

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Today I would like to introduce to the Assembly Mr. Eddie Bright, Esq., Clerk of the House of Representatives of the parliament of The Gambia. Mr. Bright will be a guest of the Clerk at the Table for a portion of the current legislative session. I would ask all members to welcome Eddie Bright here with us, and to take the opportunity to meet and talk with him when you see him around the corridors.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in introducing two students from the Shaunavon grade 8 class, Lawrence Johnston and Nadine Zackodnik, and their teacher Richard Dahl. They're here in the Speaker's gallery today as guests of our department; they are winners in the child safety award.

For a moment I'd just like to indicate what they did in their town, Mr. Speaker. The grade 7 class from Shaunavon last year did a research on the use of seat-belts in their town. They had a real campaign of posters and awareness, and on "Seat-belt Saturday" they doubled the use of seat-belts in the town of Shaunavon. I understand that they're doing it again this year under the direction of their teacher. They're accompanied today with the head of the child safety committee, Mrs. Ruth Robinson. I would like all members of the Assembly to really show our support for the concern that these young people are taking towards safety in this province.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce to you and through you, along with my friend and colleague, the Minister of Health, the group from Shaunavon — Lawrence Johnston and Nadine Zackodnik who attended grade 8 last year with my daughter Sacha. And they did in fact have a great operation on Seat-belt Saturday. Leading up to it, they did some advertising and had posters around the community. And what they clearly found in that advertising had a great impact on young people, and in fact on the whole community, in the use of seat belts.

I would like to join with the minister in welcoming them here today, along with their teacher, Richard Dahl, a friend and a good teacher, I can testify to that.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure all members will want to join with us in welcoming them here today and wishing them the best of luck in their work in trying to get a seat-belt week declared in the province of Saskatchewan. And I'm sure the minister will lend them his ear today in order that that will take place in the near future.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf

of my colleague the member from Regina Centre, I would like to introduce to you, sir, and through you to the members of the House, 26 English as a second language students who are attending the Regina Plains Community College. They are seated in the Speaker's gallery. They are accompanied by their teachers, Sally Heeren, Elsa Turek, and Yvonne Lewchysyn.

These men and women are studying the English language. They are in the process already of making a contribution to Canada and Saskatchewan. We're most happy to have them here with us. We hope that they will enjoy their stay in the legislature and get a great deal out of how our system of government works. I ask members of the House to join me in extending to them our welcome.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Saskatchewan Forest Products

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question to the minister responsible for Saskatchewan Forest Products, a public company which lost taxpayers more than \$3 million last year. In light of that loss, one would assume that the Saskatchewan Forest Products would be anxious to gather in every bit of business possible. Yet Saskatchewan Forest Products appears to have blown the sale of 1 million board feet of pressure-treated wood products to a Manitoba wholesaler.

Can the minister explain why an offer made in January of this year by Shan-Wood Lumber Ltd. was never followed up on? And, as a result, this wholesaler withdrew his offer to purchase 1 million board feet of pressure-treated wood products, such as two by fours and two by sixes, at a loss of more than \$350,000 to the corporation.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the member's colleague sitting directly behind him asked the question yesterday. I took notice and I will be providing the answer, I believe, as early as tomorrow.

Visit to San Francisco by Sedco Official

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier took notice of a question from the member from Quill Lakes with regards to Mr. Price. The member from Quill Lakes indicated among other things that Mr. Price was on a holiday in San Francisco. That is, in fact, not true. Mr. Price, accompanied by some other people from Westank-Willock, were at a national tank truck carriers trade show in San Francisco that attracted that particular industry from across the entire North America, Mr. Speaker.

He also indicated that they were there for a period of one week. That is not true. There was a travel day. They travelled down there Monday afternoon, got in late Monday night, and came home Friday. They were there Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at this trade show.

The hon. member also indicated, Mr. Speaker, that the

hotel room was 152 to \$350 a night. That is also not true. The hotel room cost 138 for the first night and 86 for the second night. Mr. Speaker, he indicated as well that this was at taxpayers' expense. In fact, he was accompanying people from Westank-Willock. The bill was paid by Westank-Willock — a total cost of \$1,130, Mr. Speaker.

This particular group is trying to get into the U.S. market to sell a product that can be produced right here in Saskatchewan, right here in Regina; to create jobs right here in Saskatchewan, right here in Regina.

The hon. member would have us believe, number one, that cabinet ministers should never travel outside the province. They criticize us if we make a brochure; somebody else makes a brochure because it's political. Now they criticize anybody travelling any place. I would have, or take to believe, that the member would suggest that the particular employee take a moped, pack a tent, and move to San Francisco for three or four days, see if he can make a sale.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary to the minister. Does the minister deny that Westank-Willock is owned as to more than 99.5 per cent by the people of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — The minister will do exactly this, that the Westank-Willock was saved from bankruptcy by Sedco. Sedco was pursuing now ways by which we can sell Sedco to somebody in the private sector. In the same course, this particular industry is now being turned around, Mr. Speaker, to preserve jobs in the city of Regina, and I can tell the member opposite that the particular union of Westank-Willock does not take kindly to the members of the NDP, their so-called friends, trying to drive that business down so that they lose their jobs, and jobs are lost in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I didn't quite catch the relevance of the minister's last comments with the respect to the ownership of Westank-Willock. I'll ask him another supplementary.

Does the minister deny that on this particular trip to California there were several employees of Westank-Willock, and the question that needs to be asked is: why was there an need of an extra employee of Sedco?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Along with the president, Mr. Campbell, there were also two engineers to deal with the particular buyers on the engineering capacity with regards to what Westank-Willock can produce in the Regina plant, and as a result, they were taken down as you would at any trade show to try to promote your wares and give the details of your wares. I might also indicate to the members opposite, as if he needs me telling him, that his friend Gerry Van Wachem was there running a company far less secure than Westank-Willock, also doing the same thing.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, final supplementary. Does the minister deny that the president of Westank-Willock was there, and if so, what was the purpose being served by the president of Sedco being there?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — The particular Mr. Price is on the board, along with the president of Westank-Willock, along with two engineers. They're trying to sell product outside of Saskatchewan. They're trying to sell product into the United States.

And I don't know what the members opposite are so down on anybody trying to manufacture something in our province to sell, whether it's in California; to sell, whether it's in the Yukon; to sell, whether it's in the Pacific Rim. We believe that that's what the people of this province want to see — people manufacturing in our province, selling outside of our province, bringing money and jobs into this province, creating a better economy.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Does not the minister share the view that having regard to Mr. Price's record of performance at Pioneer Trust — a company which will be known to the minister — we, the taxpayer, would be better served by the president of Westank-Willock, Mr. Campbell, than we would be served by Mr. Price's efforts to sell tanks, an industry of which he knows nothing?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Price has in fact taken the loss of Sedco in 1984 of 8.8 million down to a figure this year of 562,000 — and that's pretty good results, I would indicate. And I think that should be commended.

The member opposite always seeks to try to somehow put down a person, whether he's in business, whether he works for the government, whoever he might be — somehow you shouldn't move out of the province to try to do something.

I remind the Leader of the Opposition that the last time you took a government trip to California you went to Disneyland. And I'll tell you, in Disneyland you didn't sell any tanker trucks.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hiring of Consultants from Ontario

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to direct a question to the Minister responsible for Science and Technology. And I ask the minister: can you confirm that in recent weeks your department has hired Ontario consultants and that you are paying each of them \$500 a day plus expenses to advise your department on some aspects of high technology?

I ask you: could you not find any qualified consultants here within your own staff or at the universities or indeed within high-tech industry in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Mr. Speaker, once again, obviously a question when I have officials so that we can

get into that type of detail, we can do it in estimates, or I can take notice of the question. I'm not sure where it's leading. If it's a question of the capacity of local people, if in fact some consultants from outside the province were hired, I'm sure there's a very good reason for it. I will take notice of the question and bring it back to the Assembly.

Mr. Koskie: — Okay. A further supplement so that you can have more information, Mr. Minister. I ask you, are you aware that in February of this year a contract was prepared for the signature of one Denzil Doyle of Kanata, Ontario? And are you aware that under the terms of this contract, Mr. Doyle was to be paid a minimum of \$12,000 plus expenses for providing your department with advice on the basis of four days a month over a six-month period? In other words, a rate of about \$500 per day plus expenses.

I ask you, are you aware that that contract was indeed commissioned with Mr. Denzil Doyle of Ontario as a consultant of your department?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Mr. Speaker, once again, in estimates of Tourism and Small Business I presented a list of 61 consulting contracts that were awarded by that department. When Science and Technology comes up we will present you the whole list of consultant contracts that were awarded by that department. We can do it that way or, if it's your wish, I will take notice and bring information on this specific one back to this House.

I wonder why, in fact, Mr. Doyle has been picked out of another exceedingly long list. Is this another attempt, Mr. Speaker, to slander someone who does not have the opportunity to defend himself or the redress of the legal system? I'm surprised at this again.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I ask the minister about a second consultant and, in the course of so asking, do not slander the consultant but simply ask — but simply ask — whether your department has agreed to pay \$3,500 plus expenses to one Harold W. Blakely of Mississauga, Ontario, for seven days of work. And are you aware that such an arrangement has been made by your department to engage the consulting services of the said Harold W. Blakely?

Hon. Mr. Schoenhals: — Mr. Chairman, once again I'm not sure if this is a relative of the Leader of the Opposition or not. But I will take notice of that question.

I have some knowledge of Mr. Doyle who, I'm informed, is probably the best high tech venture capitalist in Canada. This gentleman is the head of a particularly successful high tech firm. But I will take notice; I will bring back those details. And as I indicated, I can present all the contracts, consulting contracts this department has awarded when we do estimates, but I'll take notice and bring back those individual ones if it's an attempt to somehow discredit some of the individuals that work for the department.

Income of SGI Employee

Mr. Sveinson: — Could you please, sir, outline the income of Mr. Morley Koskie, an employee of SGI in

1982 who is a brother to the member from Quill Lakes and a former cabinet minister in the government of the last NDP administration? Also, would you confirm that this gentleman had seven relatives working for the Government of Saskatchewan at that time?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please.

Hon. Mr. Folk: — Mr. Speaker, believe me, I'd be very pleased to take notice of that question and come back and report to the House on that matter.

Non-Payment of Municipal Taxes by Pioneer Trust

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the former minister of finance in the absence of the Minister of Finance. It has to do with the biggest business collapse in the history of Saskatchewan, and you will know the referring to the closure of Pioneer Trust last year. Mr. Minister, the victims of that collapse are still coming in a full year after the Pioneer Trust closed their doors.

Mr. Speaker, by way of background, the latest is a group of 25 families who had their mortgage accounts with Pioneer Trust and who discovered only after the fact that Pioneer Trust had not been passing on the municipal tax portion of their monthly payments to the municipalities involved.

I wonder, Mr. Minister, can you explain how this took place and whether or not you have lobbied with the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation to see that that portion of these families' lost taxes is paid by the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I will take notice of that question on behalf of the Minister of Finance. I can't take at face value the statements made by the member from Shaunavon, although it does remind one of a story that was run on the TV about three weeks ago which, I assume, is what he is referring to. I heard some show, or saw some show on TV about three weeks ago. Perhaps I could take notice, have the Minister of Finance respond to you next day.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, a supplement to the minister who makes light of the fact that 25 families in the province are short a good deal of change as a result of one of their friends who flew the coop, so to speak.

But I will ask you, Mr. Minister, since these 25 families had paid their monthly payments to Pioneer Trust in good faith, and the money collected was never passed on, have the circumstances surrounding the non-payment of taxes by Pioneer Trust, has it been investigated by law enforcement authorities? Have you got any indication whether that is at the present time being investigated to see that these families are protected from a company that has taken their money and disappeared?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Well, I think that because this question come up three weeks ago, I think the member from Shaunavon conveniently waits until the Minister of Finance is not in the House to pose the question.

Mr. Speaker, I indicated that we would undertake notice. I'm not making light of this at all. I do challenge the credibility of the member from Shaunavon who stood up back in January or February and accused the PC party of getting grand amounts of dollars from Pioneer Trust. The Minister of Finance at that point in time told him the way it was, made him back down, and made him look like a fool. And when he comes back into the House, he'll probably do the same thing again.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, there were suggestions that the Tory party had money on deposit prior to the collapse of Pioneer Trust, and those rumours are around, and we will find out after the next election when you pulled the money. That's the question.

And getting back to the issue at hand, and the minister is well aware of Pioneer Trust because, Mr. Speaker, by way of background you will know he was the minister responsible for the bill when we had to pay out \$20 million of hard-earned taxpayers money because of a letter he sent. And for him to stand here sanctimoniously, I think, is a little ridiculous. But I want to ask the minister, who now has no knowledge of Pioneer Trust apparently, Mr. Minister, is too much trouble to investigate and to see whether or not Pioneer Trust, in fact, broke any laws in taking this money and not passing it on to the municipal authorities who they, in fact, should have. Is that asking too much?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I simply responded, Mr. Speaker, to the member's question by indicating that it was under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Finance. I indicated that he's not here today; that I'm sure that he wishes to respond, Mr. Speaker, to that particular question as to whether something can be done for those particular individuals. We are, in fact, concerned about those individuals as any government would be, and we will undertake to do what we can, Mr. Speaker. I simply ask the member to be patient, to wait for the Minister of Finance to return to his chair tomorrow, at which time he'll give a response to it.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Final supplementary to the minister. If he's indicating the opposition to be patient, he is also indicating that he knew about this three weeks ago. He has indicated to the Assembly that he knew about this problem three weeks ago. Today he pleads innocent on it. And I would ask you, sir, whether you think it's fair to these families that you would say to them: be patient, because I have known about this for three weeks, but I didn't intend to do anything unless it was raised as a political issue.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Well I think that the particular response I had is that I saw a show on TV about three weeks ago, which I assume is where your question arises from . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, it's the Minister of Finance within his jurisdiction to do.

Now you ask me: is it fair to ask these people to wait one more day? I ask you, I ask you, four short years ago was it fair when people were paying 22 per cent interest on their mortgage for you to sit mute with your . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order.

Delays in Answering Written Questions

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a question to the acting Government House Leader. Mr. Minister, probably the height of any government's arrogance is when the government refuses to provide information on the expenditure of the taxpayers' money, and that is what your government has been doing.

I remind you that we are now in the 40th sitting day of this legislature, but still your government has failed to answer a number of written questions that were ordered by this Assembly nearly two years ago. And I'll remind you, for the benefit of the minister, what some of those were.

Can you, Mr. Minister, tell Saskatchewan people when you will finally answer the questions such as: the government employment arrangements for former PC candidate, Mr. Terry Leier; the money paid out to various law firms by government departments and Crown corporations; and the out-of-province travel expense of cabinet ministers such as the Premier and former minister of Economic Development and Trade?

Mr. Minister, these written questions have gone unanswered for nearly two years — highly unacceptable. When will you finally respond to these questions?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, in answer to the question, perhaps it's appropriate to draw a comparison. I remember sitting on the benches in opposition and watching that government, that former NDP government, coming to this House with boxes on the very last possible hour of a session, coming in here with boxes of answers that had not been provided to the legislature over many, many, many months. And they brought them in here with a great raucous laughter which was participated in by that very member who asked the question.

As it relates to the questions and the way in which questions have been answered by this government, Mr. Speaker, just for your information and for the information of the member from Regina North East, since 1982, 302 orders for return have been ordered. There are 19 of those which remain outstanding; 22 have been answered in this session. Three hundred and two ordered; 19 are outstanding, and 22 have been answered in this session, Mr. Speaker — a record which I believe, in the eyes of everyone in Saskatchewan, will stand in good stead as it relates to the comparison that I've just drawn with the former government.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, the point is: if that's the argument — new question — if that's the argument that the minister wants to make, the least he could have done is answered these questions on the last day of the last session. We've been waiting here, the public has been waiting, for two years. Never before has the public of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, had to wait for two years to get answers to questions, and the only questions that the government answers are the ones they selectively choose to answer.

I ask you, Mr. Minister, why do you choose to hide the answers that deal with things like the travel arrangements and costs of your Premier two years ago? What is it that you're trying to hide? I further ask, Mr. Minister, what is it that you're trying to hide about the travel arrangements and costs of the former minister of Economic Development and Trade, that you selectively refuse to answer the questions to? And why do you choose to hide, and what is it that you're choosing to hide, Mr. Minister, about the kind of government employment arrangements for former Conservative candidates?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, what the member says in his preliminary remarks and that supplementary is simply not true; it's simply not so. The record is stated for itself. And as I have said before, 302 returned ordered, 19 are outstanding; we have been answering them a few at a time as this session goes on. There are 19 outstanding, 22 have been answered during the course of this session, in the last — what did he say? — 40 days.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Final supplementary. Mr. Minister, can you explain to the House and to the public of Saskatchewan how you can justify not answering any question for two years? Can you answer that question for the benefit of the people who have paid these expenses, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, there are members in this House who sat in opposition for two terms and never did receive an answer until they got into government — until they got into government and got the answers for themselves in government. For the member, the former minister in the other government, who brought in returns to this House in the way in which I described, Mr. Speaker, with boxes rolling in here, with boxes and great laughter, and so on — a big joke about it — they made light of the answering of questions. We have never made light of the answering of questions. We provide the information; we continue to provide the information, and we'll stand on our record in that regard, Mr. Speaker.

Promised Arbitration Hearing

Mr. Sveinson: — I have a question of the Premier of Saskatchewan. I ask the Premier: in your globe-trotting extravaganzas, Mr. Premier, where you spin off Conservative rhetoric about individualism and protection of the individual from big government, do you ever reflect on some of the promises you've made individuals in Saskatchewan? We have one sitting here today in the Assembly, a Mr. Hainstock. You promised to solve the man's problem two months ago. You promised him an arbitration hearing. He has not yet received it.

I ask you, sir: are you sure that you would like to solve this man's problem, or are you just making false promises that will delay a solution to this man's problem so he'll fall into bankruptcy?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — No, Mr. Speaker. We said that we would be quite happy to have an independent appraisal of the property so that we know how many cattle to run on it, and I'm quite prepared to have an independent

appraiser, and there's no reason to stop that.

Secondly, we reviewed all the stumpage policy and stumpage fees associated with forestry as you cut trees for new land. Now our policy is consistent with other jurisdictions, and I'm not about to change it.

So with respect to rent on the land, we'll have a private appraisal. With respect to the tree policy and stumpage, we've made up our mind. We've looked at all the rest across Canada, and we think ours is fair, and we're going to stay the course.

Mr. Sveinson: — Supplementary. Have you examined the agricultural Act and what it says regarding stumpage? The man claims that the forestry Act is not his problem; it's the ag Act, and that his problem is under that jurisdiction, and that the stumpage that he claims he's paid, and that should be paid back to him, should be governed by the ag Act and not the forestry Act.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — I'm not going to get into the agriculture Act and the forestry Act and the combination of which Act has jurisdiction. I'll tell you, from my point of view I have made up my mind what the policy's going to be, regardless of what Act it's under. It's going to be that we are going to charge stumpage fees if there's going to be people clearing the trees and then marketing them. They do it in other jurisdictions, and that's what we're going to do here, whether it's the agriculture Act or the forestry Act or any other Act.

So I will review his entire land values to find out if, in fact, he can carry cattle; how many they can carry. Let's have a private appraisal. But we get into the whole question of stumpage. It doesn't matter to me what Act it's under. I mean, we can modify the Act or you can have legal . . . I have my legal counsel; he has his. But I just say that the policy and the intent of the policy is to charge people — if they cut trees and they're going to market them commercially, they should pay some royalty to the government, to the people of Saskatchewan, and we'll stay the course on that policy.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE BILLS

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

Clauses 1 to 14 inclusive agreed to.

Preamble agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

THIRD READINGS

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

Ms. Zazelenchuk: I move that Bill No. 03 — An Act to incorporate Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church be now

read a third time and passed under its title.

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

MOTIONS

Resolution No. 7 — Housing Needs for Senior Citizens

Mr. Smith: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to rise in the Assembly today to bring in the motion which reads as follows:

That this Assembly commends the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation for the initiatives undertaken in meeting the needs of senior citizens in our province.

It is with great pleasure, as I said, to stand and speak on this motion, Mr. Speaker. And I'm sure that being in the city of Moose Jaw, in Moose Jaw South where our main part of our seniors' high rises are, the people in Moose Jaw South and throughout Moose Jaw are very happy with what's happened with senior housing over the past four years.

I'm quite sure that with the comments I get from many people in Moose Jaw that it is very inadequate in Moose Jaw for senior housing up until that point in time, and which we have done many things for them in regard to building more homes, not only in Moose Jaw, but throughout the province of Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan Housing Corporation has committed 5,550 units since 1982 in the province. And I'm quite sure that we, as citizens of this province who visit these places, frequently realize the good which these seniors are getting out of them.

I'm quite sure that many people are quite well acquainted with the task force which we had on senior citizens' housing in 1983-84, which recommended changes to the senior citizens' housing, and also the senior citizens' home repair program, which was at a very low figure whenever we took over, and it is now at \$1,000 per family every five years, and I'm quite sure that this year alone has kept many people in their homes in the province due to this program.

I certainly appreciate what has been done for the seniors. I don't believe that I am quite in that category yet myself, but . . . I suppose I can call myself the kid from Moose Jaw South. And I'm sure that there's many people in this legislature today that want to speak on this Bill, and I'm quite sure that there will be some good things said about the housing corporation.

I'm very sure that over the past four years that the administration of these places have been well improved. We've got some very good administrative boards in these cities and towns looking after these. And I think the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation should be commended on this, as before there were very many things that weren't being looked after under these programs, and now we have very good boards throughout the province. And I've talked to many of them

and been to some of their seminars and that, and they're all very well pleased that we are taking an interest in what they are doing as caretakers and what not in these homes.

I think we've got to realize that they need recognition, as well as those who are living in them. It's caretakers and those on the boards and what not that keep these things going. So I think I will read this motion and then turn it over to some of the other ones:

That this Assembly commends the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation for the initiatives undertaken in meeting the needs of senior citizens in our province.

And the seconder of this motion would be the member from Saskatoon Centre, and he will be seconding the motion.

Mr. Sandberg: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed a pleasure for me to rise today and support my colleague, the MLA for Moose Jaw South, in his resolution which you have just read, and it says:

That this Assembly commends the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation for the initiatives undertaken in meeting the needs of senior citizens in our province.

And I'm very happy and indeed privileged to speak on senior citizens because there are a great many of them in the constituency of Saskatoon Centre, Mr. Speaker. You know, this government has accomplished a great deal in just four years for seniors. It's a record I'm proud of. It's a record the people of Saskatchewan will note with satisfaction. It's a noteworthy record of accomplishments in very tough economic times when revenues have fallen drastically in this province, but times in which the people of Saskatchewan have tightened their belts and worked that much harder.

Mr. Speaker, this government's record of building for seniors is the best in the history of this province, there's no doubt about that. In my constituency of Saskatoon Centre alone, in the last four years, we have seen the building of many, many units. For example, Fifth Avenue Place on Fifth Avenue in Saskatoon, right in the heart of downtown Saskatoon, has 138 new units; and King Edward Place on 25th Street, 120 new units.

I've spent a lot of time visiting folks and friends in both of these new developments. The residents tell me they are very pleased with the facilities. They're located — that is, the facilities are located — in the down-town core close to the services that seniors need, such as shopping, the store of down town, the library, theatres, doctors and other medical services, as well as transportation such as transit and taxis.

The seniors also enjoy the proximity of Kinsmen Park, a beautiful park located right in the heart of down-town Saskatoon next to these two senior citizens' complexes. And of course the view of the South Saskatchewan River valley from the floors, anywhere up above the third floor to the 10th or 11th, wherever they may go, is just fantastic. I've enjoyed many sunny afternoons with tea or

coffee with many of my friends in these complexes.

(1445)

I must also point out, Mr. Speaker, the building of the Sutherland House in the Sutherland residential area with its 44 units. My friend and colleague, the MLA for Sutherland, tells me it's a much appreciated complex and much needed by the seniors who call it home in that area.

Mr. Speaker, there are about 1,100 seniors' units in Saskatoon administered by the Saskatchewan Housing Authority. May I take this opportunity to commend the board, headed by chairman David Brittain, and executive director Jim Wasilenko and his staff for doing an excellent job. His staff, by the way, is located in the Shepherd Apartments on 24th Street, and they do a real good job administering the Saskatoon Housing Authority and the some 1,600 units under their jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, housing for seniors is a great challenge for the '80s, and a great challenge for the '90s as well, and into the 21st century. We have to work hard and do much research for the right answers and the solutions to seniors' housing problems. I believe we have to encourage our seniors to maintain their independence in their own homes as long as is possible. Therefore we, as the younger generation, much provide the services — that is, the services the seniors need — to allow them to stay in their homes, in their own communities, and in a familiar environment.

I know, my mother lives in a senior housing unit in Cut Knife, Saskatchewan. It's a blessing that she can stay in our home town and be near her friends and be near her family, rather than having to move to a city where she would be in a strange environment.

Mr. Speaker, there is a great demand for seniors' units in Saskatoon. Many seniors gravitate to the city from the rural communities. Saskatoon is a beautiful and well-run city. It provides excellent shopping, health services, and entertainment for the seniors. And I'm informed that our seniors population is growing fast. It's now 12 per cent and is expected to grow to some 20 per cent by the year 2000. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, by the year 2000 I'll be pretty close to senior status myself.

Mr. Speaker, there are some 2,000 units for seniors administered by private institutions for seniors in Saskatoon — complexes, housing places such as the Lutheran Sunset Homes and Jubilee Residences. And there is a continuing and enhanced trend for church organizations to build seniors' complexes targeted to higher-income seniors. This, in my opinion and my view, Mr. Speaker, is good because many seniors want to enjoy their retirement years in the company of other seniors where services are provided and also for the obvious social benefits.

I would also point out that the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation has provided funding in Saskatoon for St. Vladimir's seniors' home where there are 100 units coming up; the Circle Drive Alliance Church seniors' home, another 100 units; and St. Ann's seniors' home where 60 units are being built. These three projects, Mr.

Speaker, total some \$14.3 million, with the province's share of capital cost at 3.6 million. And it was a pleasure for me to be there with the former minister of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation when these projects were announced some time last year.

Another private seniors' residence recently completed is the Saskatoon Mennonite home for seniors, in the Lawson Heights area, and that has some 70 units. The province provided 0.8 million for that \$4 million project. Mr. Speaker, I should also point out that the Circle Drive Alliance Church nursing home will provide 50 beds. That's a \$3.1 million project.

The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation is also to be commended for some new initiatives in enriched housing. These projects are designed for independent living for seniors in the province's smaller centres. The projects have a central entrance, with common hallways and a separate exist to the outside, to a back yard or whatever. In these projects, the community is encouraged to provide some of the services, such as meals on wheels, aerobics or exercise classes, or even arts and handicrafts classes. Projects are on line for Wynyard and Eston, in those areas.

Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation has been very busy these last four years, and has many accomplishments which my friend from Moose Jaw South alluded to briefly. They've committed 5,550 units since 1982, and some 2,335 of these have gone to senior citizens, including 616 enriched units, 1,960 to families, and 1,250 units for nursing homes. The commitments have resulted in an estimated \$142 million expenditures and have created approximately 4,900 man-years of employment in Saskatchewan.

And another accomplishment of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation is the announcement in 1984 by the Department of Health to launch a new five-year program to provide some 1,600 new and replacement special care beds. The corporation has been able to provide through its budget allocation 890 units to meet this objective. That's all ready, Mr. Speaker. This is well ahead of the planned 766 units to be committed over the planned five-year period. So that is indeed progress.

In 1986 the corporation plans to commit another 300. This brings the total commitment to 1,190 units or 79 per cent of the total units to be committed over the planned five-year period. So that is indeed progress.

On another topic of accomplishment, the senior citizens' task force on housing in 1983 and '84 recommended changes to the home repair program for seniors and the introduction of the innovative enriched housing concept for seniors. The new senior citizens' home repair program, established in August of '84, provided \$1,000 grants for needed repairs to almost 22,000 households for a total of 19 million.

The previous five-year program under the NDP, started in 1979, provided 650 grants to 1,350 seniors for a total commitment of 11 million. So to date, 1,616 enriched housing units which promote the independent life-style

of the senior have been committed. And I'd like to commend the housing corporation also, because in April they announced a program to register contractors so that seniors are protected from fraudulent or unethical practices in those contractors that they hire to do that \$1,000 improvement program.

And another program, Mr. Speaker, in 1985 the province introduced a provincially funded, senior citizens', non-profit program which provided 309 units. And I've already listed some of the projects in Saskatoon that come under that program — St. Vladimir's, St. Ann's, and Circle Drive, just to name three of them.

Also, Mr. Speaker, a program innovation is an integral part of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. This commitment is illustrated by five innovative programs. Number one I want to speak briefly on is the elder suites pilot project which explores an alternative way to house seniors, which allows them to remain independent while maintaining the benefits of a close, warm family relationships.

And I talked briefly a short while ago to the president of the housing corporation, and he tells me that the program has been started in the North of Saskatchewan. And what it does it attach a seniors unit to an existing residence. And the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation will build the unit and rent it, geared to the income of that senior. Already one unit has been produced and has been accommodated, rather, at Green Lake in northern Saskatchewan. And he tells me that they've also got one self-contained unit that has been touring northern Saskatchewan to show the folks in that area just what they can be used for. So that, indeed, is a good innovative program.

And I want to talk briefly about developmental services for senior residents in enriched housing projects. The housing corporation is introducing a personal alarm system pilot project for seniors. A device being tested is a wristband worn by the user and, when it's activated, can summon immediately assistance through the telephone system. So when a senior finds himself or herself in trouble and unable to reach the telephone, this device will alert the proper people to take care of the problem.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we all have friends and relatives that are senior citizens, individuals who've spent a lifetime of hard work making our province a better place to live. In the community, we witness their meaningful contributions. Within the family, they are the most cherished and the most valuable resources, and I speak from the heart on this. To their sons and daughters, they are a source of inspiration and advice. And to their grandchildren, they are indeed warm and loving grandparents. Yet in the past these valuable members of our society were generally neglected under the former administration.

In 1977 a moratorium was placed on nursing home construction, and it lasted until 1982. In nine years only 245 nursing home units were built by the former administration. Seniors were not being given a reasonable raise in income supplements. In 10 years there was only one — only one \$5 cost of living increase.

This was unfair treatment to those who had given so much to this province.

When we assumed office in 1982, we found nursing homes overcrowded and health care for seniors inadequate. Our response was to improve health and social services while strengthening incomes and housing for seniors.

In the area of health care for the elderly, this government, our Progressive Conservative government, has spent 14.2 million on construction of special care homes. This has resulted in the completion of 688 nursing home units in just three years. Additionally we have made a commitment to providing 1,500 new special care beds over a five-year period.

At this point, Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay special commendation to the folks in my home town of Cut Knife. I represent Saskatoon Centre, but I have indeed a close attachment to that town. They have raised almost half a million dollars to get their new nursing home under way, and it has been announced by the Minister of Health, a new 30-bed nursing home facility. And I congratulate His Worship the Mayor, Roger Manegre, and the hard-working committee that worked with him to get this project under way, and of course the generous people, the very generous people of Cut Knife and district.

At this point I would also like to say a congratulations and heartfelt best wishes to the long-time doctor of that village, Dr. Ronald Scratch, who has nursed my wounds through growing up, Mr. Speaker, and who has served the people faithfully, loyally, and untiringly for some 40 years in the community of Cut Knife. And what a great man he is. The citizens of Cut Knife have told me they are going to be honouring him some time later this summer.

Mr. Speaker, I see that the member from Quill Lakes is bellowing from his seat again. That's what he's famous for; he can shout and holler from his seat. He's evidently become a star now in the newspapers of Regina. I show you a column referring to the member from Quill Lakes as one of the political terrorists who sit over on that side of the House and bellow like a moose. And there he goes again, Mr. Speaker, bellowing like a moose — the political terrorist; part of the rat pack from the NDP opposition. And I can assure that member that the people of Quill Lakes will not send him back to the legislature next time around. And we, this government, will not have to put up with the foolish antics of that incompetent member from Quill Lakes.

Mr. Speaker, if I can get back to my topics on seniors and the services provided to them by the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, we've directed over \$2 million for innovative programs such as respite beds, daytime hospital care, and geriatric programs, as well as establishing a provincial chiropody program to provide foot care for seniors. As well, we've seen new hospital construction in Regina, Saskatoon, and new small hospital initiative packages for rural communities.

We viewed the incomes of seniors to be unfairly adjusted in the past. To combat this, we doubled the income supplement for single, low-income singles from \$25 to

\$50 per month. For couples, the increase was 66 per cent, from \$45 to \$75 per month. And on January 1st of 1985 we initiated the senior citizens' heritage program which covers 75,000 eligible seniors with incomes of less than \$30,000 per year. And I understand now, Mr. Speaker, on this topic, and I am even flabbergasted to believe this, but one of the seniors in my constituency phoned me and told me that the NDP had told her not to fill out an application for the seniors' heritage grant because they weren't going to get it. Can you imagine anything more low life than that, than those people who sit over in that other benches and some of the people who support them telling seniors that they cannot receive their senior citizens' heritage ...

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. I just want to caution the member for Quill Lakes that we aren't allowed coffee in when the House is in session.

Mr. Sandberg: — Mr. Speaker, to carry on. To give seniors better access to government departments and programs, we created the seniors' bureau, which is important to them. This organizations provides one-stop shopping and counselling for seniors. Over 250 seniors use the services every month. Additionally we've sent a directory of programs and services to every senior in this province.

To further improve the way of life for seniors we implemented a \$20 million senior citizens' home repair program which I have outlined. These programs and initiatives have given our seniors a new sense of security and optimism.

(1500)

By listening and acting upon the concerns of seniors, our government has taken a direction which benefits us all. We strengthen, not only our senior citizens, but our pride, our families, and our communities. By helping seniors we are working to make Saskatchewan a better place to live.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, it does indeed give me pleasure to second the resolution put forth by my colleague, the member from Moose Jaw South, which says:

That this Assembly commends the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation for the initiatives undertaken in meeting the needs of senior citizens in our province.

And I am happy to second that resolution.

Hon. Mr. Dutchak: —Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had delayed for a minute, thinking that the opposition was interested in expressing their feelings on the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. However, I can understand why they wouldn't want to do that.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the resolution before us, what's important is that the resolution does identify an important part of our government, namely the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. But more importantly it identifies an area of an important policy development in a relatively new government, our government, which took effect in 1982.

Now for a minute let me talk about the history in relation to seniors, because it's important to realize how far the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation has come in policy development for the benefit of seniors in Saskatchewan. As you recall, before 1982 the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation did not have a good reputation. As you recall, there were various things done within the corporation which were highly political in nature, which really paid more attention to the concerns of the politicians of the day than the seniors in Saskatchewan. And that is the type of legacy that was left to us by the NDP government which was soundly defeated in 1982.

In terms of the history of the treatment of seniors, there is a variance there as well. Mr. Speaker, there was a time when the former CCF government saw the needs of seniors and focused in on programs dealing with medicare, for example, which assisted seniors in acquiring proper medical care and attention. However, as the years slipped by and as the NDP took hold of this province, things changed; the seniors instead were seen as a tool, a tool in the political game, Mr. Speaker.

As you recall, the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation wasn't utilized to bring home the concerns of seniors and do something for seniors in the province. Instead, we saw election after election where the seniors were simply frightened into supporting the NDP, and many of them in fact did, and many saw through it and did not.

As you remember, the housing corporation didn't worry about performance, but was involved with the fear tactics conducted by the members opposite when they were in government. So the housing corporation has come a long way, Mr. Speaker.

What we saw before 1982 was a moratorium on nursing home construction by the NDP government. The housing corporation wasn't utilized to increase the number of nursing home beds that were constructed in the province of Saskatchewan. Instead, the government of the day had other priorities such as nationalizing the potash mines, for example, which are such a great economic success today in light of that great investment on our behalf.

So there were certain priorities that were different than the priorities the housing corporation has today. As you recall, the government changed in 1982, and the member from Saskatoon Centre indicated some of the changes that were important to him which we can see happening in Saskatoon. Many, many projects for the benefit of seniors have been built in the last four years and have been announced recently, much more than any four-year period in the history of this province, and I challenge any member of this legislature to show otherwise, because it's clearly a fact, Mr. Speaker.

So what we have seen in Saskatoon is not unique to Saskatoon. I come from Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker, and I know in my seat alone we've seen several major projects which exemplify the attitude that this government has to seniors, the pioneers, the people who built this province. For example, the Northcote Manor, a seniors' high rise, was brought to my constituency by this government. The Duck Lake Nursing Home was brought to Duck Lake by this government. The Macdowall Seniors' Building

was brought to Macdowall by this government. All of this happened, Mr. Speaker, because the present government, our government, cares about seniors. We have compassion for people who need assistance and have earned that type of assistance. So the result, Mr. Speaker, has been good for my area as well as Saskatoon and many other communities in Saskatchewan.

What has been the process that has led to these changes? As you recall, Mr. Speaker, an intensive review of the housing corporation was conducted when the government changed in 1982. Certain people were removed, as you recall, from the housing corporation. And I remember distinctly the members opposite arguing how we took these non-political people, who were there to serve seniors, away from government. You recall, they objected to Mr. Van Mulligen running into some problems because he was one of these non-political civil servants. As you recall, now he has suddenly become a candidate for the NDP party. So clearly the members opposite were not really telling the whole facts to the public in Saskatchewan in regards to the housing corporation.

But as you recall, there was a reorganization in 1982 and 1983. In relation to seniors, it was deemed important by the government, by us, to find out what seniors wanted and what they felt, rather than bureaucrats under the NDP who sat in the back rooms and simply designed programs which were vote-getters and which attempted to figure out what seniors really needed.

Well the government, the Progressive Conservative government, took the view that, since we serve seniors, we should ask seniors how they feel and what they require, because seniors represent a growing population in Saskatchewan, as they do across Canada.

So a seniors' task force was implemented, visited roughly 10 communities. And on that task force were people, not only in government, but people from the private sector who were seniors themselves. They travelled, listening to seniors delegations across Saskatchewan. And there were many, many important factors that were brought to the attention of the task force which were reduced to a task force report.

Mr. Speaker, I was proud to see that the vast majority of the submissions that were made to government through the task force have now been implemented, and the others are being worked on. I'll give you some examples.

The home repair program is a great success in Saskatchewan because the senior citizens said to the task force, listen to what we need. We are the seniors who are living in older homes, perhaps. We're able to live there, and we want to live there longer. However, we need some help in fixing the roof. We need some help in fixing the windows. We need some general assistance to allow us to remain in our homes.

And the seniors also said that because of their concern for the taxpayers — their daughters, their sons, their grandchildren — they believe that it would save the government money, and the people of Saskatchewan money, if they were able to stay longer in their homes.

And we agreed, Mr. Speaker, because that makes common sense. And we find that seniors who built Saskatchewan have common sense.

So the seniors' home repair program was changed. The old program under the NDP, which wasn't really smart and not very creative, had a limit of \$650 to it. And unfortunately the seniors were compelled to make the changes or renovations to their homes during the winter. Well that didn't make much sense, Mr. Speaker. We don't believe in compelling seniors to doing their repairs during the winter because it would somehow discourage them from doing repairs, because it wouldn't be very pleasant to change your windows in winter. We changed that rule.

So what we did, what we did, Mr. Speaker — and I can hear the NDP screaming from their seats, as usual — but what we did, we brought in a better program, designed by seniors. And this program was for a maximum of \$1,000, which better identified the amount which would be required to make some of the necessary changes. Plus we cut away 90 per cent of the red tape, made it very simple to apply for, and also we didn't obligate seniors to do the repair work during the winter time, which was welcomed by the seniors; and in fact I have some of the figures to indicate how successful that program was.

An Hon. Member: — What can you do with \$1,000?

Hon. Mr. Dutchak: — Now one of the members opposites says, what can you do for \$1,000? Well, here's the numbers indicating to you that many people did a lot for \$1,000. The home repair program was so successful that repairs were done to 21,912 households for a total of \$20 million, Mr. Speaker. That's because people thought they could do a lot for \$1,000.

The previous five-year program under the NDP for \$650 went to 13,565 seniors for a total of only half of the new program. That indicates, Mr. Speaker, that the program under the former government was not effective because they didn't listen to the seniors. You can't have people in the back rooms of government designing programs without talking to the real people. That's why the present system works.

Well what else happened, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the task force? Well the enriched housing program came into force. And the enriched housing program wasn't in existence under the former administration. The reason was because when you have a moratorium on nursing home beds, it's a little difficult to go and face the seniors in all the communities and ask them what they would need. So you can see why the task force didn't take place under the NDP government. Again they were too busy nationalizing uranium mines and potash mines and everything that they could get their hands on.

However, the enriched housing complex, the design, the system itself was based on the ideas from seniors. The task force . . . wherever we travelled around the province seniors told us that they had an idea, an idea to provide something that wasn't quite a nursing home but yet provided some of the basic services for seniors.

Recently I was at the official opening of one in one of my

neighbouring constituencies, the Shellbrook constituency, where the enriched unit was officially opened, and I visited some of the seniors in the complex. And, Mr. Speaker, there wasn't one complaint because the facility was designed with seniors in mind after seniors had input. Before the building was announced, a visitation from the housing corporation staff took place at Shellbrook to listen to the requirements of the local seniors.

So what has happened now, Mr. Speaker, we have developed a very important program leading to the construction of enriched housing units that previously weren't constructed. As you recall, the only buildings that were constructed previously were semi-detached units under the former administration which worked in some communities. However, we thought that the seniors had a better idea, and the seniors were, in fact, telling us they had better ideas in terms of accommodation for seniors, so that's why we went to the new program. As a result, Mr. Speaker, more nursing home suites and more enriched housing units are being constructed in this four-year term than any four-year term under any former government in the history of Saskatchewan. And again, if this is not accepted by any member in this legislature, I challenge them to produce the facts to prove otherwise.

What this means, Mr. Speaker, is that we've built a basis. The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation has been involved in a new task in the last four-year period. Not the task of protecting the members opposite; not the task of greasing political supporters; not the task of providing ribbon-cutting ceremonies for projects that really didn't exist. What the housing corporation has been involved in is building a basis for seniors for the future, and they've made phenomenal progress.

I have to commend the minister of housing, who is the member from Regina Rosemont, in his intense regard for the wishes and aspirations of seniors in this province, who, I submit, before 1982 were often forgotten. Someone indicated to me the other day . . . This individual was a senior and came to me and said, you know I really have to commend you people for the job you're doing on nursing home construction and your enriched housing units. And the lady indicated that she had visited the new enriched housing unit, and she said it was about time that facilities for seniors were built that at least remotely resembled some of the lavish construction the members opposite undertook for the bureaucracy and, in fact, for jails in Saskatchewan. There was a standard under the former administration that somehow inmates in correctional institutes deserved better accommodation than seniors. Now we've changed that, and the housing corporation is primarily responsible for changing that rule, Mr. Speaker.

(1515)

So for the future, the member from Saskatoon Centre reminds us that the seniors' population is growing constantly. I believe it's over 2 per cent per year, the rate of growth. And what that means is by the year 2000 over 20 per cent of the people in this province will be seniors. Many of us will be seniors by that time. It's important that we use innovation, Mr. Speaker, and creativity in

designing some of these programs to allow seniors to remain in their homes; those that can't, to allow them to move into much needed facilities which they now are able to move into. Mr. Speaker, this trend must continue.

The members opposite are now in the midst of a heated campaign asking the people to allow the province to go back into the '60s when the Leader of the Opposition was in his prime. However, the seniors of this province know that the plan for the future, to plan for the future of their children and grandchildren, we can't go back to the '60s, Mr. Speaker. And in fact, if the Leader of the Opposition thinks about it, he too will be a senior very shortly and will want to make sure that there is a good deal of creativity that goes on in the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation.

And again I want to commend this staff and the Minister of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation for what we've seen in the past few years and the progress that we've seen for the pioneers of Saskatchewan. Therefore, I'll be glad to support the motion before us, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments on this resolution and then move an amendment. I listened to what the member from Prince Albert had to say, and I feel so moved that I think I need to respond to some of his comments, because in the usual tradition of the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake, he spent most of his time in the debate on this resolution talking about the past.

It is becoming quite evident that this government has become so mired in its ineptitude and its mismanagement of the economy that it has no more forward-looking ability whatsoever, and if anything else, Mr. Speaker, that is what Saskatchewan people are concerned about — that among many other things.

What the people of this province desire to see more than anything else is a government that anticipates, a government that looks ahead, identifies some of the problems that people face, and then gets out and tries to provide some solutions in consultation with them . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the member from Rosemont yells from his sheets . . . seat, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure that he does from his sheets too, because he obviously shouts all the time. But the member from Rosemont has very little to say in the House, Mr. Speaker, except when he's in his seat and somebody else is trying to say something. It's very highly unbecoming of any member of this House. Now as soon as the members have settled down, Mr. Speaker, I'll continue.

The point I think they make, by their carrying on, when we talk about their inability to look ahead and to plan for the future, is that they feel guilty about it. Any member of a government who would feel good about what they have done, and good about what they are about to do, wouldn't have to over-react when a member of an opposition stands up and makes some comment about the fact. But obviously, Mr. Speaker, there is a sense of unease among those members as the member of Prince Albert-Duck Lake has just demonstrated, and therefore their reactions, I think, are predictable.

The member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake talked about

going back to the '60s. Well, Mr. Speaker, nobody wants to go back to the '60s except to recognize the good things that came out of that time. And medicare was one of the things that came out of that time, and I'm going to mention medicare because the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake does . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the other member from Saskatoon now yells from her seat as well. She may choose to do that, and as long as she continues to do that, I will wait. I think she's finished now. I can continue, Mr. Speaker.

The problem with the Conservatives who talk about going back to the '60s, Mr. Speaker, is that they have demonstrated unequivocally how they are prepared to go back to the 1930s. The whole style of this government, Mr. Speaker, the whole style of the leadership of this government, is in the style that was moulded in the late 1920s, and the people of Saskatchewan decided in the 1930s they weren't going to have any more of it, and then we didn't see that style again for another 50 years.

Well I think it's quite clear by the way that this government has managed this session, or mismanaged this session, because they do a better job at mismanagement than management, that once again we're going to see . . . And every day I go out to visit my constituents in their homes people are saying, this is the end for this government. They cannot feel comfortable with a government that has no vision for the future. It talks about a vision; even the Premier has now produced a pamphlet in which he talks about a vision. Well, Mr. Speaker, isn't it regrettable that for four years this government felt not the need to have any vision or any plan. They stumbled along, very easily handing out patronage and not providing information that was asked in the House. We had it happen again. But as far as thinking about the future well-being of Saskatchewan people, that was one thing that the government has failed to be able to handle adequately.

The member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake talked about the CCF and I'm glad he did. I'm proud that I come from the roots of the CCF, that the New Democratic Party comes from the roots of the CCF. It was that party that introduced into this province, and as a result into all of Canada, hospitalization and medicare. And when the program was introduced, Mr. Speaker, who do you think led the fight against it? The most prominent people leading the fight in the KOD, Keep Our Doctor committees, and those who were trying to put down medicare, were Conservatives, Mr. Speaker. All across this province the people who fought medicare . . .

Well the member for Qu'Appelle — it's nice to see him back in the House — says, oh. He might not realize that because at that time he was still a very young guy and probably a Liberal. It is only since then that he has decided to be transformed into an extreme right-wing Conservative, and I'm sure that maybe in recent weeks and months he's probably had some regrets about that as well.

But the point, Mr. Speaker, and I only mention this because the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake did, is that when the medicare programs were being introduced in Saskatchewan, the people leading the fight

against it was the Conservative Party of Saskatchewan. And I'm not going to mention names, but there was some very, very prominent people involved in that. Some of them have even achieved this great lofty position of being the senator.

Well, Mr. Speaker, now the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake tries to cloak himself in the shroud of being a great supporter of these great programs that were introduced over the protestations of the Progressive Conservative Party back in the '60s. What new has this party done in this area, Mr. Speaker? The Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living was introduced by the New Democratic Party government prior to '82, providing prosthetic devices and other kinds of similar devices for people who need them. You know what's happened since 1982, Mr. Speaker? That program has been reduced and cut back. People who need artificial legs are waiting nine months because of the cut-back. Nine months, Mr. Minister of Health, and I have examples of . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. I think the member realizes that he's straying a long ways from the topic when he starts talking about artificial legs and things, and I would ask him to come back to Sask Housing.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I don't question your ruling. I simply am responding to the comments of the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake who raised the question of medicare, and I'm sure you will agree that he did.

Mr. Speaker: — I've given the member quite a bit of liberty, and now I'd ask you to get on with the debate.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I shall proceed with the debate, Mr. Speaker. I will not choose to argue with your ruling. Simply suffice to say that since the member from Duck Lake indicated that he had some comments about the whole question of medicare and the CCF, I thought it was only appropriate to respond. And I have done that, and I shall move on.

One of the things that I think seniors are concerns about, Mr. Speaker, is exactly those kinds of comments — comments by the member that have no bearing to what the reality is and what the truth is. But that's fine. I think the judgement day will come whenever there is an election, and people who know the practices and the attitudes of this government will have an opportunity to make a decision.

Now the member who spoke is a former minister of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. So I think, Mr. Speaker, there is a point that I would like to make about that because he talked about the housing corporation which does indeed have a mandate to provide many kinds of housing for many kinds of people, including senior citizens.

Now one of the things that the member forgot to mention, which I am finding a lot of people throughout Saskatchewan concerned about, is the lack of emphasis that this government is putting on the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation as it used to be.

Well the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake laughs. Well maybe he should talk to the new minister in charge of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, who is his seat-mate, and ask him about the empire building that's taking place in the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation these days. Yes, ask him about the centralization that is being proposed of the running of local housing authorities throughout Saskatchewan.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the way many senior citizens' units in many communities of Saskatchewan are run is that local housing authorities are appointed. They're local people. There's a committee that consists of three people that appoints these local people. There's somebody from the federal government, somebody from the provincial government, somebody from the municipal government. And then they provide recommendations, to the minister in charge, of people who should sit on the local housing authorities and therefore look after the units in their community.

An Hon. Member: — What about seniors?

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well seniors' housing is part of the local housing authority in these communities. You have been the . . . I'm surprised, after all the years you were minister of housing, you didn't learn that, Mr. Member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake.

Well what's happening, Mr. Speaker — and seniors are concerned about this — is that there is a process in place in the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation to take away the decision-making authority of these local housing authorities. And senior citizens who live in many of these units are becoming very concerned about that, and so they should be.

In fact, the concern is so great that when the new Minister of Social Services spoke to a meeting of people who are on these local housing authorities, he was not welcomed with open arms. And he laughs nervously, because he knows that the result of his presentation to the meeting was a chorus of boos around the room, because of the great concern that people have about this power grab by the government, taking away the decision-making rights of local housing authorities and centralizing it — for what reason I don't know.

Mr. Speaker, the policies of this government are not working, with regard to senior citizens' housing or any other kind of housing, as well as they ought to. And I'll give you one other example.

In the cities we have communities like there are communities in rural Saskatchewan. Well I'll give you an example of a community in the constituency of Regina North East. It's called Eastview. It's kind of next . . . backed up against the Ross Industrial Park area. Most of the people who live there have lived there for quite a number of years. In a sense it is a community unto itself in the context of a bigger Regina community.

In the community of Eastview there is no reason in the world why provisions couldn't be made for some senior citizens' units. But under the policies of this government, that's not happening. I have had a number of people

make this presentation to me, including people involved with the parish there, saying that this would be a good idea, but the policies of the government under this government don't allow that to happen.

And I just want to say and put on the record, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker — sorry, I didn't realize you were in the seat — I just want to put on the record that I think the policy of the housing corporation should change. It should not be so restrictive to prevent a community like that, if they have the initiative to get something started, from being able to have for people who live in that community in the larger Regina or any other city community, to provide themselves with senior citizens' housing so that people, when they want to and when they choose to move out of their home, should be able to still stay within the vicinity of their community.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I may continue. One of the comments that was made in the House was dealing with the desire for most seniors to stay independent, and I agree with that comment. The member from Saskatoon said that. He said a number of things which I could agree with. It's unfortunate the member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake just tended to feel that his only role in the House is to be negative, but that's his decision.

(1530)

But the member from Saskatoon Centre talked about the desire of senior citizens to be independent. And I know that that is their desire. Both of my parents live in the city of Saskatoon. They live in their own home, and, as long as they can, that's what they want to do. And they're not unique. They are like almost every other senior citizen. They want to live in their own home. They want to live close to their friends that they have grown with and worked with and even, if it's possible, close to their relatives.

So every effort that is made by governments to make it possible for these people to live independent for as long as they can, I think, is a well-meaning effort. And any amount of money that we can spend in making that possible, I think society, Mr. Chairman, should be prepared to spend.

But what has this government done? They have held back on home care to such an extent that the home care boards have seen the number of people who need assistance grow. But the home care boards are afraid to advertise their services because they know that with the restriction of funding under the last four years, they will not be able to handle the demand. I really think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's unfair.

When you say to people who, under severe hardship, built this province, made it the great place which it is, made it possible for every one of us who's in this House and the people we represent to be able to reap the benefits of a province that is truly, truly great and wonderful, when we have the people who made that possible for us say: we want to be independent, home care is a good way to assist us to do that; and then they have a government that doesn't provide adequate funding to make that possible to the extent and the level it

should be possible, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we are being unjust as a society. And I think this government needs to be condemned for that lack of initiative in this field.

No one deserves more the expenditure of taxpayers' money than our senior citizens — your parents, my parents and grandparents, and people who are of that generation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we're talking about senior citizens' home repair program. Well I was pleased to see one of the members opposite say such great things about the senior citizens' home repair program. Why, you may ask, am I pleased? I am pleased because the program was introduced by the former NDP government, and the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake knows it. Well I'm pleased that at least there's one program which this government did not cut and destroy, because it is indeed a good program.

The problem with the program as it is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that this government is reducing its priority for that program. And just let me give you the facts. The commitment to keep seniors in their own homes under this government has been declining, and I regret that.

And I submit to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that under a New Democratic government, that would change. There would be a very high priority to keep senior citizens in their own homes or help them to stay in their own homes if they so choose.

But here are the facts. Do you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in 1984, this government spent \$10.9 million for the senior citizens' home repair program, and in 1985 they spent only \$7.9 million in the senior citizens' home repair program, and then in 1986 that's cut in half from 1984 to \$5.3 million? And I get this out of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation building plan. Both of those gentleman should know about it.

Now if there is not an example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of a reduction in priority dealing with senior citizens' home repair, then I don't know what is. Clearly, clearly that is what's happening here, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now I want to turn to another subject briefly. That's the question of the special care home units constructed. We here see the same kind of reduced priority. In 1984 there were 325 home units constructed. And notice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm not going way back into the past; I'm talking about relevant, more or less up-to-date years. I'm even talking about only the Conservative years. But in 1984, 325 nursing home and special care beds were built. In 1985 there was a little bubble. There was talk of an election that year, as you will recall. Everybody believed, including the Premier and his cabinet, that they were going to call an election in 1985. And so guess what? They announced 565 special care home units. But do you know what the proposal for 1986 is, Mr. Deputy Speaker? It's 300 to 350 according to the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation plan.

What happened to this priority? Somehow, this priority has disappeared. But not only have the numbers been

reduced, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but the new funding arrangement is such that it makes it more difficult for local communities to be able to finance these units because the formula has been jiggled so that local communities have to raise a great deal more money than they used to.

So what the government has done in their public relations efforts is announces a number, announces a figure in the budget, and then unknown to anybody but several weeks later tells the local communities, although you knew you only had to raise — what was it? — 5 per cent cost locally, we didn't tell you this earlier, but now we want you to know that you have to raise more. What's the new figure they have to raise? It's about 15 per cent. So all their planning has been done. Then the government turns around and changes the rules. And that's one way they can get away with putting in a number and then after putting the number in . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . It is 15 per cent. I thought it was 15 per cent. They put a number in and then they surprise the people out there who are planning these units, change the formula, and they have to start all over again.

Now that's the kind of cruel politics, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that no one — I don't care if it's Conservatives or Liberals or New Democrats — that's the kind of cruel politics that no political party should play with senior citizens. But that's the kind of cruel politics that these gentlemen opposite have been playing with our senior citizens.

Now they talk about a moratorium. And I'll just, for this one moment, I'll go back in history a little bit. But the members talk about a moratorium. The thing that they never mention, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I want to put that for the record once and for all, is that in none of those years that they refer to was there ever a year in which nursing homes weren't built. They've dug out some bureaucratic memorandum on a moratorium and they claim that there was a moratorium, but they can't substantiate it because in every year there were nursing homes built.

The members opposite are sceptical about that. Well we asked the Minister of Health in his estimates to show us the years in which no nursing homes were built. He has yet to provide that information. And I ask: why does he procrastinate? What is the problem that he is not able to tell us the years in which there were no nursing homes built? Simply because they probably were built, Mr. Speaker.

Now I submit in my comments to this resolution, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it is really quite regrettable that the Devine government has allowed, as well as senior citizens' housing, new housing starts in general to fall to the lowest level in years. The total level of new housing starts in Saskatchewan in both 1984 and 1985 were at record lows.

Now that surely cannot be called a commitment to housing. The housing industry is, I submit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, an excellent way not only to provide housing, adequate housing for all kinds of people including senior citizens, but it's an excellent way in which to help get Saskatchewan people working again. If you build homes, you have a lot of — you have literally thousands of people

working on those homes. Jobs for Saskatchewan workers are made available. Contracts for Saskatchewan small businesses are made available in communities all across Saskatchewan. And that's what we should be doing.

That's why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the New Democratic Party has a proposal. It's a proposal not only that will provide adequate housing, but it also will provide jobs because the two can go together. And that's what I mean when I talk about looking to the future and having a plan about what you're going to do as a government, which this government has not had — having some idea about what you want to accomplish.

The problem with the last four years is that our government has looked through tunnel vision at issues. Oh, the member makes a good tunnel across the way, the member from Moosomin. But that's been the problem. Maybe that's why he's not running again; he's recognized the problem.

You see, they identify a crisis and then they rush over and try to solve it instead of having some scheme by which they can prevent the crisis from happening and accomplish other things as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the central issues facing Saskatchewan today is yes, housing; and yes, housing for seniors citizens. But it also is the issue of getting Saskatchewan people working again. And who best can get Saskatchewan working again is also an issue. Is it that government which has had four years of opportunity to do that, or will it be a New Democratic government which will be given an opportunity to do it after the next election? And I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that more and more people are recognizing it will probably be a New Democratic government because we have a program and a policy that will do that. And my colleague, the member from Regina Centre, and others, have outlined it very adequately.

We will provide, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a \$7,000 grant for people who want to build a new home. That will give them the ability to make a down payment, and we will provide them with a 7 per cent mortgage so that they can afford to make the payments and still have some money to buy the furniture and the appliances which they can put in their home and live comfortably. And people who already have a mortgage will also be able to benefit because they will be able to write down . . . I'm getting to the seniors, because it's part of this package. They will be able to write down their mortgage to 7 per cent.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that will create 18,000 new direct jobs and generate more than \$1.3 billion in new economic activity over the next five years by setting a minimum target of 8,000 housing starts for Saskatchewan for each of the next five years — not the 4,500 and the 5,000 under the former government, but 8,000, where in a province like ours it ought to be . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake laughs a lot today. He only has to look back prior to 1982, and he will find that in those years that's what the housing start levels were. They were 8,000 to 10,000 to 12,000 housing starts a year; only in '84 and 1985 did we drop to record lows.

So you see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the point I've been trying to make here is you don't simply talk about houses; you talk about other needs. You talk about jobs. And you put together a package that not only creates affordable homes, but it also provides for work for people who want to work. And believe me, there are thousands out there who want to work. When you have the kind of unemployment levels we have, when you have the kind of numbers of people who are on the welfare roles, not by their choosing, then there are an awful lot of people who want to work.

The program of this New Democratic Party will provide work for those people, and the spin-offs from this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are just something amazing. The spin-offs in the purchases of appliances and the purchases of furniture . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. I think the member is straying from the motion. It has nothing to do with employment, and I would ask him to get back on to the motion.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — If the Deputy Speaker would look at the amendment that my colleague has mentioned that he will be moving, he has indicated that he intended to move the amendment, and the amendment follows these lines.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. I have not got the privilege of seeing the amendment. So let us now get back to the . . . If the members wants to move the amendment . . .

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't question your ruling. I just simply want to make this point. I agree with the member from Shaunavon; I think his point is well made. And I will be referred to my amendment very shortly. But I really find it difficult to understand how housing, whether it's for senior citizens or anyone else, does not create employment. I really think it does. And that's the point I'm . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — You are questioning my ruling when you insist on your own line of debate, and I would ask you again to follow the rules.

(1545)

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I will be, Mr. . . . I just want to, I guess, serve notice that I will be moving an amendment at the conclusion of my remarks along the following lines. I will be saying when I move the amendment that the Assembly regrets that the provincial government has failed to implement a comprehensive and vigorous housing policy which would provide jobs for Saskatchewan workers, contracts for Saskatchewan small business, and decent, affordable housing for Saskatchewan seniors and families.

Now the point I was coming to before you called me to order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was this: that in the housing program of the New Democratic Party, senior citizens are included. Seniors citizens' housing is included. There is a part of the component of this program, a home rehabilitation assistance plan, which will provide up to

\$7,000 in assistance for those making major renovations or repairs to older homes.

Now I submit to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that senior citizens generally, not always, live in older homes. They will as much, and maybe more than most other people, benefit from this very significant program. They will be able to improve their homes. And with \$7,000, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you can do things like the rewiring of your home — the essentials that have to be done. You can do things like put in all of the windows that you need, instead of one or two which is possible under the present program of the present government.

So that part of the package, that's what I talk about — a comprehensive package rather than a crisis mentality approach which has been taking place from the members opposite. This rehabilitation program will indeed be a very significant help to senior citizens in being able to provide adequate accommodation.

And, of course, the final component of the program is a firm commitment by the New Democratic Party to increase construction of social housing for low-income families and senior citizens. A total package.

And you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this program has met with widespread approval by the Saskatchewan public. And that's one of the reasons . . . And I had a meeting with a number of people over the last several days in my constituency, some of them in the real estate business. And those people are saying people want to know when there is an election so that they can make some decisions about when they're going to build or repair their home. And one of the injustices of the Premier not calling an election is that there is this uncertainty, uncertainty by people about the decisions that they want to make, but they really are uneasy about making them because they don't know any more when this election is going to be called.

And so if this government can do anything in the near future that would be of the greatest benefit, I submit that calling an election would most likely be it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, having made my comments, I want to now move my amendment, and it's seconded by the member from Athabasca. And here is my amendment:

That all the words after the word "Assembly" be deleted and the following be submitted therefor:

regrets that the provincial government has failed to implement a comprehensive and vigorous housing policy which would provide jobs for Saskatchewan workers, contracts for Saskatchewan small business, and decent, affordable housing for Saskatchewan seniors and families.

I so move. Thank you.

Mr. Thompson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's indeed a great pleasure for me to be able to speak on the amendment that has been offered today by

my colleague from Regina North East, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The words that he has spoken in here today and explained the reason for this type of amendment, I want to add to that.

I listened with great interest to the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake when he was speaking, and how he was referring to the past and about the housing programs under the New Democratic Party that were not well received and did not have a good reception.

I want to say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that is just not so. Figures will bear that out, and I will try to bring out some of them figures today, and hopefully to the citizens of Saskatchewan out there who will be making a decision, I hope, on the housing programs that have been put forward by your government, sir, and also by the housing program that we have put forward. And I think that when they make that decision you will see that we will be sitting on the other side of the House, and they will be over here on this side.

Talked about not having a good reputation in housing . . . I asked the member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake to go up into northern Saskatchewan and take a look at the housing program that has been implemented under the New Democratic government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the program that has been implemented under the Conservative government. And let me tell you, we have a reputation up there, and it is a good reputation. We were building up to 2, 3, and up to 500 homes a year in northern Saskatchewan. And since the Conservative government got in, they have just shut that down. In the largest town that I have in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, the town of La Loche, they haven't started one house.

And prior to 1982 we built senior citizens' homes in many of the communities in my constituency. And I can single out Green Lake and Beauval and Ile-a-la-Crosse and Buffalo Narrows and La Loche. And they were built under the New Democratic government. They were senior citizens' homes. We now have . . . And under our program, under the section 40 housing, we also had senior citizens who qualified and moved into section 40 homes and are still living in them and are very proud of them.

I want to now turn to the senior citizens home repair program that the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake also was referring to, and how successful it was. Well I want to say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that living in northern Saskatchewan and getting a senior citizens' home repair program is a lot different than it is living in Regina or Meadow Lake or any southern community. And it just didn't work out very good.

And the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake, who was the minister in charge of that program at that time, and myself, exchanged letters and verbal views on this, and we tried to get that straightened around. But it took a lot of time. And senior citizens up there were confused. And there are still many senior citizens in northern Saskatchewan who have a hard time applying for and receiving the type of grants, the housing and the home repair grants.

It's one thing to live in Meadow Lake and be a senior citizen and get a \$1,000 home repair grant, and to a senior citizen who is living in St. George's Hill. Many of the senior citizens could not take advantage of these programs because, number one, they didn't understand the applications that were put forward; and number two, they didn't have anyone to do the work because there's no tradespeople up in that area in many of the communities, and number three, they had no transportation. Some of them had to drive over 200 miles in order to purchase a window or material to repair their home.

When you want to compare our program and the program under the Conservative government, well it's just not comparable because we had department inspectors who went into the senior citizens' homes. Many of the inspectors were local people who spoke the language, went in and filled out the forms for them, inspected the houses to see what they needed, and then there was a delivery system. Because many of the senior citizens, that grant, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was eaten up just with the transportation of the material from the closest lumber yards at that time was Meadow Lake.

So it was tough on senior citizens up there. And it's still like that because we still have a large gap up there with not enough tradespeople to go around.

Another part of the application stated — and we finally got around that, but with a lot of confusion — was that there had to be two applications . . . two bids put in by contractors. And that just didn't work out.

But the member also wanted to dwell on the past. And he said that the New Democratic Party was more interested in nationalizing potash mines and "anything else" was his words that we could nationalize — everything that we could. That was his words, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So let me tell you, and I want to say this to the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake: yes, yes, we did nationalize the potash mines. And I tell you, that gave security. And we're talking about the amendment here, and providing jobs and security, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And let me tell you, that did provide jobs, and it provided security, and it provided revenue to this province so that we could go out and carry out the housing programs that we did carry out. We carried out them programs because we had money to operate with. When we left government in 1982, we had a massive housing program. We had \$140 million in the bank. And that was because of our policies.

But the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake, he suggests that we want to live in the past. And I want to say that that is right: that we would like to go to the past right now, and the citizens of Saskatchewan would like to go back to the past, when the New Democratic Party was the government of this province. They have had four years now; they're into the fifth year.

And let me tell you, the senior citizens, the folks out there who are unemployed, would dearly love to go back to the years of the New Democratic Party when we had an active housing program, not only for senior citizens but

for the families in this province, and everybody was working. And that's right; that's right, everybody was working. We had an unemployment rate of 4 per cent, and we could live with that, and they were happy.

But I want to say that when you talk about living in the past and going back in history, I'm not too sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the Conservative members really want to go back to the past and go back to 1929 to '34, the last time they were in government. and we know what happened then. They went to the polls and they never got any seats. And I would suggest, with the housing program that they have implemented under this regime, this could repeat itself.

Under our program . . . And I will touch on that, but I just want to touch on some of the disruption that has taken place under the senior citizens' program. And many senior citizens, when in 1982 the Conservative government came to power, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they were promised new senior citizens' homes and the like, and they were also promised that they would have a 5 per cent sales tax taken off. And that wasn't done, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that caused confusion.

The property improvement grant was another thing that they took off. And then they had to reinstate it, and senior citizens were confused. And right now we have senior citizens confused again. They talk about a moratorium on nursing homes. And I just want to repeat what my colleague, the member from Regina North East, has indicated. There was never, ever a moratorium, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and you know that. There isn't one year that we were in government when there wasn't senior citizens' homes opened up in this province.

But you can go into northern Saskatchewan — and I'll tell you, you get north of Meadow Lake, and there isn't one. There isn't one opening that has taken place since they got in except for starts that were started under the New Democratic government.

I want to now turn to what it is going to mean to the small-business community in this province if the housing policy that the New Democratic Party has put forward is implemented. And one can just make a comparison.

(1600)

The Conservative members over there said, well, the senior citizens' home repair grant program that we had was only for six months . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's right. That's what was said. I just want to . . . And *Hansard* will bear that out. I'm not saying that the member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake said that, but one of the members said that well, only . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I will let you know tomorrow, if you want that answer, when I read *Hansard*. But I most certainly won't have to because my memory's not that short.

And I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when they talk about our housing program being only a winter works program that started in October and ended at the end of April, and you take a look at the housing program that we are putting forward which gives the first time home owners a \$7,000 grant to start off with. It gives them a

mortgage of 7 per cent over seven years on the first \$70,000 on that mortgage. And their program, Mr. Speaker, runs for one year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the housing program that the Conservative government has put in their budget.

Well I just want to say that we feel that the citizens of Saskatchewan have a right to be able to plan and to not rush into this, so we have made our program a three-year program. Ours is available for three years. So from the time we get back in power, which will be as soon as the next election is over, for the next three years there will be an ambitious housing program in this province. Now only new housing starts will begin with security, because they'll have three years to take advantage of the program, but they'll also be able to have 7 per cent mortgage money on the first \$70,000 of that mortgage.

There'll also be another \$7,000 grant available to individuals in this province to repair their homes. And just imagine what that's going to mean, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the business community in Saskatoon and in your constituency — the lumber yards and the hardware stores who are going to provide this material.

Just imagine what it's going to mean to the labour force in this province, with the carpenters and the plumbers and the electricians who are now going to have a job. And they're not going to have a short-term job. It's not going to be some of the make-work programs that we see under the Conservative government that go on for 20 weeks and then they're laid off so they can get UIC.

These housing programs are going to go on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for three years to start with. And the workers who are working will know that at least they've got a job for three years. And we will have a bright future, because that is going to get the economy working. Once we can get Saskatchewan working, Mr. Deputy Speaker, then you will see the small business community in this province will start to thrive, and that's what we have to have. We have to get the young men and women of this province back to work, and we have to give them security. And by this type of a housing program we will not only give them security for housing and jobs that are affordable, but will give some security to this province. And you will see what this province will do with our program, compared to the Conservative program that they announced.

Mr. Speaker, I know that there are many members in the House that want to speak on this important amendment that we have put forward, so with that, Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to engage in this very important debate, and I do so as the minister responsible for seniors in the province of Saskatchewan, and also as the minister responsible for Sask Housing Corporation. And I do want to, I believe, at the outset of my talk, draw attention to some of the things that were mentioned by the members opposite which certainly need to be corrected.

And I do want to speak directly to all of the seniors in the province of Saskatchewan who are watching this particular telecast today, and let them know that our Progressive Conservative government certainly takes very seriously the concerns of our seniors' population here in the province. And I think that it's important for the seniors who are watching today, and for all members of the Assembly who are here, to know exactly what the record of the former NDP administration was.

We have heard the members opposite today indicate that they did not put a moratorium on nursing home construction here in the province of Saskatchewan. And that, of course, is something that relates directly to the housing needs of seniors. And when we have seniors in our province today that form such a large percentage of the population, surely to put a moratorium on nursing home construction clearly indicates that the NDP opposition did not understand the needs of seniors, nor did they give the needs of seniors priority. Oh, they gave priority to potash mines and uranium mines and their family of Crown corporations, but I ask you senior citizens, and I ask the members of this Assembly: did they give priority to your needs?

And here's the evidence, and I quote from an NDP cabinet memo from Walter Smishek, and I'm sure many of the seniors watching today will remember that name. He was chairman of the NDP treasury board, and he sent this memo to the minister of Social Services at that time, Mr. Rolfes, and I'm sure many seniors will remember that name as well. And he said that: "Treasury Board is seriously concerned about the level of construction occurring in the special care home sector." Concerned, in other words, that too much construction was taking place on behalf of seniors. "The level of activity proposed in (this particular) budgetary request would result in a surplus of beds . . ."

Now can you believe that the NDP would ever believe that that would actually happen. And so the two NDP cabinet ministers, here is what they have said:

Treasury Board deferred a decision on the level of funding to be approved for this activity, pending the review of more detailed information on all committed projects. Until such a time as the need for additional beds can be clearly identified and a suitable construction policy defined, a moratorium on future commitments should be enforced . . .

The senior citizens of this province need to understand very clearly that it was an NDP government, under the leadership of the present Leader of the Opposition, that put in place a moratorium on nursing home construction. And in 1978, two years later, a memo was sent to the village of Theodore that was very concerned for their seniors that they have some kind of additional seniors' housing, nursing home beds. Here is what the NDP government of the day said:

. . . your request and similar requests from other communities have been held in abeyance . . . special-care beds currently in operation throughout the province have prompted

government to place a moratorium on the development of any additional special care beds . . .

That was the priority of the former government when it came to meeting the housing needs of the seniors in this province — a moratorium. And I want the seniors of this province to know, and I want all members of this Assembly and especially the members opposite to clearly understand what the priority of the Progressive Conservative government today is when it comes to meeting the needs of special care home beds for senior citizens in the province of Saskatchewan.

Let me read the list, Mr. Speaker, of the kinds of things that we are doing to meet the housing needs of seniors in the province of Saskatchewan. This was 1984-85, just one year ago: Davidson, 10 beds . . . Tell the seniors in Davidson that this government is not concerned. They will remember a number of years ago that they did not receive special care home beds under an NDP administration, but they certainly know today that this government is concerned about them.

Indian Head, 15; Kelvington, 10; Kindersley, 80 replacements beds; Kinistino, 16 new beds; Lloydminster, 50 replacement beds; Outlook, 16 new; Regina, Lutheran, 11; Saskatoon, Circle Drive, 50; Stoughton, 6; Wawota, 30. And that was just in 1984-85.

What about 1985-86, Mr. Speaker? And I'm sure many of the seniors who are watching this afternoon, who live in these communities that I am going to list for us now, will be very happy to know that there is not a moratorium on the construction of nursing home beds today.

There may have been, a number of years back, but under the leadership of the Premier of this province today: Arborfield, 36 new beds; Big River, 30 beds; Dalmeny, 9; Duck Lake, 90; Foam Lake, 12; and Goodsoil, 12; and Lampman, 19; and Lucky Lake, 12; and Melville, 30; and Nokomis, 12; and Rabbit Lake, 12; Regina, Salvation Army, 30; Rose Valley, 12; Saltcoats, 30.

Mr. Speaker, here we have a solid commitment, a firm indication that this government places the housing needs of senior citizens right at the top of our priority list. And if every anybody doubted whether or not there was any difference between the former NDP administration and the Progressive Conservative government of today, all you have to do is compare the moratorium memo from the NDP to the list of special care home beds that this Progressive Conservative government is constructing.

And I would remind the members that we have committed ourselves to construct 1,500 special care home beds over a five-year period of time, because we indeed do care about senior citizens — we indeed do care.

Now the members opposite also talked about their vaunted seniors' home repair program which they wanted to talk about so highly. I would like to tell the seniors today who are watching, and all members of the Assembly, that the senior citizens' home repair program that we have introduced recently in the province of

Saskatchewan provides seniors with a grant of \$1,000 to assist with needed repairs. They will be interested to know that the NDP administration had a grant, but it was only \$650.

And in addition, Mr. Speaker, their grant was available only during the winter-time. And the grant for the seniors under the Progressive Conservative administration is available year-round to seniors.

The latest statistics that I have here is that something in the order of almost 22,000 seniors' households have benefited from present Progressive Conservative senior citizens' home repair grant program. That is a major commitment, Mr. Speaker — a major commitment of funds, a major commitment from our heart to that of the seniors, that we care about them; we want to see their needs met. And when you compare the magnitude of our program to that which was offered under the NDP, certainly, certainly, Mr. Speaker, there is no comparison. We are providing a senior citizens' home repair program of great substance.

Now the member opposite said that somehow this government has not planned for the future. I only need to remind the members of what I said just a few moments ago. Putting a moratorium on nursing home construction, which the NDP did, is just the antithesis of planning for the future.

How can you plan for the future? And I see the member for Regina Centre listening to the debate. How can you plan for the future, Mr. NDP Member, by putting a moratorium on nursing home construction? In fact, that is simply closing your eyes to a growing need that seniors had in the province of Saskatchewan in the mid and late '70s. You did not plan for the future. In fact, you closed your eyes towards the future. You turned your back on the future for senior citizens by putting that moratorium on.

To put in place a five-year program to provide 1,500 new nursing home beds is obviously an example, I believe, of planning for the future. I'm sure there were some who would like to see a few more than 1,500. But certainly that magnitude of bed construction stands in stark contrast to a moratorium. It stands in stark contrast to a lack of planning for seniors' housing on the part of the NDP administration opposite.

Today, for example, whether it's turning sod on the Trianon high-rise down town in the city of Regina — and we see the building being constructed for seniors — whether it's the Lutheran Sunset Home or the Circle Drive home in the city of Saskatoon, clearly there is a firm commitment on the part of this particular government to meet the housing needs of seniors in the province.

(1615)

Mr. Speaker, I also want to draw attention to the fact that this government believes that it is important to be innovative when we consider the needs of people in this province for the future. Innovation, new ideas, progressive adventures. I believe that is what sets this government apart from the former NDP administration and from the kinds of things that they are offering in their

policies to the people of this province today.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's clear to say that this government is a government that believes in building towards the future. To do that successfully you need to anticipate, you need to come up with new ideas. You can't simply bank on things that happened in the past. You need to project into the future.

And I want to just draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to one or two of the key innovative things that I know seniors are very excited about in the province. I know they are projects that our government is certainly proud of, and I think the people of Saskatchewan are very pleased that they have a government that is moving in this direction.

For example, Mr. Speaker, we are today in the Sask Housing Corporation committed to the elder suites pilot project that explores an alternate way to house seniors while allowing them to remain independent and maintaining the benefits of a close, warm, family relationship. Elder suites where elders can live in very close proximity, perhaps in the same yard, or nearby their particular family members. The cost of those units are substantially less than the traditional senior citizens' apartment costs, and I think, given the magnitude of the growing seniors' population in our province, the elder suites pilot project is a very keen example of the innovative and forward-looking thinking of the Devine government here in the province of Saskatchewan.

As well I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, another example is the personal alarm system pilot project for seniors. I know that seniors are very concerned about security issues, Mr. Speaker, and rightly so. This device, this personal alarm system, this device that we are testing, is a wristband which can be worn by the user, and when activated it can summon immediate assistance through the telephone system. The costs, we expect, will decline as economies of scale are introduced in the future, and this is a very reasonable way to provide health support and security support assistance to the senior citizens of our province.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we compare things like the elder suite and the personal alarm system, and the building of 1,500 new nursing home beds, and the home repair program for seniors — when we compare that to what we saw under the former NDP administration — a moratorium on nursing home construction, a senior citizens' grant that was a little bit more than half of what we are providing to seniors — certainly I think today seniors know that they have a government that is deeply concerned about the seniors' needs.

Now we also know when it comes to housing needs, we're not simply talking about the large facility, the large high-rise apartment or construction of a house itself, but we're also talking about little things that a senior may need to purchase to keep themselves in their house — to possibly fix up certain aspects of their house, certain small repair items that need to be considered by a senior.

How does a senior get the income, Mr. Speaker, if they are on a fixed income, a pension income of some kind, or perhaps all they have is the old age security or the guaranteed income supplement? How do they receive

additional income to provide for those small but very important repair needs for seniors? Well, certainly we have the guaranteed income supplement, Mr. Speaker, and we, of course, substantially increased that from \$25 to \$50 a month here in the province of Saskatchewan. And I compare that to the members opposite who in fact increased that once in seven years from only 20 to \$25. That does provide a little bit of additional money for seniors to meet some of their housing repair needs.

But I think the most significant thing, Mr. Speaker, that this Progressive Conservative government has done has been to introduce the senior citizens' heritage grant program this year, for the first time ever in the province of Saskatchewan. This is a heritage grant program, Mr. Speaker, which will provide literally thousands, indeed tens of thousands, of seniors with substantial income for them to use at their discretion. And I'm sure that many seniors will be using that income to meet some of their small but important housing needs or repair needs this year in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now I know that many seniors watching have already received benefits under this program. There may be some seniors watching who, for some reason or another, are still not aware of the seniors' heritage grant program, and I think members opposite will certainly benefit from being reminded about this particular program and how seniors can access it and put that money to use to benefit their housing needs.

And this of course, Mr. Speaker, is as follows, the details of the program: any senior who has an income of under 30,000, whether they are a couple or whether they are a single senior, they can apply. Application forms have been sent out to all seniors. If for some reason they have not received one, they can certainly contact my office directly here in the Legislative Assembly Building and we will send an application form to them.

Seniors may be eligible for as much as up to \$700, Mr. Speaker, for couples, or \$500 for a single senior. And that will provide them with substantial income to meet some of the needs that they have in the province of Saskatchewan today.

And if any member of the Assembly today wondered, Mr. Speaker, whether or not the senior's heritage grant program was of benefit, then I think, as members consider this motion before us today, they will be interested to hear the words of the following letters that I have received from senior citizens here in the province in the last few weeks concerning this grant program. And I think members here today will be able to deduce from the letters that I am reading exactly the potential benefit that seniors receive for housing purposes from this particular grant program.

Here's a letter, dated May 1st, that comes from Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. And I know there are many seniors that live in Moose Jaw, and certainly some of them will be watching this afternoon.

Dear Sir: I just wanted to write you and tell you how much I appreciate my pension and what a good and appreciated work you are doing for all us seniors. There is no government that could do

more than our present government is doing for everyone, especially for seniors.

Now that's a single senior from Moose Jaw who will have benefited with the \$500 cheque and will have been able to apply that to some housing need in Moose Jaw.

Here's a letter which was dated April 28th, coming to us from rural Saskatchewan, directed to the Premier and to myself:

Please accept my thanks for the \$500 cheque. You have no idea how this has helped me. You are the only ones that ever did anything for me. I will remember you. Thanks again.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we can image how that \$500 cheque benefited that senior. And I don't think anyone in the province of Saskatchewan today would hold it against that senior that they received benefit from this government because they did not perhaps have sufficient income so that they could live the kind of independent quality of life that we would like to see seniors living today.

And we know that there are many seniors who, for one reason or another, have not had sufficient income to do the kinds of little things that they would like to do, particularly as it relates to housing. And why should they not be in a position like the rest of us, Mr. Speaker, to be able to enjoy the kind of quality housing that you enjoy and that I enjoy and that all members in the Assembly here today enjoy? Why should seniors not have that benefit?

It was for that very reason, Mr. Speaker, that we, as a government, decided that the time was ripe to provide seniors with the first-ever heritage grant program in the province of Saskatchewan. And I think this letter which says is so succinctly, Mr. Speaker, but so clearly and so from the heart, is a prime example of how seniors are benefiting from the heritage grant program.

You have no idea how this has helped me. You are the only ones that every did anything for me.

Surely, Mr. Speaker, the program speaks for itself. And I think the actions of this government, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to seniors' housing, speak for themselves. The motion today, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member opposite interjects from his seat and says that the debate in essence should come to an end. I think that's what he's saying when he speaks from his seat. Perhaps his conscience bothers him a little bit because he used to be one of the NDP cabinet ministers when they had the opportunity to build 1,500 nursing home beds for seniors. But instead they put a moratorium on it. I think it was the member from Shaunavon who made those remarks.

They had the opportunity to provide seniors with a \$1,000 home repair program for seniors, but the member opposite, I suspect, was more taken up debating take-overs of potash mines or take-over of uranium mines or perhaps — I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, this was a possibility since he comes from rural Saskatchewan — taking money

from the taxpayer and not giving it to seniors, but buying farm land instead.

Well I suspect the housing needs of seniors, the housing needs of seniors suffered in the 1970s and early 1980s because money that should have gone into housing programs went into a socialist land bank scheme — went into a socialist land bank scheme.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that housing is a very important priority for seniors. So whether it's the home repair program, whether it's the seniors' heritage grant program used for housing purposes, whether it's the 1,500 new nursing home beds constructed in the province of Saskatchewan, whether it's the elder suite program, or whether it's the personal alarm program, this government is committed to meeting the needs of seniors.

This resolution before us today should be supported by all members of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, I want to enter this debate, such as it is. I've listened to the members opposite who have a great deal to say about the perceived failings of the housing policy during the '70s, and a great deal less to say about the obvious failings of the housing policy of this government during the '80s.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have repeatedly spoken of the freeze on nursing homes. In fact, there was no freeze on nursing homes. There's been nursing homes built in this province every year since the province began building them decades ago. With the benefit of hindsight, it is possible to suggest that we should have built more nursing homes in the '70s, Mr. Speaker, but I note that that's simply with the benefit of hindsight.

No one was offering that advice at the time. The member from Souris-Cannington did not offer that advice, nor did the member from Kindersley offer that advice, nor did the member from Rosetown offer that advice, nor did the member from Moosomin offer that advice. It is only with the benefit of hindsight that the shortage has developed.

At least I may say — and then I'm going to leave this historical discourse — at least one might say with respect to the '70s that the problem was not obvious. We now have a problem which cries out for attention, which is obvious to all concerned, and a government which is still not tackling it in any meaningful way.

The shortage of nursing homes in this province contributes to an overall malaise in the hospital system. Indeed, senior citizens' housing is probably the single most important element in solving a hospital crisis. While there's more staff needed in the hospitals, there's also a need to take care of senior citizens in a different fashion. Anyone with the slightest acquaintance with our hospital system knows, Mr. Speaker, that there are people in the hospital system who would be better served in a nursing home. There are also, I might say, people who would be better served with a more extensive home care system.

(1630)

This government has done nothing meaningful about either; has waited until the problem boiled over and now can't understand why both nurses and doctors are racing each other up the stairs of the Legislative Building to plant a picket sign in the skull of the Minister of Health. It comes about . . . Well it's not a new situation. It comes about because of the inadequate seniors' housing.

The member from P.A.-Duck Lake is alternatively amused by the problem and critical because he thinks I'm off the subject. Neither is the case. The single most important contribution we could make to solving the crisis in hospitals — that's not too strong a term — is to tackle in a meaningful way the problem of senior citizen housing.

At one end of the spectrum, we have an insufficient amount being spent on home care. At the other end, we have an insufficient amount being spent on nursing homes. The result is an enormously expensive problem in the middle, in hospitals. The most expensive solution in the world to an inadequate number of nursing homes is to leave them all in hospitals. Hospital care is vastly more expensive than nursing home care. Neither one's cheap, but it's a lot cheaper than leaving them in hospitals, which is the current solution.

Walk down any hospital in any major city in Saskatchewan, and room after room after room has people who patently should be in nursing homes. It is the failure of this government to properly deal with the problem of nursing homes. It has backed up, and it is now backed up all the way through the health care system. We thus have, as I say, doctors and nurses arriving virtually simultaneously, and unco-ordinated with each other, to criticize this government for its leadership in health care.

There are a number of things which can and should be done. The most important thing that should be done is to do something about senior citizens' housing. That hasn't been done. There is, I think, while we could use more senior citizens' high-rises — more senior citizens' multi-residential units, I think they're called — while we could use more of those, there isn't the crisis in that regard that there is with respect to nursing homes.

Each year during the 1970s we built about one senior citizens' high-rise a year in my riding, and I can name them all for you, if you want them. I don't suppose that would serve a great deal. That came to a halt in '82 as this government entered into its paralysis by analysis phase which lasted for a couple of years. We now see the pressure building up to the point where not even this government can ignore it, and there is the odd one being built here and there.

There is a need for more of those. There's a lengthy waiting list. Senior citizens' incomes drop . . . peoples incomes drop dramatically when they retire. One of the solutions which they seek to meet that problem is to find residential accommodation which will give them adequate housing at a cost they can afford. The solution which many senior citizens choose is multi-unit residential units, what we call senior citizens' high-rises, or senior citizens' apartments. They're not all high-rises.

I am glad to see . . . If the housing corporation is going to build a housing unit which is free of any problems in my riding, I'm glad to see this break with precedent, Mr. Speaker, because the last one they build was a horror story. It is in part resolved, but only in part. It's Davis Mews.

I was canvassing in Davis Mews during the federal election . . . I say this to illustrate the problem. I was canvassing in Davis Mews during the federal election, and it was very hot in '84, outside, and I thus didn't notice the heat inside until I'd been in the building for a while, and I realized it was unordinarily hot. I went and found the thermometer which I had seen earlier in the hall. The temperature in the hallway in the senior citizens' high-rise was 91 degrees Fahrenheit. That situation, I found out as I canvassed through the building, had been the subject of endless complaints to the minister opposite, the ministers opposite, both the member from Saskatoon Sutherland and the member from P.A.-Duck Lake. Both had blissfully ignored it.

We then began a campaign to attempt to remedy the problem. The problem was that the paralysis by analysis had extended further than that. After the election in 1982 they had changed the plans on what was supposed to have been air conditioned. The air conditioning was cut to save costs. The result was that the rooms were left with windows which were virtually impossible to open. One little square window that you couldn't scarcely throw a box out, a small box out, was the only ventilation in the entire suite. They turned into ovens.

Senior citizens, who I think would be the first to admit, are probably less able to cope with extremes in temperature, much less so than young people. After a campaign of many months in which I wrote letters, senior citizens wrote letters, they finally got some air conditioning in the halls. That has helped somewhat; it's not a complete solution.

So if they're now going to build, as the member from P.A.-Duck Lake says, if they're now going to build an apartment block in my riding which is going to be trouble free, then . . . Now I see him shaking his head. No I don't think they will. I tend to think this may be the first honest comment the member has made in some time. It is certainly going to be a break with precedent because the past efforts have been badly flawed, badly flawed by people who simply . . . by members opposite who simply don't listen.

I think important to senior citizens, the whole housing market is a single market, and of course when you provide houses in the market, you provide houses for senior citizens. One of the programs which occurred by sheer coincidence was a juxtaposition of two programs — one federal, one provincial.

An Hon. Member: — That's a good word. I like that.

Mr. Shillington: — That's a good word, isn't it? Yes. The member from Redberry likes that contribution to the language.

We had this government introduce a program, a \$3,000 program which provided a \$3,000 grant for new home builders. Almost simultaneously the federal government announcement the same program. We were able to stack them, and thus during 1983 there were . . . a \$6,000 grant for new home owners. Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to see that in a way. In a way the program was badly flawed, but in a way I was pleased to see it.

I have, for one, been concerned about the number of new homes that we have been building in this province. For many, many years we built 8 to 10 to 12,000 new homes a year. Under this administration that number has dropped to 4 and 5,000. While in this recession — not caused by the Conservative government, but contributed to by a failure to take any steps to alleviate the problem — while in this current recession the demand may not catch up with us; in due course it will.

In due course, no matter how hard it's raining, the clouds will break, the sun will start to shine again, and normal economic times will return. It's part of the cycle of an economy such as ours. I see the member from P.A. in the back nodding his head vigorously at this recitation of economics. Eventually the clouds are going to break; eventually normal times are going to return.

When it does, a home building program of 4 to 5,000 units a year is going to haunt us because there's going to be a pent-up demand. That is going to make itself felt in the market, and that is going to result in a rapid escalation of housing costs unless we deal with the problem.

That occurred before, Mr. Speaker, during the late '60s and early '70s. We built very few new homes in this province. In the first half of the '70s housing prices doubled and trebled in this city because there was a pent-up demand. It is going to happen again unless we take some steps to deal with the problem.

That is why I say in one sense I was pleased to see some modest effort, however modest, on the part of the government opposite to induce more homes being built. The problem was that it was too short. It created a real bubble in the market. In 1983 the number of new houses being built shot up dramatically and the cost of construction went up, the land titles system got badly plugged, and the usual ills befell us which befell us when you inspire too much demand too quickly.

Our program, Mr. Speaker, which I announced on April 3rd, and which has been the subject of good deal of favourable comments by the public, and a great deal of adverse comment by members opposite who wished they had done it themselves . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, the member from P.A. says it has not been the subject of adverse comment by members opposite. Well I'm pleased to see there are some members opposite who are honest — a couple of honest ones.

Mr. Speaker, our program provides for a \$7,000 subsidy. In constant dollars that's less than the \$6,000 in 1983 — a good deal less, actually. That, Mr. Speaker, will I think give us a sufficient incentive for people to go out and build houses. That in fact, Mr. Speaker, gives you your down payment on a modestly priced new house. That,

Mr. Speaker, enables young people to buy a house.

I have heard members opposite say that nobody should get something for nothing; you shouldn't give them the down payment. Give them the down payment and they'll wreck the house. They won't look after it and they won't make the payments. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In many ways a home and a house is an embodiment of ourselves. This is the material extension of ourselves. Few things are as important to people as the home they live in. While people may be a little rough on the back fence or the garbage can, I don't think they treat their house to quite the same fashion. I don't think it's going to matter one whit whether they put up a down payment or not. I think they will take what time is available to them, what resource is available to them, and they'll look after the house and the homes every bit as well as if they put the down payment down.

So I don't share the criticism of members opposite who say that if you give them the down payment you're going to spoil them and they won't look after it, and they won't make their payments. I think that's nonsense. We all, except for some very rare individuals, have an emotional attachment to the house we live in, Mr. Speaker, so I have no hesitation and no apology for the \$7,000 down payment, for the \$7,000 grant to build a new house. It provides, Mr. Speaker, an incentive to build new houses. It provides young people with a means of getting into a new house and it will spur on new houses.

In the long run, history has shown that these things run in waves. Housing demands will build up to a breakneck pace resulting in a rapid escalation of prices which means that the older portion of our population are suddenly enriched because their houses become worth a great deal more than what they ever anticipated. Young people are impoverished. That is not a very healthy way to develop a housing system.

A system which continues to build enough new houses to meet the market for everybody is in the best interests to continue with the inordinarily low number of new homes being built so that eventually the prices of their homes would increase in value because of a shortage. I don't think any of them would argue that. Senior citizens, in addition to everything else, in addition to a number of other fine qualities, do have a sense of responsibility for society in the future that's sometimes lacking in young people in a strange way.

(1645)

So I think the \$7,000 will (a) enable young people to buy a house. It will spur the building of homes. We need that because we're not building enough houses now. We need it as well because we need the jobs. This party is not content to see 46,000 people unemployed in Saskatchewan. When you think about it, that is an

enormous waste of talent and manpower, and it marks an enormous amount of suffering as well. I think all of us have had some experience with unemployment. I think we've all got to know some people who have been unemployed, many of them for the first time in their life. And given the likelihood of a Tory government ever returning, it's probably the last time in their life that they'll ever have to put up with this. All of us have got to know some of these people. It really has marked an inordinate amount of suffering.

So the housing program which we have . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well members opposite, if they haven't experienced unemployment, just call the election and you'll get your chance to share this human experience. Just call the election and you'll have your opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, we need the jobs; we need the homes. Much of the \$7,000 is going to return to the government in terms of taxes because it circulates throughout the economy. It's spent over and over. If a \$7,000 grant results in the construction of a \$70,000 house, then patently it's a good investment for the government as well, because you're going to get more than \$7,000 back in taxes. So I say that the \$7,000, even in the relatively short run, in the period of two to three years, is not an expensive program.

Part of our program as well, Mr. Speaker, provides a \$7,000 grant to assist people in the construction of older homes, assist them in renovating older homes — the \$7,000 which is available. We do that for a variety of reasons, Mr. Speaker. We do that because we need to provide older homes with an enhancement in terms of their resale value. We need to ensure that there's a ready market for those.

And we need to assist people who live in older homes. I suspect that people who live in older homes, while they cut across a wide variety of the social spectrum, probably are, on the average, lower income than people who live in the newer homes. So we need the program so that this assistance goes to lower income people. We also need it to make sure that older homes are saleable, are looked after. And of course the same thing applies, Mr. Speaker. This construction grant provides work for tradesmen. It often provides work for tradesmen who are not part of any large company, which are self-employed, and it will provide work for some people who are having a great deal of difficulty finding it.

It will provide work for people. It will provide . . . It'll increase the saleability of older homes and will provide, Mr. Speaker, for a smoother flow through the system of the sale of house. As people want . . . Many people who are going to build a new home will want to sell an old one. This grant, by enabling them to fix up the older home, will make these houses more saleable and thus will assist the program in flowing through.

It will avoid some of the distortions that were created by the short-lived, if well-intended, program in 1983, about which I might add . . . The 1983 program, I might add, is one that is . . . anyone connected with the industry is at this point in time critical of, even real estate agents. I met with a group of them the other day. They said, well-intended effort but fatally flawed, and it created a

distortion in the market which we are still . . . and we're still suffering from the results of that program.

An Hon. Member: — Who said that? Name them.

Mr. Shillington: — Well I don't have the permission to name them. I don't have the permission. The member from P.A.-Duck Lake wants to know the name of it. Suffice it to say that we met with the executive of the Regina . . . If members opposite would stop yelling from their seats, I could tell them. It is difficult, I will admit, Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to yell over 20 braying jackasses opposite. If you'll be quiet, I'll tell you who we met with.

We met with the executive of the Regina Real Estate Association. The views were put forward as the views of the Regina Real Estate Association. So while I'm not . . . That's the point I was going to say earlier. I'm not going to name names, because I don't think I have their permission to use their name publicly. I do think we have permission to use the language of the . . . use the name of the Regina Real Estate Association . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, because . . . I don't . . . This seems to make them nervous.

It makes them nervous, Mr. Speaker, because this, I suppose, was a group upon whom the Conservatives counted upon for undying support. Well I'm not so sure that that is the case. I think they objectively evaluate each government's performance the same as everyone else does, and I think they find many of the efforts of this government sorely wanting.

Mr. Speaker, the final part of the program is the 7 per cent interest rate. If we are going to build new houses to (a) ensure a more orderly market over the long run . . . Long-range planning by members opposite consists of worrying about what's going to happen next month. Short-run planning, dis-enables them to worry about what's going to happen tomorrow — they're concerned about today.

Mr. Speaker, members of the New Democratic Party want to take a longer-run view of the thing. You can't provide leadership to a government worrying about next month. We, Mr. Speaker, are worrying about . . . We, Mr. Speaker, are attempting to provide leadership for over a longer term. To do that, Mr. Speaker, you need to ask yourself: what do people need to spur them to build new homes?

We think that the \$7,000 grant will do that. We think the \$7,000 grant for renovation of older homes will assist in that by providing an orderly market. We think, as well, the guarantee of a 7 per cent mortgage is the final leg of what is probably a three-legged stool . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Mr. Speaker . . . well that has been the question. The member from . . . such brilliance and such dominance in this House, I can almost remember your name and your riding. It might be Melfort. The member from Melfort asks, how much is it going to cost? That's a fair question. The answer is, it depends upon what the interest rates are during the period of time it's in effect.

Now if members opposite will give me a gold, gilt-edged certificate telling me what the interest rates are going to be over the seven years, I'll give them a cost, and it's not hard to do. The cost of the program, if you assume you are subsidizing . . . The cost of the program is, we believe, about \$20 million per per cent of subsidy. So, Mr. Speaker, if the program began at a cost of some \$80 million, it now costs a good deal less than that because interest rates have been falling.

Indeed, I note the Economic Council of Canada predicting interest rates of 7 per cent plus — in the 7 per cent range. If that happens, Mr. Speaker, the program will cost very little.

Members opposite ought to recognize this because that's precisely what happened in 1982. You introduced a program during the '82 election which might have been enormously expensive. When you announced that, interest rates were running at about 21 per cent. By the time you got around to getting it into effect interest rates had dropped to 15, and the program scarcely cost this government very much.

Mr. Speaker, the 7 per cent program is our best guess as to what is a reasonable peg. We wanted to peg it below the market, but not at an inordinately low level. So far economic events are proving us right.

I said to the same real estate people that in . . . Government is not unlike a business. You inform yourself of the facts, analyse them as best you can, but in the end result you roll the dice and you hope that you correctly judged events. That's what you do in business. The member for Moose Jaw South — North, whatever it may be — will now. And that's what you do in government.

Mr. Speaker, we may be wrong about the interest rates, but I don't think we are. We are running, Mr. Speaker . . . We are supporting our position with respect to interest rates . . . We have, Mr. Speaker, to support us with respect to our position on interest rates, a number of respected economic bodies, and we have the course of recent events. Interest rates are dropping, and they have come down fairly markedly.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, the chances are fairly good that it will be an affordable program. It is an effort, Mr. Speaker, to assure that when those young people buy homes that they will be able to afford them. One of the problems with the programs which this government introduced is it sometimes got people into homes which they couldn't afford. We are attempting to avoid that by giving them, not only assistance with the down payment, but an assurance of a guaranteed interest rate.

The assumption, Mr. Speaker, during the '70s and '60s was that you could go out on a limb because your payments would remain relatively stable while your income went up. Many, many young people bought houses they couldn't afford in the late '60s and '70s and, Mr. Speaker, it worked. In an era of 15, 20 per cent inflation, it didn't take long before that payment which really was beyond your means was affordable. Then after a few years it got so that it was highly affordable.

There's no assurance, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, if you don't believe I said that, then you need to come back and spend some time in opposition. Any government . . . I say to the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden, any action in life involves some risk; there's nothing assured. There's nothing assured, Mr. Speaker, in government and nothing assured in business. You always have to make the best guess you can and hope that events don't surprise you.

You people . . . The members opposite, with respect to virtually every one of their programs, have engaged in best-case planning. And it has got you into trouble because you've had anything but best-case luck. You've had some bad luck. And I say with respect to this, with respect to the housing program which we have introduced, it has not been best-case planning. We think it's been a realistic estimate based on some sound economic analysis. With respect to interest rates, we think it's affordable. We think it's highly affordable. It's also attractive.

I note, Mr. Speaker, that members opposite have said virtually nothing about the . . . Can anyone remember what the figure was? They had some such faint shade of our program in the budget.

An Hon. Member: — \$3,000.

Mr. Shillington: — My colleague from Athabasca has a sterling memory. He can actually recall the figure; it was \$3,000. I assume members opposite can't recall the figure because they haven't mentioned it since the budget.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Saskatoon Sutherland says nobody's mentioned it. Everybody I talk to asks me about it. Some people are interested in the renovation program; some people are interested in the new home program. Some business men whom I've talked to ask me if I think it's an affordable program. I answered them as I've answered you people; the \$7,000 is largely refundable and the interest rates, Mr. Speaker, are, I think, a realistic . . . (inaudible) . . . of the interest rate.

There is, Mr. Speaker, something useful from members opposite. I'm reminded from the chatter opposite that it's the House Leader's plan not to reconvene at seven but to adjourn, and if I keep talking for much longer, we're going to be back here at 7 o'clock. So I will sit down and give him a moment before 5 o'clock to adjourn the House.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 o'clock.