

March 25, 1986

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Deputy Clerk: — Mr. Katzman from the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills presents the 12th report of the said committee, which is as follows:

Your committee has considered the following Bills and agreed to report the same without amendment.

Bill No. 01 — An Act respecting the Canadian Bible Society, Saskatchewan District

Bill No. 02 — An Act respecting Medical Services Incorporated

Your committee recommends under the provision of rule 58 that fees be remitted, less the cost of printing, with respect to Bill No. 01.

Mr. Katzman: — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills be now concurred in.

Seconded by the member from Cumberland, Mr. Yew.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Legislative Assembly, some 75 students seated in the Speaker's gallery. This is another group, today again, Mr. Speaker, from the Weyburn Junior High School in Weyburn, from the grade 8 class there. They are accompanied today by their teachers, Jim Nedelcov and Dave Lewicki, and as well bus drivers, Wayne Vilcu and Brian Tait. And as well, Mr. Speaker, a special student in the group today, Larry Wu, who is the Rotary exchange student from the Philippines.

I hope that the students found their tour earlier this afternoon an educational one. I'm certain that you'll enjoy question period. I look forward to meeting with you after question period today and answering your questions, as I did the group that was here yesterday from your same school. Given the weather conditions out there today I, as well, wish you a safe trip home after your visit here today. I would ask all members of the legislature to join with me in extending a very warm welcome to these students.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Sveinson: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce 60 adult students from the Regina Plains Community College, Saskatchewan Skills Development Program, that are seated in the east gallery, along with their teaching

staff and three chaperons. I can't read the copy that I've got, so I'll have to apologize for that, ladies and gentlemen, and I'll meet you at 3 o'clock for coffee and juice in the members' dining room. And at that time you can certainly address any questions that I may answer regarding the operation of the legislature or, in fact, any other questions you may have.

So I would ask the House to welcome this group, please, and I'll meet you at 3 o'clock.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Availability of Hospital Beds in Saskatoon

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health, and it deals with a question you took notice of last week. Last week we were inquiring of the minister the number of people on the waiting list for the hospital beds in the city of Saskatoon. I wonder whether the minister could now inform us, in fact, how many people are waiting for the beds in the city of Saskatoon; that is, hospital beds.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I could not provide that information today.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, this morning we took an opportunity to canvass the City Hospital, the University Hospital, and St. Paul's, and we find that at those three hospitals in Saskatoon we have a waiting list now in excess of 6,000 people waiting for beds in the city of Saskatoon. And I say to you, Mr. Minister, that, while in opposition, you complained long and hard about the waiting lists in 1982, which at that time were less than a third of the 6,000 we now find in Saskatoon. In addition to this, we have close to, or a similar number in the city of Regina waiting for hospital beds.

I wonder whether you can now tell us why at St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon they have been forced to close 77 beds as a result of the financial problems they find themselves in as a result of inadequate funding.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — First of all, Mr. Speaker, I've long since learned not to take the statistics of the member opposite as being anywhere valid. That would be the first premise. Secondly, his polls and surveys sometimes are a little off the mark, to say the least. However, as I said, I cannot report exactly what the waiting lists in Saskatoon are today.

Certainly the member opposite knows, as does everyone else in this Chamber, that hospitals are autonomous boards. They make the decisions as to how they will work within their budgets. Those are local decisions. I'm not apprised that there are 77 beds being closed down. Again I do not take it as the gospel because it comes from the member opposite. But certainly to indicate this is because of a lack of funding I think is a gross exaggeration.

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question to the Minister of

Health, and I want to ask the Minister of Health: can he explain again the rationale of 77 beds being lost in St. Paul's — reported by St. Paul's — indicating that these beds will be out of service for a number of days, partially in an effort to cope with budget deficits?

What is happening here, Mr. Minister, there is an underfunding of the health care. Can you explain whether or not you feel you have an obligation in light of the fact that some 6,000 people are waiting to be admitted and hospital beds are being closed? Do you have any obligations, and do you have any plans for overcoming this problem?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, Mr. Speaker, certainly you hear lots of announcements. There was a very good one yesterday of 6 CAT scans in the province of Saskatchewan, one that I've been flooded by calls of congratulations for over the night and this morning.

However, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite also spouts the figure of 6,000, which I do not take as being anywhere near accurate, regarding the closure of beds. They know as well as I do that hospitals from time to time close down beds within the operation of that hospital. I can't say with any degree of certainty: I can tell you this, Mr. Speaker, that we are putting on a substantial expansion at St. Paul's Hospital. We also . . . I remember coming in, the first year that I was Health minister, and giving them \$1 million up-front money for needed equipment that was not provided by the previous administration at St. Paul's Hospital — \$1 million right up front, money for needed diagnostic equipment.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think for those members to criticize a government that has year after year put more money into health care than any other government in Saskatchewan, that has a \$300 million capital program in hospital and nursing home construction, and a \$100 million program in staffing, I think, Mr. Speaker, those figures speak for themselves to the people of Saskatchewan, and they realize that health care has been a priority of the Devine government ever since they took office in '82 and will continue, and will continue to be a priority of the Devine government following the next election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Further supplemental. Mr. Minister, you have indicated your lack of knowledge, or your ignorance, or your incompetence, or all three. Because first of all, you do not admit knowing how many are on the waiting list in Saskatoon, and secondly, in spite of a report indicating that beds are being closed down in the city of Saskatoon . . . I'm asking you: are you denying the fact that 77 beds are being shut down in St. Paul's Hospital? And I'm asking you: what are you prepared to do?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, first of all, if I'm going to have consultation discussions with St. Paul's Hospital, it will be between me and St. Paul's Hospital, or my deputy, and not because of some statement in the paper, not because of some statement in the paper. The people opposite, Mr. Speaker . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. If the members ask questions, I think they should give the minister an opportunity to answer.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I realize that many of the press releases that come out from the Department of Health are bitter pills for the opposition to swallow. I understand that very, very well.

I would ask the gentlemen opposite: if they're really going to be sincere and look at these types of situations, wouldn't it be interesting, Mr. Speaker, to see how many patients last year St. Paul's treated over the previous years, and how many patients are being treated by St. Paul's and other hospitals throughout Saskatchewan now than were under the NDP administration?

I think we would see some very glaring figures there, figures that have shown that the hospitals of Saskatchewan, with the increased funding by this government, have continued to put through more people than they did in their day — when, I remind you, I stood in this House last week and indicated in 1976, July 1, 1976, a 5 per cent reduction in hospital staffing.

And you talk about St. Paul's Hospital? I can give you the letter, Mr. Speaker, that says St. Paul's Hospital on July 1, '76 was to be reduced by 6.2 registered nurses — 6.2 — NDP government; 2.5 CNAs; 3 nurse's aides. Now is that addressing waiting lists? They don't like those figures, Mr. Speaker, but they're true.

Mr. Speaker: — Does the member from Regina North West have a supplementary? I'll take the supplementary from Regina North East.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, the minister's sincerity and integrity is questioned when he is not even prepared to meet with nurses who have asked him to meet again in Saskatoon last night where there was a public forum held.

My supplementary, Mr. Speaker: in light of the fact that St. Paul's Hospital has announced the closing of 77 beds, why were not the minister of any one of his 10 candidates in the city of Saskatoon, all of whom were invited, prepared last night to meet with the nurses at a nurses' forum to discuss the problems in health care in that city last night?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I think it's very evident that if there's anyone who speaks for health care on this side of the House, it's me, and I indicated to the members opposite in question period a few days ago I would be attending one of the meetings that the SUN (Saskatchewan Union of Nurses) are having around the province on health care, and I will explain at that meeting the government's position.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, since the minister has confirmed now for the second time that he will attend one of the meetings of the nurses that the nurses are sponsoring, I want to ask him, since I will be there at the meeting tonight, and so will my colleague, the critic of health, will he come to the meeting in Regina tonight so that he can answer the questions that people who are deeply concerned about what's happening in the health care system can ask him?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — My advice for the member opposite, would have his homework done for tonight.

Mr. Lusney: — A question to the Minister of Health, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, in light of the fact that you've got 77 beds closing down or have to close down for a period of time in St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon, and also in light of the fact that a hospital in Canora, Saskatchewan, has been cut down in funding last year from 40 to 36 beds, this year from 36 to 30 beds — a 50-bed hospital, Mr. Minister — is it the policy of this government to cut down the funding to the local hospitals, or to every hospital, in view of this news article, to the point where they cannot operate all the beds that they have, that they have to shut down some of them or else go into a huge deficit? Is this the policy of your government, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well certainly not, Mr. Speaker. As the member opposite, if he knows how the hospitals are funded and how it's worked out, the average daily census is worked out in consultation with the hospitals. Canora hospital has the opportunity to meet with the Saskatchewan hospital services branch each year to work out the needs of that hospital. That's gone on during this administration, was the policy of the previous administration. I'm sure if you look back you will see where the average daily census decreased in some of the hospitals around Saskatchewan under the NDP.

This is nothing new, Mr. Speaker. That is the way that the hospitals, other than the base hospitals which are funded under the old basis, their funding arrangements are worked out.

Mr. Lusney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, the members of the Canora hospital board have met with your department just about a week ago, and they were told, since they have 50 beds and they are full, but they have from 12 to 18 long-stay patients, that they will not get funding unless they release those long-stay patients out of there. They have no place to go; they are forced to keep them. But because they are forced to keep them, they cannot get funding.

Are you saying, Mr. Minister, that these hospitals have to kick those people out, that have nowhere to go, if they're going to get funding; or else they have to go into deficit position or ask the taxpayers for more money to keep those patients in there?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well it may be, Mr. Speaker, that one of the reasons it's a difficulty to find where the long-stay patients should go was that the moratorium that was placed in '76 in the construction of nursing home beds; we haven't completely overcome that disastrous event.

But also, if you look at the whole picture in the Canora area, where we have the Gateway Lodge, which comprises three areas in there — Canora, Norquay, and Invermay — three towns in the areas, and two of those are getting additions for long-stay patients on their lodges, Mr. Speaker. And it may well be that SHSP's plans are that some of these people who are in the Canora hospital at this time will be able to move to those integrated facilities

that we built in that area.

Tabling of Public Accounts

Mr. Engel: — My new question. My question is to the Minister of Revenue and Financial Services. Mr. Minister, it deals with Public Accounts for the fiscal year which ended March 31, 1985 — a year ago — a year ago next Monday. The minister admitted in this House that the Provincial Auditor has completed his review, and still those accounts have not been tabled.

Can the minister assure Saskatchewan taxpayers and this Assembly that the 1984-85 Public Accounts will be tabled before the day is over today?

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I won't give him that assurance. I've said in this House often that the documents will be tabled in due course, and they will be tabled in due course.

Mr. Engel: — Supplementary. If the Provincial Auditor has approved them, and you were on the Public Accounts Committee, sir, what is preventing you from making these public documents public that are more than a year old?

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Well, Mr. Speaker, to begin with, a little history on this. The Public Accounts under the former administration were tabled as late as March 28th. And they are not more than a year old, and they will be tabled in due course. And I don't know what more to tell the member. I mean, we've been over this ground time and time again. They will be tabled in due course.

Mr. Engel: — Supplementary. Other than having something to hide, why won't you table those documents? What are you trying to hide? One reason why you're not tabling those documents, other than covering up.

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the member has indicated that I was on the Public Accounts Committee, and so was he. And if he would go back and review the documents from the Public Accounts Committee over the years that this administration was in power, he would find that there are fewer and fewer items that the auditor raises, and that they are of less and less significance.

So if we're hiding anything, Mr. Speaker, certainly no one knows what it is, because by the auditor's own admission things are getting better and better in the administration of the government accounts.

Mr. Engel: — The supplement was short and simple. What are you trying to hide, period?

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Nothing, Mr. Speaker.

SUN Meeting in Saskatoon

Mr. Sveinsson: — I would just like to get back for a moment, Mr. Speaker, to the meeting last night in Saskatoon that SUN held on health care issues. I was the only member there, and it was obviously boycotted by Tory candidates and the eight members from Saskatoon.

But one of the concerns that the chief negotiator with SUN raised with me regarding the 100 million you indicate is earmarked for bedside employment in the hospital, in fact employment of staff, is: how can you, Mr. Minister, direct that funding after it hits the hospital? It's at that point controlled by the hospital boards, and will they not control where that money is spent within the hospital?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, as I said previously in this House, that figure that we came up with — the \$100 million that was needed for staffing and for equipment and to address waiting lists, as the question was today — was arrived at in consultation with the hospitals in Saskatchewan. And I can assure the member, precisely at this time, that type of consultation is going on as to how the money will be deployed and to how many bodies will be in the various hospitals in the upcoming year.

Costs of Advertising

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Deputy Premier, and it has to do with an opposition in 1982 that promised, if elected, they would cut the government advertising. My question today relates to a two-page colour advertisement which appeared in the *Leader-Post* and other daily papers yesterday. What I would ask the Deputy Premier is how many hundreds of thousands of dollars this political ad cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, and how you justify spending this kind of taxpayers' dollars to elect a bankrupt government — bankrupt of ideas and bankrupt of plans — but is using their tax money to try to get re-elected? How do you square that with the taxpayers?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I don't think even the member opposite would be critical of us, or any government, in communicating to the young people of Saskatchewan the opportunity that exists in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure that after sober reflection, even the members opposite will endorse that as being an excellent method of communication.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, my question to the Deputy Premier was: how much did this psychedelic-coloured photo cost the taxpayers, and just what do you think you're appealing to with this kind of a poster. I say to you that the hundreds of thousands of dollars that the placement and cost of production of this kind of an ad is not going unnoticed by the taxpayers, and using taxpayers' money to try to salvage a sinking ship is not going to work. I ask you again, how much did it cost?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Well, as might be expected, Mr. Speaker, from the member opposite, he's fast and loose with his numbers. He's done it before; we know it. I mean, it's become a tradition with that particular member to make wild allegations about costs, or is fast and loose with the facts. But the truth is, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how much it will cost, so I'll take notice of the question and find out for the hon. member.

Mr. Sveinson: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Relating to advertising, in this week's *Western Report*, this type of advertising, it's indicated, cost the Government of Saskatchewan 60,000. It's an ad which, in fact, advertises

advertising. And this is not an ad that . . . This isn't really an ad that I think costs a great deal because of the production costs, compared to the ad the member just raised in the House. So 60,000 for this, Mr. Minister — what did that one cost?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Obviously I'm not reaching the hon. member. I just said 30 seconds ago that I didn't know. But that went over your head. Now I've taken notice of the question, and I'll provide the House with that information in due course.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Speaker, I'd be interested in the Deputy Premier telling us what the series that you ran on television that we just have two more Sundays to bear with, to listen to — what did that agricultural series, those half-hour prime time TV shows, cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Again, Mr. Speaker, I think this question was raised in this House before. And if it wasn't raised in the House, I think it was dealt with outside of the House and was reported broadly. And I'm going only from memory, Mr. Speaker, but as I recall, it was in the neighbourhood of \$250,000 for the four productions.

Mr. Engel: — That was the production cost's high price. What about the place we got? What did this little fancy piece of thing that came in the mail to the farmers' pockets this week cost you? I'm not too impressed, because I got a phone call from a constituent of the Attorney General this morning who told me that there's some articles in there that aren't even correct. What did this fancy little piece of production cost that are trying to brainwash the farmers on what a good job you're doing?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Once again, Mr. Speaker, since I'm not the Minister of Agriculture, I wouldn't be expected to have that kind of information at my fingertips. But I wonder if after having received that particular publication which sets out all the programs that you may have access to in the Department of Agriculture — I wonder if it was only after that that the hon. member accessed those programs.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — New question, Mr. Speaker, to the Deputy Premier. And I want to suggest to him that it's his business to know when he's dealing with taxpayers' money. It is not good enough to say that he does not know in this particular case when he knew very well these questions at some point in time would be asked.

Mr. Deputy Premier, the blatant political advertising which we have brought to your attention here today only scratches the surface. There are literally dozens of government ads in every newspaper and each day on Saskatchewan radio and television stations that Saskatchewan taxpayers are paying for your political purposes. If you put them all together, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it looks like an Eaton's catalogue.

Will you confirm that your government has spent between 3 and \$5 million of Saskatchewan taxpayers' money in the past six weeks alone trying to buy votes prior to an election campaign? That could have hired a lot of nurses in a lot of hospitals in Saskatchewan. And isn't

that the price tag on all that this political advertising is all about.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is truly incredible. He's standing over there, Mr. Speaker, talking about hiring nurses while during his reign as minister of Finance, he cut 400 nursing positions — 485, I believe — from the roles of health care in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — . . . and another solid indication of the incredibility of the guy — I imagine when he was over on this side of the House, he could stand up and recite line by line every nickel that was spent by every department on advertising. I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that that is totally incredible. Not only could that member not do it, his leader couldn't do it, not even the genius, salt-water sheik from Shaunavon could do it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, when the Deputy Premier gets pressed he reacts in very strange ways. I want . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order. The member is asking a question. It would be impossible for any minister to hear what he's asking. I would ask for order.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Deputy Premier, in his exuberance and his determination to look backwards instead of forwards, failed to answer the question, so I will ask it again as a supplementary. Will you confirm that your government has spent on this blatant political advertising in the newspapers between 3 and \$5 million of taxpayers' money in the last six week?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — No.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Size of SGI Rate Stabilization Reserve Fund

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question to the minister responsible for SGI. On January 31st you took notice of a question about the exact size of SGI rate stabilization reserve fund. Can you tell the Assembly and the Saskatchewan taxpayers the current total of that reserve fund in SGI.

Hon. Mr. Folk: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to indicate that the report for SGI should be tabled very shortly, and the information will be there.

Mr. Thompson: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, do you have no sense of responsibility to the public legislature? On Friday, January 31st, on page 438 of Hansard you took notice of the question as to how much money you have stockpiled in this reserve fund in SGI. Why, six weeks later, are you still uninformed as to this figure, and why will you not table that figure in the House today?

Hon. Mr. Folk: — Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite should well know through his years of experience that those figures are tabled with the annual report, which will be tabled in this House in due course.

Mr. Speaker: — Ministerial statements. Introduction of Bills.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — What about ministerial statements, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: — I'm sorry. I called ministerial statements; nobody rose.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — If Mr. Speaker in fact called ministerial statements, I of course have to live with your ruling. The fact is, I did not hear ministerial statements being called, nor did anybody on this side of the House. And if these guys . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I think my point has been well illustrated, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: — Introduction of Bills.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave to go to ministerial statements.

Mr. Speaker: — Does the minister have leave?

Some Hon. Members: — No.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if, before orders of the day, we could go down the order paper, with leave, to private members' Bills to deal with Bills No. 01 and 02.

Leave granted.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 01 — An Act respecting the Canadian Bible Society, Saskatchewan District

Clauses 1 to 11 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 02 — An Act respecting Medical Services Incorporated

Preamble agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 14 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 01 — An Act respecting the Canadian Bible Society, Saskatchewan District

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I move the Bill now be read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

**Bill No. 02 — An Act respecting Medical Services
Incorporated**

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I move the Bill now be read a third time and passed under its title.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, items 78 through 280 to notices of motions for returns debatable.

Mr. Speaker: — Motions 78 to 280, orders for return debatable.

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.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to make a few brief remarks during this throne speech debate, Mr. Speaker, that related to this government, the Devine government's vision of the North. At this very moment, Mr. Speaker, Premier Grant Devine is in Prince Albert, meeting with the people from that city and from other northern communities to bring them some very welcome and very exciting news. It is this news, Mr. Speaker, which I wish to convey to the people of Saskatchewan.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, this government has a vision for northern Saskatchewan, a vision which includes stability and opportunity for our citizens, but most of all a vision of jobs for the people of northern Saskatchewan, security for existing jobs, and creation of new jobs.

(1445)

In the past, some of our northern forestry jobs have been in jeopardy. For example, the Bodmin sawmill in Big River, a government-owned plant, is losing money. And to take a much larger example, the Prince Albert Pulp Company is also losing money. Accumulated losses on these two operations have reached \$47 million, Mr. Speaker. These losses have put at risk hundreds of Saskatchewan jobs.

Why, Mr. Speaker? Well in the case of PAPCO, the problem is a drastic and fundamental change in world market for pulp. Throughout this decade we've been victims of falling prices. Low-cost, third world countries are exporting more and more cheap pulp and paper. That kind of restricted world market is going to be part of our

future for a long time to come. And if we keep going the way we are, we can project another \$100 million loss for PAPCO — another \$100 million of taxpayers' money, Mr. Speaker.

The solution to this problem in Saskatchewan is the same solution which pulp producers all across North America are finding. Small, single-product operations have to tie themselves, Mr. Speaker, into large, integrated forestry companies. That integration should include every phase of the industry — forestry, pulp production, paper manufacturing, and a first-class, well-established, international marketing and distribution network. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the essence of the announcement we are making today.

The government has reached an agreement in principle with Weyerhaeuser Canada which is going to open up a new era of opportunity for the people of northern Saskatchewan. The deal we're finalizing will include the purchase of the PAPCO pulp mill and other related assets, the modernization and expansion of the pulp mill, and the construction of a giant, new paper mill — the first fine paper mill, Mr. Speaker, in the prairie provinces.

The paper mill is going to be something all of Saskatchewan can be proud of — as big as two football fields, Mr. Speaker; a capacity of 200,000 tonnes of fine paper a year, one-sixth of the entire Canadian production; the second largest fine paper plant in Canada.

And I can understand that the members opposite have a difficult time with this. And I understand that the . . . The members opposite, Mr. Speaker, are groaning again. And they're telling us, if they ever get back into office, they'll cancel this project, cancel the jobs in northern Saskatchewan, cancel the jobs in the very constituency of the member . . . In any event, Mr. Speaker, the second largest paper plant in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I said our vision for the North was centred on a vision of new jobs. Well here's the bottom line on jobs, which result from our agreement from Weyerhaeuser: 215 new full-time jobs in the industry, 50 in the pulp mill, 165 in the paper mill and the woodlands, 700 man-years of construction work, Mr. Speaker, plus the spin-off employment we can expect from this activity — 430 indirect full-time jobs in our northern communities, 350 indirect man-years of work spinning off from the construction phase, and another 2,000 man-years of Canadian manufacturing employment by those companies who will be supplying equipment, goods, and services to build the new plant.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to provide a few more details of the related assets which I said would be part of the agreement. Weyerhaeuser will purchase the PAPCO pulp mill and other PAPCO assets such as timber rights and PAPCO's chemical plant in Saskatoon. The purchase won't include PAPCO's sawmill in Meadow Lake. The plant will remain in operation as is, and will grow and prosper on its own under the Crown Management Board. But the purchase will include the Bodmin sawmill, which up to now has been under the ownership of Saskatchewan Forest Products.

This agreement is a breakthrough for the Saskatchewan forest industry. First, the pulp mill will be modernized to handle hardwood more efficiently. Our abundant reserves of aspen hardwood, or poplar, are greatly underused. It's going to waste, too small for lumber, and it's not the kind of wood the PAPCO plant was built to handle. PAPCO has started to take in hardwood, but what the plant needs is several million dollars worth of upgrading so it can handle aspen efficiently. And that's what Weyerhaeuser is going to do.

Second, the pulp mill is now going to have an assured market. Instead of fighting to sell our pulp in a tough world market, we'll be shipping it right next door to a brand-new paper plant.

Third, the paper mill is a brand-new manufacturing plant for our province. That means more value added in our forest industry, more production in our province before exports are shipped out.

Fourth, the export market for our paper will also be assured. Weyerhaeuser Canada's parent, the Weyerhaeuser Company, is one of the biggest American forest products companies, and there is a whole distribution network in the United States owned by Weyerhaeuser. That network is ready and waiting to take the paper we're going to produce here in Saskatchewan.

Now before I conclude, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the financial side of the agreement. In total, this is a \$498 million transaction, and the financial plan looks like this: Weyerhaeuser will purchase the pulp mill and related assets for \$248 million. This will be done through a debenture from the provincial government which the company will repay with interest over an expected 20-year period. Weyerhaeuser will also invest \$250 million in modernizing the pulp mill and building the new paper mill. That \$250 million will be raised, approximately one-third through Weyerhaeuser's direct investment, one-third through loans guaranteed by Weyerhaeuser, and one-third by — approximately \$83 million — through loans guaranteed by the government.

Mr. Speaker, there are some very clear messages which we can see in the financial side of this agreement. First, Weyerhaeuser has shown that it is fully committed in dollars and cents to the economic promise for Saskatchewan. Second, the government intends that the people of Saskatchewan get a fair dollar value when they sell their asset in PAPCO. Third, the government and the people of Saskatchewan have clearly said, no more unnecessary government ownership, and no more government interference trying to do poorly those things that the private sector can do well.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, our vision for northern Saskatchewan, a vision which has included a new technical training institute, a major transmission line project — the vision has now taken another bold step towards realization. The transfer of PAPCO and Bodmin into an integrated forestry company; the construction of a new paper mill which will be a Canadian giant and a source of millions of dollars worth of exports; the securing of pulp markets and paper markets through the Weyerhaeuser marketing network; a return to the people

of Saskatchewan for the millions of dollars they've invested in PAPCO over the years; and most important of all, Mr. Speaker, jobs for the people of northern Saskatchewan; current employment level secured, and new jobs to be created.

Mr. Speaker, that's the vision that we have for northern Saskatchewan, and that's how we're making that dream come true. And I'm very proud to inform you and the members of this House how effectively we are getting the job done.

Mr. Speaker, I want to continue to talk about another part of this particular project, and that has to do with the PAPCO/Weyerhaeuser forestry agreement. And again, this is a very important part of our vision of the North, Mr. Speaker. This concerns the precious forest resource we have in our province.

Our vision of a northern pulp and paper industry depends upon forest management policies which will achieve two goals. First, the efficient, wise, and careful harvesting of our forests so that Saskatchewan people can prosper from that resource wealth. Second, the protection and renewal of our forests so that the benefits of that renewable resource will be enjoyed by our children, and our children's children, and their children, Mr. Speaker, in perpetuity.

To this end, Mr. Speaker, the government and Weyerhaeuser Canada have reached an agreement in principle for a forestry licence that opens up a new era of enlightened forest management. The new agreement will help us realize our vision for the North by giving us more woodlands jobs, more opportunities for small Saskatchewan forestry firms, better forest allocations, more efficient cutting rights, and a long-term renewal plan, Mr. Speaker, for Saskatchewan timber.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the pulp mill in Prince Albert, under the ownership and with considerable investment of Weyerhaeuser, will be able to process hard woods which now go to waste in our forests. This use of hard woods, particularly aspen or poplar, is a key factor in our new forestry agreement. More efficient use of aspen will mean Weyerhaeuser will be able to harvest more timber in a smaller licence area. To say it another way, the company will be making more efficient use of all the timber in their cutting area, and that cutting area, Mr. Speaker, will be substantially smaller than the area that used to be reserved for PAPCO. The result is that more wood is now available for other Saskatchewan forestry companies. Together with this, a more efficient renewal program will mean comprehensive reforestation that's going to guarantee a long-term future for this important renewable resource.

Mr. Speaker, with your permission I will try to summarize as briefly as I can the elements of the forest licence arrangement. They are as follows:

1. Tighter control over forest management by using shorter licence terms of 20 years with five-year renewals instead of the older 30-year terms;
2. More wood for small operators by increasing 80 per cent the amount of timber which can be harvested

by other operators in Weyerhaeuser's licence area;
 3. More timberland made available for small operators outside Weyerhaeuser's core licence area by providing more non-exclusive harvesting areas and by increasing the amount of timber which can be cut by small operators;
 4. A 'use or lose' harvesting system whereby the size of the agreement area available to Weyerhaeuser can be increased or decreased depending on the company's demonstrated use.

Next, more revenue for the province through an increase in stumpage fees which will bring the former level paid by PAPCO to the equitable level paid by other operators, and a strong company commitment to good forest management, based on obligations for proper timber use and reforestation at the expense of the company.

Better planning of timberland development tied to a long-term approved forest management strategy which will include other forest resource uses — for example, resources like wildlife; and reduction of forest waste, by harvesting those hard woods which were previously unused or were discarded in the process of timber cutting.

In the future, Mr. Speaker, I believe the people of northern Saskatchewan will look back on these two announcements made today as the dawn of a new era in the forestry industry, a revitalization our pulp capacity, plus the construction of a major Canadian pulp mill, and a new timber agreement to bring added wealth and long-term security to our forest lands.

Mr. Speaker, our vision for northern development is becoming a reality, a reality which is going to provide jobs now and in the future for Saskatchewan citizens. I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members of the opposition for allowing me to participate in this throne speech debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

(1500)

Mr. Engel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate this opportunity to respond. I realize that the rules don't allow my seatmate and someone that knows that area like the back of his hand and could respond more adequately to this kind of an announcement.

But this announcement today, Mr. Speaker, when we think of history — and I was thinking of the remarks I was going to make in my throne speech — it's interesting to hear this and to see how history repeats itself. It seems to me we have a similar situation here as to what we had when Davey Stuart stood up and in grandiose style announced a little sweetheart deal with the fellows that nobody forgets in Saskatchewan.

When this gentleman across the way — the Deputy Premier — made this announcement today, he says we're not going to forget it for along time, and I can assure you that we won't. But the people of Saskatchewan remember Karl Landegger as well. They remember that Athabasca pulp mill announcement just as well, and the only difference here is we have a new company and a new

player.

We had the same de-regulation of the forestry; the same de-regulation. When he talks about core areas and 'use or lose' terms in there, he makes it as though that's some threat to this new pulp mill. That's no threat to the pulp mill. That's a threat to the forestry and the heritage we have in our forestry to the people of Saskatchewan.

To allow a company free access and free title to that area of land at the expense of communities like Big River, Carrot River, Hudson Bay, or Green Lake, and to tell me that they like it, I can assure you that the member from Meadow Lake better not spend any more time in this House. He'd better get home and start doing a little lobbying and have a little love-in to make sure that they like it because I know that his constituents aren't going to like this announcement today.

The little fellow . . . What riding is he in? The person that sits two seats behind you, the little member from Turtleford, is going to have his hands full. He can speak in whatever brogue he likes, but he's not going to convince the people of Big River that this is a good idea for them. To give a core area, and to sell them out on this kind of a deal today, smacks of exactly what Davey Stuart tried to do. And you'd think that they'd learn. They tried to copy, they tried to copy their slogan that we're open for business. They painted the green slogan red and blue and thought that everybody in Saskatchewan would jump on this new slogan and say, we're open for business.

Now they're stooping at the dawn of an election and say we've got to have a megaproject. Fellows, we've got to get together, and we've got to find somebody to come in here and buy a megaproject. So they give a \$400 million pulp mill at P.A. They give the taxpayers' pulp mill away for \$248 million, or \$250 million. They put up another \$83 million to beg them to come in, with no assurance that they have a share in the company, just a guaranteed loan. Give them the guaranteed loans like you did to Peter Loughheed's family when they bought the coal mine at Coronach. Give them those kinds of deals, create little love-ins with your friends that have the money.

And I'm going to tell you something — the people of Saskatchewan don't like it. The people of Saskatchewan are going to do to you exactly like they did to Davey Stuart and his little band of men that sat over here. The only difference is, Mr. Speaker, back in '64 to '71 we didn't quite have the mismanagement like these people have here today. We didn't have that \$2 billion deficit hanging on the heads of all the people of Saskatchewan.

And you will know and you will find out that the writing's on the wall. The truck drivers, the suppliers, the garages, the people up there that are looking after the thousand or more people that are working in forestry today, that are working in their sawmill operations, they're going to say to you, you can have your giant operator take over this forest, you can give it to him, and you can give him a core area to use or lose. Well, I don't think that's going to wash, Mr. Speaker. I don't think that's going to wash.

And if that's your megaproject, if that's your megaproject, to go into an election when you hide the *Public Accounts*

from the people, you hide the *Public Accounts* . . . And today in question period he stood up and said that there's been dates like March 28th before. What about '73? In February 6th, 1971-72, *Public Accounts* were tabled by February 6th. We weren't afraid to let people know what's happened. '72-73, December 19th — you can go down the row and there's only one year when there was March 20th. Every other year was in December, late as February 24th, and now all of a sudden . . .

I have the dates right here before me that were tabled from every date from 1973 to 1985, and the only times it was late was in 1983, when it was February 24th; '84, March 23rd; and '85, April 12th, and what's it going to be this year, Mr. Speaker? Likely after the election's called, because there are numbers in there that damned you people last year, that let the people of Saskatchewan know where your priorities lie and who you want to spend on, and what kind of sweetheart deals you're making with your friends like this deal on the pulp mill today, like your advertising deal, like the deals you've made with Peter Pocklington, and so on.

And I want to say that as I get into the main remarks of my throne speech, Mr. Speaker, I think that when we gathered in this House, when we started this session, with a tribute to one that all Saskatchewan people love, and different ones in the legislature, and particular the Premier, tried to tie his reputation to one Tommy Douglas. I would today like to pay tribute to all those that have served in their capacity as MLAs, and as leaders of parties in different positions, those that have gone before and paved the way for opportunity for people of Saskatchewan.

And I want to say to my colleague, the member for Cumberland, that I appreciated getting to know what his people stand for and their values, very much having served and worked with our dear friend and brother for four years. Others in this Assembly — the member for Rosthern, who has decided not to run after serving his constituents well, recognized the needs and aspirations of the people, and particularly the large Mennonite community in his area that he was so well able to serve. But I don't blame him for not running again. If I'd have to rub shoulders with cronies like he has had to in the last four years, no wonder he's decided not to run again. No wonder he's decided not to run again.

Our friend from Regina South is hoping the election is going to be till later on in July or maybe even in fall or next spring, because if it's held earlier, his trip to England will likely be off. And I suppose the other 10 members or so that aren't running again would also like to see the election, that it wouldn't be called real soon because they can see the writing on the wall.

And so we're standing at a crossroad. Much of the pressure has been talking about that there'll be an early election. We anticipate it will likely be called within a week. But there are good reasons why it likely won't be able to be called for another year or more.

To recap my history in politics, I think of the time, that I can remember, that I decided to get into politics was because of the lean, dry years we had from '64 to '71.

Business foreclosures across our area down in southern Saskatchewan were in record numbers. Agencies were folding and moving out. Farms were getting larger and larger, picking up the land that came up for sale, as young people wouldn't and didn't go back to the farms.

But in that time I noticed something that bothered me a little bit, and that was that the friends of the Liberal government were doing reasonably well. Contractors that were related to the Liberal Party seemed to be getting the better jobs and seemed to do reasonably well. Other groups in society that the Liberal Party decided to favour in their wisdom were doing well, as well, and there was a gap forming between those that had, and those that didn't have.

In '71 there was a turn-around. We had a new government formed in Saskatchewan. Businesses turned around. It wasn't long before dealers were lining up equipment and bringing in and taking risks and bringing in lots of stock. Business turned around, housing starts were up to record numbers, and the province began to pay its own way. Wealth was being reaped from the oil patch. I had contracts . . . I was involved and I know what was happening, and by 1981 the oil patch was bringing in a revenue of over \$600 million —close to \$700 million a year.

Potash mines, that in the '64 to '71 period were on a quota, were running at a third throttle — just not even half bore, only a third — production was way down; potash was losing money. But in the '71 era, from '71 to '81, the potash industry turned around, Mr. Speaker, and the potash began to make money. And by 1981 we were making 175 or \$180 million in potash.

Uranium mines were opened up across northern Saskatchewan, and jobs were created. Saskatchewan's future was one that was positive. Good management, together with a good planning team, had the kind of approach, Mr. Speaker, that built a new vision and new opportunities in Saskatchewan. And by 1981 the province had accumulated a surplus.

They met the needs and aspirations of the people of Saskatchewan. And young people in particular were coming back to farm. Farmers my age group were making a little money. General public got relaxed and were comfortable and saying, everything's great. Everything's great.

And what happened? Along came a little cheer-leader, the invisible man, as he called himself the other day in this House when we were here. And you remember that, Mr. Speaker. And he started making some promises. And they said, vote for us and you'll have some cheap gas; you'll have some cheap mortgages; you'll have some jobs; we'll reduce the welfare roll.

And what happened, Mr. Speaker? Did all those things come to pass? Did we have that kind of prosperity that he promised to the people that were living in comparative luxury and living in comfort? Well I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that hardship creates some dissension. Good wealth restores a sense of lackadaisical attitude, and the people decided to go for it. We're going to give them a try.

And they elected you right across the province in seats that you shouldn't have got. There's just no way that Riversdale should have gone Tory. Seats all over the province went Tory. And people had some visions that we're going to give them a chance.

In just four years, Mr. Speaker, in just four years, what has happened? What has happened to those young farmers down in my riding; Rockglen, where's there's 25, 30 new couples moved in, in the years from '71 to '81? What's happened to those young people? Have they got hope and a vision of tomorrow? Are they happy with the Tory government that promised all those things? Are they content, and are they living at ease and in luxury and enjoying life?

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan and those young people and all of us wound up with a \$2 billion deficit. We've got the debt on our hands. If you'd rent out your farm and go back to Europe for two years, Mr. Speaker, and you'd come with that farm mortgaged to the hilt, what would you do? What would you do?

Well, I want to tell you we came back to face Saskatchewan four years later, one election later, and here we had a province that was making money in oil, was making money in potash, was making money in uranium, was making money on the farms and the small business. Things were comfortable. And all of a sudden we've got the highest welfare rate, welfare roll, ever; the most people unemployed and looking for work; farmers across the piece not making any money; and people are saying, we never dreamt it was possible; we didn't think we could face that kind of tough times in Saskatchewan. And things became really tough and really rough.

(1515)

Why did this kind of a mass resentment take place, Mr. Speaker? Why did we get this kind of a mass resentment, and what are we going to do about it? The Tories got their heads together and said, it's time to make some announcements. Today we got the announcement on a pulp company. A couple of weeks ago our Premier went down to Estevan to make another announcement, an announcement on Rafferty. It was a decision based on the need to get re-elected. They exaggerated the benefits and deflated the price. The Premier and the Deputy Premier were down there and they left very, very many questions unanswered.

What is Rafferty dam, Mr. Speaker? If you look at a map, there's a valley that leads from Estevan up towards Weyburn on the north side, about 45, 48, maybe 50 kilometres — a valley that has ranching. It's the kind of land that isn't cultivated; little bit of hay irrigation there. They tell me, the PFRA figures tell, that when that dam is full there'll be 760,000 — 760,000 acre-feet of water. Now you imagine how big an acre is. You take 760,000 acres and put a foot of water on there, that's as much as Rafferty dam could hold when it's full. What about a dry year? How much water will there be in a dry year, Mr. Deputy Premier?

An Hon. Member: — How much is there in Diefenbaker in a dry year?

Mr. Engel: — The Deputy Premier wants to know much water is there in Diefenbaker Lake in a dry year. Well we've had three dry years. We've had three dry years and the shore line from Diefenbaker Lake went down a little bit. You know it better than I do. But I've looked at it and the shore line is down a little bit. But, Mr. Speaker, it didn't go down to 3,600 acre-feet of water.

The guaranteed level in Rafferty will be, not 760,000 acre-feet, but 3,600. Now just imagine a 45-mile-long valley, a mud flat, with 3,000 acre-feet of water at one end, enough water for one cooling generating station. This is what they're foisting on the people of that valley.

Rafferty dam is going to be the largest mud flat in the world in an average year. In a dry year it won't even be a mud flat. It will just be a valley that's not used, and I don't know what's going to grow in there. I haven't had a clue. The environmentalists don't know what's going to grow but it isn't going to be good hay, it's not going to be good hay — it's not going to be a good hay. Mr. Speaker, in three years out of 100 it'll be full. Three years out of 100, Rafferty is going to be full. That's worth spending \$160 million on.

Now the Premier stood up, and I believe he thought he was sincere and honest. Somebody gave him a script to read, and he said, we're going to use Rafferty dam for recreation and irrigation. Well I can tell my friends that love sailing . . . And maybe Jack Chapman will go down there and ride his boat — he's got a nice sail boat and I've ridden with him on Diefenbaker Lake — maybe he'll take his sail boat down there and sail on a wet year. He'll have a nice 45-mile stretch he can sail on. But on a dry year he might as well put it on a pond because the lake at Boundary dam is going to be as big. That's all the water that's going to be there on a normal dry year.

On a wet year, when things are really wet and we've got a lot of rainfall and a lot of snowfall, then the farmers will be irrigating. I don't know too many farmers — the member from Morse maybe does . . . Maybe you have to irrigate when it's wet, but when it's dry and you want to irrigate, it's going to be 3,000 acre-feet of water, not 750,000.

So I think when you look at the whole story and you see the whole and look at all the facts, two things stand out. Number one, it was a vehicle to elect the Deputy Premier and the Premier, the Bobbsey twins. The Bobbsey twins thought, this is a good scheme to get elected on. That's one thing. The only other thing about Rafferty that I can see — and that it's a vehicle to pay off their friend, Mr. George Hill. I can't see another good reason that come out of this Rafferty dam. It's some fancy deal where they could pay off our friend, George Hill.

I think that when the chickens come home to roost, the people in Saskatchewan will be saying the same poem as the young children at Coronach did. And they revised a nursery rhyme, Mr. Speaker, and I think I'd like to read that into the record at this time. And to make this nursery rhyme work, I'm going to have to use the Premier's name. It's in a quote in a poem. So on those cases will you not . . . Could I use the name? I'm reading a poem.

But anyhow, the poem goes like this:

Grant Devine went up to Hill
To fetch a little power.
Grant fell down and lost his crown
And Hill came tumbling after.

And I think there's your story. There's your story on the Rafferty dam. There's your story on what the people are going to do as far as Rafferty dam is concerned.

Announcements like Rafferty dam, announcements like the pulp mill, announcements like the pork operation, \$10 million grant to Peter Pocklington — those kind of announcements are going to come home to haunt all of you.

CAT scans — we needed CAT scans in Saskatchewan. The waiting list on CAT scans . . . They should have built one in '83, they should have bought one in '84, and they should have bought one in '85 and the other three this year. But now they're trying to convince the doctors that they're going to buy six at one time. Who'd believe you? Who would believe those kind of promises?

If I look at these kind of promises, it's what somebody in my constituency coined "catch-up politics." And I'll tell you what catch-up politics is all about: you try and announce at the end of your four-year period everything that you should have done in four years. But I want to tell you, it doesn't work, because catch-up politics means it's going to catch up to you, and the people have got your number, and they won't believe you. And nobody in Saskatchewan's going to call it catch-up politics; they're going to call it missed opportunities.

In four years people that needed CAT scans were going down to Minot. They're weren't getting them in Saskatchewan, because catch-up politics is a little too late, Mr. Minister of Health. You're a little too late with your announcement to expect anybody to believe you.

Another example of that — and I'd like to get a little closer to home than Rafferty or the pulp mill — and let's go to Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan. In 1981, Mr. Minister of Health, Gravelbourg did a study on their local hospital and nursing home. They spent \$20,000 on this study and the feasibility study. Plans were in motion to proceed in '82 with a renovation and new construction down at Gravelbourg.

What happened? This government sat on those plans. They wouldn't move; they wouldn't go ahead with the construction. What I'm talking about is Gravelbourg, and the Minister of Health well knows. There we have a plant that was built more than 50 years ago. It was a well used plant already when it came along, and so I know the age of that hospital. That hospital was built . . . Out-patient delivery of care comes from the fourth floor in the Gravelbourg hospital. Their offices are on the main floor and their patients are on the second and third floor. It's the kind of facility that isn't designed to meet today's needs. It needs a major renovation and overhaul to bring the hospital down to where we can use it.

The nursing home which was built in the '60s was built to

accommodate levels 1 and 2 care. The people have gotten in worse and worse condition and the nursing home is stacked with level 3 and 4 people. The facilities aren't available to handle that kind of care. The doors are too small to roll beds in and out. The rooms are too small to properly care for them. They need a massive overhaul.

What did this PC government do in the last four years? The study was completed four years ago. The project was ready to go. What did these guys do? This spring they made an announcement that they're going to do something. All of a sudden now they're going to start.

How much credibility is in their announcement? I looked at their five-year plan and I questioned the Minister of Health. Gravelbourg wasn't on your five-year plan. It wasn't a promise. But now all of a sudden it's an election promise saying, elect a PC down here and you'll get your nursing home and hospital.

The people of Gravelbourg don't believe you. I don't believe you. And the people of Gravelbourg know that if they want to get their nursing home built, they're going to elect the member that's been fighting for it for the last 10 years. We're going to get their housing unit.

Something that I am really proud of and I had some input into our planning and strategy committee is our new housing program that we announced just today, Mr. Speaker. And I'm sure you'll be interested in hearing it in case you didn't hear the noon news and hear the announcement that our leader made up in Saskatoon when he announced the new housing plan.

We've got a four-point housing policy, Mr. Speaker, that we announced. When we form this next government in five or six weeks time, whenever the take-over is going to be — I believe it will be sooner than six weeks, but whenever it's going to be — we're going to provide every young family that hasn't had a house, first-time home buyers, with \$7,000 assistance to build their first-time new house.

This program isn't going to be a one-year shot like your other approaches in the past. We're going to make this assistance program available for a minimum of three years. We expect that this will be the kind of cash injection young people need, that were looking for jobs, that were sitting by, frustrated because they couldn't find work under your present administration. We think this kind of an injection of cash is going to turn it around in Saskatchewan. It's going to get the builders and the plumbers and the electricians, the retailers that sell furniture and appliances, going. And it's going to create the kind of employment, the kind of enthusiasm, and the kind of opportunity that Saskatchewan has been looking for, and been seriously looking for, for four years.

The other aspect of that package, Mr. Speaker — that's a four-point package — the other aspect is going to be that we're going to provide protection which will guarantee the home mortgage interest rates. Now listen to this, Mr. Speaker, because this is going to catch you. We're going to guarantee the interest rates at 7 per cent for seven years on the first \$70,000. There are some numbers that you can remember, Mr. Speaker — \$7,000 for a first home; 7

per cent interest for seven years up to the first \$70,000 of their mortgage. And besides that, for those that are living out in the country, or those that want to rebuild their home, we're going to have a home rehabilitation assistance plan which will provide another \$7,000 — up to \$7,000 for assistance for those who want to make major renovations and improvement to their older homes.

This commitment is going to provide jobs that are so badly needed in Saskatchewan. It's going to put people to work and it's going to be something that works. And the housing program, Mr. Speaker, the housing program in Saskatchewan is going to get generated like it's never been before.

Let me take a moment now to turn to the area that I've been the critic for and had the responsibility of trying to keep herd on three different cabinet ministers during the last four years. I'm sure that they had no place else to go, Mr. Speaker. We've watched the Deputy Premier try and hang on to agriculture and get a good economic climate out there and try to build some support in rural Saskatchewan. It didn't work. They got the member for Weyburn to step in and take over agriculture and all we had is drought and grasshoppers. And now to bail out the Tory party they said we're going for the best; we're going to put in our Premier. And what's happened? What's happened with agriculture? What happened to the headlines since that time?

A headline in February 3, 1986, and I want to start with a religious paper, *The Prairie Messenger*: "Agriculture crisis hits family farms." February 3, '86:

The current crisis facing agriculture producers on the Prairies may mean an end to the traditional family farm.

That's a headline in the *Messenger* — "Agriculture crisis hits family farm." Who's the Minister of Agriculture? Our Premier hasn't been able to pull it out of the crisis.

Another headline, March 20, 1986: "Grain prices may tumble." Jim Knisley, in the *Leader-Post* said:

The light that farmers have been seeing at the end of the tunnel for the last few years is now clearly in sight, but it's attached to an oncoming train.

And he goes on to describe what this express is going to do to farmers. A panel of experts during the third annual Saskatchewan Grain Prospects conference said that Saskatchewan farmers would get about \$800 million less income in this coming year.

(1530)

Eight hundred million dollars less. It was summed up by Gary Storey, a Professor of Agriculture at the University of Saskatchewan. And Storey said prospects are not very promising. Prices for wheat, Saskatchewan's largest crop, could drop by 20 to 30 per cent.

And what does our minister, the Premier of Saskatchewan, do about it when grain prices are expected to drop by 30 per cent? "Saskatchewan farmers

face big income drops"; "Farmers warned income will drop"; "Figures show on-farm land values are declining"; "Farm life worsens during hard times."

Mr. Speaker, I think the wrong person took over the Agriculture portfolio, because instead of getting better, instead of being as good as it was when the minister of Agriculture was the member for Weyburn, things are getting worse. In fact, according to the 25th edition of the *Leader-Post*, wheat prices are expected to hit a 55-year low. During the last 55 years the average price for a tonne of wheat has been about \$242 — 1981. And today we're back to the same old Tory times, those tough times, when wheat prices hit a low.

An Hon. Member: — That was 1931. Who was in power then?

Mr. Engel: — Yes. Anderson government was in power in 1931. And we've hit the lowest wheat prices ever.

The Canadian Wheat Board advisory committee called on the federal government and on the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board that we need a deficiency payment. If we can't compete, if we can't compete with the farmers from the United States, and if we can't compete with the farmers from the Common Market, Saskatchewan farmers just aren't going to hang in there.

And what do the Tories do? What do the Tories do when farmers are facing this tough times? Well I have a little document here, Mr. Speaker, and Deputy Speaker — I don't know who's in charge right now — but I want to show you here a document. It's called *Economic Growth: Agriculture Section*.

I wonder how many of you have seen this. I'd like to know how many people on the opposition side have seen it. This is a study team report to the task force on program review. And we have a document here that has, for agriculture alone, some 266 pages — 266 pages here. And cheapie from Regina North East is asking it be tabled. Well I'll tell him to lay out 35 bucks like we did and buy yourself a set.

An Hon. Member: — I've got a set. They sent me a set for nothing. They did. I'm still on the Tory mailing list.

Mr. Engel: — Well, Tories still rank. Tories till rank pretty good. We didn't have that privilege.

Let me quote from page 22. And there's some very, very distressing — very, very distressing things here. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for your edification, so maybe you, of all the Tory members, will come on side and start sending some vibrations to Ottawa, in closing this section here on the Canadian Wheat Board, the study team writes:

One has to wonder whether an organization such as the Canadian Wheat Board is a liability or an asset.

They wonder if it's a liability or an asset.

It discourages criticism. It tends to stifle innovation. It slows down strategic thinking. And

it could become a vehicle to hide mistakes.

It could become. They didn't say it does hide mistakes. The didn't say it stifles it. But it might and it could. So their number one aim, and the aim of this report, is, let's do away with the Canadian Wheat Board. Let's do away with the Canadian Wheat Board. And I am telling you, the end of that chapter says, agriculture is good for Canada.

I want to say that if this report is tabled, that line will read, agriculture was good for Canada. Because I like what the Canadian Wheat Board has been able to do, in spite of Tory governments and in spite of Liberal governments. They got in and marketed my grain at the best possible advantage to me, and not at an advantage to a friend of one of the other. And this Nielsen report takes on the Canadian Wheat Board. It also recommends scrapping the PFRA and farm improvement loans. They said those are not in the best interests of farmers. The report says that those programs have to go, as well.

The Nielsen report recommends a shift in accounting to the accrual method. Now I'm not sure if you know what that means, because you haven't said anything about it. I listened carefully, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to your speech and you didn't talk about it. You didn't mention the Nielsen report or what the Nielsen report was going to do. But what that does in a year like this when you have your granaries full of wheat . . . To me this year it wouldn't make any difference because my bins are empty and my carry-over wasn't anything. But you'll pay income tax the minute you're through harvesting on the grain you've got on hand, and that report recommends calculating your income tax on a basis of what you grew that particular year, rather than what you sold — on the accrual method. And that is going to cost you a lot of tax, Mr. Member.

And I want to tell you, you'd better get up, when you get out of that Chair, and start sending some messages to Ottawa, saying that you don't like the Nielsen report, because nobody else over there does. I listened to the speech of the member for Morse. Not a word against the Canadian Wheat Board, changes that are supposed to be made — didn't say a word about this report and this study that the Deputy Premier commissioned.

He didn't say a word about the method of calculating our income tax. He didn't say a word about the PFRA being dismantled. And then when it gets right down to it, I suppose he doesn't care about cash advances that much. Maybe he doesn't need them, but I think the cash advance program — the minute harvest is done and you've got the bushels in your bin, you can get a cash advance on up to 75 per cent of the value of that grain — that has pulled a lot of farmers through when times are this tough. They're saying that they should abandon all cash advances.

Rail line abandonment, they're saying, is supposed to be speeded up. The branch lines are costing us money and are costing upgrading, and they're saying they're costing modernizing the rail line. And I think this report is dynamite when it comes to serving farmers.

The Nielsen report favours variable rates for shipping grain. Are you interested in that in Last

Mountain-Touchwood? Do those farmers think it's to their advantage if the rail line's gone and they go to the main lines? Well, you shake your head in approval. But I want to tell you that on that page 88 in this report . . . and it talks about the whole aspect of payment to the railways, continue the \$660 million subsidy.

There is no economic rationale for this subsidy. It exists as an acquired right to compensate for termination of the Crow rates on a 30 million tonne export crop. This subsidy amounts to over \$20 a tonne, or roughly 10 per cent of the port price of your grain. They're saying that that \$20 a tonne subsidy has to go. It doesn't make any . . . They have no rationale for that.

The other line that I was going to refer to says that branch land retention is the single biggest impediment to increasing grain handling efficiency. Well I've had no problem with efficiency of grain handling. My grain gets going every fall. We can haul in 5 to 6,000 bushels while we're harvesting, and their quotas continue to open and we get rid of our grain. The system is efficient enough to get rid of our grain. I don't want to pay the extra \$20 a tonne, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'm sure you don't either.

I'd like to hear somebody, somebody from your side, send a message to Ottawa like they did from other provinces. Somebody from Saskatchewan speak up for the price for us. But what do we hear? What do we hear? The little cheer-leader pats Brian Mulroney on the back and says, keep up the good work, Brian. Big smile.

The other aspect that they're saying in this report, and the other option they're doing is, they're saying, variable pricing options should be investigated. I think this report stinks. If I wouldn't have paid \$30 for it, I'd rip it up right in front of this TV. It is that bad. But nobody from the government side is registering any complaints. And nobody from Saskatchewan, as far as the PC government is concerned, is saying to Erik Nielsen, we can live with that report. I haven't heard a word. And yet the other provinces are complaining.

Nielsen would also have the grain growers in the province pay significantly more crop insurance. They're saying their crop insurance rates . . . and that was amazing. It's amazing how much they expect that the crop insurance should go up — by 20 per cent. The federal government wants to save 20 per cent on crop insurance and pass that on to the farmers of Saskatchewan, as far as the premium is concerned. They say that they want to get out of that.

And this is only a partial list. I can't take the time of this House to go through all the changes that this Nielsen report recommends. So far we've heard no opposition whatsoever from the Devine government. From all appearances, they welcome it. They say, this is great. This is right-wing politics; it's great. Let's go with it. Let the fittest survive. I'm telling you that this spells the end to Saskatchewan farmers.

Federal Agriculture Minister, John Wise, has been under considerable pressure from other provinces such as Ontario, and has already said Ottawa will not act on at least a couple of the recommendations, such as ending

dairy payments or feed freight assistance. And from his point of view, why should he scrap any other sections of this report? For all he knows, the Saskatchewan government is whole-heartedly endorsing this report, and everything that is in the task force report.

Well I want to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan family farms don't endorse it. In fact, they don't want any part of the Nielsen report once they see what's in it. They reject its right-wing nonsense, and will also reject any political party that hasn't got the guts of the leadership to fight the imposition of these recommendations.

We in the New Democratic Party have made it clear that we will not sit idly by and watch Erik Nielsen or Michael Wilson, or in fact Brian Mulroney, or any other Tory, do a hatchet job on the institutions and on the programs that people in the West have co-operated to build, like the Canadian Wheat Board, like the Crow benefit, and like our crop insurance. And any erosion of our rail system will be strongly opposed by the New Democratic Party once we form the next government.

If the Devine government hopes to be able to pretend there is no threat to prairie agriculture in these recommendations, the Saskatchewan PCs want only to ignore the report and hope that strategy will get them through this next provincial election.

Well, I'll tell you right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that tactic won't work. You either condemn those unacceptable portions of this report or you will be tarred with them, just like your federal party is being tarred. By refusing to fight the imposition of this proposal for agriculture, you are putting politics ahead of your duty to the province of Saskatchewan and to the people of Saskatchewan.

I have spoken in this House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in times past, about cuts to the beef stabilization plan; the loopholes in The Farm Security Act which are letting more than half the foreclosures on farms go ahead at record-breaking numbers and it's very much shortened up times. I have condemned the counselling and assistance program which has provided a loan guarantee to only a handful of farmers. And as the Minister of Agriculture admitted in the spring session, there's only a handful that benefit from that program.

I have spoken out against a tripartite hog stabilization plan which is only half as financially worthwhile to producers as SHARP (Saskatchewan hog assured returns program) was. I have opposed the livestock tax credit which only serves to get lawyers and doctors into the feedlot business to compete with bona fide farmers and bona fide cattle feeders. I have pointed out that the problems with the farm purchase program, where many young farmers with variable interest rates on their loan at the bank had been paying as much as 10.5 per cent more while the PC government sits back and likes to brag and say they got 8 per cent money. So I'll not be surprised and not be supporting the measures in this throne speech because there's nothing in it for the rural community.

I want to conclude my remarks by going on record as

opposing not just this throne speech as a pitiful record that you've had in this office, but more than that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am opposed to the reign of terror that the PCs have carried out while they were in government.

(1545)

The PCs read the polls and they arrived at a conclusion that unions are an easy target for government. So instead of spending your time creating jobs and solving problems in agriculture, you construct a confrontation with civil servants. That, Mr. Speaker, is a tactic that right-wing, red-neck politicians are interested not in good government, but rather demigod tactics. Young people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from across my riding, several young people just this past week have come up to me and said that Tory organizers in my riding are using tactics to pressure young people into buying PC memberships with threats of losing their jobs. And if you want the names, I can give them to you.

The PC pollsters have also told this government that an attack on welfare recipients will have some appeal. And this government has responded with cuts and asked people to line up to get their cheques. This, despite the fact that a very large percentage of Saskatchewan's citizens receiving social assistance are children of single parents, or physically or mentally handicapped, or elderly.

In anticipation of this legislation being dissolved very, very soon and an election called, I don't want to delay the proceedings of this House for one minute longer. But I want to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I am pleased — I am pleased — with the programs we've put forward. We've put forward a housing program that's never been initiated before in this province, a housing program that has some grab in it, a housing program that people are going to love and respond to.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Engel: — We've initiated other programs and other attacks that are going to provide fairness, that's going to provide sound fiscal management. People in my riding are saying we can't afford four more years.

So I'm going to support — I'm going to support — the amendment that was put forward by our leader, and I'm going to vote against the resolution. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — Why is the member from Saskatoon Nutana on her feet?

Mrs. Bacon: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg leave of this Assembly to bring special greetings.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Anniversary of Greek Independence

Mrs. Bacon: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and colleagues in

this House. Today, March 25th, is a very special day for the Greek communities in Saskatchewan, as well as across Canada. Today is the 165th anniversary of the country of Greece achieving independence from the occupation of the Turks.

When we think of slavery, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would hesitate to guess that most persons in North America reflect upon the Civil War that took place south of our boundaries. However, Father John Nikdlaou from the parish located in Nutana told me at a celebration on Sunday night in Saskatchewan that during the Turkish occupation of Greece the women and children were sold into slavery and the men were drafted into the army.

I, like many of my colleagues, have come to know many people in the Greek community in Saskatchewan and have formed long and beneficial friendships. When my husband and I were first married and stationed in Humboldt at the RCMP detachment, it was two Greek families that became our surrogate parents for Easter and Christmas when we were separated from our families, and opened their homes to us.

Their contribution in Saskatchewan to the multiculturalism events such as Folkfest in Saskatoon has left a permanent mark. In Saskatoon they have their own Greek school, and their culture, their dances, their poetry, and their traditions are kept alive within their families.

I would ask other members of this Assembly to join with me in celebration of their independence day, and I ask the other members join with me in extending to our Greek friends in this province and the country much happiness and continued prosperity.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATE

ADDRESS IN REPLY (continued)

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to continue where I left off last night, although I've been interrupted by a very major event in the history of the province of Saskatchewan. As indicated in the throne speech, this government believes in economic development, and today you have heard the announcement of the sale of PAPCO and the expansion of the pulp mill and the building of a paper mill.

What has happened in the House here today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is exactly what I thought would happen. The NDP haven't changed one little bit. They haven't learned anything at all. They are still against everything that isn't socialist orientated. They don't care whether there are jobs in this province. They only want government jobs and government corporations. They only want socialist jobs, sharing the diminishing pie rather than building. So therefore the members opposite immediately get up in this House and denounce the expansion of the P.A. pulp mill. And worse yet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again they have indicated they are against it. And I'm just waiting for them

to say they would review it; they would kick out those people who create jobs. They don't want jobs in Saskatchewan.

And I'm going to show you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the expropriation dollar. I've saved it to remind myself and everyone in this province what the NDP have promised they will do if they ever — help us if they ever — got into power. They said for one dollar they would expropriate any Crown corporation we have sold. That's what they've said. That's their view. This is the expropriation dollar. This is the dirty dollar that they're going to use to destroy this province. And I will save it and I hope that I never see it spent, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I will guard that dollar.

The problem is that they have no respect for property. They have no respect for people investing and they are not in the least bit interested in jobs. They are interested in ideology. They are interested in their socialist ideology rather than jobs. And therefore we have examples. They denounce everything that's built. They denounce a power plant. They denounce every major project in this province that creates jobs. Why? Because it's not a socialist project.

And then they say, remember Ross Thatcher, he built this pulp mill. He certainly did. It's still there and the jobs are still there. Where is their socialist shoe factory? Where's their socialist box factory? They're not there. Nobody even remembers them. Where are the jobs they created with those socialist plants? They don't exist because they don't work. So I am pleased that Ross Thatcher built the pulp mill, and I'm very pleased that Grant Devine can expand it and double its size. And the people of Saskatchewan will see it for 30 or 40 or 100 years.

In addition, they are against everything. Where are the profits from the potash mines that their socialist philosophy was going to bring us? All we've got is a bottomless pit, a hole that sucks up our tax dollars year after year. They say, oh, don't sell it to any corporation. Well, if there are going to be losses, let it go to a corporation rather than the people of Saskatchewan. And if there's going to be profits, let the people of Saskatchewan take a fair tax and then let people make money on their investment. But basically, above all, there are jobs involved here, and that's what they are against.

With respect to labour, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and labour is something that they think they own, they have a few union leaders who are card-carrying members of their party, the powerful arm of their party. And they say, oh, we are labour. Well they are — they are big union labour. But they are not jobs; that's not what they are talking about. They are not the party of the worker; they are the labour party, not the worker party. They wouldn't call themselves the party of the worker.

When I took over as Minister of Labour a few months ago, immediately there was a great turmoil created. Why? Because the NDP wanted to see turmoil; they wanted to see militancy. They encouraged people to march on the legislature. They encourage people to parade around in front of this building rather than be at their jobs working. Allan Blakeney has called for militancy, and that's what

we have had. And if you ever re-elect him, that's all you're going to have.

With respect to labour, our government has indicated in this throne speech that we stand for jobs. We stand for jobs and more jobs and continued jobs. And I, as the Minister of Labour, have taken a very clear position. I represent employees, whether they are organized or unorganized, whether they are unionized or non-unionized. I represent employees, not just a segment of this province, but all employees. And what I promised to all employees, and what our government has shown for all employees, is what's most important to employees: jobs, thousands and thousands of jobs.

And yesterday we had the member for Regina Centre complain about the Worker's Compensation Board. With respect to the Workers' Compensation Board, it is something that we should be very, very proud of in this province. We have the best system of workers' compensation. It is funded; we have reserves to cover the cost of this board. And contrary, in Manitoba they have a deficit in the workers' compensation fund. They don't even meet their day-to-day obligations. That's the kind of management they've developed in Manitoba.

In this province we have a very good system, the best in Canada. And it is now under review, as you know — as you know on the other side of the House here — that every four years this is reviewed, and a board is now sitting to review things. We expect that workers' compensation could be improved, and it will be improved, and it will continue to be the best plan in Saskatchewan, the best plan anywhere in North America, so much so that other people come here to study it.

And in addition, the throne speech has promised protection for workers. And we will debate this Bill later, but my department has already delivered to this House an amendment to section 11(1)(m) of The Trade Union Act, to protect workers. What they wish to do is protect their political friends.

Now I have found, as Minister of Labour, that there are two kinds of union leaders. I have found a very professional group of union leaders, people who represent their people well, people who stay out of politics and take care of their members. And I have nothing but respect for those professional union leaders. I don't really care what their politics are, but they are truly professional and I have nothing but respect for them.

On the other hand, I have found too many union leaders in this province, the leaders, who are not at all concerned about their members but are primarily concerned about politics. They are the political union leaders and I treat them as common politicians. And I have to treat them as common NDP politicians because that's what they are.

So I have great respect for the professionals in the field. I have found them to be very, very helpful to their members and very, very firm in their views, and also realistic in how this province, this country, and this world operates. But with respect to the political leaders, I have to treat them

like politicians.

And then we have the members opposite who talk about unemployment, but they never talk about jobs. I want to report that there was an article in the *Leader-Post* of March 3rd, and the headline reads: "Women advancing in the job market." Now this is something that the members opposite don't want to talk about because they can't take credit for it, but in part it reads that females are outpacing males in Saskatchewan's labour market. In the last 10 years new jobs held by females grew at three times the rate of those of men. And that in the last 10 years, jobs for females have increased from 23,000 to 52,000 in the 25- to 30-year age bracket where most of the new jobs have been created.

It also goes on to state that these jobs for women are permanent jobs. They are permanent jobs for women, and that has had a major effect on Saskatchewan's economy. We now have a 65 per cent participation rate in our labour force. There are more people working in Saskatchewan today than there ever have been in the history of this province.

Statistics can be misleading. Let's talk about employment. More than 92 per cent of the people who want to work in this province have jobs, and that is a very good record. That is a record in this province for the number of people working. And I am very proud to indicate that many, many of these jobs are for women. For example, on an industrial basis the growth of female employment has outpaced men in all major categories, including agriculture. In government, females have increased their share of available jobs from one-third in 1975 to 57 per cent in 1985 — 57 per cent of all the workers in government in this province are females. That is not equality; that is superiority, and I have no objection to that. These are good jobs, they are clean jobs, they are well-paid jobs, and I'm very, very pleased that women have been able to fill them.

(1600)

So when we came to the topic of jobs, to the topic of labour, to the topic of employees and the importance of women having jobs, this is all a question of fairness, and it's very, very fair that there should be more jobs for women.

And that leads me to my constituency, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where this government has seen fit to move the head office of the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance to Melville, Saskatchewan. This is part of a decentralization plan that is very fair to all the citizens of this province.

And it gets me back to the bad old days that I recall very, very well, the days when I was a member of the NDP. This is one of the reasons why I quit that party, because I recall when the NDP started farm programs — some of them good, some of them bad — but they all employed people. All of those jobs were in the large cities.

I remember the hue and cry from the NDP: we have to save rural Saskatchewan; we have to save rural Saskatchewan with farm programs. And what did they

do? They created hundreds of jobs in Regina — none in Davidson, none in Canora, none in Kamsack, none in Shaunavon — all of them in Regina.

Are there any farms in Regina? Not very many, but all the jobs for farmers and all the jobs for their wives are in Regina, so farmers couldn't hold these jobs to keep their farm going. Farmers' wives couldn't get work. That's what's fair about decentralization.

There are thousands and thousands of government jobs in the city of Regina. There are very, very few in rural Saskatchewan. Those people pay taxes, and those women deserve jobs as well, I tell you in the NDP. Those women deserve a fair chance at employment. It is tough enough for a farmer to make a living without his wife being unable to get a job. Here in Regina you have two-income families. Out in rural Saskatchewan they're half-income families, because a farmer can only make a half an income because all of the money is going to your friends right here.

Your friends are demanding more. They've come to me as the Minister of Labour. They say, we need more money. I said yes, you do; but I want you to think about this: that while you're making \$2,000 a month the farmers of this province are making \$1,000 a month. And do you wish me to take more money from them so that you can make \$2,500 a month? Do you think they can live on \$500 a month? Well that is quite a question. The question is fairness, and decentralization is very, very fair.

I remember the NDP. I remember being at your convention in 1974, and I remember when you publicly stated that you believed in decentralization. And you publicly stated that you would decentralize government and give equal opportunity to all people in this province. And what did you do? Nothing. You continued to put jobs in the city so that farmers would go hungry. And during your reign and during the period of your government, while you talked about decentralization . . . And your leader now says, oh, he started it, and it's good thing. No, that is not correct. He promised, and now we are delivering.

During that period of time, in 1960 the city of Melville was incorporated as a city with 5,800 people — 5,800 people in the city of Melville in 1960. By the time we got to the 1981 census, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the city of Melville had shrank to 5,100 people. The city of Melville, when I was elected, was in danger of becoming a town. And I have turned that around, with the help of this government — this government that believes in fairness, that believes in decentralization, and that believes that when there are 55 jobs and approximately 45 of those are for women, that rural women should have a fair chance at those jobs.

Now I am the Minister of Labour. And we are not a ruthless government, and we have indicated very clearly to those employees in Regina that we will not force them to leave the city if they have reason to stay here. If they have family ties, if they have economic reasons, personal reasons why they cannot move from Regina to Melville, that we will help them find jobs in other government departments — and we have thousands of other government departmental jobs in this city of Regina. And

it seems to me that when there are well over 5,000 — and there could be 10,000 — government workers in Regina, that to move 55 of them to Melville to give the city of Melville a fair chance is not unreasonable. But that's not what Larry Brown says. Larry Brown says, we won't go.

An Hon. Member: — Who's Larry Brown?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Larry Brown is the head of their union, and he has a duty to represent his workers. I agree he has that duty. And I am advised that Larry Brown was a former executive assistant to the NDP minister of Labour. So there may be some connection between Larry Brown and the members opposite. However, I agree he has a duty to his members to represent them. But if he is a member of the NDP, and if anyone is a member of the NDP and opposes decentralization, I ask them: do they have a social conscience? Do they think the people in Melville should starve? Do they think they should live without jobs, or do they think they should all come to Regina? Do they think that the farmers in the surrounding areas should not have a chance for their wives and their children to get jobs? Should they all have to come and live in Regina Centre? I think not.

And so I say this is a matter of fairness. We are delivering decentralization. We are taking rural departments to where the people are. And therefore I am stating clearly to the NDP that if they have a social conscience at all, they will control their people and they will co-operate with the move of this department to a city that is in need. And this government looks after the needy, not the greedy. And I ask the NDP not to be greedy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have already explained the fairness of the move, of decentralization, to Swift Current and to Melville. And now I want to say to the workers that are coming to Melville, and to those who cannot come, that our government will be fair with respect to the transfer of people; there will be a lucrative package to assist in moving; that there will be consultation; and that people who cannot move will be dealt with fairly. And for that reason, I ask them to be co-operative; I ask them to be understanding; and I ask them to understand that fairness requires that other parts of the province also have employment.

So therefore I look forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to this decentralization. I look forward to these workers coming to Melville. I know that they will like my city very much. The city is waiting with open arms. This is the biggest job creation in the city of Melville since 1907 when the railroad came to Melville. And the people of Melville will appreciate it very, very much. And I encourage the NDP on that side, I encourage them to co-operate and control their greedy members.

Thank you very much, and I expect co-operation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLaren: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a great deal of pleasure for me this afternoon to rise in the Assembly and speak on the excellent throne speech that we heard in this Assembly a week ago yesterday by the Lieutenant Governor of our province.

And I want to congratulate the member from Regina North, my colleague, for his moving of the throne speech, and also the member of Humboldt who seconded that motion.

It's also an honour for me to be in this Assembly representing the people of Yorkton and my constituents. We wish to bring greetings to the Assembly from them.

As most of you know, the Yorkton constituency is nestled in the east central region of the province, a city of some 16,000 people, and surrounded by a prosperous and fertile mixed farming area better known as the parkland.

And we are blessed with a hard-working population of many ethnic backgrounds. Pioneers who settled in the area in the late 1800s and the early 1900s — pioneers from many countries of the world who saw a vision and opportunities for themselves and their families in the parkland. The predominant nationality that settled in this area is the Ukrainians who pulled up stakes in the Ukraine to begin a better and new life for themselves in Canada and Saskatchewan, and to leave behind the socialistic thumb that suppressed them, and state control that denied them the freedom to live and run their own lives and to own their own lands, and not to be an employee of the state.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I decided to run as a candidate for the Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan under the dynamic leadership of Premier Grant Devine back in February of 1981, simply for the reason to play my part and help to stem the same socialistic suppression trends that my constituents tried to get away from when they pulled up stakes in their homelands.

We saw an NDP government which reminded me of an octopus with its tentacles reaching out and snapping up our Saskatchewan farm land, choking out the oil industry, taking over businesses, and the list goes on and on. The members opposite, Mr. Deputy Speaker, were so obsessed with their power that they forgot to listen to the grass roots, and we all know what happened in April of 1982.

The electorate voted in '82 for Premier Grant Devine because they recognized leadership in this man and the Progressive Conservative Party. Leadership means vision and enthusiasm — that means trust and constant innovation. It means compassion and optimism — that means commitment and determination, that means dealing with the issues and concerns of Saskatchewan people. And from what I've heard in four years in this Assembly from the members opposite, that is not what they believe in.

Within minutes of taking office we eliminated the gasoline tax which provided immediate additional income to Saskatchewan people and at the same time provided a boost to the economy through increased consumer spending.

We brought in a 13.25 per cent interest rate reduction plan which helped over 44,000 families with the purchase of their homes. The people saw leadership in protecting the family farm and assisting young farmers to

own their own land, land which often had been in their families for generations.

Last spring, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a budget was presented to this Assembly by our Progressive Conservative government which set out and targeted funding for a five-year development plan covering the four basic corner-stones on which our province can be further developed, built, and strengthened.

The four corner-stones, of course, are the employment development agency and the \$600 million employment development fund; health care and the \$300 million health capital fund; education and the \$400 million education development fund; and agriculture with a \$200 million development fund.

What has this strong initiative on our four corner-stone commitment done for our province? Let's look at employment for a moment. Since 1982, Mr. Deputy Speaker, under the leadership of Grant Devine and the Progressive Conservative government, 30,000 new jobs have been created. For four years we have, on average, led the nation with the lowest unemployment rate. And for the first time in our history our province has topped the one million mark of population; and our work-force hovers around the half-million people. All of this despite poor world market conditions for uranium, potash, our grain, and all of this despite severe drought and grasshopper infestation.

Our second corner-stone is health care. And our Progressive Conservative government recognizes the importance of health care in protecting the people of Saskatchewan and is developing new and innovative responses to the needs of the 1980s and beyond.

(1615)

We are fully cognizant of the increased numbers of our ageing population and the increased life expectancy. We all must be participants within the health system, working together in a creative and meaningful way to provide a level of health care unmatched anywhere and still keeping within a cost which our society can afford; \$1.2 billion has been budgeted for health care, one-third of our total provincial budget. With the \$300 million health capital fund which was set up last spring, additional funds are made available for targeted areas as circumstances occur.

The recent announcement by my colleague, the Minister of Health, of extra funding for increased staffing and equipment of \$100 million is a good example.

I would like to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I agree with my colleague, the member from Melfort, whole-heartedly, when he states that the NDP use unadulterated scare tactics when talking to the electorate and suggesting that the Progressive Conservatives will take medicare away from them. I've talked with my many seniors and widows who confirmed that they were afraid to vote for us because of what NDP candidates had advised we would do with hospitalization.

We would never have believed that grown men would

stoop so low to mislead elderly people just to pick up a vote or two. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I suggest to the members opposite that if they try the same tactic in the next election, the electorate is going to discredit their integrity totally, when the people of the province know full well that never, in the history of our province, has so much money been spent and targeted to health care.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture, another major corner-stone of our province, is without a doubt the backbone of Saskatchewan. How agriculture goes and performs determines how Saskatchewan will perform; how small business will benefit. The ripple effect that happens in our economy when farmers have a cash flow is unbelievable and our Progressive Conservative government recognizes that fact.

We only have to look at the many programs that have been provided to rural Saskatchewan, such as the 6 per cent loan program, where in the last five to six weeks \$2 billion has been put into farmers' hands. I know the impact. The small businesses in Yorkton have prospered because of that cash flow that the farmers have had over the last few weeks —the livestock cash advance at zero per cent interest rate, the cash and protection for our cattle producers; the 8 per cent farm purchase program, solid interest rate protection for the young farmer who wishes to start farming; and the 21 cent per gallon rebate program, a payment made possible because of increased royalty revenues from the oil industry which we can pass on to our farmers. And we have heard for months and months and months the ridiculous nonsense coming from across the way, talking about the massive oil corporations stripping Saskatchewan of all their funds.

The list goes on and on — a 500,000 exemption on the capital gains tax which will provide tax relief for farmers selling their land and which gives them a good retirement income; the announcement of the building of a brand-new agricultural college by our Premier a few days ago, a \$78 million project has been required for some 25 years.

Where has the NDP been during the last 11 years? They have been so busy buying up our farm land for the land bank, so busy at nationalizing potash mines, so busy building gold office towers, that they forgot that agriculture and small business even existed. Not one cent was offered the farmers to assist them when interest rates rose to 18, 19, and 20 per cent in the 1979 to 1981 era. You outbid young farmers for land which drove the price sky-high. You were so obsessed with your power to run and own people's lives and ambitions that you forgot the electorate completely.

Education, our fourth corner-stone, is the institution that will train our people, young and old, to cope with the technological environment that we will live in today. Our Progressive Conservative government is committed to enhancing opportunity and to promote economic development within Saskatchewan.

If the youth of this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are to lead independent and productive lives, they require the necessary training and skills to secure a position in the work-force. Because of this commitment, Mr. Deputy

Speaker, we are targeting an additional \$275 million to provide improvements over the next five years for youth from kindergarten to grade 12.

Increased support, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for native education in a number of areas has already begun. We are continuing our support for native teacher education programs, alternative school development, and native curriculum development. Over the past year we have provided adult basic education to approximately 1,000 non-status and Metis people. Forty-eight hundred farmers in rural communities have upgraded their education.

Three hundred Northerners have been training in mining, forestry, and wild rice harvesting, which has enabled over 200 to find employment. This, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is helping Northerners, including natives, to partake in Saskatchewan opportunities.

Between 1982 and 1985, the Progressive Conservative government has provided \$80 million more funding, and achieved 18,000 more student enrolment, than was the case between 1978 and 1981. We have also responded by providing \$125 million through the implementation of the university renewal and development fund. Our community colleges and technical institutes are providing programs to assist people to learn a new trade or upgrade their own education and skills to enable them to actively participate in Saskatchewan's future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to take a few moments to comment on various projects that have occurred in my constituency since April, 1982.

A major renovation program to the Yorkton Union Hospital, approximately \$14 million, which is covering the reception, admitting, emergency ward, administration offices, and a brand-new laundry facility. Probably one of the most highly technical laundries that we have seen for many, many years is in our hospital.

A 31-bed senior citizens' complex, Victoria Place, at a cost of \$1.6 million — a beautiful complex where seniors can enjoy their retirement.

And the announcement of a new 40-bed nursing home to be added onto the present Yorkton nursing home.

All these facilities to help the seniors of our Yorkton area and the whole zone of the area to come and use during their retirement or when they are ill.

Funding has been arranged for blacktopping the road from Yorkton out to York Lake, which has been causing a lot of problems with dust and dirt, and the people that live along that road which is being used extensively now because of the development out at the lake with the ball diamonds, new cottage development, and a lot of activity going on there.

Another area that I'm proud of, which will recognize the Ukrainian element of my constituency, was the generous co-operation from my colleagues for a \$225,000 grant to help the Ukrainian Professional and Business Men's Association with their chapter two of the Ukrainian encyclopedia.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McLaren: — Volume two is the second of a series of four volumes, and volume two is going to be dedicated to Saskatchewan.

We also had a \$1 million addition to the Yorkdale Junior High School, and I want to thank my colleague, the Minister of Education, for that help in that school there.

Another very, very interesting event that took place in our constituency last fall, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was the first national youth conference ever held in Canada, which was held in Yorkton, Saskatchewan. And the reason that that conference took place was the young people of my constituency who took up the challenge of Premier Grant Devine to host a national conference, and that is exactly what they did. And I want to publicly thank Heather Laxdal and Trent Tuttosi, the two students who were co-chairmen of that conference, and Barry Sharpe, the teacher at Yorkton Regional High School, and his colleagues, that put on such an excellent conference. It covered people from all provinces in Canada and also the United States.

Another event that has just taken place and turned in to be one of the most exciting events that we have had in Yorkton was the Saskatchewan winter games. And here again I want to thank Jim Caudle and his committee for the tremendous job that they did in hosting the Saskatchewan games.

The member from Regina North East asked, why aren't we talking about Mr. Pocklington? So let me tell the members opposite that, if you fellows are not anxious to have the pork plant — and I understand the Leader of the Opposition is going to be investigating — I'm telling you that we are aggressively going after that pork plant for Yorkton. And I want to thank my council and their men for doing exactly that.

You people are not in favour of jobs at all. Everything that's good you pooh-pooh. And to me it's people like the George Morrises, and the Pocklingtons, and the Degalmans, and the Malinowskis — people that have got the guts to put some money, and take some risk, and get the job done in our province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McLaren: — I was never so embarrassed last November when I sat in this Assembly and listened to the garbage that came across the way of people that have the guts to do something in our province. I was embarrassed to even suggest that I belonged to Saskatchewan that day when I sat in that Assembly.

We are going to go after that. We are going to go after that project and provide 400 to 500 jobs for the people of Yorkton, Saskatchewan. And I'm not going to listen to the garbage that comes across from over there.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McLaren: — The other thing that we are really proud of and can see what is coming in our province is the

Saskatchewan pension plan. And I was home on the last weekend, and I couldn't believe the response that came from my constituents covering that pension program. They have really enjoyed the home repair program, and hundreds of people applying and doing renovations in their homes.

I've listened to the members opposite talk about the massive tax increases and so on, and they're going to return the tax that was collected from the education tax on used cars. I would like to know why you don't add the \$26 million that you stole from orphans and widows when you had the succession duties on back in the '70s. Why don't you give that back to the people of Saskatchewan as well?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — And I want to tell you why I believe that, Mr. Speaker, and why I believe that the majority of people in Saskatchewan hold that view as well. Sixty thousand reasons why, Mr. Speaker. We've set a goal to have 60,000 more people working in the province of Saskatchewan this summer than were working in 1982. This past year alone, 16,000 more jobs — 16,000 more people working this year than last year.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's a future with a Progressive Conservative government in the province of Saskatchewan.

I want to compare for a minute, Mr. Speaker, the job creation record of the NDP government with that of the Devine government during the past four years. When we go back to October 1979 and we take a look at the permanent jobs that were created from October 1979 to October 1981 we find that the former NDP government created 4,000 permanent jobs. Now people might say that's not a bad figure — 4,000 permanent jobs. But let's take a look, Mr. Speaker, and compare that to the record from October of 1982 to October of 1985. And I want to quote you, Mr. Speaker, from the fourth page of the *Leader-Post*, December 10, 1985, just a few months ago. And the *Leader-Post* researcher indicated at that time that the Progressive Conservative government did not create 4,000 jobs during that period of time; they didn't create 10,000 jobs during that period of time. In fact, Mr. Speaker, they helped create 21,000 new jobs during the same period of time: 4,000 jobs by the NDP; 21,000 new permanent jobs created by Grant Devine and the Progressive Conservative government here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, if there is any doubt as to which administration can lead the way into the future throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s, then I would say it's the Progressive Conservative government, clearly.

I have before me, Mr. Speaker, a brochure which has as its heading, "The Choice is Clear." And in my mind, Mr. Speaker, the choice is indeed clear. As we lead up to what many people consider to be an election sometime in 1986, the choice indeed is clear. And I want to reiterate for the members of the Assembly and for the people of the province why the choice is clear, why the choice is clear, Mr. Speaker.

Let me ask you some questions. Who was it that provided interest rate protection for 40,000 home owners in the province of Saskatchewan? Was it the Leader of the Opposition and the NDP party when they were in power? Certainly not. But the Premier of the province and the Progressive Conservative government, when interest rates were 18, 19, 20, 21 per cent and people in this Assembly and people across the province were running the risk of losing their homes, we said we will help the people of Saskatchewan and we provided them with the assistance they needed.

Mr. Speaker, who was it that helped to clean up the taste and odour problem of Regina's drinking water? Was it the NDP administration? Was it the Leader of the Opposition when he was in government? I can recall, Mr. Speaker, for 11 years that administration talked about what needed to be done. Yes, we need to solve Regina's taste and odour drinking water problem and, yes, we are the government to do it. That what they said. What does the record show, Mr. Speaker? In 11 years did the former NDP government ever spend one red cent to clean up the taste and odour drinking problem here in Regina? Not one red cent.

In four years, Mr. Speaker, this administration has moved quickly to clean up that problem and today the people of Regina have good drinking water. No thanks to the NDP, but they can certainly thank a Progressive Conservative government. We said we would do it, and we did. And that's why the choice is clear.

Mr. Speaker, the choice is clear because I believe a Progressive Conservative government is the government that understands small business. Eighty-eight per cent of all the jobs, new jobs created in the province, are created in the small-business sector. Ask yourself the question: which party and which government understands small business? The NDP are the government that chased business out of this province. The NDP are the government that do not want businesses to come into the province. The Progressive Conservative government believes in small business. We know that's where the jobs are going to be created. The people of this province know that small business is the engine of economic growth. And when they ask themselves the question — who best can create jobs in the province of Saskatchewan; who best can work with small business? — they know it's not the NDP. They know it is the Progressive Conservative government.

Mr. Speaker, who was it that took the provincial gas tax off in the province so that today Regina has the lowest gasoline prices of any city in Canada? Who was it, Mr. Speaker?

The NDP members opposite talk about tax increases. I want to ask the members of this Assembly, and I want to ask everybody in this province: can you remember one time ever in their 11 years when they reduced taxes for people in this province? Did they ever reduce the gas tax, Mr. Speaker? Never. Did they ever reduce the income tax, Mr. Speaker? Never.

But what did they do to the income tax? What did the member from Regina do when the budgets were

brought in and that income tax went from 37 per cent to 39 per cent to 41 per cent, and on and on? Did you ever vote against those tax increases? The NDP, Mr. Speaker, increased our personal income tax from 37 per cent to 51 per cent. They increased the gas tax year after year after year. And every year, Mr. Speaker, when the power bills went up under the NDP, they taxed that by putting the sales tax on power bills.

Mr. Speaker, the choice is clear. This administration took the gas tax off and that's one of the reasons why we have the lowest gasoline prices in Canada. And can the people trust the Leader of the Opposition and the members opposite when they say, oh no, we learned our lesson; we won't put the gas tax back on; we won't put the gas tax back on?

Mr. Speaker, we know that the NDP are the party of big government, they are the party of high taxes, and we know what's going to happen to that gas tax when they get back in, Mr. Speaker.

When we ask ourselves the question, who is it, Mr. Speaker — who is it that has a vision for the future of this province? Who is it, Mr. Speaker, that has a vision for what this province can be? Let's compare ourselves, Mr. Speaker, to NDP Manitoba for a minute. What was their vision, Mr. Speaker? Did they want to participate in Expo? Did they want to show the world, Mr. Speaker, what an NDP government could do in Manitoba? What are you going to see when you travel out to Expo this year? What are you going to see from the NDP government in Manitoba? Nothing. But when you travel out to Expo and you see what the Progressive Conservative government is doing to sell the province of Saskatchewan, then you will know, and the people of this province will know, that it's a Progressive Conservative government that has a vision for this province.

And when you take a look at the initiatives that are announced in the throne speech, Mr. Speaker, I think that will become very clear. And I'm going to get to some of those initiatives in a minute, Mr. Speaker.

When we say the choice is clear, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the members of this Assembly a very important question. This throne speech document, Mr. Speaker, does it show that this Progressive Conservative government, Mr. Speaker, has become a government that is a pawn of the big labour unions? Certainly not, Mr. Speaker. But everybody in this province knows that the member from Shaunavon, and the member from Regina Centre, the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, all of the NDP members of this House, the NDP party, the Leader of the Opposition, we all know, Mr. Speaker — we all know — that the NDP party today is the party of big labour union bosses. And they can't deny it, Mr. Speaker.

And what that means, Mr. Speaker, is that if an NDP government were ever returned to the province of Saskatchewan, small business would not have a major say in the direction of this province. Agriculture would not have a major say in the direction of this province, and that's not what the people of this province want, Mr. Speaker. That's not what I

want; that's not what this government wants; that's not what the majority of families want.

They want a government, Mr. Speaker, that has a vision for the future of this province that is not motivated by the big labour union bosses, but is motivated by families, by small business, and by the farmers. We know, Mr. Speaker, that the choice is indeed clear.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about a vision for the future of this province, would an NDP government have a vision for the future of this province that would include women? Would they have a vision for the future of this province that would include the women of this province?

I want to ask the members opposite: when you were in power, did your premier, the now Leader of the Opposition, did he ever once appoint a woman to your NDP cabinet in 11 years? Never, never. Answer me.

An Hon. Member: — We never managed to get one elected.

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Now the member from Regina Centre indicated that they never even managed to get one elected — never even managed to get one elected, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, last year in this province there were 16 to 17,000 new jobs created. And the statistics indicate that the great majority of those jobs went to women entering the labour force, Mr. Speaker. There is a future for women in Saskatchewan under the Progressive Conservative government.

Mr. Speaker, I ask another question, another question that's very important for the people of Regina. I'm wondering why it is that when the NDP government was in power they never once seriously considered the possibility of building a massive oil upgrader in the city of Regina. Why was it? You had 11 years. You had 11 years to consider building an oil upgrader in the city of Regina, and you chose not to.

But what did you do during your 11 years? Where did they put their money, Mr. Speaker? They didn't put money into oil upgraders. They put their money, Mr. Speaker, into buying uranium mines that haven't returned one red cent of investment to the people of this province. Those mines would have been created anyway, Mr. Speaker, and now through some convoluted sense of social policy or economic policy, having spent \$600 million to buy those uranium mines, what do they want to do, Mr. Speaker? Close them, Mr. Speaker. Close them, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, an NDP Speech from the Throne, you know what it would have read like? Close down the uranium industry. Close down the oil patch, Mr. Speaker. Cancel the Rafferty dam project, Mr. Speaker. Cancel the Gainer plants in North Battleford and wherever else they're going to be. The members opposite, Mr. Speaker, they want to cancel, cancel, cancel, cancel — cancel hundreds of jobs in northern Saskatchewan; cancel hundreds of jobs in North Battleford; cancel hundreds of jobs at the Rafferty dam project, Mr. Speaker.

The people of this province know, Mr. Speaker, that the future of this government is not going to be assured if you cancel uranium mines, and you cancel out an oil industry, and you cancel out a Rafferty dam project. That's not building for the future, Mr. Speaker. That's not a vision for what this province can be. That's an example of a government from the old days that has no new ideas, that has no innovative approaches. They are bankrupt, Mr. Speaker. Bankrupt.

(1645)

And the best example of their bankrupt state is what they announced today, Mr. Speaker, what they announced today. They announced a housing program today, Mr. Speaker, and I have to chuckle. Where were they in 1982 when the people were having their homes taken away from them, and they were in government, and they could have helped people keep their homes? Where were they, Mr. Speaker? Where were they? They were sitting in the movie theatres of this province watching their grand Crown corporation ads. That's where they were, Mr. Speaker.

Today they announce a program that isn't a new idea, Mr. Speaker. It's an old idea. No new ideas, no vision, Mr. Speaker — none. Bankrupt. The people of this province, Mr. Speaker, they see through that kind of a cynical vote-buying attempt on the part of people that have no new ideas, that have no vision, that are so desperate to get back into power that they're willing to run up another \$800 million of deficit in the province in a cynical attempt, Mr. Speaker, to just buy votes.

Well the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, they don't want a government that buys votes. They want a government that has a vision, that can build for the future of this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite, when they were in power, they had an opportunity to do many of the kinds of things that should have been done. I want to take the last few minutes of my speech, Mr. Speaker, to talk about one area where the members opposite were bankrupt. They are bankrupt of new ideas today, and I would recommend to you that they will continue to be bankrupt.

And I want to refer, Mr. Speaker, to the area of welfare reform. When the former government was in power, Mr. Speaker, did they do anything — anything — did they lift a finger to attempt to get people off of welfare? I'll tell you what they did, Mr. Speaker. They handed out a cheque and they turned around and walked away. And not only did they just hand out a cheque, but they didn't even care if that cheque went to someone who didn't deserve it. They could have cared less. They were much more interested in keeping people on welfare than they were in getting people off. Mr. Speaker, they handed out a cheque; they turned around and walked away. You almost think that they had a vested interest in seeing that welfare treadmill just keep on going around and around and around, Mr. Speaker.

Did they ever mount any training or education activities for people on social assistance? I suspect, Mr. Speaker, that if we had the opportunity to sit in their back pocket

during those 11 years and sit around the cabinet table, that we would have seen that not once did they ever talk about the need for a welfare reform program in the province. Not once did they ever talk about the possibility of seeing whether or not there was significant levels of fraud and abuse that needed to be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, they are the party of welfare. We are the party of opportunity. And I want to show you why, Mr. Speaker. Here is just a small example. The member opposite says to go back to the private sector. Here is just a prime example, Mr. Speaker, of the difference between those members over there and these members here. They are the party of big government. They will always be the party of big government. And when you're a party of big government, Mr. Speaker, you believe in only one thing. You worship at the shrine of big government, Mr. Speaker, and that's where they worshipped for 11 years, and they haven't changed. They haven't changed, Mr. Speaker.

The people of this province know that the big government approach is not the way to go. People understand, Mr. Speaker, that that's the way of the past. It was a new deal 30 or 40 years ago but, Mr. Speaker, it's an old deal today. In fact, it's no deal for the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, no deal. Did that government ever provide a new deal for those people who were on the welfare treadmill? I don't think so.

But I want to read to you, Mr. Speaker, an example of some of the things that we are doing to reform the welfare system. In Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker — and the members from Moose Jaw who are here today will be interested in this — in Moose Jaw, for example, we took eight students on social assistance and we enrolled them in a short-order cooking class at the Saskatchewan Technical Institute. They graduated in September, and six of those eight students continue to be employed today, Mr. Speaker.

We developed dry-wall courses in conjunction with the dry-wall industry in Regina, in Saskatoon, and Prince Albert. We took 18 people on the welfare rolls and we put them through these training programs. Today, Mr. Speaker, the majority of those people have either secured employment or they have started their own business, Mr. Speaker, or they are continuing their upgrading.

Mr. Speaker, a furnace maintenance program by Sask Housing Corporation in northern Saskatchewan trained 18 individuals, and all 18 of those people today have employment. Since August, Mr. Speaker, we took 33 individuals and we put them through a five-week course on job search techniques. Seventeen of those, Mr. Speaker, are employed full-time, five are enrolled in further training, eight have been referred for further counselling, and only three are still seeking employment.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the record of this government in attempting to turn around the welfare reform here in the province of Saskatchewan to put welfare on the tracks that it should have been running for a long time, I think, Mr. Speaker, that the effort is well accepted by the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I know that it's well accepted because even the Leader of the Opposition, when he was questioned by welfare reform, he himself had to grudgingly admit, Mr. Speaker, that welfare reform was a good idea. The only question we have, Mr. Speaker, is: if it was a good idea, why didn't the NDP government do anything to reform the welfare system?

And when the Leader of the Opposition was asked whether or not it was a good idea for welfare clients to have to come down occasionally to pick up their cheque if they're employable, to see whether or not their circumstances have changed, what did the Leader of the Opposition say? Well he grudgingly thought that that perhaps wasn't a bad idea.

Well I ask you, Mr. Speaker, and I ask the quiet members opposite on the NDP benches: why didn't your Leader of the Opposition, why didn't the former Finance minister, why didn't their caucus, why didn't their cabinet, Mr. Speaker, once in 11 years ever implement a program which required employable social assistance clients to come down and pick up their cheques? Why, Mr. Speaker? Why, Mr. Speaker?

We know why, Mr. Speaker. We know why, Mr. Speaker: because that party for 11 years — 11 years — conned, they conned the people of Saskatchewan into believing that they really had a heart and soul of compassion for people on welfare.

Well what kind of heart and soul is it, Mr. Speaker, when you take a cheque, and you turn around, and you walk away? You give them another cheque, and you say, we don't care if you ever get off of welfare; in fact, maybe we're kind of interested if you stay on welfare, because we know we'll get your vote next time.

Mr. Speaker, that is not the kind of sound social policy and innovative and imaginative programs that Saskatchewan needs. The throne speech of this Progressive Conservative government, I believe, Mr. Speaker, is an example. And in the short time remaining I want to focus in on what I believe likely is the most innovative example in this throne speech of a government that believes in opportunity and a government that believes in building for the future.

When the former government was in power, Mr. Speaker, for 11 years, I ask them now, as they sit quietly, I ask them this question. Did they once, ever — ever — seriously consider implementing a pension plan for home-makers, for people who work in small businesses, for part-time employees, or for farm families in the province of Saskatchewan, in order that those people could have long-term financial security?

Did the Leader of the Opposition ever once seriously consider implementing that? Did he ever, Mr. Speaker, bring forward a Speech from the Throne which said: we will provide a pension plan for home-makers? Did he ever once bring forward a Speech from the Throne that said: we will provide a pension plan for people in small business? Did he ever once bring forward a pension plan that said: we will provide a pension plan for farmers?

Mr. Speaker, the former government, the former premier, the now Leader of the Opposition, never — never — brought forward in their 11 years of power a pension plan to provide that kind of security. It was a Progressive Conservative government that announced in its throne speech just a few days ago that this province will have a long-deserved pension plan for home-makers, for small-business people, and for farmers. Long overdue, Mr. Speaker. Long overdue.

And why is it, Mr. Speaker? Why is it that when they were in power, not only did they not bring forward that kind of a pension plan, Mr. Speaker, but they didn't even adequately fund the teachers' pension plan? They didn't even adequately fund the public servants' pension plan in this province. In fact, they ran up deficits in the billions of dollars in those pension plans — billions of dollars. And instead, Mr. Speaker, instead of taking that money and putting it into the pension plans where it should have been, they took that money and they callously said, we don't care about your future; we want to buy potash mines; we want to buy uranium mines; we want to build this shrine that we can worship at — the shrine of Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, shame. What else can we say? Six hundred million dollars wasted. They put all their eggs into the basket of Crown corporations when the farm wives, when the home-makers, when the small-business men were saying, we sure could use some pension support. But they weren't there. They weren't there when the families were suffering with high interest rates; when income tax went from 37 to 51 per cent — Mr. Speaker, 37 to 51 per cent. When that gas tax kept on going up and up, higher and higher and higher, where were they, Mr. Speaker. Where were they?

They were not paying for a pension plan, Mr. Speaker. They were not providing assistance for home owners. They were allowing the taxes to go up dramatically. And, Mr. Speaker, the point needs to be made: the reason why they were allowing those taxes to go up so dramatically year after year after year is because that's the only way they could fund and finance their big government approach.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this throne speech is a prime example of a government that has a vision for the future. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.