

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

June 10, 1985

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

HON. MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, 35 students from the Vibank Elementary School seated in the west gallery along with their teacher, Mr. Gary Pack; chaperon, Mr. Brian Flaman; and the bus driver, Vern Merk.

We just met a few minutes ago on the steps, and if questions that I received are any indication of the type of questioning that goes on in your class, Mr. Pack, you certainly have a very good class there, and you'll have a bunch of young boys and girls that know a great deal when they graduate from school. So welcome here to the Assembly this afternoon.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Speaker, I have distinct pleasure of introducing to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, two groups of students from two different schools in Regina. There are 25 grade 7 and 8 students from Douglas Park School who are here with their teacher, Ken Farago and Mrs. Price, and they are presently sitting in the west gallery. Also there are 32 grade 8 students from St. Dominic Savio School, and they are here with their teacher and principal, Paulette Vanderlinde. They are sitting in the Speaker's gallery.

To both groups of students, I hope you enjoy your tour of the Legislative Building. I look forward to meeting the Douglas Park students at 2:30 p.m. in the rotunda for pictures and later in Room 255 for refreshments. And at 2:45, I shall meet with St. Dominic students in the rotunda for pictures and Room 218 for refreshments.

I would ask the members on both sides of the House to join with me in welcoming these young people.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to members of the House, a group of senior citizens in the Speaker's gallery and a few in the public galleries and some on the floor. There are approximately 40 in number, some coming from the Senior Citizens Action Now group, and some are coming from other senior citizens' organizations.

They are here today to indicate their interest in the issue of de-indexing of old age security pensions, and I'm sure that all hon. members of the Assembly would want to join with me in welcoming all of them here this afternoon.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Inflation Protection for Old Age Security Payments

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier, and it deals with the federal government's decision to eliminate the inflation protection for old age security payments.

Last week, Mr. Premier, you declined to take a stand on this issue, saying you would prefer to study the impact of de-indexing on Saskatchewan's 122,000 seniors.

Now, Mr. Premier, in light of the fact that the Manitoba legislature unanimously condemned de-indexing in a joint resolution passed last Thursday, and in light of the fact that the Premier Of Nova Scotia, Progressive Conservative the Hon. John Buchanan is reported to have similarly condemned de-indexing, I ask you whether you have reconsidered your position, and will you now support a resolution of this legislature similar to the one in Manitoba calling up the Mulroney government to reverse this decision?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Well, Mr. Speaker, two or three comments with respect to the Leader of the Opposition's question. One is that the de-indexing does not apply to all seniors, and the Leader of the Opposition knows that. It only applies to a portion of the seniors, and that's the portion that I'm going to address.

For people who have very low incomes and are subject to indexing, and this portion of the de-indexing, then as I said the other day on Friday, I believe, or last Thursday, that I suggested the federal government look at ways to deal with that for those lower-income individuals that have no other source of income except for pensions and supplements and the like.

And today, as a matter of fact, the Minister of Finance for the province of Saskatchewan wrote the Minister of Finance for the country, suggesting an alternative to protect those low-income seniors that were subject to the de-indexing, along the lines that we have done in the province of Saskatchewan, to make sure that: one, we provide help to those that need it; and number two, that we don't get caught up in rebating the wealthy.

And it's a combination of what we've been doing here, and what we suggested they do in terms of general tax reform, which has the support of the Premier of Manitoba and the Premier of Alberta and the Premier of British Columbia with respect to the whole question of taxation and how you address the public debt question, but also make it fair.

So I can read you the letter, and if you like, I will. But I will just say, at the outset, that we have suggested to the federal government that they should look at the kinds of things that we've done in the province of Saskatchewan to protect low-income people who have no alternative, and to make sure those people are protected. And I believe seniors across Saskatchewan today or tomorrow will be receiving a letter from me which outlines, not only the property improvement rebate for 1985 but, in fact, the increase in the rebate for seniors who have low income for 1986 and '87, '88, and so forth. And I use that as an example and as an illustration that we've said three things:

1. We should have general reform to make it fair;
2. That we should make sure that we're not rebating the rich, and;
3. We should make sure that the federal government, the provincial governments co-ordinate all their programs, because there's a lot of program — several — and to make sure that the low-income people who are just receiving parts of their salary and their income, are protected. And that's what the Minister of Finance has suggested in detail to the Minister of Finance at the national level.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, supplementary. Mr. Premier, in view of the fact that every senior who gets an old-age security pension is affected by the de-indexing, and in view of the fact that every senior citizen in Canada is eligible to receive an old-age security pension, who is not affected by the de-indexing? I ask you that firstly: who is not affected by the de-indexing?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, there are some seniors who only receive pensions that are government pensions, and those individuals are affected directly by the de-indexing. As you get into other pensions and other forms of income and as your income rises and rises and rises, the

de-indexing has marginal effect, and then a smaller effect, and then virtually no effect at all.

So when you're looking at, say, in the province of Saskatchewan, something like 12,000 seniors who would be directly influenced by the de-indexing in a very direct way, we are saying to the federal government: make sure that those individuals and others up the line that are influenced by the de-indexing are addressed. And we have proposed a method of address that that would countervail this de-indexing for people who only receive government pensions.

And if they do that, if they help those individuals, then in fact we don't end up in a situation where we're rebating somebody that might be making 60, 70, \$80,000 in a pension. And we don't think that they should be supplemented more if they're making that kind of money. The low-incomers, yes, and that's what we've done with respect to the property improvement grant. But for people who have a great deal of income, we said we must be beyond the point where we have to rebate the rich, and we'll encourage the federal government to look at that with its whole basket of programs. There's this program and that program and several others; let's look at them all.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Does the Premier not agree that every single one of the 122,000 senior citizens in Saskatchewan loses money by the de-indexing? Point number one, don't you agree with that? And secondly, do you state that all seniors who are not eligible for the guaranteed income supplement are somehow wealthy and are not suffering at all because of de-indexing?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I'm saying that there are people in the country who have a great deal of income, who get the guaranteed income supplement or get the OAS (old age security). Okay? And it they're getting a great deal of income, why should we be supplementing them more?

I mean, I don't think that Canadians across the country here want to see us provide a great deal of additional tax dollars to people who are wealthy, that have an income of, say, 80, 90 to \$100,000 worth of pensions and other incomes. Okay?

Now for those individuals that are just on government pensions — just on government pensions — those are the people that we believe should be protected. If individuals are making a high income, and individuals have low income and no protection, we're saying: why rebate the rich when you should be helping those that are poor? And that's exactly what we're doing with respect to our rebate program — helping those individuals that are poor and stop rebating those that are wealthy.

Now I'm sure that the hon. member knows that there are many seniors who have a great deal of income — a great deal of income, a high pension, pensions that'll run 50 to \$100,000 a year. Those individuals, I suggest, and the Minister of Finance suggests, we shouldn't be supplementing their income when the poor people or some individuals that have, say, \$10,000 worth of income deserve more.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, or new question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: I ask you whether you believe it is fair for a person who is not a senior who has an income of \$100,000 to get one level of tax, and a person who is a senior to pay the same level of tax substantially, and in addition suffer the de-indexing.

Why are you asking seniors, some of whom do not qualify for the guaranteed income supplement — and you only have to have a very modest income to avoid being eligible for the guaranteed income supplement — why are you saying that those people, that they should make a special sacrifice of de-indexing when other people are not asked to make a similar special sacrifice?

We're not talking about rebates now. Why de-indexing? And will you join with us and the entire Manitoba legislature and Premier Buchanan in protesting de-indexing?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — The point is, who does de-indexing influence? And if de-indexing has a smaller and smaller influence and impact on people who are quite wealthy, I don't want to re-introduce indexing and pay the wealthy. I mean, you know as well as I do that we want to have money for lower-income people, and among people that have low incomes should receive some benefit and some help. That's what the Minister of Finance has said to the national minister.

I mean, in the province of Saskatchewan for years under your administration you rebated the rich, and not many Canadians think that's a good idea, to rebate wealthy individuals. So take the money from wealthy and redistribute it for those individuals that are only on government pensions and who have no other source of income, and we'll make sure those individuals, through one program or another, keep up with inflation.

Now if they can keep up with inflation, that's the idea. And there's many ways to do that: de-indexing this or double-indexing that, or applying to a different program. There are several ways to do it. So what I'm saying is that most Canadians want to be fair to low income individuals, but they don't see tax dollars and rebating somebody that's making \$100,000 worth of income. And that's what you're proposing.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Do I take it then that the position of your government with respect to de-indexing, that you favour or do not oppose de-indexing in so far as it applies to anyone who does not receive the guaranteed income supplement? Is that your position?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — What I'm saying is that there are many ways, through double-indexing or other programs, to make sure that low income people who have no other source of income, on government pensions, have their pensions ride with inflation. And that's the intent of what Mr. Andrew, the Minister of Finance, has said to the Minister of Finance federally.

Now there are many ways to do that. We have suggested one way that they can do it, and I believe that's fair. I believe that when the Minister of Finance suggests that to the federal Minister of Finance and say, make sure those low income people who have no other source of income are protected, then that's where people like to see their money go.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Premier, you talked a good deal in the Assembly and outside the Assembly about consultation that went on between yourself and the federal government I planning the budget, the federal budget. I wonder whether or not, when this proposal of de-indexing was brought to you, whether or not you agreed with the Mulroney government that de-indexing should take place, or whether you stated your opposition to it. Did you state your opposition to de-indexing, or did you agree with it when your consultation process was going on?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, the subject of de-indexing was not discussed with me.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether or not the Premier, who had indicated earlier that this de-indexing would help the seniors on the bottom end of the spectrum, do you want to elaborate on how de-indexing and taking \$1,500 over four years out of pockets of senior citizens is going to help those at the bottom end of the spectrum?

I listened closely, but I must have missed some of the important steps in this formula of how \$1,500 out of the pockets of the senior citizens on the bottom end of the economic scale would be helped by this de-indexing. I missed a point there. Could you elaborate on how they'll be helped?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the member from Shaunavon says that he missed the point. I'll agree he missed the point. He missed the point because this administration has made sure that low-income seniors get more help than they've ever had in the province of Saskatchewan before. Significant increases; that's number one.

Number two, our Minister of Finance has said to the federal Minister of Finance: do as we do in the province of Saskatchewan and make sure those low-income people that only have government pensions are protected. That's what he said. Now you may not be able to understand that, but seniors understand that. They know exactly what I'm talking about. So when we bring in a program that provides even greater increases to low-income seniors, they appreciate that. When we increase their supplement, they appreciate that. We didn't keep it to \$5. I mean, we've increased it \$50 in some cases.

Now when we suggest the same thing to the federal government and say you care about the seniors that are on low income, fixed pensions, government only, and you help those, then it's exactly what we're doing in the province of Saskatchewan. And believe me, senior citizens appreciate that.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder whether or not the Premier, who talked about his finance minister discussing de-indexing with his federal counterparts, are you telling the Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan that the idea of de-indexing came from Saskatchewan and from your finance minister? Is that what you're saying?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I just got finished saying, and I can read it to the member and if Mr. Speaker, would like, I can read the letter that the Minister of Finance from Saskatchewan sent to the Minister of Finance in Canada today. Now you didn't understand it. So I can . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . If you like, Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Speaker doesn't want me to read the letter.

The letter here outlines our position with respect to the Minister of Finance. The senior citizens or anybody else in the province may want to look at it and read it. It just elaborates in some detail what I've said already with respect to low-income seniors — that they should do at the national level what we've done at the provincial level in the province of Saskatchewan, and that is, protect them.

Study on the Impact of De-Indexing

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to address a question to the Premier also. Last week, Mr. Premier, you refused to take a stand on the issue of de-indexing, and you indicated that you would prefer to study the impact of de-indexing on the Saskatchewan 122,000 seniors in Saskatchewan. I was wondering whether the Premier has had an opportunity to complete his study, and could he indicate to the seniors across this province what amount of money is going to be taken out of the pockets of the seniors as a result of the Mulroney government policy of de-indexing.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, if I might, I could, in three or four paragraphs, outline the position that the cabinet has taken with respect . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You want to know what our examination has resulted in. This is what it's resulted in. Perhaps I'll just read it to the member and he'll know exactly.

Mr. Speaker, this is to Mr. Wilson. You asked to know what position we're taking.

I write to you concerning the recent budget announcement that, beginning January 1, 1986, old age security benefits will be inflation-indexed only for that portion of the consumer price index in excess of 3 per cent. This will, in all likelihood, result in a future lower standard of living for thousands of Saskatchewan seniors.

(Okay?) I am sure most Canadians are of the opinion that all seniors deserve an adequate income and that lower income seniors in particular should be protected from the forces of inflation.

While I appreciate that the federal government must take measures to control our national debt, in doing so we must not compromise the principle of protecting low income seniors from increases in their cost of living. I refer specifically to those seniors who rely totally on old age security, guaranteed income supplement benefits, and Saskatchewan Income Plan benefits.

I am pleased to see that the guaranteed income supplement will continue to be fully indexed. However the de-indexing of old age security will, over time, result in a relative loss of income to seniors who are totally reliant on public pensions.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what I've been saying.

I would therefore respectfully request that the recently announced de-indexing proposal be reconsidered by you and your colleagues with a view to amending it or replacing it with other measures that will not burden low-income seniors, and at the same time will not add to the public debt.

As part of this review you may wish to give consideration to increasing the guaranteed income supplement beyond normal indexing levels in order to protect the income of those seniors. This would be consistent with your strategy concerning child and family benefits. Perhaps consideration should be given to restructuring old age security benefits based on income, introducing a seniors' tax credit, or amalgamating old age security and the guaranteed income supplement into a plan based on income.

I am sure after that review, various options will present themselves which will effectively meet the twin goals of maintaining relative income levels for low-income seniors while simultaneously managing the public debt. I would be pleased to discuss this issue with you at your convenience.

Sincerely, Bob Andrew, Minister of Finance for Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

MR. KOSKIE: — I will ask another question, and I'll ask this specific question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier — a specific one.

Last week in the House, Mr. Speaker, you indicated that you would do a study on the impact of de-indexing of Saskatchewan's 122,000 seniors. I ask you: have you completed your study, and how many thousands of dollars will it take out of the pockets of the seniors who need this money?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the proposal out of the federal government is to take effect of January 1986. So to date there hasn't been anything done. We have just presented our proposal to the federal government to protect low-income seniors, and we suspect that the proposal will be looked at seriously, which will mean that there will be no loss, no loss to low-income seniors in the province of Saskatchewan as a result, or if the federal government follows the advice that we have given and the Minister of Finance has sent today.

MR. KOSKIE: — A new question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, I want to refer you to an article here where it says: "Epp . . ." which is the Minister of Health and Welfare in the federal government, where it says: "Epp can't name one group backing pension decision," and it goes

on in this article:

The finance department figures show that by having indexation kick only after inflation rises above 3 per cent, the government will save \$15 million in '85-86 fiscal year, \$245 million in 1986-87, and will be saving \$1.62 billion a year in 1990-1991. And the above is expected to cost the average pensioner (it goes on to say) \$1,500 to \$2,300 over five years.

Mr. Premier, do you not acknowledge that the de-indexing of the pensions by the federal government is going to create a crisis of taking thousands and millions of dollars out of the seniors' pockets?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the question is a little bit hypothetical because the tax increase doesn't take place until 1986 if, in fact, does increase . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, it doesn't begin until 1986, so I don't know where you get your number, 1985.

We have examined the impact, and we have made recommendations to the federal -government that they deal with the low-income seniors.

Now I know the members opposite have been accustomed to rebating the rich, and they like those kinds of programs. We said we want to provide more help to low-income seniors. That's exactly what we've done, and we're encouraging the federal government to provide more help to low-income seniors as well. I mean, I've got a whole list of programs that we've designed for seniors, and we've provided them extensive increases in supplement in the province of Saskatchewan. And they appreciate it. We're encouraging the federal government to do the same, and hopefully they'll listen.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I ask the Premier to clarify one aspect of the letter which he read wherein the Minister of Finance suggested that one way to provide help for senior citizens without costing the federal treasury money would be to provide that the old age security pension would not go to all senior citizens, or all in the same amount.

Do you agree that what the letter says is that old age security pensions should be means tested or needs tested?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — No, I didn't say that at all.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Well, would you read the portion of the letter again which says that the old age security pension might be revised to vary the income of the senior citizens.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, what I said — and what is in the letter — on Thursday and Friday and today is that there are many programs structured for senior citizens. What we should do is take a look at all the programs, make sure that low-income people receive the benefit, and that we don't tax the low-income individuals, and we make sure that we don't rebate the wealthy, so that we can provide income and supplements and benefits to people making \$10,000, or those on the low-income scale.

The letter says this:

I would therefore respectfully request that the recently announced de-indexing proposal be reconsidered by you and your colleagues with a view to amending it or replacing it with other measures that will not burden low-income seniors, and at the same time will not add to the public debt.

As part of this review you may wish to give consideration to increasing the guaranteed income supplement beyond normal indexing levels in order to protect

the income of those seniors. This would be consistent with your strategy concerning child and family benefits. Perhaps consideration should be given to restructuring old age security benefits based on income, introducing a seniors' tax credit, or amalgamating old age security and the guaranteed income supplement into a plan based on income.

I am sure after that review, various options will present themselves which will effectively meet the twin goals of maintaining relative income levels for low-income seniors while simultaneously managing the public debt.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as we look towards reform, as we have Howard Pawley encouraging tax reform, and the feds looking at tax reform . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 110 — An Act to amend The University of Saskatchewan Act

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The University of Saskatchewan Act.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the Bill referred to the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills.

POINT OF ORDER

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, during question period today, during the question and answer portion, the Premier in answering a supplement, members of our caucus believe, went on at great length. And in timing the answers, several of them were in the area of two minutes to questions that were very brief.

I wonder whether or not we could get a ruling on this, and I must say as well that the caucus is having a very difficult time in understanding how these answers can be allowed to go on and on, that we have to stand up after . . . regularly after question period, and bring this to the attention of the Assembly.

I wonder whether or not you could check it and bring back a ruling on it.

MR. SPEAKER: — I listened very closely throughout question period today, and sometimes a question can be a short question, but it cannot be answered with a short answer. And I believe that the answers today were in order, and the point of order raised is not well taken.

MOTIONS

Rule 39

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, before the orders of the day I rise under the provisions of rule 39 of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly*, to seek the unanimous consent of the Assembly to present a motion of urgent and pressing necessity — that being the need to make the position of this House clear on the issue of de-indexing of old age security payments to Canada's senior citizens.

Mr. Speaker, by way of brief explanation, this resolution that I would propose to introduce would be identical to a resolution which received the unanimous support of the Manitoba legislature last Thursday, June 6. It was introduced by the Government Leader and supported by

the official opposition.

If I have leave of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, I would introduce a motion in the following terms:

Whereas the recent decision by the Government of Canada to de-index the old age security pensions . . . (or I will use the exact words of the Manitoba one).

Whereas the recent decision by the Government of Canada to de-index the old age security program will have a harmful effect on many senior citizens in Canada; and whereas the de-indexation of the incomes of our senior citizens will have a profoundly negative effect on the standard of living for many pensioners on old age security programs; and whereas the de-indexation of the old age pension is unfair to Canada's seniors who have inadequate sources of income;

Therefore, be it resolved that this Assembly demand the immediate reinstatement of full indexation of old age pensions for the seniors of Canada.

And, Mr. Speaker, I seek leave of the Assembly to proceed with this motion now.

MR. SPEAKER: — The Clerks have drawn to my attention that we do have a bit of a problem in the manner that the motion is put forward. In Beauchesne's 423 and 424, if the members would like to refer to it, it says:

A motion should be neither argumentative, nor in the style of the speech, nor contain unnecessary provisions or objectionable words. It is usually expressed in the affirmative, even where its purpose and effect are negative.

And in 424 it simply gives the Speaker the authorization to amend the motion to bring it in order, and what it would take in the circumstances of this motion would be to drop the "whereas" clauses that . . . The first three whereas's that were in the motion, and that the motion then would be:

That therefore be it resolved that this Assembly demand the immediate re-instatement of full indexation of old age pensions for the seniors of Canada.

Proceed.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, our resolution deals with the Mulroney government's action in the May 23rd federal budget to cut old age security payments to Canada's senior citizens. I say, cut, because the government's decision to de-index these payments will see the purchasing power of Canadian seniors eroded each year by increases in the cost of living.

Today, Mr. Speaker, old age security payments rise each year, and they rise the same amount as inflation rises. If the inflation rises 4 per cent, the old age security pension rises 4 per cent. The simple reason for this is so that Canada's senior citizens don't see their pensions eroded; see the purchasing power of their pensions taken away. That's what indexation is all about, for senior citizens' pensions or for other pensions. And the Mulroney budget does away with full indexation, effective next January.

Beginning in January 1986, it proposes to cover only a portion of inflation, that portion over 3 per cent in any year. For example, if inflation next year was exactly 3 per cent, Canada's senior citizens would receive no increase in their old age security pension. In fact their purchasing power would have eroded by 3 per cent. If inflation was 6 per cent, Canada's senior citizens would receive an increase in their pension of only 3 per cent, and again their purchasing power of their pension would erode by 3 per cent. Only in the highly unlikely event that inflation is less than 3 per cent would the senior citizens face a smaller cut in the real value of their pensions, and

only in the almost impossible to conceive event that we have no rate increase in inflation would their pensions be protected.

Mr. Speaker, we say that under these circumstances the Mulroney budget guarantees that the incomes of senior citizens will be eroded, and I say guarantees that they will be eroded at the rate of 3 per cent a year over the next decade. I say this because I think there's no real prospect of inflation being less than 3 per cent per year over the next 10 years.

Someone may conjure up that vision, but certainly Mr. Wilson did not in his budget. He provided various scenarios about levels of inflation, and the lowest one — the lowest one — Mr. Speaker, was an inflation rate of 2.9 per cent, which for all practical purposes is 3 per cent. And unless that unlikely low one was met, we are sure that inflation will exceed 3 per cent.

I refer hon. members who may be wondering about this to the document tabled with the budget, called "Canada's Economic prospects, 1985-1990." And there the government forecast of inflation is that it will remain about 4 per cent a year. And I suspect that's right. I suspect that inflation will be of the 4 per cent of greater range. Certainly there's nothing in the Mulroney budget which is likely to decrease the cost of living.

Mr. Speaker, that's why, notwithstanding any rhetoric you may hear, the Mulroney budget guarantees a 3 per cent year loss in income for Canada's senior citizens in respect of their old age security pension.

Mr. Speaker, New Democrats say that is wrong. We say it's unfair. We say it's unjustified. Certainly Canada needs to get its huge deficit under control — no one denies that — but not, Mr. Speaker, by asking for special sacrifice from senior citizens, from our pioneers; not on the backs of people who have built this province and this country and who have sacrificed so much through years that were less bountiful than this year, or less bountiful than recent years.

We owe a debt to those senior citizens. They're earned, through their hard work and sacrifice, the right to retire in dignity. We owe them that much. And I think that we should see that our pension provisions guarantee them that much.

And that's why, Mr. Speaker, we've introduced the emergency resolution this afternoon. The Assembly and the people of this province must go on record with one voice in clear opposition to this de-indexing proposal. It's not good enough to say that we're going to study it, not good enough to say it's going to be matched by something else, not good enough to say, as the Premier said this afternoon in quoting from a letter from the Minister of Finance, that we might solve this problem by having the whole old age security scheme restructured so that it would be income dependent. We all know what that means, Mr. Speaker. It means a means test or a needs test for old age security in the same way that we have one for guaranteed income supplement.

Mr. Speaker, we do not believe that that is fair or reasonable, and we do not believe that proposal is a good one from the government opposite. We do not believe the de-indexing proposal is a good one from the federal government.

Saskatchewan's 122,000 senior citizens are going to see their old age security income eroded by 3 per cent. Now either you think that's right, or you think it's not right. And we think that that's a large income loss — 3 per cent doesn't seem much the first year, but another 3 per cent the second year, another 3 per cent the third year, and on.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, if you can postulate the fact a 3 per cent decrease for 20 years, then the value of the pension is cut in half. Three per cent per year compounded will cut the value of the pension in one-half. And that's a very, very significant cut. We believe that the government opposite, and we believe that all members of this Assembly, should stand up and say that that is the wrong way to go. It is unfair to ask senior citizens to bear this special burden.

(1445)

Mr. Speaker, I think it is ironic that we are debating this resolution today because I believe today marks the beginning of Senior Citizens' Week in Saskatchewan. A few days ago when he announced the proclamation of Senior Citizens' Week, the Minister of Social Services said that it will be a time for Saskatchewan residents to, and I want to quote his press release, "... express special recognition for the important contribution Saskatchewan seniors have made and continue to make." And to that I say, hear, hear!

Mr. Minister, and Mr. Premier, what better way is there to show that recognition and appreciation than to help protect the incomes of senior citizens? Heritage awards are fine; they're worthwhile. Conferences involving senior citizens are important, yes. But they don't pay bills, and, more particularly, they don't give the sense of financial security that an indexed pension gives.

What we owe to senior citizens is not only enough money for today, but some reasonable assurance that there will be enough money for next year and the year after, when a person is a senior citizen and when their earning capacity has all but ceased. And many, many senior citizens find themselves in that position.

The question of security for years to come is a very real one. Those of us who are in the work-force, we comfort ourselves with the fact that if prices go up, probably our incomes will go up, and that, by and large, happens. The people who are living on pensions have no such assurance. The old age security pension was specifically set up to give some little measure of assurance that if prices went up, so would the pension go up.

That level of financial security — and it's far from generous — that level of financial security we owe to senior citizens. If we owe them heritage awards, fine; if we're going to have conferences, fine; but we certainly owe them that assurance that we will provide financial security in the future, and that's what de-indexing attacks.

If we want to do something concrete, something meaningful for the pocket-books of Saskatchewan senior citizens, not only this year but in years to come, then we will support this resolution in the way that all the members of the Manitoba legislature did. We will stand up and say we believe you, the federal government, have made an error. We ask you to reconsider.

I think that this could be done on a non-partisan basis in this House as it was done in the Manitoba House. There was no suggestion that anyone was scoring any particular points in the Manitoba House, and we will hope that the same thing would be true here.

That would be a very, very concrete way to say to senior citizens in Saskatchewan during this Senior Citizens Week, we appreciate your contribution and we join with you in providing you with some measure of financial security.

Mr. Speaker, when I say that we shouldn't target senior citizens for special sacrifice, I'm not suggesting that senior citizens shouldn't sacrifice along with the rest of us. And they're not asking that they be sheltered from the full impact of the Mulroney budget. That's not what they're asking. They're asking that they not be picked out and singled out.

Mr. Speaker, you will know that the Mulroney budget applies a new 10 per cent tax on things like soap and toilet supplies and fruit drinks and a whole series of other commodities — things . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Pet food.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Pet food — things which we buy and things which senior citizens

buy. And senior citizens have to pay that. And they're not complaining. I suppose they complain like the rest of us about rising prices, but they're not expecting to be sheltered from that because they're senior citizens.

In addition to that, a 1 per cent tax has been added to virtually everything we buy, and senior citizens aren't asking to be sheltered from that. They say everybody has to share the burden. We will pay our share of that.

But what they are saying is: having done that, having shouldered our share of the load with all other age groups in society, why should we now be targeted for special sacrifice by de-indexing? And I think their case is a good one. I think they've got a case which simply cannot be argued against effectively.

I have to remind the House that this is not the only burden which senior citizens have been asked to bear recently. We have had the Devine budget, the budget of this government, of April. There was a 1 per cent flat tax on net income, and some senior citizens will be hit by that. There is an exemption, but it is an exemption which certainly will not spare all senior citizens. And senior citizens under that flat tax are not able to use the exemptions which are available to most people or some people under the flat tax.

Not many senior citizens are able to use the shelters that frontier drilling credits, or MURBs (multiple unit residential buildings), or film and video shelters. And of course under the flat tax the age exemption which is given to them is taken away by the Minister of Finance. Any charitable donations which they may make is taken away by the Minister of Finance. If they have substantial medical bills, and some senior citizens do, that deduction is taken away by the Minister of Finance during the flat tax. So I'm saying, Mr. Minister, this is not the only burden they've been asked to bear.

I won't go into detail about our provincial budget. We know about that. We know about what it has done for seniors — or done to seniors is perhaps the best way to phrase it. I should point out that senior citizens who are renters have been very hard hit by that budget, and no relief is offered to them — none whatever.

I think it's fair to remind the House of a couple of points. We have 122,000 senior citizens who are being asked to bear the special burdens of the provincial budget and now the Mulroney budget.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to home in on one thing which the Premier at least suggested earlier in the House today. In the House, and elsewhere, the Mulroney government has claimed at one time that de-indexing would not hurt low-income senior citizens because the guaranteed income supplement remains fully indexed to inflation. Well, Mr. Speaker, that is a half truth. It is true that the guaranteed income supplement remains fully indexed. But we must understand that the supplement is just that — a supplement. It's an add-on. It's an add-on to the basic pensions of old age security. Nobody gets all of his income from the guaranteed income supplement. It is legally impossible.

And so while the supplement may not be de-indexed, everyone who gets the supplement loses money. Now that point should be made over and over again, because there is a suggestion somehow that if you don't de-index the supplement you are leaving people who receive the supplement in the same position as they were before. And we all know that that's not true.

If a person is on a guaranteed income supplement, he will be receiving the old age security pension, a guaranteed income supplement and perhaps the provincial supplementary income benefit. Leaving the provincial one out of it for a moment, referring to the two federal ones, if one of them is de-indexed and one is not, very clearly, that senior citizen loses money even

though the guaranteed income supplement may not be de-indexed. And that point must be made because of the many, many times that it was, in effect, denied in the early discussion of this issue.

What bothers many people, Mr. Speaker, is that there's a belief that this de-indexing proposal imposes a double standard. If, as it has been suggested, we wish to share the burden; and if, as has been suggested, we want to raise taxes on those with ability to pay, and lower taxes on those without the ability to pay, then there have been some very remarkable decisions as to who does not have the ability to pay, and who does have the ability to pay.

We have a budget which incorporates vast, and I mean vast, tax cuts to the oil industry, and we have a budget which de-indexes pensions for every senior citizen in Canada — this presumably on the basis that the people, the old age pensioners who are getting their pensions de-indexed, have ability to pay, and oil companies do not have the ability to pay. That, to put it mildly, is a strange judgement; and it's a judgement which simply will not bear any analysis. It does not bear any analysis.

Mr. Speaker, I could go through the other provisions of the Mulroney budget to make the similar argument, but one needs only to read some material that is put out by the investment houses in Canada, and from the investment houses has come a steady string of information, a string of promotional literature saying that this budget is a bonanza for sophisticated investors.

Now I wonder, Mr. Speaker, whether many of the sophisticated investors fall into the low-income class, and many of the people who are getting OAS (old age security) and GIS (guaranteed income supplement) fall into the big-investor class. There is no question if you can believe the investment dealers who are sending out their material that the budget is a bonanza for people who buy shares and bonds, but particularly shares. It's a bonanza for people who have large pensions gathered in through registered retirement savings plans. It is not a bonanza for old age security pensioners.

And so on that basis, on the basis of fairness and the basis of equality of sacrifice, acknowledging that the federal financial affairs must be put in order, we acknowledge that all must pay. We do not acknowledge that senior citizens should be targeted.

And so we are asking that the Mulroney government reassess its position. We are asking that they consider de-indexing, reconsider de-indexing. We are asking that they withdraw the proposal for de-indexing. We ask that whether or not you agree with my arguments and criticisms, you consider the issue of de-indexing. We ask that all members of the House ask themselves whether this is fair; whether this is the right way to target a group; is this the right group to ask special sacrifices from? I think the answer will be no.

I'm pleased to note that the Manitoba legislature reached that conclusion. I'm pleased to note the Premier of Nova Scotia is reported in the press to have reached the same conclusion. And I would hope that this House would similarly reach the same conclusion.

And with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I would move — and I do not have it available to me since it was moved in a different form — but I would move that:

Be it resolved that this Assembly demand the immediate reinstatement of full indexation of old age pensions for the seniors of Canada.

I so move, and ask all hon. members to join in supporting this resolution making it unanimous, as was the case in our sister province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. I would caution the members in the galleries that no one can participate in the debate in this Assembly except those who are elected to sit here as representatives.

(1500)

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate very much the opportunity to become involved in this most important resolution. And one, as the member from Elphinstone has wished for or indicated, that we would like to have support of the government in sending a clear message to Ottawa that would basically say that we, on behalf of the seniors, the 122,000 seniors in the province, are in fact disappointed in . . . and that we are not going to sit idly by while many millions of dollars are taken out of the pockets of the present senior citizens and, I might add, the people who at the present time are planning for their retirement, those people whether they're 45 or 55 or 64 are planning for their retirement who now, all of a sudden, have a monkey-wrench thrown into those plans.

When the Mulroney government looks at the number in Saskatchewan of 122,000 senior citizens at the present time that they are going to affect and affect directly, they have to realize, as well, that there are many thousands of individuals, as well, who are on the verge of becoming senior citizens and are looking at and planning, and they too will be affected in the very near future by the impact of this 3 per cent reduction in the old age security.

And I think for them the question is maybe even more important than for the people who are already senior citizens at the present time. Because what we are looking at, and has been indicated already, that for somebody at the age of 45 who is planning for their retirement, that by the time they reach the age of 65 the old age security pension will have been effectively reduced to half of what it is at the present time.

What we are saying, and I think that all members would agree with, that we are talking basically about fairness, about the problem that we are having in understanding where the Conservative government, both provincially and federally, are headed.

We talk as well about double standards and the effect that these changes are going to have on those people who have basically built the province. And it's not only the members of this opposition or the members of the Manitoba opposition and government who are opposed to it, but there are many, many people who are beginning to understand the impact of what taking \$1.6 billion out of the pockets of seniors in the year 1990 will have on the economy of the province.

And I wonder, Mr. Speaker, whether or not it's a mere coincidence that the number that is being given to the oil companies of about \$2 billion in tax incentives, as they've called, is basically the same \$1.6 billion that is being taken from the senior citizens. There are many, many seniors' groups who are saying this.

Now the Conservative government may say that they are being cynical when they say that it's interesting that the amount of money being taken from seniors is the same amount that's being divvied out to oil companies across Canada, but we have a difficult time understanding the credibility of a government that would say that oil companies who are already announcing record profits would need an extra \$2 billion, and that should be shouldered on the backs of the senior citizens of this country.

But Mr. Speaker, it is not only the seniors who are arguing with this change in the taxation or the tax reform that the Minister of Finance here and in Ottawa are talking about. And basically when we talk about tax reform, Tory style, we are talking about shifting taxation from the rich to those in the middle and low incomes.

And here is the most blatant example of all: where you're taking \$1.6 billion out of the pockets of the senior citizens and giving it to the multinational oil companies. That's what we are talking about is fairness and tax reform and tax change. And I say that we are decidedly and unequivocally opposed to the kind of tax reform that the Saskatchewan Minister of Finance is talking about, and the federal minister, Mr. Wilson, is talking about when they're talking about shifting the responsibility of paying taxes from those who can afford to pay to those who can least afford.

When I say that it's not only members of the opposition and senior citizens groups who believe this, I would like to quote from a couple of Conservative MPs who are also opposed to this shift in, and change in tax reform. Mr. Allan McKinnon, the former Tory defence minister — I'm quoting from a Toronto *Globe and Mail* report — and Allan McKinnon, a former Tory defence minister, whose Victoria riding is awash with seniors, says:

There is anger and concern about de-indexing of the pensions.

And another Conservative MP, an Alan Redway, whose York East riding is full of seniors, believes the government must review the issue.

I would say to members opposite that if you are concerned about the plight of senior citizens and the plight of people who are, in many cases, at the bottom end of the economic spectrum, then how can you in all fairness continue this attack, whether it's a removal of the renter's rebate, whether it's the massive increases we have seen in the nursing home rates, or the shift in taxation to the local government of the cost of building new nursing homes? In every area, what we are seeing is a direct attack, a direct attack on the individuals who can least afford to pay.

What we would like to see when we are completing our remarks is the Premier or other members of the Cabinet stand in their place and defend or to argue against de-indexing. Because what we would like is a clear voice, a clear voice coming out of the province of Saskatchewan that would agree with the government and the opposition in Manitoba, that would say very clearly that we believe de-indexing of the OAS, the old age security, is an unfortunate, and a move that should not be allowed, and that we should be defending the 122,000 senior citizens who will be directly affected.

When we talk about the changes that are coming in tax reform in Canada and in Saskatchewan, I find that the words that were said by both this government in opposition and leading up to the last election campaign, and those words that were spoken by the now Prime Minister, when he talked about the plight of seniors . . . and I want to refer to one of his quotes that was given in Sherbrooke, Quebec, on July 26 in 1984, where he talks about the plight of senior citizens. And he said, and I quote:

Senior citizens are often isolated, poor, and in a crippling state of dependency.

And this was spoken by one of the aides of the Tory leader at that time, and he went on to say that:

Recent statistics indicated that more than 60 per cent of women, senior women, and 40 per cent of men over the age of 65, who live alone, are on incomes below the poverty line.

Now what have they decided to do to change that shocking statistic in Canada? Well, clearly, they have decided that living below the poverty line is not enough and that they should de-index the old age security that these 60 per cent of women and 40 per cent of men who are below the poverty line and seniors, are now getting. What they have decided to do to help these people out is to take 3 per cent away from them each year. And over a five-year period, we are looking at taking away from these people who are already below the poverty line, \$1,500 in

actual money that they have at their disposal.

And I say that it is clearly an issue of shifting taxation. And when we talk about tax reform, Tory style, that's what we are saying. We are saying that we are going to take away from those people, who are in the middle and low income, and give it to those who already have. The oil companies who are announcing record profits, you don't look at them to take any more money from.

And I would like to have one of the Conservative members stand here and tell me why, when we're looking at tax reform, we don't have to say to the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's right. Those are the very people that we should be going after. Yes, that's right. People who are making 200,000 a year don't pay. There are many people who don't pay, and you should be changing the tax policy to plug those loopholes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I say to the Minister of Finance that the reason that he can't take those people on is because he's afraid of them. Who does he take on? I'll tell you who this Minister of Finance and the Minister of Finance in Ottawa take on: they take on pensioners. They take on the pensioners, and they give it to the oil companies. These are the macho Tories and right-wingers in Ottawa and Saskatchewan who are afraid to take on the people with money.

And I say to them, very clearly, I would like to know what the strategy is that's causing you people to decide that those people who are making record profits should not be scrutinized in terms of paying their fair share of taxes. What sense does that make?

We look at the banks, we look at the oil companies, we look at the railways — all of them paying or all of them declaring record profits, and not one move, not one move in the federal budget; not one move except for one little slight move in the provincial budget that would take into consideration those corporations making record profits.

But we look at who they're taking on. So they've got a deficit. They've got a deficit that they have built up here in the province and in the federal government. How are they going to solve it?

Well, obviously, you don't take on your friends. Issue number one, you don't take on your friends of the Conservative party, namely the oil companies and the banks. You don't take them on.

Well do you take on the people who are in unionized positions? Well no, we certainly don't want to, and no one's going to take them on.

Well who do we go to? The people we go to, if you're a Tory, are the people who are on pensions. That's who we go to. And I say to you that you're making one fundamental mistake because you're taking on the people who will not stand idly by and not fight back.

You may assume that the seniors of this country are going to stand idly by and that you can get away with it. But these are the very people in this province, and I know many of them who built this province, who, when they were attacked by the grain companies in the early days, set up the Canadian Wheat Board and the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. And I want to say to you that when they were taken on by the banks in the 1930s, what they did is set up the credit union system to fight banks and to act as a lending institution.

And I want to tell you as well that in de-indexing . . . and the Minister of Finance here can laugh about the people, 60 per cent who are below the poverty line, and where he's going to take 3 per cent from.

Well you may think this is a joke, or what I'm saying is a joke. But what I want to say to you, Mr. Minister of Finance, that these seniors are not going to sit idly by while you take 115 bucks out of their pockets if they're a renter. And they're not going to sit idly by while you take \$1,500 out of their pockets over four years in direct de-indexing of their pensions, because they're fighters, and they're going to fight back. And we will watch to see whether or not you will have the courage to stand up here and defend the seniors, or whether you'll continue on down the path of taking on the side of the oil companies and banks and railways.

This will really determine where you people stand on the issue of fairness in tax reform because I want to say that when we see tax reform, Tory style, in Saskatchewan and Canada, what it means is taking from the poor and giving to the rich. And it's been mentioned in Ottawa any number of times over the last week of debate on this issue, the Robin Hood in reverse or the Robin-Hood-gone-mad mentality of Conservative governments in this province and in Canada. And I would urge all members to support the resolution and send a clear message to the government in Ottawa.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

HON. MR. ANDREW: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a few comments with regard to the motion of the Leader of the Opposition before I move an amendment to that motion.

The Leader of the Opposition started out indicating that we should follow the lead of the province of Manitoba in a non-partisan way, in a non-partisan way, Mr. Speaker, and says: look, all together, let's try to work this collectively. We won't do it politically; we'll do it in a non-partisan way.

And then between him and the House Leader for the opposition, they proceed to make their patented political speech that we've heard in this House for the last two months.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that hardly strikes me as somebody that is looking at trying to do something in a non-partisan way. And we've had, Mr. Speaker, we've had experiences with the members opposite dealing with senior citizens. When I go back to the first election that I was involved in — and I anticipate we're going to see the same type of tactics — Mr. Speaker, I saw, in that first election in 1978, the NDP government of the day going to senior citizens, house after house after house, saying, elect a Tory and medicare will be gone — medicare will be gone. They said that in '78, Mr. Speaker, and the people believed them — the old people believed.

Then in 1982 they tried, and they said it again, Mr. Speaker, but the people that time said, no, I don't believe you. I don't believe those scare tactics this time.

Three years later, Mr. Speaker — three years later, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. State your point of order.

(1515)

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I'm having a great difficulty understanding the relation between the campaign in 1978 in Kindersley and the motion before the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. Order. I've had a great deal of difficulty relating the comments of the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Shaunavon to the resolution as well, and when they're broadening out like they have today on this motion, it's very difficult to contain it to one subject area.

HON. MR. ANDREW: — Mr. Speaker, you go back, as I said, to 1978, and that was the tactic, and I think that is a shameful tactic, Mr. Speaker, to go to pensioners, to

people that have made great contributions in this country and in this province and lead them with the scare tactic that if you don't be careful, you won't get into a hospital, you won't get to see a doctor. That kind of tactic, in my view, Mr. Speaker, has no place in Canadian politics, has no place in Saskatchewan politics.

But let's go back and look at . . . Prior to the amendment, I'm going to talk about the basic question. I want to talk about what we have done for senior citizens in this province, and it all starts with a series, one of them being in the area of nursing homes. This government has committed over 1,500 new nursing home spaces in this province — 1,500 new spaces.

And I want to read to you, Mr. Speaker, and into this Assembly, two letters, Mr. Speaker. The members . . . the members should maybe like to hear these letters. One is a memo dated January 4, 1976, from a W. Smishek, Chairman of Treasury Board, to the Hon Herman Rolfes, Minister of Social Services . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. Order. Order, please. I would ask the members to co-operate a bit and debate the motion that is before the House. I've given you both some latitude; now I'd ask you to get back to the motion.

HON. MR. ANDREW: — What I . . . I think what we have to look at in the context of dealing with funding to senior citizens, and I think the rationale of my argument is that you must have, you must look at all programs for senior citizens in dealing with the debate on this particular question.

One obvious important area to senior citizens is special care homes for those people when they come to the point where they need institutional care. And I simply want to indicate — indicate consistently, Mr. Speaker, that we have increased the funding to those nursing homes very significantly. And what I wanted to read briefly, and it's just two short paragraphs — two lines, in effect, Mr. Speaker — dealing with 1976, and this is . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. Order, order! I just cautioned the member and asked him to come back to the topic at hand. If you're going to deal with the items in the manner that you are now, then I think we're going to have to have a repeat of the throne speech and the budget speech, and I don't think that's what either side of the House wants.

So I would ask you to come back to the motion.

HON. MR. ANDREW: — I will stay away from the moratorium stuff, Mr. Speaker, of the previous government. What I would say, though, is that I think we have to look at funding to senior citizens in the very wide context and ask ourselves: what are the fundamental priorities that we have to provide to senior citizens in this country? What are the fundamental priorities? How can we best meet those priorities? And how can we generate revenues to meet those priorities?

And I think that's a question that all Canadians must face. And I quite frankly believe that senior citizens, equally, ask those questions and seek answers to those questions, Mr. Speaker.

What we have to do, it seems to me, is the fundamental priority in this country. What is fundamental in this country, it seems to me is as a society we must look after those people that are less fortunate. And that applies equally to senior citizens.

Now when we talk about de-indexation and we ask ourselves about the fairness of de-indexation, nobody suggests that's a good program, Mr. Speaker. And we certainly haven't suggested it's a good program. But let's look at how it impacts people.

Assuming you had a senior citizen making \$100,000 a year from pensions, some of them, Mr. Speaker, just as an example, from investment income, from pensions, from whatever it might be. And then you have some other senior citizen that is making no more income, has no more income than the old age pension, the guaranteed income supplement and the Saskatchewan Income Plan — those three programs; that's all the basis of their income.

It's very difficult for those people to make ends meet. We all agree with that. Those that have, perhaps, still a farm; those that perhaps have a good pension; and those that perhaps have some investments and have some income. What the de-indexation will do is take exactly the same amount, the same number of dollars out of each pocket.

Now when we are as a society, is it not incumbent upon us to ask ourselves which of those in that group is most important that we assist? Which in that group is the most important for us to assist? Is it the people with an income that they can still save and can have what they need? Or is it those who don't have enough to get by, day to day? And that's a question for society, whether it's people with a family, or it's equally true it's people that are over 65. And I think we have to look at the same thing and the same way of looking at it.

The number two thing we have to look at, Mr. Speaker, is this. The number two thing we have to look at is this: what do we do with the host of programs that we have? We have several programs for senior citizens. We have the old age security. We have the guaranteed income supplement. We have the SIP program (Saskatchewan Income Plan), senior's program in Saskatchewan. And in that regard, Mr. Speaker, that program in Saskatchewan, we can make a contribution to single people, single individual senior citizens on SIP that make SIP. They get \$50 a month — those that are on maximum OAS, GIS — \$50 a month. Couples get \$75 a month.

Now let's go to Manitoba and compare what they get there. In Manitoba — and this is where the motion comes — it's easy to hear a motion. Where we give \$50 a month to those low-income seniors, Manitoba gives \$16. Where we give \$75 to couples, senior citizens low income of \$75, Manitoba gives \$34.

Mr. Speaker, we don't speak to the senior citizens of our province through motions to Ottawa; we speak with money on the table and grants back to senior citizens.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

HON. MR. ANDREW: — How do we deal with this, Mr. Speaker? How do we deal with this? It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me the senior citizens, the low-income senior citizens in this country, the low-income senior citizens in this country deserve more attention, and the most attention, Mr. Speaker. And that's why we, Mr. Speaker, will be moving this motion that senior citizens on the low income should get more from their senior citizen's rebate — those that are making over 30,000 and 35,000 should get significantly less.

And what is wrong with that philosophy? Is that not the philosophy by which this country was created and built, helping those on the low-income level? Isn't it ironic that I stand speaking on those terms that very often the Leader of the Opposition tried to build a career speaking on the same thing?

Mr. Speaker, that is the way we must move in this country, and that is why I move an amendment to this motion. And what we would propose, Mr. Speaker, is this: the savings that the federal government would make from de-indexation of the old age pension should be offset with increased benefits to those in the guaranteed income supplement.

What that means, Mr. Speaker, is those with, give more, a little more to those without. And what's wrong with that type of system, Mr. Speaker? That is what we were taught in this

country. That's what we were taught in this province, and that's what we believe in, Mr. Speaker.

Therefore, I move an amendment to this motion, Mr. Speaker, that reads as follows . . . that the resolution be amended as follows:

That all the words after the word "that" be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

This Assembly requests the federal government take measures that will ensure that the standard of living of low-income seniors is not eroded by partial indexing of the old age security program that is scheduled to begin January 1, 1986, and urge the federal government to consider instituting offsetting increases in the guaranteed income supplement payable as a possible measure.

I move that, seconded by the member from Meadow Lake, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Speaker, unlike the Minister of Finance, I do not intend to try to cloud the issue by discussing every conceivable issue that has affected senior citizens in the last 10 years. Mr. Speaker, I want to be relatively brief and direct to the point.

What the amendment amounts to — the amendment should be seen for what it is. It amounts to a refusal by the government members opposite to take a stand on this issue. It is patently — and the speeches by the Minister of Finance and whatever one would describe the performance of the Premier in question period — it is patently an attempt to confuse the issue and to avoid taking a stand.

I say, Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that members opposite would have had the courage of the Conservative Party in Manitoba or the Conservative Party in Nova Scotia, and would have joined Liberals and New Democrats in Canada in condemning de-indexing. What in fact the government opposite has done is to introduce a confusing amendment that I want to speak to in a moment.

Mr. Minister, Mr. Speaker, rather, I would have hoped that members opposite could have found their way to saying to their federal brethren, you're wrong, it should not be done. I would have hoped that they would have had the courage to do that. It's a rather strange relationship. This government is slavishly tied to the skirts of the federal government while the federal government seem to pay them very little heed in return. It is a very strange, one-sided relationship. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, I would have hoped they would have found the courage to do that.

The old age pensions in this country are one of the genuinely decent things this country has done, and we initiated on our own, that was our idea. It's been our contribution to a more civilized western society. And you are quite right — the old age pensions are not enough. And it has been the New Democrats in Ottawa who have taken the lead in urging that they be increased.

Mr. Speaker, the indexing of those pensions was another compassionate step in an attempt, Mr. Speaker, to make old age pensions and the lot of senior citizens a better one, another genuinely compassionate decent thing this country has done.

I would have hoped members opposite would have had the courage to defend and protect our old age pension system. They have not done so. They have refused to do so. Instead we have these bizarre performances today by the Minister of Finance, who spoke about everything else, and by the Premier, and I must confess I had no idea what he was speaking about in question period.

Mr. Speaker, the amendment deals with the proposition that the GIS, which has always been

means tested, and the old age security should be means tested. That is, in fact, just what the letter said. Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party of Saskatchewan has been the . . . the New Democratic Party in Canada and Saskatchewan has been the only parties which have consistently opposed means testing old age pensions. We are the only party that has consistently opposed it. Both Liberals and Conservatives have toyed with it. We opposed that.

(1530)

We opposed that because most senior citizens now live below the poverty line. Some 60 per cent of them do. Some 60 per cent of them do, Mr. Minister. Inevitably a means-tested old age pension will take income and money away from senior citizens who already live below the poverty line. There can be no justification for that.

The GIS, which is now income tested, does not begin to assist in a full and fair way all those who are below the poverty line. Some 60 per cent of senior citizens live below the poverty line. Those 60 per cent of senior citizens do not all get the GIS. Indeed, I think it's fair to say that only 20 per cent of those senior citizens who live below the poverty line get the full GIS. And, Mr. Speaker, to index . . . to means test, as this resolution suggests, as the amendment suggests — to means test the old age security will further erode the position of senior citizens.

My colleague from Shaunavon read the statement by the Prime Minister in the federal election campaign with respect to what indexing should mean for senior citizens. I don't intend to repeat it, and I frankly — although I must be forgiven for the source — I don't think I could improve upon that statement.

De-indexing pensions will aggravate the lot of the poorest age group in our society. I would have hoped members opposite, who I suspect know that this cannot be justified either on . . . certainly not on political grounds, and cannot be justified on policy grounds. I think they know it; I think they just haven't got the courage to say to the federal government, you've made a mistake and you ought not to do it.

Mr. Speaker, as I said the other day, I would have hoped this government would have said no, we think you made a mistake — on compassionate grounds. I'd hoped they would have done it because it is a program that Canadians have developed which is decent and compassionate and has done a lot for senior citizens.

But if members opposite have no compassion, I would have hoped, then, that they could have found some crasser ground, Mr. Speaker, in which to oppose the de-indexing . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the resolution deals with de-indexing, and that's what I'm dealing with.

Mr. Speaker, I would have hoped that they could have found some crass grounds to impose de-indexing. Mr. Speaker, as the Premier admitted Friday in question period when the matter was raised, it is unacceptable to Canadians that the financial position of senior citizens should be further eroded by any means.

And if that occurs because the federal government removes the de-indexing, then the provinces may well find themselves being pressured to pick up the pieces. And thus we may have the federal government transferring a program to the provincial government.

The provincial governments, most of them, are already hard pressed; certainly this government claims to be. So if the members opposite couldn't find their way to oppose de-indexing on compassionate grounds, I would have hoped they would have done it on a rather more crass ground. They haven't done so.

Mr. Speaker, the de-indexing of pensions is a further illustration of how Conservative

governments are shifting the tax burden from the rich to the poor. Mr. Speaker, we have seen the renter's rebate taken away from senior citizens — at least those who live in apartments; we don't know what's going to happen next year. We now see the de-indexing of pensions further erodes their financial position.

All of this done admittedly for only one purpose — to save the government money. Why? So they can reduce the taxes of the oil companies — reduce the taxes of wealthy Canadians — so that they will not have to pay capital gains on profits they make speculating on the stock market; and so that they will not have to pay capital gains on income, much of which cannot be defended, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I don't intend to go on at length, and I haven't had a chance to discuss it. I can tell you that I will be casting my vote, Mr. Speaker, against this amendment and for the main motion. The amendment is nothing other than an attempt to avoid having to say yes or no. The amendment, Mr. Speaker, is an attempt by members opposite to say maybe. On this issue, Mr. Speaker, we think "maybe" just simply isn't good enough. Members opposite should say yes or no.

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would have hoped that the opportunity would have been provided to us to hear the Premier enter into this debate, and I certainly would have invite him to be a part of it because I think that senior citizens across this country are asking many questions. They are asking the question here in Saskatchewan, and they are asking it in respect to the Tory government now in Ottawa. And they are asking of who can believe the Tory promise.

My colleague has indicated . . . In the last federal election the leader, the now Prime Minister of this country, indicated that there was a sacred trust that the seniors' pensions would not be, in fact, disturbed, that indexing would continue back and be continued. And today it's the seniors across this nation . . . and I ask the seniors who can remember the Tory government of the 1929 and 34 in Saskatchewan . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. Order. I stopped the Minister of Finance from going back and reviewing history back from the beginning of time. And I'm going to ask the member here to stay on the subject of the debate.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well, I ask the seniors across Canada to look back into history of previous Tory governments and ask themselves whether they have ever offered security and dignity to the seniors. And I ask them to look again today and watch what is happening across the world, and indeed in Canada, with right-wing governments.

I'll tell you that Brian Mulroney, the Prime Minister of this province, indicated clearly at Sherbrooke, promised unequivocally to re-instate complete indexing of old age pensions to the actual cost of living as of January, 1985. And they said also at that time that they would provide continuation of the security net — the safety net, as they called it — that that was a sacred trust.

Well I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, that that promise has been broken to the people, the seniors of Canada. And I ask the seniors to remember the records of other Tory governments. You know, across the way they seem to think that it's a kind of a little change; that it's not going to affect anybody. But do you know the magnitude of what it's going to take out of the average citizen? \$1.62 billion, average citizens, the collective citizens across this nation . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . and you might want to laugh because of the magnitude of it, but over an average of four years it's about \$1,500 out of every senior's pocket. And they think that's . . . That's the new Tory justice — the new Tory justice.

We were promised tax reforms by the federal government in respect to putting a minimum taxation on the rich — those that were escaping, the 750 that were making over 150, \$200,000

range and were paying no tax. But no, no. That was too complicated. It wasn't complicated; it was the people that they are acting on behalf of.

So why would the Tory government effect a tax on wealthy? Of course not. They represent them. And so what are they doing now? They have decided to strike out against the seniors across this nation. And I want to say, one of the biggest myths that has ever been perpetrated, or pretended to be perpetrated, is by this and other Tory governments across this nation, and that is that they have consultation with the people that they are going to affect. Consultations . . . the new order of consultations, they say. Federal Tory government will consult with the provincial, and collectively will introduce fiscal responsibility.

You know, when the Minister of Health was asked in Ottawa whether he had consulted in respect to de-indexing the pensions to the seniors, he had to admit . . . Epp can't name one group backing pension decision. He hadn't even consulted with the people — the seniors, the people that had built this nation.

And one of the things, as the member from . . . my colleagues from Regina Centre indicated, what we had built here in Canada was a basic pension for all seniors, the old age security. Regardless of their income, other income, we said, in respect to your contribution in building this nation, we will establish for you a basic pension called old age security.

And we went beyond that, and we said to those seniors who were unfortunate and need more income in order to sustain life in the dawn of their life, we set up the guaranteed income supplement. That's what we did.

And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, the basic old age security has become an integral part of security for our seniors throughout this nation. I think it has been the envy of many people who have seen the respect and the dignity with which we looked at the seniors who, I say, contributed so much in the building of this province and this country. And today what we see is a further erosion of that which I thought all seniors could continue with security to expect would continue to exist.

And so I am disappointed that here today that . . . in having the massive tradition, the massive tradition in Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan which was known as the social . . . which brought in so many social programs throughout the year. It was the social laboratory of North America — laboratory — and no doubt about it. And today what we see is again the right-wing Tory party attacking those very people who have built this country.

And so I want to ask the seniors again to realize that here today what we ask the provincial government and members of this legislature to agree on. We ask to join together, as they did in Manitoba, and to send a message to Ottawa on behalf of the 122,000 seniors in this province, to send a message to Ottawa and to ask them to reconsider cutting back on the security of senior citizens throughout this country.

(1545)

And unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Finance got up said, well we can't agree with that. We have to fudge it. We have to really go for a means test. That's what his amendment does.

No longer will we have the old age security as a right, and properly indexed as we had during the past number of years. And so it's very clear here that what we have in a erosion of the safety net which has been provided for our seniors throughout Canada at the federal level. And there is, in fact, duplicity here in Saskatchewan. And if a government and members of the government refuse to agree with what was passed in Manitoba, being critical of the federal government's

de-indexing of pensions, then we know exactly where this government stands in respect to seniors.

And so I ask you, the seniors of this province, to certainly regard this as a right-wing Tory action and look across the world and look at it at Great Britain and see what is happening there so far as the social net; to take a look in the United States at the right-wing Reagan government. And I ask the seniors to look at what happened here in this province some years ago under the previous Tory government, and I ask them not to sit idly by but to take on the fight to prevent this right-wing government from destroying the network of security that took a number of years for various political parties to build up.

And so, therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say that I am disappointed that here across are other Saskatchewan members of the government who absolutely will refuse to support the seniors of this country. That's what it amounts to. If we don't pass the resolution in the form that we put forward, what the members of the government caucus are saying to the seniors of this province and this country is that we tacitly agree with the steps being taken by the Mulroney government.

I want to say that in our party we're going to continue the fight on behalf of the seniors in Saskatchewan and the fight for seniors across Canada. And I am glad to say that I have a member of Parliament in the House today from the New Democratic Party who are holding hearings across Saskatchewan and across Canada to hear what the seniors of this country have to say about this Tory policy. And I will tell you, I will tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there is no doubt that the seniors, come the subsequent elections, will know what to do.

And so I, on behalf of my caucus, indicate clearly that we are, in fact, joined in co-operation with the seniors of this province, of this country, and we will continue to fight for an old age security with the continuation of indexing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just have a few words of comment with respect to the amendment that was proposed, and the resolution. I want to make sure that the public of Saskatchewan understands what it will mean if the opposition votes against an increase to the guaranteed income supplement.

In this amendment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have proposed to help senior citizens with low income. And we have proposed to offset the partial de-indexing by an increase in guaranteed income supplement. And I want the entire province to know, and the nation to know, if the opposition in the province of Saskatchewan is about to vote against that, what that means to low-income people in this province, and what that would mean in principle to low-income people across this country.

Now what it means is that they would rather have a system that supplements high-income people. Well I just want to make it very, very clear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that our amendment would completely offset the de-indexing, and it would apply to low-income people, low-income people who need the help, and not to rebate the rich.

Now speaker after speaker after speaker in the opposition is saying that they want to rebate everybody, and they want to provide more money to everybody, whether they're wealthy, whether they have 100,000 or 200,000 or 50,000. And we're saying, Mr. Speaker, we can address

the problem of the de-indexing for low-income seniors by providing an increase in guaranteed income supplement.

That's very, very important, Mr. Speaker, because it provides for a mechanism which allows low-income people to be protected and still allows a tax base for provincial governments and federal governments and others to deal with their particular programs.

The second point I want to make: I know the opposition has talked about oil companies in this debate. They've talked about capital gains in this debate. I want to talk about seniors. I want to speak about seniors. What kind of position are the seniors of Saskatchewan in today in the province of Saskatchewan? What kind of position are they in, and how would guaranteed income supplement increases fit with what's gone on in the province of Saskatchewan today? If we can adopt this motion, and the federal government adopts our recommendation, it fits perfectly with the programs that we've initiated in the province of Saskatchewan — perfectly.

As an example — and I'll just touch on part of it — senior citizens will be receiving this letter from me today or tomorrow. It went out. And the letter in the first two paragraphs says this — just two paragraphs — as it applies to seniors in this province. I'm not talking about oil companies. I'm not talking about capital gains. I'm talking about seniors and the impact that guaranteed income supplement increases would have on the programs that we've initiated here to date. The letter says this:

During the past three years we have introduced programs to ensure security to seniors. We have doubled the maximum benefits under the Saskatchewan Income Plan for single seniors from \$25 to \$50 a month, and increased senior couples maximum benefits from \$45 to \$75 a month in the province of Saskatchewan for senior citizens.

We established a 5-year, \$20 million Senior Citizens' Home Repair Program, and this year took great pleasure in announcing the Senior Citizens' Heritage Rebate.

Now the letter goes on to say about seniors in this province:

The Senior Citizens' Heritage Rebate Program offers \$25 million in benefits to senior home owners. The program will reimburse seniors a portion of their 1985 property taxes that are paid by December 31 of this year and ensure that senior home owners in Saskatchewan receive rebate benefits this year.

This week seniors will receive the application form, and next year, Mr. Speaker, next year the senior citizens' property tax credit will introduce . . . will be introduced, providing increased benefits, increased benefits to lower income seniors in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now I raise that, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because guaranteed income supplements that would be increased will be focused and targeted on exactly the same individuals that have come to us from across the province and say, help those on lower income, or people who have fixed government pensions; make sure they are protected, and for heavens sakes don't start rebating, and don't keep rebating all those folks that may have incomes that are very, very large and larger than anybody in this room.

Now we have addressed that because people have said to the province of Saskatchewan and the government, the finance minister and others, the low-income people need help; the wealthy people don't need it. Tax breaks, benefits, supplements that would encourage more rebates to the rich; take the money and provide it to lower income people.

The second point I want to make Mr. Deputy Speaker, with respect to how this program would fit with Saskatchewan, we have taken a look at seniors' programs in this province and said

we must do more than has ever been done before. I mean, I think the Minister of Finance mentioned, in the province of Manitoba their protection for seniors is only a fraction of what it is here. And similarly I don't believe that Manitoba even indexes at all their supplements to seniors. They don't even index them at all, as far as I'm aware, but they're talking about the de-indexing at the federal level.

In the province of Saskatchewan, not only are we indexed, but we have put a great deal of money forward with respect to low-income people and seniors across the board. Now I'll give you some examples, because this program announced today, or the amendment that we propose, fits with these.

Fifteen hundred new nursing home beds planned for Saskatchewan. That's a large construction project for seniors. Extra billing by doctors has been eliminated. I think that would be extremely significant and important to seniors in the province of Saskatchewan. And when you're looking at low-income people, extra billing is precisely the individuals that are saying, that's a problem for me. And we've addressed that problem head-on. And for decades and generations people have been trying to deal with it, and the Minister of Health in this government dealt with it.

Provide province-wide foot care programs for seniors. And low-income seniors are those that need it, and that's what's provided here — up to \$25 a month for low-income seniors, as I've mentioned. No Sask Tel increases for seniors and for citizens of this province for two years. A \$1,000 home repair program, a grant program for seniors who own their own homes. Sales tax removed for power bills. Ask the low-income seniors if that's important.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have put together programs for seniors in this province; a long list of them. And they are designed particularly for low-income seniors. When we announce a program — and I'm not going to go over the entire budget — when we announce a program that provides up to \$600 million for economic activity and jobs, 300 million for health, senior citizens believe that that's extremely important.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just let me close with this. Just let me close with this. I want the entire province of Saskatchewan to know two things; one, obviously what we're doing for seniors and those on low income — and our new rebate program for seniors is designed specifically for those on low income.

And two, I want the whole country to know, if the opposition in this House votes against an increase, an offsetting increase to guaranteed income supplement that would apply to all low-income seniors, I want the whole country to know that the opposition, that the NDP voted against that. Because I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you help low-income people — and this would — it is not only responsible, it is not only caring, but it's also wise in the sense that you're not giving rebates to wealthy people.

And I've said many times there's a distinct difference between the opposition and this government with respect to the philosophy of rebating the rich. They were into it for years, and they carried on old programs, and they encouraged to carry them on, and we're saying: we believe that it's responsible to care and protect those low-income individuals, and that's what this amendment says: to make sure that the guaranteed income supplement completely offsets the indexing, and if it does, it will do the job, and at the same time we don't end up rebating the rich.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe it's a very sound amendment, and I certainly will be supporting it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

MR. ENGEL: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to listen to what the Premier said today and how he's trying to put up a smoke-screen so that this government

doesn't have to go on record and doesn't have to vote where they stand on indexing — on where they stand.

This amendment, this amendment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that he expects us to support — instead of a motion that's before the House, Mr. Speaker — this amendment here says that . . . urges the federal government to consider, to consider instituting offsetting increases in guaranteed income supplement payments as a possible measure.

Let's just say . . . please look at something. Go ahead and slap on an index. Go ahead and take the indexing away and say that we're to go back, we're going to go back to the days when the Tories were in power last time. Mr. Speaker, this move goes back, and, if we follow it through, if we follow it through to what it's going to cost seniors, we'll be back to where we were in the '30s when there was no effective pension in place — when there was no effective pension in place. And we're going to move back.

And it's even worse than that, Mr. Speaker, because what I heard today, what I heard today in both this amendment and in the question period and in what the previous speaker, what the Premier just said, if that he believes in a means test. He believes that there should be a means test to see who's going to get a pension or not. He wants to be able to exercise his political will and say, look, we'll allow this, but we won't allow that; and we're going to determine who . . . we're going to determine who in Saskatchewan is going to get a pension or not. We're going to determine that, and we're going to do a means test.

And as far as I'm concerned, as far as I'm concerned, this government doesn't care, Mr. Speaker, about seniors. This government has demonstrated over and over they don't care what the ordinary person is going to get stuck with.

When we discussed the pay-out on Pioneer Trust, that wasn't a problem. We paid out the money that went to people that were unsecured depositors, Mr. Speaker. But when we talk about indexing pensions, when you talk about indexing pensions, and you talk about the person that's on a low level, we're going to freeze them; in fact, we're going to roll them back by 3 per cent.

(1600)

Seniors in my area are on the pension and never expecting an index spent a life's savings to go on a trip, but we didn't have \$4,500 to rebate them. We didn't have \$4,500 for them, Mr. Speaker.

And I think that this amendment goes completely contrary to the original motion. This amendment is completely opposite because it says we'll talk about possible measures of offsetting the cost, possible measures that might be instituted to offset the cost. Talk about urging the federal government to institute, or consider instituting, offsetting increases. Mr. Speaker, that waters down the intent because the resolution was direct and clear, right to the point, saying we don't believe that the federal government should allow de-indexing of pensions.

And I think that this amendment, if you look at the fine lines of it, shouldn't even have been considered by this House today, Mr. Speaker. I question whether that amendment should be considered because it's a completely different resolution. We were being specific and saying that we don't believe in de-indexing, and out we come with a measure saying, well, if you're going to de-index, go ahead and de-index. And by voting for this amendment, Mr. Speaker, you are telling me that I'm supposed to vote for and agree with de-indexing of senior citizens' pensions. And that is completely and opposite to what our original intent was.

I think the original intent was a good one. When I look at the article that's in the *Globe and Mail* this past week, the federal leader, our Prime Minister, made a statement in Sherbrooke, Quebec,

on July 26, 1984, and Brian Mulroney promised unequivocally to reinstate complete indexing of old age pensions to the actual cost of living as of January, 1985. He was going after Liberals and said, you're indexing those . . . And now he's taken the indexing away — a complete turn-around.

When you want to win an election in this country, you can make any kind of promise, and people will believe governments for making promises. But once the election's over, then you go back on your promise. When the Prime Minister promised that we're supposed to reinstate complete indexing of old age pensions to the actual cost of living back to January 1st, 1985 — he makes that promise on July 26, '84, and by less than one year later, and it's not July yet in 1985 — we've got a motion before the federal government that is going to go completely contrary to his word.

So we don't need to listen to election promises any more because they are just great for winning an election, but once the election's over we can stand up in this House and say, taboo with the election promises, we don't need to follow them, and we're going to stick before you a little resolution, or a little amendment to the resolution that completely disregards the promises that were made earlier.

And I think this amendment is one that we can't consider today because it's so far off what the original intent was. And to tell me that I'm supposed to stand up in this House and vote for an amendment like this that is the first step in the means test, I want to tell every Tory in Saskatchewan that here is one person that isn't going to vote for a means test — not for senior citizens, not for child care. I don't believe in means tests. I don't believe in a means test for my medicare insurance, Mr. Speaker, and I don't believe in a means test that this one sets out, that we would set up a possible measure that will offset the increases of indexing.

I don't believe that that's the step we want to take. This is a brand-new motion. This moves us back to the '30s. I don't think this House today is ready to do that. We're not ready to take a regressive step like that. And I would urge the members of this House to consider what the finance minister is leading you into, and the letter he wrote.

Consider the final letters your finance minister is writing and see the kind of trouble he is getting you into. The Premier stood up in question period today and he said he didn't do a study, he didn't do a study on what the impact this indexing is going to have.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at some of the numbers that are raised, and the numbers here in the *Globe and Mail*, the federal government is going to save \$15 million in 1985-86; \$15 million is going to come out of the pockets of seniors in this country. And that's going to go up to \$1.6 billion by 1990-1991 — \$1.6 billion is going to come out of the pockets of seniors.

And they put up a little amendment here in a little motion that says the federal government should consider possible measures to supplement this amount of money — consider possible measures to supplement \$1.6 billion. Well I'll tell you what the possible substitutes are, Mr. Speaker. The possible substitutes will be that much more money for the oil companies. That's going to come out of the hands of senior citizens.

And here it says to consider offsetting increases. Well, they'll take that offsetting increase, and according to this article, that money is going to the oil companies and to the banks.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. The member knows that we're not debating what will go to anybody except senior citizens, and I would ask him to stay on the topic.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Speaker, I will just then not talk about where the money is going to go. But I know that out of the pockets of senior citizens is going to come \$1.6 billion — \$1.6 billion — just about as much as you've already got us in a deficit in this province. And you want to take that much more from the pockets of senior citizens. The amount of money that we're talking about

here that will be in place if it's de-indexed, by 1990 and 1991 budget will be the amount of Saskatchewan's deficit. And that is a lot of money, Mr. Speaker.

The amount of money is coming out of the pockets of senior citizens. And my parents, my parents are going to be stuck with this increase here. They didn't do that well in their life, and they don't own oil wells. They don't have other sources of income. And my dad has always driven a comfortable car, but under the pressures facing him now . . . I saw him this weekend. He came home with a new Chevy, a little, tiny Chevy he bought, and that for him is really stepping down. And as old people, they have to go back and say, we can't afford to live like we could when we had the good old days. We can't afford to live like that anymore. We've got to cut back. And I think the cut-backs are terrible.

Mr. Speaker, when you talk about the other offsetting increases to senior citizens . . . I have here a letter, Mr. Speaker, I have here a copy of a letter that was addressed to the Minister of Health, Minister in charge of Saskatchewan Health, room 38, Saskatchewan Legislative Building. And it talks about a local contribution for a new nursing home, Mr. Speaker — a local contribution for a new nursing home.

The Premier talked about the advantages . . . And I see the Speaker's probably planning on standing up and saying that this is going to be out of order. But what I want to point out is saying that with this amendment we're talking about offsetting the increases that senior citizens are paying.

I want to say what the offset really is in Gravelbourg. I want to tell you that what the offset is in Gravelbourg: they've changed the formula for senior citizens that were getting the indexing. Senior citizens who were getting the index, thanks to this government, have had their formula changed when they go to build a new nursing home from . . . The local contribution used to be 8 per cent . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. The member is off topic completely. I stopped the Minister of Finance when he wanted to talk about senior citizens' homes and the amount of money, and so on, and I 'm going to stop the member here, as well.

MR. ENGEL: — Well, Mr. Speaker, when you were . . . I will accept your ruling and not talk about this, but when you were not in the chair and the deputy speaker was in the chair, the Premier listed for this Assembly quite a list of benefits that the seniors were getting as offsetting increases. That is on the amendment — offsetting increases. But now I can't talk on this amendment about the offsetting increases that the seniors are paying, not the increases they're getting.

On one hand, the premier talked we can afford to de-index their pensions. We can afford to de-index their pension because they're getting these increases, where it's costing some money. I won't bother; I won't bother doing that. I won't bother doing what it's going to cost in Gravelbourg because if you de-index they're going to lose some money.

I'm saying that they're not only going to get increases, because this amendment said we're going to give them some increases and the federal government should consider instituting — consider, which isn't a very strong word — but they said they should consider instituting some offsetting increases.

Well I would suggest to the Premier of Saskatchewan that he should consider what some of the changes he's made that's affecting seniors over and above losing their annual increase that they would get. You've taken that away on them. You're agreeing that the federal government should take it away and you're saying that hey should do as a possible measure is giving some increase in guaranteed income supplement.

Mr. Premier, this is hog-wash. It is so flowery language through his cousins in Ottawa that it's not going to do anything. It's a statement that just doesn't mean anything.

I like what our counterparts is doing. I like to point out and say that my colleague — he's not here anymore — but Les Benjamin came down and he brought us some copies of some petitions that are out. And I want to read that into the record:

That the annual cut to each and every OAS pensioner in Canada will be \$100 in 1986 (\$100 this year); \$205 next year; \$315 per person, (Mr. Speaker) in 1988; \$431 in '89; \$553 in '90; and \$680 in 1991.

That's what we're talking about. We're talking about a lot of money for each and every senior citizen. This government is prepared to take from the hands of every senior citizen in this country \$100 in '86, \$205 in '87, and all the way up to \$680 in 1991. In 1991 that's going to cost \$1.5 billion, Mr. Speaker.

Flowery language like this little motion here, that says, oh, we'll pat them on the back, take it away, but possibly consider a few alternatives — consider a few alternatives.

Well I'll tell you, Mr. Premier, that the senior citizens of Saskatchewan are considering the alternatives. They're writing a letter. Read a copy of the letter that was written to your Minister of Health, that came from your brother-in-law's home town. Read a copy of the letter and see why your sister-in-law did as well as she did. And I'll tell you why: because they don't like the cuts that are being given; they don't like the increased funding that's coming. And they like a government that's in office that's going to support them, and it's going to support them and their role and their pensions.

I don't like an amendment that's going to introduce a means test. I don't like amendments that are going to set that precedent. And there's no way I'm going to be tricked into voting for that amendment when we have a good motion before this Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not going to take a long time with the House today because I know that there are a number of other members that want to speak on this, and I'm going to be quite interested in hearing the comment from the seconder of this motion, the member from Meadow Lake.

Because, Mr. Minister, I want to indicate that I just got back from my constituency and a number of other constituencies over the weekend, and the de-indexing of senior citizens' pension most certainly is an issue, and it's a great issue out there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

MR. THOMPSON: — When we take a look at the motion that was presented here today . . . and I just want to indicate that that motion was spelled out quite clearly that it's a motion asking the Government of Canada who has brought out in their last federal government the de-indexing of OAS pensions for senior citizens.

And we have just heard from my colleague from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, and he indicated what it is going to cost a senior citizen five years down the road, and that's going to be taking out \$680 from that senior citizen's pocket. And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, I've spoken to many senior citizens on the weekend and they think it's a shame that this would take place.

And the motions that are going around . . . and let's take a look at what the motion that we

presented here and asking the government members to support us in that motion. “Whereas, Mr. Speaker, the recent decision — (I’m not going to read the whole motion) — whereas the decision by the Government of Canada to de-index old age security programs was harmful . . .” Then we go on and we finish by saying, “. . . that this Assembly demand or request immediate reinstatement.”

So what did the Conservative government do? And what did they do, they have watered it down. And I just want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that this is how they watered it down. And I won’t read the whole thing, but I want to go to how they ended off their resolution, which I consider to be a means test, Mr. Speaker.

And here’s what they say: and urges the federal government to consider — they urge the federal government to consider; they’re not demanding; they’re not requesting; they’re not saying immediate — but to consider instituting offsetting increases in guaranteed income supplement payments as a possible measure. They’re not demanding anything — a possible measure, they want them to consider.

Then, Mr. Speaker, the Premier got up in the House, got up in the House and indicated when you were not in your seat that if the NDP voted against this motion, if the NDP were to vote against this motion, that we would be voting against the senior citizens.

Now I just wonder, Mr. Speaker, I have not heard of any representation prior to this debate today, by the Conservative government, by the hon. Premier of this province, to the federal government requesting why they have put in their motion. They have not written a letter to the federal government. All of a sudden today we’re debating a motion that we’ve put forward, opposing the indexing. Now they come up with an amendment to it and are saying that we have to support that, and if we don’t support it, we’re against the senior citizens. Well I just say: where was your government before today when we got into this debate over de-indexing? There was nothing said.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Premier got up in the House and he talked about the heritage rebate Bill that was coming in. And I want to say that that’s right, they’re bringing in a heritage rebate Bill. And he was the one who just got through speaking on that. And that has caused the senior citizens a lot of concern out there. Why did you take it off two months ago when you brought the budget in, and now two months later, you’re introducing another Bill, calling it the heritage Bill, to pay the senior citizens’ home repair rebate program? You didn’t have to do that and cause the senior citizens all this grief.

I tell you, I know a lot of senior citizens who have cancelled their summer holidays — they have cancelled it because they did not believe that they were going to get that rebate. Two months later, here we got it. You were the one who had just got through saying that.

You also talked about — and, Mr. Speaker, just prior to you coming back to your seat, the Premier got up in the House, and he said, the NDP didn’t say anything about the 1,500 nursing homes, and he qualified that: planned for Saskatchewan; not built, but planned. And that’s his words, and you can check *Hansard*.

But I say, Mr. Speaker, that this is a good motion. This is a good motion that we put forward to urge the federal government to withdraw the de-indexing Bill, and it’s something that the senior citizens of this province deserve, and of Canada, they deserve. They are the ones who built this country, and I think that we owe them that type of respect. And I would ask all the Conservative members to join in this House together today and send a message to the government of Ottawa requesting that they withdraw the de-indexing Bill, and ask them to vote against the amendment that has just been put forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SCHMIDT: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm of the opinion that every senior that needs a pension increase should get it. Of course, this is within reason. You can't just give people everything that they ask for. But seniors are reasonable people and wouldn't ask for anything more than a government could afford to pay.

Also, I'm of the opinion that the federal government should adjust the guaranteed income supplement so that de-indexing would not hurt or cause hardship to our poorest senior citizens.

Now on this issue, the NDP are repeating their deplorable and historical tactics. The medicare party, as they think they are, is really the medi-scare party, a name that I gave to them I this Assembly. In my constituency they are out scaring old people again. In Melville constituency they are preaching fear and deception. They're saying to the senior citizens, they're going to take your pension away. And that is the furthest thing from the truth. The truth is that those people who do not necessarily need an increase, may not necessarily get it.

In my constituency I would say 75 per cent of the population receives the guaranteed income supplement. So there's no need to scare those people. Their pension will continue as will everyone else's.

What we have is really the old game of misspelling. Now in my constituency many of us don't spell very well, and the way we spell deception is NDP — the new deception party. And even the name of the deception . . . it should really be the old socialist party, why New Democratic Party? But in any event, the deception continues.

Now the truth is, Mr. Speaker, that de-indexing will only affect people in years when the inflation is under 3 per cent. I'm not saying it is necessarily the best course of action that the federal government can take, but it is one course of action open to them. I think that it is something that should be considered generally when you look at tax reform. And I wish to point out in the case of seniors, there's a special exemption for seniors — in 1985 it will be \$2,590. Now if \$2,950 of 1985 income so seniors is tax free, that means about 80 per cent of the old age pension is tax free.

Now income tax is based on the ability to pay, and I can't really understand how the opposition believes that — to use an example of this nature — Senator Davey Stuart, who I believe is over 65, would pay approximately \$1,250 less income tax right now than the Leader of the Opposition. Now on the same income a person who is 65 would pay less income tax.

So there are hidden benefits to seniors that do not necessarily appear in this debate and are hidden by the members of the opposition. And what I'm trying to point out is that at some time when we reform taxes this special benefit will have to be taken into account in the ability to pay income tax and the ability or right to receive pension.

The NDP don't believe in a means test. They believe in equal poverty for all. They don't seem to understand that if you give people with a lot of money some of the money the poor should be getting that the poor will get less. It's simple mathematics, and they don't understand it.

Mr. Speaker, senior citizens demand and expect only fair pension increases. And if this amendment is passed, this will be the fairest type of increase that Canada has seen in a long time.

Mr. Speaker, seniors deserve to pay fair taxes, to pay fair income taxes, and I'm only pointing out to seniors in this province, and in particular my constituency, that they have a very large benefit of \$2,590 if they're in the income tax bracket. At some time they will have to also bear the brunt of the fair taxation system.

Seniors deserve a pension increase if they need it. And lastly, they do not deserve to be scared by the NDP. I will be voting in favour of the amendment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I am speaking . . . I wish to wind up the debate . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Then I will speak to the amendment and wind up the debate after that then.

With respect to the items which have been raised in this debate o the amendment by the Premier, and I specifically made notes and will go down them, and it will be recalled that he read or substantially read his letter to senior citizens around the province pointing out what benefits his government had bestowed upon senior citizens, and presumably it was relevant to this question of the guaranteed income supplement, and I will pick them up one by one.

He spoke of the Senior Citizens' Home Repair Program and, of course, that's quite right. There has been a Senior Citizens' Home Repair program for a good number of years, and it is still there. It has got a new name. And with respect to the program, Mr. Speaker, the amount available has been increased, as it has on a fair number of occasions over the 12-or 13-year life of the program.

With respect to the Senior Citizens' Heritage Rebate, we will be dealing with legislation with respect to that later in this session, and we will note with interest whether or not it provides rebates to the wealthy or not. I'm surprised at the Premier taking a very firm line against any rebates to the wealthy, and if this program should happen to have rebates for the wealthy. I presume that he will move the appropriate amendments or vote against the Bill.

With respect to the increased benefits for lower incomes through the tax credit program, we will have an opportunity to debate that during the income tax arrangements. I've already alluded very briefly to that simplified tax measure contained in a simple 25-paragraph, several-page amendment.

But I want to turn to the basic element of the Premier's argument that he believes that it is all right to de-index old age security so long as we restore the indexation or the money lost to those old age pensioners who receive the guaranteed income supplement. To do otherwise he says, is to give money to the wealthy — to use his term, to rebate money to the wealthy.

I don't know anyone who was taking about a rebate, but he keeps using that term in his address in this House. We are now talking about the old age security pension and whether or not we should target in people who are receiving the old age pension but who do not receive the guaranteed income supplement.

The nub of the main motion was: let's not de-index old age security. The nub of the amendment is: let's de-index old age security except for those who receive the guaranteed income supplement. The argument is that the people who don't receive the guaranteed income supplement are, in the words of the Premier, the rich — the people who don't need it.

I want to advise the House that we do not share that view. We do not share the view that people who do not receive the guaranteed income supplement are the rich. We do not believe, for example, that a single person who receives an income of \$12,000 a year all in, is the rich.

Now that person does not qualify for a guaranteed income supplement. The Premier says it's all right to de-index her pension because she's probably a widow. I say that an income of \$12,000 a year for a widow is not such a munificent and magnificent income that she should be specifically targeted, she should be asked to pay an extra amount over and above the amount we'll all have to pay because of the increases in prices arising from this budget, that she should pay an extra amount by having her income reduced, in fact, because her pension is not indexed. He believes that that is the rich. I do not.

(1630)

Or take a couple, both of whom are on old age security, if they get as much as \$18,000 a year, they will not qualify for the guaranteed income supplement. The belief by members opposite is that they're the rich, that they should be targeted, that they should have their old age security pensions de-indexed and that they should not have any protection for those pensions because they are the rich.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that we ought to provide security against inflation for senior citizens who have incomes as much as \$18,000 for the couple. And I say that we ought not to decide that people with that level of income are the rich. I simply don't agree with the Premier's characterization of these people as the rich.

Now this amendment very clearly says we want to change the motion so as not to protect people who get the old age security pension, but only those who get the old age security plus the guaranteed income supplement. We want to offer no protection to people who have incomes of something under \$12,000 if single, or something under \$18,000 if couples. I say that is niggardly, and I say that it is all too characteristic of the Progressive Conservative approach to social programs.

In the Premier's words, there's a distinct difference in philosophy. And I say he's right. He believes that when people are getting these sums of money, these \$12,000 of a widow and \$18,000 for a couple, it's time to start cutting back their pensions. They are among the wealthy. They do not deserve the full protection against inflation. They say that the basket, the network of the social security safety net shouldn't protect them fully.

Well, believe you me, Mr. Speaker, there is a difference in philosophy. And I say that we are seeing a very clear statement of Conservative philosophy in this amendment. And I say to people, this now applies to old age security. You can expect that same philosophy of saying, we will provide protection and comfort only to the people at the bottom of the scale and not to the middle income. It's hardly high income. But no, protection is not to be offered to them this time with respect to old age security. Next year it will be some other social program.

We have heard the philosophy of the Conservative Party stated many times with respect to this. We are going to hear it many times again. We are hearing it today with respect to pensions.

Tomorrow it will be with respect to some other program that protects the moderate-income people of this country — maybe medicare, maybe some other program. But surely the logic, the logic of saying that people with modest incomes should lose part of their pensions is the same logic which said that people with modest incomes should pay part of their medical bills. There is no difference in logic. It is the philosophy of the Progressive Conservative Party. It is not the philosophy of our party.

This amendment is very clearly directed to derailing the debate having to do with universal old age pensions. We will therefore be opposing this amendment, and I will look forward to seeing whether or not members opposite support the proposition that old age security pensions should not be indexed for people who get these marginal incomes of \$12,000 single or \$18,000 as a couple.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

MR. YEW: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to take a few minutes, Mr. Speaker, to join debate with respect to our motion and the amendment presented recently, just a few minutes ago, by the leader of the Tories.

Mr. Speaker, our resolution deals with Mulroney's . . . with the Mulroney government's unfair and unjustified decision on the May 23rd federal budget in Canada, and it deals with the cut-backs to old age security payments to Canada's senior citizens.

Devine's amendment, or the leader of the government, the member for Estevan, proposes an amendment, which to me, Mr. Speaker, only confuses matters more. It is nothing but a smoke-screen as far as the Tory government is concerned. It waters everything down as far as . . . They have absolutely no sensitivity, no compassion, Mr. Speaker, when it comes down to senior citizens in this province.

Our motion, on the other hand, talks about, Mr. Speaker, the reason why we have introduced a motion — the reason being that the Mulroney government has decided to cut the senior, the old age security system, and undermine the old age security system for pensioners in this country.

I say . . . our motion says "cut" because the Mulroney government's decision to de-index those payments will see the purchasing power of Canadian seniors eroded each year by increases in the cost of living, Mr. Speaker.

For the record as well, Mr. Speaker, old age security payments rise each year by the same amount as Canada's annual inflation rate. If inflation is 4 per cent, old age security payments increase by 4 per cent. An example of this, Mr. Speaker, is the simple reason is that . . . is so that Canada's senior citizens do not see their fixed incomes lose ground to inflation.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is what indexation of old age security payments is all about. The Mulroney budget proposes to do away with full indexation. And like the Leader of the Opposition mentioned earlier, beginning in 1986 it proposes to cover only that portion of inflation above 3 per cent a year.

Mr. Speaker, the senior citizens that I represent in the top half of this province have a hard time making ends meet, as it is, today. None of the senior citizens that I know of living in the top half of this province earn anything close to 90 or \$100,000 a year — none.

As far as this member is concerned, as far as I'm concerned, the proposed amendment presented here today by the Leader of the Government, Leader of the Tory Conservatives in this province, is nothing, as I said earlier, nothing but a smoke-screen, a deliberate attempt to try to cover up the mismanagement, the misguided administration of Ottawa.

Those people in Ottawa have no sensitivity, no compassion, no understanding. Their policies, as well as the government of this province's policies, reflect only measures that safeguard the big industries, the wealthy people in this province — people that don't need help; people that are wealthy already. Those are the type of people that this government advocates for. But they don't realize the hardships that are encountered by people at the community level, at the grass roots level — people that don't have any hope.

Inflation is constantly rising in this province, continuously rising — high interest rates, high inflation. And those, Mr. Speaker, are the things that the Mulroney budget does not want to protect, in terms of the pensioner. The same thing applies with the Conservative government in this province. They do not want to protect the senior citizens of this province. They simply want to ignore people that are at the bottom scale, the people that are right at the bottom of our social and economic mainstream of society, the people that are having a hard time to make ends meet.

Those are the people that this Conservative government wants to do away with.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

MR. YEW: — Those people include those senior citizens living in the top half of this province, the people living in the northern administration district. Those people are hard up. Unemployment at the present time with these people is as high as 95 per cent. The welfare lines of the North, top half of this province, has increased dramatically. The people, the senior citizens of this province, are concerned that their old age security system is being undermined and being jeopardized by both the Mulroney and the Devine Conservatives in this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

MR. YEW: — For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I support the motion presented here by the Leader of the Opposition, and I reject completely the resolution, the amendment presented by the member for Estevan. Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

(1640)

Amendment agreed to on the following recorded division.

YEAS — 33

Devine	Muller	Birkbeck
McLeod	Andrew	Berntson
Lane	Duncan	Pickering
Hardy	Garner	Smith(Swift Current)
Baker	Schoenhals	Currie
Dutchak	Martens	Muirhead
Petersen	Bacon	Hodgins
Parker	Smith(Moose Jaw South)	Hopfner
Myers	Rybchuk	Caswell
Schmidt	Tusa	Glauser
Weiman	Swenson	Morin

NAYS — 7

Blakeney	Thompson	Engel
Lingenfelter	Koskie	Shillington
Yew		

Motion as amended agreed to on the following recorded division.

YEAS — 35

Devine	Muller	Birkbeck
McLeod	Andrew	Berntson
Lane	Duncan	Pickering
Hardy	Garner	Smith(Swift Current)
Baker	Schoenhals	Dirks
Currie	Dutchak	Martens

Muirhead
Hodgins
Hopfner
Caswell
Tusa
Swenson

Petersen
Parker
Myers
Gerich
Glauser
Morin

Bacon
Smith (Moose Jaw South)
Rybchuk
Schmidt
Weiman

NAYS — 7

Blakeney
Lingenfelter
Yew

Thompson
Koskie

Engel
Shillington

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, with leave, I would like to make a ministerial statement with respect to the Queen Mother's visit to Saskatchewan. It's very short, but I would like to . . .

Leave granted.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Queen Mother's Visit.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, it is with much pride and pleasure that I rise in this Assembly to today announce details relating to the July 16th visit to our fine province of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother.

The Queen Mother's visit to Regina will be her first visit to Saskatchewan since 1939. I'm delighted that she can be with us to assist in the celebration of the province's 80th anniversary celebrations. Her visit promises to be a highlight of our Heritage Year celebrations.

The Queen Mother will arrive in Regina from Toronto at 12 noon, July 16th. At 12:15 there will be an official welcome at the Legislative Building and an opportunity for Saskatchewan people to meet Her Majesty. At 12:45 the Queen Mother will be driven in an open landau north on Albert Street, along Victoria Avenue to the Hotel Saskatchewan, where the province will be hosting a reception and a luncheon. At 3:15 Her Majesty leaves the Hotel Saskatchewan and is taken to the airport for departure for Alberta.

While the Queen Mother's stay in our province and capital city will be brief, I'm hoping that all citizens of the province of Saskatchewan will join me on July 16th in welcoming Her Majesty to our fair province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I know members of the opposition join with the Premier in welcoming the news that the Queen Mother, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, will be visiting us in July. We have had a number of successful royal visits in recent years. Saskatchewan people have indicated the warmth of their affection for members of the royal family and I'm sure the same will happen when Her Majesty the Queen Mother visits us.

There are many older Saskatchewan citizens who have fond memories of the part that the Queen Mother and her late husband played during World War II, and I know will want to pour forth their affection for the Queen Mother.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

SASKATCHEWAN HOUSING CORPORATION

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 51

The committee recessed until 7 p.m.