

EVENING SITTING

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Mr. Klein, seconded by Mr. Domotor, and the amendment thereto moved by Hon. Mr. Blakeney.

Mr. Lusney: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To continue where I left off at 5 o'clock, Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, some of the members opposite were talking about what we should be doing for farmers and how difficult it is on the farms today. And I think what they should be doing is more than talking. We know what the problems are. And what do they do?

An Hon. Member: — Six per cent money . . .

Mr. Lusney: — The member for Kelvington-Wadena here says 6 per cent money. Well as I said before, 6 per cent money is fine, but all you're doing is putting another debt load on that individual that needs something more than another debt load. He has financial problems now, and certainly the one thing he doesn't need is more debt. And that's what this government is offering — more debt for the farmers of Saskatchewan.

Instead of looking at possibly getting after the federal government and telling them we've got to have more for our wheat — instead of suggesting that it should go down — this government does nothing more than study and study, and review and look, and continue to delay. They send out a committee to look into farm input costs.

And the member for Kelvington-Wadena was a member on that committee, and he was going to try to come up with a solution to our expensive chemicals. But, Mr. Speaker, that same member sells those chemicals. And that's almost the same like telling a banker to go and study how to get the interest rates down, when he's the same guy that sets them. That's what we have here. He sells the chemicals, and then he's going around trying to study how we can get the price down.

And why would it be that difficult, Mr. Speaker, for him to come up with a solution to it? Well when you're selling the produce, when you've got the company that gives you a holiday at their expense . . .

An Hon. Member: — Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: — State your point of order.

Mr. Petersen: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the member for Pelly just stated that a chemical company gave me a trip. I would like him to retract that statement, Mr. Speaker. At no time did a company ever give me a trip. It was an earned trip, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: — I don't find that the member has a point of

order that's well taken.

Mr. Lusney: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the member's a little upset, a little upset over that point, but the Premier himself said that the member was over in Venezuela, and they were over there on behalf of a chemical company; they deal in chemicals. And that's not something that's unusual. There are many chemical companies that provide vacations or trips for their dealers. They do that.

And that, I say, is wrong, Mr. Speaker. Because when the farmer has to pay the price for that chemical that it is today, and they can afford to send someone to another country on a vacation — whether it's Venezuela, or Australia, or any place else — then I think they are taking too much money from the farmer. Because that's who paying for all those trips.

And what we should be looking at is trying to get that chemical down. We should be looking at getting fertilizers down, at getting the price of fuel down. That, Mr. Speaker, is what should be happening.

But to this point, after spending thousands of dollars on that study, I have yet to see a report from that group that is going to tell us how we are going to get farm input costs down. That, Mr. Speaker, has not happened as yet.

They talk about some of the great programs — 21 cents a gallon for fuel that they are going to be rebating to farmers. And it's going to be so cheap now; we're going to get real cheap fuel. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to inform the members opposite that last year the oil companies were providing a subsidy to the farmer, if you want to call it that, but it wasn't a subsidy. What they were doing is giving him a discount, because the farmers was paying way more than that oil was worth and the province wasn't charging any royalties on it. So the oil companies could afford to give a little back to the farmer. So they'd give him a discount, anywhere from 25 to 35 cents a gallon.

And what happens now? This government says that they're going to rebate 21 cents a gallon, and the oil companies cut off their discounts. So most of the farmers are going to be getting their fuel for more this year than what it cost them last year, even with the 21 cents that the government is going to be rebating. That's what's going to happen, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — Want us to take it off, Lorne? Do you want us to take it off?

Mr. Lusney: — And some of the members say that I want them to take it off. No, Mr. Speaker, what I'm saying, the 21 cents is less than what the companies were offering last year, and if this government is serious about bringing down the cost of fuel, they should be bringing it up to 30 or 40 or 50 cents, or else tell the oil companies, if they could afford to have that discount on last year, then it should stay on this year, on top of that 21 cents that the government is going to rebate. They should have both of those in there then. They shouldn't be allowed to take that discount off this year, because they still aren't charging, the government isn't charging the oil companies any

royalty.

And unless the government is prepared to say to the oil companies, that if you're going to take that discount off, you're going to have to start paying some royalties for that oil, then anything they do is meaningless, Mr. Speaker, totally meaningless. It is not going to help any of the farmers.

And I know that some of the members opposite are upset. They keep saying that we have no farm policy. Well, Mr. Speaker, we put forward, I think, a fairly good farm policy and some fairly good programs that, I think, the farmers are going to accept. And the only difference is, Mr. Speaker, that I think the farmers also know that we're going to deliver.

When we make a promise, we keep it. Unlike the government opposite who made all kinds of promises, complained about everything you could think of. Before they were saying we spent too much money on government advertising, on advertising Crown corporations, and you name it.

And what have they done? They've spent way more than we spent in advertising. And now they come up with a nice glossy ad, went out in the paper in every household, that's going to cost the taxpayers of this province a small fortune. And the taxpayer has to pay for it. And it's getting awful close to an election. Yes, it's nice colour on both sides. And the taxpayer has to pay for it. And the taxpayer is going to be paying for it. Sponsored by the Government of Saskatchewan. And that, Mr. Speaker, is how they are spending the taxpayers' dollars in advertising, trying to buy some votes shortly before an election. And they think that that glossy piece of paper is going to buy them the votes, and that they're going to win this election again. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think they're going to be somewhat disappointed because that glossy poster is not going to buy them that many votes. I think the people of Saskatchewan are a little more intelligent than that and they aren't bought off that easy.

The other day when the Premier was speaking in this House, he said that what they did was take off the tax on gasoline and that everybody was getting such cheap gasoline today that if the NDP were in, in his words, and in *Hansard*, he said that if the NDP were in power, gasoline would cost us 60 cents a litre — 60 cents a litre — and he said they took off 40 cents a gallon.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when I look at some of the prices and 40 cents a gallon at what the price is today, 40 cents a litre in Regina, I don't know how he comes up with saying, even if it was 40 cents a gallon more, how he'd get 60 cents a litre out of it.

But it's true with this party, whether it's the Premier of any other minister or any other member on that side of the House, they don't have to be very factual. They can just throw out a figure even though there is no sense to it all. And they want people to believe it.

Mr. Speaker, after hearing some of the comments of the Premier the other day, over the weekend I picked out some bills of mine from 1982, a couple of bills from service stations — January of 1982. And he was saying

that the price was so high at that time, and when he got in power everything became so low, and one can think back of the last few years as to what we paid for fuel. What we paid for fuel only about six months ago, and not even that — just a month or two ago back in Kamsack, it was 48 cents a litre. In Regina I think it was around 44 cents a litre. Now it's down to 40 cents in Regina; it's still 44 back at home. But in January of '82 before the Conservatives came to power . . . I have one bill from the highway service — it was 38 cents a litre. Thirty eight cents a litre. That's expensive fuel.

In January of '82 before the Conservatives came into power, at the Turbo just on East Albert here, Victoria, 2445 Victoria Avenue East, it was 34.8 cents a litre, and it was that expensive gas that the NDP had at that time. And the Conservatives are trying to say that somehow when they came into power fuel got so cheap. Well I wish I was paying 34 cents a litre for it right now. I wish we would have been paying that for it the last two or three years because that's wasn't the case. That wasn't the case, Mr. Speaker.

But yet, somehow, the members opposite are trying to convince the public that everything that they did was so much cheaper and so much better, but the public aren't buying it. They just aren't buying because they know better. They have invoices also. They know what the price was four years ago; they know what it is now. And we've got \$12-a-barrel oil right now, and what are we paying for it? We're still up there at 40 and 44 cents a litre for gasoline.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Premier keeps saying that somehow he brought this price of gasoline down so low. Well if that's what he calls bringing it down real low then, Mr. Speaker, I think he'd better go and try to sell that to the people of Saskatchewan because they're not likely to believe him.

Some of the members are also talking about how we put our Crown corporations into debt. And you notice they're not talking about what they propose to be doing. I don't hear anything about what they're going to do for the people of Saskatchewan in the next two months, or three months, or six months. They're not saying anything about that. They keep talking about the NDP government that was in four years ago. But they don't want to talk about themselves, and I can understand why. Why would you want to talk about your programs which were so terrible.

They talk about how we put the Crown corporations in debt. And, Mr. Speaker, all we have to do is go back a few years, go back to '81, and look what the debt was for the Crown corporations at that time. And I think if you did check back, and that's in their own documentation, you look at what there was. It was about 2.4 billion in the Crown corps at that time under the administration of the NDP. In '84, which was a little over a year ago, in '84 it was \$4 billion. They doubled the debt of the Crown corporations. And they say we were the ones that put them in debt.

(1915)

Go to the total debt of the province, Mr. Speaker. Let's have a look at that one and see what happened with that. The total debt in '82 when we were in power, the last time that we were in power, we had a total debt of about 3 billion, a little over \$3 billion in the province of Saskatchewan. That's total debt. Under the PC government, what is the total debt going to be now that the people have to shoulder the expense on, pay the interest on, and try to pay back somehow? A little over 7 billion. That is where we are today, Mr. Speaker.

And here we have this government and its members saying that it was the NDP that put us in debt. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think when the people of Saskatchewan take a look at some of those figures, they will realize that the people that put us in debt to the point where we are today is the present administration. That's who did it.

They made a lot of other promises in '82 which it would have been nice if they had kept some of them. The former minister of Highways was talking about all these four-lane highways that he was going to build. They were going to have four-lane highways on No. 1 and on the Yellowhead. Unfortunately that minister is no longer with us. He's not the minister of Highways any more, and he hasn't built any of those four-lane highways. We're still waiting for them.

What has he done instead? Whether it's the former minister or the present Minister of Highways, they aren't much different. The former minister was selling off all the highway equipment. The present Highways minister is the guy that does the selling. So there isn't much difference.

They got rid of all the equipment. They cut down the budget for highways and they didn't build very many roads, Mr. Speaker. And everyone in this province knows that, because they have to drive over all those roads. And I was talking to a guy the other day that was telling me when he was going down to Saskatoon last summer, what did he see? There was a guy on the highway, patching the highway off a half-ton truck with some asphalt in the back, trying to fill holes — Alberta plates. And that's the unfortunate part.

We have a lot of the people that were doing the work in this province that did have Alberta plates on their vehicles. We weren't using Saskatchewan people and Saskatchewan youth in this province to do the work. We were getting Alberta contractors in with Alberta people doing the work. And our people, our youth in Saskatchewan were sitting unemployed. That is what was happening, Mr. Speaker.

This year we hear more promises. Well it seems, Mr. Speaker, that in this election year there's going to be a lot of highways built and it doesn't matter who asks for a road or where, they get a letter saying, yes, we are certainly going to look at putting this into our permanent program and get it built. They are prepared to build every road in the province this year, especially a couple of weeks or so, or months, before an election. They are prepared to promise anything anyone wants.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't think the people are going to

believe that. I don't think they are going to believe those kinds of promises because there were none of them kept in the last four years and they certainly aren't going to believe any promises on the eve of an election.

They've done the same thing, Mr. Speaker, with STC. We had a good transportation company in this province, one that's been in since 1946, and it's provided a good service to the people of Saskatchewan. But what has happened since this administration has been in power? They got rid of some nice new buses that we had. And the members opposite laugh; the members opposite laugh because they got rid of some buses, some buses that had virtually no miles on them. They got rid of them, traded the new ones in for a bunch of used buses that they can't keep on the road. That is what they bought. And one could be suspicious of what that kind of deal was when you see someone trading in new buses and buying used ones. One would wonder why you would be buying used buses in a public transportation company. They could have fixed up those new buses to put them on any route in this province but they didn't do that.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that this government gave those buses away for half of their value, if not less — if not less. And I would like them to show . . . If they say that's not true, let them table the documents. Let them table the agreement that they had with Murray Hill and then we would know what those buses brought. But I say we will never see that documentation because they know very well that it would show exactly what happened. We'll never see that and I know they're not going to ever table that. But one day the people of Saskatchewan will find out what went on with some of those deals. Because they've purchased buses after that, and they've paid anywhere from 150 to \$200,000 for used buses that another company traded in because they didn't want to run those buses any more. They brought some more of those buses from Murray Hill. They bring them in to Saskatchewan and what do they have to do? Some they can't even put on the road without fixing, and some will go on the road for two or three weeks. They've got to put transmissions in them and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, there is no responsible government that would ever operate a public utility that way. They wouldn't operate a transportation system in any other province that way. Even the private operators got rid of those buses because they wanted to provide a better service for their customers. And what happens? Saskatchewan buys a bunch of junk. We had better buses of our own that they traded in than some of the stuff they bought. But that is the way this government operated. That is the way they operated, Mr. Speaker, and that wasn't only in that area. It seems they ran the whole government that way.

One can look at some of the things they say about health care, and they certainly like to brag about health care. They like to brag about health care. But, Mr. Speaker, most of the things they brag about, and some of the members mentioned it tonight, they brag about all the nursing homes that there are to help the senior citizens. They're saying they're going to help all the senior citizens.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I would only like to ask them — and I know that people know better — I would like to ask those members: did they build all those nursing homes? I would say not. I would say those nursing homes were in there long before they got into power. They were in there long before they got into power. I can use my constituency, I can use Kamsack, I can use Norquay, and if I could go right close to Canora, those were all there before these guys got into power. So they didn't build any nursing homes in that area. All of those senior citizens were in the nursing homes that needed them. There's no doubt that there is need for more. There is certainly need for more. But all this government is doing is talking about it.

Again, they've talked about it for four years. They've talked about it for four years, and now if anybody applies for an nursing home, they say, yes, we'll give it to you. To me that can only mean one thing. There's got to be an election very soon, because they are promising nursing homes in every place that wants them. And, Mr. Speaker, I would then suggest that all that is another empty promise, because it is not likely that they're going to be there long enough before they call an election to come through with some of those promises.

They are promising everything, but they are not likely to be in this House long enough to bring down that budget and to go through with that budget and build and do everything that they will be saying. That, Mr. Speaker, is what is going to happen.

They talk about all the work they're doing in the hospitals and how they're improving the hospital service. Well, Mr. Speaker, we've heard from the nurses, we've heard from a lot of patients as to what the conditions are in the hospitals today. And some of the members say, have I been a patient lately and how would I like to be one. Well, Mr. Speaker, with the kind of hospital care that these people are providing, I certainly don't think I want to be in a hospital because I know some people that were in there and I know how they were treated.

I know that there is a shortage of nurses. There aren't enough nurses on staff to be able to look after the patients properly. And yet they are saying that they are doing so much for health care. Well, Mr. Speaker, they should go to some of these hospitals and talk to some of the staff and find out just how good it is in there, because they certainly have not been providing the kind of care that is necessary.

Every year they make cut-backs in funding to the local hospitals, and I can use Canora hospital as an example . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And somebody said, I would. Well, I certainly will, because last year — it's a 50-bed hospital — the Minister of Health cut back the funding to Canora hospital to 36 beds. This year they have been informed that they will be cut back to 30 beds. A 50-bed hospital that is full, and they cut it back to 30-bed funding. And the hospital went into debt last year, and they say they certainly cannot operate, being funded at 30 beds this year. And why can't they do it? Because they need some nursing home space. They've got some long-stay patients in there. And what does the Department of Health tell the board when they come to see them? They tell them, well you better release these long-stay patients,

get them out of the hospital, and if you have to readmit them again that'll make it look better for the hospital.

Well that doesn't make a lot of sense, Mr. Speaker, If somebody's in there and they're sick, they're being told to get them out of there and then bring them back in so you can put on paper that they're going in and out. One would think that the minister of the department would be able to go into that hospital and have a look to see how many beds are being utilized on a permanent basis and fund them accordingly. But that, Mr. Speaker, they certainly are not doing. That's one hospital that has that problem, and I would suggest there's probably more that have a similar problem. And yet they continue to say that they are doing so much in the field of health care. Again, Mr. Speaker, I doubt very much that people are going to believe that.

One of the members opposite this evening in his speech was saying that the NDP are like badgers and pigeons because we seem to like holes in the ground and tall buildings.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I might suggest to that member that those holes in the ground that he's referring to, those potash mines, used to bring some revenue for this province. They used to be able to provide decent health care. And now what do we have? They're trying to get rid of those holes in the ground that were providing revenue. They are trying to destroy all of that. They are trying to destroy all of that. They are selling it off. And that, Mr. Speaker, is their answer for a better province and a better economy — sell off everything that you've got.

And we see what they did in some of the areas. They sold off highway equipment. They got rid of some new STC buses. They sold a coal mine. They sold the drag-line and then lease it back, and they're buying back the coal from a private company from Alberta. They sold some potash equipment and they lease it back. Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how many business men with any intelligence whatsoever would operate on that basis. They wouldn't.

They talk about private sector administration. Well, Mr. Speaker, I wish that they would go to some of these companies and get a little bit of advice on how you run a business, because you certainly don't do it by selling off property or equipment and then leasing it back. That certainly does not save you any money. But somehow they're going to try to sell that to the public, that that is supposed to save money.

(1930)

In the long run, that is going to destroy this province. And that is what this government is doing. They have been doing it for four years, and if they re-elected they'll continue doing that. That seems to be their philosophy . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

You are not going to be back in here. You're not going to be back in here, so I know you won't have to worry about it. And I can say, Mr. Speaker, that certainly this government is not going to be able to destroy this province after they call the election. When they get the

courage to call that election, they certainly will not be destroying this province any more, because the people of this province say that they certainly cannot afford four more years of what we have seen in the last four years.

Mr. Speaker, some of the members were talking about our accounting system in the past, and I know they've tried to make it appear as though somehow things weren't as good before as they are right now. They're trying to make themselves look a lot better. Well, Mr. Speaker, I know it's difficult for them to do. They've had some problems even tabling this auditor's report, and they certainly don't want to table public accounts for us, and I don't think we'll see them. They probably won't table those accounts before they call the election. Because if they did, the public would have access to many of the figures that are in there and the public would know exactly what this government has been doing in the last four years.

Mr. Speaker, even the auditor himself says that there is something wrong in this government. They've changed their accounting, they've changed their method of moving money around the government, to a revolving fund. They've changed it, Mr. Speaker.

And just picking out a few areas of this report, it talks about one department that submitted all their figures to the auditor, and he pointed out some discrepancy in it. When he pointed that out to the department, guess what they did? And the auditor puts that in his report.

When informed of the errors, officials of the department chose to adjust the records and financial statements of the fund to reflect the correct contributions receivable amount. They didn't look for what the problem was or how that came about. They just changed things around, changed the numbers, made sure it balances, and then turned it back to the auditor. That is how this government has been operating, Mr. Speaker. And even the auditor said that that isn't not right.

In a couple of other areas he says the same thing. He says the processing of incorrect or unauthorized information greatly increases the risk that a material error or fraud may occur. And it seems to have happened. He says payments of \$464,000 on some projects were made without evidence of adequate authority.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that would make one wonder just what is happening within some of these departments. Even the auditor says that there is a risk of fraud when they operate the way they have been.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this is the way this government has been going for four years. They keep always referring to the NDP and saying that we're against everything. We're against companies; we're against the rich.

Well, Mr. Speaker, private companies have been operating in this province for many years under the NDP and under the Liberals. And they will continue to operate in this province. But I'll tell you, if the private companies ever had problems, they've certainly had them under this administration. You hear more and more of them criticizing the government and how they operate, because these people don't deal honestly with anyone.

They don't deal honestly with anyone. That's why even the private companies say that they can't deal with the Conservatives. They're not honest. They don't deal fairly. And they think that somehow that is the right way to go.

We certainly aren't against private enterprise in this province. It's been there. We're not against anyone that is prepared to work. And, as one of the members said that we're jealous of people who have, in his words, who have worked hard and saved and have got ahead — well, Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you, we certainly aren't jealous of anyone who's worked hard and saved and got ahead. In fact, I would commend anyone that has done that.

But what is this government doing for any of those companies that have worked hard in this province? Are they giving them a fair deal? Mr. Speaker, I would suggest not.

When you look at some of the private contractors in this province, Mr. Speaker, who have tried to get contracts, what do they see? They are asked for proposals. There are no more fair and honest tenders. This government would pick and choose who they wanted in.

Most of the time it was companies from outside the province. That is what they did. There is no fairness, there is no honesty, there's no integrity in this government. And the people are starting to see that.

The only ones they seem to be fair to . . . And I wouldn't say fair. They're very generous, yes; they're generous to themselves. They're generous to people like Peter Pocklington. That, Mr. Speaker, if you want to call it anything — I wouldn't say it's fraud, but I'll tell you that has to be the biggest give-away in the history of this province.

When someone can come in from Alberta and walk into the Premier's office, or whoever he walked in to, and then walk out of here with \$10 million of taxpayers' money, and on top of that, get another \$26 million in loans of taxpayers' money, guaranteed by the taxpayer, well I'll tell you, I think there's a lot of business people in this province that wish they had the same opportunity to come to this government and say, look, give me a grant and give me the loan; guarantee it and I'll start up a business here.

I think anybody would do that if he didn't have to put any money into it. And that's exactly what's happened here. Peter Pocklington comes in and he doesn't have to put any money in. This government says, the taxpayer will give it all to you. They'll put up the money, and you can just take the credit for it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think people see through that too. They are not going to be fooled that easily. They will not be fooled by this government any more. I say if they have the courage, they should call that election and let the people decide.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Lusney: — They keep talking about us having some kind of hidden agenda, because what we do is . . . What

we've done in the last few days is said what we think should be done in this province, what we need, what the people of this province need. We have been saying that. And some of the members come up and they say, well what they're saying doesn't really mean anything. They've got some hidden agenda somewhere. Well, Mr. Speaker, we don't deal the way the Tories do. We don't operate the way they do. When we say something, we mean what we say.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Lusney: — And there is no hidden agenda. But I could see why some of you would be suspicious of that because if you operate in that manner, then you would be suspicious of someone else doing that. And I can understand why they would be suspicious of someone else. But, Mr. Speaker, these people are used to a better government than what has been happening in Sask Forest Products, where you see people getting a high salary, getting their grocery bills paid, getting laundry paid, getting their cabin rented, getting flights back from the province to their home, whether it's in Vancouver; or what's happened recently at Westank-Willock.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when you see the kind of things that some people can get away with in this province, at taxpayers' expense then it starts looking more and more like a government that's recently been defeated. The government of Ferdinand Marco in the Philippines is not all that far off from what we've seen in this province for the last four years.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Lusney: — And I say, Mr. Speaker, the people of this province will not tolerate that kind of a government. And when they call the election, they will certainly let this government know what they believe to be true and what kind of government they want.

Mr. Speaker, I know many of my colleagues have things they'd like to say. But I'd have to say, Mr. Speaker, seeing the things I've seen, hearing what I hear from this government saying, I find it very difficult to be able to support that throne speech that they put forward in this House. But I certainly am going to support the amendment that we put forward.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it is with pleasure that I enter into this debate tonight. After listening to the member from Pelly, I was beginning to wonder precisely what it was, and I had to indeed remind myself that it was on the throne speech which was last Monday. Perhaps I would do well to remind the member from Pelly that that in fact is what the debate is on.

Mr. Speaker, as the traditions of the House go, throne speech debate included, the past few days have held few surprises, including tonight. The hon. member from Regina North has on several occasions spoken with a great deal of sincerity and eloquence. As the mover of this throne speech, he once again put his best foot forward,

and I would like to congratulate him and the seconder from the constituency of Humboldt.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the most moving speech given in my few four years in this House was delivered by the member from Rosthern. Not only was it what I considered to be out of the norm as to what I usually hear, particularly from the opposition, but more importantly, Mr. Speaker, it was from the heart.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that more words spoken in this House should be exactly that, and that is from the heart. I want to thank the member from Rosthern not only for his words of wisdom, but for his many contributions to the betterment of this institution that we so neatly call parliament.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I observed and listened to another speaker, namely the hon. member from Athabasca. He came to this Assembly in 1982, and it was he who spoke for . . . I'm sorry, Cumberland. Thank you. It was he who spoke for the first time that I am aware of in his native tongue in this Assembly. And I would suggest to this institution that he will not be the last. We on this side of the House extend our best wishes to him in his future endeavours.

Mr. Speaker, I've touched on what I think are some notable, positive moments in this Assembly this week. Obviously, all is not positive, and we heard a lot of negatives just before me.

I continue to hear from the opposition the usual doom and gloom, the fear tactics, the put-downs, and the pitting of one group against another, or one individual against another individual. I would suggest, after listening to tonight, that the hon. member from Rosthern over the last decade has had much more of patience than what I will ever have in this House.

(1945)

Mr. Speaker, each member in this Assembly holds a personal vision of democracy, and they hold a set of goals, and they usually act accordingly. The throne speech in the last few days in fact, lays out what I would call a vision, a vision of this province, a vision of its people — the economy, our social framework, and in fact, the future of this province. It provided without a doubt a broadening path that carefully leads Saskatchewan into the world of the future.

Mr. Speaker, while much has been done to prepare Saskatchewan for the future, there remains so much more to do. The past four years have seen an emphasis on people and their families. That's a very sharp contrast from 1971 to 1981 when the emphasis was on the family of Crown corporations. This was a period of time that saw government grow at an alarming rate. Not only were the Crown corporations growing, but the size of government was growing. And yet while all that was happening, there were some very contradictory other things happening that, in fact, did state it was contradictory. For example, as the government grew, people assumed the province was growing. Well we created bigger and more Crowns. We bought up more land and we saw a continued migration

of our people, namely our youth, and it is that fact that was contradictory to the growth of government. While the government was growing, our population was not.

Mr. Speaker, our young people left this province in droves. And why did they leave? I would suggest to you they saw no vision that would affect them personally. They saw no protection and they saw no opportunity, no opportunity to own their own farm; very little opportunity or encouragement for small business. They had a lot of encouragement if you wanted to be on welfare, but there was no encouragement to get off of welfare. And sad but true, Mr. Speaker, they saw a leadership that cared more about regulating and legislating. And why did they see that?

In simple terms, Mr. Speaker, the leadership of socialism is one of control for the state — not the people, the state. Who cares about the individual? Who cares about the hopes and dreams of the farmer, the worker, the housewife? How about the aspirations of the young business woman? How about the dreams of a 15-year-old or perhaps the pain of the separated family or the battered family or the dignity of each member of that family? Well, Mr. Speaker, in that decade our people — they listened and they observed and they left this province.

In 1982, the province changed government and, in fact, changed leadership. And, Mr. Speaker, it was not long and people were moving back to Saskatchewan. And in fact, over the last four years we have enjoyed a growth in our population, and we have reached our 1 million mark, and a long time coming it was.

Young people from British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec, Ontario came to Saskatchewan. Some came home and some came for the first time. Now why, at a time when other provinces were seeing recession and the world was seeing recession? What they saw, Mr. Speaker, was a vision, a vision that spoke of the talents of each individual — a vision of less government, of bureaucratic red tape; a vision of less, fewer laws that did indeed protect the rights of people. They saw a new leader who spoke to the people of Saskatchewan, the business men and the business women, the farmers, the housewives, and the workers. They saw a leadership that said we must care for our elderly.

I sat tonight and I listened to the member from Pelly say that, indeed, the nursing homes were there. I want to remind the member from Pelly that in 1982 when I was Minister of Social Services we in fact had very few nursing homes, government sponsored, in this province that year. What we did have was a letter, dated 1978, I believe, stating that there was a moratorium on the construction of nursing homes. That moratorium, that letter stating that, had been delivered to me, Mr. Speaker.

They also saw, when they came back to Saskatchewan within our leadership, a province that cared about its youth. In fact with a new government and a leadership, we created some recognition that government can't do it all. That message has still to go through the eight sitting across the way.

Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, are renowned for

their common sense. And most of them would tell you that the day government is big enough to give it all to you is the day that government is big enough to take it all away. Well, Mr. Speaker, this throne speech is one of a partnership, and I for one welcome the opportunity to work with people in creating opportunities for all ages and walks of life.

Mr. Speaker, the directions in this throne speech impact very much so on my constituency, Swift Current. The potential impact is very positive for my constituency and it will set a good foundation for the city's future growth. Mr. Speaker, I live in what I call the heart of the great south-west. Immediately surrounding my constituency is the constituency of Morse. These two constituencies share the great south-west with Maple Creek and the constituency of Shaunavon. And many of us also consider a portion of the Assiniboia-Gravelbourg to be in the south-west corner. We in that corner, Mr. Speaker, know the harshness of the elements, but we also know what it is like to have a neighbour and a good friend.

This constituency lies in the midst of farming, ranching, oil and gas enterprises. It is a city that is very aggressive, hard-working, and we have very innovative people. It is also a city, Mr. Speaker, that has an approximate population of senior citizens of 18 per cent, relatively high within this province. We have an education system that is second to none. We have a hospital that is in fairly good shape, regardless of what the opposition say. We have a level 4 that services the entire region and nursing homes.

The cities in the south-west have been through drought. We've been through grasshoppers, soil erosion. The wind blows almost every day. And now, Mr. Speaker, we face a downward trend with the price of oil. All of this, and our people still remain a people of optimism and pride in their area.

Mr. Speaker, we have reason for optimism. With the throne speech came the announcement of further government decentralization. The agriculture credit corporation is to be moved to the city of Swift Current. We welcome this news and the approximate 23 jobs that will go with it. My opposition across the way have stated some opposition to it. It's inconvenient, has been what I've heard, it's too far removed from the people. In fact, Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further removed from the truth.

With the advances in technology and communications, there is absolutely no reason, Mr. Speaker, why even more decentralization cannot take place in this province. Besides the direct jobs it will create, there are certainly indirect spin-offs that come with any such development. It also brings government closer to the people, and that is a fact that people should remember more often than what they do. It should always be uppermost in the minds of good government.

Agriculture policies of this government, Mr. Speaker, have greatly assisted my constituency as they have others. While there has been protection for those in rough times, there has also been cash advances. That in turn has helped our small businesses within our community and the general activity that comes about in any given

community.

The farmers living in Swift Current have welcomed the news of the natural gas distribution program. And believe it or not, they can hardly believe it or not that they are finally getting their telephone lines into the 1980s and '90s. Mr. Speaker, what might seem small to some means a great deal to many, and that is the program to put hydro lines underground.

Mr. Speaker, it has been approximately three years since discussion first began on a first ever Saskatchewan pension plan. It's a discussion that began with home-makers, home-makers whose work and contributions are so often undervalued. Granted, there's been a lot of lip service paid by many, with such comments as, you can't put a value on their work. The full-time caring of our children is the most important contribution that anyone can make. And yes, while all that's true, perhaps the time has come that we have given something tangible for the recognition of the home-maker.

The finalization of a Saskatchewan pension plan, I'm pleased to see, also includes part-time workers, because approximately 70 per cent of part-time workers in this province are female. It also includes small-business employees. The opposition has charged it's not enough and it should be mandatory. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not important. What is important is the opportunity and the opportunity to choose, to contribute, and to be recognized for your contribution. That is what the people most affected tell me.

My constituency has over 800 businesses, all but a few dozen are classified as small business. The number of people this could possibly affect is absolutely overwhelming, and in all of this there is a simple message. We care about your future, and we think you should have a choice.

Mr. Speaker, school boards, city council, our hospital and others have also welcomed the news in the throne speech that the province will be taking a first step in the growing concern of recognizing our problems with liability insurance, just as the farmers and ranchers will feel a measure of protection with the announcement of assistance for grasshoppers and drought. Mr. Speaker, you are probably aware that Swift Current and area is designated for severe hopper problems this year. And so indeed it is welcome, the news of assistance being planned early.

The initiatives and directions of the throne speech are positive for my constituency. Over the last four years we have fared relatively well under this government. We have seen an increase in such areas as our hospital base grant of over a quarter million dollars more. We have seen the feasibility study for the Union Hospital there. We have also seen equipment worth almost \$200,000 come into the community for health services. Along with that, Mr. Speaker, we have seen the Chinook urban parkway agreement reached, a very significant benefit for a small city in the south-west. Along with that, Mr. Speaker, the mortgage interest reduction program, the benefits for my constituency add up to approximately \$1.3 million.

If I look at other areas such as the crisis centre, some provincial involvement with our tourist centre, and our down-town redevelopment, we in fact have been on the move over the last four years.

We have also, Mr. Speaker, been blessed with the Department of Health giving us an air conditioner for our regional 4 hospital, which for 20 years has suffered through extreme heat and no relief from it.

Mr. Speaker, while I have spoken of my constituency, there are two other areas that I would like to touch on tonight, namely education and the status of women.

This government has given a commitment to education like no other government before it in this province. As with any initiative by government, there is a reason. And the emphasis on education as a pillar of Saskatchewan's foundation should not go unnoticed.

Mr. Speaker, governments world over cannot ignore, nor can they continue to think of education as only a social policy. It is much more. And in fact I would suggest if societies are to grow and flourish, they too must think of education in economic and social terms. All governments must clearly say, as this government has done, education is in fact an investment in the future. Without it, there are no returns for the individual or for society.

Mr. Speaker, we have worked long and we have worked hard to put into place mechanisms that will strengthen our education system, that will challenge our young people for excellence in education, and in fact we have worked hard to provide more dollars for the system.

Considering what happened to the NDP days, we have made some very positive gains. In 1975 we saw this province paying approximately 56 per cent of operational grants. By 1981, Mr. Speaker, that had dropped to approximately 49 per cent. That drop put a burden on local taxpayers, and if that wasn't enough, the government of the day put blame on the school boards. Today, Mr. Speaker, the provincial share is approximately 54 per cent. We have been on an upward trend.

(2000)

Within our education system we have recognized our teachers with a first-time ever dental plan in this province. And a first one in Canada, Mr. Speaker, was the 30-year-and-out or the early retirement.

Last April saw the creation of the education development fund in consultation with school boards. The total amount of dollars to be allocated, Mr. Speaker, was 150 million; 10 million were for the first year. Today, Mr. Speaker, the expenditures of the fund is being allocated by consultation in divisions, and it is being done in a spirit of collaboration and co-operation.

This year, Mr. Speaker, is the second year, and it will see \$35 million into the fund for school boards. Such areas as the improvement of the basic skills, guidance, career counselling, education for the gifted, library resources, and the updating of technology will be areas that we'll

see money spent on. Mr. Speaker, the results of this commitment will hold our province through the next decade or more.

The development of a provincial educational and cultural television network will enhance the opportunities, particularly for our sparsely populated rural areas.

Our youth cannot be ignored. They are, in fact, our future. And they deserve that consideration.

I sat here tonight and I listened to the member for Pelly criticize and chastise this government for a poster brochure . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And if the member for Regina Centre would listen, he would do well too. The criticism was that moneys are being spent on this posture brochure. The brochure is targeted at our young people for their education and for their work opportunities.

You know, I can remember a day when the member for Pelly or the member for Regina Centre didn't blink an eye when they allocated \$6 million for advertising to Crown corporations. And yet, there's absolutely no consideration given to the moneys being spent on our young people. Mr. Speaker, that says something about party policies.

Mr. Speaker, when I ran for public office in '82, I, like everybody else in here, had a vision. And I also had a vision as a woman, a vision that eventually the barriers in what is often thought as a male domain would be no longer there and women would in fact be represented equally in the political process. Women would be thought of as contributing to solutions, not just isolating them as a problem.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we've made a start, and this government has indeed made some gains. While everyone knows there are five female members on the government side, it is sometimes a fact that is forgotten. We also have two ministers in cabinet, the first time ever in the history of the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, today we have a style of leadership in this province that opens the doors of opportunity for women with understanding. Women in this province have waited for a long time for such things as the enforcement of maintenance payments, the skills development program instead of only the option of welfare. They have waited a long time for recognition through the home-makers' pension. And they have waited a long time for a commitment by any government for greater public participation in such areas as boards and commissions.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to note, when we took office in '82 there were approximately 9 per cent of women represented on boards and commissions. Mr. Speaker, four years later we are up to 29 per cent, and we are going to go higher. Now you tell me what happened to the 40 years of socialism.

We have also put into place, Mr. Speaker, a pro-active management program to give women in the public service the same opportunity as their male colleagues. We have encouraged our women to exercise their many

abilities, including their abilities in small business.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to note that the Department of Tourism and Small Business has been very active in putting on seminars for women, along with the federal government. When I look at statistics, I would suggest that they have been extremely successful, not only in the interest, but in encouraging women to actually get into it. The stats across Canada show approximately 43, 44 per cent of women owning small businesses, and it's interesting to note that in 1985 that 49 per cent of women own or manage small businesses in Saskatchewan, well above the national average.

Mr. Speaker, women don't ask for a lot. They don't ask for government to do it all. They simply want choices. And once given those choices, they want the respect and the opportunity for the choice they make. I made a choice in '81 to run for the PCs, and I probably will again in '86, Mr. Speaker, because it is a government that is open to all, both male and female. It is a government that understands, but more importantly, it is a government that is positive in its actions, and that is precisely how I see this throne speech before this Assembly in debate tonight. It's positive. It sets a firm foundation for the future. And I, for one, Mr. Speaker, will be supporting the motion. Thank you.

Mr. Hopfner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to stand before you and speak to this Assembly. I would like to say, before I get into my speaking notes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to pass a message, if I may, at this time to the member for Rosthern and the other members that will not be running on this government side of the House. I would like to say, they have helped to create a lot of the programs that we've seen over the last four years. The member for Rosthern is probably one of our more senior-type members, and we're going to miss him very much, Mr. Speaker.

I had the pleasure of sitting on a legislative committee with him, and I'm sure it will go down in history for the province of Saskatchewan as we see the fire college and others develop in this province, and I would hope that when such a building does become a reality, that they do take a look at it, and maybe, who knows, they may name it after the member for Rosthern.

So with that, on to the people that are still going to be here, Mr. Speaker, and help us direct this province with positive policy, such as the member for Melfort, our new Minister of Highways, or the member from The Battlefords, our new Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, individuals such as my colleagues that I've named from a few different ridings are the type of people that are going to carry this province into a more realistic place for young people to stay home at and to come back to.

Mr. Speaker, 35,000 jobs — 35,000 jobs. I want everybody to listen. Thirty-five thousand jobs, Mr. Speaker, have been created under this government in the last four years — 35,000 jobs. And the members opposite, the NDP, say we have done nothing. Thirty-five thousand jobs created in the province of Saskatchewan, when they called . . . when the members opposite called our time today, the time we're in today, a time of doom and gloom

or a time of depression.

I'll accept that. We didn't have excellent times in the province of Saskatchewan. We did not have what you could call a type of year, an excellent type of year, where agriculture wasn't suffering or education programs had to be revamped to keep up with the changes and technologies and various technologies that were coming in to the province, and drought. And you know, you just . . . The mineral sales have dropped off. You know, we just never really had an excellent year of governing. But we saw the hard time through, Mr. Speaker. We saw them through. And the members opposite are over there saying we haven't done anything.

I want to say something there. The member from Athabasca had stated here, Mr. Speaker, that we will be in close to \$2 billion in a deficit in the province of Saskatchewan after the next public documents are tabled. Well, Mr. Speaker, they ask us what we have to show for running a deficit in the province of Saskatchewan. I'll tell them what we have to show for running a deficit in the province of Saskatchewan, and I will use my riding for an example, Mr. Speaker.

My riding, Mr. Speaker, has had, if you want to get into the aspect of health — instead of eroding health, Mr. Speaker, we have brought about a resurgence within the health system, Mr. Speaker. We have begun to build our hospitals, instead of close them down.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear.

Mr. Hopfner: — We have begun to decentralize the medicare system in the province of Saskatchewan, without centralizing it where our families, our older people and our younger people, had to drive for therapeutic . . . for therapy and for — pardon me, Mr. Speaker — for therapy treatment and for . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, and they said it, therapeutic abortion. They were the ones, they were the ones that had created it. They were the ones. They would like to see the clinics on every corner. But, Mr. Speaker, people would have to travel to the cities, miles, 60, 100, 150 miles to the city for treatment, because they were closing down rural Saskatchewan hospitals. Rural Saskatchewan hospitals, Mr. Speaker. They were even . . . They had a moratorium on hospitals. They had a moratorium on nursing homes. And our people from rural Saskatchewan were having to travel to strange surroundings to have their health needs looked after.

Mr. Speaker, they're the righteous ones. The NDP are the righteous ones. They're the ones that can do no wrong. They're the ones they say, are the only ones. They're the only one that means anything to Saskatchewan, they say.

But I want to warn the people in the province, in this province, the province of Saskatchewan, that if there is ever an NDP government back in this province they will realize what they have done within just a short period of time.

I would like to make an example within the health care, from what the Minister of Health and I have been able to do for my particular riding over the past number of years.

And it's still to come and there is still more to come.

I have had three, three hospitals built in my riding —promised for years by the NDP administration, promised around every election time, Mr. Speaker. And I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, when I ran for office, when I ran to stand in this legislature to represent my constituents, I did not say that I'm going to give you a hospital, and not deliver.

I went to each one of those communities and I said I would deliver. And I would deliver before another election. And I delivered.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

(2015)

Mr. Hopfner: — I went into nursing home agreements. I went into . . . Nurses in the hospitals, nurses in the hospitals — the hon. member from Shaunavon says, I have a shortage of nurses in my hospital. Well, Mr. Speaker, for the information to the member from Shaunavon, I want to indicate to him that I have a very, very good rapport with the nurses' representation from my constituency of Lloydminster, Maidstone, and Cut Knife. And as of yet, I have not had one of their association, one member from their association come into my office or any one of the meetings that I have been at, Mr. Speaker, indicate to me, face to face, that there's a shortage; that our patients are suffering.

I've had countless meetings with our health representatives out in my riding, Mr. Speaker, and I want you to know, and I want the rest of the province to know that the members opposite are lying when they say that my . . .

Mr. Speaker: — I would ask the member to refrain from using that kind of language in the House. I would ask you to withdraw that statement.

Mr. Hopfner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope that you'll accept my apology for using that word. I sometimes get carried away. But I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that they're about as far from the truth as the truth can be. That is . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — I cannot imagine these people, the members opposite, the members and candidates of the NDP, marching across the province of Saskatchewan being able to go into the communities that are offering the health care service throughout this province and agitate the whole system.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you a little story. They tie themselves around the Bob Whites or the Larry Browns or other individuals like that in this province, and what do we get? We get follower, followers — little sheep on their side that are working within these organizations. These are the people that seem to want to take the time to cry. These are the people that want to take the time to, instead of doing their job and doing it right, they're the ones that have the time to come into the city of Regina here to

march, to march, because anyone that is busy doing their work, busy doing their job, has not got the time to come into Regina and march. Mr. Speaker, those kind of people, they're too honest. They just want to be left alone. They want to do their job and they don't want aggravation. And there is a good two, four, six, eight, nine aggravations.

I want to say though, that when you go into the . . . When I travel my riding, Mr. Speaker, and I talk to the people, they're pleased. They're pleased about having the hospitals built. They're pleased about having the nursing homes. But I want to say this. Now this is ironic. This is so ironic. It was just pointed out to me here the other day that the candidate that is running for the NDP in my riding is now running around trying to take credit for all the buildings I've built. I could not believe . . . (inaudible) . . . He's saying, oh, back in 1976 we promised the hospital in Lloydminster. We have 1976. There was an election in 1982 and he still hadn't delivered. He still hadn't delivered. He was saying about how he promised a hospital in Cut Knife. Well, 1982 came along and that hadn't been delivered either, or the one in Maidstone.

Then we get into the nursing homes. Well you know, they didn't even want to talk nursing homes. They had the moratorium on the nursing homes. I delivered a nursing home into the city of Lloydminster, and I put that nursing home in the city of Lloydminster actually two years before they really were expecting it. But I knew it was on the hot plate. I knew they were beginning to move it forward. I knew the building was becoming a problem for them. The fire marshal's report wasn't good. So, Mr. Speaker, instead of taking a chance or instead of spending a lot of money revamping that old building, which was a fire hazard that they had never corrected . . . Mr. Speaker, I felt for those people because if there would have been a fire that . . . A fire would have raced through that type of a building as quick as it would have through these mobile homes. That's the type of fire rating that old building probably had there. So we built it. We built it. And these people are now enjoying a brand-new home, larger rooms, beautiful decor, brighter atmosphere. And they're happy; they're singing. You go in there. They have their get-togethers. They're happy. They're just really enthused about having their new home.

Then I go over to Cut Knife, Saskatchewan. Cut Knife never did have a nursing home. They never did even think of having it, I must admit, up until our term in government. But I want to tell you something. The people in the community of Cut Knife invited me in, Mr. Speaker; invited me into their community to see if there was anything I could do to give them a nursing home in their community because they were forced to drive and visit 50 times two, which is 100 miles a day, to go and visit their parents or their grandparents. They were forced, Mr. Speaker, to leave their community — miles. And then when you want to talk about it, when you're driving that many miles you've got that much more risk . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, members of the opposition says, why are they voting against me. Well, Mr. Speaker, I will challenge the member opposite to drop his candidacy in his Regina riding and come out and challenge me in my riding because, mister, you will be as fast out as you were in.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you something that the members of the NDP, the NDP candidates, must think — that the people of Saskatchewan are probably as low as low can be, because whenever I hear them talk I hear them referring to the people of Saskatchewan as ordinary people, some sort of animal out there that's ordinary. Well, Mr. Speaker, what about them? What about me? Do they not call me ordinary? Do they not call themselves ordinary? Are they above it all?

I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that that just doesn't wash any more. The younger people and the older people have seen through that. They've seen through all this hodgepodge which they've been feeding us for years and years, trying to play on this motherhood and apple pie stuff when they didn't have it here. They had it up here, but they didn't have it here. They didn't have it in their heart. They didn't care! They didn't care, Mr. Speaker.

There isn't one of those members over there that, other than the fact of running and winning in the next election, they don't care if they do anything for anybody out there. They don't! Because, Mr. Speaker, when you look at it just in the aspect of health care itself, they stand there and they speak to us in this Assembly, and they speak out of one side of the mouth. And they say, well, Mr. Speaker, this government is mismanaging and we are running a terrible deficit; we'll never see daylight.

But I'll tell you something. I'll tell you something, Mr. Speaker. When I go across this province and I see new hospitals being erected, and I see new nursing homes being erected, and I see new schools being erected, and I see private enterprise taking over and they're erecting their building — and they say 2 billion deficit.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if we didn't have that 2 billion deficit in this province, there wouldn't be the 35,000 new jobs during hard times; there would not be 35,000 jobs created in the province of Saskatchewan. There would not be these hospitals. There would not be the education facilities, etc., etc. You can go right down the line; you can list it.

We would not have any type of an economy in this province if we were led and being undermined in this province with the mentality of the NDP and the NDP Party. Those people stand for nothing. If you do nothing, which they've done — and I can prove it in my riding — that's exactly what they stand for, is nothing.

You know, I don't mind criticism, Mr. Speaker. Criticism builds on character; it builds on character and it builds things. Positive criticism is an amazing fact that, when you travel through your own individual ridings, you'll find that the criticisms, the positive criticism that you listen to, like the farmers may be talking to you, or accountant, or restaurant waitress, or someone giving you, saying, well, can't government do this, or why don't you guys do that, you're not doing this, and you're not doing that. And you ask them, well, what would you do, what would you do? That's what I call open government, and that's what I've been doing the last almost four years, Mr. Speaker. I've been listening to the people in my

riding. And that's where I say is . . . I will apologize to no one for what has happened in my riding.

An Hon. Member: — Two billion dollars in the hole.

Mr. Hopfner: — Mr. Speaker, the member from Shaunavon again brings up the 2 billion in the hole. Well, I want to tell you something. Let's just work a little bit into the energy sector, and let's go into potash, for instance. Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, under their administration, under the NDP administration a few years ago, a few years back, we had potash mines being built.

An Hon. Member: — No, that's not right. Not one was built under the NDP.

Mr. Hopfner: — Not under the NDP, but they were expropriated under the NDP — bought out under the NDP. Bought out. That money, the money that they used, that the NDP used to purchase those potash mines, Mr. Speaker, if they would have used a little bit of common sense, instead of using that money, using those public funds and putting them into potash mines . . . And instead of leaving the private sector do what they do best within that industry, no, they had to take this money and they had to put it into those potash mines just by the millions — the millions, literally the millions.

And, Mr. Speaker, what has happened is, in easy figuring — anybody can figure it. Just take out a pencil and paper and get the investments, the millions of dollars investments in those potash mines, turn it around, and if they would have taken that money and put it in some, you know, just in investments at 10 per cent, 10 per cent, drawing an interest rate of 10 percent, we'd have had well over \$2 billion in the heritage fund by now. We would have had over 2 billion, in fact in easy figuring — you could probably sit down and figure it out — I think it comes out to about \$2.6 billion in our heritage fund, if they'd have just invested that money at 10 per cent instead of buying potash mines.

(2030)

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — We wouldn't have had a deficit in the province of Saskatchewan. A publicized deficit, Mr. Speaker, a publicized deficit, not a hidden one. We never carried a hidden one. That's why they're out there speaking, oh boy, there's a real deficit here. We got a terrible deficit.

Mr. Speaker, I have not . . . If they're such honest birds, if they're such honest birds, I have not, I have not seen any of them stand in this House and publicly bring in any Crown corporation books to say, well we ran this Crown at a deficit and we ran this Crown, and that and that and that.

Mr. Speaker, that's why I wonder sometimes about what this is all about, what this Assembly is all about. You know, Mr. Speaker, the NDP talk about being so righteous, you know. They talk about being honest. But I'll tell you something, and I'll warn every person in the province of Saskatchewan not to turn your back on one of

those people, especially not one of those that are sitting in this House, because I have not heard much of the truth being spoken in this House over a period of four years.

Mr. Speaker, I have no idea what's happening, with their mentality, with their way of thinking. But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that when the member opposite, the member from Athabasca, when he was speaking, some couple, few days ago, he mentioned the fact about all these oil give-aways that our government has . . . all these oil breaks that we've given the mega oil companies. Well there again, you see, I listened to him and then I listened to the Leader of the Opposition, and the stories do not quite jibe. The stories do not quite jibe. One speaking that we're giving all the oil companies these massive breaks, and they're doing nothing for us in the province of Saskatchewan; no job creating, no nothing.

And then you hear the Leader of the Opposition, he says, well — and he's speaking to the people, the ordinary people, that work within the oilfield areas — and he says, well, yes, that's not so bad. That's not so bad, and I guess we . . . (inaudible) . . .

So now where is it coming from? Who's saying what? The leader is saying, yes, that's a good idea. We'll have to think about keeping that thing going like that. And the other fellow is saying, let's cut, let's cut, let's not do that. They don't even want the upgrader; they don't even want the upgrader in my constituency, Mr. Speaker.

There's not one of those individuals over there, not one of those NDP individuals over there that are committed to this project in the Lloydminster area, in the heavy oilfields — none of them. Anything that they've stated in this Assembly, anything, Mr. Speaker, that they stated in regards to the oil policy that we have developed in the province of Saskatchewan in the last four years, anything they said was a total negative and a total opposite to what we were trying to do but to create jobs and everything else.

What they would sooner see, Mr. Speaker, is big government, big bureaucracy — no incentive to the people. They have no incentives into the people out there so as that they can work, they can go out on their own and make it for themselves — no incentives.

These fellows have stood in this House, condemned my leader, and in not so nice words, they've called him names. I haven't sat in this House here and called their leader any insubordinate type of name or anything like that, but they've gotten away with it by doing it in this House.

And I want to tell you something. When I look at leaders, at leaders of provincial political parties, when I look at that, and I look at where the Premier of our province came, and then I look at where the Leader of the Opposition came from, Mr. Speaker — I think probably he was an in-rooted . . . a growth we found from down East. The Leader of the Opposition was some sort of a growth that we found from down East and brought him here as a bureaucrat and in the prime of this province. And from a bureaucrat he goes into being a political leader — some great giant.

Well I look at the Premier we have today — a farm boy, Saskatchewan-born, Saskatchewan-raised, Saskatchewan-educated, farmer, grass-root, right here from the province, right here in the prairie, home-grown. And those guys want to measure him up against each other. They want to try and balance them. That's their big job. That's the NDP's job today, boys, to try and balance that little leader right here, you know, get him up there a little higher than ours.

Well I want to tell you something. Well I'll tell you something. I would sooner vote for a farmer as a leader in this province than I would for a bureaucrat as a leader in this province, as a professional. I would, and I'll challenge any one of you guys to say different. I'll challenge any one of you to stand up in this House and say you would not sooner see a Saskatchewan-born farmer versus an eastern bureaucrat coming in here to be our premier. Yes, I'll challenge any one of you guys.

We build, Mr. Speaker, we build. Through our leader we build honesty, integrity, grass-root type of government. We don't believe in big government, big bureaucracy. The NDP do, and they've got a leader to prove it. Any bureaucrat can build a bureaucracy. But a business man knows how to operate a business, and our leader is just that kind of an individual. He's a business man, and he's operated this province through rough times — through rough times. And he's brought it through; he's brought it through the tough times, and I'll tell you something. It's the first time in years, it's the first time in years we can actually say, Mr. Speaker, that we had a man of such calibre in our province.

I want to say that we've probably maybe in a lot of cases —and maybe it is against the philosophy of some of my far right-winger colleagues, but it would set well with some of my more left-wing colleagues, sir — but I think we've outsocialized the socialists. Because in four years, in four years, Mr. Speaker, we've had to spend many, many, many millions, millions of dollars on trying to keep the economy of this province flowing, and people together, families together. And, Mr. Speaker, these are just a few reasons why I don't apologize, I do not apologize for the past years, for the deficit. I do not apologize, because everything we've done as a government has been above-board, has been out there to be highly scrutinized by the public.

And, Mr. Speaker, with looking and looking at education, looking at the young, preparing them for new jobs, for the jobs to be; looking at the senior citizens across this province; looking at the business people in this province, the small-business people which I call big business; looking at the expansions we've seen throughout the province in the bad times; looking at all these, I can only say to you, Mr. Speaker, that you've tolerated a lot of nonsense by listening to the opposition over the last four years, by listening to them, their doom and gloom stuff.

But I want to thank you for taking the time to bend an ear towards us government back-benchers when we get up and speak. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I know there's many more of my buddy colleagues who would like to

speak so I'd just like to say that I will be supporting the throne speech. Thank you very kindly.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: — That's a tough act to follow.

Mr. Shillington: — Yes, that will indeed, Mr. Speaker. That is a chilling act to follow, but I shall try.

I want to, on a note that is conciliatory and non-partisan, I want to say good-bye to a couple of members. I may say I hope that I am able to say good-bye to a goodly number of members in this House. It appears that a couple, however, will be departing in any event. One is the member from Rosthern who has been on public accounts. I've had the pleasure to work with him. There were times when I wished he had been less partisan in his approach, but I don't think anybody worked harder or whose attendance was better. It has been a pleasure working with that member.

I want to say good-bye as well to my seat mate. I have had the pleasure of getting to know the member from Cumberland and it has been a real pleasure. I also know the New Democratic Party candidate in that riding who I expect will win, and I expect most members of the House expect will win. He is able and conscientious. I have every confidence that he will fulfil the role which I'm sure the next election will bring to him.

(2045)

Having said that, however, this House and northern people are going to be poorer for the absence of the present member from Cumberland. He has understood their lives, their problems and has attempted, and I think with a good deal of proficiency and compassion, to bring those problems to the attention of the government. With any government who were a bit more sensitive than this government, he may have achieved some success.

I want to make a comment about the gentlemen on my left, the members of the WCC. I wish, Mr. Speaker, they were present when I was saying this. I think what has happened is most unfortunate. I deny no one the right to cross the floor. Everyone that I talk to, members of the public believe that if you cross the floor you ought to resign your seat and establish your legitimacy. I don't happen to believe that. That would make it virtually impossible to cross the floor for the very reason that when you do it, you do it in controversy. That isn't always a very good atmosphere in which to get re-elected. But while defending their right to cross the floor, I'm critical of the system which allows them to pick up a third party grant. These two members have in effect crawled into a hollow shell of a party. They don't pretend to support the principles of that party. They admit quite openly they did it to get \$140,000. I, Mr. Speaker, don't think that's an appropriate use of the rules of this House.

I am mollified somewhat by the fact that it apparently isn't going to carry on very long. We are apparently facing a general election. That makes the whole thing . . . That removes some of the bad taste in my mouth, since I don't expect either one of them will be back; and if they are,

then they've a perfect right in what they're requesting.

But I do think the abuse of the system — and I cannot describe it any other terms — the abuse of the system by these two members who crawled into a hollow shell of a party, which they don't pretend to believe in, for the sole purpose of picking \$140,000 should not be repeated, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — And I say, Mr. Speaker, that after the election, in an atmosphere which may be both more sane and more civilized, I think this House is going to have to deal with the problem which those two gentlemen have brought to our attention in such an unfortunate fashion.

I want to make one other comment, Mr. Speaker. I want to congratulate our Clerk Assistant, Gwenn Ronyk, on an addition to the family. I think we are all delighted at this and wish her the very best.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — I want to make a comment, Mr. Speaker, about the deficit. I want to express alarm — I guess I can't put it in any other fashion — at the manner in which this government has handled the province's finances.

While the deficit is not as large in absolute terms or even the per capita terms, and while the deficit does not consume as large a portion of the budget in paying the interest as the federal deficit, nevertheless, the rapidity with which this deficit is growing is a cause for alarm.

This province's credit rating has been lowered twice in the last two years. We are going to be very, very fortunate if it isn't lowered again this year, Mr. Speaker. To have this province's credit rating lowered three times in three years ought to be a cause for alarm. What it means is that the international experts are saying to us what I think many of the people in this province already understand, that this is too much — this is just too much.

We are facing an accumulated deficit, I gather, of about \$1.4 billion — \$1.45 billion, if the various figures which the Minister of Finance gives us from time to time can be believed. Heaven only knows what it's going to be at the end of the next fiscal year when we see the budget Wednesday night. I think most people expect that the real deficit will be well over \$2 billion. That's \$2,000 for every man, woman, and child in this province. That's all been accumulated in a space of four years. That, Mr. Speaker, is just simply not an acceptable way to run a government.

The deficit, if it is the size which I predict it will be, it will be, Mr. Speaker, the largest per capita deficit west of the Maritimes — that in a province which four years ago had no deficit at all. Now that, Mr. Speaker, ought to be a cause for alarm. This is not simply a philosophical argument about to what extent borrowings ought to finance ongoing operations. This is a discussion about a

government which has proved to be completely and utterly irresponsible with the public purse. I hear people saying, Mr. Speaker, that if something isn't done we'll all be broke. It's a bit alarmist, but it's not a lot alarmist. It is not a lot. That in fact is what the bond dealers are saying as well. If you do not do something about your deficit, you are going to be broke. Ah ha, we'll see what it is next year. I say to the member from Saskatoon Centre, we'll just see what it is next year. I will make a prediction that the real deficit of this province next on per capita terms will be higher than it is in Manitoba. And their deficit, their cumulative deficit was accumulated over many years. This problem has arisen over four years. To be fair, it is partially a result of a deteriorating economy. But to be fair as well, this deficit comes about because of a highly irresponsible election campaign. A highly irresponsible campaign.

Mr. Speaker, I am . . . Well I can say to the member from Saskatoon Mayfair, whether or not I wished we had been in power over the last four years, I'll tell you there's a lot of people in Saskatchewan wish we had been in office over the last four years.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — There's a lot of people wished, and I say to the member from Lloydminster, there is a lot of people who wished that the bureaucrat, as you incorrectly styled him, had been in charge of this province's affairs, who is, I think, a skilled administrator. There's a lot of people that wished they had had a skilled administrator at the helm rather than a cheer-leader. And that is what, unfortunately, the last election brought us.

Mr. Speaker, whatever party forms the next government after the election, this deficit is going to have to be dealt with. I just wish members opposite would be a little more responsible in their communications with the public. In suggesting that they don't have to worry about the deficit, they are denying reality. Whoever forms the government after the next election is going to have to deal with it.

I want to make some comments as well, Mr. Speaker, about free trade. I want to state what I believe to be the position of the New Democratic Party. As is the case . . . Well I'm glad the member from Kindersley is paying attention. As is the case, I think, with all political parties, there are varying views about a subject this complex. It is partially because of the sheer complexity of the question; partially because of the emotionalism of the question. I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, what we are four-square against. This party stands four-square against the kind of free trade, the unrestricted free trade espoused by the Premier. Mr. Speaker, we do not believe that a completely free trade, with all things moving unencumbered between the borders, is in the best interest of this country. I know for a fact that most Americans don't believe it's in the best interests of their country. What the Premier advocates is some sort of a nirvana in which all goods move free and everyone's wealthier. I say, Mr. Speaker, that if the Premier had been . . . had received a Canadian rather than an American education, he might have profited by the experience of some others who have advocated it.

I would remind the Premier that one of Canada's greatest Prime Ministers, Sir Wilfred Laurier, lost not one but two elections on this issue. He lost an election in 1891, and then 20 years later when he'd forgotten the lessons of history, he lost another one in 1911 on the issue of reciprocity. And I say to the Premier of Saskatchewan, if you want to make the free trade that you believe to be an election issue, then you're going to lose the 1986 election.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that while . . . Canadians, I think, have an ambivalent relationship with Americans. I think most Canadians appreciate the fact that we live next to a benevolent neighbour, whose sheer size could render us impotent in the face of the American colossus as Afghanistan or Czechoslovakia is in the face of the Soviet colossus.

This is not the way we have been treated. We have been treated, Mr. Speaker, with dignity and we have flourished as a neighbour of the American nation. I think most Canadians genuinely appreciate that. And most Canadians genuinely would not trade the Americans as a neighbour for any other.

Having said all that, Canadians do not want to be Americans, and they're nervous about any government which runs the risk of that happening. Free trade, with the loss of so many institutions which are important to this nation, Mr. Speaker, is an anathema.

An Hon. Member: — The CBC.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, if you . . . The member from Kindersley seems to believe that the CBC is some kind of useless appendage. I say, Mr. Speaker, that this country has developed a communication system which is the envy of most nations in the world who understand it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Integral to that, and the feat is all the greater because it has been done over one of the most sparsely settled countries in the world, integral to that communication system is the CBC. While all of us, Mr. Speaker, are able to criticize the public network, nevertheless this would be a very different and a very much poorer nation without the public broadcasting system.

I will mention, as well, the wheat board. If the kind of free trade which is espoused by the Premier, as he does in absolute terms, were accepted, such institutions as the wheat board would also go by the way.

Mr. Speaker, members of the New Democratic Party, members of this caucus, believe that there may be much to be gained by a freer trade between the U.S. and Canada. There are many areas where we may benefit by a freer trade. I mentioned short-line machinery as an area in which we've done very well. There are, no doubt, areas where they might benefit from freer trade. And I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that both sides would make an effort to find those areas where it is of mutual advantage and stop clouding the issue with rhetoric, which alarms people and does no justice at all to the issue.

So I say, Mr. Speaker, we are in favour of a freer trade where it is to our mutual advantage. We reject out of hand the free trade as it's described in absolute terms. I also think that one might be critical of the approach which this government has and the Ottawa government has taken, with respect to free trade. Both have, I think, done a very poor job of bargaining.

A rancher in Coronach, I thought, put it to me rather well. He said that, and this is almost a direct quote, when you're horse trading with the Yanks, you're dealing with some shrewd traders. You don't give away anything that you don't have to. You don't walk up to them and say, this is a great horse; how much is it? You have a look at the horse first of all, and if you think it's a good horse you keep that to yourself. And you try to get it for as fair a price as you can. Because you don't have to worry about the Yanks looking after themselves.

And what he was describing, I think, is accurate. I think that is the way the Mulroney government approached this issue. They have approached it with . . . Conservatives in this country have approached this issue by saying, it's a great thing. We can do nothing but benefit. What's it going to cost us? That is just a very poor way to enter into negotiations.

The rancher in Coronach is right. It is a terrible way to buy a horse. And it is an equally poor way to enter into a negotiation for something as complex as free trade.

The government, I think, did not adequately examine the issue to determine to what extent it is in our best interest and to what extent it isn't. Having failed to examine the animal, they then embraced it in glowing terms.

(2100)

I say, Mr. Speaker, that the best we could hope for is that those who are doing the negotiating on our behalf will learn as they go along. They've proved to the benefit of most thoughtful observers that they didn't learn very much and didn't know very much about the subject when they entered into the discussion.

I want to make some comments, Mr. Speaker, about the workers' compensation. I'm interested to know that the Minister of Labour may be following me. I hope he will find time to address some of the problems which have arisen with respect to workers' compensation.

This, Mr. Speaker, is an old movie. I recall, in the dying days of the Thatcher regime, a problem which recurred again and again and again was workers' compensation. The reasons, which I never understood . . . At least one of the members opposite is reading some useful literature. Mr. Speaker, I see one of them opposite reading an NDP pamphlet, so one of them is going to get something out of the evening. Mr. Speaker, in the dying years of the Thatcher government, for reasons that I never understood, the adjustment of the claims of injured workers got more and more niggardly. More and more just claims were denied. And it was a problem, and it was one of the very serious problems which we had to deal

with after 1971.

We see the same phenomenon starting again, Mr. Speaker. I see a very large number of complaints, Mr. Speaker. The volume of complaints which I have received from injured workers over the last few months may well be the largest single source of complaints. Some of them are undeniably . . . have legitimate complaints.

One of the things the Workers' Compensation Board is doing is to deem people capable of earning a certain amount of income. They deem a worker to be capable of earning a certain income. And it is done arbitrarily. There is no appeal from the system. The worker has no real right of redress, and then he loses that amount.

Some injured workmen, Mr. Speaker, have taken to publicizing their complaints in what I think is a novel but a very illustrative fashion. In the March 4th edition of The Regina Shopper the following advertisement appears:

Job wanted. Saskatchewan injured work association requires employment for a male, early 50s. Education: public school graduate. Previous experience: landscaping and excavating contractor. Physical restrictions: specialist reports cannot bend forward or sideways; sitting and walking time limited. Job requirement: minimum, eight hours per day at 6.70.

The ad was put in the paper, not that the person who it describes — whom I happen to know on a first-name basis . . . The ad was put in the paper, not because there was any hope that anyone would answer such an advertisement, of a man whose sitting and walking time is limited, who cannot bend forward or sideways. Obviously, a public school graduate with those qualifications has no hope of getting a job.

That's all he actually meant to illustrate, and that accurately describes him, I might say. Someone whose physical qualities are such as that has no hope of getting a job — would have, I think, very little hope of getting a job if there were a zero unemployment rate and jobs were going begging.

It is even more preposterous to suggest that in this atmosphere a person such as this can get a job. And yet out of his allowance from the workers' compensation is deducted a sum equal to eight hours per day at \$7.60. That's deducted from his work, from his allowance, because he is deemed capable of earning that. He is patently not capable of earning that. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that any system which would treat fellow human beings in such a harsh fashion should make us all ashamed.

I want to read another ad for another job wanted:

Saskatchewan injured work association requires employment for a male. Age: early 50s. Education: public school graduate. Specialist reports 30 per cent compression fracture, T9 vertebrae. Degenerative bone disease with little movement in cervical area. Cannot bend forward or sideways. Sitting time limited.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, the advertisement was put in The Regina Shopper, not that this person had any hope of getting a job, but because they wanted to illustrate how absurd it was and that workmen who have injuries such as that should be deemed capable of earning \$6 . . . The member from Prince Albert looks puzzled, as well he should be. Such a system makes no sense whatsoever. It would make no sense if it were suggested that he's capable of earning the minimum wage. But to suggest that such a person is capable of \$6.70 is patently ridiculous.

I pick, Mr. Speaker, one illustration of the manner in which injured workmen have been denied what is justly and fairly theirs. This is not tax dollars that they go begging for. This is something which they . . . This is money which in a sense belongs to them. As I think all members will know —and the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake ought to —many, many decades ago, when the workmen's compensation legislation was introduced, each side gave up something. Workers gave up the right to sue their employers; the employers gained freedom from legal suits but in turn had to pay into a fund to provide compensation. So it is something that they earned; it is something that really in every sense belongs to them.

The fund in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is solvent. There is no reason to be denying these claims on the basis of the amount in the fund. I simply cannot figure out why this government is being so harsh — cruel is not too strong a word — so cruel to a group of people who have no means of defending themselves except to carry on the type of campaign which they are and which I hope brings some fruit.

I can say to injured workmen and to others across the province that in the upcoming general election, if there is a change in government, injured workmen are going to be treated differently.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — We will see to it, Mr. Speaker, that the money which is in the fund is made available to them. We will not be hoarding it for whatever ulterior purpose the government may have. We will see that they get fair and reasonable allowance and we'll see that they are treated with dignity. We will see, Mr. Speaker that the contract which was entered into so many decades ago is honoured.

I want to make a comment, Mr. Speaker, about the health care system . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the member wants to know something about Crown corporations. He needs to learn a bit. Given his performance as minister of Finance, he needs to learn a bit about corporations and finance. I can well understand why the member from Kindersley wants to learn something. He's no doubt smarting from his obvious lack of knowledge about public finance.

An Hon. Member: — Is that the guy with the most intelligent budget?

Mr. Shillington: — Indeed it was. Someone asked if that

was the author of the province's most intelligent budget. He was the author. After that budget, Mr. Speaker, I can well understand why the member from Kindersley wants a lesson in public administration.

I say to the member from Kindersley that we are a little pressed at the moment, getting ready for what appears to be a general election. However, you're going to have a lot more time after the election, and I think these lessons could well be absorbed after the election when you're going to have all kinds of free time — all kinds of time to spend on your studies.

Mr. Speaker, about 40 per cent of my constituency, by our calculations — by no scientific survey, but by our calculations — about 40 per cent of my constituency is on welfare. Mr. Speaker, I want to say something about the plight of people who are on welfare.

Mr. Speaker, we received some rumours that welfare reform was coming in the spring of 1984. What we heard turned out to be substantially accurate. I said to the person who told me, I just don't believe it. I just don't believe anyone would do something that irresponsible. As it turned out, they did. And during the spring of 1984 we debated welfare reform.

I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, when the federal election came and I began to canvass in earnest every evening, I began to understand what welfare reform meant. As I met one hungry face after another in my riding, then I began to understand what welfare means. Welfare means stark hunger for people on welfare.

I see members opposite grinning. I say to you, if you want to dispute it, I'd be happy to engage in that debate. I just make one request: that you come on a tour with me of my riding before you enter the debate. You don't have to make any admissions; you don't have to do anything. You simply have to come and have a look for yourself. And then, Mr. Speaker, when that happens, they won't be quite as ready to deny the fact of hunger. Of course hunger exists in this city. Go down, Mr. Speaker, and look at the food bank. Just have a look at the load they are asked to carry.

Mr. Speaker, this is supposedly a Christian society, one of the teachings of which is that we should love our brother. I have always believed, Mr. Speaker, that charity was an important part of our faith. And I cannot believe, Mr. Speaker, that the type of situation which we have in this province where people are unnecessarily denied enough to eat, I simply cannot believe that that is in accordance with anyone's religious faith. I simply can't believe that, Mr. Speaker.

I can only assume that members opposite are ignorant; I can only assume that they are ignorant of what welfare reform has actually done to people. It has caused hunger.

It is no secret, Mr. Speaker, that the rate of property crimes increased drastically within a few months after welfare reform was brought in. And I would think the reasons for that are fairly obvious. Policemen tell me that they now have incidents of thefts of nothing but food. The police tell me that there are thefts of nothing but food. Mr.

Speaker, one of the most tragic victims of this government's insensitivity, its inability to manage public affairs, and its total incompetence, one of the most tragic victims are those who are on welfare, the people who are most susceptible and least able to defend themselves. I say, Mr. Speaker, that I simply can't believe if members opposite knew what welfare reform had done to those on welfare that present policies would continue in effect.

I am waiting with some considerable interest to find out what was meant in the throne speech by the suggestion that work would be found for people on welfare. If, indeed, meaningful employment can be found, then that is a giant step forward. It's going to be fairly challenging because this government hasn't managed to find work for a wide variety of people, including those on welfare.

With an 8 per cent unemployment, it is not easy to believe that this government is going to find work for everybody on welfare. If it means, Mr. Speaker, that this province is going to have chain gangs, the sort of pick and shovel gangs that existed in the '30s, whereby people did meaningless work simply to punish them for a problem which they didn't create and which they can't solve, then I say, Mr. Speaker, that that again ought to be beneath the dignity of any political party in this province. So as I say, I wait with bated breath to find out what was meant. It may have been simply a bit of red neckism. They may have simply been taking a swipe at people on welfare because their polls tell them that's good politics. People don't have a lot of sympathy for people on welfare. The general public believe it's their fault.

I pray, Mr. Speaker, that that's all it was. It was simply a bit of red neckism on the part of this government. I hope that there is no serious suggestion and no serious policy that people who are on welfare are going to be given meaningless work to do solely to punish them for a problem which is not their creation.

As is the case with many members opposite, members of this caucus have been travelling around the province. Mr. Speaker, one of the problems which we run into everywhere is health care. The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, who I think is doing an excellent job of publicizing a problem that they are genuinely concerned about . . . They didn't in any sense create the problem which is what members opposite obviously think. The problem, Mr. Speaker, was there long before the nurses began to articulate the problem as eloquently as they have.

(2115)

This province has a level of staff care in hospitals which is downright dangerous. We have all heard the stories of people falling and injuring themselves because there was no one to help them, of people being unable to get help when they need it. So far . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I say to the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake, if he denies that's the case, you might try talking to some of the people in your riding. The member from Regina North West and I had the opportunity to do that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You're going to go back tomorrow. Well, tomorrow's none too soon to get back to your riding and do some work. The member from Regina North East and I

did that, and I'll tell you the problem is as prevalent in your riding as it is everywhere else. The level of health care and the level of staffing in our hospitals, Mr. Speaker, has reached a dangerous level.

Quite apart from the main problem that people are not getting the sort of health care that they deserve, and which Saskatchewan people demand, I will admit that in the area of health care, Saskatchewan people are more demanding than other provinces. Some of the situations which exist in other provinces people of Saskatchewan won't accept. Nor should they. People of Saskatchewan were the first ones to understand that we didn't have to accept or put up with second-rate health care. We didn't have to put up with health care that was available to some people and not to others.

People of this province were the first ones to make a decision that we could collectively, together, provide a high standard of health care for all. So if there are worse horror stories at Montreal or in some other community, as I gather there are, that doesn't make much of an impression on Saskatchewan people. Saskatchewan people will tell you that they have higher standards, and they demand something better than Conservative governments in other provinces dish out.

Mr. Speaker, apart from the fact that people aren't getting the kind of health care which they deserve, we risk a tragedy. The level of health care in our hospitals is dangerous, and something very serious is going to occur if this government doesn't do something about it.

Mr. Speaker, we do not yet know what, if anything, the announcement made by the Minister of Health about a month ago, or three weeks ago, is actually going to mean to hospitals. He hasn't given any details, nor was he . . . and he was every bit as reticent when he was in the House the other day when we were trying to get some details out of him as to exactly what it meant.

There are, Mr. Speaker, a number of cynical people who might be called realists, as well, who believe that what was announced is nothing more than was announced previously. And that this is simply the reannouncement of a program that was announced in the last budget. It was about \$50 million, as I recall it, for additional staff care in the previous budget. There are those who believe that this may well be nothing but a reannouncement of the same issue.

I see the member from Saskatoon Centre is a bit sensitive. You well ought to be with the kind of riding which you have; you ought well to be sensitive about it, Mr. Speaker. A little late to get sensitive about it. You should have got sensitive about it when you were in cabinet and had some influence.

Mr. Speaker, the level of health care that this government has provided is simply not adequate. It is certainly not accepted. Saskatchewan Union of Nurses is doing an excellent job of articulating the problem, but, Mr. Speaker, they are simply telling the public something they already know. And that is that the level of health care is just simply not adequate.

Mr. Speaker, I have a number of other comments which I'd wanted to make. In fairness, the members opposite did attempt to co-operate, with some interference from their own benches, they did attempt to co-operate in getting myself on time, and I will not take up any more of the members opposite's time. I think it's obvious, Mr. Speaker, from what I've said, that I will be voting against the motion.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, it was interesting to hear the throne speech read to us the other day. It was lengthy, and that's because it was so full of important information and changes and policies that this government is going to implement.

But first of all, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to break a rule and I think, if you'll be patient, it's justifiable. I want to use the names of members who are retiring because I think their names could be read. If you stop me I'll stick to their constituencies, but I don't think it will be quite as significant. I think at least the name of Ralph Katzman should be mentioned.

Mr. Speaker: — Order please. Naming members by their name is not allowed in the Chamber, even at this time. I'd ask the member to refrain.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well, I will still honour these members, Mr. Speaker, but according to the technicality of the rules. The member for Rosthern has served long and well here. He has been a credit to this Assembly. He has shown that any person, no matter what their occupation, can come here and serve well.

The same applies to the member for Moosomin. He is a farmer by background, and he's come here and spoke like a statesman. And the member for Cumberland has come here and represented his people well, and has given us their point of view.

I also want to mention the member for Regina South has served long, and has represented the city when there was very little representation for large parts of this city.

I want to mention the former minister of highways who did a very good job and worked very long and hard. These are all people who are retiring voluntarily, including the member for Saskatoon Eastview and the member for Saskatoon Fairview and the member for Regina Wascana. All of these people are retiring voluntarily. I want to thank them for serving their province and giving a sacrifice to their families to benefit this province.

Now there will be other members who may retire not so voluntarily, and we can get into a debate on which side of the House they are on. But I'm sure there will be few on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, because this government is a government for the people. The members opposite say, we are for the people, but they don't represent all of the people. They say, we are for this special interest group; we are for that special interest group. They are always for a minority, but minorities, while they have to be taken care of, do not build a province. Minorities do not lead a province, and

minorities do not always create jobs, so one has to be compassionate and help the special interest groups that they represent. They will always represent a minority. This government has to represent the general population of this province and take into account all issues. Therefore, most of the members on this side will be back, and those that are not back will be replaced, and I expect we'll have many, many members on this side.

Now I have a great deal of experience with the NDP, and if anyone knows their mentality it certainly is myself. And what really concerns me is that they try to spread their mentality to the general population. That mentality spreads like a disease and is definitely not good for this province because, if anything, their mentality can be described in a nutshell — it's a loser attitude. Their attitude is that, oh, I'm working, but someone else is getting money; or I don't have to work because someone else will take care of me; or oh, I am poor, so somebody should hand me money. Their attitude is not that everyone should do their part to the best of their ability, but no, we are the downtrodden NDP and you have to follow us because we are being downtrodden by the great majority. What majority? So they go around saying to people, you are poor, you are poor, you are poor. And after a while the people become poor in spirit. Certainly there are some poor people, but to spread such a loser attitude among this province has been a disservice to this province for over 45 years.

I remember their party, and it was truly a paranoid attitude, like, somebody is out to get us — someone is out to get us. And I remember the words, the only words that John Diefenbaker ever spoke to me, when he gave me my law degree, he said, do well, young man. He didn't say, you are poor, somebody will take care of you. He didn't say, loaf, the government will feed you. He said, do well, young man. And then in contrast in the NDP Party there was sort of a paranoid attitude. Somebody is out to get us — somebody is out to get us. Spreading fear and a negative attitude, and it did nothing to build this province. And while the population of Alberta doubled under the Social Credit and the Conservatives, the population of Saskatchewan stayed the same for 35 or 40 years. The population of British Columbia more than doubled, but the population of Saskatchewan stayed the same. It was a problem of attitude. The population of Manitoba with the attitude they have recently displayed has also stayed the same for years and years. And that's the problem. It's a matter of attitude.

Tell me, members opposite . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . My name is Schmidt and I have a German background. Tell me why that in East Germany, if all they have is sports and very few consumer goods, and West Germany with the same people and the same blood and the same religion and the same language is twice as prosperous. It is because they do not have a losing attitude in the West. They have a losing attitude in the East. And these people represent a losing attitude. And the province is never going to go ahead. It was going to crawl for ever and ever with their type of attitude.

Now in contrast, the Progressive Conservative party has a winning attitude, and the attitude is such that if you are capable doing something for yourself, you should do

something for yourself, and that you can go out and change the world, rather than the world controlling you. And you can go out and build, and when you build, you build jobs. And jobs is what people want, not hand-outs. So therefore I suggest to the people of this province that you have to have a winning attitude, a Progressive Conservative attitude, rather than a losing attitude as exemplified by the NDP.

And not only do they have a losing attitude, but they can't add. They can subtract; they can subtract from the well-being of this province, but they can't add. And therefore they say, well what about the deficit? The deficit is getting out of control. And we have a solution for deficit, they say. The NDP solution: spend more money. They don't tell you about their hidden agenda. Tax, tax, tax. Their motto is: double the taxes, triple the taxes. And they did just that.

From 1971 to 1982, the NDP doubled the taxes in this province, and if they are re-elected, they will triple the taxes without any qualms of conscience whatsoever. Because they can't add. And they have only three choices. They say we don't want a deficit, increased spending. Then give us the third one. Tell us how you're going to raise taxes. Tell us how you're going to tax people on unemployment. Tell us how you're going to tax on gasoline. Tell us how you're going to tax . . .

Your party even wants to put on currency restrictions in this country so that Canadians cannot trade across the border. Not only are you against trade, you want to put currency restrictions. You want to have people not even allowed to take their children to Disneyland. That is the losing attitude that you people represent. You want everyone equal — you want everyone equally poor. I don't believe in that kind of equality. I believe that everyone should have a chance, a chance to improve themselves and a chance to build up a future. That is the philosophy of our party.

(2130)

And what is really disappointing is that, according to you people, we have a class system in this country. And that is quite true; we do have a class system. We have an affluent class, and we have a middle class, and we have a poor class. But I can tell you who you represent: the unrealistic people that I call a whining class.

You represent everyone in this province who wants to whine about something rather than work to build this province. So every time this government comes up with something positive, you start your whining. And then you spread your whining across the province, and you implore everyone, whine with us; whine about this and whine about that; never build anything.

Oh, we got to whine about the deficit, and we got to whine about the taxes, and we got whine about the increase. But nobody ever talks about work. That's a dirty word in the NDP. Nobody ever talks about work. Nobody ever talks about saving money. Nobody ever talks about building anything. We will share; we will all whine together to the poor-house —that's your philosophy.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Now, Mr. Speaker, I have a lengthy discussion here. And the members opposite are losing their concentration, and I'm sure that they have to regenerate themselves. And you know, even whining takes energy, and the whining party has to get out and whine. So for that reason, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 9:31 p.m.