

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and to members of the House nine adults, residents of the cancer patient lodge of the Allan Blair Memorial Clinic associated with, or close to, Pasqua Hospital in the constituency of Regina Elphinstone. I know all hon. members will wish to welcome them to the House. I express the hope that they enjoy their stay here. I will look forward to meeting with them at about 2:30 when we'll have an opportunity to chat and consider the proceedings which they will view in the next half-hour.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Myers: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you, and through you, 35 students from a school in Saskatoon which is in my riding. Hugh Cairns school. They're accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Sulatyski. And I would hope that they have a very informative stay here in the Legislative Building and that all members join with me in welcoming them to the legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Rousseau: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly 41 grade 7 and 8 students from the St. Matthew School in Whitmore Park, I believe, accompanied as well by their teacher, Mr. Stan Crawford. I will be meeting with them at 2:30, and I've asked the new candidate for Regina South to join me in meeting with them for refreshments. I would ask the members to join me in welcoming the students to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

U.S. Policy on International Wheat Sales

Mr. Lusney: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, in the absence of the Minister of Agriculture, and it has to do with the efforts by the United States to steal traditional grain customers from Canada.

I have here copies of a document, Mr. Speaker, from the Mulroney PC government which show that the U.S. has been selling wheat and other grains at fire-sale prices to traditional Canadian customers such as Syria, Algeria, Egypt, and Yemen. In addition to the low sale prices, the Americans have been providing subsidies of up to \$54 a tonne on some of the sales. And since these documents prove that the Mulroney government is aware of what's happening, can the Deputy Premier tell us what specific action he's aware of that the Canadian government plans to take in protecting Canadian markets?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as we all know,

there is only one world price for a bushel of wheat. And the actions of the U.S. in the market-place are the direct result of their efforts to get rid of some huge surpluses that they have in their inventory in the United States and, I think also, an effort to in some way bring some discipline to the actions of the European Economic Community in agricultural commodities in marketing those particular commodities.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that it . . . I think that it augurs well, Mr. Speaker, for the arguments advanced by our Premier on several occasions in the past, where he has argued that it is necessary that we in the western producers — Canada, United States, Australia, and others — should come to some international grains agreement so that we do have some clout in the international market-place, rather than cutting one another up in the international market-place.

And as it relates to the record of this government, Mr. Speaker, in support of our farmers here in Saskatchewan, we will compare the support of this government with any other government in Canada, particularly that, Mr. Speaker, of Manitoba, where the National Farmers Union has asked the government of Manitoba to provide a \$25 an acre cash subsidy, and our friend, the Minister of Agriculture in Manitoba, has said no.

What he says, Mr. Speaker, what the Minister of Agriculture in Manitoba has said is that it's up to the federal government to keep the agricultural economy healthy. Manitoba isn't interested in keeping the agricultural economy healthy; he says, up to the federal government. While we may agree in part with the federal government helping to keep the agricultural economy happy, we in Saskatchewan have put our treasury four-square behind the agricultural community, and we intend to continue, Mr. Speaker. And that's why our Premier has worked and worked tirelessly in co-operating with the federal government to bring initiatives to help our agricultural community.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Lusney: — New question to the Deputy Premier. Mr. Minister, you talk about all the programs that may be offered provincially. My question to you specifically was: — what is the federal government going to do to protect our markets? They are now fully aware that this is happening. Their own documents show it. Are they going to sit idly by, Mr. Minister, while the so-called friends of ours south of the border steal our traditional markets. Is this what the federal government is going to do?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I can't speak with firsthand knowledge. The Premier is our Minister of Agriculture, and I know that he has lobbied long and hard with the federal government. And I know as well, Mr. Speaker, that his efforts in lobbying for help for the western Canadian farmer from the federal government have paid off in large measure, and I can name a few, but I won't bore you with them. You've heard them several times before in this legislature, and I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that our Premier and this government's continued lobby at the federal level will bear even more fruit in the future.

Mr. Lusney: — A question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, are you saying that at this point you are not aware of any kind of action that the federal government has been prepared to take, or is going to take, regarding losing these markets because of what the U.S. government is doing? We know, Mr. Minister, that the Americans are so-called acting against the European subsidies. Now, Mr. Minister, why are they not going after the European markets rather than after the Canadian ones? What is Ottawa at this point, that you are aware of, doing to try and save our markets from the U.S. of A.?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I say in all honesty that we in Saskatchewan are doing far more as it relates to protecting our agricultural community than are our neighbours in Manitoba. And I mean that is clearly demonstrated, clearly demonstrated, a matter of record for anyone that wants to look it up.

As it relates to what Ottawa may or may not be doing this very moment in protecting the markets . . . and true, they may be traditional markets of Canada, but for him to say that they're exclusive markets of Canada clearly indicates to this House that that member doesn't know how the market-place works . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . and that may be true as well.

As it relates to what Ottawa may or may not be doing at this particular moment, I'm not prepared to answer. I say, with all the honesty that I can muster, that I have been a little preoccupied as of late. I am not the Minister of Agriculture, and when the Minister of Agriculture is here, I'm sure that he'll be more than pleased to deal with that question.

Mr. Lusney: — A question to the Deputy Premier. Mr. Minister, can you give a short, quick answer then to something you should be aware of? It seems that your government has made no representation. Has the Premier of this province, the Minister of Agriculture, made any representation to Ottawa urging them to take some action to protect the farmers of Saskatchewan and the farmers of Canada so that we would not lose our traditional markets in the market-place? Have you done any of that, Mr. Deputy Premier?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I know, and the Premier has told you in this House, some of the things that he has lobbied for in Ottawa are to bring in an enhanced, two-price, domestic wheat . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . He's not interested in the answer. I don't know why he asked the question.

The Premier has lobbied for the federal government to remove all taxes from farm fuel. The Premier has lobbied for the federal government to accelerate pay-outs from the western grains stabilization plan. The Premier has lobbied the federal government to get rid of capital gains tax on the transfer of farm land. The Premier has lobbied for all kinds of things, some with varying degrees of success. There will be more fruit borne by these lobbying efforts in the future.

One thing about the Premier is he does have an excellent relationship with the government in Ottawa, something

that members opposite could never have, because their breed of cat will never find themselves sitting on the benches of power in Ottawa, and they're sitting right where they belong here, Mr. Speaker. And I think they'll be sitting there for a very long time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Deputy Premier, in the absence of the Minister of Agriculture. Sir, the Reagan administration has recently attacked European governments and others for continuing to trade with Libya and its allies. I ask you, sir, do you not see that stand as somewhat surprising when the Americans, behind the scenes, are trying to steal away traditional Canadian customers like Syria, who many would see as Libya's strongest ally? And if you agree with that, will you not put this argument to the federal government, and will you not ask your friends in the federal government to stand up for Saskatchewan farmers?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, the marketing of Canadian wheat is done through the wheat board, and they work very hard in not only maintaining our existing and traditional markets, but developing new markets. And I fully expect that with the market being finite, that some of the new markets that we are trying to develop are, in fact, traditional markets of United States and the European Economic Community. And I fully expect that if you develop an understanding for how the market-place works, you will come to understand that in a free competitive market out there in the international market-place, from time to time you come head to head with a competitor. And I'm as offended as anyone by the subsidies and the fire-sale prices, as you'd say, that are being offered by United States and by the European Economic Community. And yes, we have lobbied the federal government to take whatever measures necessary to protect our western Canadian farmer, and we will continue to do that, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Deputy Premier. I take it from your answer, and I ask you, sir, do you then agree with the actions of the United States government in: — (a) urging Canada not to trade with Syria; and (b) moving into Syria and taking our traditional markets? And if you do not agree with that action of the United States government, would you lobby with the federal government at Ottawa to see whether they will stand up for Saskatchewan farmers and western farmers to see whether they will at least argue with their American colleagues on behalf of Saskatchewan farmers who are being hurt by these particular predatory trade practices on the part of the United States?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I think that all fair-thinking people are offended by predatory marketing practices. If what you say about the United States is true as it relates to Syria, clearly what they're doing is hypocritical, and we should be offended by that as well.

As it relates to the market-place, we would love for them to vacate it altogether so that we could have it all to ourselves, but that's not the reality of the world; it's not likely to be for at least my life-time. And you know . . . (inaudible)

interjection) . . . No, I won't get into that.

I saw an old friend of mine sitting in the gallery that has a lot of experience in marketing potash, and I was going to talk about that for a while, but I'll leave that for another time.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Deputy Premier, are you aware of any representations made by your government to Ottawa with respect to grain markets in Syria?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I can't speak with any first-hand knowledge of that at all. The Premier is the Minister of Agriculture and, you know, he talks to Ottawa on a regular basis, on an ongoing basis. And I don't know whether he's talked to them today, but I know that he talked to them earlier this week, and we are meeting with some federal ministers later this week. You know, as it relates to the specific question, the answer is I don't know.

Closure of Provincial Campsites

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question to the Minister of Parks and Renewable Resources. It seems the minister was much more forthcoming outside the Assembly yesterday afternoon than he was inside the House. Can the minister confirm that his department plans to close down 36 roadside camp grounds and picnic sites and rest stops around the province this year? And will he provide the public with a full list of the facilities he plans to close down?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Speaker, the department will continue to operate 17 provincial parks, 101 regional parks, 253 campsites.

An Hon. Member: — Answer the question.

Mr. Thompson: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The minister apparently didn't hear the question that I put to him. Can you explain how your decision to close down 36 roadside camp grounds, picnic sites, and rest stops around the province will encourage tourists to spend more time and money in our province? If such facilities are closed down, or not maintained properly, won't tourists be given a poor image of our province and its people?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Well, Mr. Speaker, of the 36 sites to which the hon. member has referred, only 10 are campsites involving — and camp spots — some 75 camp spots, out of a total of close to 9,000 camp spots within the province.

Before any action was taken . . . Before any rationalization was done, Mr. Speaker, we consulted with the Department of Highways; we consulted with the Department of Tourism and Small Business, and they assured us that we would be doing no damage whatsoever to the tourist industry.

Mr. Thompson: — New question, Mr. Speaker. The minister talks about the campsites that he's closing down, that a small proportion of them are campsites. But I want

to remind you by way of information that not only are they campsites but they're picnic sites where groups of Boy Scouts and Girl Guides go there on their trips for picnics.

And by way of information, Mr. Speaker, on my new question, the minister indicated yesterday that he wanted to pass the camp grounds on to local service clubs, municipalities, or private operators. If they want them, they can have them free.

Further, for information, if no one wants the sites, Mr. Speaker, the department will leave them open but not necessarily be responsible for maintaining them, he said.

Now my question to the minister: — if you are going to leave these campsites open, you're not going to maintain them; or if somebody wants them free, then we have fee for services; or if you don't maintain them, you can just imagine what's going to happen after citizens go in there and camp and the bears start going into the garbage cans and throwing it around and the ravens spreading the garbage all over, that we're going to have one real mess on our hands. And that is not what these campsites are for.

In view of these facts, Mr. Minister, will you reconsider your decision to leave these campsites open and have your department officials maintain them for the summer?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the hon. member for expressing this new-found interest in tourism, which seemed to be somewhat lacking in the number of years in which they were in office.

The kind of campsites that are being talked about here are places that have very, very low utilization. Some of them have four, and indeed three, tent spots. We're not talking about big recreational facilities, Mr. Speaker. Some of them are out of the way; they're not used. To the best of my knowledge, Cub groups and Scout groups and Girl Guides aren't using those particular sites. The only sites that are involved in this are the ones that people don't want, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what we've found in the last three years in the rationalization system was people wanted new provincial parks. They wanted upgraded facilities in their regional parks. They wanted more electrified sites put into the popular places. And that's exactly what we've done, and that's the process we're going through when the new parks Act will be tabled in this legislature, Mr. Speaker.

Further to that, the type of sites we're talking about are not the ones the public are going to in great droves; they're hardly utilized at all. Some of them, in fact, are in areas where they're only being used for parties on weekends. Then my department has to go in there the following week and it becomes a game. A weekend a group moves in; there's all kinds of damage — breaks up the outhouses, knocks down the barbecues, steal the firewood, steal the picnic tables. The following week my staff are in there doing all the repairs, putting it all back together again.

Mr. Speaker, just by taking those small picnic sites which

are not currently being used, we will save the taxpayers of this province \$100,000; just on that small modification alone with little, if any — if any — inconvenience to the travelling public.

Mr. Thompson: — New question, Mr. Speaker. I have never heard such a statement. When a minister stands up in this House and insinuates that the citizens of Saskatchewan and the tourists of this province are going out and destroying . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Does the member have a question? The member is making a statement. Order, please. The member is quite capable of speaking for himself. Does the member have a question?

Mr. Thompson: — New question, Mr. Speaker. The minister indicated that the campsites that were being closed down were all small, underutilized, and not really important. And my new question is to you, Mr. Minister. Are you saying that the Beauré Creek campsite and the Shirley Lake campsite — Shirley Lake which is a lake off the highway into Doré Lake, where many campers use that to fish trout; that lake has been stocked with trout and it's used, and I've been there many times. The Beauré Creek is a historic campsite where Boy Scouts and Girl Guides throughout this province have used that campsite, and citizens and senior citizens in this province have used it for the last 30 years, and you say that they're small and they are unimportant. I ask you once again, Mr. Minister, will you reconsider shutting down these campsites until you could at least have a full investigation and continue to maintain them for the rest of the summer.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Speaker, we have done a full investigation. The hon. member, who is capable of speaking for himself without the assistance of the nonentities over there, has made a point about Beauré Creek and Shirley Lake. Mr. Speaker, if there are troops of Boy Scouts and Girl Guides and Cubs and so on going to Beauré Creek, I rather wonder where they were camping, because there are only three tenting spots at Beauré Creek. There is no historic site there. There is no intention to close down access to the lake for fishing, and that's not the intent.

We're not claiming that the Boys Scouts and the Girl Guides and the Cub groups were going there and inflicting damage or vandalism on those spots. Those weren't the particular spots I was referring to; there are others. And during estimates no doubt we'll get into some of that debate, and I don't mind getting into and pointing out which ones we've had more vandalism damage with.

The point is, in that particular area to which the hon. member has referred, currently there are five sites, cheek by jowl, and we're saying that two of them, one with three camp spots and one with six camp spots, are not really vital to continue either tourism interest in the area or the best interest of the locals in the area. The fish will still be in the lake, Mr. Speaker. The locals can go fishing any time they wish, and we will not interfere with that; in fact my department will act in the best interests of the resource for conservation, management, and enhancement as we

have always done.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, a supplement to the minister. I wonder if he could confirm that the people who are wrecking these camp grounds are the Boy Scouts and Girls Guides, or whether they are Young Tories going there, as they did to the Regina Inn, and wrecking them.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Speaker, I would say no, it is not the Boy Scouts or the Girl Guides or the Cubs. But I do remember a newsletter from the member for Shaunavon going out to his constituents, inviting people to come out for a picnic and a beer garden . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order.

Mr. Thompson: — And by way of information, Mr. Minister, when you talk about these campsites being cluttered close together, I want to say to you that you have not been up into that area to see where Beauré Creek is, Shirley Lake, Sled Lake, and Cowan dam. Now they are not clumped together, and there are many, many people that utilize those sites. And I ask you once again — and you did not answer the question — will you reconsider closing down these sites, especially the historic sites at Beauré Creek and Shirley Lake, and continue to maintain them for this coming year?

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Well, Mr. Speaker, once again the hon. member has referred to the numbers of people using these sites. That's not the information we have, either locally or in information that's been gathered down here by other means — by surveys, by consultation with transportation department, by consultation with Tourism and Small Business.

Secondly the hon. member has inferred that somehow I've never been north of Prince Albert. That's entirely erroneous. I've spent some considerable time in northern Saskatchewan, and once I even stopped in to stay hello to you and you weren't home.

Salaries of Cabinet Ministers' Assistants

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the absence of the Premier, I'd like to address my question to the Deputy Premier, and it deals with salary increases for the cabinet ministers' assistants. They are, in large part, the political aides or political cronies, as they're known, who are already being paid 45-50,000, some of them 70,000 a year out of the Saskatchewan taxpayers' taxes.

And so I ask the Deputy Premier, can you confirm that there has been a general salary increase for the cabinet minister aides in recent weeks, and can you confirm that some of those increases have been made retroactive to October of last year?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I have no knowledge of any increases, and I'll therefore . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'll therefore take notice of the question.

And in response to the member from Assiniboia, I can say that my particular . . . from Shaunavon — the fellow from Assiniboia wouldn't even understand this one. My assistant, Mr. Speaker, who is very well paid and has been

with the government for 14 years, when he came to work for me he was deputy chairman of land bank, and he came over to my office and has been with me ever since, and I think that he has earned several increases since then but, Mr. Speaker, he has in the last three years, Mr. Speaker, had one increase.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE BILLS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 03 — An Act to incorporate Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church

Ms. Zazelenchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 03, An Act to incorporate Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church, be now read a second time, referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Motion agreed to, Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

MOTIONS

Resolution No. 2 — Business Contribution to Economic Recovery

Mr. Glauser: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with pleasure that I stand in this Assembly, perhaps for the last time, and at the end of my remarks will be moving a motion:

That this Assembly commends businesses, be they large or small, for the contribution they have made for economic recovery in this province and the long-term jobs they are creating.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a pleasure to represent the constituency of Mayfair over the past four years, a constituency that houses many businesses. Some are large; some are small. But whatever they were, large or small, they played certainly a large part in the recovery of the economic situation in Saskatoon.

I dealt with many of them on a firsthand basis. I met with them on many occasions. I belong to their business association. And throughout the four years, I would say that there were very few left that I have not discussed matters with at one time or another.

And small businesses, like agriculture, small business is one of the major locomotives that drives both the Canadian and, indeed, the Saskatchewan economy. Indeed, like the province's families, small-business people are dedicated, determined, and are visionary. They are an asset to our province and they always will be. That philosophy and personal support towards small business sector characterizes the government, the government that has been in place for the last four years, in their commitment to the entrepreneurial spirit in Saskatchewan.

But let me tell you what the alternative is. The NDP formed a committee. They formed a committee that

would go about meeting business. Well it was sort of an *ad hoc* thing to begin with, and then they decided that this should become more formal. And the purpose of this committee was to meet with small business. Now the committee has been meeting with them periodically and the idea emerged for a small-business policy that the NDP, I suppose, could use in the next election. But the problem members on the NDP small-business committee face is somehow finding a way for the party's socialist ideology to make concessions.

Now this was an item that came from the *Leader-Post*, provided by one Dale Eisler. And they fail to realize what the economy of Saskatchewan is like and that it is, as I said earlier, one of the locomotives that drives the economic situation in Saskatchewan.

The crux of the matter is that there is a core of people within the NDP party who are members because they are socialists. And their ideology does not allow them to accept private enterprise and profit. They do not accept private enterprise as the entrepreneurship that goes into making a business tick and is part of our social fabric in so far as creating jobs and opportunities for young people. Well, the result of this internal tension is only becoming more clear because simply, I suppose, because the NDP are not in power, and they're struggling for an issue. And they know that they need the strength of the small business in order to create an issue for themselves, and they are finding that they are not rushing to them that quickly.

So what they've done for themselves is created two positions that seem contradictory. One is embodied in the small-business committee and its guarded talk of free enterprise, and then, on the left, the party who believes free enterprise should be replaced by a socialist's economy. So there's their dilemma.

But we don't have any dilemma when we talk to small business, because in Saskatchewan 45 per cent of all private sector employees are employed by business with fewer than 50 employees. So the employees, as well as small business, understand each other.

More than 90 per cent of all new ventures in Canada start with fewer than 50 employees. Between 1975 and 1982 small manufacturing companies, those with less than 50 employees, created some 400,000 jobs across Canada. And the Mayfair constituency in Saskatoon contributed to a large measure for the numbers of jobs created in that small constituency in Saskatoon.

And what has helped these small businesses to accomplish this? Well I suggest that the venture capital program, the 8 per cent money, previously nine and five-eighths. I suggest that those things have added tremendously to strengthen the framework of the private enterprise business and has created jobs like they haven't been created before. And they were jobs that were created, Mr. Speaker, not by big government, not by all-powerful government creating jobs in the civil service to perpetuate themselves in power, but a government that provided funds to help industry create permanent jobs in the private sector, and not a burden on the taxpayers of this province.

Saskatchewan currently has the highest employment rate in Canada, and that, too, can be related to the inspiration, the entrepreneurship and the industrious private sector, as I set out in the motion that is on the book. The best job record in Canada is right here in Saskatchewan. The lowest unemployment rates, 1982, '83, '84, year over year over year. And again, all in the private sector.

And again, they are to be commended for the tremendous job they have done. They saw the task and were able to get it done. And even here in Regina, best job creation record in western Canada. In 1982 to '84 it ranked third and fourth in all of Canada.

People are returning home. They are returning home because there is that opportunity. I can cite so many examples in the city of Saskatoon, and particularly in the Mayfair constituency. I recall talking to one individual who was in the small manufacturing, and he was able to put in place — with a used machine that he brought over from Germany — he was able to put in place a mechanism that would turn out gears for the potash industry.

He was turning these gears out at a cost that was less than half of what it was costing to bring them in from across the border. These are the kinds of things that are going on in the industrial area of the city of Saskatoon in the constituency of Mayfair.

I must commend the previous minister, the member from Regina North, who, when he was in charge of that department, garnered a tremendous reputation with the people of this province, and indeed the people of the Mayfair constituency. They found him most helpful and aggressive, something they understood, and contributed greatly to that department during his tenure as minister of Tourism and Small Business.

Now we talk about jobs, and that also is mentioned in my motion. And since this government was elected in 1982, there have been 45,000 new jobs in our province. And I want to remind the people of Saskatchewan that these jobs were not created at their expense by placing them on the pay roll of the government in perpetuity.

(1445)

The amount of money that was committed to the employment development fund helped to maintain that momentum that was started in '82, '83, '84, and came into place in '85, that assisted the small-business man, the entrepreneur, to again create more and more jobs.

And the oil industry is well represented in my constituency — the suppliers, the manufacturers — and they, too, felt the impact of the movement that was made in the oil patch to create the jobs and, of course, the supplies, the material; and again, the spin-off of jobs in the manufacturing was tremendous. And these people were prepared and took up the task and created many, many jobs.

There's just one other thing I want to cover, as I know there are others who would like to get into this. It goes on like this . . . One only has to read success stories in a wide

variety of magazines, and you can pick them up in your office any day of the week, recognizing the growing role and potential of small business in North America. That is particularly so in the service industry and in the scientific and technological fields.

And when we talk about the technological fields and as that relates to the Mayfair constituency, I think of one of the largest employers of people and that is SED Systems. And SED Systems, as you know, has just obtained a large contract, one with Brazil, the other one with the development of the frigates for the navy in Canada, and that again has expanded the number of employees that they have had to acquire.

Small business has been a launching pad for success in these areas, and many more. It was not by chance that this government made major innovations in two of the fastest growing businesses, recreational and educational areas, when it is meshed in the real tourist development and promotional programs with small business, and established the ministry of Science and Technology; and that was also a good move considering the high-tech industries that are prevalent in Saskatoon. Saskatoon is quickly becoming known as the silicon valley of the West.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure at this time to move:

That this Assembly commends businesses, be they large or small, for the contribution they have made for economic recovery in this province, and the long-term jobs they are creating.

Seconded by the member from Moosomin.

Mr. Birkbeck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just . . .

An Hon. Member: — This must be the last hurrah.

Mr. Birkbeck: — No, it's not the last hurrah. It's just a few comments I want to make, Mr. Speaker, on the motion that was moved by my hon. colleague. And just to cover the motion for the members opposite so they know what we're talking about here, Mr. Speaker, we're commending, through this motion, the businesses in this province, be they large or small, for the contribution they've made for economic recovery in this province and the long-term jobs they are creating.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to go over the motion briefly, just so that we are very precise and clear in what we're discussing in this motion today. We're talking about economic expansion; we're talking about growth; we're talking about co-operation. We're talking about consultation, in particular with the business people, the small businesses and large businesses, and how they have in partnership with the Government of Saskatchewan — in partnership with the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker — been able to bring this province to the forefront, not just in this country, but, Mr. Speaker, in the world.

This province — as we used to say some number of years ago, not too long ago, when we were in opposition — was the best-kept secret anywhere in the world. Well it's not

any more. And we're developing, Mr. Speaker, on all fronts. We're developing in agriculture and research. We're developing in health care. We're developing in all kinds of high technology industries, like the member had just spoke about in Saskatoon — the so-called silicon valley, if you like, of the West. We're starting to break through into new frontiers that this province had never thought could ever be possible, Mr. Speaker, under 11 years of the previous administration.

And we're not doing that, Mr. Speaker, just as a government alone. No, the government can't do everything — not at all, Mr. Speaker. In fact we hold quite the opposing view of the members in opposition, of the NDP. And, of course, when they were in administration, they believed at that time that the government was the be-all and the end-all to everything in the province in terms of its economic expansion. Well it isn't, Mr. Speaker.

You know, we don't share that view. We don't accept that it's the government looking after you from the cradle to the grave. We don't believe in that at all. What we believe in, Mr. Speaker, is the people. We believe in the people of this province. We believe in them, their ability, their own particular expertise — whatever field that may be — to work in conjunction and co-operation with their government to build for themselves.

And we believe, Mr. Speaker, that individuals should be allowed to bear the fruits of their labour as individuals. They should become as much or as little as they themselves choose to be. And, Mr. Speaker, through small businesses and large businesses which individuals of course are a part of, that can be possible.

So rather than take the approach that the previous administration did, that we would just create one big humungous bureaucracy to run everything for the province, which resulted in, of course, massive tax increases and stifled growth in this province, certainly stifled economic growth. It stifled it, Mr. Speaker, quite to an extent that the people look at the province of Saskatchewan — at least they did, I should say, in the first year of our administration — and they were a little hesitant about coming onto this new-laid ice in the province, if you like, Mr. Speaker.

They were not sure if it was firm enough to hold, or if maybe a socialist government would come back in again and crack it and they'd fall right through. They were not prepared to come in and build in this province, Mr. Speaker. Not until they were sure, sure in their minds, Mr. Speaker, that this province had froze over tight so that they could support economic development.

And that now is here, Mr. Speaker. That confidence is in this province. The people now are sure to come in; they're confident to come in; they're trusting that the people are going to return this administration to power so the kinds of economic policies that we've had in place over the last three years, in particular, will continue through into a new administration of a renewed mandate for a Conservative government.

And as I said, Mr. Speaker, in that first year business

people were very, very sceptical about coming into this province that had been NDP for so many years. Because, Mr. Speaker, it was well-known that that administration for 11 years was against business. It was against business whether it was small or whether it was large.

That was evidenced on so many occasions — certainly when they drove the potash industry out, it was evidenced that they were against large business; certainly the fact that there was not economic development at the local level throughout rural Saskatchewan in small communities and hamlets where they were at that time dying, dying and withering away, small communities, Mr. Speaker.

Why that's not happening any more. We're revitalizing rural Saskatchewan, and we're revitalizing rural Saskatchewan by assisting small-business people to flourish. They're providing that base, Mr. Speaker.

There's a point that needs to be made, Mr. Speaker, with regards to the result of this kind of administration that we have now and what it has been able to accomplish through co-operation with small business.

We take a look at what we have now. We see the interest rates are down, Mr. Speaker. We see inflation is down; we see that food costs are down; we see that gas prices are down; we see the tax on clothing has been able to be removed. We're not increasing taxation; we're reducing taxation. Because we've got more people making money, business has been activated. We've broadened the tax base, which is so necessary. And when you broaden the tax base, more people making money, then you can afford not to increase the taxation levels. That point is very, very vividly, if you like, displayed if you take a look at the kinds of personal income tax rates that were made when the previous administration was in power. And look at the kinds of increases that were imposed on the people of Saskatchewan. If I remember right it was something like 37 to 51 per cent — something in that neighbourhood — a tremendous increase in personal income tax.

Well the reason for that, Mr. Speaker, was because there was not economic growth. That tax base had been just taken and squashed, brought right in, narrowed. We've been able to take it and broaden it now again, by consultation and co-operation and building confidence in the private sector with small businesses.

It's resulted in building; it's resulted in jobs. Whenever this province sees a project being built — when you see the holes being dug, laying the foundation, buildings being erected — whenever that kind of activity is taking place, Mr. Speaker, you can be sure that there are going to be jobs created. And it wouldn't matter, quite frankly, if it was a government project that was 70 or 80 per cent funded by the government, in other words, almost solely a government project, or whether it was a joint venture, or whether it was a venture that was solely or 80 per cent private sector. In either event, whenever a construction starts, you know it's going to finish — or at least it will under this administration — and you know that's going to create jobs. And jobs have been created — capital projects, Mr. Speaker.

I cannot recall in my time in this province when so many capital starts and completions ever happened in this province. I cannot recall a time when we saw the kind of growth that we've been able to be witness to and part of in the last four years.

Minimum wage is the highest in the province; the highest in the province, Mr. Speaker. And again, that's something that you can do because there's economic growth; there's a demand for the kinds of people and skills that are available in this province. And obviously other people throughout the country saw it necessary to gravitate to this province, if you like, because they did; they came here. And it was under this administration, Mr. Speaker — and I want to remind you of that — it was under this administration that the population of this province went over the one million mark. So it grew; it grew because economic opportunities were here. They were made available, as I've said, through co-operation with the private sector.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think there's some other things that need to be said. And you have to identify, Mr. Speaker, all of the reasons, not just one or two of the reasons, why we have this kind of growth. You do not just have a government that gets elected and comes into office and all of a sudden there's economic activity. That doesn't happen that way. Any new administration taking office must have somewhere, deep-rooted within itself, some kind of pride and meaning for the kinds of projects that it proposes to go into partnership with, the people that it very much so represents.

(1500)

And so I want to take a moment to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that this Progressive Conservative government and the small business community have a very deep sense of pride that runs right throughout each and every individual, a pride in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, that pride is growing; that pride and confidence in this province is growing.

It's a sense, Mr. Speaker, that I get when I go out to the riding, that people are optimistic. And quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, they are optimistic in the wake of all kinds of disasters throughout the world — one recently, of course, the nuclear disaster, if you like, in Russia. There's all kinds of wars going on about. There's all kinds of need for gloom and doom. There's the NDP opposition to be considered.

And, Mr. Speaker, in spite of adversity, the people of this province reach deep inside and they pull out from within themselves the pride in this province that has been able to keep this province going through good times and through tough times. And, Mr. Speaker, what more could one say on that, except that one would have to be awfully proud to be a person that's a resident, not only of Saskatchewan, but of this country.

We believe that through the individual initiative of Saskatchewan people, great accomplishments can be realized, Mr. Speaker. We actually believe that, and we have reason to believe it. We do not subscribe to the view

that people in this province require a bureaucracy to direct them, not in any matter. Not in any matter do we believe that. We just do not. I'm going to be running over this very subject more than once, Mr. Speaker, because it's very important that it's understood — that we do not believe that government is the be-all and the end-all for the province of Saskatchewan. We just do not believe that. We do not believe in big government. We believe in running an efficient government, as I said, in partnership with the private sector.

Back to the pride, Mr. Speaker. We have, and the small-business people have, a pride and optimism that's rooted in faith, a faith in individuals, Mr. Speaker; a faith in their families, in their home, Mr. Speaker, and in their community. They're not of the view that they're going to move to Regina or move to some major city, necessarily. They take a look at the community they are living in or that their family roots were set in many decades ago. And they say, well, this is my home; this is my community. My family is here and my friends are here, and this is where I'm going to build a life for myself and my family, Mr. Speaker. And they do that. They do that in their own communities because they're proud — proud of themselves, proud of their province, and proud of their country — and they're optimistic. And as I said, in the face of all of the reasons that one could take a look at that are before us every evening on the national news for us to be negative.

But these people in Saskatchewan just aren't made that way. They are cut from unique cloth, Mr. Speaker, a cut that I'm proud to be taken from as well. And that's the very essence of this government, and it's the very essence of small business and why it continues to build and grow and develop the economy of this province.

The unfortunate aspect is, Mr. Speaker, that the former government in this province failed to really appreciate the pride of Saskatchewan people, and I believe that that is something that was almost damning in a, if you like, in a long-term way. People in this province were almost being brought to that point in their lives where they were actually starting to think different than they had for generations. And that was almost a disaster, created by a previous administration, Mr. Speaker. That's been set back on track.

Now let me emphasize that we, in this government, not only recognize that pride, but we share in it, and we're proud of this province and of its people. We know that citizens from one end of Saskatchewan to the other believe we can be first-class and hold our own with the rest of the world. And we are.

An Hon. Member: — World class.

Mr. Birkbeck: — And the member from Regina North East suggests we're world-class, and I agree with him. We are. We're first-class, and we're world-class.

As I said, we were at one time, under 11 years of NDP administration, the best-kept secret in the world. We're not any more. We're flying the flags. We're standing up and we're standing tall and we're saying, yes, we're from Saskatchewan; you bet we are.

Now what today is about to epitomize is the very essence of our province and what has been happening here over four years through economic development and small business and the government co-operating with small business, not threatening them, not kicking them out of the province, encouraging them to build and helping them to build, providing seed money where it's necessary.

Well I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, this is why our government is making a positive commitment to Expo '86. For the first time at a world's fair, Saskatchewan is to have its own pavilion. I know that every citizen who visits our site during the fair will be proud of Saskatchewan's presence there. Even now our pavilion is the talk of the whole Expo '86 organization . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the NDP members, the member for Quill Lakes says, oh, now what has this got to do with the resolution? I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate the comments from the member for Quill Lakes because there is only one province that's not represented at Expo '86 — only one province — and that is the province of Manitoba, the only province in this country with an NDP government. So I can appreciate that. Oh, they don't want to share in the fact that this province has a record of building. They don't want to share in the pride that these people have in their province because they put a pavilion at the Expo '86 in Vancouver.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I just believe that that's unacceptable. That's unacceptable to me; it's unacceptable to the people of this province. Now Mr. Speaker, I'm trying to indicate that the whole Expo pavilion is in fact epitomizing what Saskatchewan people stand for and how that growth and development can take place and that we're not prepared any more, as this province once was by the previous administration, jammed under a rock and hidden if you like. We've climbed out from under there; the lid's been lifted; we've said, yes, we're not going to hide this province any more. We're going to put it on display, not just for this country, but for the world. And we're putting it on display, Mr. Speaker, for the world at the Expo '86 pavilion.

And I say we just need to be proud of that, proud of Saskatchewan people, proud of Saskatchewan talent that is going to be there to perform. And all of the ethnic origins can be represented, and all of the various cultures can be put on display so that we can again, you know, stand up and say yes, we're proud to be part of Saskatchewan.

Now if being proud of Saskatchewan and the kind of building sense that they have, and have had for many years — although it was once almost stifled by the previous administration — is something that should be scoffed at, like the NDP members, the member for Quill Lakes, who doesn't like Expo '86, I think it is just totally unacceptable.

This government is developing a tourist trade. And if the member for Quill Lakes doesn't believe, Mr. Speaker, that a tourist trade doesn't have something to do with economic development, then obviously that member

won't be speaking on this motion, or at least I should hope he isn't, because he doesn't understand economic development.

If there is a tourist industry developing in this province, if there are people coming here, then it's reasonable to assume you will have to build facilities. Well this government isn't going to build all the facilities for them. We're share in partnership with small business to build those facilities, Mr. Speaker.

So the tourism industry is very important. And small business has not let us down in that regard. Certainly we've not been let down by Saskatchewan talent at Expo '86. So for the first time, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is actually being promoted in other provinces and in the United States and around the world. And this makes good economic sense, Mr. Speaker. Tourism, as you understand, brings new dollars into Saskatchewan's economy, and it creates new jobs along with sustaining thousands of others.

But there is also another reason why, Mr. Speaker, this government believes in the potential of a tourist industry in connection with economic development in the small business sector. And that's again because I said we believe in Saskatchewan. We know that this province is special, and it has a tremendous heritage to offer visitors.

We're a big province. We've got lots of room to grow; we've got lots of room here for people, Mr. Speaker. And we know that is something to be proud of, and we know that's something that others envy us for. It's just very unfortunate that the NDP members in opposition envy Saskatchewan people for that traditional heritage that they have, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'm confident that the renewed optimism that we threw out for small business through the throne speech will strengthen that pride as it continues to demonstrate the leadership of our Premier, Mr. Speaker, and, of course, the leadership and direction of this government this administration has taken — a leadership based on the faith and optimism of our people, and a leadership of which we can all be proud because it recognizes the importance of individual people through all parts of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if I can just provide some more information as it regards the development of small business in our province and the commitment that they have made to sharing in the building of this great province. Let me remind members that they do that with a variety of means. It isn't just something where they jump out of bed in the morning and decide they're going to go out and build Saskatchewan. As I said earlier, they must be motivated; they have to have some basis and some reason for doing such, Mr. Speaker. And unlike some members of this House in opposition, it should be noted, Mr. Speaker, that the people of this province love their province, and they love it because it is free — and that is important.

The member for Quill Lakes laughs at freedom, and that's fair enough. He laughs at freedom, and he laughs at profit — they're negative.

An Hon. Member: — I'm not laughing at that . . . (inaudible) . . . I'm laughing at you.

Mr. Birkbeck: — And if he's laughing at me, that's fine, Mr. Speaker. He says he's laughing at me, and that's good, because I'm not much to be laughed at. He's not hurting me at all, and he thinks I'm a joke, and that's fine. We'll see what the public think. I don't mind.

Have you anything else to say, Mr. Member for Quill Lakes? You know, call me a few more names if you like, because we'll see. The people of Saskatchewan have judged me, and we'll just see how it goes. So anyway, Mr. Speaker, I'll just wait a little while until they get a little more bothered, and I'll pick up on them again.

But in any event, Mr. Speaker, we believe in . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well it's pretty hard, Mr. Speaker, to understand the NDP opposition. First they criticize me, and then they turn around and applaud me, so I can't follow them.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, the NDP members in opposition, and in particular the member for Quill Lakes, needs to be reminded that politics is about the future — it's not about the past. So we're not going to go back to those old traditional values that the NDP adhered to of big government and big bureaucracy. We're not going to do that. We're going to have faith in the people of this province. Whether they like it or not, we're going to have the confidence in the people that they deserve, and we're going to do everything in our power as a government to help them build.

Now they may not want to do that. They want to tear down the province, turn it all into a big, dictatorial, bureaucratic government; that's their business, that's their concern. If the people of this province, come the next election — and I suspect it's coming fairly soon — will choose to turn back into office an NDP administration that was absolutely inept at anything as it related to small business and economic development, then I will go back to an old saying: that the people in politics, when they go to the polls, deserve what they get. And surely they do.

(1515)

If we have not been a good administration, well my goodness, I mean, the people have themselves to blame for that. That's freedom, Mr. Speaker. The people have a right to choose in the government of their choice, and certainly they do. So, I suppose, if they want to go back to an NDP administration that was not able to develop and share in partnership with small business, that's entirely up to them. I'm not concerned about that at all. I'll let the public be the judge of that.

I do not share the opinion of the member for Regina Centre, who says in fact that the public of this province, the people of this province made a mistake by electing a Conservative government in '82. I don't share that view at all. He said they made a mistake. Well maybe they did, but it's their mistake to make; they have a right to make that mistake at election time.

I don't say they made a mistake when they elected an NDP government for 11 years; they chose to do so, and they have that right, and that's what I'm talking about is: what kind of people do we have in this province? We have people in this province that believe in rights; they believe in freedom; and they believe in sharing and co-operating and consulting. They do not believe in big government; they do not believe in the "big daddy" government concept and the big bureaucracy. They don't believe in any of that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to move into some very interesting material that I know that the members opposite will want to hear. Well they may not want to hear it, but it will be quite educational if they'll listen. This government, Mr. Speaker, as I said, has been working with small business like it's never been done before, and small business has risen to the challenge. We threw it out there, and small business has risen to the challenge. And what has resulted from that small business development? As I had indicated, when you have building taking place, you have jobs being created, and that's absolutely essential. The NDP members in opposition are always crying about, oh, you've got to create jobs, why aren't you — you know, where are you creating jobs; you're not doing this and you're not doing that.

Well let's get back to the basics again, Mr. Speaker. My grandfather came to this country in 1904. Now when he came over here, there was no guaranteed minimum wage, no, that wasn't in place. There was no guaranteed job. Do you know what there was when he came here from the old country, from England? There was an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, for him to go ahead, develop a family, develop a farming operation, to grow, to have as much or as little as he chose to have, because there were opportunities here in this new land at that time.

Now he did that, Mr. Speaker, and there was no guarantee that the job was there or that it would be there for 10 years or 20 years or even a day. Now all of a sudden we seem to have come full circle, and I will say this — not in being critical of the NDP; I'm going to be very candid about this. It has come to be, Mr. Speaker, that in this country for some reason the people believe it is the government's sole responsibility to create jobs through economic development. Well, Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that it's the government's sole responsibility to create jobs. Because if we were to create one, it may or may not be meaningful, and whatever it was it would be paid for by taxpayers' dollars. So you have to understand the basis for it, Mr. Speaker.

So having said that, then we understand that the government's responsibility for creating jobs is not just on its back, but rather something to be shared with the people of this province. That's what we've been able to do, to share with small business, with all of those people out there that want to be part of putting this province together again and making it grow, making it happen, making it have a national and an international presence.

A Progressive Conservative government, Mr. Speaker, has a deep commitment to creating jobs and opportunities for the people of this province; to help all

Saskatchewan residents from all walks of life gain independence, optimism, and prosperity. This has been a prime concern of our government since 1982, Mr. Speaker.

And statistics indicate that the government is being successful in achieving its goals. Under the leadership of our Premier, Mr. Speaker, in co-operation with small business, the government has been able to create 23,000 additional jobs since 1982. Twenty-three thousand people have gained a renewed sense of optimism and independence, Mr. Speaker, through new-found employment; independence from a big bureaucratic government through new job creation shared with small business — 23,000 new jobs. And as I said earlier, for the first time in our history we were able to peak the 1 million mark.

Mr. Speaker, those kinds of figures, I understand, are not pleasing to the NDP members in opposition. But be that as it may, they are the facts. And I want to raise these issues in connection with the motion and its tribute, if you like, through the motion to small business and the part they're playing, because I believe that through that kind of economic growth, broadening the economic tax base, creating jobs, then we're able to break loose from the big government. The people of Saskatchewan, they'll have that renewed independence and freedom that I so much want them to have.

I'm just looking, Mr. Speaker, at a report that one of our own members had put out, and he has some interesting statistics. They're not right up to date. I had just given the information indicating 23,000 new jobs. At that time, just up to including '85, it was 21,000. We're up to 23,000 now. And I want to point out the difference, Mr. Speaker, that the previous administration was able to build up in terms of its record.

What was it able to do? If we created 23,000 — or in the same time period 21,000 — what were they able to create? They're the ones that almost every day get up and talk about creating jobs. They're all now starting to talk about small business, which is really interesting when you had 11 years in office and you didn't do one thing to help small business. All of a sudden they're asking us as a government to do something for small business, which, of course, we've already done.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the three-year record, just taking a three-year record of the previous administration, 1979-81, they only created 4,000 jobs — just 4,000 jobs. So, Mr. Speaker, I think that that points it out very clearly that under an NDP administration who would not play ball with the small business sector, not at all, they were only able to create in the neighbourhood of 4,000 jobs. Under this administration where we are prepared to work with the private sector, we are prepared to provide seed money for small business to get started, we have been able to create 23,000 jobs.

Why, Mr. Speaker, that's a marked improvement over the previous administration.

And we're not going to stop there, Mr. Speaker. I'm not in any way implying that we've got the job done; not in any

way. What I'm saying is that we're on the right track; we're just getting started, and we're going to continue to build on our future into the future.

We're ready to meet the future head-on, Mr. Speaker, and since 1982 this labour force in this province has grown by 36,000 people. Now think of that. The member for Canora would want to take note of that. The labour force has grown by 36,000 people, Mr. Speaker. So when they start banting around unemployment figures and trying to indicate that we're not doing our job, they've got to be reminded, Mr. Speaker, that we as a government, in consultation and partnership with the small business sector, cannot create jobs as fast as the people are coming onto the labour force.

So Mr. Speaker, if you yourself were wondering why unemployment figures change from time to time and in fact, as a percentage, they're somewhat and slightly higher now than they were, I want to remind you and to help you, Mr. Speaker, to understand, as I do other members and the people of this province, why that is. If you're creating jobs at a rate less than the numbers of people coming into the work-force, then it's understandable that you're going to have an increase in unemployment figures. And also, Mr. Speaker, you have to go back and ask yourself this question: what would full unemployment be? What would full employment be? What would that be?

Now I don't know what they believe it would be. In fact, I don't even know what my own colleagues believe full employment would be. I'm kind of . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, all right. I hear a comment made that the Leader of the Opposition said that he felt full employment in this province was 6 per cent.

Well now, I just haven't checked what the unemployment rate is today, but I'm sure someone will clue me in from behind what the unemployment rate is today but let's say it was 8.5 or . . . what is it? 7.1? I'm told it's 7.1 per cent, Mr. Speaker . . . 7.1, and the Leader of the Opposition says the full employment is 6 per cent, so in fact that's only 1.1 per cent of the people unemployed, by the Leader of the Opposition's own statement.

Now that's very interesting, Mr. Speaker. So when we hear the NDP get up and talk about these terrible unemployment figures that we're dealing with, then they themselves need to be reminded that the leader of their party believes that full employment — that would be if you had two jobs for every person to match every skill that that individual had — you'd have 6 per cent unemployed.

Now I hope, Mr. Speaker, that you understand that, because it's fairly complicated, but it results in the fact that there's a very low unemployment rate in this province given, number one, the full employment figure that can be considered and taken in as a factor, and also, taking in the second factor — and I think is a more significant one — and that is that we have such a growth in the labour force.

So Mr. Speaker, I believe it's a tremendous challenge — a tremendous challenge to this government. It's certainly a tremendous challenge to small business and to the private

sector to try and create the kinds of economic activity and growth that are necessary when you have those kinds of increases into the labour force.

Well, Mr. Speaker, every day more and more people are finding work. For example, I'll give you, during the month of February, 2,000 new jobs created; 2,000 jobs, Mr. Deputy Speaker; 2,000 jobs created in just one month. In just one month, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 2,000 jobs — new jobs and opportunities for people. And in February our unemployment rate dropped to 7.6. As I just indicated, and my members advise me, my colleagues advise me today, it's now down to 7.1 — second only to Ontario, in all of Canada.

And now over 92 per cent of our labour force is actively employed. Now think of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker; 92 per cent of our labour force is now actively employed. It couldn't be done, Mr. Speaker, by government alone. No, it could not, not by government alone. It could only be done by this government providing the kinds of incentives and seed money, co-operation and consultation with individuals in small business that it has been able to do in the last four years.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to be making it very clear to you that I congratulate the people of this province, and I'll be candid again — not so much the government. I'm not going to so much congratulate the government. That's not so much what the motion's about as it is congratulating the people of this province, their abilities, and their ability to rise to the challenge of such an ever increasing labour force, and so many more people coming back into the province. The labour force, as I indicated, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that has been busy since this government took office — on an average the lowest rate of employment in all of Canada. If you take the average since we became government, we've had the lowest unemployment record of anywhere in Canada.

So if you were coming to this country and you were asking yourself, where will I settle in this great land? Where will I settle? Will I settle in Prince Edward Island or will I settle Ontario or Quebec? Will I move into Manitoba? Will I go to Alberta or British Columbia?

(1530)

If you look at all the facts considered, look at where economic development is taking place, look at where the growth is taking place, look at where there's a pride among the people of the land, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you would most assuredly look to the province of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, where Saskatchewan was once a follower, it is now a leader. We were following. We were almost like the tail on a dog, if you like. Not any more. We're right up at the front, and not just in this country but throughout this nation, throughout the world. The Progressive Conservative government's commitment to creating jobs and opportunity is as strong today as it was in 1982.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't think it's unfair to say that this government and small business is obsessed with creating

jobs. It's absolutely obsessed with creating jobs in economic activity.

I want to, just if I can, Mr. Deputy Speaker, very briefly slip back just momentarily to show the contrast. I mean, it's one thing for me to stand here and indicate to you the kinds of things that have been taking place in the small business world — and of course large business included — how this government has been able to take part in that and let it happen. But I believe it makes it all that much more significant when, in fact, we point out the contrast.

And that contrast, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is between this administration in four years, and the NDP administration that had 11. The success of the Progressive Conservative government in job creation is, as I said, in sharp contrast to that of the previous administration. Bits and pieces of the previous administration can still be found loitering, as a matter of fact, within these Chambers, and I advise members of the previous administration, now the opposition, to listen closely.

As was pointed out earlier, this Progressive Conservative government has maintained on average, since 1982, the lowest rate of unemployment in Canada — on average the lowest rate of unemployment in Canada. So they can say what they like about unemployment. They can criticize us for not having worked with the small business sector. They can criticize us if they like. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the record in itself is all I'm concerned about. As the old saying goes, "The proof is in the pudding."

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us just more closely examine the record of the previous administration. In the period October 1978 to May 1982, the previous administration could not lay claim to the lowest unemployment rate in Canada. It could not do that. Despite better world market conditions for uranium, potash, wheat, and despite less severe drought and grasshopper problems, the previous administration could not equal the consistent performance of this government.

Now let me build on that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What I am trying to say here and make very clear to this Assembly is that in spite of severe conditions — economic conditions — in spite of adversity, the people of this province, in co-operation with their government, were able to continue, not only to continue to develop and build, but to increase economic activity.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you have to ask yourself: what would it have been like if we had been the government through buoyant economic times? Can you just imagine the development that would have taken place in this province. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, during the last 12 months of the previous administration, the labour force increased by only 7,000 people, and 1,000 people lost their jobs. As I said, 7,000 people is the only amount of growth that we were able to witness under an NDP administration. So I repeat, Mr. Speaker, 1,000 people lost their jobs. The administration which bragged about creating jobs for the average person was the same administration responsible for the loss of 1,000 jobs in this province.

Now the same bunch of political dinosaurs whine and

complain about our job creation record. Not all wines get better with age, Mr. Speaker, especially when whining and complaining about the creation of 21,000 jobs and the lowest average unemployment rate since 1982 in all of Canada. What I'm trying to point out here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that the NDP opposition like to stand up and make a lot of noise about the issue, but they do not have their facts straight. And what I'm trying to give you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are the facts.

I want to share with you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the result of the kind of economic activity that we've been able to witness in this province. And if we take a look at this province, we take a look at . . . i.e. Saskatoon. You yourself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, had indicated the kind of development that's taking place in the high-tech field. Well there are many other developments that are taking place.

The University of Saskatchewan, of course, which is a major centre for development, a major centre for the creation of jobs, and certainly a centre where many people are employed, certainly a centre where the private sector and small business is required — we have a College of Nursing. I'm just going to list a few, Mr. Deputy Speaker — animal resource centre; drama department expansion; physical education building; agricultural sciences building; geological sciences building; western Canada veterinary college; physically disabled facilities improvement; administration building restoration; the Thorvaldson building renovation.

There's the College of Agriculture building; geological sciences; City Hospital; St. Paul's Hospital; Saskatoon cancer clinic; University Hospital addition; hospital computer system; special care facility in Saskatoon; Intercontinental Packers; SED Systems Inc. complex; Canada Packers poultry plant; Norcan jet service; SaskTel data-pak switch; Circle Park Mall; Scotia Tower; multipurpose sports facility.

I'm talking about economic development. I'm talking about the kinds of things that are happening in this province that never happened under an NDP administration because they never had confidence in the people. They simply wanted to rule them through a big government. We do not accept that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I want to take just a moment to identify a few of the projects, Mr. Deputy Speaker, here in Regina. University of Regina — we have the student centre walkway; addition to the arts building; renovations to heritage building; renovations to Darke Hall; University of Regina, Darke Hall; Regina General Hospital; CT scanners; South Saskatchewan Rehabilitation Centre; NewGrade upgrader; ammonia plant; Interprovincial Pipe Line; slab caster facility at Ipsco; Supercart International; Twin Towers; Mackenzie Art Gallery; auto claims centre construction. I've just given you a few of the many economic development starts and completions in the two major centres in this province.

Now if anyone thinks that that happened just because of the government, then they're sadly mistaken. It happened because small business, because the people of this province through small business, and yes, large business

were able to take advantage of the opportunities that we were able to make for them. I think they were able to take advantage of the obstacles that we removed and let them proceed. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's that reason, it's not just the government, that those kinds of projects, all of those kinds that I just listed off, were able to happen.

There are others. I mean, I have lists here in Estevan, Lloydminster, Moose Jaw, northern Saskatchewan, of course, North Battleford, and then a whole long list of economic up-starts in southern Saskatchewan.

So let's take a look at just a few. The one in North Battleford particularly pleases me, the Gainers bacon plant; the North Battleford youth centre. And in southern Saskatchewan: Saskatchewan natural gas distribution program; private line calling; SaskTel switching network; highways construction program; Kalium potash mine expansion; PCS fertilizer plant; Ocelot Industries; natural gas drilling program; Swift Current shopping centre complex; Nipawin Union Hospital; Lakeside Nursing Home; Canapharm Inc.; special care home, Saltcoats; Weyburn flood control project; Cypress Hills pool complex; Cypress Lake irrigation project; golf course and country club.

We're going on and on with economic development — this province growing, moving into the future. In Lloydminster: an enhanced oil recovery program; the Lloydminster Hospital; and certainly the work that's being done there to bring about a major upgrader facility. Moose Jaw: Phillips Cables Ltd.; St. Anthony's Home.

And of course in the Premier's riding in Estevan we weren't about to leave him entirely out of matters either. As the economic development swept across this province, it certainly wasn't about to sweep over Estevan. So we have the Rafferty and Alameda dams and the Estevan airport, a couple of major projects.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me make one thing very clear. Let me make one thing very clear — that I am not just taking the time of the House to list off a whole long list of small programs, or developments, rather, but I'm talking about major. The ones that I just read into the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know are not just small operations. We're talking about some very significant and major economic projects in this province.

And one can only say thank you — thank you to the people of this province and thank you to small business and thank you to large business in the way they've co-operated with this government in building on the very strengths that we have in this province.

It's something, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I'm very proud of. And I think it's unfortunate and I think it's very sad, quite frankly, that members in the NDP are not in favour of development and expansion, and in growth. Whatever would you want to do with a province if you're going to drive the people out, as they have, if you're not going to allow business to grow, if you're not going to provide incentives for them, if you're going to be for ever critical of the word "profit"?

I don't understand that. I never did. I never could understand why the New Democratic Party was against development and against small business. It could be, and I suppose it's maybe slightly off the subject, but it's maybe improperly named, New Democratic. There's nothing democratic about your administration over 11 years. And today I can tell you there's nothing new about them. There's nothing new about them and there's nothing democratic, and they want to get back to some of their old ways. And as I said earlier, politics is about the future, not of the past.

So there's not a lot of good in me spending any time talking about the terrible record of the NDP. I only throw a few comments out from time to time to show the contrast, i.e., employment records. More important, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we should be, as I said, talking about the future. How do we build the future and how do we go ahead?

(1545)

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to just go back to some of the comments that I had made earlier with regards to jobs, and the programs and the initiatives. The Progressive Conservative government is committed to ensuring anyone who wants to work has the opportunity to do so.

Now again, if you can recall earlier in my comments, I said that I did not believe it was the government's sole responsibility to create jobs. So when I say that we want to make a commitment to ensure that anyone in this province who wants to work will have the opportunity, I am trusting and trusting in a very large way that the private sector, that the small business initiatives, will be there — not to take the full burden, not to take the full responsibility, but that it will be there to share with us, to act as one pillar, if you like, and we the other, to support that commitment.

Now we're committed to giving our youth a future as well — a future full of employment and opportunities much like, if you like, not unlike that future that was there for my grandfather when he came to this country in 1904. We want to create opportunities for people. We want to create jobs and opportunities. And that has to be done with consultation with small business — employment which enhances their career development so they can build our province through their career contributions.

Most importantly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government is committed to the long-term economic development of this province. And with economic development comes jobs and opportunities; jobs and opportunities for all Saskatchewan people, people from all walks of life; jobs in the rich agricultural fields of Saskatchewan; jobs in our oil; jobs in small business; and jobs in construction and manufacturing. Jobs in our schools and our hospitals and our civil service and jobs for people from all walks of life, in all sectors of our economy.

The Progressive Conservative Government of Saskatchewan is committed to ensuring jobs and enhancing opportunities, but we're going to make that commitment arm in arm, stride for stride, in partnership

with small business. We're going to do it that way, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're not going to do it by building some, as I said earlier, some big humungous bureaucracy where they're going to tell us all what we're going to do; where we're going to live; how big a house we'll live in; how big or small a car we'll drive or what make it will be or what colour it will be. No, I don't want that kind of government.

For me, the less government that I have over my shoulder, that I have to look over at, is the better. And that doesn't necessarily mean that you could just eliminate government. Certainly there's a need for government. A government is there to set rules and regulations and guide-lines by which free people will work and play in a free society — something I believe in; something the NDP in opposition do not understand. They do not understand that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, the programs and initiatives that we've designed to help the Saskatchewan people are working; programs and initiatives which reflect the strong commitment of this government and of small business; programs and initiatives which work in consultation and co-operation with the people of our province; that combine the talents of those involved and utilize these talents to the fullest. Programs and initiatives, much unlike those of the previous administration, programs and initiatives which build bridges with the people of Saskatchewan and not burn them down.

And you know the NDP aren't just into burning bridges, but we know they're burning American flags and those kinds of things as well.

Programs like our government's winter works program, an innovative program enthusiastically received by both the public and the private sector, with the greatest response incoming from the business community, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the response by farmers and rural people as well, has been very encouraging.

Last year this program created over 5,000 jobs for Saskatchewan people. It even helped many hard-pressed farmers to obtain employment for the winter months, and the extra cash flow generated continues to be of great assistance to farmers and communities alike.

These kinds of projects, like I've identified, the winter works projects, are not projects by government or programs where we send out bags of money to individuals and say there, you're good for the winter. No, we don't do that. We provide, as I said, incentives for the private sector, for small business, to create jobs. That's our role — not as a government to create the job itself but to create the opportunity, and not only for the young people, but for all ages and for all talents.

Another reason is the Employment Development Agency and the employment development fund. For the first time ever Saskatchewan has a fully operational and well-planned, long-term employment strategy — a \$600 million five-year strategy for job creation. And again, not a program that just the government is doing. Certainly it's a job creation program. Certainly there's 600 million being put up front, cash right up there on the front. That's

being put there, Mr. Speaker.

But it's not going to be utilized effectively unless there's the kind of co-operation and consultation that's going on, on an ongoing basis with government to make good use of that 600 million.

During 1985-86, a program which created and sustained some 31,000 jobs in Saskatchewan — 31,000 jobs, Mr. Speaker — jobs for people from all parts of this great province. This innovative employment development fund also contains medium-term programs for Saskatchewan people in need of educational training or retraining or in need of landing that all important first job.

And the results of these programs keep pouring in, Mr. Speaker; 2,300 Saskatchewan youths found jobs under the youth access program. The Opportunities '85 program helped 10,000 students go back to school in the fall by helping them receive employment in the summer.

People on social assistance have a new sense of optimism and a desire to work. And that's very important, Mr. Speaker. The skills extension development program has helped 1,400 people on unemployment and social assistance gain new independence and optimism. The employment development fund is just one of many job creation efforts of the Government of Saskatchewan, and I must say again, Mr. Speaker, it's a job creation effort on behalf of this government but not one that could be successful — it could not begin to be successful — if it did not have the confidence of the people of this province, if it did not have the small-business people out there prepared to, as I said, join hands with us and go in partnership and to build. It couldn't do it, Mr. Speaker.

Governments must not make people rely solely on them for employment, but should help individuals gain a job and independence that goes with it. And that's important. I've often said, Mr. Speaker, that any government that claims that it gets its support from the poor and the underprivileged and the ravaged, is a government that has a reason to keep them that way.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not the kind of government you have in Saskatchewan today. Not at all, Mr. Speaker. You had that kind of a government for 11 years. That's been epitomized.

We're trying to work with small businesses that create jobs. The previous administration want us to increase the welfare rates. Oh sure, that'd be great. You know, we could get those rates so high it'd be better just to sit on welfare than to go out and be the kind of person that maybe you were born to be, that God wanted you to be. Maybe that could be, Mr. Speaker. But not under an NDP administration.

Sure they want to increase the welfare rates. They're the highest in the country now. They want to know why so many people are on welfare. If you doubled the rate, wouldn't you have more people on welfare? Isn't it better not to have people on welfare? I don't want people in this province on welfare, Mr. Speaker. I want them employed. I want them to have a job. I want them to do what they want to do in life, not to be stifled by socialism. No, not

ever again.

I saw it for 11 years; that was enough for me. I don't ever want to see it again in this province, and by some stroke of genius or luck or whatever it might take to get the NDP back in office in this province. I'm going to tell you now, Mr. Speaker, people are asking me, what are you going to do? Well I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I am going to be, as long as I've got a breath of life left in me, prepared to fight socialism and the NDP at every turn.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Birkbeck: — Mr. Speaker, we've always believed in partnership with people. The difference is that we believe in people, Mr. Speaker. And the corner-stone of our government's commitment to keeping Saskatchewan strong is our belief and feeling that Saskatchewan people are proud of themselves as we are. It is this partnership for progress which has spurred small business to hire new employees. It is this partnership for progress which has created 7,000 jobs in the oilfields of Saskatchewan and hundreds of millions of dollars of provincial revenue every year.

And you know, I talk of hundreds of millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that is very significant. Just in the oilfield alone, 7,000 new jobs. Well it took the private sector, the engine of the private sector, it took that kind of co-operation there as well to develop 7,000 new jobs in the oilfield.

It is this attitude of provincial consultation and participation which is preparing future jobs and opportunities for the people of Saskatchewan. And the people of this province are the number one concern of this government. I mean, who else, you know, would the government be concerned about if it were not the very people that elected them to office. That's the very reason that we're here is because they placed their trust in us. And in return, we're placing our trust in the people of the province. We're trusting them to build and develop and take advantage of some of the small . . . And I won't give our government great, great tributes, if you like, for what they've done, but we have at least done some things that have cleared the way for small business, cleared the way for this province to build, and I'll commend our government for that.

If the people of this province have jobs and opportunities, then we're well on the way to a more prosperous tomorrow, Mr. Speaker; a prosperous tomorrow for all Saskatchewan people and from all walks of life. A more prosperous tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, I believe is being built today — is being built today by small business.

Now, Mr. Speaker, being built through the Progressive Conservative government's commitment, the future hinges on the creation of jobs and opportunities for the Saskatchewan people. And it is becoming a reality to the success of a wide range of innovative programs and initiatives, programs and initiatives which are securing jobs and opportunities for the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, if there was ever a time for us to recognize where we are in the course of our history, it is now. We

must, Mr. Speaker, become all one or all the other. We are either in favour in this province of a government that believes in the people and trusts in the people and that does not want to dictate to them and rule them for ever, or we're going to believe in socialism.

I have laid out through this motion, that I am so pleased to second, that we have been able to restore the confidence and allow the people of this province to build. That's now happening. What I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that it cannot happen under an NDP administration. This is not something to be compared with health care.

It was once said that only a socialist government could, in fact, build social justice programs — of course health care rolled into that. Well that's not true. It was proven that this government, not a socialist government, was able to build on health care for this province. And the building that's taken place in health care, with all of the nursing homes and the hospitals that are being built across this province, have been creating jobs and opportunities for suppliers — the lumber companies, creating employment in small communities like in my riding, Mr. Speaker. I would identify the two nursing homes, one in Whitewood, one in Wawota. Well those two projects, Mr. Speaker, to whatever extent they could, used local supplies. That helped to maintain jobs and to create new jobs in those supply related industries, notwithstanding of course, Mr. Speaker, the professional expertise and personnel that was required in the facility itself to care for our aged.

So when I say that our record and the record of small business is something that would be, in fact, put to death in certain terms by an NDP administration, I say it's not something that can be compared to health care, not at all.

(1600)

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear that if an NDP government gets back into office in this province, which I hear comments being made will never happen . . . and I hope they're right, because I have reason to believe that the people of this province have a right to make that decision, and I believe they'll not only have the right but that they'll make a right, and a very right, decision when that time comes.

When you move, Mr. Speaker, to what could be the situation as I said, and we fear it, but if ever, through whatever reasons it might happen that an NDP was in power in this province again, people who have invested millions of dollars on the future of Saskatchewan could very well be lost. You would see industries and big businesses being bought up. Their motto is: if they see something that's running well, then it's something that they, as the government, should take over. And they do. They take over things. They take over businesses and practices that quite frankly should be in the private sector, that are running well in the private sector, and as soon as they take them over, then they're not running well.

I challenge you, Mr. Speaker, to show me a place, where the private sector today exists, where the government of any party could do a better job. The private sector and the small-business people are far more efficient, far more effective, than any government could be in the

development of this province. So, Mr. Speaker, we're not going to rest our case on being the big daddy government like the previous administration was. We're going to rest our confidence and our case in the people of this province, and that's where it should be.

This province, Mr. Speaker, is a province that cannot be divided against itself, but on a daily basis we see NDP members in the House rising to try and find some reason to be against everything that the people of this province are trying to build. They're against a bacon plant in North Battleford. They're against that. That's economic development. They're against the enhanced oil recovery that we have going on, in particular, in the south-eastern part of the province. They're against the upgraders. They're against the Co-op upgrader in Regina. They're certainly against the upgrader in Lloydminster, and they're against all kinds of projects.

There's some projects that I understand they're against in Saskatoon . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The Saskatoon arena, yes. They're against that. Now I don't know whatever would you be against the Saskatoon arena for. I mean, you know, that would be like being against the Stanley Cup playoffs or being against the World Series or being against the Roughriders. And maybe they are, I don't know.

But, Mr. Speaker, what I'm trying to point out, and I went through a whole host of information here which I think is made very clear that this government has done its share in providing opportunities and incentives for the small business, meaning the people of this province, to in themselves and by themselves create jobs and opportunities and build on the growth of this province. And if we ever get an NDP administration in, then all of that is going to be lost. We're going to see the oil industry not only shut down, but it's going to be squeezed right out south of the border. That's where it's going to go. They'll close all the potash mines. They'll close them down. They'll close the uranium mines down. They've made that decision now, to close the uranium mines down. And then they'll close the potash down. That would come next.

Well I think, Mr. Speaker, and I don't think, I believe that that's just not what Saskatchewan people want. Not at all. Now I could throw out some interesting comments on that subject, but I'm not going to. I'm going to leave them because they're so, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, damning of the NDP members in this legislature that in all probability I could be called to order because they'd be almost unparliamentary remarks. And so I'm going to stay within the tradition of parliament. I'm not going to break any of the rules in *Beauchesne*. I'm going to stay within those rules, and I'm not going to mention them. And it's against great temptation, Mr. Speaker.

But there is one comment that is within the rules, and I believe it needs to be made. I think the NDP members need to be made aware of it. Certainly the people of this province need to be made aware of it.

I was just looking at an article today — it fell across my desk a couple of days ago, but I never had an opportunity to take a look at it until today — it's an article by Michael

Farraby out of Ottawa and it's just a comment here, and I'm not going to take the time of the House to read all of this to you, Mr. Speaker, but if I could just read what I've marked out in yellow here. It says,

On the issue of electioneering, Mr. MacDonald seems to have his greatest trouble with the party, reflecting uncertainty among others within the party about the basic objectives of the NDP. He is concerned that the NDP is beginning to quack, waddle and gabble like any other party for whom winning elections is the goal.

So, you know, they're talking about quaking and waddling and gabbling, and we've had evidence of that right here in this House from NDP members. And I don't believe, Mr. Speaker, that that kind of conduct by NDP members of the opposition contributes in any meaningful way to the development of small business. I mean I don't know what the connection is. I do not understand what the connection is between those kinds of, you know, with those kinds of conduct, if you like, and small business activity.

The people of this province realize that they are paying the salaries of each and every one of us in this House. They expect us to be responsible, and when we're not, they expect us to do honourable things. And we do honourable things like resigning or apologizing. They expect us to be honourable.

When you get a letter in your office, Mr. Speaker, it's "The honourable member" from wherever. Here in this House we address each other as honourable members so we have to assume that, in fact, the members are honourable. And the public expects us to be honourable. They expect us to be honourable; they expect us to be honest and they want to trust us. And I believe that's very important.

But when you get members of this Assembly and the opposition doing things that quite frankly take a swipe at the very root of that trust that is with the government — with the members — then I think it's very destructive towards the concept of building and consulting and co-operating and trying to build the kind of trust throughout Saskatchewan that the people want to have in their government.

And I'm not saying it about any political party. It doesn't matter what the political party is, quite frankly. I'm speaking conceptually, Mr. Speaker. The people want to believe in their government, and they want to be able to trust in them. They do not want to see them acting irresponsible in the House. It's as simple as that. And members in opposition have acted irresponsible in the House. It's very unfortunate that they do that because it contributes not one thing to economic development. Not one thing.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind members of the Assembly that strong people cannot be defeated. It's as simple as that. Strong people cannot be defeated. So, Mr. Speaker, given that, one has to understand that regardless of the tactics, if you like, taken by the NDP members, the strong individuality of Conservative members cannot be defeated. The strong individuality of the people of this

province cannot be defeated. Strong people, Mr. Speaker, cannot be defeated.

So, Mr. Speaker, what I want to suggest is that we broaden, if you like, our new beginning. Now let us broaden our new beginning. Does that not seem, Mr. Speaker, like a good thing to do? Is that not better than being negative and critical, as the NDP members do, to get up and consistently criticize the government of the day, which is for ever, and has been for ever since 1982 — when I say for ever, I mean since we became government in '82 — has been doing the kinds of things that we should do, and that's to act responsible for the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a little bit of time to build further on some of the kinds of things that I believe the people believe in, and how we can inevitably go from there and continue to build. As I said, I listed a whole array of projects, and there's a great number of them. And I want to touch on that a bit more. I want to tell you that this government is pro-growth, Mr. Speaker. This government is pro-family, Mr. Speaker. This government believes in the province.

Low, long-term interest rates that we have guaranteed are the basis for a continuing economic growth. We have done everything that we can do, Mr. Speaker, to reduce costs — costs to the building that is taking place in this province . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to have the interjection by the members in opposition, because I needed the time out to have a drink of water. I want to tell you . . .

An Hon. Member: — Clean water.

Mr. Birkbeck: — Yes, an one member said, clean water, that's true. Now, Mr. Speaker . . .

An Hon. Member: — Come on, use that old one.

Mr. Birkbeck: — No, I didn't say that. As a matter of fact, it's the very first time that I have indicated that this government had anything to do with providing clean water for the city of Regina in this House. That's the first time I've ever said it. There might have been other members, and I'm sure there have, that have spoke about the kinds of things we've done for this province, and one in particular, you know, providing clean water.

Well I guess it's reasonable to assume that that's a good kind of thing to have done as well, because if you're going to build through this economic development activity that we have in the province, it would be reasonable to assume that you'd want to have clean water as well.

We must, Mr. Speaker, continue to build — continue to build in co-operation and consultation with the people. We must continue to do that, and we're going to continue to do that. As I said, we're going to start and build now towards a new future.

I had indicated earlier, Mr. Speaker, that opposition members were quite in opposition to the kinds of projects that we're undertaking here in this province, that they're

against almost everything that we do. And keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, that what we're doing is what the people of the province want us to do. So we didn't just wake up some morning and have a grandiose idea that was dredged from some ideological belief — in particular, you know, as the NDP would have, a socialist ideological belief. We didn't do that. We got up and we went responsibly to work and we were busy with committees and task force reports and reviews and studies around this province, visiting with people to find out what kind of shape and direction they wanted this province to take.

Having found that out, Mr. Speaker, then with confidence in the people we embarked to build just that kind of a province. And that's very important. That kind of attitude never prevailed in an NDP administration. If it had ever have prevailed in an NDP administration, somewhere in the 11 years they had to be in power, that they were in power, somewhere along there one of them would have been bright enough to figure a few things out. They would have figured out that we needed a new multi-purpose arena in Saskatoon. They would have figured that out. That would have been, Mr. Speaker, had they been listening to the people. Well, we were told by people in Saskatoon that this was something that they wanted, was something that was beneficial to the people, and subsequently that project is under way.

(1615)

How often, Mr. Speaker, do we hear members in the opposition criticize us for the potash industry and its development, and Canpotex. Well Canpotex, the international marketing agency for Saskatchewan potash, moved its head office from Toronto to Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. As well, the Potash-Phosphate Institute of Canada is moving its headquarters and research office from Toronto to Saskatoon.

Well, Mr. Speaker, let's think on that for a moment. We now have head offices locating in Saskatoon — from Toronto. Well how often have I been in Toronto — quite; I have a brother in Toronto — and how it irritated me to drive through Toronto and see these great big buildings, and all these people being employed, processing, Mr. Speaker, raw products that came from this province. Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that it's pretty good news for me to hear that we're having head offices now in Toronto . . . from Toronto coming to Saskatoon.

Now the NDP, you know, they don't believe in that. They're laughing again. They don't agree with Canpotex having its head office in Saskatoon. You know, the head office in Saskatoon is now just an empty building with windows in it. It has people in it, people that have jobs. And I say I'd rather have people working here in this province in a head office in Saskatoon as it relates to Canpotex, than I would have them in Toronto, notwithstanding the kinds of jobs that were created, and the opportunities that were created in building that centre in the first place. I mean, they didn't move it down here on the nearest train that was coming by Saskatoon. They just didn't ship the head office down. You know they didn't package it up and send it over there. They actually had to build the thing. Well that's jobs and opportunities.

Seven million dollar refurbishment for the Western Development Museum, Mr. Speaker. Eight new child care incorporations in Saskatoon alone have provided pre-school and day-care services to approximately 300 new families.

New \$17 million cancer clinic, 100 per cent financed by the government, but who was going to build it? Well I don't see the member for Athabasca over there building it. No, the private sector, Mr. Speaker. We can provide dollars for the kinds of developments that are taking place, but it's the small-business sector that has to come right in and get the job done.

New geological sciences building at the University of Saskatchewan, and that was a fairly significant expenditure, as well, of 18.6 million. A new \$78 million, world-class, agricultural building for the University of Saskatchewan, and it's interesting. Here's a party in opposition, the NDP, who on a daily basis are criticizing the government of the day, hollering at us about what are you going to do for agriculture. Well, Mr. Speaker, they had 11 years to build that kind of a facility in Saskatoon and they couldn't do it. Eleven years and they couldn't build it. Well we had four, and they've got themselves a new \$78 million — and I say, yes, and proud of it — world-class, agricultural building for the University of Saskatchewan.

A science research unit is being built at the College of Medicine at a cost of 1.6 million; \$31 million College of Engineering building. Forty-three new advanced technology firms have located in Saskatoon since 1982. Now let's think on that for a minute, Mr. Speaker — 43 brand-new advanced technology firms located in the city of Saskatoon since we became government, with another eight existing firms moving into advanced technology fields.

Two hundred and two point nine million dollars worth of planned and ongoing hospital construction in Saskatoon for expansions at St. Paul's, University, and the construction of a new City Hospital in Saskatoon.

Since 1982, over \$41.2 million worth of school construction and renovations has taken place.

School construction: building centres for people to be educated, so they can go out and take advantage of the opportunities which the small business is taking and providing through the incentives of this government in economic development and opportunities — those facilities again being built by small business.

So they themselves have a good circle going the right way — the right way for them, Mr. Speaker. And they're taking up the challenge and they're to be commended for it. As I said, 41.2 million — just since we became government — worth of school construction. Well those are significant dollars, Mr. Speaker. Those are significant . . . it's a very significant expenditure.

Four hundred and thirty-three special care home beds being constructed under the five-year special care home construction program. All of that building is now going to take place in this province over the next five years. If the

NDP were in office tomorrow, that five-year program would be scrapped. Nursing home construction which small business could participate in would be gone. You would have a moratorium on nursing homes, as was the case under the NDP. You'd have an 11-year moratorium — that's what you'd have — stop building nursing homes for 11 years.

Think of it. Think of the disaster for the people of this province. I think it's something, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, to be feared. And to be quite honest with you, Mr. Speaker, I do fear it. I fear for the people of this province if an NDP administration ever comes back to power.

May I itemize a few more, Mr. Speaker? Over \$40 million in the science and technology research located to 12 research infrastructure facilities in Saskatoon; 1,230 new jobs created through Saskatchewan employment development program of Social Services, just in Saskatoon; 1,500 increase in day care spaces in Saskatoon; and over 354,000 in grants to seniors' organizations in Saskatoon; and the kinds of building that takes place for senior centres all over this province — over \$11 million in grants to organizations in support of handicapped in Saskatoon; and nearly \$20 million of urban assistance from Department of Highways to Saskatoon since 1982; and over 2 million on highways in the Saskatoon area alone.

You know, and again I'm going to stop, because I'm just trying to itemize some of the things that are taking place in the various parts of this province, whether it's Saskatoon, Regina, Estevan, Moose Jaw, Lloydminster, Nipawin — around the province we go — and even in my riding in the constituency of Moosomin. All of the kinds of building that's taking place. And it's something, Mr. Speaker, to be excited about and it's something to be thankful to small business for.

It's certainly something, Mr. Speaker, that will stop dead in its tracks when an NDP government comes back to rule in this province — whenever that is. And that could be a long time and I hope that the judgement of the people will be fair and reasonable and that they won't get that opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — Call an election and find out.

Mr. Birkbeck: — Well I've mentioned a few construction starts in Saskatoon. I don't think it's fair to leave out Regina.

The member for Regina North East mentioned that we should call an election and find out. Well, the people of this province will certainly have their opportunity to decide who they want to be government, and they certainly made that decision on April 26, 1982 when they took an 11-year-old NDP administration and they kicked it right out of office, right out of office, and they did so because you absolutely refused to listen. You absolutely refused to listen to the people. They know that you're not listening now.

Now, Mr. Speaker, not only did that NDP administration get thrown out of office for those reasons that they could not listen, but they got thrown out of office because they,

quite frankly, took advantage of the electoral system. They had elections when it was appropriate for them to have an election.

When I got elected in '75 I thought I was going to be there for four or five years. Keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, the legal mandate for a government is five years — five. Well I got elected and I was all excited about it. I thought, oh my goodness, I'm going to be an MLA for five years. Why, three and half years later we were having an election because they thought it was politically popular to go to the polls at that time.

They were not concerned, Mr. Speaker, about getting down to the business of administration that they were elected to do by the people. You just simply got elected and then started to play a whole bunch of politics so that you could orchestrate and organize your own re-election. I think that's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker. But that's what happened.

Well if that wasn't bad enough, I got elected again in 1978 and I thought, well now this time — this time — I'm going to be there for a while. But oh no. No, no. Not to be. The NDP called another election in three and a half years. So what has been the net result of this?

Well, there's two things. Number one, the people of this province did not get good government when they were there because they were too busy politicking, figuring out how they could, you know, move things around to be politically expedient for them to get re-elected. That's what they were doing. That was the net result of it — poor administration. And I just don't think that that was good for the people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

But I believe, Mr. Speaker, that more significantly what it did, it had now got the people of this province believing that when a political party gets elected, that they're not there to provide good government, number one, and that they're only there for three years. I've got some people that even ask me if a term of government is two years, because they used to have elections so often, because they were trying to just have them when it was politically expedient for them to get re-elected.

Well I'm going to just set the record straight. An election period, a legal election mandate, when a party is elected to govern, they are elected to govern for five years. That's how long they've got to be in office. So, Mr. Speaker, we're right on time. We're right on target. We've been in office four years. And they're going to get an election. The member for Regina North East, you know, he's saying, any time. And he's the same member that likes to get up in this House and talk about what an arrogant government that we have over here, and he just says that when we're all sitting here quietly, trying to do our work and be a good government. He says that. Well, who's being arrogant? Who's being arrogant now, Mr. Speaker?

The member for Regina North East is being arrogant when he gets up and says, oh, call an election. Because he's still hot because of his big by-election win. Well, you know, we did the right thing. We got up in the House and we congratulated him for his win. We did that. We congratulated him. We congratulated the member for

Regina North East for his victory. We were honourable. But we don't want to spend the rest of our time in government dwelling on the Regina from North East's victory because that makes no contribution to economic development — none whatsoever. It makes no contribution to economic development.

And now he's wanting to have an election. Now he doesn't really care if anybody else gets elected, as long as he does. He's not concerned about his colleagues or who is government — whether we're government or the NDP are government. He just wants to make sure that he gets elected again. Because he believes if he can get re-elected again, whether or not they're in government or in opposition; he's going to get a crack at the leadership.

(1630)

And that I say, Mr. Speaker, makes no contribution to small business, no contribution to economic development. It is not responsible in any way, shape, or form, Mr. Speaker. And he, you know, says, don't be chicken, call an election. And you know, we've had enough of the chicken act from the NDP members in opposition.

I'm going to stay right on topic, Mr. Speaker. I want to talk now about some of the economic development projects that have taken place in the city of Regina. And the member for Regina North East might want to take note of that, because of course that's the city that he represents a riding in.

The Regina NewGrade heavy oil upgrader, the largest project in Saskatchewan's history, the \$650 million project will create 3,000 new jobs in the construction phase alone. The 50,000 barrel-a-day heavy oil upgrader will increase Saskatchewan crude oil purchases by \$480 million a year — \$480 million a year.

And the members in the NDP opposition, Mr. Speaker — and I want to make sure this goes on the record — are opposed to that upgrader. They don't want to see anything developed with regards to that upgrader. There's nothing they would like to see than to have the whole thing sabotaged by terrorism. Sure, that's what they'd like to see. It wouldn't matter to them if it was blown up. It wouldn't matter if it was just put to rest for 20 years. That's what they want to see.

The only way, Mr. Speaker, that they can find their way back into government is over the back of crisis and poverty and bad things happening. They don't want to . . . You know, every time something good happens in the province we try to be happy about it and be proud of Saskatchewan people, proud of the way that the small-business people have worked into that whole economic scheme of things. But what do we get?

Every time we have a ministerial statement on some of these issues, some of these projects which I've listed . . . And, you know, already they've forgotten that I said that only 10 or 15 minutes ago. I listed off three or four pages of them, and now they've forgotten. Oh, what projects? Or, when was there a statement? Or, what happened? Even now they've forgotten — even half an hour. Mr.

Speaker, it's very difficult when you got such slow learners like that in opposition — slow learners. Those are not the kinds of people that you want to build for the province of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me be clear that the city of Regina is building. It's building as a part of this province, and so is this government, Mr. Speaker. I listed the Regina upgrader. Just moments ago the NDP members were congratulating us for having cleaned up the water situation in Regina, and that was a \$15 million carbon filtration plant at Buffalo Lake, and it's part of the PC commitment to good drinking water for Regina. We've done that in three years, and the NDP had 11 and they failed. So it's just another case, just in drinking water alone. What you failed to do in 11 years we were able to do in three.

I've talked quite a bit about nursing homes. We were able to build more nursing homes in the province of Saskatchewan in seven months than you people did in seven years- in seven years. Now think of that, that kind of economic development and activity in this province, more in special care home construction in seven months than the NDP could do in seven years . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Mr. Speaker, the member from Canora would like to know if I'm going right through till 5. I'm going to go right through until I'm finished making my comments about what is very important to the people of Saskatchewan. I know it's not very important to that woebegone, lost in the night WCC party. I know it's not very important to the NDP members. I know there are not too many of them here to listen to me, and I'm not concerned about who else would be listening, but the NDP, they're not here to hear this, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when I complete my remarks, quite frankly, is quite irrelevant to anyone in this House except myself, because I have a number of comments to make and I'm going to make them and I believe make some contribution to indicating to members in opposition, for their benefit, the kinds of things that are happening in this province.

They need to know that, because obviously they don't understand and they don't know what economic development is all about. They don't understand small business. They had 11 years to figure it out and they couldn't figure it out.

What I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, is that we have on this side taken a consultative approach; a co-operative approach with small business and building is taking place. You're seeing the results of that in the province of Saskatchewan. Oh, NDP members don't like it. They don't like to see developments. They don't like to see building. Not at all.

Now, Mr. Speaker, consider \$100 million as well in a expansion at the Kalium mine — \$100 million.

Regina has one of the best job creation records of any city in Canada and certainly the best in western Canada, and that means better than NDP Manitoba. So we're going to make it clear, Mr. Speaker, that we must be doing the right

kinds of things.

Over \$42.5 million of new school construction and renovations in the city of Regina since the PC government came into office. Since 1982, school starts — the Regina Centre member and, of course, North East member would want to be interested in this — \$42.5 million. I believe that's good for the province. I believe that's good for the city of Regina. I believe it's good for the people of this province, and certainly it's good for small business and suppliers. It's good for economic development and activity and opportunism. It's here in this province.

Over \$95 million committed for health care projects in the city of Regina alone — just in the city of Regina. And yet, Mr. Speaker, this government and members of this government, in particular the Minister of Health, have to be subject to such defamation from the member from Regina Centre as being told that he's letting health care deteriorate. And I think that's unfair.

The member from Regina Centre now understands, he now understands that there's \$95 million that was committed for health care in the province of Saskatchewan — 95 million. That's in the city of Regina. That's the Regina Centre member's very own city. That's where Regina Centre is, in case he's maybe lost track of it. It's right within the boundaries of the city of Regina — 95 million for health care.

And yet — being a slow learner and poor memory and the like — he'll be right up tomorrow saying, oh it's terrible that you're doing nothing for health care; or he'll be up after my comments today saying, oh it's terrible you're doing nothing for economic development; oh it's terrible what you're doing to the small-business people; it's terrible what you're doing to the old people; everything is terrible. Well it is terrible to the NDP — the whole world's terrible. In fact, I believe, Mr. Speaker, that life itself is likely terrible to the NDP — likely.

Well it's not terrible to me. I get up in the morning and I say, we'll it's a bright day. And if I've got a pain — and quite frankly, I have got a pain, but be that as it may — you know, I get up and I say, well isn't it wonderful I can feel the pain. If I couldn't I'd be dead, and I'd rather be alive than dead. And I'm happy to be alive, and I'm happy not to be NDP.

So, Mr. Speaker, you know, I mean, I don't know how they can just take that approach and that's the very approach, the very essence if you like, of the NDP that just stifled economic development — just put it right down and ground it right in as low as it could go. Then they rise up, you know, like a teeter totter — you jam one end down and the other end comes up — now they're jumping on the other end of the scale, and they're saying, well, now we are all for small business. My goodness sakes. Well you know, good old switch you know and on comes the light. Well they've got little lights on their desks, but the lights hardly ever come on.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what else is happening? Home ownership and new home construction increased since 1982 in the city of Regina as a result of the mortgage interest reduction program — 11,860 Regina home

owners — almost 12,000 Regina home owners received over \$18.6 million in benefits. That's an average of \$1,570 per household. And since 1982, Mr. Speaker, over 1,200 Regina families received grants from the Build-A-Home program for a total of 3.5 million.

If the NDP, Mr. Speaker, had their way, that money would be taken away from them because again, they had 11 years in office, with the interest rates away up there in the 18, 20, 22 per cent — even higher in some cases, 24 and approaching 26 — and the Leader of the Opposition wouldn't pay any attention to that at all. The NDP members wouldn't pay any attention. Not in 11 years could they figure it out that families, Mr. Speaker, that families were suffering because they couldn't recognize that interest rates were getting too high.

They never did a thing. They only thing they ever said was, well, don't pay your mortgage if the interest rates are getting too high. That's the only thing, Mr. Speaker, that's the only thing they ever said. Now then, Mr. Speaker, I believe that's an unacceptable approach to be taken by elected officials of this Assembly, very irresponsible, and totally unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, when we moved in to government in 1982 and recognized that interest rates were a key factor to building economic activity and to laying out very quickly help for families in building their homes, we were able to stimulate economic growth in this province.

In particular, and again I say it for the benefit of the member for Regina Centre, we certainly brought about some economic activity in the city of Regina. We got building starts up. We got them up in this city, and we got them up around this province. That's something that he doesn't want to see happen. It would please the member for Regina Centre if those home owners did not have that kind of interest rate reduction, because then he would know that if they didn't have it they wouldn't build homes, and he would know that if people weren't building homes then there would be no construction and no spin-off benefits in economic activity and jobs and opportunities for the people of this province. And he would like that. He would like that, Mr. Speaker, that people would not have jobs and opportunities. He would rather the people of this province be beholden to the government, be beholden to each NDP member that ever got elected.

Well, I'll tell you, I've never been beholden to any NDP member, and I never will, and nor will any member on the Conservative side of this House. I won't speak for the member for the WCC party that's here today. He says he doesn't want to be getting down on his knees to them either, but I wonder about that. But anyway, you know, it's strange what politics does to people . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . He says that he doesn't want to agree with them, but be that as it may.

You know, we'll take a look at some of the things that compare with the NDP and . . . rather, our record with the NDP . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member for Athabasca, I'm thankful he reminded me now, just now, Mr. Speaker. He reminded me that they themselves, when they were in power, left us with a terrible debt. And

I thank the member for Athabasca for bringing that to my attention. He's the only one in that group that would ever be so honest as to speak out in this House and indicate that they had left us with a terrible debt.

When we took office there was no Heritage Fund. No, no there wasn't. The cupboard was bare, and we have been struggling through tough economic times. And at least the member for Athabasca has recognized, acknowledged here in this House today, that we were left a terrible debt by the previous NDP administration that had 11 years in office and couldn't take the opportunity to build on the strengths and the growth that was taking place in this province at that time, Mr. Speaker. They couldn't do that. In 11 years they couldn't do that. No, they couldn't build on that opportunity that they had. Had they built on it, they would have had a 10 or \$15 billion Heritage Fund. They would have had money set aside.

(1645)

And if you consider what we're doing now, Mr. Speaker, what we're doing now to assist small business to be the main engine for economic recovery in the face of adversity, just imagine what we could have done if we'd had had a 10 or \$15 billion Heritage Fund to draw on — one that should have been in place if the NDP administration had have administered effectively and efficiently and responsibly on behalf of the people they represented, on behalf of the taxpayers.

They didn't do that, Mr. Speaker, so we're in a pretty rough shape because of it. Or we were. I should be more candid about it than that, and more specific. We would have been, but we're not. Small businesses, as I said, have risen to the challenge.

The NDP jobs record meant misery for many. Their figures are an absolute disgrace. And when you look at the job record of the NDP, you know that economic development must have been pretty goldarned low. It wasn't doing the kinds of things it should have been. Saskatchewan, as I said earlier, currently has the highest employment rate at 92 per cent. And that of course is . . . 92 per cent, rather, of any province in the nation. Between the NDP years, '75 to '82, Saskatchewan unemployment rate increased by — and I want them to get this — 114 per cent.

But if the unemployment rate was going up, economic activity was going down. Well I understand why. Because the NDP are against small business. They do not like small-business people and they did nothing in 11 years to help them. And I haven't got one reason, not one reason to believe they would ever do anything if you gave them 22 years. You could give them 50 years and they couldn't come up with one original idea for small business.

The NDP record, Mr. Speaker, in this area of economic development and jobs and those kinds of things, is an absolute shame to the people of the province that they themselves represent. The relentless climb of unemployment even during the boom years of the '70s is shown in this table which I have, Mr. Speaker, wherein, it says below, when unemployment climbed to 114 per cent; look at some of the specifics: 1975, all right, we

look at 11,000 jobless; and go up to 1982, 28,000 jobless; 150,000 people unemployed in seven NDP years of prosperity.

Now all of those good years, the so-called boom years as my colleagues call it, you know, were entirely lost. They never took the opportunity to go ahead and build on the province as they should have when they had that golden opportunity.

So it's fairly clear, Mr. Speaker, that the people of this province would be very, very hesitant about giving them an opportunity to go ahead and ruin . . . You know, what we're now moving into is another boom period. We've put it on the right track. We're moving now back into a boom period in the province of Saskatchewan, and they want to destroy that. They don't want to see it happen, and I think that's not acceptable, Mr. Speaker.

Let's touch on a couple of more projects before my time runs out on my comments. I want to make these clear and get them onto the record, Mr. Speaker.

The Lewvan has been expanded from Regina Avenue to Highway 1 at a cost of \$5,689,115 — 100 per cent financed by the provincial government. The Premier, of course, wants this province to have the best transportation system in the country and that's why this government has financed the Lewvan Expressway in Regina. And I use it quite often. And again, they had those 11 or 12 years in office to do something about the Lewvan Expressway and they just promised and promised and promised, and never delivered. That reminded me of the former prime minister Trudeau, who in his campaign said, I promise you nothing. And in fact he was right on believe in fact he delivered nothing.

So at least I can say for the former prime minister, at least he was honest. These people in opposition promise to do all kinds of things. Certainly they promised that they would do something for the city of Regina's water problem. They promised the Lewvan Expressway. Certainly they made promises in economic development. But did they deliver? No, they didn't deliver.

So the people, Mr. Speaker, I believe, want a government that doesn't make promises. They don't want to hear their promises. They want to hear the announcements. They want to hear the announcements; they want to see the construction starts; they want to see the digging taking place; they want to see the cranes being erected. Certainly they want to see the bricks being laid, the foundations, the walls going up. That's what they want to see.

Well I've listed off, I'll bet you, 100 projects here today, Mr. Speaker, that were just promised by the NDP and delivered by a Conservative government. And they're real and they're there. Now, Mr. Speaker, there's a few more that I want to touch on.

I want to talk briefly about the kind of excitement that we're looking at now in northern Saskatchewan. The member for Athabasca's here today and I know he's right on side with me on this issue as well. And it's a real tribute to any government to get NDP members voting on their

side and to get them speaking out on the side of government, where the whole Assembly is coming together in the best interests of the people.

Gold development, Mr. Speaker, taking place in northern Saskatchewan — gold development. And the member for Athabasca is right behind us in that as well — and that again being done by the private sector, being done by the private sector, Mr. Speaker. We're examining some of the records now and taking a look at what's happening in that kind of expansion. We're looking at the private sector having invested upwards of 7 and \$8 million just in gold expansion and exploration, Mr. Speaker — private sector, small businesses involved in that total exploration of the North. You know I'm moving to the North on this now because I've touched on all of the things that have happened in Saskatoon, Regina. I talked about Moose Jaw and Estevan, and on and on.

I touched on all the major centres, and by and large basically rural Saskatchewan, and I'm not going to leave out northern Saskatchewan. The member for Athabasca wanted me to include this in my remarks and I'm going to. He wanted me to tell of the development of the gold in the North, something that couldn't happen under an NDP administration because they were fiddling around through SMDC — a bunch of government employees I guess trying to look for it and not knowing where to find it. SMDC went ahead in partnership with the private sector; they brought in their expertise as well. They undertook to employ residents of northern Saskatchewan and to develop the North and to develop gold in the North.

And I want to just raise and bring into the record, Mr. Speaker, a news release, February 13, 1986:

Mining Development Corporation — Star Lake Surface Lease Approved. Approval has been given for the surface lease for the Star Lake gold-mine and mill in northern Saskatchewan.

That's going to be jobs and opportunities I say to the member for Athabasca and I'm glad to see him here today agreeing with me. He knows its jobs and opportunities for the very people that he will be representing, if he's successful in winning the next election, people that he's representing now.

Now, Mr. Speaker, their policy is of course to close down any kind of development in the resource sector. Their policy is to close down uranium — close down the uranium. Oh, they stuck \$600 million of our money, Mr. Speaker, \$600 million of the taxpayers' money, they plucked right from the pockets of the young and of the old, the middle-aged; they didn't leave anyone out. They invested it into the uranium industry. They sent it all away to those big companies they hate so badly and those Americans they hate so badly, whose flags they burn; sent it all the way down there and we're still trying to get it back. And what do they want to do? Is that developing economic activity in the North? No, not at all, not at all.

They want to close uranium mines; we're not going to do that. They want to closure uranium mines. Well I can only assume if they stuck 600 million into uranium and then turned around and decided they want to close it . . . I'm

kind of excited, and I know other members are, about gold development in the north. That's always something that's caught the imagination of the people. What's going to happen? The NDP would take out Star Lake and they would close it. Close the gold industry. Would that be good for the people of this province? Shut down a gold industry that is long overdue in the developing? Not at all, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — What would they do with the paper-mills?

Mr. Birkbeck: — Now, Mr. Speaker, my colleague sitting beside me has just asked me, he says: I wonder what they'd do with the paper-mill?

An Hon. Member: — They'd shut that down, too.

Mr. Birkbeck: — Well that's right. I guess we have a paper-mill that's under way and being developed now in Prince Albert and I can be sure that if they've closed down uranium mines, they've closed down gold-mines, they'd close down a paper-mill. I mean, there wouldn't be much to closing down a paper-mill. If you can get a uranium industry shut down and get a gold industry shut down, shut down the oil industry, scare them all off to that terrible Yankee-land to the south, sure, do that, too, or else over to Alberta and we'll all be recalled. We'll be all recalled right now as I tell you what they did when they were in office.

The Leader of the Opposition is here and that's great to see him here, because he understands this, Mr. Speaker. He's not like the member for Athabasca, you know — the member for Athabasca agrees with me. The member for Elphinstone doesn't agree with me most often, but at least he understands what I'm trying to say. He understands that.

I recall when we were in opposition and asked a very simple question, why we couldn't do something for small business in this province by allowing natural gas to be developed in this province and making it available for Saskatchewan people; to reduce the costs for farmers and small-business individuals operating in this province. But oh no, we couldn't do that. No, no, no, that would be no good at all.

This proposal was of course, Mr. Speaker, at that time, that it was much more prudent to pay — and I say exactly five times, five times the cost to Alberta producers as they would to Saskatchewan producers; to import two-thirds of our natural gas from Alberta, import two-thirds of our gas from Alberta, and of course, keep our reserves here.

And I remember it was the member for Kelsey-Tisdale, the hon. member for Kelsey-Tisdale — Jack Messer was his name. Happy Jack we used to call him. He was the only NDP member that I ever met that was happy. But he was. He was happy Jack. He used to come strutting on down that aisle there. And he was pretty smart, but not quite smart enough to know that it was smart to take our own resource and develop it. And we should have done that at a time when it was much less expensive to develop. But oh no. Maybe he was smart enough, but he was guided by the Leader of the Opposition, the then premier . . .

(inaudible interjection) . . . guided or directed, whichever. It doesn't matter much; it gets you to the same place.

But be that as it may, he must have been under that direction where he was told that oh no, Mr. Member for Kelsey-Tisdale, you're the minister of Energy, but we're not going to let you use any of your intelligence and develop Saskatchewan natural gas which would be good for Saskatchewan business and good for Saskatchewan economic activity. We're going to pay those Albertans — God bless them; we love them all — but we're going to pay them five times what we were paying our producers for two-thirds of the natural gas requirements of the province of Saskatchewan.

Where did that money go, Mr. Speaker? Where did it go? You bet, it piled right up into a Heritage Fund. We should have had that money, as I said earlier, in a Heritage Fund here. That's where it should have been, in a Heritage Fund here, not in Alberta.

Now maybe what we should do is send the Leader of the Opposition over there. Maybe he can go over there and speak to the soon-to-be elected Premier of Alberta, Mr. Getty, and ask him if maybe he could give us a bit of that heritage money so we could use it to help our small-business people. I doubt it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the incentives program expands industry and creates jobs. And I want to before, as I said, my time is up on this debate, enter into some more information, Mr. Speaker. I want to maybe come close to closing on this. That would be depending on the NDP members in opposition of course.

Economic Development and Trade — I'm just going to quote if I could quote, Mr. Speaker:

Economic Development and Trade Minister, Bob Andrew (I read his name because I'm quoting, of course, and not breaking any rules), said today that Saskatchewan industrial incentives program is continuing to spur industrial expansion while at the same time creating hundreds of jobs for Saskatchewan people.

Hundreds of jobs for Saskatchewan people.

As I said quite some time ago now in my discussions, we in this side of the House as a government are obsessed with creating jobs. The private sector is obsessed with creating jobs. No amount of job creation could ever be enough to satisfy us. We will go on creating jobs as long as we can, notwithstanding the fact, of course, the Leader of the Opposition believes full employment is 6 per cent. Notwithstanding that. We'll go on and we'll create his 6 per cent . . . jobs for his 6 per cent as well.

In just two years the industrial development program has encouraged more than 300 manufacturers and processors in 74 Saskatchewan communities to expand their business and create permanent jobs.

Permanent jobs. They were not there under an NDP

administration and they are there now, Mr. Speaker.

Approved projects represent a capital investment of 110 million by the companies and a commitment by them to create more than 3,500 permanent jobs. For doing so, they'll earn incentives totalling \$20 million.

Incentives. I wonder if the NDP members can now understand that. Create incentives. That's what this government has done. We have not just taken and said, we're going to be the big government. We're going to look after everyone in this province. Don't you do anything. We know what's better for you than you know best for what's good for yourself.

We don't agree with that philosophy, Mr. Speaker. We don't agree with it at all. Their philosophy is to nationalize matters and go against the free enterprise system, go against the private sector, go against small business, and go against economic development.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we disagree with that on this side of the House. Mr. Speaker, I, would you believe, have quite much more to say on this topic and I just would ask, Mr. Speaker, leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.