily increased, even though there are over 1 million people in the province, and more people now licensed to drive in the province, we have witnessed a steady decline in traffic fatalities, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

(1945)

In 1981 the fatality number was 262; in 1982 it dropped dramatically to 240; in 1983 there was more improvement and the count slipped to 235. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm very pleased to report to the Chamber that once again, in 1984, we have reached an all-time low in traffic fatalities of 221 fatalities in the province of Saskatchewan.

It is still, Mr. Deputy Speaker, too many. But I believe with the safety programs, with the road network that we have in the province of Saskatchewan, with working together with the people of Saskatchewan . . . this side of the House wants to work to save fatalities. Maybe the other side of the House doesn't want to, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but we want to work to reduce fatalities on the roads in the province of Saskatchewan. That is one of our primary goals and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to say that it is working.

It is not my intention to promise that we shall continue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to see such a dramatic reduction in traffic fatalities as we have in the past three years, but I will do everything, along with my colleagues, to do whatever has to be done to reduce traffic fatalities each year on the streets and roads in our great province. Anything less, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is unacceptable to me personally, and unacceptable to the Progressive Conservative government under the leadership of Premier Grant Devine.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, several new initiatives will be undertaken this year that will have a profound effect on our transportation system. These new initiatives will have a direct effect on rural Saskatchewan, small business, and grain handling.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased at this time to announce that in the general election of 1982 the Progressive Conservative government made a promise to preserve and improve our rural way of life. One of the corner-stones of that promise was improved transportation services. I'm pleased to announce tonight the Progressive Conservative government will once again live up to its commitments. Mr. Speaker, as we promised, the primary highway system will be extended. This promise will more than double the present primary system from 2,000 miles to 4,200 miles. This promise will connect all towns with populations of 2,000 or more. And this promise will mean transportation savings to rural Saskatchewan of \$45 million over the next 15 years. Mr. Deputy Speaker, a promise made by this government is a promise kept.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the transportation of fuel, fertilizer, and grain stand to gain the most benefit. A five-axle semi, hauling fuel on a provincial highway, can add 6,000 pounds to its payload, a B train hauling fertilizer can increase the payload by 10,000 pounds, and a three-axle grain truck can increase the payload by 3,000 pounds or the same amount of wheat, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the most significant improvement to our provincial highway system since the building boom of the '50s and the '60s. The real winner will be the towns, villages, farms and families of rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Second of all, the department is concluding a major highway signing study. The study has been given the mandate to explore options that will guide people not only to our towns and villages, but to our small businesses and unique locations. For many years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the small businesses and attractions that were located just off the well-travelled routes cried for attention. These cries have been listened to and acted upon by the Progressive Conservative government. This government feels that small businesses is the real work-horse of our economy, and deserves every change to succeed, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the third major initiative falls into the support role transportation must give our agriculture industry. Saskatchewan produces in excess of 50 per cent of Canada's grain exports. With the abolishment of the Crow rate, the cost of transporting grain will eventually rise. It is imperative that the entire grain handling and transportation system becomes more efficient and more equitable. The first opportunity to have significant input into achieving this end will be the upcoming review of the Western Grain Transportation Act. The outcome of that review will influence the operation of the agriculture industry, and the handling and transportation of grain, for the next several years.

There is an urgency to participate in this review to ensure that Saskatchewan agriculture producers will benefit, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The current Hall Commission of inquiry into the

method of payment will provide important input into the review of the Western Grain Transportation Act. It is the method of payment — either to the railways, the producers or a combination of both — that will dictate the structural environment within which the agriculture industry must operate. Further, decisions as to the method of payment will indicate administrative modifications at all levels of the agriculture industry. It is encouraging to note that the new federal Conservative government is living up to their commitment to renewed federalism. We can take heart in Saskatchewan with such swift action as freezing any further branch line abandonment's, and opening of the Fife Lake branch line between Coronach and Big Beaver. We can also take heart that the federal Minister of Transport, Mr. Don Mazankowski, is taking an intelligent approach to branch line abandonment. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's too bad that all members of this Assembly, and especially members of the opposition, couldn't work together with us to try and solve the problems facing agriculture today.

A new commission headed by Mr. J. McDonough has been established by the Hon. Don Mazankowski. The commission will examine the future requirements for branch lines, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The commission, through its findings, could influence the grain collecting system.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a major emphasis of the '85-86 transportation program is on the agricultural industry. A perfect example of this concerns variable rates, Mr. Deputy Speaker. With our support the government saw a variable rate application withdrawn.

We believe lower rates are needed. We do not believe that the only selected rail points should benefit. All producers must have access to lower rates. It's only fair, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. GARNER: — Our position on variable rates reflects three transportation goals that we have set for ourselves. For one, we must ensure an improved grain handling and distribution system; we must ensure returns are maximized to producers; and we must ensure maximized secondary agricultural opportunities.

And we have already started, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On behalf of the province of Saskatchewan I recently made a proposal to the McDonough Commission. We have offered to conduct three demonstration projects testing short line rail operations. If approved by the commission, these projects would provide information on the adaptability of short line haul operations to the grain handling system. It is hoped that this kind of research opportunity will open the door to greater flexibility when abandonment threatens a branch line.

Mr. Speaker, this now brings me to the highway program for 1985. This year's construction projects, which I will table following my address, are valued at \$94.6 million.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance told us that the government budget he tabled was an intelligent document, and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he is right. And you can understand why when you examine our project listing.

We are going to maintain the high level of highway quality and service to the people. There will be a special emphasis on preventing further road deterioration. The department's maintenance budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker will increase by 5 per cent to \$83.6 million.

Within the capital program, there will be more funding for resurfacing projects, Mr. Deputy Speaker, projects which have wisely been started by this government, and which shall continue; completion this fall, Mr. Deputy Speaker of the bridge crossing the North Saskatchewan River near Borden, known as the Borden bridge; continued upgrading of the southbound lanes of Highway No. 11 between Regina and Saskatoon; continued extension of Highway 41 between Wakaw and Melfort; continued reconstruction of priority sections of Highway No. 13, known as

ever popular Red Coat Trail, Mr. Deputy Speaker; and continued construction of the bridge crossing the North Saskatchewan River 17 miles north of Lloydminster, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, between keeping pace with road reconstruction and completion of these major projects, the capital program will continue to provide a viable and safe highway system for the people of Saskatchewan.

And that fact represents a very important bottom line with me, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The safety of the people of Saskatchewan who travel our highways will never, never be sacrificed by this government. Our transportation priorities remain the safety of the people of Saskatchewan, their families, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and their children. The provision of an essential transportation service to our agriculture industry and a highway system that connects our farming communities together and preserves our rural way of life.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this concludes my address in reply to the budget speech by the Minister of Finance. In summary, I will say that 1985 will be a busy and challenging year for all of us. It may well be a pivotal year for our agricultural community.

Major transportation legislation is going to be reviewed. First, there is the Western Grain Transportation Act review that will begin in the '85-86 crop year. Second, it is the intent of the federal government to introduce a new national transportation Act; add to this heavy agenda the re-regulation of our highway transport industry, and the transportation of dangerous goods. Mr. Deputy Speaker, you can easily see just how important a year this is going to be for transportation in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is cause for optimism. I believe we have to approach each year in a very positive attitude in working together with people and working together with all members of this Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Deputy Minister, we have a federal minister of transport who will give western transportation concerns a fair hearing. The Progressive Conservative government is committed to providing the people of Saskatchewan with a safe highway system that is economical, effective, and efficient, no matter how difficult the situation is.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I started out this throne speech talking about keeping promises, and that is how I shall finish this speech. Last year, 89 projects were announced, and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 89 projects were started. And today, Mr. Deputy Speaker I promise the 89 projects planned for 1985 will be started, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 1985.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hereby table a project listing for 1985 project season for the people of Saskatchewan. Once again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a promise made is a promise kept by the Progressive Conservative government in the province of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MRS. CASWELL: — It is often said that there is much rhetoric in the House, and little is accomplished . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh thank you.

I'm so pleased that the member from Shaunavon has opened his mouth because I forgot to tell him . . . I forgot to congratulate him on he and his wife having a baby. As far as I know, it is the only productive event that the member has ever accomplished. And I congratulate him for this, and I certainly congratulate his wife.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MRS. CASWELL: — I don't understand why they are so concerned about our Minister of Social Services being in the House, when obviously that their leader is the one who is most in need of education . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, progress.

When I first heard the budget, I was not sure where the budget was going, or if this was the kind of budget that I could support completely. But as my colleagues explained things to me and explained how it would work, I could see that it is very difficult to turn a province from socialism to a province which is a free and fair province to all its members, and I could see that in some areas especially, indeed this is a very good budget.

I would particularly like to discuss the flat tax, and I'm not here to sound like an accountant, or to sound like someone who is the first person to ask questions about how to fill out your income tax, etc., etc. But I do know and do recognize needless government invasion and privacy, and needless government work, which is our present tax system has that. I recognize that the only way to start on the road to tax reform is to cease having so much power invested in the Revenue Canada to control and to orchestrate what is important to Canadian people and Saskatchewan people.

I recognize that when we have a tax system that can arbitrate that this is a valid way to spend your money, and this is not a valid way to spend your money; this is worthy of a tax deduction, and this is not worthy of a tax deduction; this year we will support one group, and next year we will support another group. Revenue Canada has, in fact, more power, or one of the most powerful institutions in Canada to carve and create a country to its own liking. It is called legislation by taxation, and so as they manipulate and control the kind of deductions people will make, the kind of people who will be protected or not protected, they have a great deal of power.

(2000)

They also have a great deal of power to collect a great amount of information on people. And we say, well, we have governments that are fair and democratic, and they don't use information collected on them in harmful ways.

But I believe that the best government is a government where the people clearly see they must have limits to governmental power and they must have freedom of privacy. And freedom of privacy is not our present tax system in which we must tell all, declare all, collect every piece of paper etc., etc, so we will be covered from not being treated as guilty of tax evasion until possibly you're proven innocent. And innocent really doesn't mean innocent, but that you're smart enough to have or you're rich enough to hire expensive lawyers and accountants.

So as it is, that Revenue Canada is very much of a bully department. It is very much a department that needs . . . that can be a great threat to our freedom. And I congratulate the PC caucus when they were in opposition to carry up this challenge of listening to the people of Canada, tell them about the terrible autocratic rights of Revenue Canada, and how we must do something about that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MRS. CASWELL: — I think this problem has also been experienced in America. And that's why whether you're not democratic or republican, more and more people are looking at flat tax. They do not.

We, in this government, do not support government by bureaucracy; we support government by legislation. And so we don't want to have the kinds of powers that Revenue Canada had over

people. And indeed it could have been expanded, and we have no idea how many times Revenue Canada could have been used for political purposes to knife someone. And so we have a situation where, when people are investigated for their taxes, there's so much discretion as to what as can be exempt, what is not exempt, that one is at the mercy of a revenue tax collector and the discretionary powers of that department. We also know that they had a great incentive to be very merciless to the people who they investigated.

So the socialist Liberal government had a great power base in Revenue Canada. And it was one of the most . . . the tools that could've been most used to erode our freedoms in this country more and more.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, although I recognize that you rule and the opposition do not in terms of . . . I'm just amazed that there's mumblings in the corners that I'm not speaking on the topic. Now I can't possibly think of anything more speaking on the topic in a budget debate than the autocratic powers of collecting income tax. Just what is exactly a budget comes from.

And I think if nothing else, that surely in 1985 that the socialists would finally admit that they get money from people. They get money from the pockets of people, and therefore, to protect people from having their money extracted in the most humane and fair way would seem totally on the topic, but perhaps it is that I was discussing freedom concerning money and they don't understand that term.

The socialists had . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . you object to the term "socialists"? What do you want to be called? Communists? You know, the socialists are . . . They used to walk out on my speeches because they can't tell the truth. Now they've decided to mutter in their chairs, and all I can say is, let them mutter; they make more sense than usual.

When we're talking about tax reform, we can't talk about we're going to change everything overnight because we have, of course, a provincial government and therefore we are not in the total control over the revenue situation. We have to deal with the powers vested in the federal government, so our flat tax can only go so far and can be only a start. But I might say, to my knowledge, it is the first start all over North America.

Leadership, when it's just inane leadership, meaning me too-ism, or first on the block for a new fad, is not leadership. It's merely exhibitionism or, let's see how can be the first one on the bandwagon. But when it's leadership that has taken careful consideration and thought and discussion, then I think we've seen real leadership, and therefore I very much support this budget when it talks about flat tax.

I'm just going to read a little bit from The Edmonton sun.

Saskatchewan has a history of influencing national trends in government and politics out of all proportion to its share of this country's population.

I was telling them that in North Dakota.

For whatever reason, good ideas often seem to take root first in the fertile soil of our sister province. Take the idea of a flat tax system. It's an idea whose time is fast approaching and has already partially arrived in Saskatchewan as a result of last week's budget.

Finance Minister Bob Andrew announced a flat 1 per cent surtax on income tax over 10,000 and a similar reduction in conventional income tax as a first stage of a move to a single flat rate of provincial income tax of around 8 per cent.

The U.S. is studying it. Several nations in Europe are also, and Ottawa said that

somehow down the road it, too, will look at it. But Saskatchewan has done something.

It's a very short article, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so I hope you won't mind.

The Devine government seems firmly committed to introducing a flat system before the end of the decade. You remember that Oiler owner, Peter Pocklington, raised a flat tax issue during his bid for the leadership of the federal Tories in 1983. Despite the knee-jerk reactions of many in a study by the federal revenue department that seems specifically designed to prove the idea couldn't work, it was and is a good idea.

Although many fear to say so, because of predictable criticism from those who favour the status quo, it's an idea that is taken seriously within the Mulroney government. But ideas go nowhere unless someone has the guts to give them a try. Saskatchewan is going to give it a try, and it's a bold and sensible experiment — sensible because our current tax system has become a multi-headed monster that giveth and taketh away with little attention to simplicity, equity, or common sense.

It's fundamental to democracy that citizens understand how, what, and why they contribute to the running of the state. Very few people understand any of those things about our present complicated tax system. No doubt it's going to cost taxpayers something in the short run. Doesn't it always? But bravo to Saskatchewan for getting the ball rolling! Let's hope it's a first step on the road out of Canada's tax jungle.

I must congratulate the editor, Paul Stanway, who wrote that article. It's very succinct and it very clearly shows. And who controls the purse-strings of a country is who controls the people. And therefore it is extremely important that when people attempt to regain control of their lives after years of socialism both nationally and provincially, that the first thing they must look at is to stop the invasion of privacy and the complexity and confusion in our tax system.

Continually the opposition, in its classic illogics, since 1982 has talked about two things. It has talked about the deficit, which is an honest deficit — “honest” not meaning good, but a real deficit created by the past government, because they continually misrepresented the situation in Saskatchewan by creating a dummy balanced budget by dumping revenues from the Crowns into the budget, especially at election time. And so we have a deficit that has been caused by years of overspending.

And so then when we have the government of the day, now in opposition, has two things to say: you've got a deficit, and you're cutting spending. Now I don't know what they propose as a solution, but for three years I've heard two things: (a) we're cutting government — and that's terrible to them; (b) we're not replacing some people retired — and that's bad to them. We're trying to down-size government, and that's bad to them. We're trying to help companies make a profit, so they'll stay in Saskatchewan, and that's bad to them. We're trying to help the private sector so they have some money in their pocket to invest and to spend in their own family, and that's bad to them.

All those things that we're trying to do to cut government down to a logical size gradually is bad to them, but along with that it's bad to them that we have a deficit, and that we're in debt. Now first of all, you don't get in debt over three years. It takes 40 years of socialism.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MRS. CASWELL: — And second of all, it's best if you are in debt. The first thing to do is tell the people about it and have some honest set of books. Now it would seem, if the past government was so fond of overspending, that they at least would be honest about it and let us know exactly

how much money and what the financial situation was. But socialism always depends on duplicity because people do not vote for a logic unless it's dressed up in terms of logicity. So then they go on and on — you're not spending money on the hospitals; you're not spending money on the universities; you're not spending money on the schools; education is being cut, and crocodile tears on and on and on. Now the majority of people in this province assume it's good to spend money on education; it's good to spend money on health. And so they are willing to accept a government intervention in that area. But the vast majority of people accept it.

Apparently the people in the NDP caucus know that money comes from people. It comes from the taxpayer. It doesn't come from government. So when we give money to hospitals and education, we're doing it, not because we have invented the money or because we are somehow a magical source of money, but it comes from the people, so we have to be very careful how much money we take from the people to give back to the people in services that the collective goodwill wants. We can't ask for two things at the same time. You can't ask for more government spending; at the same time you can't ask for decreased taxes. The people have to decide.

And the opposition representing them, supposedly the second voice, a sober, serious voice, to be the watchdog for this government, doesn't understand that and won't tell the people that money comes from them. Of course, the people are more sensible than they. And you think, well, how ridiculous that I have to stand up in the House and remind people that money comes from people and that it doesn't come from government. And if you're not writing cheques every day for huge megaprojects, it's not because we're selfish or uncompassionate. It's just that we don't want to take all the money from people so we can give it back to them, because we think that people have a right to keep some of their own.

But the past government chose not to invest the taxpayer money in those areas, but to expand an ideological base of socialism by buying more and more businesses, by getting the government more and more involved in businesses, in mines, in expensive programs, in a department-a-day creation. And because this happened, in education and in health we had serious problems.

And there's no question to my mind that when the hospitals of Saskatoon are very concerned about the waiting lists, that is a very legitimate, caring concern. They are asking for that money because they want to provide services to the people of Saskatchewan.

(2015)

And when the hospitals told us about their plight over and over again, then it is a legitimate concern that the government must respond to, because we most certainly cannot have long waiting lists and say that we are supporting the health care of Saskatchewan.

The subject today was the budget speech, but money is spent on something to somewhere. And while we're talking about Saskatoon hospitals, I would just like to read from the Hon. Minister of Health's news release concerning hospital projects announced. He says:

In Saskatoon, a start will be made this year on adding two floors at University Hospital to accommodate 300 patients. St. Paul's Hospital also will begin a major expansion in 1985. The amount for that expansion will be \$50 million, and the complete replacement of City Hospital will begin in 1988. The new Saskatoon cancer clinic will begin construction late this year. The Minister of Health said the total costs of these major projects in Saskatoon will approach \$200 million.

So therefore, citizens of Saskatoon, I want you to make it very clear that we are not wasting your taxpayer money when we talk about giving to health. The city of Saskatoon will get \$200 million in hospital care, in hospital expansion.

I am the member for Saskatoon Westmount, and I believe that there is a natural bias and a right bias a member should have, which is to be biased towards that area, that turf, where her constituency lies. So that I would like to talk a bit about St. Paul's Hospital.

St. Paul's Hospital has been fighting for its life for a long, long time, while it fights for the life of other people. St. Paul's Hospital is a very popular hospital, particularly giving health care to the native population around Saskatoon. To the northern regions, to outlying regions, it is a hospital that is popular, where people feel at home.

And certainly I don't in any way want to take away from the loving care that can be found in the other hospitals, but St. Paul's Hospital is unique in that it's a privately owned hospital, that it was begun by the Grey Nuns. And it was one of the first hospitals, and the Grey Nuns were one of the first people who brought health care to the province of Saskatchewan. Yes, health care was not brought in by a politician. It was brought in by nurses and doctors.

But continually while the NDP were in, St. Paul's was fighting for its autonomy and existence. It was fighting to maintain that a Catholic hospital has a right to be a Catholic hospital; that a hospital that is run on a certain philosophy has a right to maintain that philosophy. And why the NDP opposed that was because they believed that money belongs to them, and your money belongs to them. So if they are funding something, then they have a right to control it.

Now to me, if you take money from people and you give it back to them, then you don't have a right to control it, you only have a right to be responsible and answerable to how you distribute it. But the socialist mentality says that it is our money — even though it came from your pockets and your jobs and your effort and your work — and if we give it to you, we must control you.

Now you think, the member as usual is perhaps waxing elegant on rhetoric against socialism. Well, I must admit that rhetoric against socialism perhaps is badly needed in this province who's had a an overdose of rhetoric towards socialism.

But I would like to read a Report of the Task Force of Women's Health, September 1980. It is from the Policy Research and Management Services Branch, Saskatchewan Health, April 1981, where it was tabled. There are some people who worked on this committee to bring it about.

There was a Mr. Duane Adams who was chairperson of the Thrust Group (It's not that the chairperson is a . . . he's a man, but he was still a chairperson . . . it's also a neutral term). Thrust Group, Saskatchewan health, T. C. Douglas Building. And here is the people who worked on this task force.

There's a Bonnie Johnson, chairperson, Task Force on Women's Health; Helen A. MacDonald, Community Services, Saskatoon Rural Region; Beatrice Williams, Community Services, Rosetown Region; Lorraine Hill, Policy Planning and Management Information, Saskatchewan Continuing Education; Linda Jolson of Women's Division, Saskatchewan Labour; C. Jane Mihalyko, Secretary, Task Force of Women's Health; Alderwoman Pat Lorje, Saskatoon Mental Health Centre, Saskatchewan Health.

And I would like to read some of the things that they recommend for women and health. And here's some, several of the recommendations on page 13 of this women and health report. Some of these things you might think are irrelevant to the subject, but I tend to think in health care the first thing that we're obviously talking about health care is saving lives. So some of these recommendations will be dealing with abortion which, of course, is using health care for a very different purpose, which is for the destruction of lives. But we will have equal accessibility to safe, legal therapeutic abortions in all parts of Saskatchewan.

The province adopt an official clear interpretation of Section (4) (b) of the Abortion Law based on the W.H.O. definition of "health".

There be investigation into the possibility of accrediting a free-standing health centre where abortions could be performed by specially trained physicians under the constraints of existing legislation until such time as the legislation be rescinded.

Clinics where abortions can be performed on an outpatient basis without anaesthetic by skilled professionals be established in Saskatchewan, thereby reducing costs and risks, based on U.S. models.

Now I might say that is a women and health report, 1980, written in the promotion of the NDP and for the purpose to have a new direction in policy in health care.

But there is one I haven't got to.

The province actively promote removal of abortion from the Criminal Code, until such time the Minister of Health should ensure that all provincially funded hospitals provide for therapeutic abortion services.

What you just heard is a recommendation that all hospitals receiving government money must provide abortion services.

That means that the NDP had a policy within their bureaucracy that all hospitals must have abortion forced on their facilities, on their doctors, on their staff, on their management. This apparently was a pro choice position, and under this compulsory abortion pushing that every hospital in Saskatchewan that does not have abortion, no longer has abortion, would have abortion in those hospitals.

And so, where would that put St. Paul's? St. Paul's, because it receives government funding, would either have to decide that its corridors and hallways would be used for death, as well as for life, and totally violate the whole reason and purpose of St. Paul's Hospital, which is to maintain life and health, and totally violate one of the reasons why St. Paul's Hospital is so popular and where people feel secure and good . . .

And so and if St. Paul's Hospital would not provide abortions, which I am sure that the people in their ethics would not, they would receive no government fundings.

In other words, they were willing to coerce hospitals that, you get money for us and you do what we say. You get money from us and we will run our hospitals and we will put in what we want. But we, not meaning the people of Saskatchewan, but a select group of women who have very different views on what's good for women, and babies, and families, than many people of Saskatchewan . . .

And if you think that the NDP learned after 1980, in 1982 they passed a similar recommendation at their convention. And Pat Lorje, alderwoman in Saskatoon, aggressively supported that resolution while the minister of health, ex-minister of health, Herman Rolfes, was trying to inject a little belated sense into the organization.

And so I assure you I am not flagging the point of bringing up an issue. Obviously, abortion was very important to the NDP. They had a task force on women. And the only thing they could think of that women needed was abortion. And the only thing they could think of to help Saskatchewan hospitals was they would make sure that there was murder attached when they gave taxpayer money to the hospitals. And I might say, while we're talking about honesty: what do you think of that pro-choice position?

And so, under the NDP, St. Paul's Hospital would cease to be St. Paul's Hospital. It would be confiscated and expropriated and become a state hospital because they would grind it to its

knees, because they would not fund a hospital unless it went along with their situational-ethics mentality instead of Christian morality.

And that is absolutely true, and it is absolutely, on page 13 of a book I certainly had nothing to do with, of a book I certainly had no input in in any possibility. So I am not discussing our government's pro-life views. I'm only talking about the NDP's position on hospital funding.

And I ask you when we talk about hospital funding and saving medicare, the NDP were willing to give St. Paul's Hospital zero public funds if it continued to be St. Paul's Hospital, as it is today. And I say that on the basis of recommendation 9(11), page 13, on their report.

And we are willing to give St. Paul's Hospital 50 million on the basis that St. Paul's Hospital continue to provide the good service to families and individuals that it's providing today — in their terms, in their administration, in their ownership, and in their philosophy.

And I ask you, when we talk about who's committed to health care, the difference between the NDP's position on health care orchestrated by Alderwoman Pat Lorje and our position on funding for St. Paul's privately-owned hospital is zero to 50 million. And you tell me who is committed to medicare.

A budget, to the NDP, was only another way of trying to figure out how to control people, and individuals, and their souls, and their lives, by taking money from their pockets and controlling them the other direction.

And also we will talk about the property improvement grant — that little paperwork job that the NDP loved. The idea, I think, of a perfect government, a perfect world for the NDP is that everybody is paid by the government, and they do nothing all day except shuffle papers.

So then we have the property improvement grant that taketh from one hand and giveth to another, and so on and so on, and then they were supposed to be heroes. And I think also that, when we see the property improvement grant, we see a move towards taking the property base, the tax base, away from cities and putting it in the provincial government, so that education is more and more controlled from the top, rather than from the local areas. Because when the local areas can tax and get educational taxes from their tax base, then they can control education much better than if all education is controlled provincially.

And I noticed when I was campaigning, and the Leader of the Opposition — the one who was still the leader yesterday; I think he is today — was talking about a promise a day while he was losing the election, he said, we'll get rid of the property tax totally; we'll get it all away. And I was at a door, and somebody was telling me what they . . . I couldn't follow their promises a day, but somebody would always tell me what it was. And they said, but that'll be bad because I think we'll lose control of education. And that was a very profound and very perceptive statement from that lady at the door, because it was clear that she understood that the tax base in a city helps people control education at the local level.

And I think that we will see that people still enjoy . . . I mean, you enjoy getting a cheque even if you had to write a form and get it back. Undeniably, people like getting cheques. I do too, even if it's a cheque that I had to write the first place.

But I think that people will see that we will have a more equitable base in taxes when we don't have this property improvement grant, which was just a boondoggle for paper shufflers and paper pushers.

There's nothing more expensive than bureaucracy. A job created by the government to make government complex does not save anything, does not put new money into the economy, but is an extremely expensive welfare cheque.

(2030)

I wish to speak especially on two subjects: that I support the flat tax, because I see it as a definite step towards a fair and equitable way of taxing people by a straight percentage, with out a huge invasion of privacy in the taxing arena, without the government making judgement calls on how people run their lives and their money; and I wanted to talk especially about our different attitude to people's money.

We understand that it's money that we collect from people. And we understand we cannot spend it in collective ways, in redistribution ways, unless we are totally accountable to the people, and understand it as their money, and understand it as not a tool to control people, but a tool to give people collective services, such as hospital services.

And when I talk about St. Paul's Hospital, I don't in any way want to degrade the services provided at City Hospital and University Hospital in the health caring field. But I do want to stress that I am stressing St. Paul's Hospital because, one, the people who own St. Paul's Hospital, the Grey Nuns, are in my constituency. Many of the people in my area, that is their hospital. They work there, they go there, it is the most, the hospital that serves Saskatoon Westmount, although certainly the others do as well.

But I'd also like to talk about St. Paul's Hospital because it seemed to be targeted for destruction under the NDP, and perhaps we should get that for the record. And so I would like to table the women and health report, so that people understand that what I'm talking about, the compulsive way that the NDP chose to control hospitals and push their philosophy while they are writing the cheques or not writing the cheques, is totally documented.

And also I would like to say that I'm not here as a legislator in the provincial legislature to attack politicians on other levels of government, but I might say that Pat Lorje was not a member of the legislature, and she certainly seemed to have had a great deal of input in the provincial government when the NDP were in. And so, because it is a provincial government documentation, I've mentioned particular Pat Lorje's name, and her constituency is, does include, St. Paul's Hospital. And I think for the record that people should perhaps understand her philosophy of hospitals, her tax philosophy of hospitals that don't go along with her views of morality.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Where is your Bill?

MRS. CASWELL: — And where's your conscience? You're still NDP. And so I would . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I think that I'm often, I often forget it myself, how difficult it is to turn a province from over-spending, over-government, from a province that, where government has tried to control people in almost every aspect, to a Conservative province where people are free, where government has a logical, a role, and it's very difficult. And especially because often people are clamouring for two things at once. They are clamouring for decreasing the budget, which, of course, we must do. And they are clamouring for no cuts in spending, which of course is a contradiction of the other thing.

Tax increases of any kind, on anything, I find it very difficult to support. But I might say that perhaps when people realize very clearly that this government, like all governments, does not have money coming from a fairy world, but only has money that we take first from them, that they and I will work towards, as we are doing, a means in which they can keep more money in their pockets to run their life, and that we will have the government services that the majority of people believe are proper and appropriate, and that the money in the departments will go to the services and not to a bloated bureaucracy.

And so with that I would like to close my remarks because my good colleague from P.A., I

believe, whose comments I always enjoy because they are so sensible, and moderate, and a clear voice for freedom . . . I would like to thank the Minister of Finance for the consultation process. I trust that he will expand the consultation process, and we will have a continual open government.

And I want to add something that may not be germane to the point, but I was in North Dakota legislature, and I was testifying. They were very interested. The conservatives brought me in because they were very interested to listen to someone who endured a province whose past attorney general called us a sociological experiment. And I was telling them about some oppressive legislation, and why this legislation of theirs may be dangerous. And of course, the conservatives thought I was wonderful and some of the people called liberals, who we would call socialists, were maybe somewhat sceptical of what I said. But they gave me a royal welcome and treated me wonderfully and in a very warm and wonderful way that I got to speak to both chambers of the North Dakota legislature, despite the fight they're having with the NDP government in its usual acrimonious attitude, flamed by needless anti-Americanism.

But I was asking them, how do you decide who gets to sit where? And they told me that it goes by seniority, and if you've been in the legislature for a long time, you get to pick your own place. The most preferred place is in the back row near the door. And I would just like to tell, I am intrigued that . . . I appreciate this about the North Dakota legislature. And some of us are beginning to understand where the power base really might be.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MEAGHER: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased as well to be afforded an opportunity to make a few comments tonight on the fourth budget of the new Progressive Conservative government. And I must say that some of the members of the opposition must be real excited about this budget as well. They can't wait their turn to speak on it. It is an exciting budget. I listened with real interest the other evening to the Leader of the Opposition respond to the budget, just to see where he would be coming from.

I can see the member for Quill Lakes hasn't lost his sense of humour. I overheard him a few moments ago saying that the NDP are on the way up. And he's obviously still got a sense of humour, and I congratulate him for that. Because the comments that the Leader of the Opposition made the other day indicate, or make it apparent, why the NDP are going nowhere.

The recent by-election, and I want to congratulate the new member for Thunder Creek, that recent by-election, in fact, two by-elections since the 1982 general election, have made it pretty clear where the NDP are going in Saskatchewan. It's nowhere.

They can't improve their position in the legislature in by-elections when the governing party holds a very substantial majority, has got to tell the people of Saskatchewan something. And that something is that they were mistaken when they said this was just a fluke in 1982, that this was going to be a short-term experiment in freedom. It's nothing of the sort. The people of Saskatchewan are very strongly in support of the direction this new government has taken. And this budget, this fourth budget, starts off again on a new beginning here in Saskatchewan.

But really I listened to him carefully, and I wondered why he would be off on such a tangent at this stage. He should be recognizing that he's, as they say themselves, lost touch with the people.

But I believe that it's more than that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's that they've lost touch with reality. He demonstrated the depth that they've descended into foggy bottom — valley of sort of fuzzy, negative thinking. They're so far from the issues that really concern the people of Saskatchewan.

When the NDP leader suggested that young people here in Saskatchewan are not worried about getting a job, or the crops, taxes, and gasoline prices, but they're worried about whether or not

they'll live till they're 30 years old because of that all consuming fear of a nuclear war. This is what the Leader of the Opposition said that he found out young people in Saskatchewan are worried about, whether they're going to live to be 30 years old. They're particularly worried about that threat posed by that warmonger, President Reagan and his Star Wars.

Now these are comments coming from the Leader of the Opposition in his response to this budget. He wants, it seems to me, almost that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . you see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how excited they are about the budget. They can't wait their turn, and I don't blame them. This is an exciting budget, and I share their excitement. But I say that despite the leader's seeming concern about defence, that we should have a defence budget here in Saskatchewan.

This budget is a real one that concerns real issues that concern a provincial government in Canada, and I just say thank God that our defence needs are taken care of by our neighbour to the South, free of charge. We don't have to include it in our budget.

He also went off in a tangent about that this budget should mention the famine in Africa. That should be a matter for the finance minister here in Saskatchewan. He mentioned Ethiopia, in particular, and several of the other countries that have been liberated over the past several decades and kind of released to the tender mercy of his socialist comrades. And I notice he neglected to mention the fact that these Marxist countries like Ethiopia wilfully starve their people to death, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as part of the government policy. It's sort of population control, socialist style. They spend hundreds of millions of dollars to buy shiploads of Scotch whisky and on parties to celebrate their own tyranny.

And the Leader of the Opposition wants us to include some reference to that in our budget. Talk about being off the issues. And no wonder they've lost touch with the people of Saskatchewan.

The people here aren't believing that song anymore. And when they hear of Ethiopia, for instance, selling grain to Egypt, they're a little bit disconcerted. They want to lay the responsibility for this famine onto the people of Saskatchewan, and they're not listening to it. They're getting sick and tired of hearing it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And they're sick and tired of the NDP's attempting to play the part of the only people that care because they can raise up the spectre of starving people around the world.

I say that we've got to get our act together in this country, and we're doing it here with this budget.

I would suggest to the leader that, if he isn't careful, his credibility will end up as low as the media's in that regard, if that's possible. I believe the only people left in the world that believe this garbage besides the media, or some professors in the halls of academe here, some misguided churchmen, and that tattered group in the corner there — about the only people left that believe that . . .

It's not much wonder they can't improve their vote at a by-election. It's not much wonder they can't improve their vote in a by-election, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a reform budget. That's one of the most exciting aspects of this budget. It's beginning to reform something that needs to be reformed in this country. We've reformed the political system somewhat.

. . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member for one of the northern constituencies is pretty concerned, the member for Athabasca. He wants to speak on the budget. He's quite anxious, and he can't wait his turn either, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This not only incorporates tax reforms, but it has some very interesting innovations, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I hope that some other jurisdictions here in Canada will watch very closely.

(2045)

I could refer you to the tax on pornographic material. And if you'll pardon the suggestion, that conjures up some interesting visions. It is yet an undefined tax, mind you, but I think what's important about it is it's an equally undefined commodity.

And the Criminal Code definition of pornography and obscene material has left many people concerned here in Saskatchewan. And in Prince Albert, in particular, it's a local issue. And I would like to see someone make a clear definition for the benefit of the police, and the merchants, and other people in this province.

I'm also looking forward to . . . now, I expect that this will be very helpful to people in Prince Albert where this issue has, as I say, become a fairly important issue.

This budget is different, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It recognizes the four main priorities that have been pointed out by my colleagues earlier — education, employment, agriculture, and health care. But more importantly it recognizes, I believe, two fundamental concerns of the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, and that's a fairly wide group of people that haven't been too well represented in the past decade, either in Regina or in Ottawa. And it's the most intelligent approach that's been taken by any government, I believe, in the past several decades anywhere in Canada.

And those two main issues are tax reform and interest rates. In interest rates, in particular, they are paid by the business community to finance their operations, and I think include farmers in this business community. That's the same community, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that generates all the real jobs in this country — all of them.

I know the opposition thinks the government should create the jobs, and anyone laid off by government is condemned to the ranks of the unemployed for ever. Well, I don't share that view, and neither do most of the people of Saskatchewan.

Low interest money for businessman and farmers will help create more real jobs in Prince Albert, and elsewhere in Saskatchewan, than all the busy, make-work projects an army of bureaucrats can dream up in a lifetime. And once more, they'll make a real contribution to the economic strength of our city and province.

But the most exciting aspect of this budget is that it is a reform budget. That's the thing that's exciting. The press, as was quoted by my colleague from Saskatoon, an Edmonton paper, and others across Canada, are looking very closely at this budget because it is a reform budget.

Tax reform, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is an idea whose time has come. I'd like to paraphrase the American astronaut that it was a small step for man, but a giant step for mankind. Well, this budget may be a small step for the Minister of Finance here in Saskatchewan, but it could turn out to be a giant step for this whole country into the area of tax reform.

I believe that history will show that this budget started this country on the road to tax sanity again. Our tax system in Canada has grown over the years like a cancer. While it maybe an accountant, or a lawyer's dream come true, to the business man or farmer who build real things and harvest real crops it has become an expensive nightmare that saps his strength and ingenuity, to the detriment of us all.

We, in Saskatchewan, have again become leaders. We're pioneers in Canada. The introduction of this one per cent flat tax on net income is a pioneering innovation that we should be all proud of. And this is not a new role for the Saskatchewan people. We've pioneered our ideas in the past, and we're doing it again.

But I believe, more importantly, we're responding to a very widely held view amongst taxpayers that our tax system is not fair. And it is not. Two things, I believe, have contributed to this dilemma: the first has been the past policy of governments, which has been to respond to pressure groups by throwing money at them — other people's money, of course, taxpayers' money. You've heard the expression — the squeaky wheel gets the grease; well, in the case of the government in the past, that's exactly what's happened. The squeakier they were, the more grease was thrown at them.

And the other has been that socialist con game that has been going on for decades. Tax the corporations. You've heard that many, many times, that if we just tax the corporations, somehow it's the answer to all our economic problems. Somewhere in the sky there, there's a huge pool of money that Imperial Oil is sitting on. All we have to do is be plumbers and get a pipe up into it, and it's just an unlimited supply; every squeaky wheel in the country will be quiet. Well, we're now paying the price for that pie in the sky, economic theory that's been so prevalent over the past few decades. The whole country is reeling under a bureaucratic tax apparatus based to a large degree on that misconception.

But this budget recognizes a fundamental economic reality that I am sure will be a real revelation to the members over there in the corner especially. But you don't have to be a graduate of the London School of Economics to understand it. And that is, that corporations do not pay taxes ever. Only people pay taxes. A corporation is simply a piece of paper established to deliver goods and services. Corporations don't care what the taxes are on their commodity. The consumer is going to pay it anyway. As long as their competitors are taxed equally, Imperial Oil couldn't care less what the tax is on gasoline. The person at the pump is the one that's going to pay the tax, not the corporation. However, if you tax the operations to the point where their incentive is gone, then the people that are working for the corporation and the shareholders of the corporation have no incentive to carry on their business. They of course either quit, or leave the country, or move away.

When the previous federal government, in concert with the NDP and their allies here in Saskatchewan, gave us a very painful demonstration of that policy in the national energy program in the excessive royalties charged by the previous provincial government here in Saskatchewan . . . I ask you, Mr. Deputy Speaker what good is a 100 per cent tax when the people developing the resource, goods, and services are in North Dakota or some place else; 100 per cent of nothing is nothing. And that's just exactly what we in this province had accomplished. We managed to drive the oil industry out of the country, not just in Saskatchewan but all over western Canada.

This is not just a tax reform budget, but it is a budget addressing reforms in other important areas as well. It is in a thoughtful way recognizing another major concern of the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. And that is, that throwing their money at something doesn't always fix the problem or make the service to be delivered any better. Education is a good example of this widely held view.

The NDP and other groups in Saskatchewan suggest that if we just throw enough of the taxpayers' money at this institution, and a utopian system will automatically evolve from this largess.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, most parents and taxpayers in Saskatchewan don't share that view either. They are often disappointed, in fact, in the results of what constitutes, for many of them, a very large investment of their tax dollars. They are getting tired of seeing their children come home from the universities mouthing Marxist clichés and demonstrating their newly acquired contempt for the values and morals that their parents respect. The final insult is that they, the parents, have to foot the bill for it.

They're tired, as well, of architects and engineers seeing if they can outdo each other in

designing monuments to themselves, and as well, seeing if they can incorporate enough fancy, imported Italian terrazzo or whatever into the buildings to spend as much of the taxpayers' money as they can. They're a little tired of that. They don't make the direct connection between the amount of money they spend and the results. They want to see results.

But the opposition love to throw out these statistics: if we just spent so much per pupil per year, we're bound to be doing a good job. Well, Mr. Speaker, if you carry that logic to its proper conclusion, we must have the finest institution of all in the province of Saskatchewan in the west end there. It's called the penitentiary. We spend \$50,000 per inmate a year. And I can assure you we should be graduating nuclear physicists from that institution. But I can assure you we're not. We're graduating criminals, for the most part, unfortunately.

But this budget does recognize the importance of education, and it recognizes the growing demand of society for an efficient use of the money spent on education. And that, I can assure you, Mr. Deputy Speaker is an extremely popular concept out there.

In Prince Albert, for an example, we have the new \$25 million technical institute under construction there. And I believe that's an excellent example of good, intelligent investment in education. It's revolutionary in so much as it's designed to respond to the requirements of the community it serves. It's not built to satisfy some professionals, or some educators, or some architectural engineers. It's designed to deliver an educational concept that's going to be of benefit to the community, to all of northern Saskatchewan. And in particular, it's designed to please the people that are paying for it, which are the taxpayers and the parents.

This competency-based educational concept, it's the first school in Canada that's designed around that concept entirely. And it's been extremely in other parts of North America. And it's revolutionary. And I believe that it's going to make Prince Albert a very, very important educational centre in Saskatchewan, without us having to spend \$50,000 an inmate to get it accomplished.

And I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we will be turning out graduates from that school that are not only useful to themselves, but to the larger society. And, after all, that has got to be one of the prime objectives of a functioning educational system. It's not the function of the educational system to attempt to change our society, but rather to carry forward the values and the civilization that pay for it.

But I believe that because this budget is such an intelligent reform budget, I will have no difficulty in supporting it, nor will I have any difficulty in explaining it to my constituents in Prince Albert. For that reason, I support the budget.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TUSA: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to rise in the Assembly here this evening to enter this debate on the budget. I would like to, first of all, take this opportunity to welcome our new member from Thunder Creek who has taken his seat. I am certain that the member for Thunder Creek, Mr. Swenson, will be a great asset not only to his constituents, but to the province of Saskatchewan.

I might comment, Mr. Speaker, briefly, that I recall during the election the members of the opposition, the NDP, were attempting to make an issue out of the fact that there were so many cabinet ministers and MLA's campaigning in Thunder Creek. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that I was one of those.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Which poll?

MR. TUSA: — I was proud to say that I was one of those — and we want the poll — who

campaigned. But I would just like to point out to the hon. members that the cabinet ministers and MLA's were all from Saskatchewan. That's very different from the 1982 election, Mr. Speaker. And, if anybody in the House has any experience with that, that's me.

And I would just like to point out to the hon. members opposite that during the 1982 election when they knew they were in trouble in Last Mountain-Touchwood, they not only brought in cabinet ministers and MLA's, but they brought in campaigners from Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. They brought in campaigners from Alberta, Mr. Speaker — canvassers from outside the province, who tried to influence this election . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, that is bad, Mr. Speaker.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, they didn't stop there. They didn't stop there. When they stand here in the House and complain about how we spend money, in their righteous manner, I ask them who was paying for the civil servants who were campaigning in my constituency? I'd ask them that.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to congratulate my seat-mate, my colleague from Prince Albert, who has just concluded his speech. His words are always enlightening, direct, and to the point.

1985, Mr. Speaker, marks Saskatchewan's 80th year in Confederation. So much is changed in Saskatchewan since the first budget for the province of Saskatchewan was introduced in this historic chamber. Eighty years ago, Saskatchewan was a new frontier. The promised land for thousands of pioneers and homesteaders. Today, we have grown, and we are 1 million strong. Much has changed. Yet the pioneer spirit, the faith in the future, the determination and optimism of our people is still here.

Three years ago when this Progressive Conservative government took office it did so in a time of economic stress. It was not the first time our people had faced economic stress — after all, Saskatchewan had weathered the depression of the '30s, they weathered the slow down of the '50s and the late '60s and early '70s. Similarly, in 1982, Saskatchewan farmers faced economic stress. They faced it in the form of double-digit inflation.

(2100)

In 1982, Saskatchewan home owners, with mortgages, also faced economic stress. They, too, faced it in the form of double-digit inflation, and sky-rocketing interest rates. In general, people from all walks of life were facing economic stress throughout our province. Indeed, there seemed to be no life at the end of the tunnel. Here in Regina, we had an administration that no longer cared. Here in Regina, we had an administration that no longer listened. The government in Regina was remote from the day-to-day life of the people of this province. The bureaucracy grew fat and indifferent on the needs of our people.

The then premier of Saskatchewan . . . the then premier of Saskatchewan had grown tired, complacent, and as remote as his government. All over Saskatchewan, there was a yearning for new leadership. The people believed that in this blessed land there always is a better tomorrow. Voices were raised in Saskatchewan that it was time for a change. People said that we, in Saskatchewan, had to return to our past greatness and glory as a province. These same people, the children of our pioneers, also inherited the Saskatchewan tradition, that in cherishing their values we must always build for the future.

Three years ago, Mr. Speaker, an overwhelming majority of the people in Saskatchewan voted for anew beginning. Three years ago, the people rejected an administration that no longer was in touch with the people. In a sense, Saskatchewan's new beginning with a Progressive Conservative government was a continuation of our heritage, a heritage that says that government is a servant of the people. That system has never failed us. For a time, an NDP government failed the system, but it was a regime that gave itself more and more to power. It meddled in the day-to-day lives of Saskatchewan people; it allowed Crown corporations to grow uncontrolled; it set up the state ownership of land, Mr. Speaker. And, indeed, by 1982 — in

10 short years from 1972 to 1982 — the NDP administration owned 2,800 farms in Saskatchewan. They owned 2,800 farms in this province, Mr. Speaker — a very, very significant number. And in that period of time they only sold 152 of those farms.

The writing was on the wall. The intent was clear. The government of Saskatchewan, as long as it was run by the NDP, would continue to buy and own more and more of Saskatchewan's farms. By 1982, Mr. Speaker, we knew it was time to renew the faith in Saskatchewan. The Progressive Conservatives, who formed the government in 1982, believed then as they do now that there are no limits to growth in human progress in this province.

The budget introduced last Wednesday by the Minister of Finance symbolizes the spirit of this government. The deficit has been reduced. Over the past three years taxes have been reduced. Inflation has been . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . We removed the gas tax, Mr. Speaker — the largest single tax cut in the history of this province — \$140 million per year, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TUSA: — And they say we didn't reduce taxes. Inflation has been cut dramatically in Saskatchewan — dramatically. When we came to power, inflation was nearing the double digits. We are now down to approximately 4 per cent. And we have the lowest unemployment rate of any province in Canada. And this has been the case consistently since 1982.

Mr. Speaker, we are creating a province once again a vibrant, robust, and alive. But there are many mountains yet to climb. We as a government will not rest until every Saskatchewan citizen enjoys the fullness of employment, and dignity, and opportunity as a birthright.

If we meet this challenge, these will be years when the people of Saskatchewan have restored their confidence and tradition of progress; when our values of faith, family, work, and neighbourhood were restated for the 1980s and future decades; when our economy was freed from the grip of big government; when we made sincere efforts for our senior citizens; when we developed new technology in a changing world; when Saskatchewan courageously defended free enterprise, the family farm, and small business. In short, it will mark a time in our history when the province of Saskatchewan became the economic bright spot of Canada.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Is this a history lesson? Was this back in the '30s?

MR. TUSA: — Mr. Speaker, our province is poised for greatness. And the member from Regina North West ridicules history. Mr. Speaker, may I say that within about one year the member from Regina North West will be relegated to the ashcans of history. History will say of us, Mr. Speaker, those were golden years, when the spirit of Saskatchewan was reborn, when Saskatchewan reached for her best.

That is what the provincial budget is all about. It is a statement of our faith in the people of our province; the heart of our efforts is the one idea vindicated by three years of economic growth. The heart of our efforts has been building Saskatchewan today for tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, today Saskatchewan is stronger because of the record of the past three years. Our progress began, not here in Regina, but in the hearts of our families, communities, workplaces, voluntary groups, which together from the spirit of we, the people of Saskatchewan.

The leadership to unleash that spirit was found in the Premier of our province. The economic and social progress of the last three years is because of our Premier. In a province rich in agriculture, our Premier planted the seeds of change that grew into the Saskatchewan we know in 1985. People who know Canada will recognize that Saskatchewan's Premier is known as a prairie populist, a man who is just as much at home in the corporate board rooms as he is on coffee row in Strasbourg, Saskatchewan, a typical rural town, which is in my constituency of Last Mountain-Touchwood.

The Premier of this province symbolizes the new Saskatchewan of which I speak. In three short years there have been record achievements. A Progressive Conservative government has done more for farmers than any previous administration in our history. We have brought in programs which have effectively doubled the budget on agriculture.

A Progressive Conservative government is spending more on health care than any other administration in our history, approximately \$1 billion, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . 1.1, the Minister of Health informs me, 1.1. Mr. Speaker, this is a reflection of a caring government, and this is a reflection on the Minister of Health who is doing a fantastic job as Minister of Health for our province.

A Progressive Conservative government is investing more in education and job training than at any other time in history. That is the content of the provincial budget.

The budget is not a document full of numbers and statistics. The budget is a blue print for Saskatchewan in the 1980s. The Progressive Conservative blueprint for economic progress.

Mr. Speaker, how does that compare to the philosophy presented by the NDP opposition in this province? What would the NDP opposition propose? In short, I believe it would serve a purpose for us to closely inspect the philosophy of the Leader of the Opposition.

British parliamentary tradition dictates that I respect the sincerity of the Leader of the Opposition. Although I could never subscribe to the philosophy of socialism, I can and do recognize the sincerity of the leader of the NDP in his unyielding fight for socialist ideas.

That great British parliamentarian and Conservative, Sir Winston Churchill, once described socialism as equalized misery. He described it as an exploitation of human fears. He described it as a bankrupt philosophy that pits neighbour against neighbour, and family member against family member. Those are the things that Mr. Churchill stated when he was prime minister of Great Britain.

Some years later his opposite, the Soviet premier, Nikita Khrushchev, also had something to say about socialism. Mr. Khrushchev said, as he was discussing the take-over of the free world, he said, we'll bury you, but we won't do it with guns and bullets. He said, we'll simply do it by feeding the free world many, many small doses of socialism until they wake up one day and find that they're enslaved. That's what Mr. Churchill's opposite said. They both agreed, in different ways, on the effects of socialism. I leave those two ideas for this Assembly to reflect on, Mr. Speaker.

Now, as I was saying about the Leader of the Opposition, I have never questioned his sincerity. I question his grasp of the real issues facing the real people of our province. His speech in response to the provincial budget was a classic example of a political figure living in the past. A man clinging onto the leadership of a party that is also living in the past.

Let us examine his speech in the reply to the budget. The Leader of the Opposition proposed eliminating the Oil Industry Recovery Program, at a time when Saskatchewan's oil industry is prospering like never before; at a time when revenue from the oil industry is the Saskatchewan government's largest single source of revenue. The NDP Leader of the Opposition wants to eliminate the Oil Industry Recovery Program at a time like this, Mr. Speaker.

This same man is the leader of a party that would shut down uranium mining in Saskatchewan. Day after day, Mr. Speaker, we hear members of the opposition stand in question period and say, what are you going to do for employment in northern Saskatchewan? I want the people in northern Saskatchewan to know what the opposition would do for employment in northern Saskatchewan. They would shut down the uranium mines, eliminating 10,000 jobs in the North.

That's their answer to unemployment in northern Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this same man is the leader of a party that would shut down uranium mining, putting 10,000 people out of work.

This is the same man who would bring back the tax on gasoline, which at today's prices would be approximately nine cents per litre. This is the same man and the same political party whose only major suggestion for farmers is to bring back the land bank.

The NDP, Mr. Speaker, has no agricultural policy. That is reflected in the results of Thunder Creek constituency. The NDP vote fell in Thunder Creek constituency. And I have never in my life seen a party, who has lost, going on television and bragging that they just won.

Mr. Speaker, they would bring back the land bank at a cost of hundreds of million dollars to the people of this province.

There is a statement that the Leader of the Opposition . . . that I can agree with. He made a statement I can agree with. He said, and I quote, "Judge what they will do by what they have done." Yes, that is what the Leader of the Opposition said. He said, "Judge what they will do by what they have done." And that is good advice. The voters in the constituency of Thunder Creek took that advice, Mr. Speaker, and elected a Progressive Conservative MLA.

The budget is also a clear example of that. The people of Saskatchewan know what we have done. That is why they trust the contents of this budget. They believe in our commitment to agriculture; they believe in our commitment to health; they believe in our commitment to education; and they believe in our commitment to jobs.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we will be pleased to be judged on what we will do and what we have done. The budget is a solid commitment to the people of our province. It is the Progressive Conservative vision for the future. Proverbs tell us: without a vision, the people perish. We honour the history of Saskatchewan not by going back, but by going forward to the dreams, the visions of our pioneers.

Take a look at agriculture. At the turn of the century, agriculture was a combination of horse, and manpower, and sheer faith. Today, faith in new technology are the factors. Yet we have not lost the vision that the land is the strength of our people.

Over 200,000 Saskatchewan people live on our farms. They love the land, and their future is dependent on it. As a member from a rural constituency, I can say with confidence: the Progressive Conservative government knows the hopes and dreams of Saskatchewan farmers, and Saskatchewan farmers know that we care.

(2115)

The family farm purchase program is a key example of our commitment to the future of agriculture. To date, there are approximately 4,000 young farmers repaying the benefits of the farm purchase program. Our recently introduced budget indicates we will provide funding which will provide for approximately another 1,800 young farmers to begin to purchase their land. At the end of this coming fiscal year, Mr. Speaker, approximately 5,800 farmers will be receiving benefits from the farm purchase program.

We've also responded to the drought last year, with our drought assistance program to assist our livestock producers. We have introduced a livestock investment tax credit to encourage the finishing of cattle in our province. And we have announced the expansion of the counselling and assistance program to help our farmers put in their crops.

All these are just a few examples of our firm commitment to the farmers in this province. In short, in the 1985 budget, this government is introducing a five year, \$200 million Agricultural

Development fund. That is our vision for the future. A solid commitment to farming.

For over a year now, I have had the good fortune to serve as Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Education. Saskatchewan's Minister of Education is a woman who has the vision and leadership needed in the education portfolio in these complex and changing times.

Working closely with education over the past number of months, I am proud to say that our province recognizes that education spending is a solid investment in Saskatchewan's future. May I say that at this point that Last Mountain-Touchwood constituency has benefited greatly from a change of government in 1982, in the area of education.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TUSA: — Let me just list some of the projects, some of the projects that have been completed since 1982, where the following communities have had renovations and additions since 1982 to their schools: Strasbourg, Bulyea, Lestock, Lipton, Dysart, Southey; completed: Earl Grey which is presently undergoing a massive renovation and addition project to their school. And I'm very pleased to announce here tonight again that just today the Minister of Education has announced that my home town of Cupar, who waited for years for action under the NDP government, will now be getting an addition and a renovation to its school.

Mr. Speaker, the property improvement grant, which we have eliminated and directed into education, will go a long ways towards meeting the concerns of the taxpayers of rural Saskatchewan. As we all know, the people of rural Saskatchewan represented by the SARM, and those in the urban areas represented by SUMA, have been asking for some relief to the rapidly escalating taxes in the area of education. The elimination of the property improvement grant and its direction into education, a total of \$400 million over five years, will go a long, long ways towards helping to alleviate the tax burden.

We who have eliminated that property improvement grant, Mr. Speaker, so we don't pay games with our taxpayers. We aren't simply going to charge them, and send a little bit of it back. We're simply going to take that money we were going to send back anyway and direct it into education. This will have the desired effect of dampening the tax load in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the global economy is changing so much that we consider the education luxuries a few years ago are now necessities. Moreover, a highly skilled labour force of the future will mean economic success. That mean as planning and investment in the future. The 1985 budget commitment to education clearly spells out our Progressive Conservative vision for education. The five-year \$400 million investment is a real commitment. For the first time in North America, a government has had the courage and conviction to set up an educational endowment fund.

As Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Education, I am excited about our solid commitment to education in our province.

The budget is also a statement of our commitment to job creation. For three years now, Saskatchewan could proudly claim that we have had on average the lowest unemployment of any province in Canada.

The Conference Board of Canada, independent economists, tell us that Saskatchewan is the economic leader, a bright spot in our country. In other parts of Canada, they call it the Saskatchewan miracle.

Saskatchewan's Progressive Conservative government is recognized as an economic leader. We encourage jobs and opportunity, not dependency and big government control. We have invested in job creation because we want people to know the pride of work and have confidence in the future.

Mr. Speaker, since this legislature was last in session, during the winter months I took an extensive tour of Last Mountain-Touchwood constituency. I visited during the past winter with hundreds of my constituents. On coffee row, on main streets, on farms, in kitchens, in living rooms, at garage stations, at schools and other places — to all these places, I listened. I listened to a retired senior citizen at Nokomis tell me that we should be spending more in health care in their district. And today I'm proud to tell the constituents of Last Mountain-Touchwood, and particularly the people of the district of Nokomis, that we have responded to their concerns. The people of Nokomis, the people of Govan, the people of Duval, the people of Strasbourg, the people of Semans, all these people came to speak to our Minister of Health who's always open and accessible. This came on different occasions to encourage the Minister of Health to build an integrated facility in Nokomis, to add on to their hospital. I am very pleased to tell the people in those five communities who worked so hard with me that the Minister of Health has agreed and there will be a 12-bed, integrated facility added on to Nokomis Hospital.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TUSA: — I listened to a young farmer at Quinton tell me how much the PC debt moratorium legislation meant to farmers. And I recall clearly, Mr. Speaker, when that legislation was passing through this House, the members opposite scorned and ridiculed it as being a useless bit of legislation.

Well, I want to tell the members opposite that the farmers of Saskatchewan don't agree with that. I've had many farmers come to me and literally thank me that we brought in that legislation, and they said, we aren't necessarily going to go broke this year, but I'm going to tell you that this legislation is going to make life an awful lot easier for us in 1985. The opposition members of course, don't agree with that. I'm not certain whether they care with farmers at all.

That same young farmer told me that the PC government should invest more in farming. And I'm pleased to tell that young farmer in Quinton, and all his farmer friends, that our budget has committed 200 million extra dollars over the next five years to be spent on agriculture.

Tonight I'm proud to tell my constituents their PC government is doing more for farming. I listened to a young student in Dysart — a young student full of hopes and dreams — and she told me that we should try and create more jobs for young people. And I am pleased to tell that young person tonight, and all other young students, that we are seriously doing that. We have introduced the Opportunities '85 Program, which will literally employ up to 10 or 12,000 students this coming summer in Saskatchewan.

We have the youth access program which is directed mainly at young people between the ages of 16 to 24. That also is going to go a long, long ways towards creating employment for our young people. We have introduced a program to make certain that 3,500 extra young people will be trained in our community colleges, will be given skills in which they can go out into the work force and compete. These are only three examples of how seriously we take our job to create jobs for our young people in our province.

I also, Mr. Speaker, listened to a housewife in Bulyea tell me that the deficit should be reduced. And I'm pleased to tell that housewife — and she knows all about deficits, because I'm sure she handles money each day — I'm pleased to tell her that in our budget we reduced the deficit by \$100 million. And I predict, Mr. Speaker, that by next year at this time, the deficit will have taken a dramatic downturn.

I also listened to a businessman in Lestock tell me that we should put money into highways. And I'm very, very pleased to inform that businessman in Lestock and all the people in the Lestock-Leross-Punnichy areas that the highway between Leross and Punnichy will be constructed and finished this coming summer — once again responding to their concerns.

I also listened to a retired farmer in my home town of Cupar tell me that, as a government, we must always return to basic values. And I am proud that I told him that basic values are the heritage of a Progressive Conservative government — the Progressive Conservative government.

The Progressive Conservative Party has very, very strong rural roots. In that, they have a faith in hard work, in integrity, a belief in a Supreme Being, a belief in helping our fellow man, in co-operation. Those are the roots of the Progressive Conservative Party. And I'm pleased to tell that retired individual in my home town that our government will certainly not betray those values.

Last Mountain-Touchwood constituents told me many things during my visits this winter. And today I'm happy to see many of their hopes and ideas incorporated in the 1985 budget.

Mr. Speaker, of all the changes that have swept Saskatchewan in the last three years, none brings greater promise than our rediscovery of the values of family, faith, work, and community. Today we must declare anew to the people of our province that long-term prosperity is the goal of this government. Victory against poverty is greatest in societies where people live in the spirit of faith, family, work, and optimism in the future. Saskatchewan's economic success is freedom's success.

So today we go forward in a province that is still young, 80 years young in the Confederation of Canada, with our economy leading the country to a new age of economic expansion. And all of this is because the Progressive Conservative government worked with the people and for the people. The budget is clear proof of that.

History is a journey. A pioneer sails across the Atlantic Ocean in 1906 for free land in Saskatchewan. He sailed with his wife and family. Saskatchewan farmers fought the dust and hardship of the 1930s. Saskatchewan men and women went to war to defend freedom from 1939 to 1945. Despite all this, Saskatchewan grew and prospered. It is a Saskatchewan tradition. It is hopeful; it is daring; it is decent and fair. For all our problems, for all our differences, together as a people we have made Saskatchewan a good place to live, a good place to work, and a good place to raise a family.

That is the Progressive Conservative way, Mr. Speaker. That is what the 1985 budget is all about: working together to build a stronger tomorrow. For those reasons, and for many, many more, on behalf of the people of Last Mountain-Touchwood I am proud to support the budget. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HOPFNER: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my privilege to be standing and taking part in the debate of the budget.

And before I do so I would just like to welcome the member from Thunder Creek to this Assembly, to our government, and thank the people of Thunder Creek for their trust that they've put in and have carried on with this government. I'm sure that we'll be able to show that we will keep going in our endeavours to make Saskatchewan a much better place to come home to, and to call their province, and for them to be proud of such a province.

(2130)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we talk about the budget, I'd like to first of all comment on probably one of the most important industries in our province, and that's agriculture. Agriculture is a foundation of the province which is in need of constant care and maintenance. As a provincial government, we need to help overcome the economic pressures that are facing our young farmers today.

Opportunities arising in agriculture must be made use of and must be kept up to date. We've initiated some programs in the past which have done exactly that. And they've been talked at to some great lengths, in some degree, so I'm not going to get into too many specifics. But I would like to mention these programs that have been set out by our government, and have been proven to be very adequate programs, and have been well received in the province.

Those programs in the past, which we have come to pass, have been the farm land security program which has preserved our provincial land base; the farm purchase program which gave new owner farmers an opportunity to seek a successful career within agriculture. We've initiated the Livestock Investment Tax Credit, which helped ranchers rebuild their herds in our province. We've initiated drought assistance to many farmers that were in devastating times. And we've initiated irrigation grants to help in those areas where water applications would improve the farming structures for many farmers in this province.

Agriculture is an ongoing thing. And the techniques must be continually developed, and through that we've developed many other little — what I call little — ideas, because there's so many more to go on to. But the agricultural development fund will give strength to industry with research program and constant productivity, and also insure growth by aiding the new farmers. This program will add to the long-term, as well as short-term commitments that this government has to the province of Saskatchewan. I guess we could go on in agriculture, but I want to make sure that I do reply to many of the comments members of the opposition made, and in particular to my part of the province.

I would like to get into the energy sector of the budget, and of the programs which our government has initiated over the past years. The past record of ours is hard to beat. The oil production is virtually at full capacity in the province. And if we go back to the 1984 record that was set in the province of 2,970 oil wells drilled, I would say that these types of records are hard to carry on with, but there are other initiatives and job creations that the oil companies have taken on with, instead of just punching the hole.

Sales of Crown petroleum and natural gas in the past year has saw record revenues of 123.7 million. The potash production was up 29 per cent last year, and prices were up 17 per cent. This activity is stimulating industry and creating much employment.

I've listened to the fact that the members of the opposition have been going around . . . And in fact the Leader of the Opposition in Lloydminster not too long ago — I believe it was a matter of a couple of weeks back — where he was doing a television interview, and I could not believe the answers he would give to the questions that were asked upon him.

The facts will speak for themselves in due course, which I have told my constituents. Because the facts are not far off; it is just a matter of a few weeks, and the things that he has said will remain in the constituents' minds. And the things that he has said will be proven to be totally false. And he, along with his sidekick as a candidate out in my constituency, will be judged upon those inaccuracies that they are trying to bring out to the public's attention.

I would like to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I move into a few of those areas that the hon. member has been quoting out in the constituency, that first of all, I would like to congratulate not only the Finance Minister for the budget, but also congratulate the rest of the ministers. And one in particular I'd like to speak on is the Minister of Energy, the Hon. Paul Schoenhals, and the initiatives and actions that were taken to bring about the new energy agreement for our province. The word I may use is "potential" because we have everything to gain from expansion. We have control of our market and the direction it follows. We have new projects which will take place, increasing drilling and land sales, and those land sales will continually occur.

But for those of the people that may be watching tonight, and that may not have heard, I would

just like to take this opportunity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to announce tonight a project; the first in Saskatchewan's history that has taken place due to our energy agreements that have been sought out with the oil industry. And this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the Husky Aberfeldy commercial steam flood development. As I had indicated to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the first commercial scale steam flood enhanced oil recovery project every undertaken in Saskatchewan. The project is located 9 miles south-east of Lloydminster, in the Aberfeldy pool. This will encompass a 900-acre area. Before the Hon. Leader of the Opposition leaves, he should listen to this.

This development will require a new type of drilling which is being introduced into our oil field area, and this is a directional type drilling. And for this particular program the drilling that will be required is approximately 250 wells, which will be initially installed upon concrete pads to eliminate taking up to much of the agricultural base plan. So, when we talk about the co-operation between the industry and the farming community, it is happening.

It is designed to produce 5,000 barrels per day, initially, and up to 10,000 per day at full development. It will require about \$250 million in capital over 15 years. It will begin construction in late 1985, with first steam injection planned of nearly 1987. This will also create 65,000 person-days of employment during 1985 to 1989 drilling and construction period.

It will require, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 45 new permanent skilled job opportunities to operate the project after start-up. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's not the 45 new permanent jobs just for the project, but it is estimated that it will be over 200 permanent jobs with the 45 from spin-off from this project.

These are the kind of things that, by co-operation with industry — these are the kind of things that can happen when we as a government and the industry as an industry, as a private sector, are prepared and are willing to work together to spend a buck to create the employment.

I've listened to the members opposite condemn this government for giving multimillions of dollars to oil companies. I want to remind the members opposite that there are not multimillions of dollars to oil companies — there are not multimillions of dollars to anyone — if nothing is happening. There are fair and equitable exchanges with resources through co-operation, and through that, we have shown immensely the right direction in which to go. And that is straight ahead, with allowing them a chance to have a reasonable — a reasonable — profit so as to create this employment, and expand and create more employment, and develop more techniques, more up-to-date technical expertise to recover higher percentages of our heavy crude out of our particular area.

I haven't even discussed the fact of the upgrader and the directions that have been taken in the last little while. Husky has just recently announced the hiring of the firm to go ahead with the working drawings, the planning drawings, of the upgrader. Positive. There is a sign that shows that this government plus the federal government are co-operating to have the industry move ahead and move ahead with the least interference.

(2145)

I would like to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that hits brings new life for small towns, it brings new life for small towns in my constituency and neighbouring constituencies, and in fact, throughout the province. It brings a new life, if not directly within the oil-related industry, but it brings new life within the people in those communities that didn't know where they could possibly go for jobs. It gives them new life and a new excitement to pick up and come into my area and being an exciting new life without having to rely on the welfare and unemployment rolls, of which they have been so used to under the Liberal federal government and the NDP past.

I would like to just go on here, and I know I'm being a little bit repetitious of a speech I've given

earlier, but I think I'm going to remind the members opposite of something in regards to the health program. And I would like to say that for years the NDP kept telling everybody that the Progressive Conservative government would destroy medicine. Well, I thought it would be time again for the truth to come out. Here's what the former NDP minister of finance, Walter Smishek, said in 1976. He said in 1976, he said:

In Saskatchewan, we have the highest hospital utilization in Canada. Two hundred and twenty citizens per thousand population are admitted to hospital as compared to the national average of a hundred and fifty-four per thousand. There is no evidence that the people of Saskatchewan are more often ill than anywhere in Canada, but we are deeply concerned about hospital utilization. There has been discussion about the reduction in the approval, in the approved hospital beds in the order of 5 per cent. That may not necessarily represent a 5 per cent budgetary cut.

So, yes, in 1976 the NDP cut hospital beds. And it wasn't too long ago that Premier Devine pointed out to this legislature that in the same year of 1976 and Mr. Smishek also said, "Until such time as the need for additional beds can be clearly identified and a suitable construction policy defined, a moratorium on further commitments should be enforced."

Well, here's some more on it. That same moratorium was still in place in 1978 when the Secretary-Treasurer of the village of Theodore received a letter which read in part "The fact that we have some 7,800 special care beds currently in operation throughout the province, has prompted government to place a moratorium on the development of any additional special care beds." That is the NDP's record on nursing homes.

And even today, and I guess I can repeat that again, and even today while this truth stated in the legislature, the NDP are still saying, "Why build nursing homes when you don't need them?" I believe that was Norm Lusney. Yes sir, that's right. He was quoted in Hansard as saying it, that's right. The member from Pelly.

They stopped building nursing homes for our senior citizens, the young disabled, and the mentally ill. That to me, is the truth about the NDP's health program, and I would like the people of Saskatchewan to remember just that particular part of the speech, because I'm going to tell you what has happened in my constituency in just a short time here.

I would just like to say that let's look at the NDP's record on hospital construction. Let's go back from 1977 to late 1981. No major projects were approved outside of Regina and Saskatoon. In fact, total hospital construction expenditures over the entire 1971 to 1981 — that's a 10-year period — averaged less than 2 million per year outside of Regina and Saskatoon.

Now that's what leads me into my constituency alone, and I want to thank the Hon. Minister of Health. I have, already built in my constituency, the Cut Knife hospital. I have — and it's in the planning and drawing stages — the Lloydminster Hospital. I have in Maidstone the planning and drawings and near-announced construction time period for the Maidstone hospital. I have the Lloydminster nursing home, the Jubilee nursing home announcement, and it's going into the planning stage. I have in Cut Knife, Saskatchewan, a nursing home commitment for 1987-88.

I want to say, we in my particular part of the constituency, with my particular growth, and with the continual growth of the senior citizens, and with the continual growth of the population, needed up-to-date facilities and hospitals, and needed the facilities of nursing homes. I want to indicate that we were way above the provincial average. And yet the members opposite, when they were government, refused to recognize that need.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to say — and go on record as saying — is that, if anybody was tearing apart the medicare system in the province of Saskatchewan, it was the NDP. I also want to go on record as saying that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition was in my riding stating that,

because there was not a hole in the ground and there was not a building in sight in the Lloydminster Hospital site, that this program would be turned back maybe three years, four years from now, yet, or something. I want to go on record as saying is that we are on schedule, as far as the planning is concerned; and that hospital will go, as far as the planning is concerned.

They are out there saying that the hospitals in Maidstone and Lloydminster are not going to go, because they feel that our Premier is going to maybe call an election next Monday and that — well, they can go out there and say it. But the truth is going to get them in the kneecaps. It'll kick them right in the kneecaps.

I just want to go on to say, because of the short time there is, is that, as far as the education facilities are concerned and the funds towards education in my constituency are concerned, I want to thank the Minister of Education. I've had many programs in regards to schooling and school facilities in my constituency.

I want to say that I have had in the past, that come to mind, several school projects in the past few years, and it was much needed because of the growth in my area, again. And I want to say that, being that time is so limited here tonight, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in that I would have liked to have basically named the communities and everything. The time does not allow. But I would like to, on behalf of my constituency and the local boards, the divisional boards, thank this government, on their behalf.

And with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would just like to say that I would like to ask to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 9:57 p.m.