

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order, and under rule 11 sub(7), I hereby read and receive the following petition: — Of Orest Olekshy, Phillip Eriksson, and Dennis Pehach, of the city of Saskatoon, in the province of Saskatchewan, praying for an Act to incorporate Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Closure of Bank of British Columbia Offices

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address a question to the Premier, and it has to do, Mr. Premier, with last evening's news that the Bank of British Columbia is closing all six of its branch offices here in Saskatchewan — branch offices, by the way, that were purchased a little less than a year ago from the collapsed Pioneer Trust Company. And you're familiar with Pioneer Trust, I think.

Can the Premier tell the Assembly when he was first informed of this here decision, and what steps, if any, that he has taken to try to save the 45 jobs associated with the closure of these financial institutions?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the jobs, as I'm sure you're aware and the members opposite are aware, we are creating many new projects and many new jobs, and we will be continuing to provide employment opportunities for people in Saskatchewan.

With respect to the announcement yesterday that the Bank of British Columbia was pulling out of Manitoba, and that the Bank of British Columbia was pulling out of Saskatchewan, and offices out of Alberta, I was informed yesterday about 5 o'clock in the afternoon. It's a situation, Mr. Speaker, as we know, that the agricultural and oil situation in Manitoba, the agricultural and oil situation in Saskatchewan and in Alberta has resulted in the fact that the bank is consolidating its offices in one or two major centres in Victoria, Calgary, and Edmonton. They're obviously responding to the economic conditions as they find them in western Canada associated with low wheat prices and low oil prices.

Mr. Koskie: — Supplemental, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Premier then: have you, since you learned yesterday of the closure, have you taken the opportunity to try to meet with the officials of the Bank of British Columbia in order to determine whether or not you can, in fact, convince them to reconsider their decision to close out the facilities, the trust company locations in Saskatchewan, and to save the jobs for the people associated with them?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, we have no intention of bailing out the Bank of British Columbia. Maybe that's the position of the NDP that they want to bail out the Bank of B.C. Well if the NDP want to bail out the Bank of B.C. they can start in Manitoba. Okay. The NDP are in power

in Manitoba, and they can bail out the Bank of B.C. I'm not going to bail out the Bank of B.C. And I don't know of any provincial government across western Canada that plans on it. Now if it's your position, fine, let it be clear that you want to bail them out. They are reacting to some economic conditions associated with low agriculture prices and low oil prices in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. And so be it.

Mr. Koskie: — Supplemental, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Premier when he has changed his policy, or was there a special relationship between himself and his government and Pioneer Trust? Because obviously the people of Saskatchewan paid some \$28 million for that little caper by your government. All I ask you here: have you met with them to ask them whether or not they would reconsider? In view of your economic forecast, surely they should have some confidence to stay around for the great, new tomorrow. Why aren't they hanging around?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are against us having firms move into the province, and then they're against us when the firms move out of the province. I mean, we ask Weyerhaeuser to come in and spend \$500 million — they don't like it. We ask Gainers to expand in the bacon plant — they don't like it. We want to build a Rafferty project — they don't like it. Announce a rural gas distribution program — they don't like it. Then when a company decides they're going to move out of the province, they don't like that either.

Well, Mr. Speaker, obviously they don't like business, period. They don't like to see business move in. They don't like to see economic activity.

In this province, Mr. Speaker, we will defend depositors, and we have with Pioneer, and we defended hospitals and nursing homes, seniors, farmers who had retirement packages, and that was exactly the thing to do.

The members opposite now, Mr. Speaker, want to bail out the Bank of B.C. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you that we are not going to bail out the Bank of B.C. The NDP are sitting there in their chairs, saying they want to bail out the Bank of B.C. The member for Shaunavon, the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg are saying they want to bail out the Bank of B.C. Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that we're going to bail out the Bank of B.C., and the members opposite are sitting there shaking their heads and saying, yes, they want to bail out the Bank of B.C.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not bailing out the Bank of B.C., now or in the future or at any time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Speaker, it doesn't take much to make this crowd clap, I'll tell you that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Final supplemental, Mr. Speaker, final supplemental.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order.

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, for the last month and a half you have been going around this province trying to convince the people of Saskatchewan that there's great economic activity on the horizon. What I'm asking you. None of the people of Saskatchewan believe you. Isn't it a fact that the Bank of British Columbia, by closing up, don't believe what you're saying either?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the NDP are always doom and gloom. I mean they just love to see . . . They wring their hands when they see a little drought coming along, or when a company goes broke; they just wring their hands. They love it. When they see a grasshopper, they love it even more.

Mr. Speaker, the Bank of British Columbia is moving out of Manitoba; the Bank of British Columbia is moving out of Saskatchewan; the Bank of British Columbia is moving out of Alberta because of agriculture prices and oil prices. And the members opposite don't like it when we say, yes, there's going to be a new \$500 million paper-mill in Prince Albert. They don't like that. They would cancel that. When we are going to be building new programs here, new economic activity, we're going to be building interprovincial pipelines, we're going to be building upgraders, we're building projects in southern, northern Saskatchewan, processing plants — they don't like it. Mr. Speaker, they just don't like being in opposition, and that's their biggest problem.

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would remind you, Mr. Premier, that the inconvenience to this province and the disaster in this province goes beyond the 45 jobs; there's also an enormous inconvenience to people who have part of that \$175 million loan and mortgage portfolio who now have to deal with Victoria or Vancouver.

My question, Mr. Premier, has to do with what I suggest to you is your personal responsibility for this closure, which goes beyond the responsibility of your office. It was your late night meeting with Edgar Kaiser, just hours after Pioneer Trust collapsed on February 7th, that gave the Bank of British Columbia the go ahead as it raced to beat others who were also interested in the take-over of Pioneer Trust's Saskatchewan branches. Edgar Kaiser, himself, bragged about this meeting throughout the Saskatchewan media.

Mr. Premier, in the light of your role in bringing the Bank of British Columbia to Saskatchewan in the first place, do you not feel a moral as well as a political obligation to find a solution to this latest fiasco.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the NDP are asking the government of Saskatchewan and taxpayers to bail out the Bank of B.C. Why do you want us to bail out the Bank of B.C.? You're asking now to bail out the Bank of British Columbia, and I'm saying I'm not bailing them out. They moved out of Manitoba. Why don't you get the NDP in Manitoba to bail them out? Why don't you do that? You asked me from time to time, do you call your friend the

Prime Minister? Why don't you call your friend the Premier of Manitoba and say, look the NDP in Manitoba are going to bail out the Bank of B.C.? Why don't you do that? Let's put your money where your mouth is. If the NDP believes you should bail out the Bank of B.C., then phone your buddies in Manitoba and say, look boys, the NDP are going to bail out the bank — and find out what the response is. If they think it's a good idea, well then you can say, yes, and our people believe that we should bail out the banks.

Well I'll tell you what — I don't believe that and we're not going to do it. We haven't in the past, and we're not in the future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, you obviously know something we don't. You're suggesting the Bank of British Columbia needs to be bailed out and is therefore in financial difficulty. Mr. Premier, I ask you: do you have that information?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, they have suggested that we bail out the bank because it's closing offices in Manitoba, in Saskatchewan, and Alberta. Well I'm saying they're moving out of Manitoba and they have an NDP administration there. If you think that they should be bailing them out, well then go phone the Premier of Manitoba, and he will bail them out if he agrees with you.

Mr. Speaker, we are not bailing them out. If they decide to close their offices across the prairie provinces, as I said earlier, it's because of agriculture prices and oil prices, and they're consolidating their offices. And I believe that if you will talk to other people across the Prairies, you'll find the same thing. The opposition here is taking the same old position that now when something moves in they don't like; when something moves out they don't like it. They're just negative. They're negative all the time. They're against this; they're against that. They haven't changed at all, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, you apparently have some information we haven't, and I'm asking you to share it with us. There was no suggestion to the media, or by the media, in anything that was printed, that the Bank of British Columbia is in any financial difficulty. The comments which were made by Mr. Kaiser, and which have been made by other sources, suggest this is a decision taken by a business to increase its profits, and not for any other reason. Do you have some information that this step is being forced on the Bank of British Columbia by their financial situation?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are asking the government to bail out the bank. I didn't say I was going to bail them out. I never suggested it. You brought it up in question period. The NDP are saying that they want the Government of Saskatchewan to bail out this bank. That bank doesn't need to be bailed out — doesn't need to be bailed out by me or by the taxpayer or by anybody else. They decided to move out of the three prairie provinces, and the NDP says, no, they got to keep

them here so that you got to bail them out. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not. I didn't raise it; they raised it, and they can defend their position if they want to bail out the Bank of British Columbia.

Mr. Shillington: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, you'll recall that the take-over of Pioneer Trust branch offices by the Bank of British Columbia last February was unexpectedly quick. The take-over took many people, including some major financial institutions who also were trying to purchase these branches, completely by surprise.

Considering that Pioneer Trust had just collapsed, did it ever cross the minds of any of the ministers of your cabinet to ask: what's the financial health of the Bank of British Columbia? Will this take-over be in the best interests of Saskatchewan for the long term? Are there any other major banks or credit unions prepared to take over these branches? And, I suggest most important of all, will service be provided to the people of Saskatchewan by the Bank of British Columbia, as it clearly would be by one of the other financial institutions who were interested?

Mr. Premier, did it occur to any of the members of Executive Council to ask any of those basic questions?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, may I point out that the Bank of British Columbia is pulling out of Manitoba, and there wasn't a Pioneer deal in Manitoba at all. It had nothing to do with it. I mean, they're pulling out of the prairie provinces because of agricultural prices and oil prices, and it has nothing to do with where they've got the offices. They have offices in Manitoba, and they're pulling out of them. They had offices here that they paid 2 or \$3 million for, and they're pulling out of them. They've got offices in Alberta, and they're pulling out of them.

Mr. Speaker, they decided that they were going to move out of the prairie provinces because of agricultural prices and because of oil prices, and they are making that financial decision. I'm not going to bail them out, and you're saying, well, I'm supposed to bail them out. No, I'm not going to bail them out. You can bail them out in Manitoba.

Mr. Shillington: — A short supplementary, Mr. Premier, which ought to admit of a fairly straightforward answer even from you. When Edgar Kaiser sought and received your encouragement to take over the branches of Pioneer Trust, did anyone ask how long they were going to continue to provide service to Saskatchewan people?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I mean, what a question. What a question from the opposition. We're going to say, a company is going to invest in Saskatchewan and we'd say, well for how long do you think that you're going to stay in the province of Saskatchewan? And if I said, Mr. Speaker, if they're going to stay, as Weyerhaeuser is, for 25 or 50 years, is that enough for the NDP? No. No, that isn't enough.

If you're going to bring a bacon processing plant and they're going to stay for 50 years, is that enough? No, that's not enough.

If you're going to build a power project, you say, how long are you going to stay in Saskatchewan? Are you going to stay for 25 years? We say yes. And they say no, that's not good enough, Mr. Speaker.

I mean, if they're here for 13 minutes and they're bringing money into the province, the NDP is against it. They don't like it all. If they're going to move out of the province and take the money, the NDP doesn't like it at all. I mean, they're negative, Mr. Speaker. They're against everything that has to do with small business, big business, economics, profits, jobs.

Do you know how many jobs are associated with economic development in Saskatchewan that would not be here if the NDP was in power? Thousands and thousands of jobs, because . . . (inaudible) . . . or close everything you can think of. You're against uranium mines. Right? You're against uranium mines. Burns Meats moves out of the province when the NDP moves in. You're against the bacon processing. You're against Melville. You're against natural gas. You didn't build any agricultural colleges.

Mr. Speaker, the record of the people opposite when they were in power is so pathetic that they lost every seat but eight. In the next election they might lose them all.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — New question, Mr. Premier, this is an interesting revelation of your government's policy that I think the public of Saskatchewan are going to be interested in.

You apparently feel it inappropriate to ask any questions when you dole out Saskatchewan tax dollars. I remind the Premier that you gave \$20 million to Peter Pocklington who is having his house foreclosed by the Royal Bank in Edmonton. Did you ask him how long he was going to continue to provide service? Did you ask Manalta Coal, who got 100 million, how long they were going to be here after they got our money? Did you ask Weyerhaeuser, after they got our 248 million, how long they're going to be here?

Is the Premier telling us that these are inappropriate questions when you are doling out enormous amounts of Saskatchewan tax dollars. Is that the policy you've just enunciated?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, when a company like Weyerhaeuser Canada comes into the province of Saskatchewan and has \$500 million in its hand and decides to spend it in Prince Albert and build a \$250 million brand-new paper-mill in the province of Saskatchewan — it's sitting there, Mr. Speaker; the paper-mill will be right beside the pulp-mill in the province of Saskatchewan. And there it will be for all Saskatchewan to look at, to regulate, to tax. If they're going to build facilities like that, don't you think they're going to be there for us to look at for generations to come?

What did you do? I'll tell you who got our money. You took \$600 million of all our money and you gave it to multinationals, and you sent them to New York. And the

money's sitting at Wall Street, and we got the bill. The people of Saskatchewan got the bill, Mr. Speaker, and we're still paying Americans in American dollars for what the NDP did in mining.

In potash mining in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible) . . . They don't like to hear this. Right? They don't like to hear it. Well, Mr. Speaker, they're going to hear it, because on the campaign trail in the province of Saskatchewan it will be \$600 million that you borrowed from Saskatchewan people to pay New Yorkers and leave it down there. We get 500 million back and put it in down-town Prince Albert.

And I'll tell you what, Mr. Speaker — they like to see the money in Saskatchewan, not to go to New York. And we're not going to change that policy. We're encouraging them to be here a long time — years and years and years. And as long, Mr. Speaker, as the NDP don't get back in, there will be many more people come into the province of Saskatchewan for years and years to come.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statement by Edgar Kaiser

Mr. Engel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Nobody believes the Premier so we'll try a question with the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Do you agree with the appraisal of our economy put forward last evening by Edgar Kaiser as reported in *The Globe and Mail* this morning? He defined the decision to close the bank's branch offices on the prairies by saying, and I quote:

It doesn't make sense for any business to be expanding into a market that is declining. There is a real depression in the West.

Do you agree with that assessment that Edgar Kaiser put forward last night in deciding to close out their banks because there's no business here?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I never read or heard the comments of Edgar Kaiser, but I have in recent days been in touch with the people from Weyerhaeuser. Their view of the economy of Saskatchewan is very, very positive now and well into the future, Mr. Speaker. I have met with the people from Interprovincial Pipe Line who are committing, Mr. Speaker, 295-odd million dollars to extend the interprovincial pipe line from Regina to Gretna, Manitoba. They have confidence in the oil industry, and they have confidence in Saskatchewan. I would tend to believe the views of those particular people that I've heard, and I support those particular views.

Mr. Engel: — In the business section in *The Globe and Mail* it says:

It doesn't make sense for any business to be expanding into a market that is declining . . . There is a real depression in the West.

The bank's pulled out, Mr. Minister, because of the

depression and the recession and no business here, not because of a financial bail-out necessarily. Do you agree with that assessment?

When the Bank of British Columbia took over here in Saskatchewan's office of Pioneer Trust less than a year ago, you said personally that you were pleased with the deal. You added that you liked Edgar Kaiser's aggressive, forthright style. Did you and your officials in the Finance department not know the financial picture of the Bank of B.C. at that time, or is there a financial problem like the Premier suggested? Or did your people just have a natural weakness for high-flyers from other provinces? You'll trust them before you give a break to a Saskatchewan business person.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to get into questions. I'll have the Minister of Finance deal with the particular questions that relate to Finance.

But I can indicate to you of the economic activity of this province. Number one, Weyerhaeuser has shown confidence in the province of Saskatchewan. CCRL (Consumers' Co-operative Refineries Limited) has shown confidence in the province of Saskatchewan by building a \$600 million upgrader here in the city of Regina. They've shown confidence. Interprovincial Pipe Line has shown confidence. The credit unions have shown confidence. The banks, Royal Bank, other banks, have shown confidence in the province of Saskatchewan. We have confidence in the province of Saskatchewan, and they have confidence in the province of Saskatchewan.

I would have the Minister of Finance maybe make reference to the questions you directed to the Department of Finance.

Open Government

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the Premier, and it has to do with accountability because we have been dealing with accountability here this afternoon.

Mr. Premier, you have had no explanation as to why you ducked a public meeting in your own constituency several days ago where the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses wanted to debate the issue of health care. But some public comments that you have made, sir, after that meeting have a lot of people wondering about your attitude towards the public.

Let me quote to you, Mr. Premier, so that you are reminded of your statement. In the latest edition of the *Estevan Mercury* you're quoted as saying the following:

Everyone at the meeting knew our policy already. I don't see any reason why we have to go around defending it. I can't go to every small town to defend our health policy and (Graham) Taylor can't go to every small town just because somebody says we have to justify our health care policies.

That is your statement, Mr. Premier, quoted in the *Estevan Mercury*. Can the Premier, sir, can you square that

arrogant statement with your pledge to run an open government that listens to people?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member probably knows, that same night I was at a nomination in Maple Creek with hundreds and hundreds of people, people from across south-western Saskatchewan that travelled to meet with me, Mr. Speaker, and that's been on my timetable for months, and so if somebody decides to call a meeting in another town and they expect the Premier to go to every meeting they all of a sudden decide to call, it's impossible.

I go to meetings and I meet with people in every corner of this province and, Mr. Speaker, I will be glad to defend — and I have — our health care policies, and the money we've spent, and the 400 new positions, and the 1,500 new positions since we took office.

I'll tell you what, Mr. Speaker — people in Saskatchewan don't believe the member from Shaunavon when he's on the radio in Saskatoon saying, we didn't have any freeze on nursing homes. That's what he says. They don't believe that. And he said, we didn't decrease nurses in the province of Saskatchewan. And he's on the radio saying things like that, Mr. Speaker, and he was the minister in charge of Social Services. They don't believe it.

When we talk about building health care — and our budget is over a billion dollars, and our record is 400 new positions, Mr. Speaker — I speak about that every single, solitary day all over the province of Saskatchewan. So I don't have to change my schedule, when I've got hundreds and hundreds of people prepared to come and listen to me, just because an organization says, well, you've got to be there 10 minutes from now, or day after tomorrow.

So the member knows; he knows full well our health care policy is in such excellent shape that the NDP don't have anything else to talk about. So they're trying to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, saying: but you're short of positions.

Mr. Speaker, our Minister of Health has created more health care positions, has done more for health and social services, built more nursing home capacity, more hospital capacity, has more CAT scans, more health care facilities than ever in the history of the province of Saskatchewan. And the member from Regina North East should give him a bouquet. He should give him a big hand, because when he was minister of finance he'd call, cut 'em off at the knees.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if we could refer items 318 through 391 inclusive to notices of motion for return debatable.

Mr. Speaker: — Items 318 to 391 inclusive, motions for returns debatable.

MOTIONS

Substitution of Member on Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I wonder if I might have leave to move, seconded by the Minister of Economic Development and Trade:

That the name of Mr. Klein be substituted for that of Mr. Morin on the list of members comprising the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE (BUDGET DEBATE)

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. Lane that the Assembly resolve itself into the committee of finance.

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to continue from where I left off last night in this budget debate. As I said last night, the more the people of Saskatchewan see and understand about the budget, the better they like it.

When we look around, Mr. Speaker, during the last week and a half at the editorials and paper articles, even the journalists like it. As one journalist said, Mr. Speaker, that the budget brought down by the rookie Finance minister promised to stimulate the economy, to reduce taxes, and to bring the deficit into line.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Finance in his budget address left no uncertainty as to where the direction of this government is going, or where the focus of our government is. Of course, that is on providing opportunity for the people of Saskatchewan, and while offering them opportunities, offering them protection also. I think he left no doubt that we are still committed to providing the opportunities for the people of Saskatchewan and the protection for the people of Saskatchewan.

The minister spelled out in very simple terms, Mr. Speaker, when he said that our common-sense approach to economic development, together with our firm commitment to protect families, the family farm, and our social institutions, has guided this government's actions during the last four years, and it has also formed the basis of our budget for 1986.

Mr. Speaker, this budget provides further stimulation for businesses to create new economic opportunities and jobs. It also provides additional protection for individuals, for families, and for our social institutions. I believe it is a budget which is part of an economic

development plan for the province, a plan which is founded on the basic values of Saskatchewan people, a plan created by a government which is proud of our past and extremely optimistic about our future.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to examine the budget in some detail because it is imperative that the people of Saskatchewan understand fully the choice they will face in the days ahead. But first, Mr. Speaker, let's be sure that we understand clearly just what this government has accomplished in its first four years in government.

In April, 1982 we made a commitment to Saskatchewan to correct the serious problems that faced this province. Those problems included sky-rocketing interest rates and inflation that were threatening homes and jobs. Young farmers could not own their land; outside investment avoided Saskatchewan. Crown corporations were out of control and not accountable to the people of the province. SGI's auto fund was practically bankrupt, even though the NDP government of the day had poured an extra \$50 million into that fund since 1979. Hospitals were in disrepair; nursing home construction had been halted, halted because of a moratorium placed in 1976 by a former NDP government. University buildings in Regina and Saskatoon were grossly inadequate.

Perhaps one of the most serious things that we found in 1982 was how the financial position of the province had been seriously misrepresented by the NDP to the people of the province. The Heritage Fund was empty, emptied because the NDP government bought up potash mines. They may have bought up the potash mines, Mr. Speaker, but they created not one new job with the hundreds of millions of dollars that they spent out of the Heritage Fund.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, it was a difficult position to find ourselves in, in 1982, taking over government. But I would like to say that I truly believe that the way our government responded to these challenges makes one of the greatest stories of our province's history.

Our Progressive Conservative government set a course of building opportunity and providing protection. We immediately removed the gasoline tax to save the families of Saskatchewan 150 millions of dollars every year. That wasn't a one-time tax reduction, Mr. Speaker; that \$150 million annually stays in the people's pockets and is regenerated and respent in our society.

The Tory mortgage interest protection plan provided almost 50,000 families an average saving of \$3,400 a year annually on mortgage interest, but probably more importantly, it helped those 50,000 families stay in their homes and live in their homes and keep their homes.

The farm purchase program provided opportunities for young farmers to be able to purchase land, and it offered retiring farmers security because they had someone to buy that land.

This government, this Tory government, created the Department of Tourism and Small Business to deal with the special needs of small business. We made Crown corporations more efficient and more accountable.

Under the able leadership of the Minister of Health, health spending increased by almost \$500 million, or 72 per cent, since 1982. Under this government, increased elementary and secondary education budgets were increased by 52 per cent, or \$156 million.

Thanks to Progressive Conservative planning, Mr. Speaker, since 1982 Saskatchewan has had the highest rate of increase in funding for post-secondary education in all of Canada — and that, Mr. Speaker, during some rather depressed economic times that we have gone through in the last few years. This government set up the \$125 million university renewal and development fund. This alone, Mr. Speaker, has been touted across Canada as being very innovative and a long time in coming. And this program in itself is being envied by educational institutions across Canada.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the initiatives that I've just listed brought about a Saskatchewan that we see today, that has the lowest average unemployment rate, the lowest inflation rate in years, a province with a real growth rate of 4.3 per cent last year, and — more proudly and more importantly — a Saskatchewan that has real jobs for our people. I believe that it is a record which every person in Saskatchewan can be proud of and are proud of.

But I would like, Mr. Speaker, to add a word of caution. A Greek philosopher once advised the people of Greece to get involved with your city-state or you will be ruled by your inferiors. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that that advice from many thousands of years ago is extremely important today, when we see members opposite trying to fool the people of Saskatchewan into giving them one more chance — trying to fool the people by saying, well, we've learnt our lesson; give us one more chance.

Mr. Speaker, last week the people of Saskatchewan were treated to a strange spectacle. They were presented with one budget by the Minister of Finance, a budget that is a solid and responsible document. And they were presented with another budget; they were presented with a budget by the Leader of the Opposition in Saskatoon. And he presented a sort of make-believe budget, a grab-bag of goodies designed, I would suppose, to buy votes in the upcoming election.

But I can tell you that the people of this province will be forever grateful that the make-believe budget will never see the light of day or will never be implemented. For in that make-believe budget, the make-believe budget of the little Leader of the Opposition, the people of Saskatchewan can see the glaring differences between the present Progressive Conservative government of Saskatchewan and the kind of alternative that is being offered to them by the NDP party opposite.

The members over there talk about taxing the oil companies to get more revenue to fill their grab-bag of promises. They talk about give-aways and how they are going to sock it to the oil companies to pay these bills. But, Mr. Speaker, everyone in the province knows that those promises can never be delivered on, because they know that the oil industry left this province some years ago, probably 15 years ago now, and they know why they

left the province. They didn't leave the province willingly, but they were forced out by the NDP government of the day. And people know that should that ragtag band of goons and buffoons ever get back in, that they would force the oil companies out immediately.

It's funny, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP have a very different philosophy. They believe that you can kill the goose that lays the golden egg and continue collecting those golden eggs. But they're the only ones, Mr. Speaker, that believe that.

I believe that this Devine government is providing the people of this province with benefits such as they have never seen before. We are providing the people with lower taxes, better health care, more nursing homes, more generous policies for seniors, good training programs for our unemployed youth. And, Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on, but the people of Saskatchewan know this success story very well.

The public knows that the members on this side of the House realize something that members opposite don't, and don't seem to be able to want to learn. The members of this government realize that these benefits come from only one place, from having a political climate that encourages the people of Saskatchewan and people from outside of Saskatchewan to invest their money here, to work here, to work hard and to develop this province. This government realizes that it is risk and hard work on the part of the people that develop a province, and it's this hard work that creates a high standard of living, and this hard work creates finances so that social programs that we want can be implemented. Members opposite don't understand that and they haven't learned in the four years that they have been sitting there. They don't realize that if you don't learn from history you are doomed to repeat it, and that is the box that they're in.

Mr. Speaker, our present Progressive Conservative government realizes that it is not a giant government bureaucracy, and high taxes, and a tight network of regulations on the economy and on the people that creates wealth. No, we realize that it is the people of Saskatchewan who are making this province great. And this basic belief, Mr. Speaker, this basic belief in the industry of people and this basic belief of having faith in people, is the very foundation of our Progressive Conservative Party.

(1445)

Our government realizes that our job is to create the political climate in which the people themselves can build this province. Our government has faith in the people of Saskatchewan to do that, and this faith and this encouragement, Mr. Speaker, is working out. It's the ordinary people of Saskatchewan that make this province work; it is the ordinary people of Saskatchewan that make this province great. But the members opposite still cling to that obsolete notion that it is government that has to do the job for the people.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite love to go out and talk about — we speak for the ordinary people. They don't even know what an ordinary person is. I'm an

ordinary person; my colleagues are ordinary people; my friends are ordinary people. We work, we try to get ahead, we try to provide homes for our families, jobs for others, do a good job if we're employed by someone else, pay our taxes and contribute to society. That's what an ordinary person does. Those people wouldn't know an ordinary person if they came up and hit them in the nose.

You know, in the recent days, in the last 10 days of this session, we've really witnessed an opposition party that has allowed its mask to fall. There is no mystery now, Mr. Speaker, as to what is happening in the NDP ranks. That opposition has come through the past four years without learning a thing. It has failed to develop a program that offers any alternative at all to our PC legislative program — I might add a legislation program that has finally got this province on the move. It has failed to use its time in opposition, during the past four years, to rethink its program and to listen to the people and to get on the side to offer some serious alternatives to the programs of this government.

Mr. Speaker, having wasted those four years it is now caught up in almost near hysteria. It is lacking a serious program to offer, so it is striking out blindly on a bidding rampage, a bidding rampage offering the public the sun and the moon and the stars and hoping that the voter might be silly enough to buy it. But I can assure them, Mr. Speaker, that the public will not be fooled again.

As one respected Saskatchewan journalist said, referring, Mr. Speaker, to the tidal wave of election promises handed out already by the opposition leader, he said: "The NDP is letting a quest for power override any sense of what is responsible politics." This same journalist went on to say, Mr. Speaker: "The NDP has become so consumed by the scent of power and determined not to see a repeat of 1982, that it is offering scores of promises." Scores of promises, Mr. Speaker, that there is no way on earth that they would ever be able to fulfil it. But that is the mentality of the members opposite. They are so consumed with wanting power that they will do anything legitimate or misleading or otherwise — anything to do it. But I say, Mr. Speaker, that the people of my riding will not be fooled. The people of Shaunavon riding will not be fooled again. The people of many of those ridings — I would even say the people of Elphinstone — will not be fooled again by the blatant mispromises of the NDP.

I would like, Mr. Speaker, to refer to a few highlights of the recent budget. And let me say that it is a document that shows that this government is just hitting its stride. It is an imaginative blueprint for our future and it is fully responsible for the time. Mr. Speaker, it is a solid, solid document.

The budget will exempt all clothing purchases under \$300 from sales tax — another step, Mr. Speaker, in our long-term goal of total elimination of the sales tax implemented some time ago by the NDP.

When you look at when we took over power in '82, virtually everything, other than food, had education and health tax on it. And you look at, Mr. Speaker, the strides that we have made in that area alone, on gasoline, on children's clothing, on electrical bills. Now clothing has

been extended to all. Prototypes are exempt from E&H. We have made great strides in that area and after the election, Mr. Speaker, will continue on our goal of total elimination of the education and health tax in the province.

The budget establishes the Saskatchewan pension plan for home-makers, small-business men, and the self-employed. And, Mr. Speaker, speaking of the woman, I think this is extremely important. This is an opportunity for those of us that perhaps do not work in an office or a business large enough to be able to fund a pension fund for their employees, this is a great opportunity for women to plan today and contribute today for their needs down the road. As we all know, some of the poorest people in society are the aged women. I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that by being able to make that choice — because it is voluntary — to make that choice to put away some money in a pension plan today for the future is something that women all over the province have been asking for a long, long time.

The budget also provides new home buyers with a grant of \$3,000. This, Mr. Speaker, is a very responsible inclusion in the budget. And when I look back to my years in opposition and the things that we had asked the government of the day to do, and it was always no, no, no — you can't do it, you can't do it, you can't do it. Well I can say, Mr. Speaker, with great pride, that my leader, the Premier of the province, Premier Grant Devine, and my colleagues, proved them wrong, because we said it could be done and we did it. And now the members opposite are saying, me too, me too, me too. But they sure didn't say that when we were making very fundamental, good suggestions in opposition.

The budget provides an 8 per cent interest rate program for small businesses. It will see health expenditures increased by \$126 million, bringing the Health budget to \$1.2 billion. That is almost one-third of the budget. And in that increase, Mr. Speaker, we will be replacing and continuing to replace the nursing positions that were cut out — 400-and-some cut out in one year — nursing positions cut out in one of their budgets. I believe it was 1976 or 1978.

It calls for spending for elementary and secondary education to increase by \$41 million, because we have a basic belief that our youth have to have educational opportunities to prepare them for the jobs of tomorrow.

Agricultural funding will be more than doubled. The increase is \$118 million. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that in the last year of the New Democratic reign of terror, the NDP spent more on social services than they did on agriculture. We believe that agriculture is the basis of our economy. Agriculture must remain strong. And I think that the programs that we have instituted over the last four years state very clearly the importance that we place on agriculture.

The budget includes income tax credit for construction or expansion of livestock facilities to help stimulate livestock production, because this government realizes that we must turn around our vitally important livestock industry.

The budget also provides two-year corporate tax holiday for new small businesses. It provides more than \$13 million for day care, an increase of 9 per cent, an increase I don't think that you would find in any other province in the country. The budget also provides \$125 million through the employment development fund for job creation and training programs this year, and combined with capital spending, Mr. Speaker, this will create over 20,000 jobs, a near record.

And yes, there are tax increases. Yes, we did increase taxes on large corporations, because it is our philosophical belief that large corporations can afford to pay more.

Mr. Speaker, as I've said before, I think I hardly have to say anything about agriculture this afternoon, because the people of Saskatchewan know that this is one government that realizes fully that the very base of our province's economy is agriculture. Our government has provided support programs for agriculture in difficult times in a way that has left the members of the opposition wide-eyed. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we responded to the needs of farmers in a way that the opposition wouldn't have dreamed of doing.

But, Mr. Speaker, the budget even goes further. It provides \$25 million for the agricultural development fund. It will build a new College of Agriculture building in Saskatoon — an agriculture building that will become a world renowned agriculture research centre.

And I find it amusing, Mr. Speaker — at a U of S students' forum, at which Mr. Blakeney, the Leader of the Opposition, was participating, one of the students asked him why they had never built an agriculture college. And he said, Mr. Speaker, he said to these students, that, the agriculture college was never a priority with my administration.

An Hon. Member: — Shame. Shame.

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Shame is right. Here in the heart of the agricultural activity of Canada, this is where the research should be going on. The budget also allocates \$42 million to Saskatchewan farmers in 1986 under the oil royalty refund program and, Mr. Speaker, this is another indication of the philosophy of this government. We believe in targeting certain sectors to help other sectors, and this is a good indication of how that can work.

We've expanded the eligibility criteria for agricultural credit corporation loans, and fixes the interest rate at 8 per cent. It offers a 15 per cent provincial income tax credit for the construction or expansion of livestock facilities. The budget provides a three-year extension of the livestock investment tax credit program.

Mr. Speaker, the farmers of this province know very well which party is going to give them the support and the protection they need in difficult times, and this budget has simply underlined that fact one more time. When this government took office four years ago, the situation was deadly serious for the people of our province, but we

responded to the serious situation we found. We responded to the challenges and we responded, I think, with vigour and imagination. We responded to the needs of families. We responded to the needs of farmers. We responded to the needs of seniors.

But let us look at one particularly vital area for this province, and to the response by the Minister of Finance in his new budget, and that area, of course, is small business. It's the source of most of the new jobs in this province, Mr. Speaker. This Progressive Conservative government has focused on small business and we have provided a plan that is putting new enthusiasm into small businesses across the province.

The program announced is a wide-ranging and comprehensive one, Mr. Speaker. It provides for a two-year corporate tax holiday on new small businesses. It provides an 8 per cent interest rate program for small businesses. It provides for the creation of a stock savings plan to encourage equity investment in public companies by Saskatchewan residents. It provides expansion of the venture capital program to include agricultural firms and to broaden investment criteria in centres with a population of under 20,000. It creates the Saskatchewan agriculture and commercial equity corporation to provide individuals with further opportunities to invest in the province. It provides financial assistance to municipalities interested in establishing community development corporations. It also provides, Mr. Speaker, an entrepreneur training program.

It is an imaginative program that will continue the revitalization of our province's economy. And there is one thing you can be sure of: that program will play a central role as we continue to increase the number of people working in this province, and to maintain our record as having just about the lowest unemployment rate in the country.

Mr. Speaker, this government knows that Saskatchewan entrepreneurs, by their very spirit and tenacity, have created thousands of new businesses and thousands of new jobs; and they will do even more of that in the years ahead. Our government realizes that labour organizations have a vital role to play in this province's economic development; that union members, with their knowledge of the work-place and their tradition for being industrious, can do much to help our economy grow. That fine spirit of co-operation between labour, management, and government, that has prevailed in the past four years, has meant an unequalled period of labour peace in this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the new budget proposes the setting up of labour venture capital corporations. Their purpose is to encourage trade unions to create jobs and to build added security and prosperity for their members by channelling investments from organized labour to small- and medium-sized businesses in Saskatchewan. Individual union members will receive provincial tax credits equal to 20 per cent of the cost of their investment. This is just one more program, Mr. Speaker, that will help our province to grow and will undoubtedly be copied in other provinces when it is fully understood.

Mr. Speaker, the basis of our strategy for this province and the strategy of our budget could not be more clear. It is to create an environment in which people of this province can take advantage of the resource riches of this province. The budget encourages them to invest their money, and their labour, and their management, and their entrepreneurial skills, to develop the province, and in doing so to bring benefits to themselves and all the people of the province.

(1500)

But there is one other side to our strategy that is just as important. Of course, it's the people and the families of Saskatchewan, and it's our emphasis on social benefits that are the right of every person in the province.

Just look at some of the benefits this government has brought to families and to the people in bringing in this budget. We are committed, Mr. Speaker, to protecting families from economic hardship. This budget provides over \$13 million for day care during 1986 — a 9 per cent increase. For the first time, Mr. Speaker, we are providing direct operating grants to day care centres. This has been a major complaint from day care centres, is not so much the funding for individual children, but the ongoing operational cost of the centre. And this will help them indeed.

The senior citizens' heritage program provides almost \$40 million to Saskatchewan senior citizens. Funding continues for the five-year, \$25 million senior citizens' home repair program. Seniors' non-profit housing program has increased by \$4.5 million.

In 1982, Mr. Speaker, we ended the NDP's moratorium on nursing home construction, and since then have contributed towards the building of over 2,000 senior citizen housing units. For 1986 we will support the building of an additional 540 senior citizen housing units. As I already said, all clothing, footwear, and yard goods valued at less than \$300 will be exempt from sales tax.

Mr. Speaker, I don't have to tell the people of this province that our future rests with our youth. Yet that simple fact means that education is of crucial importance. If we are to secure the future of Saskatchewan and provide leadership, not only for all of Canada but to the world, our education programs must be of world standard. Mr. Speaker, under this government they are. In the past four years we have brought our educational system to a position of leadership.

Now the budget goes further, Mr. Speaker, in the area of education, because it provides \$41 million increase in funding for schools — funding for 45 school capital projects throughout the province. There is a \$25 million increase in funding for the education development fund to further enhance the quality of education and to encourage our children to stay in school longer. And that is extremely important.

There will be an \$18 million contribution to the university renewal and development fund and a \$9 million grant for the operation of the Northern Institute of Technology.

And another important announcement, Mr. Speaker, was the enhanced student aid package, including new eligibility criteria, increased levels of assistance, and 6 per cent interest rates, right down through student loans. And let me say that the people of Saskatchewan support these initiatives all the way, Mr. Speaker.

One of the pronounced differences between our Tory government and what would happen under an NDP government is found in the management of the business of this government. We have demonstrated that we are committed to a much more efficient use of taxpayers' money.

From 1982 when our government took office, until now, we have reduced the size of the civil service dramatically, Mr. Speaker, by nearly 15,000 people, or brought it down from 15,000 to well under 14,000. Under this Progressive Conservative government the civil service is lean and efficient, dedicated to serving the public well but not to controlling the public with frivolous regulation and control.

Now under this new budget we will move to more government efficiencies. We will create a property management corporation for the more efficient management of government land and government buildings. We will continue to restrict government expenditures, and we will further reduce the size of civil service by using more than 300 vacant positions., Mr. Speaker, to offset the increase in nursing positions. The people of Saskatchewan want an efficient government and we are committed to giving it to them.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on now to discuss the many other benefits under this budget, but I would like to conclude this way. I would like to congratulate the Minister of Finance, the member from Qu'Appelle, for his outstanding budget.

I can only repeat, Mr. Speaker, that this budget is a budget for the times. It provides generous support in essential areas like health and education because this government insists that Saskatchewan be in the lead there. The budget has generous support programs for small businesses. It provides additional support for child care centres. It invests in agriculture, in research, and in our future. It is committed to building a much stronger livestock industry, and it lays out plans to support farmers who will move in that direction.

All in all, it's the kind of budget that the Saskatchewan people want today. It is a response to the needs of the people. It demonstrates again, Mr. Speaker, that this is government that listens, and that this is a government that has the imagination and the initiative and the courage to respond.

Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me as a member from Maple Creek to endorse and support this budget. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muller: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I take great pleasure in entering this budget debate. I want to address

some economic issues and give some lessons to the people on my right here on economics. It's hard to believe that they're on my right . . .

But I would like to start out by saying there's two sides to our economy. There's the social side, which looks after our hospitals and health care, the education system, senior citizens' accommodations and programs, youth employment, day-care centre. That's the side of our economy that has to be supported by government. And it's certainly necessary, especially senior citizens' accommodations where the former government had moratoriums on that from 1978 until '82, until we took over. If they want to learn how to spell moratorium, it's in last night's *Hansard*. It was spelled out very plainly by the member from Turtleford.

The other side of our economy is the industrial sector. People working in the industrial sector pay taxes to support the social side of our economy. And of course, the major things that look after the industrial side now are like the bacon plant in North Battleford, which certainly is going to create a lot of jobs. Those people will pay taxes into the provincial coffers, and certainly that helps to support the social side of our economy.

And of course the new announcement of the paper-mill in Prince Albert which is just going to have a tremendous effect on the economy of Prince Albert. I want to stop there and go into that a little bit. I want these people over here to understand the impact of that paper-mill and pulp-mill in Prince Albert, the \$50 million that will be spent refurbishing the pulp-mill so it can handle poplar which was never used in the pulp-mill before — just to a small extent just lately on test programs.

This extends the life of the forest industry forever in northern Saskatchewan. The poplar that's going to be used in the paper-mill, and the exchange of logs between the paper mill in Prince Albert and the sawmill in Big River is going to extend the life of the Big River sawmill and the pulp and paper industry in Prince Albert forever.

I stood at a hockey game the other night in Shellbrook. There's a lot of people from Prince Albert who support the hockey teams in the Shellbrook-Prince Albert area, and I know quite a few of them. These people work for PAPCO — that's the P.A. Pulp Company. They came up to me at that hockey game and shook my hand and said, that is the most positive thing that has ever happened in the Prince Albert area. These are PAPCO workers that work right in the pulp-mill. They realize this has extended the life of that PAPCO mill forever, because the wild oat of northern Saskatchewan, which is poplar, will now be used in the manufacture of paper.

The company, Weyerhaeuser, that is going to build this paper-mill beside the pulp-mill in Prince Albert, has the marketing system already in place to market this paper in the United States and all over North America. They're not only going to be marketing paper. The paper-mill will only take 60 per cent of the production of that pulp-mill, so 40 per cent of it will be sold as pulp. But these people also have the marketing system to market that pulp.

These people over here, the former government, don't

understand. They're totally against it. They don't realize that Weyerhaeuser has taken a smaller lease area in the parkland to support a larger industry, because it will be used more efficiently. This is very important. They are taking a smaller lease area than PAPCO had, because they're using the poplar.

The exchange of poplar logs from Big River to the pulp-mill and the saw logs going back to Big River, there will be no more saw logs going through the pulp-mill in Prince Albert. They will be sawed into lumber in the Big River mill, which increases the lifetime of the mill in Big River. So it's good for everyone.

Also, Weyerhaeuser is going to be paying the same stumpage as anyone else in the province when they take over that mill. They won't be getting it at the price that PAPCO was getting it for, away reduced, below even private operators.

The other thing that they're going to do is they're going to increase the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . They're going to increase their reforestation. I'm sure the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg doesn't know anything about reforestation, but they're going to increase their reforestation by 126 per cent. And I've seen pictures of their tree farms in British Columbia where they grow their own trees for their reforestation programs, irrigated tree farms that they manage themselves. They're going to do the reforestation, plus pay the larger stumpage fees, the same as the private operators. The private operators are going to be allowed a larger cut, a larger share of the cut in the Weyerhaeuser lease area, which is smaller than the PAPCO lease area.

And they're still saying they're against it. The people that are running against me and some of my colleagues up there aren't against it, but the people down here are certainly against it. And they're not saying the same thing. They're sending out two different messages.

An Hon. Member: — North of the No. 1?

Mr. Muller: — This is north of the No. 1. But I want to tell you, this is the most positive thing on Main Street, Prince Albert; Main Street, Shellbrook; Main Street, Meath Park, Candle Lake, Smeaton, Choceland, Mont Nebo — wherever you go in that area — Big River, Debden, Canwood, that whole area; Meadow Lake, the whole area is excited about this paper-mill that's going into Prince Albert.

I'm sure the way these people are listening to me this afternoon they're learning something about economics, how these jobs — 800 jobs in Prince Albert and Big River area, and these are permanent jobs. These aren't construction jobs. These are permanent jobs I'm talking about. Two hundred and fifteen in the pulp- and paper-mill and 600 support jobs in the service sector to support these people with the 250 new jobs. Those are all taxpayers that are going to be helping to pay for the social side of our economy.

An Hon. Member: — Make your last speech a good one.

(1515)

Mr. Muller: — I will let the member for Assiniboia know that this certainly won't be my last speech in the House, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to mention a little bit about some of the other more positive things, Mr. Speaker, in the province. I don't want to dwell on just one little area like northern Saskatchewan. We're also getting an upgrader in Regina, which will certainly support our economic base; the Rafferty dam in Estevan. All these things are important to support the social side of what our government pays for on the social side of the economy.

The other thing in this budget that is so important is the 8 per cent loans to small business. Eight per cent loans for small business, of course, are supported by industry also. I can go through all of it again, how it's done in Prince Albert through the paper-mill, if you didn't quite catch it the first time, about the reforestation and the stumpage and all the positive things that the small operators are talking about, Mr. Speaker. It's very, very interesting and very positive to walk down the streets of small town Saskatchewan now, in northern Saskatchewan, with this paper- and pulp-mill that's being built in . . . the pulp-mill is there, the paper-mill being built in Prince Albert.

An Hon. Member: — When?

Mr. Muller: — It will be started this fall. The exchange of logs will start very soon, I'm sure.

The one thing that is very, very important up there is the exchange of timber. The exchange of timber between Big River and Prince Albert is really very positive, one of the most positive things that has ever happened in that area. I'm just so excited about it, and I'm sure that the member from Athabasca will be excited about it also when he sees the impact, Mr. Speaker, that that will have on the forest industry in all of northern Saskatchewan and all the private operators, the small, private operators now that are going to be able to get more timber. And we can support the pulp- and paper-mill out of a smaller lease area than we ever have before, because we're using the poplar and not tramping it down and wasting it like we have done in the past.

It has given me a great deal of pleasure to get up and speak in this budget debate. I know that there's other members that will have something to say. I don't want to take up all the time talking about the pulp-mill and paper-mill in Prince Albert, but it's very, very important to those people. It affects all of northern Saskatchewan right from Manitoba to Alberta and right up to Athabasca and Lac La Ronge and all that northern area — far more than my seat.

And I'm happy for all those people in that area because this is the most positive thing that has happened in over 20 years — in over 20 years. And I will certainly be able to walk up, Mr. Speaker, and face my constituents, and constituents from all those other seats in that area, and be able to talk positively about northern Saskatchewan, which no one has been able to do for many, many years.

I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for letting me enter this debate, and I certainly will be supporting the budget.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask leave of the Assembly to introduce a guest.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, I just some time ago noticed one of my constituents in the gallery, Mr. Rob Krismer, who is a teacher at the Convent of The Child Jesus in North Battleford. He's down at the STF convention in the city this weekend, and I'd like to ask the members opposite and the members of this House to join me in welcoming him to Regina.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE (BUDGET DEBATE) (Continued)

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm not going to take a lot of time today debating this budget. I think that it's a budget that we will be debating once again in approximately six weeks time, Mr. Speaker. The present government that has brought this budget in, and I consider this a dark, dark day in Saskatchewan when we have a budget . . . and I will go into the magnitude of what this budget really means to the province. But I suspect, Mr. Speaker, in about six weeks time, after the election is all over and the dust is settled, that we will be having another throne speech, and we'll be bringing in a budget, a budget that will be a sensible budget, one that will be putting people back to work and not depressing this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — I just heard the member from Shellbrook, and I'm only going to make a few comments on what he has said about how excited he is about the Prince Albert pulp-mill and the Big River sawmill and that, going over to Weyerhaeuser, a large firm from Alabama who had profits last year, Mr. Speaker, of \$5.5 billion. I will go into that later as to just what that means to the province. But he says he's really excited.

I tell you, Mr. Speaker, I'm excited too. I'm excited and I'm concerned. I tell you, I've been on the phone since that announcement has been made to the folks in Big River and around Prince Albert, and there are a lot of people in there who are excited, but they're concerned. They're concerned for what has taken place; they're concerned for the amount of money that was paid to a multinational corporation to come in and buy out the assets that they have taken, which I will go into later. But I'm concerned about that.

The member from Shellbrook-Torch River also was praising Weyerhaeuser for the way they operate in other provinces. He was also talking about the large increase that we were going to see, 126 per cent in reforestation. He was telling us, and he made a point of telling us, just how great a nursery that they have in British Columbia. I suspect also, Mr. Speaker, that if they've got that big a nursery in British Columbia that you're going to see the reforestation and the trees that are going to be involved in that reforestation also coming out of Weyerhaeuser's nursery in British Columbia . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's fine, Mr. Speaker, the members over there say I'm wrong. Mr. Speaker, time will tell whether that's right or not.

I want to touch for a few minutes, Mr. Speaker, on the constituency of Athabasca that I have had the pleasure of representing for the last 11 years. I look forward to the opportunity, if they will be so kind to re-elect me, to represent my constituents for another four years. I can assure you that I will represent them well. I sincerely hope that the next four years will be represented by myself on the government side where we can see some progress.

Nowhere in the province since 1982 has any region been hit harder than the northern constituencies of Athabasca and Cumberland. And it's continuing, Mr. Speaker, it's just continuing on a daily basis. It has got worse and worse. We are facing unemployment up in northern Saskatchewan of up to 85 and 90 per cent in some of our communities. Housing has come to a stop. Municipal funding; they've got a new formula out this year that the funding for our local communities has gone way down. And I tell you, some of the communities are up there telling me that if this isn't changed and they don't get more money to operate, they're just going to give the government back the keys and let them operate the towns themselves.

I take a look at what I consider should be one of the most important priorities of any government, and that is to create jobs, and they're always talking about creating jobs. And then you take a look at the budget speech, and there's a 20 per cent cut in funding for Employment Development Agency. Now they have a 20 per cent cut for the Employment Development Agency at a time when we have crisis in this province, an unemployment crisis.

We hear them talking about transferring positions to other towns, and I see the Minister of Parks and Renewable Resources is sitting in his seat . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Does the member from Turtleford want the floor? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, I have the floor right now, and I just wanted to talk about the concerns that my constituents have, and I was going to relate to the department that the member from Turtleford is representing, and he seems to take . . . When the member from Turtleford wants to let . . . Mr. Speaker, the member for . . .

I wanted to bring out a point, Mr. Speaker, on concerns of my constituents regarding the Department of Parks and Renewable Resources. I hadn't even got the words out of my mouth and the member from Turtleford was up on his feet and hollering and screaming and interrupting me, so I can't even represent my constituents properly in this

House. Now if you would . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm not asking you a question, I'm debating the budget. I'm debating the budget, and when we get to your estimates, then I will have a question-and-answer period with yourself. So if you would just allow me the opportunity to relay my concerns, then I will do that.

Mr. Speaker, this is what's happening. They're talking about transferring positions, and they transfer permanent positions without really checking into it. I have three secretaries up in my constituency who have a full-time job and have had that full-time job with Parks and Renewable Resources in their offices for a number of years, and they're concerned. They have been told by the member for Turtleford's department that their jobs no longer will be full-time; that they're going to be part-time.

I wrote him a letter and requested that he reconsider this, because the women that have them jobs are married women, they have families, their husbands live up in La Loche and Ile-a-la-Crosse and Green Lake, where they're concerned. And I asked him to reconsider that, not to make the jobs part-time but to make them full-time. And the answer that I got back was no, that it's decentralization; we're going to cut them back. If they want to they can quit their jobs and they can reapply for the part-time position, or they can be transferred down to Maple Creek or some place in the south.

That's the type of compassion that this Conservative government has for families in this province. Three families he wants to disrupt, and I have requested again, and I ask that member today to reconsider these three positions and leave them as permanent. They have their houses up there, their homes. Their husbands are working. They have their families to look after. They have commitments to make. And that has been their home all their lives and they want to remain there. They don't want to transfer to Maple Creek. And I ask you, Mr. Member from Turtleford, to reconsider this once more.

But this is the type of frustrations that we have in northern Saskatchewan. This is the type of frustrations that we have been facing since 1982. And I tell you, Mr. Speaker, it's not easy when you live up in northern Saskatchewan. You're a long way from services. And when you're out of a job, you get up in the morning, you got to bed at night, and you haven't got a job and you're living on assistance — it's pretty demoralizing. It much more demoralizing, Mr. Speaker, for individuals who do have jobs and they're being disrupted. That is demoralizing.

I sincerely hope that this government will come to its sense and start to realize that there is people north of Meadow Lake, and that they're real people, and they need these positions. And they don't want to be disrupted. If they did, they could go through the proper process and apply down South. But they don't want that.

I also want to now turn, Mr. Speaker — and everything that I'm going to say in here really relates to northern Saskatchewan — but I want to go back to what the member of Social Services said yesterday, the member for Rosemont. And he said that the NDP were out in the countryside promising the moon to the electors. He said we were promising them the moon. And that's in *Hansard*. And

he said that the NDP are promising the moon, and here is what the Conservative government have done for Saskatchewan.

(1530)

Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to the House today just what the member from Rosemont was talking about, some of the programs, and what has really taken place under the Conservative government that he was bragging about. Then I want to go into what we are going to do if we form the government. And I really have no doubts in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that that's going to happen. I've criss-crossed this province and I've talked to people. And we've assessed it, and the polls are telling us the same thing, what is going to happen.

But the member for Rosemont, he says that we're gazing at the moon when we talk about this. Well, I just say — I say to the member for Rosemont, Mr. Speaker: do you think the citizens of Saskatchewan would prefer 4.5 per cent unemployment under the NDP when we left this government, turned it over to you, or the 9 to 10 per cent unemployment that the Conservative governments have created and exists in this province today.

We now have 44,000 people in this province who are looking for jobs, who are drawing unemployment insurance — UIC. And I'll tell you there are many thousands who are not registered that are not on that 44,000 list, Mr. Speaker. And the member for Social Services, in telling us how good things are . . . Mr. Speaker, there are 60,000 citizens in this province who are on welfare — 66,000. And for the first time ever in this four-year history of this Conservative government, we not only have 66,000 people on welfare, we have food banks that are begging for food in all the cities. We have food banks.

Never ever before in the history of this province have we sunk that low that we can't even look after our social recipients. They have to beg for food. And there are radio stations and television stations and people all over this province who are going out manning food banks . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

The former minister of co-ops wants to talk about the deficit. And, Mr. Speaker, that was my next item here. In four years . . . just imagine, Mr. Deputy Speaker, five budgets in four years. When the Conservative government took over they had \$140 million in the bank. Here we are five budgets later, and four years, and the province has \$2 billion in debt, the operating debt — \$2 billion. Just imagine that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you have a government that can come in and in four short year take \$140 million profit that was in the bank and turn it into a \$2 billion deficit.

And let's take a look at our equity position, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When we left . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'll tell you who wrote this. When we left government, the equity in this province was \$1.091 billion. That was the provincial equity. Now four years later our equity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is minus \$740 million . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Now the former minister of Tourism and Small Business wants to know where I'm getting these figures, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And for that member's information, I am getting them figures on page 11 of the *Saskatchewan Economic and Financial Position*, dated July 1985, issued by one, the former Finance minister, the hon. member from Kindersley. That's where I'm getting it — on page 11, for the member, if you would like to look at that. You read it; I can table it if you want it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the members over there . . . it seems to be a touchy situation where they could take an equity position and totally destroy it — an equity position of 1.091 billion, and now it's minus \$740 million.

I'll tell you what it means, to the member from Tourism and Small Business. I realize now why you have been taken out of cabinet. I'll ask you what it is. I'll tell you what it means: it means that this province has borrowed more money than the province is worth. That's what it means . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . All right. You say that that's wrong. You question that. I tell you, that's exactly what it means. It means that the province of Saskatchewan and the Conservative government is broke. It has borrowed more money than the province is worth. And he doesn't understand that. No wonder he's not in cabinet. And I can see why he's changed constituencies. But that's exactly what it is.

And you know, they sit over there when I talk about the figures I just gave you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and they wonder where I get them. And they say they're not true. Then they want me to explain what it means. I sincerely hope that they realize that when you start borrowing more than the province is worth, then the credit ratings start going down. And in the last year the credit rating of this province has gone down on two occasions, mainly because this province has borrowed more money than the province is worth. And it will continue to go that way under a Conservative government.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we're on the finances of the province . . . and I think that the former member of Tourism and Small Business has finally grasped that. He knows what I was talking about when I was talking about an equity position. I think he realizes now what I was talking about. I want to touch on some figures . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You better believe it, it's reality, the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake. I'm going to touch on reality. You better believe it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

When the Conservative government took over this province, we had an accumulated debt of \$3.3 billion. We now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 1986, in four years, now we have a total debt of \$7.4 billion of accumulated debt, and at the end of this fiscal year that will be \$8.7 billion. And the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake wants me to face reality. And I say to him that the people of this province also want your government to face reality.

When you take a look at an accumulated debt of 3.3 billion when the NDP were in power, and now just four years short . . . four short years later it has jumped to \$8.7 billion, just imagine what that means to your children and your grandchildren and all of us. I tell you, that is a serious

situation. We're in financial problems. And if this government keeps up, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's just no way of getting out of it.

A little later on in my speech, for the member for Moosomin, I'm going to explain where it was spent. I'm going to explain it. I intend to explain it. And I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm just going to start right now by explaining why we're in the big problem that we have right now.

It's some of these deals they've made. First of all, they were elected in 1982 and they got in in April — that's when the construction season should start and should be going full bore — and what did they do? They said to themselves, well we're not going to go ahead with these projects that the NDP have started, the hospitals and the schools, and you name it, and the highways. We're going to study them and see if they really should go ahead. We're going to study them. That's right.

The school in P.A. that the New Democratic Party had already started, and here four years later . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake, do you deny that? That that college in Prince Albert wasn't started under the NDP government?

An Hon. Member: — Yes.

Mr. Thompson: — Well that's fine. That shows what kind of a member you are.

But that's what happened. That's what happened. They decided to study and to cancel. And as a result, the first summer of construction it just didn't happen in this province. And once you started to go backwards, and then you seen the deals that started to unfold, and you just never catch up. And they've gone backwards and backwards, and now we some of the deals that are taking place.

And here's how they get into these problems. A \$145 million loan guarantee for a group in Calgary. They started that off about two and a half years ago, three years ago — Manalta Coal. They started off . . . And this is how they started getting into debt. Saskatchewan owned the coal mine; we owned the drag-line. It was being used to generate power from Saskatchewan Power utilities. So what did they do? They signed a loan guarantee, and that loan guarantee is money that they borrowed on this province. It came from the taxpayers of this province. So that's where they started.

Then we see Pioneer Trust. And we see Pioneer Trust, and it's starting to unfold more and more. They had to pay out \$28 million to the unsecured policy holders. Okay. They paid \$28 million to pay off the depositors, the unsecured depositors.

And then it keeps going, and it keeps going. But I'm only going to highlight some of them, because I think it was highlighted in this House today about really what's happening.

Then they sign another loan guarantee to a supposed millionaire up in Edmonton, by the name of Peter

Pocklington — a \$21-million loan guarantee for him to come into our province to start manufacturing bacon, and processing bacon. Now I wonder why they would give a \$21-million loan guarantee to Mr. Pocklington when Intercontinental Packers in Saskatoon is running around 50 per cent capacity and are just waiting to expand when the markets are available. They'd like to expand in Saskatchewan. They're a Saskatchewan company. They've been here for 40, 50 years, and they would like to expand. But did they give that offer to Intercontinental Packers in Saskatoon? No. But they did to Peter Pocklington and Gainers up in Edmonton.

And here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the real catch. They signed the loan guarantee for \$21 million, and he gets a \$10 million grant. He doesn't have to pay back \$10 million. Anybody could have . . . The member from Turtleford could have handled a situation like that. If he would have got the guarantees from the provincial government, he could have set it up, and he would have been a millionaire — a multi-millionaire, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because it's \$10 million.

An Hon. Member: — Let's you and me get together and do it right.

(1545)

Mr. Thompson: — That's right. And I could have also done that, if I would have been given that opportunity. And so could have Intercontinental Packers in Saskatoon. They could have expanded if they were to give them the opportunity. But no, this government, in its wisdom and its direction of deficit budgeting and over-financing on this province decided that they would bring in another individual from Alberta. And I hear there's a lot of problems up in Alberta, and they were highlighted today.

Then we get, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to one of the later announcements, and here we go again. But this one's a little bigger. This one here is worth about \$200 (I believe) and 48 million, to Weyerhaeusers in Alabama — \$248 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in all sincerity, and to the members opposite, that this indeed is a dark day for the forest industry in this province.

And I see that the Minister of Finance is telling the member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake to take notes. Well, you can take all the notes you want because I'm going on record, and I have checked it out. I could have started that. I could have taken over the Prince Albert pulp-mill, the Big River sawmill, the chemical plant in Saskatoon, the forest industry that PAPCO had, plus they've added the Big River forestry leases to that. And what is the deal? What is the deal?

Well let me tell you what the deal is. There has been a memorandum of understanding signed. There's been a memorandum of understanding signed, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the financing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the financing for the purchase of the existing pulp plant and other assets will be handled by a \$248 million government-held debenture, a promissory note on the province again.

An Hon. Member: — Do you know what that means?

Mr. Thompson: — Yes, I do know what that means. The province has put up all the money once again — \$248 million that the Government of Saskatchewan has signed, a promissory note, or will sign if the deal goes ahead — if it goes ahead. And I'm quoting . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the members would . . . I've touched a nerve over there. But I tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I'm quoting from is what the Premier has said. This is what your Premier has released:

Financing for the purchase of the existing pulp plant and other assets will be handled by a \$248 million government-held debenture . . .

An Hon. Member: — Not 1 cent of their money.

Mr. Thompson: — And not 1 cent . . .

Weyerhaeuser had profits last year of \$5.5 billion.

Sales of \$5.5 billion, and are you telling me that the Government of Saskatchewan has to put up all the funds for them to come into Saskatchewan, take our pulp-mill, take the Big River sawmill, the chemical plant in Saskatoon, and all the bush operations of PAPCO, and the bush operations from the Big River sawmill? Are you saying that the Government of Saskatchewan should put up that money? That's why we are in debt to the tune of billions and billions of dollars. That's why, because of this government's business-like attitude. Do you call that good business?

And here's another release, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

. . . which Weyerhaeuser Canada will repay with interest (and let me just finish this) . . . which Weyerhaeuser Canada will repay with interest out of the combined profits of the pulp and paper-mills over an expected 20 years.

So it's pretty obvious, if they don't make any profits over the next 20 years, that there's another \$248 million that Saskatchewan will not get back.

Then we go to the back of the release and we find out here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we now have sold off the sawmill in Big River, the pulp-mill in Prince Albert, the chemical plant in Saskatoon, PAPCO's bush operation, plus they have also thrown in the Big River mill's bush operation, and that has gone in . . .

An Hon. Member: — And not a dollar down. Not a dollar down.

Mr. Thompson: — Not one cent has Weyerhaeuser put in. Not one cent. Every cent is guaranteed.

Also the individual who was negotiating for Weyerhaeuser, and here's what he said. McInnes said:

Modernization plans at the pulp-mill would begin

immediately after formal approval by both parties. (So they really haven't signed an agreement yet.) Construction of the new paper-mill would be expected to begin this fall and be completed in 1989.

And I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, do you think the citizens of Saskatchewan are going to believe this for one minute? Do you think they're going to believe that for one minute?

And I can tell you another thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if they don't go ahead, well, they've got all our assets. If they do go ahead, any moneys that they put up will be from the assets that they have purchased with our money to buy the assets. And this really hurts. This hurts the members over there. They know that they made a bad deal. They know that.

That's fine if you want to sell off the assets of the Big River sawmill and the pulp-mill at Prince Albert, but let them do it with their own money. Why should the citizens of Saskatchewan, the taxpayers of this province, put up the funds? Let them put up their own money if they think the economic atmosphere in this province is good. Let them put their own money up. They don't need our money.

If the hog industry was that good in Saskatchewan, then why didn't Peter Pocklington put up his own money? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, I say that's the way it should be.

The Conservatives, they like to talk about the private infusion of private funds that are going in. "We welcome Weyerhaeuser's desire to inject private capital into the Saskatchewan economy." Not one cent. Not one cent did they inject. It's all our money.

I now want to turn . . . And that's why we're in this trouble. That's why this province is in debt. I think that the voters in Saskatchewan will have an opportunity in a short while to make a decision as to whether they want to continue down that trail of . . . (inaudible) . . . and giveaways to the multinational corporations, or if they are going to go back to the Blakeney days, when we had 11 straight balanced budgets under Allan Blakeney. Eleven balanced budgets, and our unemployment rate was at four to four and one-half per cent. I think that that's what the folks want.

I think they want an NDP government and the re-instatement of the property improvement grant. And we will do that. I think that they want the 60,000 individuals who paid the unfair tax on used cars, that this government admitted in their own admission that it was unfair — I think the 60,000 people are going to welcome the return of the money that they paid, and we will do that.

But I now want to turn to another plank that I hear the members across there thinking, ah, they're looking at the moon again. But I want to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the housing program that the NDP have announced and will implement, the most energetic and popular housing program this province has ever seen . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the member says it took 15 years for us to figure that out. Well I'll tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the NDP party was in this

province, there was housing starts all over this province. Housing has come to a grinding halt under the Conservative government. We will implement a new policy. I think that the folks out there in voter land are going to have an opportunity, and I think I know how they're going to vote.

We have a program and we have brought it out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a \$7,000 down payment for the first-time home buyers. This assistance would be available for a minimum of three years — \$7,000 for three years. Now that's going to help a lot of people get started and build new homes.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, do you think they would sooner have \$7,000 to start a new home, knowing full well it's going to be there for three years? They can plan ahead and plan their home. Or do you think they want the Conservative government's program which is \$3,000 for nine months? I can tell you what they're going to do. You take a look at the young couples who are going to take advantage of building this home, and now they're going to, under the NDP program, have a protection plan that will guarantee home mortgage interest rates at 7 per cent for seven years on the first \$70,000 of that mortgage. Now that's pretty good. I think that that's important. And I think that the voters out in voter land are going to accept that before they're going to accept the thirteen and three-quarter per cent offered by the Conservative government.

Also, under our program of housing we have a home rehab assistance plan which will provide up to \$7,000 in assistance for those making major renovations or repairs to older homes. I think people have to think what that's going to mean to Saskatchewan, especially after four years of a Conservative government where things were so uncertain in this province that a lot of people just couldn't even keep up their homes. When you have 44,000 unemployed and 66,000 on welfare, a program like this is going to be very, very important.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — We have another plank to that housing program, and that's a commitment to increased construction of social housing for low-income families and senior citizens. That's under the section 40 housing. We are going to go ahead with that program.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that the citizens of Saskatchewan, when they see our housing program compared to the Conservatives' housing program, when they see ours with three years and theirs with nine months, ours with \$7,000 and theirs with \$3,000, I think it's pretty clear — pretty clear — as to how they're going to vote.

And just imagine, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what this is going to mean to Saskatchewan once this starts. Just think of the carpenters and the plumbers, the electricians, the labourers, the young people who are going to be working. And they're not going to be working for nine months: this program is going to be for three years. This is going to be well planned. And this is going to help solve the youth problem that we have.

And I tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when we start debating our housing program versus the housing program of the Conservative government in the next 28 days on the hustings, I can tell you what the folks are saying, because I listen to them. They are going to vote for the New Democratic Party.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — I want to conclude by . . . Well the members opposite seem to think that this is a big joke that we want to provide security for the citizens of this province in our housing program. But I don't think it's a joke. I think it's serious.

(1600)

And I think that each and every one of them are going to have to answer for the budget that was just brought down by the new Finance minister — a Finance minister that has quite a history in this House. He's quite a legend. It's quite interesting that you have a member, a Finance minister, who is now being challenged for his own seat in his own constituency. And it's a real challenge. Can you imagine that! The Finance minister. But that doesn't end there.

When we take a look at the track record of the Minister of Finance, we also know that the Minister of Finance was a very important part of Homecoming '71. Of course he was a Liberal at that time. And he was in a very important part of that Homecoming '71. And you could remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you can remember Homecoming '71 that the Liberal government brought in, and the Minister of Finance, the present Minister of Finance, was a very important part of that Liberal government.

Then things got kind of hot. He seen that the Liberal Party wasn't going no place, so he jumps the fence and he goes over to the Conservative Party. He now sees that things are going bad in the Conservative Party, so he gets the Finance portfolio and he brings down a budget. And you talk about 1967 being a Black Friday. Well let me tell you, the budget he brought down here is also a Black Monday. And it's going to be a disaster for the Conservative government and for all the members in this House, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think that the citizens of Saskatchewan are going to have an opportunity in the next 28, 35 days to decide whether the last four years of the Conservative government and their policies — whether they want that, or they want a return to the New Democratic government and to our policies, of only a few that I have brought out here today.

And I think that the citizens of Saskatchewan will make that decision. I'm sure that they're ready to make that decision. And we're ready to go out there on the doorsteps, and we're ready to debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, their programs, the debt they got this province in. And we're prepared to discuss the programs that we have, programs that we feel will bring this province out of the situation that it's in right now, and once again provide security for every man, woman, and child in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the citizens of Saskatchewan will speak out loud and clear. And with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know for sure I will not be supporting this budget. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Dutchak: — Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the budget because what the budget does, Mr. Speaker, it sets a course for the future, a course of economic renewal, economic building in Saskatchewan. And clearly it's very appropriate that I, as another northern member, would speak after the member who has just spoken, the NDP member.

It's unfortunate that the member didn't dwell more extensively on the positive things happening in northern Saskatchewan, but it's understandable. However, I must commend the member for being honest in terms of saying what his party's position is in relation to free enterprise, growth, building; and clearly the position is negative.

The opposition don't like free enterprise. The opposition doesn't like building. They enjoy the building of government, and clearly that's what he wants to take us back to. He's talking about the future, and clearly he wants to bring back the DNS to northern Saskatchewan, because that's the only growth that the members opposite understand.

Now I'm also pleased that the member opposite has again enunciated the position of his party in relation to the Prince Albert paper-mill, because in Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker, there has been some confusion on the part of certain NDP members.

I have here an excerpt from the *Prince Albert Daily Herald* dated March 29, 1986. At that point I indicated to the media in Prince Albert that I felt that the NDP was against the mill. And I was questioned as to what I thought would happen if the NDP ever became government. I replied that I believed that they would stop the paper-mill deal. And clearly the evidence was here up to now, and clearly today the member opposite has confirmed the position of the NDP opposition. So, clearly, we know that they would take it away, Mr. Speaker.

However, I look at the comments with a bit of interest, the comments from the two NDP candidates in Prince Albert. And they say, I quote: "We welcome the announcement." Now that seems to be a bit of a flip-flop, or else a calculated flip-flop. And I suggest the latter, Mr. Speaker, because I understand that in North Battleford the local NDP candidate says that he likes the Gainers plant idea, which is against the NDP party's position, the position of the leader of the NDP, plus the members who are elected and who determine policy of the party.

Mr. Speaker, I have indicated to the media in Prince Albert that I believe we are seeing political dishonesty in a party that comes into the legislature, states a clear position, and then directs its candidates to say something else while they're campaigning for the votes of the good local people of Prince Albert and area. And, Mr. Speaker,

the public will not tolerate that type of activity.

Now I notice some of the other things being said about the paper-mill. The member opposite said that nothing was being invested by the company Weyerhaeuser. This is simply untrue, Mr. Speaker. The Weyerhaeuser Company is immediately building a paper-mill which will employ over 250 people, new permanent jobs, not counting the 400 spin-off jobs that are created instantly because of the mill's operations.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the government is not giving any money to Weyerhaeuser and the member knows that perfectly well because he was quoting from the same press release that I have before me. And the press release doesn't say that, Mr. Speaker. The member is wrong.

Now the member indicates that Weyerhaeuser will be tricking us; will be getting something for nothing and then making money and making a profit. Well I hope so, Mr. Speaker. I hope that Weyerhaeuser intends to make a profit. But they are paying for the construction of a paper-mill. They are paying for a pulp-mill. And they are paying roughly the same price that the NDP valued the pulp-mill at when they nationalized it. But, Mr. Speaker, that's the basic problem. The basic problem the NDP have is that they enjoy nationalizing and state-controlling industries. That is the real issue. But the Leader of the Opposition doesn't want to talk about that.

The real issue, Mr. Speaker, is that free enterprise is alive and doing well in Saskatchewan because we are open for business. That's why Weyerhaeuser is coming into Saskatchewan; that's why North Battleford is receiving a new industry employing hundreds of people. That's why the NDP doesn't like it, Mr. Speaker.

Now we have to look at the other positions that the NDP have taken in relation to industry, because clearly our budget talks about a climate, a climate of good business. And what we've seen in Saskatchewan since 1982 is businesses, small and large, feeling comfortable about Saskatchewan, comfortable about risking capital, coming into Saskatchewan, setting up new businesses. People are setting up their own businesses, creating employment, because they feel comfortable about the business climate in Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the opposition members have talked about northern Saskatchewan, and in a way they've indicated the basic weakness in their philosophy. And the weakness is that the DNS and government structures cannot create an economic base that's required. It wasn't the government that created the economic base in the southern part of Saskatchewan, and it can't work in northern Saskatchewan.

But let's look at some of the solutions offered by the members opposite that do directly affect Prince Albert and the rest of northern Saskatchewan. Let's look at what they would do. Well, they'd bring back the DNS and that would create a few government jobs, I suppose. They had a habit of not hiring any Northerners except those that they were buying off politically, but that would happen. So they would cancel the paper-mill which doesn't benefit, Mr. Speaker, which doesn't benefit the forestry

industry in northern Saskatchewan. And those people in the industry are telling us that they welcome this announcement because Weyerhaeuser has a reputation for getting things done in the industry, creating jobs, good forestry management — things that make sense, Mr. Speaker.

Now the NDP said they'll cancel that; they don't like the deal because it involves free enterprise. So I guess the solution for Prince Albert is to continue operating PAPCO, lose millions of dollars every year, because the NDP don't like free enterprise. Mr. Speaker, that doesn't make sense to me and it doesn't make sense to my constituents.

But they've got a bigger plan for father north of Prince Albert. They want to solve the unemployment problem by closing the mines — close the uranium mines. Well, the people in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, can't figure that one out either. Two hundred families in Prince Albert rely on the uranium industry for direct pay cheques — direct. Those people are going to have their jobs phased out if the NDP plan — their master plan — comes into effect. That doesn't make sense to me.

The NDP leader was on an open-line show the other day and someone asked him, someone phoned in and said, well what would happen to these hundreds of people that are employed in the uranium mines, an industry of the future, an industry which the Leader of the Opposition himself sunk \$600 million into — what would happen to these people? Well his answer was: we'll relocate them to other industries. Well that's about as believable as the NDP believing in small business, Mr. Speaker.

And I find it ironic that when we talk about relocating a small branch of government, namely the crop insurance people, to Melville, the Leader of the Opposition fights it — tooth and nail, he fights that move. And yet hundreds of people in northern Saskatchewan should be expected to be moved because the NDP philosophically want to close down uranium mines. That doesn't make sense, Mr. Speaker.

The other thing that doesn't make sense, Mr. Speaker, is the comments of the members opposite in relation to unemployment. The record shows that northern unemployment increased drastically over the 11-year term of the members opposite — drastically. Some communities experienced increases in unemployment from 15 per cent to 85 per cent under that 11-year term. Mr. Speaker, that isn't performance.

And yet the Leader of the Opposition says that he can take these people that reside in towns, which are unemployed to the extent of 90 per cent and 85 per cent, and he's going to put them in other industries in northern Saskatchewan. Well, Mr. Speaker, if his record of 11 years doesn't speak for itself, I don't know what will.

(1615)

Well let's look at some of the other activity that's happening that's mentioned in the budget. We have an industrial incentives program; we have an attitude of being open to business and encouraging free enterprise.

As a result, we've seen unprecedented activity in the gold fields. In fact, this Friday the Premier and I are visiting the first operating gold mine and mill in northern Saskatchewan — in the La Ronge gold belt. It's presently under construction.

That is there, Mr. Speaker, because of this government's policy. That industry would not be there if the other people were in power — because we changed the rules, Mr. Speaker. We took away the rule that said that big government could come in and nationalize half of a mine when they see that it's successful. That wasn't fair; we didn't think that was fair. If the gold industry . . . If investors want to risk capital — and gold is a high-risk type of venture — we don't think that big government should take advantage of investors.

We also changed some of the royalty tax structures and patterned them similar to our oil tax structures. As a result, Mr. Speaker, in the La Ronge gold belt now we're seeing activity like never before. The member opposite must have forgotten to talk about that. But if the NDP master plan ever comes in to force, the gold mines are gone. Hundreds of jobs are gone. It's a simple as that.

The other project that's been announced, which the member apparently forgot to mention, is the northern power line that was announced. This government is building a source of power for people in the North, part of the member's constituency. That power is there, is being brought in to provide lower electrical costs to people in northern Saskatchewan. Now again the member doesn't recognize that as something that makes sense. Instead he targeted in on talking about welfare. That's his solution — DNS or welfare. And there's not much of a difference if you look at the record of the DNS.

Now welfare reform is something that took effect in Prince Albert and in northern Saskatchewan as well. We are changing our approach in terms of the welfare structure. One NDP spokesman, disguised as a union leader, the other day indicated that were attacking the welfare structure. That is the first time, Mr. Speaker, that I've agreed with that particular union leader in Prince Albert. Yes, we are attacking the welfare structure. It's about time we attacked the welfare structure. The taxpayers cannot afford any more of what we've seen.

The Social Services minister tried an experimental program in terms of welfare reform, asking welfare recipients to pick their cheques up rather than having their cheques mailed out, because the way the system was operating, we weren't sure where they were getting to. The result was rather phenomenal. Between 5 to 8 per cent of the recipients never came to get their cheques. So the cheques were going somewhere.

Now what this means, Mr. Speaker, is a compassionate government realizing that there are people who need welfare. They should be getting welfare. Them getting welfare should not be interfered with by the people who are abusing the system, and that's what's important. There are two groups of people being abused. One is the people who should be getting welfare, and the other, of course, the taxpayers who have always been abused. So the members opposite criticize that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think what's at stake here is political honesty. I think the public is tired of politicians not quite saying what they mean and perhaps politicians saying different things in different places. And that's why the people of the Prince Albert area are going to react negatively against the NDP. Where here in the House they openly oppose the paper-mill, and then locally they get their candidates talking in favour of it. That doesn't work, Mr. Speaker.

It also doesn't work in terms of other new developments. I took some time and got an old newspaper from 1978 where a former DNS minister by the name of Mr. Bowerman is quoted as talking very complimentary about the development in northern Saskatchewan pertaining to uranium mining. He says that this is the greatest thing that ever happened in northern Saskatchewan. The jobs, the economic development, everything is good about uranium mining. Now they've changed that position now, Mr. Speaker, but I trust that some of the northern members are going to be saying that they're in favour of uranium mining to the local people, because they don't want to disclose the real agenda of the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, that's simply not honest.

I want to close by dealing with another statement that the NDP frequently uses when they use the word "ordinary." They always say they're concerned about ordinary people, ordinary Saskatchewan residents. I, for the life of me, Mr. Speaker, cannot understand what they mean by ordinary.

You know, I think Saskatchewan people are extraordinary, because they have built a fine province, and they deserve to be considered more than ordinary. But if they mean average people, I don't know how their actions are connected to their concern for ordinary people.

How do closing uranium mines help the ordinary worker in uranium mines? How does closing the oil industry help the ordinary worker in the oil industry? And how does putting a moratorium on nursing homes help the ordinary seniors who've waited for years for nursing home spaces and are now getting spaces under this government? How do we benefit by nationalizing ordinary industries? How does that create new jobs?

We believe in building industries, Mr. Speaker. So I think what has to be done, Mr. Speaker, we have to recognize that the NDP are saying and doing virtually anything to get votes, and we have a duty to the people in our constituencies to provide the facts. And in the constituency of Prince Albert-Duck Lake, I'll be providing the facts on the paper-mill to them regardless of what's being said by local NDP candidates, because they are clearly misleading the people in my constituency.

The member mentions that he would have built . . . or that the NDP started to build the technical school in P.A. Well I've seen the plans that the NDP had for three elections, and they've promised a technical school to Prince Albert. The plans were preliminary. It was a small school —

capacity of 320 people. In my by-election campaign, we announced that we were building the technical school, 640 students. The NDP reacted by saying that we weren't going to do it. They said the Tories will never build a technical school. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's been built; we delivered and the people of Prince Albert know that.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I want to end by saying that this budget stays the course of providing compassion, protection to Saskatchewan people, but also creating a climate of good business — the opportunity to build, not to close. And that's why I support the budget, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mrs. Caswell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to address the budget on several issues, particularly how it affects unions, how it deals with unions; how it deals with the small-business men; and particularly how it deals with the home-maker.

I think the most interesting comment that was made on budget night, other than, of course, the most interesting lines of the Minister of Finance concerning reduction of taxes for ordinary citizens, was the Leader of the Opposition's treatment of the reduction of the E&H sales tax on clothing. Remember when the Leader of the Opposition, the MLA for Regina Elphinstone, stood there and talked about . . . Of course, Mr. Speaker, I intend to continue with my speech. I just have difficulty when talking over the idiocies of the baboons in the corner.

However, as the Leader of the Opposition stood there and ridiculed the idea that we should possibly be concerned about the taxes on sneakers and ties and clothing, that somehow that was a silly issue to deal with, that people don't care in his riding — or apparently, all over Saskatchewan — what the price of children's clothing are. It doesn't matter to them. That was a silly issue. It was a most interesting comment for a man who claimed to be the head of the populist party, the grass roots party, the MLA for Regina Elphinstone.

And I suspect in Regina Elphinstone it's very similar than in Saskatoon Westmount. People care very much how much it costs to clothe a family. And I might say that the tax on clothing is a big issue, and it's an important issue, and we understand things like that. And we understand that a family budget is more important to the people than the government's budgets. We understand the institution of the family has a precedent over the state. And for this reason we think, if somebody is trying to buy pairs of shoes for five or six people in a family, that they shouldn't charge education and health tax for the sneakers they have to wear at school.

And, Mr. Speaker, one thing is very interesting while we're nearing an election: that it's so obvious that the NDP know that Westmount will not return their has-been NDP candidate. Because they used to treat me, oh, so well; and recently, as the election coming up, they so much like to treat me as the enemy. And I thank them very much for the vote of confidence, that they know they have a fight on their hands.

I think when I deal with such issues of tax off clothing of everyone, it's so obvious that there are people who understand the necessity of those, what seems to be in a government that spends millions, to understand how important it is on the price of clothing and the price, I might say, of sewing and knitting, and all those issues that are important to the family. Not to empire builders, not to people who are used to spending millions, as the Minister of Justice so very well said — the master plan for the NDP in the North, to waste millions for bureaucratic empires and then to go around talking about shutting down the few real jobs in the North. They don't understand what it's like for someone on a limited budget to be trying to find clothing to send children to school. But that issue isn't important to them.

What's important to them is how large can we build this government; how large can we build a bureaucratic empire divorced from the people and to be the boss of the people. And for this reason the MLA for Regina Elphinstone stands up on budget night in front of a huge crowd in this room and in a huge TV audience and ridicules the idea of reducing taxes on clothing.

(1630)

Yet he goes on with his soothsaying, clairvoyant, imaginary budgets of 7-7-7's that will cost millions and millions and millions of dollars, and he knows he never will have to produce, because he knows he will never get into government again.

It was just maybe a small thing, that comment, but I think it was historical to show how out of touch the so-called grass roots party is. And someone jokingly said to me: well, Gay, it certainly is nice to have an MLA who understands that shoes of a 14-year-old just cost as much or more than the shoes of a 12-year-old.

Maybe it's good to have MLAs who have an understanding of grass roots, ordinary people rather than the master planners of our society who think they can create empires to run other people's lives. Maybe it's about time we had a grass roots party that's based on grass roots politicians.

And on and on the opposition has, to show their philosophy, although it's not a provincial issue, they've consistently attacked the Nielsen report. And they said, why haven't the PCs talked about the Nielsen report? And they complain about how awful it is. I just want to quote for the record from the Nielsen report to show a Tory philosophy of trying to reduce government for the benefit of the people who use that government, who must pay for it. And this is the service that . . . they're so upset about the Nielsen report. And I quote from the Nielsen report, page 1:

Canadians have a right to expect government that serves their needs at a reasonable cost. Government should be as efficient as possible while providing all essential programs and services. In this context outdated regulations, waste, duplication, and conflicting program objectives can add to federal spending without meeting national goals. In fact, by rendering the

economy more rigid and unadaptive, they can and do hinder the achievement of both economic and social goals.

Now can you imagine attacking the philosophy that we must stop huge government that causes waste, that stops businesses? That is the kind of people they are, that they object that people want to save the taxpayer money. They don't like, apparently, the taxpayer having money to spend on themselves. They want to create a bureaucratic empire that controls people.

It is very interesting as we see the philosophy behind the growth of government, and I said before, that when it comes in conflict, when the family's budget comes in conflict with the government's budget, we must first consider the family's budget, and we must first consider, will this help or hinder what the family is trying to accomplish. And so when we look at issues such as tax on gas, tax on clothing, tax on fabric, and all those things, we have to say: will this help the family, or will it hurt it? And we go on to our other tax breaks.

But for the last 10 years there has been an attempt for government to replace the family. They pretend that they would say that, we will provide the rules for culture and recreation, for health, for education, for social services, and to use this not as an aid to a family, not a service to the family, but as a way and means to replace the family, particularly when it came to the issue of women. First of all, the socialist mentality, the master plan, treated women as if we were somehow a minority ethnic group who voted in a bloc — as if, I might add, any minority ethnic group votes in a bloc — and that we all think the same and we all want the same things, and we care about the same things. They did not give us the opportunity even to be seen as individuals.

And what the master planners of the socialists decided the women needed was to be removed from the home, and that the home was no longer an important institution when, after all, we could grow a government on the backs of the home. And so they decided then that the role of the home-maker was, at best, not to be mentioned; at worst, disreputable, and no intelligent woman with a choice would ever choose it voluntarily. As many of my female friends said, for years we haven't been considered as women, because we don't qualify for those people who are upset at the idea that being a home-maker is an honourable profession.

And so we saw then that continually their emphasis was on spending taxpayer money, money taken from families, to create an empire that would replace the family and control the family. And I must say, this is a rather historical budget in one way, is that the home-maker, for the first time in a long, long time, has been recognized as a valid political constituency, that the home-maker has been recognized as someone who has a role to play in society other than a vanishing breed whose job . . . Our job is to help that breed vanish.

So instead of talking about how that we must raise taxes and raise tax, and forcing women to get jobs outside the home whether or not it's good for their family — not choosing to take jobs but forcing them to go to work —

that we provided a pension plan. This pension plan would not be based on the idea, if you don't save, you get more; you're slothful, you get more; if you don't work — work meaning industriously — you get more. But it's based on the idea if you're a saver, if you're concerned about the future, if you're concerned about security, then you put money into our pension plan and we'll match it. And it is based . . . This pension plan is voluntary, and this is very, very important. Many of the women I've talked to, they said, we like the pension plan but we don't want it to be compulsory; we don't want it that my husband has to give me a pension, but we want it to be voluntary. And that is so absolutely important, that the pension plan is voluntary.

And so, this pension plan will be based on what you put in will increase what you get out when you need security in your older age, when you may be a widow or a widower. And this is so sensible because it's not welfare, not degrading welfare, where you feel that you are owned by the state, that you are at the mercy of the state. But it's saying, I've put it in; now I can get some back — matching.

And it is so very important that it is voluntary. It is for the home-maker, the part-time worker, the person who enters a work-force, may leave it to raise a family, may come back — that they will not be penalized. This shows that we are not pushing some radical feminist social agenda devised by men who believe that the state's job is to replace the family. It shows that we are talking about real people with real concern.

We're not pushing a life-style on anyone. We're not attacking the woman who needs to go to work or wants to go to work — most certainly I am not, since I'm 163 miles away from my home right now. But we are saying that the home-maker has a valuable contribution to society and that they deserve security, and we will give them a voluntary pension plan. And I think that is so absolutely significant and so absolutely important.

And perhaps the time has now arrived that women will be seen not as a mindless political bloc to pass the socialist goals of a few master-mind people who claim they know what's best for a society, and claim what that is is for the state to take on the role from the individual and the family.

And so, I think that this clearly shows in this budget that we're speaking to real people. We don't care what the people who want to run other people's ideas — excuse me, run other people's lives — think. We care about the ideas of the average citizens. We don't care about how many more Crown corporations we can build on the backs of ruined businesses, businesses ruined often by incompetence, the selfishness, the over-regulation of government. What we care about is the small-business man, or I might add the small-business woman.

We've reduced the tax burden. We've eliminated and simplified regulations. We're promoting trade and I frankly am proud that our cabinet ministers are travelling all over the world on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. And I'm proud that the world is looking at Saskatchewan as a place to develop and expand and I will

face every door in Westmount and say, you bet that sometimes we travelled to give your folks a job. You bet our cabinet ministers travel to help you people have a job. As a result we have the Weyerhaeuser in P.A., as my colleagues from P.A. spoke of so well.

In *The Globe and Mail* they talked about how this deal in P.A. shows such an incredible confidence in the economy in Saskatchewan where other pulp-mills are moving out of Canada. This is an incredible *coup*. This is marvellous, this saying that people believe in Saskatchewan. People believe that it is a place of freedom; people believe that it is no longer under the control of the regulators, the big government lovers, the bureaucrats. It's under the control of the people of Saskatchewan.

And let the people of Saskatchewan make no mistake, there is a big difference between the NDP who are now in opposition and the Tory government, and the difference is that the Tory government believes in the people of Saskatchewan, and they believe they have a right to the doors and windows of the rest of the world. They do not believe they have to put us in a lab and create a sociological experiment, to quote the past attorney general, so called Roy Romanow.

And we have helped small business because we know that the small-business man is the one who will create jobs for other people. They are the backbone of our economy and they are the risk takers, the opportunity makers. They have contributed to the standard of living we have, to the freedom we have. We can talk about our schools and our hospitals and we're proud of those institutions, but somebody has to pay and it's the business man, the fellow who's making a buck, who pays for the services we all enjoy. And when we start hurting the fellow who's out there taking the risk, making the economy work, ridiculing that fellow, competing with him with government bureaucracy, making him pay for his competition, then we're saying we don't even want the services because we refuse to treat the person right who's paying for them.

And so you can't say that the NDP are for health and they're for education and they're for social services and they're for government programs, if the NDP are opposed to the people who are paying for them. You can't get blood out of a stone and you can't build a social structure on a bankrupt province where the young and the aggressive, the risk takers, are leaving. But you can build when businesses such as the Weyerhaeusers are coming in to Saskatchewan.

And you say: what has that got to do with Saskatoon Westmount? It's got a lot to do with Saskatoon Westmount, just as everything that happens in Saskatchewan has a lot to do with Saskatoon Westmount. We need jobs for our children. We need jobs in the oil patch and in the pulp-mill and we need the money that that generates. And so every time there is an economic opportunity anywhere in this province, including in uranium mines in northern Saskatchewan, it directly affects the children and the grandchildren of the people of Westmount. So there is no constituency that is ever hurt by economic expansion, including, I might add, that

Intercon has benefited from the competition in the pig marketing industry. And I am very pleased to see that Freddie Mitchell is expanding his Intercon business that has provided jobs for my constituents. He has treated my constituents with fairness and decency, and he respects the workers in my constituency.

(1645)

I would like to mention our treatment of unions and labour, and the NDP's treatment. The NDPs have one particular goal for the unions, and that is a political machine for their re-election. The unfortunate thing about political machines, they work best when they are voluntary, meaning to say that you can tell the union leaders that they should back the NDP, and some will go along with it and some won't. But as long as we have secret ballot, you can't control the union membership and the union leaders. You can't control people because they happen to have a union card in their pocket.

So they used the union and have continually attempted to use the union as a machine for their re-election, for their spreading of their lies about our anti-union policy, or lies about our treatment of workers. What workers want is security; they want opportunity; they want jobs; they want jobs for their children; and they want education. We're providing that and the workers are smart enough to figure it out.

But this budget has said to the unions, we will give you an opportunity to invest your funds in venture capital, that you can be part of the entrepreneurial, the making job business, as well as having jobs of your own. The budget didn't say, you have to do it; this is what you must do. They said, this is an opportunity. And so it's an opportunity budget; it's not a compulsion budget. It's not saying, here's a tax there, here's a tax there; compulsory this, compulsory that. He says, here's an opportunity for pensions, if you want it; here's an opportunity for venture capital, if you want it; and here's an opportunity, when you go into a store, to put your money on clothing and not on taxes.

And for this reason, because it's an opportunity budget, I am supporting this budget.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gerich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am honoured to rise in the Assembly this afternoon to offer my congratulations to the Minister of Finance and his excellent budget for the 1986-87 fiscal year.

As a member of this legislature for the Redberry constituency I could speak extensively on many thrusts in the forest management and renewable resource development that this document contains. I could speak at considerable length on new incentives for local government or perhaps a comprehensive package for job creation. I could expand on a need for welfare reform or on selected tax cuts that will stimulate small business and small business's growth across the province. I could spend my allotted time talking on the new and exciting investment opportunities that will encourage Saskatchewan people to invest in their own province.

I could probably spend my entire time, Mr. Speaker, talking about the creation of the property management corporation, a corporation which will free our senior civil servants to do the jobs that they can do best and will leave the management of property to those trained in that function. I could talk about the substantial savings that this new corporation will bring the people of Saskatchewan.

I could explain how this government has eliminated waste and duplication and has saved over \$300 million while reducing the civil service by more than 1,000 positions since 1982. I could talk about this government's commitment to health care, and how the PC government has increased health expenditures by almost 70 per cent since 1982, and how we will spend another average of \$1,200 for every man, woman, and child in this province in health care expenditures in 1986.

Mr. Speaker, the truth of the matter is, I could spend the entire afternoon and probably the evening of the Assembly's time speaking about the positive things that this government has done and has accomplished in its four-year term. I could probably spend another afternoon on all the positive measures that have been introduced in the budget.

I think it is important for us to have a positive attitude in this House. We are constantly bombarded by members opposite with their negative attitudes, half-truths, and innuendoes. And, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, I think the people of Saskatchewan are fed up with this attitude. So I'm going to spend my time constructively outlining what I think are two of the highlights in this budget.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan and indeed the people of all Canada recognize that this Conservative government of Saskatchewan has been and will continue to be in leadership and in the leadership role when it comes to protecting the Saskatchewan family.

Over the past four years this province has demonstrated its commitment to Saskatchewan people, to Saskatchewan families, by protecting their homes against high interest rates and by removing an exorbitant NDP gas tax which crippled the economy prior to 1982.

These positive measures that our government has taken help the average Saskatchewan family. Our government has recognized that there will still be a void and it has to be filled. Many Saskatchewan people have not had the opportunity to set aside money for a worry-free retirement period. This is especially applicable to low- and middle-income earners who work for small businesses, and perhaps are self-employed, and are not under the umbrella of a pension plan.

These individuals, Mr. Speaker, are the backbone of the Saskatchewan work-force. They are the mother and dad enterprises in small business that makes Saskatchewan strong. They are the employees in towns and villages across this province who work in small business and help Saskatchewan grow and prosper. And until this time, and until this government responded to their needs, there was not a pension plan that they could contribute for their

retirement days.

I know the members opposite cringe at the thought of voluntary plans. They don't like the word "voluntary." It doesn't fit in their vocabulary at all. But this plan is voluntary, and it is not designed to compete with private pension plans, but will benefit and help all the small businesses, farmers, in this province to establish a pension plan for both their full-time and part-time employees. And perhaps most of all it will help the mom and dad enterprises to establish a saving plan for their retirement years.

I think that this pension plan in itself is a great stride forward for Saskatchewan families and for the protection of families in the future years, and I commend the Minister of Finance for introducing this in his budget. Mr. Speaker, there are potentially thousands of small-business people, home-makers, and farmers across this province who I know will participate in the plan. And I encourage all members of this government to urge the federal government and other provinces to follow the Saskatchewan lead so that a national home-makers' pension plan can be established which would be undoubtedly based on our model.

Mr. Speaker, the second item I wish to talk about is our government's commitment to the protection of the family farm. As the Minister of Finance stated in his budget speech, we are "determined to create opportunities that will ensure the future prosperity of our agricultural industry."

I could spend a fair bit of time outlining what we've already done for agriculture, and it is quite substantial, Mr. Speaker. No other government in Canada, and perhaps no other government in the world, has done more to protect its agricultural industry than this government, and I'm proud that we're doing this.

No other government in Canada has a Premier who is a farmer that has a permit book. And we have, and we're proud of it. I might add, Mr. Speaker, that the opposition doesn't like to hear that the Premier is a farmer, because when they stack their eastern lawyer against our farm boy, I'm afraid they come up well short in the eyes of the public.

However, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity and a privilege to be involved in the cabinet committee on farm input costs, which toured this province. We heard from farmers and business men and agribusiness people from virtually every corner of the province. The message they provided to us was a constant one, Mr. Speaker. At every meeting, people told us that: we appreciate The Farm Security Act that your government has brought into effect so that farmers facing foreclosure action will have some relief. We like the livestock assistance program which gave 16,000 farmers \$29 million in 1984, and 13,000 farmers \$30,000 million in 1985. We appreciate the 1985 crop assistance program which made \$68 million in assistance available to 13,000 farmers in southern Saskatchewan.

They were particularly thankful for the oil royalty refund program which will turn over \$42 million to the farmers

in this calendar year.

And perhaps the most popular program, Mr. Speaker, was the production loan program which provided \$920 million at 6 per cent interest to approximately 46,000 farmers. But did they tell us that there was more that needed to be done, Mr. Speaker? And this budget answers some of their concerns. They said, we appreciate your natural gas distribution program and it needs to go on because natural gas is a viable alternative at a lower cost for our farmers.

They also told us that, we can't function in today's highly competitive world with old-fashioned communications systems and technology. We need individual rural line service and this budget provides that opportunity. They told us that the marketing and production of agricultural commodities require substantial investment in research and development. This budget continues with a \$200 million agricultural development fund which was introduced last year.

Particularly important to note, Mr. Speaker, that although the former government promised year after year to build a new College of Agriculture in Saskatoon, the project never did get off the ground in the time of the NDP government. They had hundreds of millions of dollars to invest in potash mines, hundreds of millions of dollars to invest in uranium mines, and all kinds of money to build Cornwall Centres in down-town Regina, and the Sturdy Stone Centre in Saskatoon. But never once did they have enough money to build a College of Agriculture building in Saskatoon university. Their priority was not with agriculture, Mr. Speaker, as with this government. And this building will ensure that our College of Agriculture can maintain its rightful place as a world leader in the agricultural research and education field.

The rural folks that we talked to on our farm input tour told us how important it was that the College of Agriculture go ahead. And we listened and we responded.

And there was another message, Mr. Speaker. The people we talked to in rural Saskatchewan said, you know things aren't so rosy in this province. Input costs are higher than they should be; commodity costs are lower than they should be, and we're caught in a bit of a price squeeze. There's one thing for certain: things are better in Saskatchewan than they are in Montana; things are better in Saskatchewan than they are in North Dakota; and things are a lot better in Saskatchewan than they are in Manitoba. And we've had a Progressive Conservative government that takes and places priority in agriculture.

There is one final comment I'd like to make, Mr. Speaker, and that's about the deficit. No one in this province likes deficit financing, least of all the people on this side of the House. But this government had two choices. We either forget about securing the future of our families and our agricultural industry, as suggested by the members opposite, or we can increase the size of the deficit. The opposition say we should have raised taxes substantially by bringing back such negative measures as the gas tax so that the deficit would be reduced by squeezing the purse of every family and every wage earner in this province.

The truth is, Mr. Speaker, that those members opposite want taxes and budgets that provide for increased spending for big governments and big Crown corporations. They have been, and continue to be, totally negative towards any measure which helps the people and the real families in this province. And I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I could not and would not support any amendments that come from the negative nine opposite, but I will support the positive and progressive measures that are put forward in this budget. And I'm pleased to add my support to the motion.

Thank you, sir.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — The House Leader, why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I move this House do now adjourn.

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to say how delighted I am to get into this debate. I want to express my annoyance with the fashion in which this House is handled. The conduct of the business of this Assembly simply cannot be done efficiently or effectively if we cannot take government members at their word.

I want to publicly complain about the fact that the Government Whip gave us his word, and then apparently it meant nothing. I want to publicly complain about that and tell you that the business of this government simply cannot be effectively done if we cannot believe what you say.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I am pleased to enter into this debate. I want to mention one other thing while I'm on my feet, and that has to do with the security system in this building. The security system may or may not make sense. However, it's been combined with a policy which I vehemently object to, and that is the exclusion of peaceful protest groups from this building. These two things have been done at one and the same time.

I want to publicly complain that this building is no longer apparently open to the people of the province. This government is not just afraid of farmers and nurses; it also seems to be afraid of legitimate groups. This is the seat of government and I believe, Mr. Speaker, that peaceful demonstrations ought to be allowed and ought to come into this building.

Mr. Speaker wants to call it 5 o'clock. I'd be prepared to agree to that.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.