

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to welcome to the House 18 grade 7 and 8 students from St. Margaret School in the constituency of Moose Jaw South. With them today is their teacher, Mr. Claude Morin, and their chaperon, Mrs. Thingvold. I'm sure they have already enjoyed the tour of the building, and I hope they will enjoy question period. I look forward to meeting with them immediately following question period. I would ask all members to, with me, welcome these students.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Through you, and to all members of the House, I'd like to introduce 19 students, grades 7 and 8, seated in east gallery. They're from Drake School in my constituency. Attending with them is their teacher, Lyle Emmons, Donna Balon, Judy Dumanski, and Esther Laskowski. I want to welcome the students and their chaperons here today, and their teacher.

I hope you enjoy the proceedings, and shortly after the question period I'll have the pleasure of joining with you for a few drinks and some questions and some information with respect to the operation of the House.

Will all members join with me to welcome the students.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, it's a great pleasure for me to introduce to you and through you, Miss Regina, a member of my constituency. She is with her father. I'd like to introduce Donna Rybchuk and her father, Metro Rybchuk.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, I know that all members will wish her the very best when she competes in the Miss Canada Pageant in October.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to members of the Assembly a number of students from Regina Plains Community College, from the University of Regina, and from the Wascana Institute, who are seated in all three galleries today. We want to welcome these students to the Assembly. I'm sure they'll enjoy the question period and the ensuing debate. And would you extend a warm welcome to them, please.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, members will know

that there is in Regina a cancer patient lodge where cancer patients, who are receiving treatment, house themselves. And it has been a custom to have some patients visit our Assembly, and it is happening again today. And I would like, Mr. Speaker, to introduce to you, and to all members of the House, some nine patients seated in the Speaker's gallery who are here with their staff member, Shirley Murray, and with two volunteer drivers, Mary Backman and Merna Kew.

I hope they will enjoy their stay with us. It has been something of a custom for them to come. I look forward to meeting with them after question period in the Speaker's boardroom when we can have an opportunity to discuss the proceedings they have witnessed. And I ask all hon. members to assist me in greeting them here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to draw your attention and, through you to the members of the House, introduce a group of 23 grade 5 students from the Stewart Russell Elementary School in the constituency of Regina North East in the city. It's a great way to spend the last day of school prior to Friday, when I think they'll be getting their report cards, which I'm sure all will be terrific report cards.

Also with the students are their teacher, June Heinrichs, and chaperons, Bryan Dovell, Georgina Fluter, Dale Gerhardt, Tracy Loewen and Glenn Loewen, Glen Martens, Shirley Morphy, and Joan Pelzer. Please join with me, Mr. Speaker, and members, in welcoming these students and extending to them our best wishes for a very enjoyable and educational stay in the legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Minister of Urban Affairs I, too, would like to welcome Miss Regina to this Chamber. As the member for Regina South, it's very encouraging to see her attend as Miss Canada.

But I should tell her and the Assembly that I have had the opportunity of meeting Miss Prince Albert on the weekend and my wife served as a judge, with due respect to the Moose Jaw pageant, who will also be attending. And the competition is going to be very, very difficult, but I'm proud to say we have some young, talented, beautiful young ladies representing Saskatchewan as only they can. Welcome to the legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Cuts at Saskatchewan Technical Institutes

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Education, my question is to the Premier, and it concerns the cuts that the government has made in the courses, in the student spaces, and the instructional staff at Saskatchewan's technical institutes.

And my first question deals with the Kelsey Institute in

Saskatoon. The cuts at Kelsey have all but devastated that institution. There have been fired 74 instructors, another 39 forced to take early retirement, six programs have been abolished, and there have been dramatic cut-backs in 12 more.

My question, Mr. Premier, is this: how can you justify wiping out hundreds of student training spaces at the Kelsey Institute, where over 4,700 students are waiting to get in next year, and there are only just over 1,000 training spaces available? Under those circumstances, why cut courses? Why cut space? Why cut staff?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, in response to the hon. member, he will know that we increased funding to technical schools 21 per cent since we've been in office in our first term. During that period of time we built a brand-new technical school in Prince Albert.

And looking at the classes that need to be taught to stay competitive with Americans, with Japanese, with Europeans and others, we found, in consulting with people in education, that some new classes needed to be taught, and that in fact some instructors needed upgrading. And in some cases, Mr. Speaker, we found that not many students at all were attending particular classes, maybe just a handful, and in other cases we found that when they did graduate they couldn't find the appropriate market for their skills because the classes were no longer as relevant as they could be.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are modifying and rebuilding the educational system so in fact the students will be taking what's appropriate, so that the classes will be appropriate to fit the market conditions of today. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, we have expanded the technical school by 21 per cent, when you look at the increase in funding from 1982 through 1986-87.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Students who are speaking with us are asking for protection from your rebuilding.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — I refer now to the Wascana Institute and the cuts you have made there such as in accounting, administrative studies, and business programming, where I am advised there has been a good opportunity to get jobs. And the cuts, as I understand it, Mr. Premier, will force students in these courses to move to other cities to complete their studies. In many cases they're half-way through their course.

My question is this: will Wascana Institute students, forced to move for the most part to STI in Moose Jaw to complete their courses, receive any financial assistance to relocate in Moose Jaw, or any travel assistance to commute to Moose Jaw, since they are being interrupted in the middle of their course, and since this is being brought about by a decision of your government? Will you help these students to complete the courses which they have already commenced?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that people come from Kindersley, and they come from North Battleford, and they come from Prince Albert, and they may come from Estevan to go to technical schools and Wascana Institute in Regina. So they don't just all live in Regina. When we provide an educational program that is specialized — and some will be specialized in Regina; some will be in Prince Albert; and some will be in Moose Jaw — then it's appropriate that people take the classes there. Now we can't have all the areas of specialization in every jurisdiction or every community.

With the advice of the technical school people and educational people, they say, specialize in this area in Moose Jaw; specialize this area in Wascana . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — . . . specialize in this area in Prince Albert, which I believe you'll see will be the case. The same applies to Kelsey. With our increase in expenditures, we're asking for specialization, and the students will pick up on the classes. Now you have to begin sometime. If you said you would begin three years from now or five years from now, we're saying, in reviewing the entire system to date, that the specialization and the new upgrading in classes is necessary. Some retraining of technical people and professors is necessary, and some new classes are necessary.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Quick supplementary, Mr. Premier. If I accept your view that the technical institutes should specialize, and therefore somebody might have to go to Prince Albert for one course and Moose Jaw for another, do you not recognize that where you interrupt the student in the middle of the course, there is a separate situation and you ought to assist that student to relocate — relocate because of a decision which you made to interrupt his course in the middle of its pursuit?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, if a student is allowed to finish one year here . . . I mean, I'm sure you have attended more than one university, and I have, and many here have. So when you're in your post-secondary education, you can go for a year at the University of Saskatchewan, a year at the University of Alberta, and you may finish your . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that if you can get your appropriate classes and you're going to have specialization which gives you a better education, a more marketable education, but you have to go to another campus to finish it, that's not unreasonable. In fact, students do it all the time.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, again in the absence of the minister I direct my question to the Premier. And I want to ask you, Mr. Premier, about the way your government

cast aside the more than 140 instructors of technical institutes in Saskatchewan. I want to say that I find particularly appalling the way that the former principal of the STI (Saskatchewan Technical Institute) in Moose Jaw, Dr. Andy Nicol, was dismissed.

And let me make it clear that my question is about the way that he was dismissed. And you will know, Mr. Premier, that he was dismissed without notice, while he was supervised to clear out his desk immediately, was given the infamous "red box" treatment that has become a characteristic of dismissals in the Government of Saskatchewan. He was then escorted from the building, was told he could not even attend the graduation ceremony which was scheduled to happen a few days later.

That's just one of the examples, Mr. Premier. And I ask you, how can you justify this kind of disgusting, inhumane treatment of professional educators in Saskatchewan who have dedicated themselves to students and the people of Saskatchewan? Can you justify that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I can tell the hon. member from Moose Jaw that the . . . His Worship the mayor, Scoop Lewry, from Moose Jaw, wrote me with respect to Dr. Nicol and asked me to examine what was happening with respect to Dr. Nicol. I responded to His Worship the mayor, and I said Dr. Nicol can teach and has taught for some time. I said we are putting together a consolidation and Dr. Nicol will be able to apply for any number of positions that are available, and that he will be, and in fact he will be in . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, let me add specifically, with respect to changing departments or changing any process. Let me say this. The hon. member's probably had some classes at university; members here on either side have probably gone to school. I've had several, probably 10 years of it. I have never had a class . . . I've never had a class at university that showed me or told me in theory or in any other way how you can down-size or modify a department and make all the employees . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Order.

Mr. Hagel: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Let me repeat the question, because I asked a specific question. I would like a specific answer to the specific question. Are you proud of the way that you dismissed the principal of the STI (Saskatchewan Technical Institute), and will you justify it for the people of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I can understand. I can understand why it would be difficult for anybody to be advised that their position is no longer there. I can understand that. It's not . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. He is answering

the question — perhaps not exactly the way some members might like, but it is on the topic.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, it's never very easy when you have a position that will be vacant and you inform the individual that it will be vacant. It's not easy. And I understand that, and I have some sympathy — and a great deal of sympathy — for people who have to experience that.

Nobody ever said that it would be simple to change a department from this to this. You advise me how you would change a department, how you would consolidate, or how you would down-size and make it easy for the people who you advise and say, this position is no longer relevant.

Mr. Speaker, I have sympathy for the individuals that have to experience the fact that their position is no longer relevant. In many cases, we're going to have to modify it, and we have.

Elimination of Saskatchewan Student Bursary Program

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier, again, in the absence of the Minister of Education. And it concerns the elimination of the Saskatchewan student bursary program announced in last week's budget.

You've replaced student bursaries, which don't have to be paid back, with student loans that do have to be paid back. You claim that these new student loans are forgivable loans, based on academic performance. But my enquiries reveal that a student must now take out nearly \$6,000 in student loans before any portion of that loan is deemed forgivable. And even then, only that portion above the 6,000 is redeemable. My question is: will you now admit, Mr. Premier, that this change which destroys the student bursary program forces students to go heavily into debt to get an education? And further, will you admit that this kind of debt load represents an enormous obstacle for low-income students and middle-income students to be able to afford an education? Will you acknowledge that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I certainly won't acknowledge that. I can acknowledge to the students and to the parents and to the people of Saskatchewan that our funding for universities is up 38 per cent, is the highest in western Canada, in our first term of office — 38 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, no other administration provided 6 per cent money to students, and the loan bursary combination has always been there as I understand it. You've had some loans and you've had some bursaries. And to ask for performance and say that you're going to be able to forgive some of the money that's going to the students based on performance, I believe, is something that has been recommended by academics and by parents and by people in the community.

They appreciate that we've got 6 per cent money there. They appreciate the fact that we have increased our

funding to universities 38 per cent, and the combination of student loans and of bursaries and the increase in funding is precisely what people have been asking for.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Premier, you know that, under the former NDP government, in 1981 students only have to borrow \$1,100 in loan before they got a bursary. Then your government was elected, and the amount they had to borrow doubled. Now today you're telling students that they need to borrow \$5,940 in loan before they get a bursary.

Mr. Premier, will you acknowledge that today in Saskatchewan students have to borrow five times as much in the form of a loan compared with what they did in 1981 before they're eligible for a bursary. Now do you honestly . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Order! I think that the member is going on a little bit too long in the preamble to his question. Please put the question.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Speaker, my question is: will you acknowledge that students now have to borrow five times as much as they did in 1981 before they can get a bursary, and will you further acknowledge that this is, in effect, creating a new generation of students that are going to leave university with debts of at least \$25,000? Will you acknowledge that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — No, Mr. Speaker, I won't acknowledge that. The students in the province of Saskatchewan know that they've had more funding and more protection than they've ever had in the history of education in the province of Saskatchewan.

The fact that we would increase our expenditures and protect students . . . And you can look at other jurisdictions, and we've compared the figures. The members opposite may not want to review them and look at them, but in our jurisdictions, increase in funding is up 38 per cent, and we've provided the low-interest loans which were never provided before. In fact, if I just might add, Mr. Speaker, in 1982 when we were first elected, interest rates . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You mention interest rates. Interest rates were at 20 percent, and you didn't do a thing to help students — nothing to help students when interest rates were 20 per cent. We stepped in and said, the cap will be 6 per cent for students, and they've welcomed that ever since we've done it.

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Before question period goes on any further, I'd just like to make one or two comments about the questions and the answers, and I don't mean to cast blame on specific individuals, but I think if we were listening to some of the supplementaries, they kind of have a little long of preamble, and while they place a question, sometimes they have two parts. Sometimes the answers are going on a little longer than they need to, and in order for us to have a good, crisp question period, I'd like all members to keep those things in mind.

Mr. Prebble: — One final supplementary, MR. Speaker. My question to the Premier will be very short indeed. Mr. Premier, during the election you said you were going to make post-secondary education more accessible to students. Before the election students only had to borrow \$2,680 in loan before they got a bursary. Why is it that after the election, you've broken your promise to students and are now requiring them to borrow \$5,940 in loan before they get a bursary? Why have you broken your promise?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is saying to me and to students that he doesn't believe in performance. And if there's any relationship, it would be between performance and bursaries and loans. Mr. Speaker, the graduates from the university and the technical schools are going to have to compete in the real world when it comes to performance to get the jobs . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Order, please. Order, please. Please allow the Premier to answer the question.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, we are providing more funds for university than we have in the history of Saskatchewan. That's a fact. And, Mr. Speaker, we're basing some of the money we're providing to students on the basis of performance of academic careers. Now I believe there's a link, and a legitimate link between performance and the funds that are going to students. And I believe most Saskatchewan people would agree with me, and that's precisely why we've provided . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Changes Made to Saskatchewan Community Colleges

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Education I would direct this question to the Premier. It concerns the drastic changes that the Department of Education has made to Saskatchewan's 15 community colleges. The four urban community colleges have been swallowed up by your new centralized technical institute, losing their local boards and their local autonomy in the process. This fact was a particular concern in my constituency of Prince Albert, where the Prince Albert Regional College, which not only had an autonomous local board, but also had four board members elected by the community.

My question is, Mr. Speaker: how does your decision to centralize education jive with your government's and your party's position to decentralize government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to specialization and decentralization, there's a place for both. If I might use an example. Today I opened a brand new crop insurance building in Melville, okay, which is decentralization. Okay? And that corporation is among the farmers, it's in rural Saskatchewan, and it's very successful and very positive, both for people here and outside.

When you're looking at education, I just went through the exercise of explaining to the hon. member, the Leader of the Opposition, that we need to specialize. And we can't have a little smattering of everything on every campus or every community college, because you won't get the quality of education — the quality.

Now when we want to provide that quality we're going to consolidate and say, in this area, in this junior college, we will be able to provide top-notch quality here. In technical schools we'll be able to provide the quality in this area.

In Prince Albert, for example, Mr. Speaker, we will teach different classes there than we will in Kelsey, or that we will in Wascana. The University of Regina will not have the same departments and colleges, likely, as the University of Saskatoon, because you shouldn't have either duplication, and you shouldn't have either duplication, and you shouldn't be without quality. So the combination, you can decentralize where it's appropriate . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Supplementary.

Mr. Kowalsky: — The Premier talks about quality. Mr. Premier, your decision to centralize education in this province has already meant loss of instructors and other staff in Saskatchewan's community colleges. Ten more were dismissed in Regina just this morning, and the loss of dozens of courses. Now how can you call this dismissal of these 10 instructors and the loss of dozens of courses here and around the province, progress? How can you call that progress?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, to be fair, the member from Prince Albert could at least acknowledge that a brand-new technical school in Prince Albert is fair if he likes to see growth in education. I have never heard him give me or this administration one bouquet about the new technical institute of Prince Albert. Now he's talking about changing 10 instructors in Regina and he says that's unfair. Well obviously, again in all respects, the members opposite can't have it both ways. You don't give us a bouquet when we build a brand-new technical institute or we add 38 per cent in government funding for universities — not one word of bouquet. When we change 10 instructors, we're going to upgrade them so you can have specialized, fine-quality education — you can condemn.

Well we will provide good education and more institutes and better universities because we will have the courage to make the changes that are right. We won't just sit in the dark and put blinkers on and get defeated twice in a row because we wouldn't make . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — Supplementary. Mr. Premier, the reason you lost two seats in Prince Albert were because you did not consult.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — Neither did you consult with the community colleges before you made sweeping changes. I want to know: do you know, Mr. Minister, that by changing the boundaries of the community colleges that people now in Buckland, just one kilometre north of Prince Albert, have to be serviced by a community college from Nipawin, 140 kilometres away?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I won't accept that information. I will take it on notice to find out if that's, in fact, true. I will say that the minister can respond in specific detail with respect to the boundaries . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order. Next question.

Rumoured Sale of Saskatchewan Transportation Company

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister responsible for Saskatchewan Transportation Company. Mr. Minister, has the Saskatchewan Transportation company been sold to Grey Goose Bus Lines of Manitoba, as is persistently rumoured, or has it been sold to any other firm, and if so, can you please provide this Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan with the full details?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can give the hon. member opposite, and I can give the people of Saskatchewan, the assurance that the bus company, contrary to rumours, perhaps started by members of your party, has not been sold.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because these rumours are so persistent and are so consistent and persistent and passenger and freight is so beneficial to rural Saskatchewan, my question to the minister is simply: is your government in negotiations with Grey Goose, or any other company, for the purchase of STC at this time, at any level, and if so, what is the state of those negotiations?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have already stated to the hon. member opposite that the Saskatchewan Transportation company has not been sold, and I would suggest to the member opposite that if he were here in a co-operative spirit, if he were here in . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order, please.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — If he were here in the best interests of his constituents, he would do his best to go to the people who were starting the rumours about the bus company being sold and inform them that I have given you my assurance that the bus company indeed has not been sold.

Mr. Trew: — My question was very simple: is Saskatchewan Transportation in the process of

negotiating? Are you or anyone from . . . involved with Saskatchewan Transportation Company . . . involved in the negotiation of sale of that company to Grey Goose of Winnipeg or to any other firm? Are you in negotiations for sale? Simple question. Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — I will respond to the hon. member opposite once again. The company has not been sold. You can go back to your people . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — You can go back to your people, whoever is starting the rumours and you can give them that information that the bus company has not been sold. You can also give them the information . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — You can also give them the information that I am not in the process of negotiating with Grey Goose from Winnipeg, or some folks from Halifax, or wherever else you want to come up with these rumours. We are not in the process of negotiations for the sale of the Saskatchewan Transportation Company at this point in time.

Student Centre at University of Regina

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the minister from advanced education, I direct this question to the Premier.

Just before the last provincial election, Mr. Premier, with a great deal of fanfare, your government promised that it would pay 50 per cent of the cost of constructing a new student centre at the University of Regina, and 100 per cent of the cost of day cares in the children's centre in the old building.

During the election the PC party pointed to this promise as evidence of your commitment to the University of Regina, and after the election you betrayed that promise and reneged on it.

Mr. Speaker: — Does the member have a question?

Ms. Simard: — My question is: Mr. Premier, will you do the honourable thing and live up to your commitment now?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague knows, we have deferred several projects, and I can give her an example. We're building a regional hospital in my riding of Estevan. We've raised over \$8 million locally, and we've deferred it because we can't do them all at once.

I am asking my constituents to do that, and people in Prince Albert, or people in Moose Jaw, or people in Regina, and other places. We will build the student centre, but we can't build them all at once when we're short of money — and the hon. member knows that.

So we're asking all constituents and all people of Saskatchewan to bear with us. We have a bigger budget than we did a year ago, I mean increased expenditures. But we're short about a billion dollars because of wheat prices and potash prices. And she complains . . . I'm sure she understands it. If you have a deficit on one hand, and you don't like cuts in the other, and you don't like taxes, you have to come up with an alternative, and I haven't heard any yet.

So yes, Mr. Speaker, we will build it, but we're going to defer it until we can have the money to put them all together in a fair fashion.

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order. Hon. members should know that when the Speaker is on his feet, regardless of how they may feel like making comments, to resist making comments from their desks.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I would like to lay on the Table before the Assembly, the report of the Ombudsman, covering the period January 1, 1986 to December 31, 1986.

STATEMENT BY MR. SPEAKER

Ruling on a Point of Privilege

Mr. Speaker: — Also before orders of the day, I would like to read to the Assembly the following statement: on Thursday, June 18, 1987, the hon. member for Regina Elphinstone raised a point of privilege concerning certain statements made outside the House by the Minister of Justice about the Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk. I deferred my ruling at that time.

I have now had an opportunity to review the point raised and the circumstances surrounding it. I first want it clearly understood by all members that it is not the role of the Speaker to decide if the privileges of the Assembly have been breached. I refer all hon. members to *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, Fifth Edition, pages 24 to 25:

(1) A question of order concerns the interpretation to be put upon the rules of procedure and is a matter for the Speaker or, in a committee, for the Chairman to determine.

(2) A question of privilege, on the other hand, is a question partly of fact and partly of law — the law of contempt of Parliament — and is a matter for the House to determine.

(3) It follows that though the Speaker can rule on a question of order, he cannot rule on a question of privilege. His function, when a question of privilege is raised, is limited to deciding whether the matter is of such a character as to entitle the motion, which the Member who has raised the question desires, to move to priority over the Orders of the Day.

The role of Speaker is to review the arguments as presented and to determine, on the face of it, whether a *prima facie* case of privilege has been established. It is thus quite properly up to the Assembly as a whole to decide whether any privileges have been breached.

With regard to the role of the Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk, it is her role and duty to advise the Chair and all members equally and impartially. It is the duty of the Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk to offer opinions when requested from any member of the Legislative Assembly and, once that opinion is given, it is beyond the control of the Law Clerk as to how it is used. It is then the responsibility of the member to act in such a way as to protect the independent status of the officer of the Assembly.

With respect to the specific point of privilege, I refer all hon. members to Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice*, Twentieth Edition, page 162:

Both Houses will treat as breaches of their privileges, not only acts directly tending to obstruct their officers in the execution of their duty, but also any conduct which may tend to deter them from doing their duty in the future.

From this quotation from Erskine May, it is clear that any action which may tend to deter a parliamentary officer from doing his or her duty may be considered to be a breach of the privileges of parliament. It is vital, if parliament is to get fair and impartial service from its officers, that these officers must be defended from intimidation while conducting their duties. Critical comments attacking the competence of and credibility of an individual can be construed as a form of obstruction.

I do feel that remarks made by the member may have harmed the credibility of the Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk and may have drawn into question her capacity to serve the Leader of the Opposition. While a member may disagree with a particular legal opinion, in this case the Minister's remarks may have gone beyond the bounds of fair comment. Because the officer's capacity to carry out her function may be inhibited, I find that this matter is of sufficient concern to merit consideration by the Assembly. I find that a *prima facie* case of privilege has been established and I leave the matter in the hands of the Assembly.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, you have made the particular ruling on the motion by the Leader of the Opposition. And out of respect for this institution, and in the interests of seeing that this matter is dealt with in a very expedient manner, I would at this time unequivocally apologize to the House and to the Law Clerk for the statements that I made.

I agree that the ruling that we must not and should not attack, whether it's the clerks or anybody involved in that, and for that I certainly apologize to them and apologize to this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker: — I accept the member's apology. Does the House accept it?

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank you for your statement which dealt with the situation in the manner which I think is indicated. I am not being presumptuous here; I am simply saying that your statement, as I heard it, seemed to establish points which I felt ought to be established.

The first is that statements by members reflecting on the competence or impartiality of officers of the House constitute a breach of privileges of all members of the House, and that those statements therefore are a breach of privilege, or the House can decide they are, and that by this rule we as members protect our officers.

We are not speaking only of Legislative Counsel, but of the Ombudsman and the Clerk and the Provincial Auditor and similar officers who report to the House, and in some cases whose professional reputation is all they have.

Mr. Speaker: — I would like to ask the Leader of the Opposition if it is his intention to move a motion. If it is not his intention to move a motion, then it is not the tradition of this House to have a member speak to the ruling on a point of privilege.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I will move a motion, and I will need to have it written out.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by my colleague, the member for Saskatoon Riversdale:

That this House accepts the apology of the Minister of Justice with respect to statements reflecting on the credibility of the Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk, and confirms that a reflection on the credibility of an officer of the Assembly represents a breach of privilege of this Assembly.

That's all I will say, because I think that covers the ground and I don't want to get overly controversial. I had, Mr. Speaker, a different motion and, Mr. Speaker, I will send a written copy of that in a moment.

You, Mr. Speaker, quoted from *Erskine May* at page 155. I want to make a couple of points. I first want to thank the Minister of Justice for his gracious apology. I feel that these statements were inappropriate — grossly inappropriate — and I think particularly so because he was Minister of Justice and reflecting on the legal officer of the House. He has tendered an apology, both directed to Legislative Counsel and to this House, and I do not intend therefore to bring any other adjectives to mind in describing the particular comments of the minister.

I want to refer to some comments of the Government House Leader when he, as it seemed to me, attempted to assert that parliamentary privilege did not extend to officers of the Assembly. It may well have been that it was the Deputy Premier. And I think that that has now been disposed of by your ruling. I think that the Deputy Premier was incorrect, and the many citations which you might have cited and the one which you did cite, Mr. Speaker, put that matter to rest. These are breaches of the privilege of the House, and that is why we're dealing with it.

(1445)

I was particularly distressed that the minister indicated unhappiness with the opinion of the Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk without offering any alternative opinion and, as I suggested, where in the case of a minister of Justice that represents, I think, a particular concern for the House.

My point, sir, is this, recognized I think now by all members: that if we, as members, attack the officers of this House in their professional capacity, without any evidence being adduced, as was the case in this instance, we thereby announce to the officers of the Assembly that they are likely to be reflected upon in their professional capacity if they act in a manner which is unacceptable to a minister of the Crown. And that of course goes to the very root of what members can expect from officers of the Legislative Assembly, and will clearly discourage them in the performance of their duties. I think, Mr. Speaker, I will not go beyond this point. You have established the matter from the point of view of its legal basis. I accept the apology of the member for Kindersley in his acceptance of the impropriety of his remarks, and I accordingly will repeat my motion:

That this House accepts the apology of the Minister of Justice with respect to his public remarks attacking the credibility of the Legislative Counsel and Law Clerk, and confirms that those remarks constituted a breach of the privileges of this Assembly.

And if I may say as an aside, Mr. Speaker, if the Clerk needs any assistance in the deciphering of this particular document, I refer him to the member for Riversdale, the House Leader.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE (BUDGET DEBATE)

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. Lane that the Assembly resolve itself into the Committee of Finance, and the amendment thereto moved by Mr. Tchorzewski.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, when I left off last night I was speaking about day care. However, because there were so many questions that arose today in question period concerning education, I'd like to just quickly go back and talk a little bit about some of the educational opportunities that now are available in this province as a result of the Progressive Conservative government.

For instance, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan ... the PC government has substantially increased funding to universities, as the Premier mentioned just a few moments ago. We introduced a core curriculum which is a core curriculum designed for students from

kindergarten to grade 12, and that was designed to upgrade the kindergarten to grade 12. Mr. Speaker, teachers across the province are hailing that with great applause because they feel that it's the finest thing that's happened in the lower levels of education in a long, long time.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that has happened as a result of community colleges becoming regional colleges is the fact that now first-year and second-year university classes are now available, will be available in the regional colleges beginning in Prince Albert, and following through in the other regional college centres. Women with children now have access to university because of this opportunity. No longer will they have to drive long distances in order to get first- and second-year universities. If they live near Prince ... if they live in Prince Albert, they can go there ... no longer have to drive to Saskatoon or other areas, to Regina. This'll be a great opportunity for them. I might add, too, that women with young children who wish to attend community colleges or technical schools or universities are given additional bursaries to help them through their difficult times.

Mr. Speaker, we also have created opportunities for natives who will now have a say in the operation of the new science and technology institution in the province, and I'm sure they'll be very delighted to hear that and will be strong supporters and contributors to that program.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when I left off last night I was speaking about day care. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, a day or so ago, made reference to what he suggested was an uncaring government to social issues. Mind you, it's not surprising, that's an old NDP tactic — scare and threaten — peddling the politics of fear, and we expect that of them, Mr. Speaker. So let me straighten him out with only one example. And it relates specifically to the critical issue of day care; how the NDP ignored day care and how the Progressive Conservative responded to the needs of day care. For instance, this government has increased the number of spaces available in day care centres by nearly 2,000. That's responding to the needs of the people.

Mr. Speaker, through to 1970, those concerned with day care lobbied the previous administration, the NDP, for help, and time and again they asked the NDP for help in organizing day-care centres. But they were ignored by the NDP — they're ignored in day care as they were in so many other areas of social need during the '70s. But the Grant Devine government has responded. In 1986, the government of Devine introduced operating grants for day-care centres. We responded, Mr. Speaker, to help cover the costs of operating day-care centres. The NDP ignored this critical and important issue. We cared. We delivered.

Mr. Speaker, when one looks back over the history of this province during the years of the NDP government, specifically through the '70s, it is absolutely astounding to see how the NDP callously ignored the needs of the people of Saskatchewan. Mind you, Mr. Speaker, this was a government that stumbled through the 1970s without a clear policy, without a grand plan with which to face the

challenges of the future. And even today, after two rejections by the people of this province, they still don't have a clear policy on anything — just the same old line, the same old repressive NDP dogma that the state knows best.

But it's not surprising, really, that they don't have a clear policy, because they have a leader who can't decide if he's staying or if he's leaving; a potential leadership candidate from Saskatoon riverside, Riversdale rather, who can't decide if he wants to go federal or stay provincial; a financial critic from Regina East who can barely get his foot in the door to run for the leadership campaign; and now emerging a potential leadership candidate from The Battlefords who does not believe in free enterprise in a city that is thriving in new business. So it's not surprising, Mr. Speaker, it's the same old NDP stuff — they haven't had a new idea since potash nationalization.

Mr. Speaker, I want to clear up a couple of other matters with the member from Moose Jaw North. The member from Moose Jaw North spoke of battered women's homes or, as they are sometimes called, transition houses. I want to point out to the member that since 1982, when the Progressive Conservative government took office, funding to battered women's homes has tripled, Mr. Speaker. The funding to transition homes, to battered women's homes, has tripled under this government. That's caring; that's sharing.

He suggested that the people of the province would cheat on their gas tax receipts, which I find quite astounding. Mr. Speaker, we believe, we trust the people of this province, just as they trust us to do what is right for Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, they know we are right.

The people of my constituency, Regina Wascana, tell me that the government is right. They respect that it takes courage to make tough decisions through tough times. They like our education initiatives; our concern to protect and improve our health plan; our social initiatives; our concern to protect and make life easier for the elderly; and Mr. Speaker, they tell me that they appreciate the opportunity to take their children to the dentist, to the professionals, at no cost. They encourage the government and applaud our interest in facing serious drug and alcohol problems of our youth.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the people of Regina Wascana know this government is right in trying to control the budget while continuing our proven concern for the education, health, and social issues of the day. Mr. Speaker, the budget is right for Saskatchewan, and I give it my full support. I will be voting against the amendment, and for the main motion. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to take part in this budget debate this afternoon. And as advanced education critic, I want to spend a large part of the time I'm going to devote to my remarks, to the attack that this government has launched on the adult education system of Saskatchewan.

But before I do, I want to focus on a couple of other concerns that are special concerns of my constituents, Mr. Speaker. The first of these is the PC government's unprecedented attack on health care. The attack on medicare, and particularly the decision to financially penalize those who are dependent on pharmaceutical drugs; those who are dependent on treatment from chiropractors; those who are dependent on services through the dental plan; and those who reside in nursing homes — those kind of cuts, Mr. Speaker, I think, are some of the most cruel decisions that this government has made in the five years that it's been in office.

These cut-backs to medicare violate the basic social tradition and the tradition of human decency that's been the hallmark of Saskatchewan society. At the time when we in Saskatchewan are celebrating the 25th anniversary of medicare, this government is choosing that anniversary as an opportunity to embark on dismantling medicare. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that we on this side of the House will not let that happen.

I want to look at the record of the past two months. When the New Democratic Party left office in 1982, Saskatchewan had Canada's best drug plan. We were the only province in Canada, Mr. Speaker, with a universal prescription drug plan where all the essential drugs that were needed by people who are sick were covered under the drug plan.

In 1982 during the election, the PC government misled the public. They said that they were going to dismantle and do away with the dispensing fee of approximately \$3 that people had to pay when they bought prescription drugs at a drug store. They promised, Mr. Speaker, that they would do away with that \$3 charge. And instead of keeping their promise, the people who were told that they would pay even less for their prescription drugs are now being told by this government that they're going to have to pay more, a lot more. And we on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, think that that's fundamentally unfair.

What's going to happen to a senior citizen who has expenses for medications running into 2 to \$3,000 a year and finds that over and above the deductible they have to pay 20 per cent of that cost. Their expenses could easily run to \$500 a year — \$500 a year that someone on a fixed income can simply not afford.

I say to the Premier that he may choose to destroy the prescription drug program in 1987, but in 1990 when the New Democratic Party is elected back to government of this province, we intend to restore that prescription drug program within a year. That's a commitment that we make to the people of Saskatchewan. He may think today that he can dismantle that program, but we will rebuild that program again.

One of the other special concerns of people in my riding, Mr. Speaker, is the decision that this government has made to increase nursing home fees by \$73 a month. The PC government is telling residents of nursing homes that there is not enough money in the public purse to keep the cost of nursing home rents down, but there's plenty of money in the public purse to grant Weyerhaeuser corporation of Tacoma, Washington a \$250 million pulp

mill and have them purchase that mill with no down payments or no requirements for an annual payment.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if there is money available for Weyerhaeuser of Tacoma, Washington, or if there is money available for companies like the one being run by Mr. Pocklington in North Battleford, it's the view of members on this side of the House that there is money available to keep the price of nursing home costs down to people who can't afford to pay the extra \$73 a month.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1500)

Mr. Prebble: —Now I can tell the members opposite that the people of my constituency strongly oppose this increase. And at this time, as an example of the opposition that my constituents have to that increase, I want to present members of the conservative government with a copy of a petition signed by 148 residents of Luther Tower, the largest senior citizens' housing complex in my riding. Almost three-quarters of the people who reside in Luther Tower signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, and I want to present it to the government members opposite by tabling it in this Assembly. The petition reads as follows:

We, the undersigned of Luther Towers in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, hereby express our opposition to the \$73 increase in nursing home fees imposed upon nursing home residents this spring. We feel that this increase is unfair; that it's unfair that senior citizens who built this province should now be forced to pay an extra \$73 a month. This is far higher than the inflation rate, and much higher than any increase in our pension income. The increase is creating hardship. We therefore ask you, Premier Devine, and your government, to roll back this unjust and unfair rent increase.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents, I am pleased to table this petition to present to members of the PC government opposite, and I'd ask one of the pages to lay it on the Table, please.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to touch on one more issue that's of special concern to my constituents before I turn to the major subject of my address, which is the cuts that this government has implemented to the adult education system.

One of the special concerns to residents in my constituency, a large number of whom are students, is the decision that this government has made to severely cut back on the Opportunities '87 summer jobs program for students.

Last year at this time, just before the election, Mr. Speaker, we had a situation where members opposite committed \$10.5 million to create over 10,000 summer jobs for the young people of this province. And during the election I heard members opposite commit themselves to assist students in pursuing post-secondary education by continuing to commit significant sums of money to

employment opportunities for student summer job creation.

And what do we have after the election, Mr. Speaker? We have a situation where this government cuts back student summer employment opportunities in this province by at least 6,000 jobs — from 10,000 jobs created last summer to 4,000 jobs created this summer; from funding of \$10.5 million in 1986 to funding of only \$4 million in 1987.

And in addition to that, Mr. Speaker, what have the members opposite done? They have consciously ensured that all volunteer organizations in this province and all municipalities in this province were completely cut off from all financial sources available from the provincial government to hire students during the summer. One of the most interesting and exciting opportunities that university students and high school students had to work during the summer, Mr. Speaker, was employment opportunities with non-government organizations — with volunteer organizations. And what did the members opposite do? They completely cut volunteer organizations off from funding from this provincial government for summer job opportunities.

Well I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the result of that decision has been devastation in my constituency in terms of employment opportunities for students. Students have either had to go home, back to rural Saskatchewan, to try to look for work, they've had to leave the province to look for work, or they've been forced to go back to university and pursue studies at intersession and summer school because the summer job opportunities are not available.

And we say, Mr. Speaker, that that's fundamentally unfair. What's required, Mr. Speaker, in this province at a time when there's 14 per cent unemployment among young people and at a time when 30,000 students are coming on to the job market this summer to find only 4,000 summer jobs being created for them by this government, what's required by this government is a commitment to invest at least \$25 million into a program that will create at least 25,000 summer jobs for students. That's the only way, Mr. Speaker, that we are going to be able to create a society in this province in which young people who need and deserve to have a job, will get a job and will receive the respect that is due to them from having that job. And we, on this side of the House, call on members opposite to meet that commitment.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to turn at this point to the thrust of my remarks which deal with this government's attack on the education system in Saskatchewan. Because not since the Liberal government of the 1960s launched its attack on the universities have we seen such an ill conceived plan to undermine the adult education system in Saskatchewan and to essentially set this education system back at least two decades.

The PC government is destroying our adult education system in Saskatchewan under the guise of claiming to improve it. Before the election this government promised to make education one of the four pillars in its planning for the future, and it's betrayed the people of Saskatchewan in failing to keep that promise. Instead,

what we see is a Department of Education that's been gutted of the leading professional educators that it had on staff. These people have been replaced with persons who know nothing about education, people who come from finance, people whose task it was, Mr. Speaker, to dismantle the education system in this province, not to build it.

And what we've seen, in effect, Mr. Speaker, is a conscious attempt by this government to move large parts of the publicly funded adult education system in Saskatchewan into the private sector, to be run by private companies who are in the education business solely for the purpose of making a profit.

Privatizing adult education is really what the cuts at Saskatchewan's technical institutes are all about. The Minister of Education claims that the cuts in institute programming are being made because the demand is not there for the courses that were being offered, or because the graduates in those programs were not getting jobs. But his claims, Mr. Speaker, just don't jive with the facts.

And I want to take Kelsey Institute as an example. At Kelsey Institute this government has dismantled the office education program, where 75 per cent of all those who graduated, Mr. Speaker, got jobs within six months after graduating. And the only explanation that I can think of for this move is that this government wants to turn over training opportunities for office education to its friends in the private sector. We'll no doubt see one of the private schools in Saskatoon expand its office education programs in the fall to accommodate the cuts at Kelsey.

I want to give another example, Mr. Speaker. This government at the same time as it was cutting office education, also chose to dismantle the program for dental assistants at Kelsey Institute. It claimed, Mr. Speaker, that there was no market for the graduates — no job market for the graduates in the dental assistants program. Maybe the Premier and the Minister of Education can explain to the public of Saskatchewan why it was that this program was cut when 85 per cent of the people who graduated from that program got jobs within six months of graduating.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Education's claims that he was simply eliminating programs where there was no demand from students, are patently false. He also claimed, Mr. Speaker, that he was eliminating programs where there was duplication in the technical institute system. And one of the programs that he severely cut back was the program for agricultural machinery technology students, at Kelsey again. That happens to be the only program to train students in agricultural machinery repair in this province. That course was not duplicated anywhere else in the institute system. And today it's gone, although it had a record of at least 70 per cent of the people who took courses in it getting jobs in it within six months.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are a host of other examples. This government said, for instance, that one of the reasons that it was cutting programs was because students who were taking those programs were not taking them in sufficient numbers to justify the continuation of the program. He said, for instance, that there was a shortage

of students to take particular courses that have been cut. Well I've examined the cuts and I can tell the people of Saskatchewan that there is simply not an example that can be pointed to, of a course that was cut, where there wasn't a significant waiting list.

The government opposite, for instance, chose to cut the nursing assistants program and the dental therapists program. There were significant waiting lists for both those programs. In the case of nursing assistants, there were over 150 young people at Kelsey, waiting to get into a course that had only 55 positions available.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I can venture a guess about why the nursing assistants program has been cancelled by this government, and why the dental therapists program has been cancelled by this government. And I think it's very simply because of the fact that this government is cutting back on home care services, forcing fees in home care services up 66 per cent, and then telling the people of Saskatchewan that because of those increases home care services, because of the fee increases, are not in demand in the way that they used to be. And lo and behold, it's not surprising that one of the major areas in which nursing assistants were hired was in home care. So of course, if you cut back home care, you don't need to train as many nursing assistants.

And, Mr. Speaker, the same pattern applies to the cuts in diploma nursing and the cuts in dental therapy. This government cut the dental therapists program at Wascana in May because it knew that in June it was going to eliminate the Saskatchewan dental health plan and lay off 411 dental therapists in this province, and that therefore there would not be a demand for further training for dental therapists students in Saskatchewan.

That 's the reason that dental therapy is no longer being offered at Wascana, because this government had chose to eliminate Saskatchewan's dental health plan, one of the best preventive health measures in Saskatchewan.

And it's the same, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the diploma nursing program. Why was there a cut of 80 diploma nursing students, 80 less who will be able to enter Kelsey next year? Because this government has cut back funding to the hospital system of Saskatchewan, cut back the ability of Saskatchewan hospitals to hire new nurses, and therefore, Mr. Speaker, our need to train diploma nurses in this province accordingly is reduced.

That's the reason why the education cuts have taken place, because this government was intending to dismantle medicare, which it's embarked on doing, and because this government was intending to turn over to the private sector the opportunities that were being offered to Saskatchewan young people at our technical institutes, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Now, Mr. Speaker, the implications of these moves are very clear. Students at the technical institutes pay tuition rates of less than \$500 a year. In comparison today, in a private school that these students will now be forced to go to, they'll be looking at tuition

rates of 2,500 to 3,000 to \$3,500 — five to seven times as much as they would have paid at the technical institutes.

And when they graduate, what will they have? They'll have diplomas from private business education institutions that are not recognized across Canada, but in some cases will barely be worth the paper that they are produced on, Mr. Speaker, in contrast to the diplomas that they get today from recognized publicly funded technical institutes whose credentials are recognized across this country.

In effect, Mr. Speaker, what has taken place is that, instead of this government meeting its commitment to expand opportunities in the technical school system of this province for young people, 1,150 student spaces have been cut from our technical institutes — 1,150 spaces have been cut at a time when there's at least 8 to 9,000 young people on waiting lists to get into institutes across this province, Mr. Speaker.

At a time when 530 spaces have been cut from Kelsey Institute, 4,750 young people are waiting to get into Kelsey, Mr. Speaker. That's the implications of these government's cuts, and they're shameful cuts that can't possibly be justified.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Now, Mr. Speaker, before I leave this question of technical institute education, I want to touch on the inhumane treatment that this government has dished out to the 142 instructors and support staff who were fired in May.

These firings came without any consultation whatsoever with the staff affected. People who had worked for 15 or 20 years, Mr. Speaker, to build up the educational system, and to build up the programs that they were employed in, have essentially been thrown aside by this government as though the work that they did over all those years counted for absolutely nothing.

(1515)

Never had I seen professional educators treated so unfairly. And on behalf of my colleagues in the New Democratic Party, I call on the Minister of Education to reinstate every one of the 142 institute instructors that he fired — reinstate them immediately.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — That's the only way that the Minister of Education can begin to undo the injustices that he's inflicted on the people of Saskatchewan.

I want to repeat again to the minister that there should be absolutely no changes implemented in the technical institute system of this province without the full involvement and consultation with the institutes and the staff affected.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to turn now to the attack that the PC government has launched on Saskatchewan's community college system. Under this government, the

fundamental mandate of community colleges has in effect been destroyed. The college system was consciously set up by the NDP in the 1970s as a vehicle for lifelong learning. It recognized that adult education programming should be responsive to community needs. And thus, it was organized around a series of local boards and dozens of community-based contact committees.

Now in Regina and Saskatoon and Moose Jaw and Prince Albert, those local boards are gone. Local autonomy has been destroyed by the PC Party, Mr. Speaker. The community college system recognized that there was more to education than just training for a job. Adult basic education programs were to be developed in such a way that they encourage students to complete their grade 12 and get a good general education before focusing on specific job-related training.

It's now very clear from the PC government's commitment to the Canadian job strategy program that the PCs want to alter the approach to getting a good general education for students when they take their upgrading programs and instead replace this approach with more training that is narrowly tied to a particular job. And we don't favour such a narrow approach to education, Mr. Speaker. Once again the Tory plan is clearly to privatize adult education. That is essentially what the Canadian job strategy is all about, that the minister is so proudly proclaiming that the signed an agreement with the federal government on.

And that's what we're seeing in the cuts that have come down today in the Regina Plains Community college system. Excellent instructors in fields such as life skills and career planning are being cut at the Regina Plains Community College while the PC government contracts with private companies to put on the same courses with less qualified and less well paid staff and with diplomas for graduates that won't be recognized outside of Saskatchewan.

This same warped and narrow view of education that the PC government offers the general public can be seen in the actions that the Tories have taken to abolish funding for personal enrichment courses in the community college system. In many rural community colleges in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, 60 to 80 per cent of the programming is essentially personal enrichment courses.

Now members opposite may not think that there's any value to the public studying things like woodworking and drama and photography and cooking and the fine arts. They may not see any value, Mr. Speaker, in those courses. They obviously don't, because they've cut off all funding to them. But we in the New Democratic Party say, Mr. Speaker, that that kind of educational opportunity is an essential part of people being able to round out their education, being able to pursue education for lifelong learning purposes that go beyond just the immediate needs of getting a job, being able to pursue an education for the purposes of becoming a better citizen and a more well-rounded person. And I can assure members opposite that while they may dismantle those personal enrichment courses today, we will reinstate them, Mr. Speaker, when we next form government.

Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Minister of Education that for every wall that he tears down, members of the New Democratic Party will rebuild that wall, brick by brick, when we form government in 1990.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — And I can assure him, Mr. Speaker, that we on this side of the House will do everything in our power to defeat this government at the earliest opportunity and reinstate a sense of vision to the process of educational planning in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — I want to conclude my discussion of education with a subject that's dear to my heart, and that's the future of our universities. The PC Minister of Education, the member for Weyburn, has talked about how his new post-secondary education plan provides for an increased role for university extension courses to be offered throughout Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, to date that claim has been misleading, to say the least. All we've witnessed since the 1986 election is one cut after another in extension programming being offered by our universities. And those cuts, Mr. Speaker, have become unavoidable in the face of a government that's chosen to cut back university funding over the next two years by 10 per cent.

We've seen the University of Regina forced to cut its most successful extension service, the school of social work at the University of Regina and the School of Human Justice at the University of Regina — the School of Human Justice to be eliminated completely; the school of social work to be dramatically cut back, with all its extension services, Mr. Speaker, essentially being abolished.

Now this government, a few days ago in the budget speech, said that it was committed to expanding extension courses in university programs throughout this province. And what have we seen, Mr. Speaker? What we've seen instead is cut-backs to the universities which have forced them to dramatically reduce the best extension services that the universities ever offered, namely the school of social work extension programs throughout rural Saskatchewan at the University of Regina, and the University of Saskatchewan's extension services in the health care field in the three hospitals in Regina, which have resulted in the lay-off of at least 41 staff, many of whom were medical specialists which simply cannot be replaced.

Now I ask the Minister of Education how he can square his commitment to expanding extension services in the university, system to the massive cut-backs in extension services that have taken place to our universities.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to members of this Assembly, and to the public, that what in effect we face today in this province is a crisis in terms of quality of post-secondary education at our universities. We're seeing a government that, as a result of cuts that it has made in previous years, prior to this budget, already put the University of Regina and the University of

Saskatchewan in a situation where, while enrolments were dramatically increasing, class sizes were increasing, university library services were deteriorating, relationships between students and their professors were becoming much more difficult from the point of view of a meaningful student-teacher relationship because classes were getting so much bigger. In effect what at the two-year freeze that the Tories have now imposed on our universities means is that, because budgets on the two campuses were already tight, now major program cuts are inevitable.

And we're seeing this borne out at the University of Saskatchewan at the present time, because for the first time in provincial history we have a situation in which the University of Saskatchewan has had to impose an enrolment quota on entry to qualify its students in the College of Arts and Science, and where, for the first time in the history of the university, an entire college, namely the college of Home Economics, is being phased out, Mr. Speaker.

Now I think that this is symptomatic of further program cuts to come, and the responsibility for those cut-backs that the University of Saskatchewan is being forced to make today lies squarely on the shoulders of this government, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — I want to close, therefore, Mr. Speaker, by making one final point, and that is that members opposite in the PC Party claim that these cuts to post-secondary education are inevitable because the moneys are not in place in the budget; the moneys are not available to them, they claim, any more, to fund these programs adequately.

Well I just want to give this government two examples of where they could get the money for post-secondary education if they had the political will to change their priorities and commit funding to education, Mr. Speaker.

The first prime example is in the Minister of Education's own constituency, the constituency of Weyburn, where \$120 million is going into a dam, the Rafferty dam — a dam, Mr. Speaker, that's going to flood 20,000 acres of farmland; a dam that environmental experts believe won't ever fill up; a dam that's going to create a giant mud flat in the constituency of Weyburn, Mr. Speaker. It's a dam that ought to be cancelled. It's \$120 million that ought to be transferred into health and education, Mr. Speaker. That's one obvious example of where the PC government could save themselves \$120 million.

And a second example, and I'll use this in closing, Mr. Speaker, is that this government, as I mentioned earlier, just sold a pulp mill valued at \$350 million, and it sold it with not a penny from the buyer in the form of a down payment. It sold it, Mr. Speaker, without making any provisions at all for annual interest payments on the purchase price. It sold it, Mr. Speaker, without making any provisions for annual principal payments on the purchase price. An asset worth \$350 million, and not a single penny coming into the public purse from the sale of that asset.

Now I say, Mr. Speaker, that if members opposite were simply to take the money that they ought to have gotten from the Prince Albert Pulp Company sale and put it into education and put it into health care, there wouldn't be need for a single cut-back in medicare or post secondary education in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Can there be any doubt, Mr. Speaker, that this government has betrayed the public trust; it's betrayed the people of Saskatchewan; it's brought down a budget for which it has no mandate.

Mr. Speaker, I will be opposing the budget, and I will be supporting the amendment which expresses non-confidence in this government. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's indeed a pleasure for me to enter into this debate on the budget. On behalf of the constituents of the Meadow Lake constituency, in the north-western part of our province, that I have the privilege of representing here for the third term . . . I always consider it a considerable honour, frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to represent those people in this House, and it's one that I know all members feel a similar feeling about, representing their people in this House. Often we don't address it in that sort of way in here, but I want to say on the record today, as I have done on other occasions in the past, that it is indeed a pleasure to represent those salt of the earth people in this legislature and to speak on their behalf.

I want to congratulate my colleague, the Minister of Finance, for the budget speech and for the budget that he brought down here one week ago here today. The budget presented by my colleague is realistic and it's responsible, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On the one hand it recognizes that some hard decisions were needed if we are to stabilize our province's revenue and expenditure picture; but on the other hand it recognizes the need to preserve the essential safety net of social support programs for the people of our province.

Mr. Speaker, at times like these, governments can be tempted to ignore deficits and to keep on spending as if money was readily available. That might be a popular thing to do in the short term, but sound financial management is not a popularity contest, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a matter of acting in the province's present and future best interests, and at times it involves difficult, yes indeed, even some tough decisions.

Mr. Speaker, this government has had the courage to make these decisions, because we know that in the long run they are going to lead to a stronger Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that the people of Saskatchewan recognize that what we are doing is right and it's necessary. They are realistic people who know that if you don't keep your financial house in order, sooner or later it will catch up with you as a society. Unfortunately, the members opposite, Mr. Deputy Speaker, don't have the same grasp on reality as those

Saskatchewan people that I represent and that I speak for here.

(1530)

They refuse to understand some very basic facts. If your expenditures are higher than your revenues you have three options. You have basically three options, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You reduce your expenditures; you raise taxes to increase the revenue, or you do a combination of those two; or you do nothing and you let the deficit pile up. That seems pretty obvious, but apparently not to the members opposite, some of whom are chirping away here just now. They criticize expenditure reductions, and many of them have done that in the past few days. We've heard it here and out in the media and elsewhere. They criticize measures to increase revenues. They're against that. Don't raise taxes; they're against that. Don't make any kind of cuts in programs or changes to any programs; don't do that. And yet they still insist that the deficit has to be reduced. Don't have a deficit. That's what they say, in all cases. They can't have it both ways, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

As I said, the members opposite just don't have the grasp on reality that our people in this province have. They have to be reminded that we're living in changing times, and we are. We're living in changing times, folks, and that the world is a much different place than it was some years ago.

The changes were dramatically illustrated by the Minister of Finance in the economic and financial report he issued last March, on March 5th. That document shows what has happened on the world markets with respect to the products of our primary industries here in this province — wheat, oil, potash, uranium. We're part of the global economy whether they want to accept it or not, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And for anyone to suggest that Saskatchewan should be able to carry on as though that economy were strong and healthy is sheer nonsense.

Mr. Speaker, it's the role and responsibility of government to be constantly looking for more effective and efficient ways to use the taxpayers' dollar for the benefit of the public as a whole. And that doesn't mean looking for ways to keep spending more money, adding more and more programs, and building a bigger and bigger public service to administer those programs. That's not the answer, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It also means re-examining needs and priorities. It means looking to see if there are better ways to provide services, and sometimes it means deciding that it is simply no longer appropriate to keep on funding a particular service. It's a dynamic process of change, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it is essential if we're to remain a strong and progressive province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it seems those same members opposite don't like that process of change. They seem to think that once something has been put in place it has to stay there in the same way for ever. If the NDP had invented the automobile, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we'd all still be driving Model T's. This process of dynamic change applies to the field of health care just as much as to any

other area of government expenditure and public policy. And as Minister of Health, this is naturally the area of the budget with which I am personally most involved.

When Premier Devine's government took office in 1982, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we stated very clearly that the health care system would always be one of our top priorities. We've lived up to our commitment and would be here a long time if I were to list the numerous ways in which we have strengthened health care services for the people of our province in the last term of office. Some people would argue that if health care is a priority, it should be excluded from all considerations of fiscal restraint. Some would say that. Many of those members have said just that. They've just said that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. Relax.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — And they say it should not be subjected to the same rigorous scrutiny as other programs. That's what they say, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But that's a completely unrealistic and untenable approach. The fact is that one out of every \$3 spent by the provincial government goes to health care. Health expenditures now amount to over \$3 million a day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, every day of the year. Or to put it another way, we spend \$1,200 per capita on health care each year.

When we talk about deficit reduction, there is no way we can approach it realistically if we ignore such a substantial element of provincial expenditures. Certainly it will be a major challenge to all providers of health care services, including the government, to continue providing quality services to the public within these constrained circumstances.

However, I know that we can meet this challenge and that the integrity of essential health care programs will be maintained, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will be maintained for the people in our province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — And let me suggest that health care should be seen as a beneficiary of this exercise, rather than as some type of victim, as has been portrayed as well by some of those members opposite.

If we didn't get our financial house in order, our economy would eventually reach the point where we might not be able to sustain an acceptable level of health care and other social programs that we have. But by acting now, we will put ourselves on a firmer footing for future growth and development. And when that happens, the public will benefit through enhanced health care services, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's the context in which we have approached health care in this budget, and it is the underlying basis of the changes we have made.

Those members over there, through their over-inflamed rhetoric that we've heard on several days we've come back here, and on some days before that, would like the public to believe that somehow the action we have taken with respect to the drug plan, for example, and the dental plan and other areas, reflects some dark scheme to dismantle the health care system. You've heard it; I've

heard it from my member, from the person who preceded me in this debate.

But let me just remind all hon. members of a few very simple points, Mr. Speaker. Who was it that eliminated extra billing in this province? Was it you? No, it wasn't. It was this government, right here. Who was it who introduced the property program for seniors? Was it those members over there, Mr. Deputy Speaker? No, it wasn't. It was the members on this side of the House, and this government of the Hon. Grant Devine, Premier. Who was it who launched the new Wascana Rehabilitation Centre in Regina, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Was it them? Certainly not, over a good number of years — not them. It was this government that launched that program, a very important one for this province. Who was it that built the new cancer clinic and the 238-bed Parkridge Centre in Saskatoon? Was it them, Mr. Deputy Speaker? No it was not. It was this Progressive Conservative government of Premier Grant Devine.

And does it make any sense at all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to suggest then that a government who did all of these things is now trying to destroy the very system that it worked so hard to improve? Does it make any sense? Certainly not, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I ask all members over there to keep your opposition and your rhetoric in all of these areas in some kind of perspective. Keep that in some kind of perspective when you're dealing with the public in a province.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan will still have an excellent children's dental program. And to suggest that we won't is an insult to every dentist in this province, many of whom are graduates of our own dental college at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon.

We'll still have quality basic programs in our hospitals, in our medical care, in our home care, in our special care homes, and so on. And even with the changes that will take effect in the drug plan on July 1, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will still have the most generous universal drug plan that exists in the Dominion of Canada, and that's not something that we're hearing from those people over there. The scare tactics and the rhetoric that they're using would have people believe that there is to be no drug plan, that there is to be no dental care for children. That's absolutely false, Mr. Deputy speaker, and what I say to them is: keep your opposition in some perspective on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, we'll have a SAIL program, Saskatchewan Aids for Independent Living program, that will provide services more effectively and conveniently for people who need rehabilitation equipment. The Saskatchewan Abilities Council is recognized far and wide throughout this province and beyond our borders for its expertise. And I'm pleased to say that we've been able to reach an agreement with the abilities council that will result in a better program for SAIL beneficiaries through a network of five depots around this province to replace the two depots that existed when that program was under government. Five depots around the province — much better services for

the people that need it.

Do I hear them saying anything about that? No, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because they know it's the right decision, and it is the right decision, and it's been well received by the people and the handicapped people in the province.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's interesting that when the members opposite talk about health care, they conveniently forget to mention a couple of very significant initiatives that our government is taking, and has taken over a period of time. Let me remind all members in this House today, and the people of Saskatchewan, that even in these constrained times the budget for the Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse commission is being increased this year by 69 per cent to \$13.2 million.

Mr. Speaker, substance abuse has been identified as one of the major health care issues among our young people, and we are responding to that concern by giving it priority attention. I want to mention in particular the new Whitespruce youth treatment centre near Yorkton. We are spending \$1.5 million this year on what is the first facility of its kind in Canada — a specialized youth treatment centre for substance abuse. Together with many other initiatives we're taking in this area, we're responding in a very significant way to an issue that has emerged as one of the most important health concerns in our society today.

And as well, Mr. Speaker, we're responding to the growing problem and the growing public concern about that horrible disease . . . virus, AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). Some people would argue that AIDS is not a major issue in Saskatchewan, compared to other parts of the country. But, Mr. Speaker, people are dying from AIDS, and every one of those deaths is a human tragedy. Because there's no cure for AIDS yet, the only effective approach is prevention and education. As one expert put it, "the only vaccine against AIDS is knowledge."

Mr. Speaker, last month my department sponsored a very successful two-day symposium on AIDS in Saskatoon. This symposium was designed to build on the valuable work already completed by the advisory committee appointed by the former minister of health, my colleague, the member from Indian Head-Wolseley. The symposium was also the next logical step in the development of an effective strategy for AIDS education here in our province of Saskatchewan.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, this government is responding in a positive and concrete way to health care issues as they emerge in the changing society in which we live. Unlike those members opposite, we're not trapped in the past, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but are establishing policies and programs that will meet the needs of today, and of the future.

The budget speaks for itself, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Total health care expenditures for 1987-88 will be higher than they were last year, or at any other year in the history of this province. And in a time of overall fiscal restraint, that

is clear evidence of our continuing commitment to maintaining a quality health care system. The fact that we need to take a good hard look at where and how we spend our health care dollars and the number of dollars we spend in no way diminishes the importance of ensuring that Saskatchewan people have access to quality health care services.

Mr. Speaker, the budget speech talks about new direction and new priorities in health care. The opposition evidently believes that change is a bad thing. When we talk about a new role for rural hospitals, they, all of them, immediately talk about closing hospitals. You've heard them, I've heard them, and the people of Saskatchewan have heard them. When we talk about revitalizing regional hospitals, they can't focus on anything but a particular problem in this location or that location.

Mr. Speaker, you don't build and maintain an effective health care system by looking at specific parts of the system in isolation; you do it by looking at things from a global perspective, and making sure that all facilities and all programs are working together properly. That's what we're doing, Mr. Speaker.

We're recognizing the reality that the roles of health care facilities have changed over the years. We're recognizing that the hundreds of local boards that have grown up over the years may not be the most effective or efficient way to administer services at the local level. We recognize that the system is lacking in adequate mechanisms for accountability. And we recognize that people need to be encouraged to assume more personal responsibility for their health or, to put it another way, for their personal wellness. People need that. And we will be facing these issues in a consultation with administrators, with providers of service, and with the public. We know that only in this way will we ensure the continuation of effective health care for our people in to the 21st century and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, we have no intention of developing some game plan and then telling Saskatchewan communities, this is what you must do. As the Minister of Finance indicated, we will soon begin an extensive consultation process to discuss how we can best restructure services on some type of regional basis. I'll shortly be releasing a white paper setting forth the need for change and suggesting some direction we could be moving in. I hope that this document will serve to stimulate discussion among all the stakeholders in the system; and I don't just mean professionals and administrators. I also mean the general public, the people who create the need and demand for service and whose tax dollars are used to pay for those very services.

Mr. Speaker, let me just reiterate the goals of this consultation process. We intend to redefine the mandate of rural hospitals to accommodate the needs of the communities they serve. Note that we aren't talking about closing hospitals, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but about making them more effective. We intend to revitalize regional facilities and, where appropriate, to reduce duplication of services in cities. Again, Mr. Speaker, a logical goal if we're to have a rational and efficient system.

We will assess the ratio of spending on health care administration to spending on front line patient care. This is where the question about the number of boards comes in, Mr. Speaker. The time has come when we have to ask ourselves seriously if we need over 400 separate local boards to administer health care programs for a population of one million people. We have to ask ourselves whether we are spending money unnecessarily on administration — money that could be better spent on actual services.

Finally, we intend to decentralize the decision-making process to ensure that all participants have a stake in the performance of the system, thereby making it more responsible to the needs of the people. To put it another way, we want to see that those who generate expenditures in demands for funds become more accountable for the effective prioritization and utilization of the health care dollar that they're spending.

(1545)

As I've said, we have no preconceived ideas about where this process will eventually take us. And unlike the members opposite who seem intent on creating unfounded fears and anxieties among the public, we intend to lay out the facts in a frank and open way and to engage in constructive dialogue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have faith in the people of this province. And I believe that when they see the need for change and see that effective alternatives are available, they will respond in a positive way.

As I've said, Mr. Speaker, the budget speech clearly outlines the need for new directions in health care, and we are committed to taking the necessary steps, both through funding and other initiatives. Mr. Speaker, when the members opposite aren't trying to see some dark scheme in health care, they claim that the government is making random decisions with no common elements to those decision. They can't seem to make up their minds which it is, but it doesn't really matter because they're wrong on both counts, Mr. Speaker. But if the question is whether health care fits into overall government policies and strategies in some logical way, then the answer is definitely yes to that.

And I want to explain the relationship from three perspectives. First, as I have said, health care remains the number one social priority for the provincial government. It's the most critical component of the network of social support services that are in place to provide necessary protection to our public. And that is why in making program changes, we've been mindful of the needs of special groups such as seniors and those on social assistance.

In the drug plan, for example, seniors will have a much lower deductible than other families and individuals, and the social assistance recipients will continue to receive the same benefits as they do at present. So health care is indeed part of broader government strategy in terms of ensuring we protect the health and well-being of Saskatchewan people, but is also part of broader

strategies in other ways.

Our health care system is a major user of a wider range of supplies, equipment, and other products, Mr. Speaker. This means it is a source of potential opportunities for Saskatchewan business in terms of manufacturing and distribution. One of the key components of the government's economic strategy is to develop and diversify our economic base by encouraging and assisting new enterprise. And we want to see the health care system contributing to this objective to the greatest extent that's possible.

One way of doing this is through the Buy Saskatchewan program that all members will be aware of, in which purchasers are strongly encouraged to direct as much of their expenditure as possible to Saskatchewan-based suppliers, distributors, and manufacturers.

A second way to promote economic development is by assisting new companies to locate in the province to serve the local market. An excellent example is the new Canapharm plant making intravenous solutions in Wolseley which will help to reduce our hospitals' heavy dependency on sources outside our own province.

And now I want to mention a third and final way in which health care fits in with overall developments in the province. Throughout society, not just here in Saskatchewan, but across Canada and in other countries as well, some major stock-taking and re-evaluation is going on. People are recognizing that, on the one hand, we want to maintain excellence in the programs that have been built up over the years, and to improve and expand where possible. But they are also recognizing that government cannot continue to be the source of all or nearly all funds for every program that might be desirable. This is true in health care as it is in any other area.

The challenge is to look at other ways of sustaining programs, to see where volunteers might be encouraged instead of paid staff, or to look for additional funding within the community. This is not a question of government backing off from its responsibilities, Mr. Speaker, it's a matter of defining the extent of government responsibility as opposed to responsibility of the community and of the individual. And it's a matter of achieving a realistic and appropriate balance among those three.

Mr. Speaker, our government does not believe that direct delivery of services by government is necessarily the best approach in all cases. Sometimes it is the only effective option, but where we have the human resources and other necessary strength in the private sector, we believe that it is the route we should be looking to. Nor do we believe, Mr. Speaker, that a program whose costs are offset in part by direct public charges is necessarily worse than a program whose costs are borne entirely by government, with no charge to the public.

No one would suggest that we return to the days of premiums or utilization charges for medical and hospital care or other essential services. But that policy does not have to be extended to very single program and service. As I said a minute ago, it's quite appropriate for

communities and individuals to assume a reasonable level of financial responsibility. It is a matter of achieving a realistic balance.

Mr. Speaker, I've indicated health care fits into broad provincial strategies and developments from three perspectives: protection of the public; economic development; and reassessment of roles and responsibilities in our society.

To put it another way, it fits into the three priorities that were laid out so eloquently by my colleague, the member for Qu'Appelle-Lumsden, the Minister of Finance, those three priorities being: to build this province; to protect our people; and to diversify the economy within which we live.

Obviously many challenges are involved in successfully achieving our objectives. But this government is committing to meeting those challenges, in co-operation with those who are responsible along with us, for the delivery of health care services: the federal authorities, administrators, non-profit organizations, all of the health professions, and others.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as Minister of Health, I'm not averse to criticism, provided it is genuinely constructive, and it isn't simply based on impractical emotion that any changes or any reduction in funding, programs or services, is unacceptable. That's what we hear from there. Any change, any addressing of change, any realization that we're in a world of change is inappropriate. That's the inappropriate sort of rhetoric that we hear from those opposite.

As I have emphasized, the government is committed to deficit reduction, and my specific task is to contribute to that objective in the health care field in a realistic, but in a sensitive way.

Mr. Speaker, it's been a pleasure for me to rise in this Assembly today and to outline for the people of Saskatchewan our government's commitment to an effective and efficient health care system. That commitment is characteristic of the dynamic and forward-looking policies of all members on this side of the House. And when this debate concludes, I'll be proud, tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, to lend my personal support to the budget delivered by my colleague. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, as I begin my remarks today, I'd like to allude to some made by another member of this legislature last evening, those remarks mentioned by the member from Melville.

Two that stuck out in my mind from his speech, and the first was that he consistently said that this government's doing the right thing and the other one he said, Mr. Speaker, was that this government is hearing nothing from the opposition side but cuts, cuts, and cuts. Well if he had been listening, Mr. Speaker, he would know that we've been talking about other things that this government's been doing since 1982, as well. We've

been using words like "unfairness," words like "unfit," like "unfeeling," like "insensitive," "irresponsible," "incompetent," "deceitful," and, Mr. Speaker, as well, "morally corrupt."

And I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, I've been waiting patiently for one of the members from the back benches to realize what their constituents have been telling them back home. But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, I'm afraid they're not listening. And I want to share with them a little news. We were talking about some news from Manitoba yesterday that the Premier was alluding to. But I want to share some new news from the University of Manitoba, a little poll that came into the province and we found out about. And I'm sure it's not news to the cabinet, the front-benchers; certainly they would know. And it shows where the Tories are sitting in terms of the public feeling of the people of this province. And I want to read three figures for you, just in percentages, Mr. Speaker, and I want all the back-benchers to have careful notice of what this poll says. It shows the NDP at 56 per cent.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — It shows the Tories, Mr. Speaker, it shows the Tory government at 27 per cent, and the others I don't suppose are worth much mentioning. But all I want to say is that this was before the budget, Mr. Speaker, and since . . . that was on the pre-budget dribble that people had had enough. And now we look at a situation where they've delivered the most callous, the most uncaring, the most irresponsible budget that's ever been delivered before this House. They've dropped even further, I'm sure.

Mr. Speaker, this long-awaited budget has been unfair to the people of this province. And what's more, it proves beyond any doubt that the people were deceived, not only in 1982 but in October of '86, and every member on that side of the House should be hanging his head in shame. It's irresponsible.

Mr. Speaker, the budget is finally showing the true Tory agenda. Mr. Speaker, it shows that a right-wing government, whether it's in Ottawa, their buddies there, or whether it's Reagan in the United States of America, or whether it's their pal, Maggie Thatcher, have all got the same agenda. Mr. Speaker, their cards are finally on the table for all of the people of this province to see, and I'm telling you that I don't believe the people of this province are very comfortable with what they're looking at. You give to the rich; you take from the poor; you cut health care; you shatter education; and you put more people out of work.

Mr. Speaker, this government has spent six long years filling the pockets of their friends. And I want to mention some of them. Some of them have sat in this House prior to '86 when they got dumped. I want to mention Paul Schoenhals. I want to mention George Hill. And I want to mention Peter Pocklington, your buddy from The Battlefords who you dumped \$20 million upon. And I tell you, I want to as well mention the people from Weyerhaeuser of Tacoma, Washington who you guys gave more than a quarter of a billion dollars in the most shameful display that's ever been shown in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — And, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to forget the oil companies who they've given a billion and a half dollars since 1982. You've given it away, and all the while you've done that, you've amassed the deficit of some \$3.3 billion, a terribly shameful display. And now you come to the people of this province to pay for it. Mr. Speaker, this budget is asking the people of this province to pay the bill for irresponsibility. they're paying the bill through cuts in health care. And as I said before, you've torn apart our educational system, parts of it, and you've increased taxes terribly unfairly.

Mr. Speaker, today I want to mention a few things about what you've done to my community. I want to talk about the hurt that you've inflicted upon the people of Prince Albert-Duck Lake and the area that surround sit. And I want to talk about the intention to close North Park Centre. I want to talk about the 110 people who are losing their jobs permanently — people who served the people, the residents of that facility, and the 40 part-time people who are losing their jobs who have served that facility and the people who live there.

But mostly, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the 180 people who are losing their homes. And I want to tell you that whether the Minister of Human Resources will stand up in this House and talk about consultation; and that he's got the courage to make that kind of a statement in this House, I think, Mr. Speaker, is unacceptable, because I want to tell you that I've met with the parents, and the member from Prince Albert has with me met with those parents, and we know what kind of consultation went on. And I tell you that the poll that came from the University of Manitoba is indicative of how they feel.

(1600)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — As well, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about something that's happened in terms of education in our community.

My daughter attends the Riverside School, and her and her friends all understood that there were going to be some renovations done at the Riverside School. And because of the callous, uncaring attitude of this government and the cutbacks and what you've done to the school boards, that renovation isn't going to go ahead. And I tell you, I know the parents of those children; I know the teachers who teach them. And I can tell this government that that's why they're sitting at 27 per cent in the polls in this province.

I want to tell you about the closing of the tree nursery in Macdowall in the rural part of my riding. The lack of commitment to forestry and to re-forestation and to the future of that industry is something that should be looked closely at by members who represent the northern part of this province, and by every member of this House. We caught them last year when they were going to cut funds to it. But this year they didn't cut funds; they closed it. Mr. Speaker, it's a sad commentary.

And I tell you, as well, I've talked . . . and the Minister's had letters from people at the Herb Basset Home and from Pineview Terrace and from the Goodwill Manor in Duck Lake, complaining about the increase of \$73 a month in the rates that you're charging them.

And I want to tell you, as well, Mr. Speaker, I was surprised when I read in the *Prince Albert Daily Herald* on May 7, 1987, where a member of this Assembly was quoted as saying — and he sits, by the way on the government side; you might know him — that some people don't think we've gone far enough, in terms of the cuts.

"Some people don't think we've gone far enough." Well, I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, the people that I talked to, whether they're in his riding, or whether they're in my riding, or whatever part of this province they come from, think you've gone too far, and enough is enough.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, people are frightened, people are angry, and they feel betrayed.

I want today to spend a little time dealing with my critic area, my role as critic of Tourism and Small Business with the New Democratic Party caucus. I want to talk about what that department's been promoting since 1982 — the promotion of small business. And if there's any small-business man in this community or in this province that hasn't seen that its produced very meagre results, I'd be very surprised.

And I tell you, they don't 'have much faith in you right now, and neither do I. I'm talking about the people on Main Street, Moos Jaw, and the people on Main Street, Prince Albert, who I deal with daily. And I want to tell you, Mr. Minister, don't kid yourself. I know what they're saying. I'm there daily.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — Since '82 we've been subjected to a list of rhetorical slogans that would knock your ears off almost. We've heard "open for business," and then it was "economic diversification," and then it was "Saskatchewan Builds." We heard Partnership For Progress and then we heard: there's so much more we can be. Well I tell you, they believe there's so much more we can be right now, Mr. Minister. They're all empty slogans, and your record proves it. You have a look at your record. Look at the record of bankruptcies in this province. You got money for the large corporations and your political pals, but you aren't doing much for small business.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — You've lumped Saskatchewan consumers, the small business community and the farmers together, and you've abandoned them to face these tough times that you've created. I want to tell you, Mr. Minister, and I want to read into the record, that in 1986 there were 21 per cent more bankruptcies in this province

than in '85 — and that's the second highest in this country, and you should be aware of that.

And I want to tell you, Mr. Minister, that there, furthermore, from the corporate register in this province there are no less than 2,234 fewer businesses registered. Businesses don't have to go bankrupt to close the doors.

Mr. Speaker, this government has chased young people from the province. In the last two years we've lost more than 12,500 people from this province, a lot of them young people who were raised and educated in this province and who could be an asset, but they've had to go out to find work. It's unforgivable what you've done to the people of this province, and they aren't going to forget.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — I want to know, after this reorganization, where your commitment to small business is now. Is it lost in the reorganization? What the story? I want to know when this government is going to come up with some even-handed, long-range, comprehensive plans for economic development in this province.

We've all seen your assortment of job creation programs and your patchwork approach to economic development. But the people out there know that there's been an absence of a co-ordinated economic plan or strategy. You failed in business, and I believe you're going to fail in tourism — your new Messiah.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that people are telling me that this government hasn't listened to people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — I want to say the people are telling me that this government is clearly out of control. They've got no short-term solutions; they've got no long-term plans. They show absolutely no signs of common sense, no compassion, no credibility and, Mr. Speaker, I tell you that they face a very bleak and short future.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this amendment simply because it shows non-confidence in this government, and I will vote against the budget. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to, first of all, indicate that it is indeed a pleasure for me, and an honour, to participate in this budget debate.

I might indicate that as a newborn of seven to eight months as a politician, I still find it exciting to stand up in this House. I find it exciting to be part of the democratic process during this debate, and being part of it, and I find it particularly exciting too, as the debate goes on, each side scores a point. Scores a point here. Scores a point there.

And so I think all of us in this House, even though tempers get a little warm at times, are proud to be part of an

institution like this, and to live in a country and to live in a province, Mr. Speaker, where we can fulfil the democratic process. And so I am delighted, I am excited to be part of the process, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And having said that, I would like to go on to the budget debate itself, where I would like to say: I feel that this year's budget debate carries with it a sense of urgency and a sense of importance. Crucial and vital decisions must and are being made, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They're not always popular, but they must be made — decisions that require the co-operation and understanding of the Saskatchewan people, for the challenges that our province faces cannot be overcome by the government alone. Mr. Speaker, this budget is a recognition and a response to those challenges.

This is a budget of change, not simply for the sake of change, but because of necessity. This province is undergoing stress. We must adapt, and I would ask the hecklers from the opposite side, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to take their heads out of the sand, because we must recognize that conditions are changing, and if we do not adapt, we're going to wind up like the dinosaurs. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is something that we cannot allow to happen.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — I would suggest to the people of Saskatchewan that they do not want to back into the 1990s; they do not want to back into the future, as the opposition is tending to lead us.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I could just for a moment relate my impression of this opposition. They give the impression that they are concerned. They give the impression that they are do-gooders.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I got into politics I recognized the fact that I would no longer have the time necessary to spend on my own family farm, so I had to go out and had to hire people to take my place. And in so doing, during the interview of the man that I eventually hired, I recognized in him that there were components there that would probably qualify him as a candidate for the NDP party. But being broadminded, I did not let that stop me or concern me too much, so I wound up hiring him.

Now in the hog industry, one of the things that we learn is that management is a key issue. And one of the management facilities that you have to be fairly good at is in the taking care of the little piglets as they are born. What you have to do is you take their needle teeth, their eye teeth, and you have to clip all eight of them out with a side-cutter. It's not a pleasant prospect, but the alternative is worse, because if you do not do that they will bite each other, they will infect each other, and they will die. Or they will bite the mother, irritate her; she will stop giving milk, and the entire litter will die. So you have to make a choice.

And further that that, Mr. Speaker, a part of the process is to take that same side-cutter pliers and snip off the tail, right about one-half an inch away. That's also not a very

pleasant prospect. But the opposite is worse. And observing my hired man, I noticed that as a do-gooder, what he was doing is he did not have the heart to take and chop the tail off in one big chunk like that, he was taking a knife and cutting it off in little pieces.

Mr. Deputy Speaker that . . . that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the attitude of our friends across the way. For, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we do not change, we risk losing both the institutions that we have built and the ability to build and strengthen these same institutions for the future.

And I'm referring specifically to health care, Mr. Speaker — I'm glad you could join us. It was health care, Mr. Speaker, in particular, special care homes, that helped motivate me to become involved in politics. In the six or seven years prior to 1982, I watched while the then NDP government enforced a moratorium on nursing home construction. This was during the good times, the moratorium was introduced. And at the same time, Mr. Speaker, they spent hundreds of millions of dollars on potash mines, uranium mines, and pulp mills. They spent money creating nothing, no new jobs, but what they did do was hang a millstone around the neck of generations to come.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — To me this showed how little the NDP cared for the needs of the people of Saskatchewan. And yet, Mr. Speaker, the NDP claim that they are caring — caring and sympathetic to the needs of people. And in their egotistical and sanctimonious way, I think that they actually believe that, I really do; I think they believe that. They believe that they have, and that they claim to have, a monopoly on compassion. Where was their compassion, Mr. Speaker, when they introduced the infamous death tax to succession duties. Let's review that inheritance tax a little bit and see just how compassionate that was.

(1615)

A man and wife struggling through their entire life time, working to establish a homestead, and when they had it, and if a misfortune arose where the husband would die, what did the NDP government of the day do? The next day they came knocking on the door of that grieving widow and said, pay up, pay up because we want some of that!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — And, Mr. Speaker, when this widow in her grief was unable to come up with this payment, what did they do? They said, well in that case we're going to charge you interest. And she wound up having to sell, having to sell part of that inheritance, part of the lifelong work that she had struggled for and was hoping to pass on to her children. And they took it away from them. And they say they are compassionate, that they care, Mr. Speaker, I suggest they did not.

Where was their compassion when, during a nine-year period of reign, they built, Mr. Speaker, 245 nursing home units over nine years of time. We more than doubled that in the first three years of office in our first

term. We more than doubled that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — But what did they do? They introduced a moratorium. They said, no more. They turned their cold shoulder to the seniors of this province; they tossed them out into the cold. This is what they did. And we are building more, and we are building more because we care.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Where was their compassion, Mr. Speaker, when over 10 years, when over 10-years' period of time they increased by \$5 — they increased by \$5 — the seniors' supplemental income. Over a 10-year period of time, of \$5. When we got in, we doubled it. We doubled that supplemental plan. Why did we double it? Because we care. That is why we care. And I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the only doubling that the NDP party did was to live a double standard by allowing extra billing, by making it harder for the people of Saskatchewan to get quality health care. We, Mr. Speaker, care for our elderly; we care for the sick; and we care for the poor, because we had the courage to ban that extra billing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — And, Mr. Speaker, they continued to show their indifference when mortgage rates shot up past the 20 per cent mark. And what did they do while the farmers were watching their crops dry up and blow away during the drought? What did they do? The farmers of Saskatchewan know what they did.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I was not the only one who was fed up with the NDP's inaction. So it was, in April 1982, that the people of Saskatchewan overwhelmingly elected a Progressive Conservative Party, led by Grant Devine. And, Mr. Speaker, four years later, in October 1986 the people of Saskatchewan re-elected that same government and won . . . that I'm proud to be a part of because we are looking toward the future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — As a little bit of an aside, Mr. Speaker, I also noticed that the members of this province, the people of this province, also elected the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg who is sitting across the way, who is sitting in this House now as an independent — although, Mr. Speaker, I must admit that rumours have it that he has some kind of connection with the Liberal Party at the same time. And I am gravely disappointed, Mr. Speaker, because I must admit that when I heard of his election there was a kind of a thrill that went through me because I recognized that we were in difficult times and it take a lot of heads being put together to bring our province out of it. And I thought that what we would be seeing here would be a new dimension. I thought we would be seeing a third dimension with perhaps new ideas coming forth, with perhaps deeper insights being contributed to the discussions.

Well, Mr. Speaker, let me tell you that the people of my constituency who supported him are also deeply disappointed. Many of those Liberal supporters in my constituency are beginning to have second thoughts because there is nothing new; there has been nothing added. Whenever the NDP opposition comes up with a motion condemning this government, what has that member done? He has voted in support of that motion — every time. There has not been one exception, Mr. Speaker. It is that way all the time. In fact, as I look over to the other side, I am convinced from day to day that I see that desk of his moving closer and closer to the opposition desks. And the surprising thing is that he is also even to the left of them.

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order please. Order! Order. Order.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for bringing the House to order once more.

Mr. Speaker, I could not help, with some amount of regret, notice what was going on during what was called “condolence day” in the second day of this session, where this member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg had the chance, with no cost to him, with no cost to his convictions and so on, to show that there was some difference between him and the other members of the opposition. Did he choose to? No. Once more he voted with them.

But the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, to continue on, did elect a Progressive Conservative government. I’m going to ask a rhetorical question. Why, Mr. Speaker, did the people of Saskatchewan elect a Progressive Conservative government? Why? Why did they do that?

They did because they knew that a Progressive Conservative government would continue to protect them. They remembered how our government had helped home owners keep and improve their homes by bringing in the mortgage interest reduction program and the Saskatchewan home program. They remembered how Grant Devine had gone to bat in Ottawa for a farm deficiency program. And last fall we had the pleasure, the Premier had the pleasure in this House, to announce a \$1 billion payment to the farmers of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — And, Mr. Speaker, \$416 million of that \$1 billion has come to Saskatchewan — enough, Mr. Speaker, with one slash of the pen to double the income of the Saskatchewan farm economy.

And I remember very distinctly the member of Humboldt, the so-called agricultural critic of the NDP caucus, standing up and saying, whoa, Mr. Premier, not so fast. We must have a study first; we must see if it’s really needed; we must suggest that there is a means test necessary before this money is handed out. The member from Quill Lake could not resist, but continuously say, miserable amount, miserable amount. Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan people are not saying, miserable amount. They are saying, right on; that is what they are saying, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan people remembered how, when drought and floods struck, producers were protected and helped immediately. And there’s a long list that I could go through here of the various things that our government has done for agriculture. I think the people of Saskatchewan know what they are. Agriculture is the backbone of our economy. A healthy Saskatchewan economy depends on a healthy agricultural economy.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan also saw a government that had brought insignificant social programs and reforms. And, Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to just compliment the minister from Melville in his speech last night. We are being accused of not doing things for the people of Saskatchewan and he proceeded, in a completely non-partisan way, a very low-key . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order. Order, please, order, please. It’s difficult for the member to speak if we have a loud outbursts. Let that continue, and I would like to ask the member to resist doing that.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And during the minister’s presentation, this low-keyed, non-partisan approach was a simple reciting of the government of Saskatchewan, our commitment to the people of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, it took him almost one and a half hours to tell the people of Saskatchewan what we are doing for them in the realm of social services. That is a commitment.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, the -Saskatchewan Pension Plan, a first in North America, offers many who would not have had access to a pension plan an opportunity to build for their own futures. Home-makers, farmers, small business employees and others now have that opportunity that was denied them previously.

The seniors’ heritage program and the Saskatchewan student loan program are just two more of the initiatives that our government brought in to protect and enhance the lives of the people of Saskatchewan, initiatives, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Saskatchewan approve of. Now, Mr. Speaker, the initiatives I have outlined here were important indeed to the people of Saskatchewan. But what perhaps impressed them most was our ongoing commitment to build, strengthen, and improve the health care system in our province which, regardless of what they say, is still the best in this country of Canada.

To begin with, our government removed, as I have mentioned before, the NDP nursing home moratorium and began the job of rebuilding our hospitals and cancer clinics. And this was a massive undertaking, Mr. Speaker. The system had been allowed to run down. The funds needed to do that were indeed great, but our government makes no apology — the work needed to be done. The people need to be protected.

In my constituency, one can point to initiatives such as the special care home that has been built in Dalmeny. We are protecting the seniors in our province. Somewhat in the two or three weeks ago, I had the privilege to be in Warman and participate in the opening of the seniors

enriched housing complex, another six-unit building that was being added to the already existing six units. And in a few weeks, Mr. Speaker, I will again have the privilege to duplicate that and open a six-unit special care . . . a seniors enriched housing unit in the town of Martensville. And the seniors, Mr. Speaker, I submit, are grateful.

We have also brought in initiatives like the chiropody program for seniors, new "catscanners" for our major hospitals, and an improved ambulance system. And as a result, Mr. Speaker, health care expenditures rose 60-some per cent over the past five years, so that as everyone in Saskatchewan knows by now, our total health expenditures are in the neighbourhood of \$1.2 billion, which translates to \$1,200 for every man, woman, and child in this province. And I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that that is a signal of our commitment to the health of this province.

However, Mr. Speaker, it is this cost that we must address. We must reorder our priorities by and within government, or we risk jeopardizing the future of our health care system and other social institutions. This means tough decisions. It also means that some programs must be dropped or changed in order that we can face these challenges of the future. The economic realities of the past few years have given us little choice but to engage in deficit financing. The Leader of the Opposition knows very well whereof I speak, because he fathered a deficit himself when he was Finance minister. And now he says that he does not particularly see anything wrong with deficits in tough times.

However, Mr. Speaker, we must still keep in control of it, because with the growing size of the deficit comes reduced freedom to establish new social and economic programs. So when we introduce programs like the Whitespruce (youth) Drug and Alcohol Treatment Centre, we find ourselves in a dilemma — how to maintain existing programs and yet bring in new ones.

(1630)

Our government is attempting to reduce costs by streamlining the civil service and increasing the effectiveness of its various programs. I could not help notice, Mr. Speaker, that the member from P.A-Duck Lake, during his address, made mention to the fact that the North Park institution was closing.

I have a copy here, Mr. Speaker, of the magazine called *Dialect*. This magazine, *Dialect*, is the news magazine of the Saskatchewan Association for the Mentally Retarded. I would just like to make a few comments on an article within this *Dialect*. The heading indicates, "North Park closure an opportunity for quality community living." The 180 people are now going to be living in the community instead of an institution, and I would like to quote from the president, Norm Jones, who says:

"Scaling down institutions and creating options in the community have long been goals of the SAMR, which is largely a parent organization," added Jones. "We want to respond to the government's decision to close the facility by activating human and financial resources to make sure that the

transition will be a positive and productive one."

A positive and productive one.

Then Gordon Porter, president of the national organization, and I would like to make quote, one of his statements:

I would (and this is the president of the national organization of SAMR, saying) I would compliment the Saskatchewan government on the general direction it is taking with moving people into the community.

This is what people in the organization are responding to.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — And furthermore, Mr. Speaker, I say the Saskatchewan people are saying: right on. Now having said that, we must limit some of the programs, like I have just said. Yes, it is not necessarily a popular choice at times, and it can be a painful process. Yet, Mr. Speaker, I believe the Saskatchewan people, in their heart of hearts, recognize that it must be done. They are saying: right on.

However, as much government can given through increased efficiency and streamlining of itself, it is still not enough. With revenues from resources at such low levels — and I'm not going to go into them because we understand by now where that is at — with such low levels of income, government must look to programs that delivers, and see where changes will have to be made in order to reflect the reality of the economic changes. Because Mr. Speaker, changes must be made.

The deficit will continue to mushroom if unchecked. By 1990, projections are looking at a \$10 billion deficit — \$10 billion, Mr. Speaker. And I suggest to you, it does not take a mathematician, it does not take a chartered accountant to find out what it costs, even at 10 per cent interest rate, to service a debt of \$10 billion. That, Mr. Speaker, is \$1 billion — \$1 billion of dead money being paid out in interest to service that debt.

That, Mr. Speaker, is what the Manitoba government has chosen to do. They have chosen to try to spend their way out of their deficit, and they now have \$10 billion hanging on their necks — \$10 billion that the future generations are going to have to be paid for. And I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that is why they do not have money for funding their organizations. I suggest to you that is why their cancer patients are coming to Regina to be treated in this province of Saskatchewan.

So we can't let that happen here, Mr. Speaker; we cannot let that happen. And I suggest to you that changes are going to have to be made.

Mr. Speaker, the drug plan is an example of these changes, examples reflecting the reality of today. The cost of this drug plan has risen 400 per cent from 1975 to 1986 — 400 per cent. And if we had allowed this trend to continue, the drug plan would have cost some \$125 million by 1990. So the need to bring these costs under control is obvious. And indeed those who are able — and

I repeat that, those who are able — are asked to accept a greater share of the cost of these drugs. But, Mr. Speaker, we are committed, we are committed to protect those who cannot shoulder their responsibilities, who cannot shoulder as much of this burden.

Unlike Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, we consider our seniors to be special. Senior citizens will have significantly lower deductible levels, while those in nursing homes will continue to receive services through the drug plan at the same cost that they do now. Likewise, people on social services and those with recognized special needs will be taken care of and covered.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I could not also help but notice the NDP financial critic, during his budget address, said to the people of Saskatchewan, "We will be viewed as being doom and gloomers." Yes, Mr. Speaker, I think that he was absolutely correct in that assessment of how the people of Saskatchewan interpret his speech, because what they — NDP — over there have done is done nothing but spread fear. They have done nothing but to use scare tactics. They have done nothing but crying wolf all the time.

And I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that by trying to take advantage of those people out there who are wondering what is going on, they will be castigated in the future. Because once the people of Saskatchewan really understand how this drug plan works, they will see that they have been had by the opposition. They will see that the opposition has been trying to lead them down the garden path.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — It is true, Mr. Speaker — and we're up front on this issue — it is true that most of us will be asked to pay more for our prescriptions. However, I believe that those same people will do so knowing that they are trying to protect and to help those who cannot protect themselves.

That, Mr. Speaker, is the tradition that built our province, and has seen us through some other tough times that we have had before. That, Mr. Speaker, is the kind of stuff that the people of Saskatchewan are made up of. They would not want their government to be any other. Mr. Speaker, it is in that tradition of loving and caring that will see us into the future.

I would just like to portray a few personal impressions at this time, Mr. Speaker.

This loving and tradition is something I think that is inherent with all of us, and I think that most members in this Chamber will recognize when I say that I love and I cherish my parents. They are elderly now. Mom and dad are both well into their 80's by now, but when I think back over the years, over my childhood and my youth, when I think back to the '40s and the '50s, the sacrifices that they made. When I went to high school as a youngster, and many of us are my age group, times were tough. When I went into high school as a youngster, I can still remember we had a few cows, we had a few chickens, we had even a few pigs. How those milk cheques, how those cream

cheques were saved together for mom and dad to buy me one of those new, fancy, long coats, with a hood with no cover on it; buttons were those wooden ones that you put in, that was the style. I was a poor country bumpkin coming into the big town of Hague to go to high school. My parents made those sacrifices, Mr. Speaker. They made those sacrifices in hard times, and all I can say is the deep-down appreciation that I feel for my parents. And I wonder how many people there are in this Assembly today who can dispute that fact, even in their own lives.

And when I see them now in their 80's, frail, having done all that they could for me and this province, my heart goes out to them. And I find also that when they finally decided to retire, Mr. Speaker, they sold their farm. They had a little bit of money left over. They bought a small house in the town of Warman and they spent many good years in there. But as they grew older they looked for something else, and what did they find. They found that in Warman, the government had just built six senior citizens low rentals and they were fortunate enough to move into them. Today they are living in Bethany Manor in Saskatoon, also in one of those homes, and they appreciate that — they appreciate that. My uncle, my aunt, moved into that new home that we just opened in Warman, and they are proud. They are proud to be in there, and they appreciate that. However, my Uncle John and Aunt Anne are not that fortunate. They're still living in conditions where we would like to see them improved.

So what I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, is that I recognize the fact that no matter how much we have done, it is not enough. There is never enough. There could always be more. But we must do what we can, we must prioritize, and we must spend our money wisely.

And I'm going to go on with just a little bit more. Because, Mr. Speaker, my wife, Alma, and I have four kids — four children — and like any parent, I'm just immensely proud of them. My oldest, Dean, is 17 years old right now. It's quarter to 5; he's home from school; he's probably done his chores for me. And he's going to be writing his exams tomorrow, and he's going to be finishing them, and then he's going to be going to university next year. I'm proud of that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, he's been accepted, already. Yes, he's going to be going to university. I'm proud of him because he is everything that I would want him to be.

I have a daughter, 15-year-old Cheryl, who is in grade 10. This daughter right now is studying. She loves athletics. She's a real go-getter, and she would be out there getting gone right now if she hadn't been bucked off a horse and just suffered a broken arm. But she was cared for.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to indicate to you — yes, these two older kids of mine are not receiving dental care. They will not be receiving dental care. And I have no problem with that. I think I, as a family . . . I think I, as a father, have a certain amount of responsibility, and I will be glad to accept that responsibility, and I will take care of them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — And not only that, Mr. Speaker, not only

that. Priorization. Where is this money going to be going, then? I suggest to you, we have priorities. I suggest to you that the teenagers out there have more of a problem than just the problem with cavities. Look at what's going on out there. Look at the drug problem. Look at the alcohol problem. Are we going to assess our priorities properly, or are we just going to go merrily along our way and refuse to adapt, refuse to change, refuse to live up to the realities of the world the way they are today?

Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that that is exactly, that is exactly what this government is doing, and that is exactly what those members across the road should start to believe in and start to think about, so that they will change the error of their ways and see that times have changed. That, I suggest to you, is something that the members of the opposition are going to have to be able to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, I have two more children. I am not going to go . . . I wish I would've brought along my pictures, but I left them at home. I might add that Duane is 12, Cindy is 11. I will be taking them to the dentist, I will be taking care of them and I'm just glad that we have good dentists in this country that are going to be doing that.

(1645)

Mr. Speaker, I will conclude by saying we must all work together to protect and improve the quality of . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. The hon. member has just indicated that he's going to finish his speech, in a minute or two, and if we all allow him to do that, well, we'll move on to the next speaker. So I'd like to have order, please.

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, I realize that sometimes the truth hurts and I fully understand, I fully understand the reaction coming from across the way, and I can appreciate that. I have no problems with that. So if that makes them comfortable so be it; that's all right.

But I was saying before I was interrupted, Mr. Speaker, we must all work together to protect and to improve the quality of life of our loved ones. The people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, are willing to do their part. And I believe that this budget shows that the government is determined to do so as well. I feel this budget and this government shows the determination, the courage, and yes, Mr. Speaker, the compassion to take our problems into the '90s and beyond. By preserving our financial freedom today we will have the ability to grasp economic and social opportunities in the future.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I will be voting against the amendment and fully supporting the motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, I intend to limit my remarks this afternoon in deference to the many other speakers on both sides of the House who hope to enter into this debate in the one day that we have left. I want, therefore, to discard a great deal of the text that I had prepared, and I

want to concentrate . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — I want to concentrate in the remaining time on the justice system in Saskatchewan and bring to the attention of this House and to the people of this province, some of the problems that this system is encountering.

I want to particularly address my remarks to the criminal justice system. I can best do that by taking a hypothetical example and illustrating to the House the kind of delays that are occurring in the system, which are causing so many problems.

The hypothetical example that I want to give involves a person who is charged with a serious criminal offence, a criminal offence in which there is a fair amount of evidence to be heard. That person would appear before the courts with his lawyer and would enter a plea of not guilty. Then the judge hearing that plea would set a date for a preliminary inquiry. The purpose of a preliminary inquiry is simply to hear the Crown evidence to find out whether the Crown has enough evidence to justify putting that accused through the trouble and expense of a trial.

Now the way the system is working today, Mr. Speaker, the earliest date on which that preliminary inquiry would be scheduled would be a date eight or nine months from today — eight or nine months from today. Now then, on that day, on that day the accused would go through a preliminary inquiry and in the overwhelming majority of cases, the presiding judge would find, as they most frequently do, that there was enough evidence to justify sending the accused on for trial.

Under the present system, the way it's working today, that accused would wait for a period of from six to eight months for the transcript for that trial. Now at the end of that time, when the transcript is ready, the matter then is set down by the Court of Queen's Bench for a pre-trial hearing, and various matters are discussed, including a trial date, which we would find would occur probably within about two months.

Now this is a problem in the case of any kind of an accused, or at least a problem in the case of any kind of a trial of a major offence. There are problems because we're talking about a delay of between 16 and 19 months between the day the accused appears in court for the first time and the day on which the accused is charged.

Now that is particularly a problem, that is particularly a problem where the accused can't raise bail. Some accused can't get bail because of their particular record. Other accused people can't get bail because they simply can't put up the kind of cash or the kind of sureties that are required by the system in order to be freed on bail.

What happens to those people, Mr. Speaker? Well what happens to them is that they spend that period of 16 to 19 months in the remand section of the correction centre, and these are people who are presumed by our system to be innocent. They're presumed innocent until the day of their trial, and on that day they may be found guilty. But

until that day, they are presumed to be innocent. And these people in Saskatchewan now are serving 16 to 19 months in a correctional centre without having been convicted of a thing. And I think that's a shame, and it just shouldn't be allowed.

Now what are the problems? This is a problem of some years standing, and it gets worse and worse and worse. And successive ministers of Justice, from the man who is now the Minister of Finance, through the former minister, Mr. Dutchak, to the present minister, have said they're going to do something about it.

Indeed, in March of last year Mr. Dutchak announced to the press that he was setting up a special study, the purpose of which was to find out what the problems were and to come up with solutions to get rid of this backlog. And we find ourselves now some 15 months later with the backlog being significantly greater and with no study having produced a report that anybody has ever seen. And the backlog continues to get worse, and these injustices continue to be done.

Not only is it a problem for the poor unfortunate who is in jail, unable to get bail, but it's a problem for the police and for the community because the hardened criminal out there understands what is happening in the system all too well. And the hardened criminal who is accused of a crime knows that by pleading not guilty and by playing the system, he can stay on the street for up to 19 months without any danger of being incarcerated. Now imagine the effect of that situation, Mr. Speaker, on the police, on the prosecutors, and on the people, the people of Saskatchewan who look to the police and the court systems for protection from criminal elements, for protection from crimes being committed against them. Seeing a system like this operate, for them it is the cause of a great deal of insecurity and for a considerable amount of cynicism.

Now what do we see the government doing in this budget? Well what we see are cuts that go in exactly the opposite direction. Rather than introducing reforms that would clear up this backlog and start to make the system work the way it should, what we're seeing is cuts of a judge . . . a judge's position cut in Saskatoon; four prosecutors cut; six workers in the court system, six office workers; 11 lawyers in the rest of the Department of Justice that could come in and help in some of these cases and help clean up the backlogs — they're being laid off.

So my point, Mr. Speaker, is simply that the government has to do something about it. And it has, up to this point, indicated no intention whatever of doing something about it. As a matter of fact, it is heading in the wrong direction, in exactly the wrong direction.

I want to go back to those poor people who are on remand, because while our society is generally not very sympathetic to the plight of criminals, we are at least sympathetic to people who are presumed innocent and haven't been proven guilty of anything. These people who, as I've said earlier, are spending up to 19 months in the remand centre of our correctional centres, are in a particularly unfortunate position. Because they're not convicted of any crime, they are not allowed to take part

in any of the regular programs at the correctional centre. For example, they are not allowed to take any of the vocational or technical training courses. They are not allowed to take any of the other courses that are available to the general prison population. The amount of time that they get out of their cells is also extremely limited. These people are in effect being locked up for about 23 hours a day and they haven't been convicted of anything.

Furthermore, it's my understanding that their right to receive visitors is limited, and indeed, if my information is correct, their rights to receive visitors are more limited than the convicted criminals. What a travesty, what an outrageous situation that is? And finally, their right to take telephone calls is limited even more so than the regular inmates at the correctional centre. Now that, as I say, is a situation that has to be addressed, and as far as I can tell in this budget, is not being addressed.

The matter also has to be looked at from the perspective of the police. All members in this Assembly will recognize the important role, the critical pivotal role of the police in detecting and in fighting crime.

But how do the police forces in this province feel when they've finally done their work? They've detected a crime; they've reached the point where they can lay a charge. And then it goes into the hopper that's being maintained by the Minister of Justice in this province. He sees a not guilty plea. An eight- or nine-month delay before the preliminary hearing; another six or eight months waiting for the transcript; another two months before there's a trial. Well by that time, there's a the police trying to prove their case. They've got witnesses who are trying to remember something that happened 19 months before. They've got witnesses who have died, witnesses who have left the province, witnesses who can't be located. And every week in our province, important cases are being dismissed because of the lack of evidence as a result of witnesses just not being there when the trial finally, finally comes on.

I want to also ask the Assembly to look at this problem from the point of view of prison guards, particularly in the remand areas of the correctional centre. In Saskatoon there is in the remand centre a total of 180 prisoners on remand in the facility that was designed and built for a maximum of 120 people. Now that's a 50 per cent overrun.

Those prisoners on remand are sleeping in the woodworking shop. In the relatively recent past they're also sleeping on cots on the floor of the gymnasium. They've even been known to be sleeping in a converted kitchen. And these people are locked up, as I say, for 23 hours a day for 19 months of the year, and they haven't been proven guilty of a thing. Indeed, indeed, a relatively significant portion of them are in the end acquitted. And these people are locked up, Mr. Speaker, and you can imagine the frustration and the anger they feel at a system that treats them like that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — And the correctional centre workers, the prison guards of this province, are upset and worried

about that situation because they're the people at risk. They're the people who are walking through the corridors and walking through the prisoners in the remand section. And they're scared. They're worried. They're insecure and they fear the worst. And I fear that no one over there is paying proper attention to this problem with a view to resolving it.

Now I want to also talk about some of the other cut-backs that we've seen in the system that directly impacts on criminal justice system. For some strange reason the government opposite saw fit to cut its grant to the John Howard Society. This is a society which has done wonderful work in this province over the past period of something like 30 years. A lot of this work has been done for years, that is the re-integration of prisoners into society and all of those services that all of us know so well.

But in recent years, we've loaded additional responsibilities onto them. For example, the fine option program is being administered by the John Howard Society. Now that's a program that sees that first offenders who could otherwise go to jail, get the option of doing community work. And I'm informed that as a result of this cut, of their grant of \$193,000, the existence of that program is in doubt and indeed is in jeopardy.

Take a look at this budget of theirs with a projected deficit of \$570 million and ask yourself in that context why the John Howard Society at \$193,000, doing such an important work in such an important field, helping people that obviously need help so badly and delivering a program that the community needs so much . . . I would really like to hear someone on the other side, someone like the member from Rosthern who talked to us for 50 or 55 minutes without mentioning anything as substantial as that, explain to the House and to the people of Saskatchewan why it makes sense to cut a program like the John Howard Society.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — Another example is the native court workers. Now the native court workers was a program funded jointly by the provincial and federal governments. And it involved a person being present in the court rooms of Saskatchewan to assist native people in dealing with the system that they don't understand and don't function in nearly as well as a lot of other accused people. Now this program seemed to be one of the most advanced programs of its kind in the country. And this year, the minister pulled the rug on that program — pulled Saskatchewan out of it. And as a result, I think it's quite clear that the whole program is collapsing. My information is that by July 17 of this year, there will not be one native court worker left in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now why, why would they do this? I mean, I can understand saving a few million dollars here and a few million dollars there, but we're talking about a relatively small amount of money to deliver a program which everyone in the system agrees is a good program, performing an excellent service, a service that is absolutely necessary if our justice system in Saskatchewan is to work properly. And again, I would

invite any member on the other side of the House to try and explain to us why it was necessary to cut that program.

Now we have seen the four prosecutors being cut, as I said earlier, and we have seen a steadily increasing contracting out of prosecution services to the private bar in Saskatchewan. Now I've no objection to the private bar in Saskatchewan doing legal work, and I think it's admirable that the government uses the private bar for a lot of its services. But I really question the rationale, and I sincerely question the wisdom of contracting out prosecutions to the private bar.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that the prosecution of a criminal case is a difficult, complicated task, a highly specialized task that requires a great deal of study and a great deal of experience. It's not the sort of thing that the average lawyer can just pick up and do. And what we've seen in Saskatchewan, as well as in other provinces, is the development in departments of Justice of an expert staff of prosecutors who can take a case brought to them by the police forces of this country, present it properly to a judge or properly to a jury, and convict people who have committed criminal offences. There's absolutely no percentage in hiring a prosecutor that doesn't know how to prosecute a case. Too many guilty people walk away with acquittals if your prosecutor can't do the job.

What we've seen in Saskatchewan, in the last few months, are four very experienced prosecutors being fired — four of them — one with something like 30 years of experience in the prosecution field, one of the best prosecutors on the government's staff. And that is not as a result of the workload of the department having been lessened, that is not as a result of the number of prosecutions having dropped. Indeed, I believe the contrary to be true. And what will happen is that the department will have to contract out more and more of its prosecutions to the private bar.

First of all, as I say, that's a silly mistake because you send in people to do prosecutions who aren't nearly as good as the people that you fired. Secondly, it costs you a lot more money. The private bar, is I'm afraid, an expensive proposition when it comes to handling a file like a criminal prosecution. There is no question that it is a great deal more expensive than to pay the salary of a full-time prosecutor. False economy is exactly the right term. It is a money loser, and for a government that is trying to cut costs and save money, there is another example of you heading in the wrong directions. And your minister knows it.

This situation, Mr. Speaker, has led to cases that are comical, or at least would be comical if they weren't so sad. You know that there are actually trials being scheduled for the same time, in the same court-house, on the same days, before the same judges in our province. They're double-booking trials.

They're also double-booking prosecutors in the sense that a prosecutor will be scheduled to appear in more than one court room at the same time. Indeed, there is a situation in Saskatoon where the same prosecutor was scheduled into three separate court rooms at exactly the

same hour. And the judge in the third court room that that prosecutor arrived at, looked at him and said: look, I'll let it go this time, but if this happens one more time. I'm just going to close this court room down and I won't open it up again until Regina does something to make this situation work.

I'm also aware that the prosecutors are under instructions from their department that if their particular case gets finished early, or if their particular case falls through, they should go through the court-house and check the other court rooms. And if there's more than one trial scheduled there for the same time, they should try and get the accused and the accused's lawyer and all the witnesses and all the police together, and go down and see if you can find another court room, and go back and see if you can find another judge, and run that trial.

Now what an instruction that is. I mean, if that's true, that just has to be a joke. You have a prosecutor picking up a file, opening it for the first time and trying to prosecute a case that may reflect months of police investigation, a large number of witnesses, and — I'll almost guarantee you — an acquittal.

I sound, for all the world, like a Tory making this speech, because what I'm asking you for, what I'm pleading for, is some moves toward law and order in this province. I'm asking that the . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — I'm asking that the justice system be more properly supported. We don't want to see criminals running around unpunished. We don't want to see guilty people acquitted. We want guilty people to be brought to justice. We want people to be treated justly and fairly and expeditiously. We want a justice system that works efficiently and speedily.

None of these things are happening. You can make a joke about it if you like, but it's no joke; it is a serious problem. If you won't accept the word of an opposition member on this, then just ask anybody in the court system. Ask any provincial court judge, any prosecutor, any defence lawyer, any policeman, and he'll tell you many of the things that I've told you this afternoon. I put it before you as sincerely as I can, and I ask you, indeed I challenge you, to try and do something about it and do it quickly.

All parts of this justice system are just shaking their heads, are just shaking their heads at the situation with which they're confronted. Not only do they find no one doing anything about it, but they find that your budget is heading in exactly the wrong direction. And frankly, they wonder what in the world is going on. What do you expect of them?

Finally, the Saskatchewan people deserve a justice system that works better than this.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — They deserve the security of knowing that their system is being properly administered. They deserve the security of knowing that people can be

brought to trial quickly and speedily and efficiently. They deserve to feel safe and protected.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be voting in favour of the amendment and against the budget motion.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank you for your indulgence in allowing me to speak to the budget at this late hour.

Mr. Speaker, over the last few months the PC government has released to the province, day after day, on a piecemeal basis, one cut-back after another. This PC piecemeal budget culminated on June 17 in the budget speech.

This PC piecemeal budget, which bombarded the people of Saskatchewan day after day in the last three months, left men and women across the province numb — numb from fear, numb from apprehension and helplessness. Who would be next to lose their job and source of livelihood? Who would be next on unemployment insurance and perhaps on welfare? Some 3,000 people through firing and early retirements lost their jobs as the Tory knife cut its swath across Saskatchewan.

And this PC government is very sly, very sly indeed, Mr. Speaker. They saw to it that the Legislative Assembly was not sitting — not sitting so that the people that they were attacking would not have a forum. They are so sly, Mr. Speaker, so machiavellian and so arrogant, that at the risk of committing an illegal act by not calling the legislature, they avoided accounting to the people. They arrogantly avoided facing the people. They left the people feeling helpless, depressed, and numb.

And, Mr. Speaker, when I was talking to the people in my constituency of Regina Lakeview, the one comment I heard over and over was: is there some way we can force an election?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — When a government which is only seven months into its mandate is so widely distrusted and so widely disliked, that should send a clear message to the government that it's bent on a path of self destruction. It should, Mr. Speaker, but it doesn't. Not with this government. It doesn't, because this government doesn't care. It doesn't care about the families it's destroyed. You don't care about the families you've destroyed. Instead of compassion, we find the government members belittling concerns we've raised on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, and the vindictive Tory knife continues to strike out against working men and women, against cities, towns, and communities.

In their ivory tower, Mr. Speaker, in their world of bankers and money-lenders, in their world of Peter Pocklington, in their world of big interest rates and big give-aways to big business, in their fantasy world of cooked books and misleading budgets, this government did not care to think that it was dealing with real people — real men and women that they so callously dealt with in the last three or

four months. Real people. Real men and women.

They isolated themselves from reality and accountability. Behind closed cabinet doors while they sipped tea and listened to Wagner, the Tory knife cut its swath across the province. No words can describe the dismay and the hurt many men and women have felt as a result of this government's Draconian measures.

Cut-backs against seniors. Cut-backs against young men and women. And I might say, especially women, because my preliminary information tells me that by far the majority of people fired by this government are women— a substantial majority. Cut-backs against women and children feeling violent situations. And the list goes on. Cut-backs against those who can least afford to pay.

And it's very interesting to note the cut-backs that haven't been made. Cut-backs in your high-priced political staff; cut-backs in salaries of \$200,000 or more for patronage appointments like George Hill, cut-backs to give-aways to large out-of-province corporations, and these are the cut-backs, Mr. Speaker, that have not been made. And I say to the Premier, Mr. Speaker, and to the Minister of Finance, and to the members of the Tory caucus, your priorities are all wrong.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — The people of Saskatchewan will sit in judgement of you at the next election.

Mr. Speaker, the PC members of this House may think this slaughter of public services is popular with their constituents, but I say that's unwise. Farmers and workers alike believe in fairness. Farmers and workers alike do not want their government to be vindictive, cruel, and arrogant, as it has been over the last few months. Farmers and workers alike realize that Saskatchewan will prosper when we all prosper. Taking from the poor and giving to the rich, attacking cities, attacking working men and women, attacking young people, attacking seniors, some 3,000 people losing jobs — it's not going to solve the financial crisis that this PC government has created in this province by their mismanagement and their deceit.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1715)

Ms. Simard: — Farmers and workers alike know that Saskatchewan society will prosper when we all prosper, when we care enough about our neighbours and care enough to make sure that they too have the opportunities to succeed in life.

The activities of the government over the last three or four months are very short-sighted — short-sighted and cruel. To give you an example of this twisted Tory thinking, Mr. Speaker, to give you an example of the illogical thinking of the PC government, let's look at the decimation of the dental plan in Saskatchewan.

The other day the Premier talked about bringing dentists

to rural Saskatchewan. But in order to do this he eliminates dental therapists in rural communities. He eliminates the dental program for young adolescents. He makes dental care less accessible for children in rural Saskatchewan. This is ridiculous, Mr. Speaker. It's illogical and a betrayal of people living in rural Saskatchewan.

Not only that, Mr. Speaker, but in terms of actual cost the privatization of children's dental care is likely to cost taxpayers and parents even more money in the long-term than did the dental plan which is now being eroded.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — To further illustrate this warped, illogical thinking, the PC government has put some 400 men and women — 400 dental workers — out of work to perhaps save \$500,000. But they give away hundreds of millions to oil companies to create jobs, they said. But today the oil is gone. The provincial revenues are gone, and many of these jobs are gone. This makes no sense, Mr. Speaker, it makes no business sense at all.

What's happening in our province today, Mr. Speaker, reminds me of an incident that occurred a few years ago in a small town in a poor country. That people lived in a town, in an area that was subject to drought. They had been looking for a pump in the hope of irrigating some land so they could be self-sufficient. At first they couldn't afford to buy a pump. Finally, after saving for a long time, they could buy one, and they started looking for one but it was not easy to find. Pumps were scarce.

It was only after several months of searching that they finally did find one. So they bought it and for the next few years their town prospered. But then hard times came and the drought was too severe. One simple pump could not solve their problems. The towns' coffers were depleted and the townsfolk were once again poor and didn't know what to do. Then the solution came to them. They saw a quick solution, Mr. Speaker, some quick cash. They sold the pump. And, Mr. Speaker, that's what this government is doing today, it's selling the pump.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, are not sellers, but their government is selling the pump, and they're selling it at fire-sale prices. This short-sighted PC policy is resulting in Saskatchewan becoming a have-not province, Mr. Speaker — a have-not province.

And because of the PC policy, there were 41,000 people, 41,000 people unemployed in Saskatchewan in January. That meant an unemployment rate of 8.5 per cent. The number of people working in Saskatchewan in January was actually 1,000 less than it was January a year ago. And while the number of people working has dropped, so have the number of people looking for work. Because, Mr. Speaker, because of PC policies, people are leaving Saskatchewan in search of jobs and opportunities elsewhere. The number of people in the labour force this January was 4,000 fewer than a year ago.

As is too often the case, the unemployment picture for

young people last year was even worse than it was for the population as a whole. Figures with respect to youth unemployment for January 1987 are devastating. There were 15,000 people, young people, officially listed as unemployed in Saskatchewan in that month. That's a youth unemployment rate of 14.7 per cent — nearly double the provincial rate. The number of young people working in Saskatchewan in January was actually 5,000 less than in January a year ago. Saskatchewan lost 5,000 jobs for young people from January to January.

The number of young men and women looking for work in our province also dropped dramatically in the last year by 9,000. In other words, some 9,000 young people left Saskatchewan during 1986 in search of jobs and opportunities elsewhere. Mr. Speaker, I don't see that kind of job record as something the government should be bragging about.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — In fact, in 1986 Saskatchewan had the worst job creation record of any province in Canada. But wait, but wait, you might say, 1986 was a tough year; surely the government's done better over its full term. Wrong, wrong, Mr. Speaker. Let's take a look at the government's job creation record for young men and women between 1981 and this January 1987. The figures are quite startling, quite startling. In 1981 the youth unemployment rate was 8.9 per cent — high even then.

An Hon. Member: — What is it now?

Ms. Simard: — Now it is 14.7 per cent. In 1981 the number of young people employed in Saskatchewan was 110,000, now it's 89,000. That's a loss of 21,000 jobs for young men and women. In 1981 the number of young people in the labour force was 120,000, now it's down to 104,000. Sixteen thousand young people have left Saskatchewan in search of work and opportunities elsewhere.

Current job creation policies have failed. They've failed to create enough new jobs and opportunities for young people. They have driven thousands of young men and women out of Saskatchewan to find work. Yet the PC government brags about its policies. They say their policies are for the common good. They're prepared to wipe out families and write off young people for the common good. But let's not be mistaken, their policies have nothing to do with the common good. Their policies represent misguided ideology, to put capital in the hands of a few and to make it better for the rich people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — When it comes to young men and women and unemployment, I want our party's philosophy to be very clear. We are of the view that unemployment is an evil, an evil in two respects. First, it's a soul-destroying experience for those who are unable to earn a livelihood for themselves.

Secondly, it's a terrible waste of human resources, of people who could be working to produce goods and services to improve the material well-being of Canadians.

That is why our institutions and government policies must be changed to deal with unemployment as society's number one evil.

Some political parties argue that high unemployment was the price Canada had to pay in order to ring inflation out of the economy. New Democrats disagree. New Democrats say that the use of economic waste and human misery, as instruments to deal with inflation and deficits, are wrong and should be unequivocally rejected.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Let's talk about some ways to turn the unemployment record around. One important way is to begin using all the tools available to help stimulate our economy, create new jobs, and provide a more prosperous life for everyone in Saskatchewan, not just for a few.

And one important tool, Mr. Speaker, which hasn't been used properly in recent years, and which is again being neglected and decimated in this budget, is the public sector.

In recent years some politicians have tried to make government a dirty word. They've tried to discredit government as an important tool to help ordinary people achieve some measure of economic prosperity. They've done this successfully in the past because they've been able to attack government as something big and impersonal, and that's government at its worst. But we are talking about people working together to build a better future for themselves, and their neighbours. That's government at its best.

Government is people — people joining forces to improve their neighbourhoods, their communities, and their province. Good government is your servant, fuelled by your aspirations, and answerable to your concerns. There is a positive, important role for government to play in our economy, especially an economy as isolated from major markets as is Saskatchewan. We have to do things for ourselves. We can't rely on huge corporations from outside the province unless we're prepared to dish out generous incentives, as has been done recently. Generous incentives, which are often too rich and cannot be justified because the spin-off activity created isn't adequate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — To deal with unemployment requires government action. It requires government to be a leader, an innovator, and a lot more support for Saskatchewan-based small business.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — It's small business that creates jobs, not big business.

And for all these reasons, Mr. Speaker, because of senseless and cruel cut-backs, because of the failure of this government to offer positive solutions to young men and women, to seniors, working men and women, to

farmers, and to all the people of Saskatchewan, I cannot support this Draconian PC budget, this budget of betrayal, but I wholeheartedly support the motion for amendment. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1730)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

St. Jean Baptiste Day

Mr. Goodale: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, before the House adjourns. Today is June 24, St. Jean Baptiste day, and in some parts of our country — those with large French speaking populations — this day is a formal holiday. In our nation's capital, for example, the House of Commons is adjourned today in recognition of this special day. While this is not formally recognized as a full Saskatchewan holiday, I believe, Mr. Speaker . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Excuse me, what's your point of order? Is it dealing with some rules of the House, or what's your point? Do you have one?

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, if you will bear with me for about 30 seconds, I think that'll become clear, and it will not take me any longer . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Point of orders really aren't meant to be short speeches, so I'd like you to get to your point of order if you have one.

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, in that case, sensing the mood of the House, might I have the leave of the Assembly to address this matter for just a very few moments.

Leave granted.

Mr. Goodale: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the hon. members for their indulgence. While this is not formally recognized as a full Saskatchewan holiday, I do believe, Mr. Speaker, that all hon. members of this House would not want June 24 to pass without the appropriate acknowledgement. And so, Mr. Speaker, may I invite all members to join with me on this St. Jean Baptiste day in recognizing Saskatchewan's francophone community and in extending our good wishes on this occasion to the Fransaskois in communities like many of those in my constituency and in many others throughout this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I too would ask for leave of the Assembly to make a few comments.

Leave granted.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I join with the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg in sending best wishes to the many francophone residents of our province. This day was founded as a way to stimulate interest in the language and the cultural heritage of the French in Canada. And my

party, as you will know, has taken a stand to support the preservation of this heritage. We believe that it is important to the cultural mosaic of this province, and we appreciate the support of the cultural and the linguistic heritage of many of its parts.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that all members of the House, I think, send their best to all francophones in all of Canada, particularly those in Saskatchewan.

And now if I could beg leave to adjourn debate, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I will do just that. I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:35 p.m.