

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

HON. MR. DIRKS: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and to the Assembly today, three very special young people who are seated behind me in the east gallery, and who will be members this year of the 1985-86 student council at Martin Collegiate which is situated in the Regina Rosemont constituency, and I would ask these people to stand as I indicate them to the Assembly.

The president of the student council, Jodi Hiller; the drama representative, Rob Evans; and the newspaper representative Gaylene Erickson. We're delighted to have you with us today, and I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming them to the Assembly.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

HON. MR. LANE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with a great deal of pleasure that I introduce to you and through you to the Assembly, some 25 students, grade 4 students from the Lumsden elementary school at Lumsden, Saskatchewan. They are seated in the Speaker's gallery. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mrs. Karen Klippenstine; chaperons, Mary Lou Spence, and Joan Britton; and the bus driver Fred Dodds.

Mr. Speaker, I will have the pleasure of meeting with the students after question period. I look forward to entertaining question and answer period. I hope they find question period interesting and informative, and I wish all hon. members would join with me, Mr. Speaker, in welcoming the Lumsden students to the Assembly.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the legislature, some guests seated in the Speaker's gallery today. And in fact I do this not only on behalf of Saskatchewan Agriculture, but as well, on behalf of the Deputy Premier and the minister in charge of Agdevco.

The people with us here today are Mr. Sun, the mission team leader, all these being from Jilin province; Mr. He, Mr. Li; and from my department, Mr. Harold Ellis, and Mr. Choon Yong. I would ask that all gentlemen stand and be recognized by the members here, please.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, Hear!

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — They are here, Mr. Speaker, selecting our first plane-load of dairy cattle to go to China. I think all members will see that the fruits of the agreement, the twinning with Jilin province, are bearing fruit, and we do wish the gentlemen a successful stay here in Saskatchewan and, as well, a safe trip home.

MR. TUSA: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure on behalf of my colleague, the member from Kelvington-Wadena, to introduce to you a group of 34 students from Invermay High School. They're in grades 7, 8, and 10. They're accompanied to the legislature this afternoon by their teacher, Mr. Cal Tomilin, and Mr. Keith Kirkham, along with their bus driver, Earl Parsons.

They will be touring the legislature this afternoon and I trust they will enjoy question period

and their tour, and any other points they may visit in Regina today.

I ask all members of the legislature to please welcome these students.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

MR. TUSA: — It's also my pleasure this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, to introduce to you and through you to the House, on behalf once again, on behalf of my colleague, the member for Kelvington-Wadena, a group of 50 grade 7 students who are in the west gallery. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Semens and Mr. Samuel. And they're also accompanied by a large group of interested parents, namely the following: Mr. Markusson, Mr. and Mrs. Helgason, Mrs. Krisjanson, Mrs. Barber, Mr. Gustafson, Mrs. Smith, and Mrs. Larson.

It's a pleasure to have all these people with us this afternoon to witness question period. I'm certain that they will enjoy the questions and answers, and they will enjoy the tour that they will be making of the Legislative Building.

I might add that I'll be meeting with this group at 2:30 for pictures and drinks, and also with the group from Invermay at 3 o'clock for pictures and drinks. Please welcome the students from Foam Lake Composite High School.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce through you, and to all members of the Assembly, a former member of the Assembly for many years, for over 29 years, Mr. Fred Dewhurst, representing the Wadena constituency. And as members will know, those that were here prior to the last election, Mr. Dewhurst held the office of Speaker for a number of years.

I would ask all members to join in extending a welcome to Mr. Dewhurst.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Expenditures of Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct a question to the minister in charge of the Saskatchewan Forest Products.

My question is: according to the corporation's 1984 annual report for the Saskatchewan Forest Products, they nearly lost \$4.5 million last year. And one would have expected that under such circumstances that senior management would have been extremely careful with expenditures. Yet I have here, Mr. Minister, a series of documents. The first document, it is an invoice and a copy of a cheque for the printing of the 1983 report. That cost the taxpayers \$1,658 in 1983 through the Queen's Printer.

I have a further document here, Mr. Minister, which indicates in respect to the 1984, an invoice and a copy of the cheque of the amount that was paid. And the amount that was paid was \$12,070 to a company in Saskatoon known as Smail Communications.

I would like to ask the minister: can you explain to the taxpayers why a company which lost \$4.5 million last year went out and paid 12 times the amount for the printing of the annual report? Who made that decision, and was the work awarded by tender?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Speaker, first of all, let's set the record straight; it was \$8,000 for the

printing of the annual report. The additional money that's in the total amount of the cheques the member's referring to was money that was done for picture taking, some other work we had them do in regards to some other . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . One was a 10th anniversary of the Saskatchewan Forest Products operation.

And also, Mr. Speaker, in regards to that total amount, instead of getting just 200 copies, we had enough copies made up — I believe 1,000, it was, made up — so we could send one out to every employee that was out there. So there was additional copies made up, many more, and also there was other stuff involved in it.

MR. KOSKIE: — Mr. Minister, are you aware that the payment made to Smail Communications was approved by a Daryl Binkley, your former executive assistant and former candidate for the federal PC nomination in the Mackenzie constituency? Can you tell the Assembly when Mr. Binkley was hired by Saskatchewan Forest Products, what position he holds, and what his salary is?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Speaker, our belief is that he went into Sask Forest about after October 31st of '84, and he went in there for one reason, Mr. Speaker. We had the audit done, provincial audit done on the accounts, and they found some irregularities that should be cleared up. I think the accounting wasn't done right; we sent him in there to check it out, to make sure . . .

He is a Chartered Accountant, Mr. Speaker. He has been there for about six or seven months now, or eight months — I'm not sure of the exact length of time. And I don't know what his wages are, but certainly not as much as you would pay a chartered Accountant. He's just regular wages. I don't know what they are. I could find out and get back to the member.

MR. KOSKIE: — A new question, Mr. Speaker. I have here photocopies of a series of cheques and invoices issued by Saskatchewan Forest Products which indicate that you are paying David Binkley Consulting Ltd. of Tisdale \$5,040 a month.

Can you explain what duties Mr. Binkley performed for the level of remuneration that is being paid, and can you explain what qualifications he has to receive that level of payment?

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Speaker, his wages include all benefits inclusive, so whatever the amount would be . . . all expenses. Second of all, he is in charge of finance and administration within the corporation. The corporation handles approximately \$35 million a year, Mr. Speaker, and there should be somebody in charge of finance and administration. There's been some changes made, and he's in charge of that.

MR. KOSKIE: — A further question to the minister. Mr. Minister, I have here also a photocopy invoice and also a copy of a cancelled cheque in respect to a cheque issued on March 14th of this year to one Daryl Binkley of Tisdale, for \$3,000. Can the minister explain why the Saskatchewan taxpayers were called upon to pay these moving expenses, and what was the reason for the relocation? Three thousand dollars for moving expenses.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the expenses were for moving, but he was appointed to finance administrator in the Sask Forest Corporation.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well, Mr. Minister, are you aware that in March you paid \$3,000 for moving expenses, which I have documentation, for Mr. Binkley. Yet in May, two months later, his monthly payments of \$5,040 were still going to his address in Tisdale. Why was this man given 3 to \$3,000 when it appears that he hadn't even moved? He was still in Tisdale.

HON. MR. HARDY: — I couldn't tell you, Mr. Speaker. I know he works five days a week in

Prince Albert and he does have a home in Prince Albert.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, new question to the minister in charge of Sask Forest Products, and it has to do with the fact that the corporation that you are supposed to be running, lost \$4.5 million. One would assume that they would be very careful with their expenditures, but I have here some documents that would indicate that in May of this year Sask Forest products paid out \$1,400 in air fares from Regina to Vancouver, plus \$1,800 in expenses for a week-end trip for three management personnel and their wives.

One of the documents which I have here, says that this was approved by the board of directors of the corporation. And in the documents that we have here there is hotel rooms at the Sheraton-Plaza in Vancouver. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you could explain these trips, these little holidays, that members of your management are taking to Vancouver at taxpayers' expense.

Can you say whether or not you approve of them and why you're spending the taxpayers' money for these kinds of trips at taxpayers' expense?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, Mr. Speaker, he's making a lot of assumptions. The management team went out to look at some plywood factories, operations on the west coast.

Mr. Speaker, they went out there to look at some operations of the plywood factories out there that was set up for them to meet with management. They were gone more than just the weekend. And I don't know if their wives went along or not; I couldn't tell you.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — This is like the Minister of Highways when he talked about his trip to Maui, Mr. Speaker, but . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. If the member has questions, I'd ask him to stay on the subject of the questions.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I certainly do have a question, and it has to do with the documents that were filed by these individuals. I would like to quote from them, Mr. Speaker.

The one that refers to the trip of Mr. Glen Colvin says that: this trip has been approved by the board of directors and includes the fare for my spouse, or the spouse of each of the above.

Now, Mr. Minister, I wonder why, if this trip was taken to look at business of the corporation, it was taken on the weekend, refers to taking the spouse of the individuals along. And another document refers to . . . and it, on their expenses account they say: to Vancouver re complimentary trip and return May 22nd, '85. This includes the expenses of spouse.

Now can you stand in this Assembly and explain that this was a business trip when it was taken on the weekend, and the individuals say that it was a complimentary trip? Can you stand and explain why it was taken and whether or not you think the individuals should pay for it rather than the taxpayers?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Speaker, I'll take notice of the question, although I will . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'll take notice of the question, Mr. Speaker, and bring it back to the Assembly — the particulars that he's talking about. I do not know in general, I can say in general why that was given or why they went out there. They went out there for two reasons. One, they went out there to look at the plants into operation.

The second one, Mr. Speaker — the second reason, Mr. Speaker, is that for over a month, almost a month and a half at the plant at Hudson Bay, we had no manager, and we put together a management team of five people, a management team of five people, a management team who run the plant entirely for six weeks or seven weeks while we found a manager to put into there. And in lieu of giving them any

benefits above and beyond, you know, extra wages for doing it, they were given an opportunity to go out and look at the mill, and if they took their wives along, I'm not aware of it.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Minister, the individuals who are claiming this expense are more honest than you are, and they refer to it as a complimentary trip — not a business trip, but a complimentary trip. What I would like to know from you, Mr. Minister, is whether you were at the board meeting where this trip for these individuals was approved? Were you at the meeting and did you vote on whether or not these expenses should be approved? Now I don't think you have to take notice of that; you should remember. And I would like to know whether you approved these holidays to Vancouver.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Speaker, I was at a board meeting when we approved a trip for these five management team. If they wanted to go out and look at some mills on the West coast, and in lieu of it they were going to incorporate the weekend so there would be some benefits accrued for them — in lieu of any additional wages that they would have had coming to them.

They spent many days there, Mr. Speaker. They worked seven days a week there, the entire management team, as well as doing their own jobs. so if there was any additional expenditures, it was well warranted. But I will take notice and bring back to the member all the particulars.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — A final supplementary to the minister. I wonder if he could inform the Assembly how much these hard-earned people are earning, that they needed an extra trip, a holiday, at taxpayers' expense.

It seems to me that in going through the salaries of political executive assistants, we find out the massive increases they are getting, and now we find another means by which you are forgoing and going around the limits that you're setting on other civil servants, teachers, and nurses, where you're paying for luxury trips for individuals to Vancouver.

And can you tell me what the salaries of these individuals are, that that isn't enough and that you have to give them paid holidays to complement and supplement their income?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Speaker, I'll take notice of how much the wages are, but let's set it straight who these people are. These were five foremen off the floor that run the plant — five foremen. They weren't top management people. Five foremen.

I don't know what they would have made. Very little above hourly wage, at the hourly wage an earner would be making there. In fact, if I'm not mistaken, it would be awful close to identically the same.

There were five foremen from the floor that run the plant.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. I'd like quiet on both sides of the House, and the member that's hollering from the back row is usually the that's hollering first.

Disposal of Contaminated Wastes

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of the Environment, and it deals with the burning of PCB-contaminated oil on electrical transformers near uranium City on May 12th and 13th.

Mr. Minister, it has been a little over a month since that incident. Can the minister advise the Assembly how this unauthorized open-air burning of these toxic materials took place, what legal action your government has taken, and if none has been taken, what legal action you contemplate?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Speaker, in regards to the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, I won't take notice. I have some information here.

Mr. Speaker, in regard to the information that was, or is being supplied to us by Eldorado Nuclear, or Eldorado Corporation, we don't have all the particulars yet with us. My understanding is that there was approximately 30 transformers burnt within, up there.

There was approximately 7,500 gallons of mineral oil containing less than 5 parts per million of PCBs. There was . . . the transformers, I did understand, did have in some cases anywhere from 80 parts to 180 parts PCB contamination. But the total estimated amount of oil that was in those transformers was approximately 2 litres, which would be approximately 1 gram of PCBs, you know, to put it in its own context, that was destroyed within the, when they burnt them.

We don't have the final report back yet, from Eldorado. My department has it; they're evaluating it. They got it a few days ago, and some time this week I should be able to bring it into the Assembly here.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. As the minister will know, when PCBs are burned under certain circumstances, they can be deadly dangerous and can contribute to birth defects, cancer, many, many other medical problems.

This was a dangerous incident for the people living in the Uranium City area, and when, Mr. Minister, are you going to explain to the people in the Uranium City area just what happened, how it happened, and whether or not you are going to take steps to see that it doesn't happen again?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we never want it to happen again, any place, first of all. Second of all, in regards to Uranium City, up there, I mean, it's all cleaned up. There's nothing left up there. It's all been burned off, so it won't happen again in uranium City, and we'll do the best we can to see it doesn't happen any place else.

I suppose the main thing to take notice of is that the oil that we did allow them to burn was less than 5 parts per million. We did do a check of the soil sampling of the ground afterwards, and there was less than one part per million in the soil samples afterwards.

And the regulations under the hazardous goods act will certainly be in place. Part of it's in place now, where, as the member well knows, we've been drafting regulations in regards to that. And surely there should be by the end of this year, have some of that in place, and it would, in fact, control some of this.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Minister, Your answer suggests that this was an isolated incident, and you are going to see that it doesn't happen again. Can you, Mr. Minister, confirm that this is the first time that PCB-contaminated material was burned at the former Verna mine site in Uranium City area? Can you confirm that there was another burning back in April — two months ago, as opposed to the one in May one month ago — and can you tell us what were the circumstances surrounding that earlier one? I won't call it the first one because there may have been many, but the earlier one in April.

HON. MR. HARDY: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the information I have here says that there was one in April, and another was on May 12 and 13. That was the date the other burning took place. I don't have any other information with me in regards to it. I can get it and bring it back though.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — A short supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister advise how once this unauthorized burning had taken place in April, and the department was alerted of it, the same unauthorized burning or an even more serious one took place in May after the department had been fully warned that there was a problem there?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Speaker, the one in April was not unauthorized. The one in May was unauthorized.

MR. LUSNEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, in that burning of the PCB-contaminated transformers, have you at any time referred this question, since it was not authorized? Have you referred it to the Minister of Justice for action by his department against the people responsible?

HON. MR. HARDY: — No, Mr. Speaker, I have not. Until we have the full report back from Eldor, and the department has done a complete evaluation, we wouldn't refer it to the Minister of Justice. When we have a full report back and have had an opportunity to discuss it, you know that's always an opportunity.

MR. LUSNEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, when do you expect to have that report so that you can deal with it?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Speaker, I said this week we'd have the report back.

Cost of Out-of-Province Trips

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier, and it deals with another of your series of boondoggles. On Friday, June 1, 1984, more than a year ago, your government agreed to an order for return dealing with the cost of your out-of-province trips at taxpayers' expense. That request for information dealt with trips as far back as March 25, 1983, more than two years ago, which was the last time your government provided any information to this Assembly on the cost of your international trips. This has nothing to do with your estimates, but is a motion of this Assembly by which the government agreed to provide the information.

When, Mr. Premier, is that information going to be forthcoming?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I will take notice of the question with respect to the timing of the information. And I provide on an annual basis the information on my trips for estimates so that you can review where I've been and so forth. And my estimate will be coming up again, and I'm sure the hon. member will be able to address them at that time.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well that will be a . . . New question; that will be a brand new start, if we can, because you haven't provided the information at any of your past estimates, Mr. Premier.

Mr. Premier, by way of background, your government seems to think it's fine to flit from one end of the globe to the other while farmers have no money for grasshopper sprays . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. If the member has a question, I would ask him to get into it without a speech.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I said it was . . . I indicated that it was a new question, and the background is, Mr. Speaker, relevant to the question, Mr. Speaker. Your government thinks it is fine to deny money to farmers and people on welfare, Mr. Premier, while at the same time going on, what is clear to even casual observers, paid holidays at taxpayers' expense.

So I take it, Mr. Premier, by the fact that over . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. The member is making a statement, he is not asking a question. If the member has a question will you please get directly to it.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Do I take it, Mr. Premier, by the fact that you have failed to answer these questions in over a year, that you acknowledge that the trips and the expenditures are improper, and do I take it that's the reason why you haven't provided us with this information?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — No, not at all, Mr. Speaker. If my colleague wants me to talk about the money we've spent on agriculture, because he raised it as something that . . . (inaudible) . . . I'll go through millions and millions of dollars.

If you want a preamble and ask questions about what we're spending in agriculture or on welfare, I'll be glad to go through it. Now he knows we're spending more on agriculture than any previous government ever spent on agriculture, and we're happy and proud of that fact, and we will continue.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Premier, if you believe that you can justify these trips to the taxpayer, then why in over a year have you not provided us with information which wouldn't take your staff more than 20 minutes to assemble?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, we will be providing information with respect to where I go, and the fact that we're twinning with the province of China, and I go to China and the Chinese come here. We've put together trade arrangements.

We do the same in terms of potash sales to South America or the United States. Or, in fact, I've just returned from Europe in January with respect to talking to investors, people who are investing in uranium and so forth. I'll be going through those expenditures so people can see the benefits — they can see the sales; they can see the jobs; they can see the investment.

So of course, Mr. Speaker, we'll be glad to provide them with the information. Because with people like we have in the audience today, obviously we're very proud of the fact that we have a good international trade relationship and one that is much better and looked on much more positively around the world than the previous administration, because all they did was nationalize companies. They would take over this company and take over that company. We don't do that, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Premier, since you avoided it, I want to re-ask the question. By way of background, Mr. Premier, let me remind you that your estimates have been before this House twice, and the order for return was passed a year ago, and you have refused to provide us with information about your trips. You refused last year.

My question, Mr. Premier, was: why haven't you provided this information in over a year?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, the information will be provided, and we may even get to my estimates today so that the hon. member can ask questions with respect to what we did in China; why we decided to invite the Chinese over here; and the twinning of the two provinces, the Jilin province and the province of Saskatchewan; the cattle sales that we've initiated; the technical exchanges, and all the rest of it.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Supplementary. Mr. Premier, do I take it you're so busy going to china and other far corners of the globe that you haven't got time to answer these questions? Is that why you haven't answered them?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talks about the fact that I go to China, or I might be in Europe, as if he never travelled, or the former premier of the province never went to Russia or never went any place else. I mean, and they don't even like to hear the fact that as ministers they travel. Well I've got documents this deep that I can talk about the travel of the 11

years of the NDP, and it was all over the place. And the results were, the province got into more and more trouble and the reputation was absolutely awful because it was: nationalize this, nationalize that, turn this down, the kids can leave — all those problems.

Re-seeding Winter Wheat

MR. ENGEL: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture and it has to do with re-seeding orders for winter wheat. Farmers are facing me with the situation where the conditions are fairly dry. The winter kill was such that there's less plants per acre than what the crop insurance would deem would make a crop. And they claim that if they don't re-seed within the next few days, they won't get crop insurance on their winter wheat.

Have you some information to farmers in the fairly severe dry area about re-seeding and loosening up their land . . . (inaudible) . . . erosion. We didn't get this moisture down there. And to prevent erosion, would you recommend that that re-seeding order be carried out, or can the farmer make that decision himself?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Speaker, hon. member, I'll take notice of that question on behalf of the Minister in charge of the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 81 — An Act to amend The Workers' Compensation Act, 1979

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Would the minister please introduce his officials.

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce my staff; Don Rowlatt, deputy minister of labour; to his right, Dick Moody, the acting chairman of the workers' compensation board; directly behind me, Phil Leduc and Bob McWhillie, members of the board; and John McLean, executive director of adjudication.

AN HON. MEMBER: — John who?

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — John Mclean.

Clause 1

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. Mr. Minister, I see on my desk, House amendments. While I have not had a chance to peruse them very closely, they appear to deal, in part at least, with the problem which I mentioned in the second reading, in which I gather you have now thought better of.

Mr. Minister, I want to ask you about another matter that I raised I second reading. That was a proposal of Mr. Justice Muir to index the maximum wage. I don't have my notes with me, but I'm going from memory. You undertook not to do that but, rather, to raise the minimum wage and set another limit on it — I think a \$51,000, if I recall it correctly.

I wonder, Mr. Minister, if I might ask you why you chose not to accept the recommendation to index the wage, but instead to set an arbitrary figure on it, a figure that is going to have to be — unless you intend this government intends perpetually to do a number on the injured workman — it's going to have to be raised periodically by the legislative Assembly. I wonder what was the problem with Judge Muir's recommendation? I thought it eminently sensible.

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Well, Mr. Chairman, as the member knows, we've spent a number of

months going over the committee of review's report. We're pleased that in this particular Bill that we are addressing, about 30 items or recommendations of the committee out of 33 — two of them did not go all the way that the committee requested. We have made the change of going from 775 per cent of gross to 90 per cent of net, and the change of the indexing is reflected in that area.

We have raised the cap to 48,000 a year, which is the highest in Canada. And as I said, there's been months of consultations, and we're pleased to say that both the labour side, and with some reluctance on the management side, that the changes were made. But generally speaking we have consensus throughout the province on the moves that we made and have covered a goodly number of the recommendations made by the committee of review.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well, I'll grant to you it took months to bring the amendments forward, Mr. Minister. I'm painfully aware of that, and so injured workmen who waited far longer than they should have for these amendments.

Mr. Minister, just a word with respect to your consultation process. It took many months, but that had little to do with consultation, unless you spend all your time talking to selected employers. Both the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour and the injured workers' association, when I met with them, complained about the lack of consultation and the fact that they have never seen these particular amendments, which are the subject of the House amendments, before they were introduced. I take it, Mr. Minister, since you retreat in terror when the criticisms were made of the amendments, that you admit you didn't discuss it with anyone.

My question though, Mr. Minister, is not who you consulted with or why you took three years when you should have had them through in the first session, but rather, what, specifically, was wrong with Judge Muir's suggestion. I thought it sensible, and it would mean that the Act wouldn't have to come back to the Assembly periodically, but they would get cost of living increases which I think we all agree they should have.

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, hon. Member, we have to look at the Bill as a total package. I don't think the committee of review would have expected that maybe we would have gone as far as we have done in looking after 30 of their 33 recommendations.

And speaking about consultation, the board members have been in touch with both sides. In fact, The SFL . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, and I did at the last meeting with the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour where we asked them to help draft some of the concerns that they had with two or three of the clauses. We had a very amiable meeting and it was worked out in conjunction with the two groups. They are happy with the Bill the way it is right now.

There's another review committee will be getting put in place coming this fall, and I'm sure there will be other items required to be looked at. But generally speaking, it's a complete package that both the labour movement and basically, the management groups are happy with.

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, one of the basic concerns, and I'm wondering whether you have received any concerns, and that is really the basic fairness of the workers' compensation board in actually dealing with people who are dealing with the workers' compensation.

I was wondering, have you had any representation of difficulties that people who are receiving benefits from workers' compensation, and did you have any discussion with at least the workers, the injured workers, in order to determine whether or not you should, in fact, be included within the Bill amendments which would improve the protection of the workers in dealing with the workers' compensation?

(1445)

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I think we've gone a long way in addressing the concern raised by the member opposite just in the fact that we are going to be opening or allowing the files to be opened up for the inspections.

We have increased a number of the awards or amounts that are to be paid, especially for the injured workers, from \$1,000 to \$3,000 and so on, and the appeal process, the advocates, we've added extra staff from there. And I would suggest that the Ombudsman has given us three and a half stars as far as the workers' compensation board is concerned. We are aware of some of the back log that has developed, but we are addressing that by . . . have put extra people onto and looked after improving that situation.

So basically we've had representations from some groups, some individuals, but that's on an ongoing basis. And we have felt that we have addressed it and are improving the work that is being done at the board level and the appeal and the advocates.

MR. KOSKIE: — There is a considerable concern because I've had representation from a number of people, and they have tried on the basis of . . . within the Act, the purview of the Act. And I just want to indicate my particular case and the problems that this individual has had in respect to getting recourse.

An individual, seriously injured, no doubt about it, medical support, and then during winter the individual injured that had planned a trip with his wife — injured people do goon trips too — and what the compensation board two days beforehand indicated that he had to come in for treatment, for rehabilitation.

And even though he had a medical report from his doctor indicating that it would be good psychologically for him to proceed with the holiday, you know what the workers' compensation board did in respect to this individual? They cancelled out his coverage during the period of time that he was away on that holiday.

And then this spring the same individual ran into another problem. He was down here in Regina for rehabilitation. And right in the midst of seeding when they called him in, and he asked for permission to go back to supervise. He has a son doing the farming. And they said, well if you go back even to supervise your farm, you're cut off, and they've cut him off again.

And this is the type of problems that have been raised with me. And he has sought out . . . I have contacted the board in respect to it. And I think it's totally unreasonable when this is a responsible individual and this is the type of conduct that is going on with the board. And I just ask you seriously look at the . . . whether there is fairness in dealing with injured workers.

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm certainly not personally aware of the particular case and I don't think I can . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, how would I if I wasn't' advised? All I can say is that we get letters and that from various people on their concerns, and I would suggest that the member opposite send me the name of that particular case. We have the advocates, we have the medical review panel, and we can steer the person through that course to look at his situation.

I'm not aware of the case, and my board members can't recall it just at the moment. But send the name across, and we'll have a look at it.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I just want to make one comment, Mr. Minister, and no matter how tempted I am by your response, I'm going to leave it at one comment.

Mr. Minister, you say you have a backlog of claims. You're quite right; you do. That occurs, in

part, because you have ceased enforcing the occupational health and safety legislation, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, the administration of the workers' compensation ought to be an embarrassment to you.

This is like an old movie. I remember when Ross Thatcher was in office. The largest single problem which many members, including the one for whom I work, the member from Riversdale, the largest single source of complaints was injured workmen, Mr. Minister. And then when we were in office for a couple of years, it died away. As I say, this is an old train going past us, the same thing happening again.

For some reason or other, old-line parties seem to think it's smart politics to take it out on those who have been injured at the workplace. Mr. Minister, there is no question that the volume of complaints that elected members are receiving from injured workmen has grown dramatically in the last couple of years.

I think you're right. I think part of the reason is that there are more claims. And I think that's because you're not administering other areas of your department that are supposed to protect workmen on the job.

I also believe however, Mr. Minister, that those claims are not being properly adjusted, and that's why there's so many complaints — the complaints which I and other members of the Assembly who are accessible enough to receive them. And I can understand why many members opposite would never have been contacted.

But the source of the complaints which I and many other members receive is that (a) you do have a backlog, but (b) when the claims are dealt with, they're dealt with in a harsh manner as described by the member from Quill Lakes, which approach downright cruelty. There's no excuse for it, unless you think it's smart politics to hang injured people up by the toenails, in a figurative way.

So I say, Mr. Minister, that the administration of this fund does you no credit, just as the administration of the fund did no credit to the government of the former premier, Ross Thatcher. As I say, I make the comment. No matter how tempted I am, I'm going to try to refrain from responding to you, whatever your come-back is.

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I have a lot of difficulty accepting what the member opposite is saying. We want to do everything that we possibly can under the Act for the injured workers of Saskatchewan. And I think the fact that we have come with some 30-odd or 30 recommendations — the acceptance of 30 recommendations out of 33 — that the unions, the work force of the province, and the management have accepted the fact that we have come with this good legislation, some of the best, if not the best of all of Canada. And we intend to keep following along and improving it wherever we can. And we have already got more advocates on staff to look after and speed up the process.

And if you look at the ombudsman's report, he is even saying there that in most cases it's cut in half as far as the waiting time is concerned. But we opened the files for the workers, which they've wanted for years and years and years. We've got the rehabilitation centre in the planning, which was asked for for years and years and years, and you know it. We have good legislation coming here that is going to help the injured workers of Saskatchewan, and I won't take a back seat to any other jurisdiction in the country with it.

MR. KOSKIE: — Mr. Chairman, on that line of questioning, and that is the concern about the rate of processing, Mr. Minister, I have another instance that I could give you — and I contacted the board — of a miner who was injured at Lanigan potash mine. And he is looking for benefits. His medical reports went in, he tells me. Got his doctor to send it in. He is without income, having to borrow money from his brother, waiting for it to be processed. Can't you understand

that if a worker is injured that he may need the regular income?

And I phoned the board and they say, well, we haven't done our final medical assessment. Well that's very easy, you know, to say that you haven't completed the medical assessment, but the problem is that many of the workers out there do not have any income. They go from month to month on their basic cheques.

And again I can give you that specific example. and he may have, you know, run out of borrowing power by now, but I'm going to refer that one to you too, Mr. Minister, so that you have an appreciation of the problems that are created within your administration. There are two, just in the last three weeks that I have, and I've tried to go through the board rather than through you. And that's where we should be able to go, but there's no response. And so I ask you to, in looking at it and making the amendments, to also look at the need for increase in the rate of processing.

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Mr. Chairman, I've already stated that we are looking at increasing — and I'm talking the advocate side now — if there's some difficulties at the board level, and I don't think it's any different now than it was for years and years, they still have to go through the process and get medical records before a decision can be made/

And we have 40,000 claims or 38,000 claims a year to process. And all I ask the member opposite is to send me the person's name, and we will certainly look at it in the context of what the board has to look at, we have a large number of claims to look at it, and the Act is in place to look after that, and we'll get them processed as quickly as we can. And I would say it's no different now than it was under your administration.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 19 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 20

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I want to go back to section 15, if I might. Do I take it, Mr. Minister, that the board has some reasonable grounds for believing that moneys awarded under the workers' compensation fund will not be taxable in the hands of the recipient. Do I take it . . . is that what I assume from the fact that you're paying them 75 per cent of net as distinct from 90 per cent of gross?

(1500)

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Yes, that's correct. It's non-taxable.

Clause 20 agreed to.

Clauses 21 to 27 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 28

MR. CHAIRMAN: — There's a proposed amendment to Section 28 of the printed Bill, by striking out Section 28 of the printed Bill and substituting the following:

Section 28, subsection 161.1 and 2 are repealed and the following substituted:

- (1) The Department of Labour may employ persons to be known as Workers' Advocates.

Clause 28 as amended agreed to.

Clause 29 agreed to.

Clause 30

MR. CHAIRMAN: — There's a proposed amendment. do all the members of the committee have a copy of the proposed amendment? Do you wish the amendment read?

AN HON. MEMBER: — No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Will you take the amendment as read?

Clause 30 as amended agreed to.

Clause 31 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill as amended.

**Bill 106 — An Act for the Protection of the Health of Persons exposed to Radiation
and for the Safety of Persons in Connection with the Operation and use of
Radiation Producing Equipment and associated Apparatus**

Clause 1 agreed to.

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — I was just waiting for my official to come in. I'd like to introduce him as soon as he's here.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you. I have no questions; other members might. But I have no questions, if you want to proceed. As far as I'm concerned, you can proceed, Mr. Chairman.

Clauses 1 to 4 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 5

MR. CHAIRMAN: — There's an amendment to section 5:

Amend subclause 5(2)(b)(ii) by striking out "that" in the second line, and substituting "than".

Clause 5 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 6 to 10 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 11

MR. CHAIRMAN: — There's an amendment to section 11 of the printed Bill:

Amend clause 11(b) of the printed Bill by:

striking out "16(3)(b)" in the second line, and substituting "16(5)(b)".

Clause 11 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 12 to 15 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 16

MR. CHAIRMAN: — There's an amendment to section 16 of the printed Bill:

Amend clause 16(2)(a) of the printed bill by:

striking out "carry out an inspection or an accident "investigation" and substituting the following:

carry out (1) an inspection or (2) an accident investigation.

Clause 16 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 17 to 24 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill as amended.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 81 — An Act to amend The Workers' Compensation Act, 1979

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the amendments be now read the first and second time.

Motion agreed to.

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, be leave of the Assembly I move that Bill No. 81 be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a third time.

**Bill 106 — An Act for the Protection of the Health of Persons exposed to Radiation
and for the Safety of Persons in Connection with the Operation and use of
Radiation Producing Equipment and associated Apparatus**

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, I move the amendments be now read a first and second time.

Motion agreed to.

HON. MR. MCLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, with leave, I move that Bill 106 be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a third time.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Dirks that Bill No. 113 — **An Act respecting Facilities that Provide Certain Residential Services** be now read a second time.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of my learned friend, the member from Shaunavon, I want to say to the minister and to the members of the treasury benches opposite that my colleague has some questions. They are the sort of questions

however, which might be better put in committee of the whole. Therefore he's going to forgo the normal speech on second reading and put the questions directly to the minister in committee of the whole, where hopefully this government will break with precedent and provide some answers for a change.

Motion agreed to, Bill read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole at the next sitting.

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Embury that Bill No. 103 — **An Act to repeal Certain Acts respecting the Payment of Grants or Rebates of Property Taxes** be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

YEAS — 24

Devine	Birkbeck	McLeod
Duncan	Katzman	Pickering
McLaren	Garner	Smith (Swift Current)
Baker	Hepworth	Schoenhals
Dirks	Martens	Maxwell
Young	Domotor	Parker
Smith (Moose Jaw South)	Caswell	Schmidt
Zazelenchuk	Johnson	Swenson

NAYS — 6

Blakeney	Engel	Lingenfelter
Koskie	Lusney	Shillington

Bill read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole at the next sitting.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 10

Item 1

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to introduce officials to the committee who will be assisting me today. Mr. Norman Riddell, deputy minister and cabinet secretary; Elizabeth Croswaite, clerk of the executive council and assistant cabinet secretary; Brian Liebel, director of administration; and Lynn Schellenberg, administrative officer.

Mr. Chairman, the department of Executive Council provides support to me, as president of the Executive Council, and to the members of Cabinet. Because of this special relationship, I would like to comment on some of the major reforms and accomplishments of the Government of Saskatchewan during the past year, as we begin the discussions on the 1985-86 estimates of the department of Executive Council.

Let me begin with agriculture. Agriculture is the backbone of the Saskatchewan economy, and the government's responsibility is to pay special attention to the short and to the long run challenges in the agricultural community. Our government's approach has been two-pronged. First, we've provided a short term safety net for people needing help as a result of drought, flood, grasshoppers, high interest rates, and so on. We provided interest relief to farmers through the farm purchase program and the Agricultural Credit Corporation, and we have nearly 5,000 new farmers on the program.

Secondly, Mr. Chairman, our natural disasters response: we had \$550,000 to move cattle to suitable pastures; 14.75 million to assist livestock producers, directly, for the first time in the province of Saskatchewan; 7.5 million for flood relief; and the counselling assistance for the farmers program and The Farm Land Security Act.

In the longer term, Mr. Chairman, we've initiated a rural gas program that provides \$35 million a year; the Livestock Investment Tax Credit, \$5 million a year; the Feeder Associations loan Guarantee program; and introduced a major irrigation development program of 2.1 million.

In this most recent budget, Mr. Chairman, we provided \$200 million Agriculture Development fund, a brand new fund, which will accomplish even more. And to give you an idea, Mr. Chairman, let me just add up the federal government as well.

We look at \$35 million a year as the farmer's share in the gas tax removal we initiated in 1982; \$34.6 million a year on rural gas distribution to farmers; \$29.5 million in drought assistance; \$25 million on an 8 per cent program for farm purchases for young farmers, particularly; 4 million on the ACC (Agricultural Credit Corporation) loan rate; 7.5 million on the north-east flood assistance; 5 million on the Livestock Investment Tax Credit; 1.3 million on tax removed on power bills in terms of the home owners; irrigation development grants, 2.1 million; and, Mr. Speaker, when you add these all up, including the homestead rebate and the quarter tax assistance program in 1984, there's something like \$161 million in agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan — approximately \$2,400 per farmer, looking at something like 66,000 farmers.

Now if we add to that, Mr. Chairman, the reduction of the FCC (Farm Credit Corporation) loan rate that we bargained hard to get, that's worth \$5 million to the Saskatchewan farmer. A fuel tax rebate which we encouraged the federal government to do in 1984 is \$40 million. The capital gains tax removed from farm land in the province of Saskatchewan which people have been lobbying for some time is \$50 million a year — every year — to the province of Saskatchewan in agriculture; \$29 million on reduction in freight rates and putting — removing the cap on the statutory rate; another \$29.5 million on prairie drought assistance. You add that up, Mr. Chairman, and in the province of Saskatchewan in our term, as well as including the last few months of the federal government, we're looking at another \$161 million annually from the federal government.

That in total is over \$300 million annually going into agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan, or over \$5,000 per farm, on average — \$5,000 per farm.

Now if we add a few more, Mr. Chairman — I just wanted to make this point because agriculture is extremely important in our province. We look at 161.3 million provincial; 161 federal; we look at the stabilization and insurance programs — 636 million; we have 958 million. On a provincial basis we're looking at \$2,400, and federal basis, \$2,439. The stabilization is \$9,600 per farmer, including insurance. That's \$14,519 per farmer in the province of Saskatchewan as a result of provincial and federal programs we've initiated in the last few months, and over the last 18 months in terms of our administration.

Mr. Chairman, I point that out because agriculture is extremely important, and we have taken some very direct short-run and long-run measures with respect to agriculture.

The second point I want to comment on is economic development and, particularly, job creation and employment. It's not government that creates jobs, but it's government that provides the environment where business can create economic activity and jobs for the people throughout the economy.

Our job record in the province of Saskatchewan is the best in Canada. We are the only province to grow in the prairie provinces in 1984. We've had the lowest unemployment in the year of 1982, 1983, and 1984. And we're proud to say that the cities of Regina and Saskatoon have led all western Canadian cities in new job creation in the same period, from 1982 right through to 1984. And I'm confident, Mr. Chairman, that they will lead the country in new job creation, and certainly western Canada, in 1985.

And we have new business opening across the province and new companies coming into cities of Regina, Saskatoon, Estevan, Weyburn, Kindersley, Prince Albert, and so forth.

Secondly, the government's oil industry program created 3,800 brand-new jobs, which is something that does not even include, Mr. Chairman, the spin-offs brought in nearly \$1 billion in new investment, increased government oil revenues by \$300 million; and oil is now the largest single source of revenue in the province of Saskatchewan. It's ahead of income tax, sales tax, and all other forms of revenue.

And the excitement that goes with it is encouraging more and more investment in the province of Saskatchewan, and obviously we're looking at new things, like upgraders, that are very exciting — 25-year projects, looking at 3 to \$4 billion on one; at least half a billion dollars on another one here in the city of Regina.

Three, we've had a positive response to the venture capital program also, in providing a shot in the arm for the Saskatchewan economy, and particularly, Mr. Chairman, in the rural areas. For example, many venture capital corporations have already been formed.

Four, the Community Economic Development Program has also been well received by our smaller communities.

Five, business resource centres. Now, in Saskatchewan, we have one-stop information centres for business and industry. And we're also receiving more and more inquiries and are helping communities and people throughout Saskatchewan to invest.

Six, Saskatchewan is in a period of growth in departments such as Energy and Mines, Economic Development and trade, Tourism and Small Business, Science and Technology. See that growth reflected in the positive response to their policies and programs. People asked for them, and they were delivered.

When we look at employment policy, Mr. Chairman, the top priority is job creation and job security. Programs such as small business employment program, the Industrial Incentive Program — all have been extremely successful in facilitating employment in the private sector.

Also, we intend to do more. For 1985-86, we have allocated \$9 million for the nine and five-eighths program for small business across the province of Saskatchewan — it's an interest rate reduction program; and \$12 million for other economic development programs; and \$58 million for capital projects; \$16 million for youth job creation program; \$20 million for initiatives to assist social welfare recipients.

And in our recent budget, Mr. Chairman, a total of \$600 million over the next five years to a brand-new Employment Development Fund, which we believe will be responsible for Saskatchewan not only having the best job creation record, and the best employment record

over the last three years, but obviously into the years to come.

(1530)

The third area that is very important, Mr. Chairman, is education. This government will continue to link skill training to the market-place, which is the key to long-run employment. Our labour force now in the province of Saskatchewan, as a result of our very rapid population growth, is over 500,000 people and is growing. Saskatchewan was the prairie province that grew in 1984 and created thousands of new jobs, and I believe in the last months our record was 19,000 jobs, compared to the province of Manitoba, something like a thousand.

Seventy-five million dollars more in funding to our technical institutes, while we've increased seating capacity by almost 60 per cent — as an illustration, as a symbol of the kind of support we have for education and the educational institutions — 150 million more for funding of university operations. Now we believe this is extremely important. Many governments across Canada, and indeed the United States, are cutting back on educational facilities. We've taken the opposite point of view. We've decided to invest in our future, particularly for young people.

Eight million dollars in funding . . . increased funding for community colleges. One million more for funding for vocational centres. Twenty million more in terms of aid to students while approving more than 5,400 applicants. And the future prosperity of this province is in large part dependent on the quality of education, and we recognize that.

We intend even to do more, Mr. Chairman, through a \$400 million brand-new Education Development Fund, and that is a commitment to education in the future.

So we've committed to agriculture, to job creation, and to training.

A fourth area, Mr. Chairman, is health. I am committed to ensuring that the people of Saskatchewan will continue to have high quality health care in this province. We do not merely talk a good line; we have produced, and the record speaks for itself.

We have improved cancer treatment services in the province, improved ambulance services, improved medical services, millions more spent on hospitals construction in both rural and urban areas of our province, and millions more spent on nursing home construction. In fact, the buildings construction program across Saskatchewan is exciting and, as you go from town to town and village to village and city to city, you can see the excitement.

We intend to do more. In fact, we've established a \$300 million Health Capital Fund, a brand-new fund, to make sure that people across this country, as well as in Saskatchewan, know that we have a major priority in health.

We asked people what their priorities were, Mr. Chairman, and they said agriculture, they said jobs, they said health, and they said education. And we, Mr. Chairman, have decided, and we have put forward a five-year program in terms of expenditures that I believe will be among the very, very best in Canada, and will certainly rank.

And as I look at the record over the last three years, and particularly the last year, Mr. Chairman, and as a result of the reforms that we've initiated, we look at record population growth; we look at a record in job creation; we look at the lowest unemployment record; a record in health expenditures and a record budget in that regard; record oil production; drilling reserves, and revenues; record number of towns and villages receiving natural gas; record new technical school capacity — and I just returned yesterday from Prince Albert where we made another announcement with respect to the capacity and the new ideas that are being produced in that brand-new facility; record increases in the number of regulations in government. And we look at the

number of young people in the province of Saskatchewan who now can get access to farm lands for 8 per cent money, and we have almost 5,000 new farmers on this program, and they asked for years, and years, and years to receive rate protection, and it's now being delivered, and they're very happy.

A record number of tourists coming into the province. A record public investment. This morning, I announced, for example, we have the series two, power bonds, for sale; and we sold, I believe, 50 to \$60 million in series one. The public of Saskatchewan enjoys that participation. We've never had such participation in crown corporations in our province. The oil bond issue was very, very successful. The Sask Power bonds are very successful. Our credit rating is first class. Other provinces around us see a decline in their credit ratings, like Manitoba, and so forth, but ours is very good.

A record number of people coming into the province, and working, and staying, and the forecast for Saskatchewan are excellent. It is a good province, some good people, and good resources, and when we look at the kinds of things people ask for . . . Yes. Mr. Chairman, they ask for interest rate protection at thirteen and a quarter; they got it. They asked for eight percent for farmers, and it was delivered. They wanted sales tax removed on gasoline, and it was. They wanted rural gas system, and it was. They wanted nine and five-eighths for small business, and it was delivered. They wanted a brand-new health care system that would have extensive funding for nursing home, and hospitals, and so forth, and it's being delivered, and the same applies to university.

So when I look at those, Mr. Chairman, I remind my colleagues in the legislature that the things that the people of Saskatchewan asked for, the things that are important — agriculture, jobs, health, education, small business — they have been delivered in good fashion, I would say, Mr. Chairman, with respect to the last year and in the last three years.

Let me turn for a moment to the whole question of management philosophy under this administration, and particularly in Executive Council. I believe that the major accomplishments and new initiatives that I have just talked about are not only the result of the government's common sense approach to policy issues, but they also do impart to the administrative and managerial reforms that the government, and this government, has introduced since taking office.

We've seen a period of reform, a time to listen to people. We've seen a time of excitement in resource development, a time to exploit new technologies, a time to build on our strengths. Three particularly positive strengths, powerful strengths: one is good people, two is a rich resource base; and three is access to very, very good technology.

In this regard, before discussing the division of administrative responsibilities and some of the major accomplishments that have occurred in Executive Council for the past year, I'd like to take just a moment to outline to the members present the approach we use, and the approach which reflects this new management philosophy that I have instituted, not only in Executive Council, but in the government as a whole.

Upon taking office we found that the management philosophy which had been utilized by the previous administration did not conform to the needs and aspirations or, for that matter, to the values of the people of Saskatchewan. Quite frankly, they didn't listen closely enough and, as a result, they were not all that successful. Because, one, they were out of touch and they offered no solutions, in my view and the people's view, in 1982, and really the solutions offered today are really not much better.

Mr. Chairman, we had to learn from their mistakes, and obviously there were mistakes. We found a highly centralized and closed administration, lacking both accountability on one hand, and responsiveness on the other. We found that line department managers were no longer

responsible for the programs they were mandated to deliver. We found the decisions regarding program delivery were being made by central agencies that lacked the expertise in the particular program areas. And we found that individual managers had no mechanism for which they could improve their programs, and thus their productivity.

So, Mr. Chairman, to rectify this situation we reformed the system and instituted a management committee of treasury board, consisting of both elected government members and deputy ministers, to provide a forum for managers to present detailed reviews of their programs. We found, Mr. Chairman, that managers had not been given the tools to do the job.

For example, we found that government was still using a manual budgeting system and other outdated information systems. We reformed that as well, Mr. Chairman.

When and where necessary, we have introduced the most up-to-date information systems to enable managers to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of departmental programs. When we came to office we found out there was both low morale and a lack of productivity in the public service. Needless to say, this is having a significant impact on the program effectiveness and efficiency. We reformed the old management approach and considered the individual as the key link to the system. And I believe that's extremely important, not only in dealing outside of government, but particularly inside of government, to recognize the individual as the important link.

We instituted across-the-board productivity improvement program to address this particular issue. The basic principle behind this initiative is to encourage managers on the front line to take responsibility for their programs by allowing them to take the lead, their lead, in making innovative changes in the area of responsibility.

We found central agencies from the previous administration had a great deal of responsibility, but on the other hand, no authority or mandate to co-ordinate government-wide programs and policies. And we found line departments with no clear focus or mandate at all.

How could there be, really, when you're looking at — they weren't directly involved in the decision-making, and I go back to my earlier comment. The strength of the organization and the strength of government is to go back to the individual responsible, and that individual is key in providing new ideas and carrying out the responsibility. And under my direction, as much responsibility as possible goes back to those individuals who are working in the area.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — To address this particular problem, we realigned and rebuilt certain functions between existing departments and mandated agencies such as the Women's Secretariat, the Employment Development Agency, and the Indian and Native Affairs Secretariat, to ensure greater co-ordination and consultation across government for these particular areas.

Regulatory reform is another example. In the area of regulatory reform we have abolished more than 1,000 out-dated or frustrating laws and regulations that hindered people in the community, whether business men or individuals, and more are being abrogated as the weeks go by. These changes have greatly improved our overall service and accountability to the public.

And we've initiated budget reform. Upon coming to office we found that the previous administration had no mechanism in place by which they could receive the views of the public on such important matters of budget. We believed that it was imperative to develop such mechanisms in order to ensure that the people of Saskatchewan were involved in all aspects of government decision-making.

Accordingly we initiated, for example, a budget consultation process that is, in my view,

unmatched across the country, where people and groups of people throughout the communities, rural and urban, can provide input into the entire budgeting process.

But this was just a first step. With the introduction of the *Partnership for Progress*, we have now, in consultation with the people of Saskatchewan, taken a further step by developing a more sophisticated and long-term approach to public sector budget-making.

I know, Mr. Chairman, on occasion that during the past three years we have been accused by the opposition of instituting a system of patronage in government. May I remind the members of this House that when we took office we found 650 orders in council, 650 order-in-council appointments — more order-in-council appointments than in the entire Government of Canada at any one particular time.

Mr. Chairman, we are in the process of instituting a management classification review system in order to eliminate such blatant patronage. In addition, I have established two brand-new advisory committees to aid the Premier. A cross-section of people are now providing advice to the Premier; the senior Saskatchewan economic development advisory committee; people from all walks of life; and they come into the committee, and they go out of the committee; and a youth advisory committee do the same.

In summary, Mr. Chairman, we have developed a self-confident style of management that encourages and rewards good service to the public, and that allows for and rewards innovation by government employees.

And, Mr. Chairman, it's working. We have over the past three years endeavoured to create a more open, democratic government, a government that listens, informs, and consults, but does not dictate. The government does not come first in this administration. The people do, Mr. Chairman.

We have led the country in reform — welfare, budget, Crowns, royalty, administration, health care, energy, education, and regulations, to name a few. In this regard I believe that we have renewed the public's faith in government by endeavouring at all times to adhere to a philosophy of government that allows for the public to participate in government decision-making. People are part of the process under my administration.

Mr. Chairman, the management principles that I have initiated across government have also been applied by me in my own department with the assistance of my senior administrator, the deputy minister and the cabinet secretary. The results have been impressive and have significantly contributed to the accomplishments of my ministry. Let me comment on some specific sections of Executive Council.

First is public affairs. I'd like to spend a few minutes now discussing in details the ways in which public affairs section of Executive Council, under the direction of the director of public affairs, Don Rennie, assist this government and me in communicating with the people of Saskatchewan.

In fulfilling its mandate, public affairs does the following:

1. It distributes news releases to the media throughout the province, providing information to the people of Saskatchewan on policies of government, new programs or services, and where to get information.
2. It provides clips from news conferences and ministers' statements to television stations throughout the province through its video news service.
3. Public affairs also co-ordinates the purchasing and placement of paid advertising on behalf of government departments and Crown corporations.

Mr. Chairman, governments have a responsibility to share information with the public served, and advertising is the only way to guarantee that a message gets out when it is important that it does get out. How do I apply for this program? How do I get that program? Many, many programs are important — for example the Employment Development Agency. Many young people are asking: how can I participate in this program and that one?

(1545)

The highly successful promotion encouraging public participation, for example in Saskatchewan power bonds, Saskatchewan oil bonds, are two examples of campaigns that exceeded all expectations. When? At what rate? When's the next one coming up? How much money can I have? When can I redeem them? How often? And so forth. That require information that comes from my office and obviously through the government.

On the program side, I don't think people throughout Saskatchewan would criticize us for ensuring our seniors, for example, are aware of the existence of, and services provided by, the senior citizens' bureau. I believe everybody would like to have as much information on that as possible.

And who would not want us to promote fire safety, given the enormous importance of our forests?

Who would say that the school bus safety advertising campaign was unimportant or that our investment promotion program was money wasted? I believe not very many, Mr. Chairman.

Who would condemn us for the impaired driving program, when we all know the need to reduce deaths and injuries as a result of drinking and driving?

One of my personal responsibilities is to elicit the opinions of the people of this province on a wide range of issues, and ideas and various suggestions so that I can communicate with them, and they can provide various concepts to the government.

The best way that I find, Mr. Chairman, is to get out of the office, out of the legislature, and meet the people face to face in the province of Saskatchewan; to speak with them about their priorities; to talk to them about their goals, and about our government; and to learn from them, firsthand, their concerns and their views on how we can build on our strengths together.

I deliver, I would venture to say, over a hundred speeches in any given year. The public affairs staff are kept busy preparing notes for me as I attempt to go to many places, and also collecting the information as people come and talk to me, and we put them together so that I can be prepared to respond to them as well as be prepared to make presentations.

In the past 12 months I've made many presentations to audiences, both large and small, at home and abroad, describing what this government has attempted to do locally, nationally, and internationally since assuming its responsibility and its enormous mandate in 1982.

I also recognize the importance of working closely with the media to discuss with them the programs and policies of this government because the media, in many, many cases, can help us promote and advertise the kinds of programs we think are helpful to people across the province.

It is for this reason that I have recently appointed a senior adviser in Executive Council — to ensure that the media are given every opportunity to discuss with me issues of the day. And I don't believe, Mr. Chairman, that I have ever turned down an interview with the media. I may have, at one particular time, for a short period of time, but certainly in the course of a day or two or three days I have ready access to the members of the media.

Finally, while I cannot always meet people who wish to communicate with me, I encourage them to write me and write and give me their ideas, their aspirations, and their concerns. And they do. And the public affairs division of Executive Council routinely, in any 12-month period, receives up to 10,000 letters requiring my attention.

These are letters from citizens all over, from all sectors of Saskatchewan, from all corners of the province — some with concerns; others with ideas; some with proposals; and still others with requests for information. And we provide a great deal of information.

Public affairs also assists in learning more about how the people of this province feel about issues, what they would suggest we consider in building an even stronger Saskatchewan. For example, following the highly successful first ministers' conference on the economy, held in Regina, I wrote to more than 1,400 community leaders in all walks of life asking for their suggestions about the province and about the country and what should be done. I invited them to provide me with their opinions and suggestions for improving the quality of life and the scope of opportunity for people in our economic times.

I am delighted to report, Mr. Chairman, that replies are coming in regularly, and each is being carefully considered and studied. I examine and review these letters in detail.

In summary, the public affairs section has an important role to play by ensuring that the public is informed of policies, programs, and services that are put in place to the benefit of our people, and by assisting me in my endeavours to hear what people, citizens, men, women, and children from across this province are saying or thinking about in terms of new ideas, new programs, businesses, and so forth, so that I can have the information to make sure that we can do a first-class job.

The second division that I'd like to comment on, Mr. Chairman, is that of intergovernmental affairs. Intergovernmental affairs is under the direction of the associate deputy minister of intergovernmental affairs. One of the major responsibilities of this department is the improvement of Saskatchewan's visibility on the international scene.

And because it is important, I have it under my responsibility. In this regard, it is one of the major vehicles through which I attempt to open Saskatchewan to the rest of the world. And for too long Saskatchewan was the best-kept secret in North America. People knew, that grew up in here and grew up in the province of Saskatchewan, that this is a vibrant, powerful, strong province to live in, but many, many people did not appreciate it. In fact, they said, well, Saskatchewan was probably a good place to come from.

Well I'm proud to say, Mr. Chairman, that I believe more and more people are saying Saskatchewan is a very, very good place, not only to come from, but to come to, in today's economy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Saskatchewan is one of the strongest and most dynamic economies in North America. This strength is due in large part to the significant contribution which exports have made to the Saskatchewan gross domestic product. More than virtually any other province in Canada we need markets and customers and continued customers if we're to provide jobs and opportunities for people in this province. For this reason alone the efforts of the province beyond its borders are critical to its well-being and to its residents. Exports mean jobs and money in the jeans of people here in the province.

United States, for example. There's little doubt that Saskatchewan's most important international partner is the United States. To enhance this relationship I've agreed to: establish the

Saskatchewan-North Dakota boundary commission; and its most recent meetings several transporter issues and initiatives were discussed. Including among these was a commitment to investigate the potential for economic development activity along highway 35-85 border in the U.S. and Canada. Two, I've given keynote addresses to the last western governors' conferences in the United States. Three, under my government Saskatchewan invited the first U.S. governor to speak in the Saskatchewan legislature as a result of our invitation here, and I have made potash, oil, financial, and agriculture addresses in the United States.

We see the United States as a very, very important market and jobs for our province. We know something like 18 per cent of the entire world trade between countries takes place between the country of Canada and the country of the United States, and certainly Saskatchewan, in terms of agriculture and oil and potash and so forth, depends to a very large extent on U.S. markets. It's important that we're there.

China. On a separate front, the province has mounted an ambitious and challenging effort to enhance its relations with the People's Republic of China. Some of them were in the gallery today, Mr. Chairman. Just an example of the kind of relationship we have, they're buying cattle here, and we'll be flying them to the Chinese. China ranks third in terms of Saskatchewan exports abroad. The total value of exports to China in 1983 was \$625 million — almost 11 per cent of Saskatchewan's exports.

In June of 1984 the Government of Saskatchewan was pleased and honoured to formally enter into a protocol of friendship and understanding with the people's government of Jilin province. The protocol will serve each province by providing enhanced access to the respective foreign markets. Saskatchewan to China, and Jilin to Canada.

European markets and investment. My visit last January was part of an ongoing series of initiatives to improve the relationships between the province of Saskatchewan and European communities. To be frank, Canada is still feeling the effects of the previous federal government's policies such as the national energy program and FEARO (federal environmental assessment review organization), and nationalization programs that took place in the province of Saskatchewan in the previous administration.

Time and time again when I was in Europe, people would say, well, you're from that province, aren't you, where you took over the potash mines? I said, no, that was the other people. And they'd say, well, that's where you were going to nationalize farms; and I said no, that was the previous administration. They still remember those things. And when the potash companies moved from here and went to New Brunswick to expand, people in Europe noticed that. And people said, well, is that you, or is that the other administration. I said, no, that's the other people. So the reputation of Saskatchewan and Canada in Europe is extremely important. They are happy with the change in the government in Ottawa today, and I might add they're happy with the change in the province of Saskatchewan since 1982.

The focus of the trip was on improving the image of Saskatchewan and Canada's economic and investment environment. I pointed out at every opportunity that Saskatchewan has products and technology to trade, and opportunities to be capitalized upon, and good people. And this is an excellent province to invest, and to live, and to work, and to stay. I was told quite frankly by the European community they were pleased with the political endeavours they'd seen in Canada over the last couple of years, and they had renewed interest in Canada and in the province of Saskatchewan.

Let me turn to Saskatchewan's role on the national scene. Intergovernmental affairs, also is mandated to present and protect Saskatchewan's interest in Canada, and to ensure that all our activities, in relation to other governments in Canada, are conducted in a co-ordinated and a

consistent and professional manner.

First: the essence of intergovernmental relations in this area, as embodied, of course, in relations between first ministers. Intergovernmental affairs has played a major role in preparations for such conferences. The recent first ministers' conference held here in Regina proved to be one of the most successful conferences of its time in history, of its kind in history. It was the first time that we could entertain all the premiers and, indeed, the Prime Minister, in the province of Saskatchewan. It was an historic event, and intergovernmental affairs, under my jurisdiction, worked very hard to make it a very successful event.

Secondly: intergovernmental affairs is also responsible for co-ordinating Saskatchewan's participation in annual meeting of Canadian premiers and Western premiers. The second last meeting of the Western premiers in Kelowna produced a major statement on trade policy, for example. This paper had a major impact on the trade constellation papers recently released in the federal government, and our government here, the Department of intergovernmental affairs, put forward those ideas and those programs on expanding trade and markets two years ago, and again last year, and now they're becoming extremely well received and endorsed across Canada.

The most recent meeting in Grande Prairie saw Saskatchewan get a consensus on tax reform among all the Western premiers. And freer trade common market with the United States was something that was picked off on by the premier of Alberta as a result of our previous meetings in Kelowna, and previous meetings in Swift Current.

And again I give a bouquet to intergovernmental affairs in my shop because they have been providing the kind of information to other governments to make it understandable, and now it's being endorsed. And particularly, recently, to get three different political parties: Howard Pawley in Manitoba, obviously representing the NDP; Peter Lougheed, PC; and other people in British Columbia — three different political parties; four Western premiers to agree on reform, and tax reform, and we're taking it to the national level.

The third part is intergovernmental affairs also plays a key role in preparations for bilateral meetings which I've had with the Prime Minister, and other premiers.

Another major area of activity for intergovernmental affairs is the management and co-ordination of federal-provincial program development, implementation, and evaluation.

One such thrust is the Canada-Saskatchewan Economic and Regional Development Agreement or ERDA. Intergovernmental affairs has been working for some time putting together a very important package between the federal government and the provincial government so that we can sign it. And since January of 1984, the province has been successful in negotiating nine subsidiary agreements with the federal government, with total commitments in excess of \$230 million.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, intergovernmental affairs takes an active role in the management of the new era of federal-provincial relations. And I say the new era because in the last first ministers' conference that we had here in the province of Saskatchewan was indicative of the kind of co-operation that we see now between the provinces and the federal government. Under the Trudeau administration and the previous administration here, we have found that it was confrontation, confrontation.

As a result of what we have been doing recently, we see co-operation. We see co-operation on drought assistance. We see co-operation on oil. We see co-operation on job-related programs. The combination of this new era of federal-provincial relations and new ideas in a new management style has resulted in many, many benefits to the people of Canada and I would say to the people of Saskatchewan.

The benefits can be significant. And it is up to intergovernmental affairs to continually assist me in identifying how they can be realized. Co-operation, and not confrontation, is the key.

In summary, it is obvious that the new era of federal-provincial relations has arrived. The first ministers' conference held in Regina is just one example of the much closer relationship and understanding established between the federal government and the provinces. There will always be, Mr. Chairman, conflicting issues due to regional needs and geographical differences, but governments must demonstrate the capacity to manage these conflicting issues in constructive ways.

The key is to co-operate, to listen to people, to have them involved; it's better than confrontation. The fact that intergovernmental affairs reports to me is indicative of the priority which I place upon this important function. It is a reflection of my personal concern that this government maintain a co-ordinated and consistent and co-operative approach in its dealing with provincial, national, and international governments.

I believe that the province that depends so heavily on its exports — interprovincially, nationally, and internationally — it is important that the reputation of this province be one of understanding, to be hard bargainers, but to be one of co-operation and to build so that we can build on each other's strengths and in fact provide and identify those complementary factors in each of our regions so that we can be more successful.

I might add, Mr. Chairman, intergovernmental affairs has an attitude that says, if we don't do it, if we waste too much time, if we confront, then obviously we're going to fall behind the Americans, we may fall behind Japanese, further behind the Europeans, and so forth. It's my view, the departmental view, that we should get on with building and co-operating with our neighbours to make sure that we can.

(1600)

The third part of my office that I want to comment on, Mr. Chairman, is the protocol office. In keeping with their mandate, I have instructed the protocol office to focus its energies and activities on activities that we will build upon the self-confidence and talents of the people of Saskatchewan. This important responsibility has been sadly neglected by previous administration, and I am determined that this government shall not make the same mistake.

Saskatchewan people have a great deal of pride in their accomplishments, in their work, in arts, in energy, in agriculture, in business, and so on. And they need to be recognized. In this regard, let me give you some exciting examples of the accomplishments of the protocol office over the past year.

First, the Governor General's visit. The Governor General of Canada visit was the occasion for a memorable event in the province of Saskatchewan. To honour Madame Sauve and to recognize Saskatchewan's contribution to Canada, we invited a large number of Saskatchewan achievers to join the Governor General at a gala banquet.

I mention this event in honour of Madame Sauve because it shows the world-class calibre of Saskatchewan people. It shows that we have achievers and achievements of which we can be very proud, and our government intends to tell the world about them. We want people to feel good about the very, very positive aspects of their life, their accomplishments, and we have people that are doing and leading, on the leading edge of accomplishments all over the world in many, many professions.

And I believe for years and years people wanted to be recognized, but often they had to leave the province of Saskatchewan to find that recognition. Now they are finding it by staying here, and they're certainly finding it by coming back to the province of Saskatchewan.

Secondly, the dinner for Saskatchewan's Olympic competitors. A group of athletes and officials from our province who had represented Canada at the recent Summer and Winter Olympics were honoured by members of this Assembly and many other representative citizens.

International visitors to the province are another area. In keeping with this government's desire to display the strengths of Saskatchewan to the world during the 1984-85 fiscal year, the protocol office handled and helped me host a wide range of visitors to the province. Senior diplomats came to Saskatchewan from Austria, from Belgium, Britain, China, Germany, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, New Zealand, Tanzania, and the United States. In addition to visits and hospitality and official functions, our protocol office handles a wide range of policy, administrative, and consulting duties.

The hospitality grant program, Mr. Chairman. This grant program provides grants to non-profit, non-governmental organizations hosting international, national, and interprovincial events in the province of Saskatchewan. In 1984 . . . pardon me, '85, we awarded grants to 57 organizations for a total of \$116,000 — over a quarter of the office's budget. All kinds of worthwhile organizations benefit from these grants. The spin-off for Saskatchewan economy is worth many times this modest outlay, and the program is above reproach; it's strictly fair, objective, and non-political.

Government gift policy. In 1983 I instructed the office, in consultation with the Saskatchewan Arts Board, to make major improvements in the central gift bank used by the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker, and cabinet. The purpose of gifts is not only to show hospitality and make our guest feel welcome, although this is very worthwhile, it is also to provide a show-case for Saskatchewan artists and crafts people and writers and publishers.

I'm pleased to say that the protocol office gift bank now displays a significant role as a patron of artists and writers for the Saskatchewan Awards of Merit.

Last October on the occasion of the Governor General's visit and the dinner for Saskatchewan achievers, I was able to announce the Saskatchewan Award of Merit to recognize excellence, achievement, and good citizenship by residents of our province. An independent advisory committee will receive nominations from the general public and recommend recipients of this award. I am sure that all members will agree that the award program is timely in 1985 because it's Saskatchewan's Heritage year.

Many visitors tell us the Saskatchewan protocol office literally has a world-class reputation. We're proud of that and we'll continue our efforts to provide the best possible service to the government, the members of the Assembly, and the people of Saskatchewan.

A fourth dimension of Executive Council, Mr. Chairman, is the new cabinet secretariat. As a further means of enhancing government efficiency and accountability of expanding policy-making circles, increasing public input into government decisions, I am pleased to announce the cabinet secretariat will be undertaking new duties. In this regard, the government-wide concerns and specific management principles referred to earlier by me, were in large part responsible for this decision.

In concert with my fellow ministers, I have appointed four line department staff members under the direction of the clerk of the Executive Council to provide support to cabinet and committees of cabinet. We found that the previous government had neglected this important support mechanism for cabinet, but we found through our experience that it was necessary to correct this oversight. We have found that full and informed discussion is necessary to ensure that decisions of cabinet are made with a clear understanding of the interest and the concerns of those individuals and groups who will be directly affected.

We live in a world of rapid change and increasing interdependence. Government does not serve

isolated and independent interests. Rather, it serves the people of Saskatchewan and their varied and complex priorities and concerns. It is this interdependence and this need for consultation and co-ordination that outlines the cabinet's decision to assign new responsibilities to the cabinet secretariat.

In supporting the cabinet decision process, the secretariat will now serve the people of Saskatchewan by ensuring that the cabinet has the most accurate, up-to-date and complete information as possible. The cabinet secretariat has no specific operational or program delivery capabilities but acts as a process facilitator. It ensures that the cabinet's submissions are accurate and complete and are moved through the system as efficiently as possible and returned to the initiating department for implementation.

In assembling the staff for the position of secretariat officer, Executive Council consulted with all departments. The individuals selected have extensive experience in the public service, and bring with them professional credibility and objectivity. The responsibilities of the cabinet secretariat officers demand the confidence of ministers, senior officials, and the staff of departments and agencies of government. It is this confidence which has enabled the staff of the cabinet secretariat to meet the challenges of improving communications, co-ordination, and accountability in the administration of submissions to cabinet.

The establishment of the cabinet secretariat is a first for the province of Saskatchewan. I am confident the secretariat will continue to provide support to cabinet and thereby contribute to a more responsible and open decision-making process for the people of this province.

The fifth area I want to comment on, Mr. Chairman, is the policy secretariat. In keeping with the new management principles that I have initiated with respect to the way in which the planning bureau of the department of Executive Council participates in the government of policy, I would like to announce today the planning bureau shall henceforth be known as the policy secretariat.

The present operation of the policy secretariat, under the direction of the associate deputy minister responsible for the policy secretariat and the bureau of statistics, differs greatly from the role it had under the previous administration. The development of government policy, Mr. Chairman, is not something done for people or to people, rather in this administration it is something to be done with people and by people.

The present role of the policy secretariat reflects my commitment to respond to the major concerns and priorities of the people of the province and to work co-operatively with the departments of government and the public in the creation of appropriate solutions and policies.

Mr. Chairman, leadership in government means ability to devise policy-making processes which adapt to and respond quickly to this changing environment. To my way of thinking this means that how you go about making policy and who you involve in the policy process is very, very important. People want to participate.

It is essential to listen to people, and finally, Mr. Chairman, to actively and regularly involve people in the policy-making process. A central concern of mine has been to expand policy-making circles in and outside of government. Within government the flip side of this coin has been to try to encourage departments to contribute to the generation of innovative and creative ideas, responding always to the central concerns of Saskatchewan people.

The recent Saskatchewan budget highlights education, it highlights jobs, agriculture, health, and small business. It provided an outstanding example of how a government can listen to people and respond to these concerns and to the community priorities.

What the public perhaps does not see are those processes within government which contribute to the creation of a consensus which permits ministers who represent different people and their

separate concerns to agree upon the desirable courses of action needed to respond to all these diverse concerns.

A key process in ascribing for consensus is the annual government priorities exercise. The primary purpose of the government priorities exercise is to enable departments and their ministers to contribute initially to their overall formulation of government policy and direction. The process that we have in place to do this was designed at my request by the policy secretariat. It performs precisely to that purpose.

The general strategic planning function of the government is embodied in the government priorities exercise and is supplemented by the regular participation by the policy secretariat staff, on government private sector committees such as the Saskatchewan Development Advisory Committee, and on intergovernmental committees dealing with policy development. This regular publication is an essential component of my attempt to expand the policy-making circle as far as possible.

Mr. Chairman, I started this process some years ago, along with occasional meetings with senior officials of government, and I am constantly working towards its continuous refinement. I referred above to the central concerns of the people of Saskatchewan. These concerns include things like water-related issues; or two, employment development issues; or three, rural development in general. The policy secretariat we've developed was specifically involved in the creation and the development of particular response to these issues. Let me give you an example in water.

Nothing is more fundamental to the people of Saskatchewan to both employment development and to rural development in this province than the assurance of adequate supply of fresh, clean water. Someone has said that water will be the resource issue of the 21st century, and it may be true. In fact, in Saskatchewan, water may already be the critical resource issue. We in Saskatchewan, as a result of our recent experience with drought, know only too well the importance to our towns and our villages and our cities. And assured supply of clean, fresh water is needed for these communities to grow, to attract new industry, and to attract employment, and to prosper.

When this government came to power, water was a high priority item on the government's mind, and on my own personal agenda. Today Saskatchewan, I'm proud to say, has a brand-new water corporation which provides the framework for the implementation and administration of water policy necessary for Saskatchewan to organize the use of its water resources. When it was clear after the Muirhead report that the province-wide consultations were necessary, the policy secretariat continued to be involved in supporting functions to the Saskatchewan water project team, leading to cabinet approval and the creation of the brand-new water corporation in the province of Saskatchewan.

Let me turn to rural development. Concerning rural development and the agricultural economy, the policy secretariat prepared a strategic plan to assist the newly established Department of Rural Development, to look at how we can keep what is positive about our rural lives in rural Saskatchewan, and identify key areas in which it can be improved. To this end the policy secretariat designed and advised on the establishment of a rural development task force in the province of Saskatchewan. This task force is ready to make a full report to me, and I will enlist the aid of the policy secretariat again, in preparation of the next step in this area.

Employment policy. With respect to the critical problem of employment development, under my direction the policy secretariat helped design and advised on the establishment of the new Employment Development Agency. The broad outlines of the agency indicate, again, this government's commitment to innovative thinking and consultations which affect sectors of the

provincial population and are keystone to my administration. The agency devised does not duplicate the work of other government agencies or departments. It is not designed to administer programs. Rather, the agency's principal reason for existence is to ensure that all government departments which deliver complementary employment programs are delivered in the best co-ordinated and organized fashion and so people can be aware of them. The agency is mandated to inform the public about the available employment opportunities and to act as a catalyst for business and clients in their creation. The record for a new agency, Mr. Chairman, has been excellent.

These activities — the government priorities exercise, water development, rural development, employment development — have set as their goal an unleashing of career potential of the government and the people of Saskatchewan. I know that the people of Saskatchewan, if given listened to by this administration, Mr. Chairman. Their ideas will be considered — they have in the past, and they will now — and weighed against the opinions and attitudes of other people in society.

(1615)

Accordingly, the process that I have developed within Executive Government and the Government of Saskatchewan as a whole, is a specific style for the deliberate encouragement of innovative and creative thinking by the people of Saskatchewan. We have only ourselves to hold us back from success. This sentiment reflects both my own leadership and, I feel, the true values of the people of Saskatchewan.

In summary, Mr. Chairman, good leadership does not seek to control for control's sake, nor does it plan to simply provide an ordered world in which everything seems to be in for its proper pre-assigned place. Intelligent leadership seeks to match the will of the people with the resources available to them. This I've attempted to do, using the government priorities exercise.

Sound leadership focuses its attention on the most critical of priorities and the policy instruments needed to handle and respond to those priorities. We have done this by enlisting the aid of the policy secretariat on world development, on employment, development issues such as water-related ideas, instructing them to develop particular initiatives designed to prepare Saskatchewan for the future.

The process, Mr. Chairman, is no different in other significant areas of our society such as health, education, resources, youth, and seniors. It's a complete open, integrated, personal approach that builds on the strengths of the individuals in the system. And always, Mr. Chairman, always, responsible leadership seeks to facilitate and not control, consult and not to impose, co-operate and not subordinate.

These are exciting times for Saskatchewan people, and I'm happy to be in a position, Mr. Chairman, to serve the residents of this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

Item 1

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, I've listened . . . I won't go so far as to say I've listened with intense interest, but with some interest. I listened for the first half-hour with some interest, and thereafter it flagged a bit. But none the less I think I do report that I listened with fair interest to a number of items that the Premier had mentioned.

It was I think fairly characterized as — what shall we say? — a blizzard of buzz words. It had almost all of them: the innovation and the creation and the creativity and co-operation and

open and integrated and consult and facilitated and reform and excitement, and all of the ones that we have come to expect from the Premier.

I think however that the members opposite should be aware of the fact that they have been in office for something over three years, and the public are interested in what's going to happen in the future with respect to exciting, innovating projects built with the co-operation of the people and in accordance with their will and involving open, integrated, decentralized government which he has indicated here today just how all of these things can happen. We will presumably at some future time may see, and then again may not.

I think that the public will judge not by what is promised but by what has happened. And let's look at the last three years, three years of what you assert to be accomplishment and what we assert to be mismanagement. And that's going to be the test, not what is said about what is going to happen at some future and unspecified time.

Let's pick just a few things which the Premier indicates are going so well. Let's take that measure of economic activity which is used by economists generally to indicate whether things are going well or not well — gross domestic product.

The members opposite suggest that some number-fudging is going on. I would like I think to refer to the numbers that have been given to us by the Minister of Finance, and I hope that they will not be alleged to be number-fudging.

There is no question that with respect to gross domestic product things have not gone well for Saskatchewan. The gross domestic product for Saskatchewan when corrected for inflation has simply not gone up in the last three years. And I will refer the Premier to the material gained from the Minister of Finance, and I trust he will regard that as being accurate. And I will refer him to the Minister of Finance's budget speech and to page 38, and we will just look at what the Minister of Finance says about what's happened about gross domestic product. And carried forward in constant dollars it was in 1980, 5.2 billion; in 1981, 5.5 billion; in 1983, 5.3 billion . . . Sorry, 1980, 5.2; 1981, 5.5; 1982, 5.3; 1983, 5.3; 1984, 5.0.

Now that is not exactly a startling increase in the gross domestic product. If in fact our population is increasing, and I'll concede it is, then the gross domestic product per capita is going down, and going down just as significantly as you say the populations' increasing. If you're going to have it increasing 5 or 10 per cent a year — which isn't true, but occasionally in your exuberance you suggest that — then the gross domestic product is going down 5 or 10 per cent a year.

In fact we know that things have not gone well. We'll come in a moment to all of these jobs that are alleged to have been created. Right now we'll deal with gross domestic product; we'll deal with this in terms that the Minister of Finance gives us in his recent *Budget Address* on page 38, and we will reach the conclusion that gross domestic product has not gone up. And certainly on a per capita basis it has gone down.

We will take the value of manufacturing shipments, another little indicator, how the Minister of Finance does not put that in his budget speech corrected for inflation. But certainly when you correct for inflation, there has been no increase since 1981. In 1981 the value of manufacturing shipments was 2.5 billion, and by 1984 it was 2.7 billion, and that would be far more than accounted for by inflation.

So we see no increase in the value of manufacturing shipments in this boom time that we have been told about.

Public and private investment. And these once again, Mr. Premier, are taken from the Minister of Finance's budget speech, again at page 38. We have 1981, public and private investment, \$5.1

billion; 1984, \$5.1 billion; and '82 and '83 are in the 4.6 and 4.9 billion range.

So even in current dollars, even with inflation assisting you to make your figures look good, 1982 was worse than 1981; 1983 was worse than 1981; and 1984 was just over 1981 — oh, just barely — 5.15 billion. Corrected for inflation, that represents a decrease in investment.

So we have in gross domestic product, value of our manufacturing investment, we have seen it decline in the three years since 1981.

I could give other indicators. Retail sales — I hope that no one will suggest that retail sales did very well last year in Saskatchewan. We ranked number 10 among the provinces in increase in retail sales.

Well I concede with the Premier at the outset that 1984 wasn't a great year for Saskatchewan because we had poor crop conditions. But leaving 1984 aside, we have not done well in retail sales. Indeed, I point out that in 1984 there were no more dollars spent than in 1983 in retail sales, so we lost the entire amount of inflation, 4 to 5 per cent.

And it's not doing very well in 1985. In 1985, for the first two months — and that's all I have figures for; more recent figures are not available — Saskatchewan had retail sales growth of 7.5 per cent; Alberta, 9.8 per cent; Manitoba, 14 per cent.

Again the Premier will attempt no doubt to attribute that to last year's drought. The facts are very clear that drought happened in some other provinces, as well, although clearly it was more serious in Saskatchewan. But we are not seeing very much increase in retail sales. And I don't need to quote the figures for that. Go around and talk to any small-business man you like and he will say that he's hanging in there, but his sales are not increasing — he's hanging in there but his sales are not increasing.

I give you bankruptcies. I give you bankruptcies. And here we have business bankruptcies, and I will tell you how many happened in 1981 — 74; how many happened in 1982 — 111; how many happened in 1983 — 119; how many in 1984 — 136; 1985 — 139. That does not sound exactly like roaring prosperity. Very, very nearly twice as many bankruptcies in 1985 as in 1981 — very nearly twice as many bankruptcies.

Mr. Chairman, it's pretty clear that this prosperity of which the Premier spoke bypassed a good number of Saskatchewan people. And we are, Mr. Chairman, talking about facts, not about what the Premier says is going to happen in the near future, but what has happened in under three years of his administration.

The Premier puts forward the view that there has been a rapid increase in population in Saskatchewan. There has, in fact, been an increase at about the same rate for the last three years as for the preceding three years. And if members doubt that, I know they will enter the debate and put their figures on the table. Mr. Deputy Chairman, I don't know whether or not people are coming into Saskatchewan who previously lived here. I know that about the same number are coming here as came here in the previous years. But I don't, frankly . . . Mr. Deputy Chairman, I don't know where they're living. I don't know where they're living.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, I wonder if members opposite have looked at the figures for housing starts. They are absolutely abysmal. We have not had housing starts as low as in 1984 for a good 10 years or more. World class drop in housing starts would be one way to say it. Let's look at these figures, and let's stack those up against the people who say that there are tens of thousands of people coming to this province. It's false. The figures, of course, make it clear that it's false, but the housing starts underline it. Where would they be living? Where would they be living if they were coming here in their tens of thousands? Where are they living?

Well, I'll give you the housing-start figures. In 1985 there were 5,200 units. I haven't checked back but there's nothing as low as that back in 1974. Certainly I have to go back for 10 years or more to get anything approaching that. In 1983 it was 7,200; in 1982, 6,800; in 1981, 5,900 — not a good year; 1980, 6,200; 1979, 11,700; 1978, 9,500; 1977, 12,800; 1976, 13,100 — all those years of alleged stagnation having housing starts, which in some cases, of two and two and a half times what this government has been able to achieve in 1984.

(1630)

They assert that people are coming back to the province, but do you believe that? Do you believe there are tens of thousands of people coming back to the province and lining in non-houses? Are they living in tents? Of course they're not . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . 5,200 units in 1984; 7,200 in 1983. Compare that with '79 of 11,700. In a year like 1976 it was more than the 1983 and 1984 combined. These were the days when things were supposedly going very badly. But I'll tell you, Mr. Chairman, it is not possible to assert that things are going very well, that the population is booming, that things are going great, but nobody is building houses.

Nobody will believe that. They're not building houses, and that tells the story more effectively than any other rhetoric that could be launched from members opposite or indeed from any members of their party. There is simply not very much house-building going on.

Mr. Chairman, I turn now to jobs, and we'll have an opportunity to examine a good number of these figures in depth. Bu this unemployment rate which they're so proud of would have been a cause for very considerable disgrace in any year during the 1970s — a cause for very considerable disgrace.

In the last three years between 1979 and 1981, those three years immediately prior to this government coming to office, and I want to compare those three years with your first three years in office: the average unemployment rate in the preceding three years was four and a half per cent; your average for three years was 7.2 per cent — a very substantial increase in unemployment since 1982.

I hope members opposite don't deny this, and I hope that they will, if they deny it, enter the debate and put their figures on the table. There is no question, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and in any case I don't need to give the figures. Everybody in Saskatchewan knows it's tougher to get a job now than it was three years ago. Everybody knows that.

If you doubt that, go out and ask some of your teacher graduates whether they're finding it easier or harder. If you doubt that, go out and ask some of the nursing graduates whether they're finding it easier or harder. If you doubt that, go out and ask the law graduates whether they're finding it easier or harder to find a place to article. And I tell you that it is very definitely clear that it's harder to find a job now than it was three years ago. And if members opposite deny that, then they are indeed out of touch. They are indeed out of touch.

Let's talk about new jobs. Let's talk about new jobs. I'll take the three years of your administration and the three preceding years, and how many new jobs a year, on the average, how many new jobs a year. Mr. Chairman, in the three years preceding the coming to office of the present administration, job creation in Saskatchewan was at the rate of approximately 9,000 a year, just a little over 9,000 a year. For the period from 1982 to '84, job creation has been 4,667 a year — 4,700.

And those are the hard facts from StatsCan, from Statistics Canada. They cannot be gainsaid; they cannot be argued against, except by other figures. And what we are hearing are shouts but no figures. What we're hearing are shouts but no figures because the members opposite will not be able to mount figures to contradict what are the hard facts that in the three years preceding their coming to office there were 9,000 new jobs a year; in the three years of their term in office

there've been 4,700 new jobs a year. That, Mr. Chairman, is the hard facts.

Members opposite frequently assert that it's because our labour force is growing so fast. It's all those people coming back and wanting jobs, and that's why unemployment is soaring. Mr. Chairman, no so — not so.

The growth in the labour force in the three years prior to their coming to office was 10,600 a year, average. The growth in the labour force since they came to office is 10,300 a year, average. For all practical purposes, about the same thing. The only difference, Mr. Chairman, is that of the 10,600 who came onto the labour force in the three years prior to their coming to office, jobs were found for over 9,000 of them; and of the 10,300 or so who were coming into the labour force while they're in office, jobs are found for 4,700; and as a result, unemployment is going up and up and up.

Let's talk about the rate of increase in unemployment. And these again, Mr. Deputy Chairman, are the figures from StatsCanada. These are the figures given by StatsCanada which you and I, I hope, agree are reasonably accurate: 1979, 18,000 unemployed in this province; 1980, 19,000; 1981, 21,000; 19982, 28,000; 1983, 35,000; 1984, 38,000. Those are impressive figures. Doesn't look like it's getting much better. The May 1985 figure was at about 40,000.

But let's give them the full benefit of the doubt. We'll take the year 1984 — they were in office for that full period of 1984 — and the unemployment rate 38,000, just a little over twice what it was in 1979, just a little over twice.

Now, Mr. Chairman, those are not impressive figures. They show a government which has not been able to create jobs for the people who are coming into the labour market.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, no one denies that there are troubles out there in the economy. No one denies that it's difficult for governments to generate the circumstances which create jobs. But what I say is this: when you are seeing unemployment double from 18,000 to 38,000 between 1979 and 1984, when you see it go up from 21,000 to 38,000 between 1981 to 1984, in the three years when they are in office, it is not good enough for them to say, we're doing great. We're doing fine. We've created jobs for everybody.

Nobody can solve a problem if they don't admit it's there, and this government is pretending that that problem isn't there when tens of thousands of Saskatchewan people haven't got jobs and a great number of young people don't have jobs who very much hoped to have jobs.

Mr. Chairman, the problem of youth unemployment has got worse and worse. Not only, Mr. Chairman, are the numbers of young people who are unemployed soaring, but the number of young people who don't have work is high in relation to those who have work. Let me put that another way. What we are seeing is an increase — increase — in the number who are unemployed and a decrease in the number who are employed.

Now, that one needs some explaining from members opposite. They may well be able to blame the fact of the rising unemployment on the economic circumstances across Canada, but on what do they blame the fact that there are far fewer young people working in Saskatchewan than there were three years ago or four years ago or five years ago? To what do they attribute those facts?

Let me give you some figures, Mr. Chairman. In 1979 the number of young people between the ages 15 and 24 who were working in this province was 113,000; in 1980 it was 113,000; in 1981 it was 110,000; in 1982 it was 107,000; 1983, 105,000; 1984, 101,000. Let's go over those again. It went down from 113,000 in '79, to 107,000 in '82, to 101,000 in '84.

Well let's take the difference between '82 and '84. Those are their years. They claim to have done a great deal to create employment for young people. From 107 to 101 — 6,000 dropped —

a more than 5 per cent drop in the actual number of young people who are working. And that, Mr. Chairman, again can't be gainsay. It cannot be argued against because these figures are hard; these figures are real. Once again, Mr. Chairman, I don't need to give the figures . . . I do. But the person on the street knows that it's tougher to get a job if you're a young person now than it was two or three or four or five or six or seven years ago.

Mr. Chairman, I have a young son — two young sons — one who is approaching 30 and one who is just over 20. And I know that the older son never had any difficulty getting summer employment or any other kind of employment. The younger son has had to scratch and scabble and be without summer employment on occasion. He has got some, but he has certainly been without employment during periods. And this just wasn't true before. It just wasn't true before.

If members opposite have sons or daughters of whom are 18 or 19 now, and some of whom are 24 or 25 now, ask them which one had the toughest time getting the job. Ask that. And I tell you there's . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Perhaps I shouldn't be directing it to members opposite; they may have some special preference, but I'm not asserting that. I am saying that it is tougher to get a job now or if you're a young person than it was three or four years ago. And the figures make it clear in any case, but I don't need to rely on the figures because my constituents tell me that in no uncertain terms. So it is very, very difficult for young people.

Once again, Mr. Chairman, I am not laying all of this at the door of the government opposite, but I think it ought to be acknowledged by the government opposite so that they can address the problem and not pretend it isn't there. There is an assertion, and I heard the Premier make it again and again and again, that somehow Saskatchewan has done better at job creation than any other province. Well he may well believe that. And obviously, if you hunt around and find a month, that may well be true.

But looking at 1984, Saskatchewan ranked — and take the year the last year that we have figures for — Saskatchewan ranked seventh in Canada in the rate of new job creation. Six other provinces had a better record of job creation than Saskatchewan. And the way that's worked out is that you take the number of jobs you have, the number of new jobs added, calculate the percentage and who is doing best. And on that basis we did better than three provinces and worse than six. We were seventh.

(1645)

And that, Mr. Deputy Chairman, is not a very impressive record, not a very impressive record. Again, Mr. Chairman, we ought to be saying that's a tough problem. We ought to be doing something about it. We ought to give it something more than razzle-dazzle and press release. We ought to get out there and see if we could get our youth employment figure, for example, up to where it was in 1982. If we could get it up to where it was in 1982, we'd have another 6,000 young people working, and that would take the edge off the youth unemployment. It would take the edge off that.

But we're a long way from where we were in 1982, and a long, long way from where we were in 1979. That would need 12,000 new jobs, and somehow I don't think they're going to come to pass.

Mr. Chairman, do you ask yourself, if there is all of this burgeoning prosperity because of open for business and because everybody is confident and they're moving forward in the new and dynamic Saskatchewan, do you ask your self why social aid case-loads are soaring? Do you ask your self why so many more people are on welfare if this Saskatchewan is booming? If you do that, if you ask yourself that question, you will have an answer by surely knowing that if many, many more people are on social assistance things are not great. And the facts are that many, many more people are on social assistance.

In total beneficiaries, the number of people who rely on welfare, '81 . . . and I'm using the March figures because those are the ones that I have for 1985. Mr. Chairman, people talk about interprovincial comparisons. I would be very happy to make interprovincial comparisons in some of these areas — not an absolute basis because when this government assumed office things were very good in this province. But the issue is not whether they are very good now, although they're not, but what have you done? In what direction are you moving?

And I want to tell you a little bit about what direction you're moving in with respect to social assistance. And the number of people who were relying on social assistance in March of '81 was 43,000; by March of '82 it was 48,000; by March of '83 it was 59,000; March of '84 it was 63,000; and March of '85 it was 64,000.

Now this is a great record for a government which claims to have brought prosperity and hope and confidence to this province. If all this is true, how is it possible that we have 20,000 more people on welfare than we had four years ago?

And those are facts. And I trust members opposite once again don't deny them. Those are very, very hard facts. They are not doing well. Some people are doing well in this society, as we well know. But this isn't who they are.

But there's more revealing statistics about welfare, Mr. Chairman. There are always people who are getting social assistance in this province. And we've had the senior citizens who needed some supplement. We have had persons who were disabled. We have had persons whose spouse and breadwinner was incarcerated. We have had people who for some other reason were not really part of the work-force. And we have had . . . and that's sort of the base load of social assistance.

And there is another group which for the purposes of statistics are called "lack of earning capacity," but in plain English means they don't have a job. And this is the group which has spiralled. These are the numbers which have soared.

In 1979 the number of these that don't have a job and therefore need social assistance, that number in '79 was 6,000; in 1981 it was 8,000; 1982, 12; '83, 16; '84, 18,000. Just about three times as many people getting social assistance because they can't get a job as was true five or six years ago — very, very substantially increased.

Three years you've been in office. Three years you've had opportunities to do whatever is necessary to bring prosperity — jobs, training, all of these things you say are going to answer these questions. And three years later the number who are on welfare because they can't get a job is very much increased

In 1979 that number made up about 30 per cent of the total welfare load. It now makes up over 60 per cent. And those figures tell the story as dramatically as would possibly be able to be told.

There are many other indicators. I use the Saskatoon food bank. We didn't use to have food banks around here in 1982, but we certainly have them now. And we have many, many dozens of families who rely on food banks. These are families who are not going there simply to pick up groceries but are going there having been screened by responsible agencies and found to be wanting. And there is no question that their number continues to rise.

I looked up some figures the other day, looked up some figures the other day from the Salvation Army, who do a pretty tough screen. The Salvation Army are very, very good people, but they know when they're being conned, if I may put it that way. They've been in this business a long time, when they're not easily conned. And when they say somebody needs some food, you can bet they do. The Salvation Army will tell you that the people who they are approving for food banks are certifying that the need of food from food banks is going up and going up impressively.

So I think, Mr. Chairman, the hard facts of Saskatchewan do not support the glowing picture which the Premier gave — the picture which was, as I say, replete with: consulting and facilitating and innovative and creative and co-operation and will-of-the-people and reform and excitement and participation and open and innovative — great stuff.

Great stuff, but how much better it would be if the Premier devoted his attention not to cheerleading but to tackling some of the real problems which are there. And I say again, Mr. Chairman, we're not laying all these at the door of the Premier. We're not laying them all at the door of his government. But he should acknowledge that things are very much tougher than they were when he came to office — that jobs are not out there, that the open for business policy has not worked.

There are not a great many more factories. There are not a great many more businesses. There are certainly . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, Mr. Chairman, we're having . . .

Members opposite are suggesting, and many, many of them are suggesting that there are lots of new businesses around. Of course there are new businesses around and there are old businesses closing, and that's always true. But with respect to new businesses who are out there hiring, new businesses here because of the open for business policy, we'd be very much delighted to know where they are, and match them against the ones that have closed.

Match them against the ones that have closed and tell us where all of the new jobs are. We are aware, of course, of the fact that there are some new jobs. But how is it that in this time of new businesses which you assert are coming about, the great urge in the activity in the oil patch, you're still only creating 4,700 new jobs a year when the previous average was over 9,000.

What is wrong with your policy that it isn't working? What is wrong with a policy which only creates about half the number of jobs in your three years of office that were created in the previous three years?

Mr. Chairman, there's one other indicator of just how well we're doing, and that has to do with how the provincial treasury is doing. Every government knows that when business is booming, revenues increase, and when business isn't booming, revenues go down; and when business is going well, then we will have budgetary surpluses, and when business isn't going well, we will have budgetary deficits.

Let's look very briefly at how well this open for business policy has resulted in . . . Mr. Chairman, I want to interject in my remarks to say this with respect to Manitoba. Every citizen in Saskatchewan should wish that budgetary deficits in Saskatchewan had only increased as much as they had in Manitoba. We would be hundreds of millions of dollars ahead if that had happened. Hundreds of millions of dollars ahead. That, unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Order. We will need co-operation from both sides of the House to maintain order so the Leader of the Opposition can complete his question. Order! Do the members of the opposition wish to come to order so their leader can speak? Please proceed.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Forgive me for saying so, but with respect to the interruptions, I didn't find them coming overwhelmingly from the opposition side.

And I want to come at this deficit again. It's all very well for members to say how well we're doing and how open for business is a resounding success. But if this is so, Mr. Chairman, what are they doing with the money? If business is booming, why aren't they taking a little bit to pay their bills?

We will hear yet another speech from the Premier about how the people want balance, and they want their government to protect them in times of stress. But, Mr. Chairman, this isn't supposed to be times of stress. These are boom times. We don't need to do all of these things. We don't need to run big deficits if these are boom times.

But maybe, Mr. Chairman, these aren't boom times. Maybe the Premier's rhetoric has nothing to do with the facts. Maybe he likes to talk about how prosperous things are, cannot collect taxes because there isn't prosperity out there, and he has opted to run huge deficits. He certainly opted to run huge deficits. No one can deny that.

Mr. Chairman, the figures with respect to the financial management of this province are there for all to see; they're all audited by the Provincial Auditor. If the pre-1982 figures were inaccurate, the quarrel of hon. members is with the Provincial Auditor. But none of them will dare say that, because they know they can't sustain these rather fanciful stories.

And I say to members opposite: if you can manage, as you assert our government did, to hoodwink the Provincial Auditor for 11 years and then show 11 straight surpluses — you'll never have the chance, but try just one or two surpluses — and you will never do it because you are unable to manage the affairs of this province, because you persist in believing that there is a level of prosperity out there which isn't there. You would like to believe it was there. It isn't there. It isn't there, as revealed by the facts that there are no jobs; that it's not there, as revealed by the fact that your taxes are not coming in, and you are having massive deficits.

And that, Mr. Premier, are the hard facts, and I suggest to you that your role is to acknowledge those facts, to say that we have some problems, not to assert that everything is booming, but to say that some things are booming and some aren't booming, and we are taking concrete steps to see that we can provide jobs, put our finances in order, help farmers, do all the sorts of things which Saskatchewan people are calling upon to be done.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.