

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to members of the Assembly six students from the Regina Plains Community College, with their teacher, Ruth Quiring.

I look forward to meeting with them immediately after question period. I hope you find it informative and interesting. I invite all members to join me in welcoming them.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to the House, and to the members here, a person I am sure that many of the members on the opposition learned to respect during the past four or five years. I want to introduce a young and dynamic new president of the New Democratic Party, who is seated in the east gallery, Mr. Dwain Lingenfelter. Please join in welcoming him.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I join with the hon. member from Quill Lakes in welcoming the former member from Shaunavon, who I suspect may be president for a while but will be the former member for a very long time.

Mr. Goulet: — Yes, I would like to have the legislature welcome special guests today. First of all I would like to acknowledge Vern Bellgarde, the first vice-chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — I would also like to recognize Wayne MacKenzie the vice-president of the Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — There are many other leaders in here that I would like to recognize, Mr. Speaker. There are such people as Nap Lafontaine, Ed Nufeld. There is also special guests from northern Saskatchewan, and I would like to ask people to give a special welcome to Mayor Hegland from La Ronge and Doug Eddy.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — Also, all the way from south and north of La Ronge, William Dumais.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — I would also like to give special welcome to a person who worked in the race and ethnic relations

division of the Regina Public School, Glenda Simms.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — And of course my sister and brother-in-law, Allan and Monica Couture.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — And last, but not least, I'd like to welcome the Montreal Lake students and their teacher, Brenda Mitchell and driver John Hamilton. These students are here to learn about the process of our legislative procedures and here also to visit Regina. They are aged 10 and 12, and so I would like to ask all members to give special welcome to all the people that I have mentioned, especially to this group that I have just mentioned at the end.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, four people who are sitting in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, who are from the Friendship Centre in Moose Jaw. I'd like you to extend a warm welcome to Earl Pelletier, the vice-president; board member, George Terry; director Dave Pelletier, and assistant director Lynn Janvier. If the members will join me in extending a warm welcome to the members of the friendship centre.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, I apologize for being a little slow on my feet today. There's a group and an individual I'd like to introduce, and I will introduce the individual first.

With us today in the west gallery we have Virginia McElree, who is retiring from the public service of Saskatchewan. And it's not often that we introduce retiring public servants, but she is particularly special in the length of service that she has put into the government of Saskatchewan, and we've asked her to come here today to be introduced.

Virginia McElree commenced her employment with the Government of Saskatchewan under the then premier William Patterson on November 19, 1943, and started in the department of reconstruction, labour and public welfare. After the 1944 election of the CCF, she moved over to become a secretary in the department of social welfare office, and later moved on to government insurance and was a witness to the first purchase policy of SGI, oh, back in 1944. She then, on September 1, 1948, was appointed secretary to the chairman of the Workers' Compensation Board, where she served continuously for almost 39 years. And this year has come to the stage where she is retiring from the government.

She has almost achieved 44 years of service to the public of Saskatchewan. She served under 12 chairpersons and acting chairpersons, eight ministers, and five different government administrations and, as far as we could determine, had the most seniority of any public servant in

Canada when she retired. And this is quite an honour to have spent 44 years working for the Government of Saskatchewan. I'd ask her to rise and ask the members to welcome her here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, I would also like to introduce to you, and through you to this Assembly, 40 students from St. Henry's Separate School in Melville, Saskatchewan, in my constituency, being grade 8 students. They are here in the Speaker's gallery.

They usually bring the grade 8 class every year, and usually the same teachers, Garth Gleisinger and Phyllis Sanguin are here today. Their bus drivers are Rev. Ken Hudson and Terry Schappert. And I would ask the members to welcome them here today, and I'll try to meet with them after the delayed question period, due to the length of the introductions. Please welcome the students from Melville.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Premier's Quote Regarding AIDS

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, thank you for recognizing me, and I direct my question to the Premier. And it deals with a comment which the Premier is reported to have made at a recent meeting between cabinet members and a number of women's groups. It's reported, sir, that you told the women's representatives, and I will quote the report that was in the press:

If AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) ever gets into the native community, it will be hell on wheels.

While, sir, you are reported to have mentioned women and young people, no other nationality was mentioned — not Welsh or Ukrainian or German or English or French. Mr. Premier, why did you single out the native community in your statement with respect to AIDS?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, when I met, and the cabinet met, with women's groups and with church groups, we spoke for at least a half an hour on each occasion with respect to social disease, and particularly the problem of AIDS in Canada, and in Saskatchewan.

And I referred to the worry that we have, as leaders across the country, about the problems associated with AIDS and the fact that it is a deadly disease and we have to treat it as such — and not just in urban markets, and not just in rural markets and constituencies, and not just among the youth, and not just among the native, but everybody. And it is extremely serious.

And I talked about all of Saskatchewan — northern Saskatchewan, southern Saskatchewan, and various demographics that we have to be concerned about. And I am very serious and sincere when I say it is an extremely difficult problem, and it's a very serious problem. And that's why we're taking the time to provide more

education and more information to people about it.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary, Mr. Premier. The nub of my question was that in reporting groups at risk, you apparently singled out native people. And I ask you again, why did you single out native groups and not mention any other racial or ethnic group when you used the colourful phrase "hell on wheels"?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's not the facts that I singled out groups. I said that it's a serious concern to all age groups and categories and demographic people.

I spoke for at least 20 minutes, if not half an hour, about the problem — both groups that were in. And I said is a significant . . . And if, you know, if members opposite do not think that it's a significant problem . . . And I'd be interested in knowing your view. It is extremely significant, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to treat it as such.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The press report quotes you as follows:

If AIDS ever gets into the native community, it will be hell on wheels.

Mr. Premier, did you say that, or something approximately that?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, what I said: it would be extremely serious if it gets into Saskatchewan's communities. And if it hits the young people or it hits natives or it hits seniors or it hits anybody in any more than it is today, it will be extremely serious. And that's a fact. And it is true. And it is a life and death situation.

So, Mr. Speaker, he's taking somebody's quote. He's saying that it's somebody said that I . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A supplementary then, because I'm still not sure whether the Premier is denying that he said this or not.

Mr. Premier, a lot of people have suggested that if any such statement was made, it would be uninformed, derogatory, and the sort of statement which contributes to racial stereotyping which we don't need in this province.

I ask you, Mr. Premier, did you make this statement or anything akin to this statement which would give rise to the concerns which are being expressed to us?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — What I said, Mr. Speaker was that it was a very serious — and I talked for 20 minutes — very serious if it hits any part of our community. Extremely serious. And if it goes into the community at large — whether it's seniors or whether it is urban people or whether it is people on reserves or whether it is people in northern Saskatchewan or whether it's people in any place — now if somebody walked out of the meeting and said the Premier singled out one group, that's not fair,

because I didn't. I talked about all groups, and I talked about all demographic areas, and I talked about all regions of the province.

It's just as serious, it's just as serious, Mr. Speaker, on a reserve in northern Saskatchewan as it is in the city of Estevan, as it is any place else in this province. And that's what I said, Mr. Speaker, and I did not single out a group . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. I would just like to make a comment. Unfortunately there are one or two terms that are being used in the House which I think we should recognize should not be part of the parliamentary vocabulary that we use, whether it's standing on our feet or sitting in our desks. I think we all know which term we refer to, and I think that in the best interests of the efficient conduct of this Legislative Assembly, all members should purge their vocabulary of words like lie, liars, and that sort of thing, whether they're standing or sitting in their desks.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I perhaps have not made my position clear. A good number of people of this province are concerned that the first minister would say anything such as: if AIDS ever gets into the native community it will be hell on wheels. I ask you, sir, to deny that you made that statement, if that's possible. And I ask you also, in the absence of the Minister of Health, to give the House any information which you may have which suggests that those infected by the AIDS virus are more numerous among Indian and native communities than any other part of our community.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, let me repeat. I didn't say what the hon. member says that somebody said that I said. If he wants to play this game, I said that — and I might have used the word — it's hell if it hits any part of our community, whether it is students, whether it is urban, whether it is rural, or whether it is native, or any part. And it's serious, extremely serious. If the members opposite deny the fact that it's serious, they've got their heads in the sand. They don't want to deal with it. Well, Mr. Speaker, we are going to spend funds to make sure that Saskatchewan people are aware, because if it does hit Saskatchewan in any increased numbers, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly it will be extremely, extremely serious.

Meech Lake Accord and Self-Government of Indian, Métis and Inuit

Mr. Goulet: — I would like to direct my question to the Premier. This question concerns a lot of treaty Indian and Métis people in this province, and that's in relation to the Meech Lake Accord. In the Meech Lake Accord the Premier accepted the principle of distinct society in the case of Quebec, but he would not accept the principle of self-government as put forth by the Indian, the Inuit, and the Métis.

Will the Premier explain why he accepted the principle of distinct society in the case of Quebec, and did not accept the principle of self-government as put forth by the Indian, the Métis, and the Inuit?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — I'm sure, as the hon. member knows, the proposal that I put forth in 1985, which was accepted by the Métis association, said that I understood and I accepted self-government for the native community. And it said if this proposal is to be enshrined in the constitution, it has to come to the legislature of Saskatchewan. And it was accepted by a large number. In fact, if one more group, native group had accepted it — because we had seven out of the ten provinces — it would have been in the constitution already.

Now I accepted Quebec being part of the constitution, but not before it has to come to this legislature, and we will all have a chance to debate it, and it will have to pass this legislature, and every other legislature, including parliament in Canada. What I am surprised about is that in the last round of negotiations with the natives they turned it down because they would not want it to come to this legislature, which means the people of Saskatchewan would not be involved in those decisions.

I can't allow new forms of self-government to take place without this legislature participating, and the hon. member understands that. If it's good enough for Quebec to be part of this country, that it has to pass the legislature, it's good enough for other forms of self-government.

And again, I'll just say, in 1985 I proposed it, and if one more native group had adopted it — we had seven out of ten of the provinces and the federal government already buying it. This time it was denied . . . And I didn't turn it down, Mr. Speaker; it was turned down by the native population.

Mr. Goulet: — You mentioned the involvement of Indian and Métis people, and also the people of Saskatchewan. There was mention of public hearings in the accord. Will the government hold public hearings so that the concerns of treaty Indian and Métis, as well as others, can be heard?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I haven't made up my mind . . . a final, ultimate decision with respect to public hearings. I'm inclined not to have public hearings because we can debate it here, and each MLA can go back into his constituency and have all the meetings they want with respect to the Meech Lake Accord, and all the groups they want.

I remind the members opposite that when we had the whole constitution brought home, '81-82, there wasn't any public hearings when we brought the whole thing here. And members opposite did not provide public hearings. But if people want to debate it, I mean we will introduce the resolution very soon into this House; every MLA can have all the hearings they want to, and you can bring information back to this legislature. And the MLAs from each constituency, I'm sure, can speak for all their constituents at any time.

Mr. Goulet: — In regards to . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Is it a new question or a supplementary?

Mr. Goulet: — Supplementary. Will the Premier guarantee in the upcoming second round that his government will lobby other Premiers and the Prime Minister for some of the Meech Lake Accord amendments which have been suggested by treaty Indian and Métis leaders.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I understand that the heads of all political parties, the Leader of the Opposition in parliament and the Leader of the NDP, all support the accord as it is. And they've said so. But that is not to say that there won't be modification somewhere down the road to the constitution on the second round or third round and continuously as we go through senate reform, as we look at fish, as we look at new provinces and so forth. So I wouldn't rule out changes on this particular accord. Each legislature and parliament has to pass the identical accord, the identical resolution. So it's not likely that you're going to see modifications as we go through this exercise on this particular round. We can have a second round, and if there is modification to be made, certainly could be the case.

Mr. Goulet: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. In the Meech Lake Accord there will be a clear shift in power from the federal government to the provinces. Many people, especially treaty Indian people, are concerned that with increased provincial powers that the bilateral, treaty-making process will be jeopardized. Will the Premier honour the existing rights of treaty Indians?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I would in all respects say, of course I will honour the rights. Again, I put together a proposal in 1985 which was accepted by the Métis association, accepted by most groups except one, or we'd have had it already in the constitution.

And with respect to bilateral powers, or federal powers, provincial powers, I remind the members and my hon. colleague, the only time the federal government has to talk to the provinces in any great detail is in areas of exclusive jurisdiction where we have control over our resources or anything else that is exclusive.

Under the constitution, if we have exclusive rights, then by definition they're our rights, and if somebody is going to spend in our area, they have to come out and talk to us about that. I believe that that's about high time we got it. And not only for Quebec. And not only for Ontario, the way it was, but Saskatchewan will now have the same power and the same veto power as Ontario and Quebec, and it's about time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — We want one final assurance from the Premier. Will the Premier guarantee that the first minister will have both Métis and treaty Indians at the constitutional bargaining table throughout the second round of the constitutional conference, promised by the Meech Lake Accord? Will he assure that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I can't say what people, or additional new people, will be at the constitutional table. We've had people there before, and I lobbied to have additional people. And I've talked with Chief Roland Crowe, for example, and encouraged the federal government to . . . We funded them to go down. We encouraged the federal government to give them a seat at the table. In fact, the FSI (Federation of Saskatchewan Indians) here in Saskatchewan initiated much of the discussion, and then were denied the right to sit at the table.

So I'm already on record of supporting them, and I will continue to support them in their bilateral relationships with the federal government, as I will with respect to the things that we have obligations for that are well understood and well respected.

Cut-Back on Core Funding for AMNSIS

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, my question's to the Premier. Mr. Premier, it has to do with your government cutting back on the core funding for the Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan. This \$750,000 cut, just three months ago, was made after you were given a tongue-lashing in front of all Canadians on national television by Mr. Sinclair, the AMNSIS (Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan) leader.

Now, Mr. Premier, will you now admit that this cut is little more than petty personal revenge for Mr. Sinclair's comments?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that that is not true. The hon. member knows that it's got nothing to do with revenge at all. We have limited the funding or cut the funding for advocates from planned parenthood, to pro-life, to other groups right across the province, under some difficult economic times. At the same time . . . And with respect to the status Indian, we even changed the way we funded that organization. We didn't just give the money to the political arm; we gave the money to the reserves and to the chiefs. They allocated money back up. We've changed the way it's funded. And frankly, I'm pretty happy with some of the changes that have taken place.

With respect to her allegation, it's just simply not the case. Across the piece in Saskatchewan, we've asked people to postpone operations. We have limited funding to advocates at a time when obviously we don't have the revenue because of wheat and oil and potash prices, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Simard: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, how can you say in one breath you support the concept of native self-government and, in the other breath, cut the funding for AMNSIS in order to . . . you eliminate their funding that will help them promote native self-government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I've reviewed this on several occasions, but the advice that I receive is that as much economic activity, independent economic activity, and success . . . and may I give you a list of projects, economic projects and jobs and new economic activity that has taken place. That's where we're putting our priority. And the people of Saskatchewan are telling me: build, diversify, manufacturing, processing, tourism — those kinds of things are opposed to, Mr. Speaker, just funding the groups that want to advocate this or that, or whatever. If you want to raise political funds, you raise them with your organization.

Mr. Speaker, for economic development, I believe at the same time, if I am correct, the federal government is giving \$9 million — and the minister can comment in more detail on a subsequent question — \$9 million in economic activity, which is very, very large.

Spending on Native People

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question to the Premier, and it deals with a comment that he made at the first ministers' conference in March, and he has since many times repeated this statement.

Mr. Premier, you claimed at that conference that your government is spending \$1 million a day on treaty Indian and Métis people in this province. They tell me, what million dollars a day? And they ask and they say that they're not sure that they have seen any of it.

So my question to you, Mr. Premier, is very specific: how did you calculate this figure, and can you table in this Assembly the documents which back up your claim that your government is spending \$1 million a day on native people?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I believe if you go back and check the records, it was: I said something that we spend — we spend — in the neighbourhood of a million dollars a day on the native population in the province of Saskatchewan.

All right, the taxpayers' dollars going into the native community in Saskatchewan is, in fact, in excess of a million dollars a day. And that's on about 11 per cent of the population — a considerable amount of money — \$13 million in La Loche alone on an annual basis.

Mr. Speaker, I don't have the documentation with me, but I'll take notice of the question and, Mr. Speaker, I'm quite sure the hon. member will find that we, as taxpayers, pay, federally and provincially, put together over a million dollars — a million dollars, Mr. Speaker, a million dollars a day in the province of Saskatchewan for the native community.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, here today; not here tomorrow. Mr. Premier, you specifically said that you and your government spend \$1 million a day on Indian and

Métis people in Saskatchewan. It has become clear to this Assembly, in the last week or so, that your ability to deal truthfully with any issue is extremely questionable.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Did I hear you say, Mr. Premier, and will you make it clear to this House, that you will table in this Assembly an explanation as to how you came up with this figure — how you came up with the figure that the province spends \$1 million a day because you said, "we", and will you table the documents that support that statement?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I've already said that I will bring the documentation to the House that describes the \$1 million a day of taxpayers' money that goes to the native community in Saskatchewan. And I'll be glad to do that.

Mr. Speaker: — Order.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Does he want . . . If it adds up to more than that, then I'll just be happy to have the member opposite acknowledge that it adds up to more than \$1 million a day.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Premier. Mr. Premier, let us deal with the facts. Let's talk about your own budget estimate. On page 55 of your *Estimates*, which you approved, the budget for the Indian and Native Affairs office has been cut from . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Please put the question.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — In light of the fact, Mr. Premier, that along with the cut in the economic development program from \$3 million to \$1 million, and in light of the fact, Mr. Premier, that grants to Indian and Métis organizations and women groups have been cut from 1.2 million . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Please put the question; it's becoming a long supplementary question. As we all know, if you have a question please put it immediately.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Premier, I ask you . . . I ask you in light of those facts, which comes out of your own budget, read by the Minister of Finance here last Wednesday: how do you justify your statement that your government spends \$1 million a day on Indian and Métis people?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that he's into estimates, and we'll be glad to . . . We have lots of time. But if I could just take 20 seconds.

In 1987-88 budget, we're looking at Human Resources, Labour and Employment, have targeted \$4.491 million to native community; Education, 13 million; Social Services, 2 million; Saskatchewan Housing, 3 million; Health 1.6 million; Justice, 1.4 million — 25.977 million in just several departments that I can relate to you. And

we will provide to the hon. member, because he mentioned a couple of figures, we will provide, not 29 million, Mr. Speaker, but millions upon millions upon millions of dollars that are spent in the province of Saskatchewan on 11 per cent of the population.

Opportunities for Native People in the Public Service

Ms. Smart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, Saskatchewan's treaty Indians and Métis people are seriously underrepresented in Saskatchewan's public service. Native people make up more than 10 per cent of the total population, yet the jobs they hold are less than 5 per cent in the public service. And with the destruction of programs like the native court workers' program, employment opportunities in the public service are even less. Can you explain how you propose to improve that situation when your government has also dismantled the employment equity or affirmative action branch of the Public Service commission? Who will now work to find new job opportunities in government departments and agencies for native people, women, and persons with disabilities?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, as relates to the employment equity branch, I should make clear that that function has not somehow been eliminated. What we have done, Mr. Speaker, given the maturity of that program insofar as the various departments formulating plans and putting those plans in place, has proceeded and is on schedule. And now that function, Mr. Speaker, for the most part will be co-ordinated out of Human Resources, I think which makes some good sense. So I ought to advise the member . . . I thank her for her question, but she should be clear that the function is not somehow eliminated; it's now in a different department.

Mr. Speaker: — Time has elapsed. Order, please. Order. When the Speaker is on his feet, there is to be no talking from desks or anywhere else.

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.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to speak in support of the Minister of Finance who has brought in the budget for the 1987-88 fiscal year.

I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance for his fine effort, for taking on the task of managing our economy during really difficult times. I want to congratulate him for having the foresight and the courage to make the appropriate modifications in the Saskatchewan budget

and in our management system, to make sure that we have the future of our programs in the palm of our hand so that we can control them.

We want financial flexibility in the year 1990 and at the turn of the century. And, Mr. Speaker, this budget will provide it. We want to protect families. And, Mr. Speaker, in this province we have protected them well in the last four and a half, five years, and we're going to continue to protect them well with some very unique programs.

And, Mr. Speaker, we want to diversify and build so that we can be strong. The diversification, the processing, the manufacturing is extremely important for the province of Saskatchewan and builds that framework and that incentive and those mechanisms that have been put in place in Saskatchewan, not only since 1982 but in this budget, are very important for the province.

In the last couple of days I've had the interesting and pleasurable time of being involved in some unique diversification as well as decentralization in Saskatchewan. And we're going to continue that.

With respect to decentralization, we opened the brand-new crop insurance building in Melville yesterday. The people of Melville are delighted to have it there. The employees are very happy. The crop insurance building and the equipment and the staff is excellent. And the facility, Mr. Speaker, is in line with what the Finance minister is talking about in reaching the people, providing the services, and recognizing that there's more than just one community that is up to hosting government economic activities and services.

The city of Melville is not that large. It's just a little over 5,000 people. And with the crop insurance building going there, decentralizing out of the city of Regina, it's a tremendous boost to the urban communities outside the city of Regina. And we can provide the service. It's closer to the farmers, it's closer to the clientele, and it's well worth the effort.

And I could point out, Mr. Speaker, not everybody agreed. It wasn't without some controversies, I'm sure you know. The opposition wasn't very happy with it; we had some other groups that weren't very happy with it. We even had some church groups that said it was not the right thing to do. And when it all finishes, and a year later we find that everybody is happy with it; the people that wanted to stay in Regina are working; they have jobs. The people that want to go into Melville have jobs. And there's new job opportunities for people coming up through the ranks, and people are promotions, and it's decentralized. And it's better service to rural Saskatchewan.

But, Mr. Speaker, that's the kind of courage and foresight that is necessary to make government better and better all the time. Many things we do in government are very good. Some things need improvement. It's not always easy to make the improvements in health, in education, in crop insurance and agriculture, but it works.

Let me give you a second example. I was disappointed that the hon. member couldn't be in his riding today, but I

was in the riding of Quill Lakes and I went to Wynyard. And we opened a brand-new hatchery today and we officially cut the ribbon. And it's the finest technology, will allow 200 people in line with the processing plant and the hatchery to work in this growing industry of the poultry market, right in the middle of Saskatchewan.

We're using Saskatchewan grain, we're using Saskatchewan feed, but we're not just selling wheat to Japan or to the Soviet Union — we're processing that wheat into the livestock sector. The livestock sector is providing 200 jobs. The 200 jobs are adding more services and demanding more services in the community, and all of Wynyard is very happy with that kind of entrepreneurial business approach. And, Mr. Speaker, what it showed is that people are prepared to risk and invest. And the board of directors deserve a good bouquet of the poultry processing plant — they put up most of the money — to risk investing in Saskatchewan and work with the local people to diversify the economy.

But, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say, it's good to build and diversify and have processing and manufacturing, because it creates wealth and it creates jobs, and with jobs people pay tax and they pay sales tax. And with that money, you can make sure or you can rest assured, you can have the cash for social services, for education, for health care, and so forth.

So the culmination of managing the economy today so that you can build now and into the future is extremely important, because if you didn't manage today, you'd run out of money for health and education and social services.

If you didn't diversify the economy and you didn't have people investing their funds, you wouldn't generate the revenue. You'd be tied, as they say, put all your eggs in one basket, and when the price of that basket goes down, you're in big trouble. We don't want to just depend on potash prices. We don't want to just depend on wheat prices or on one or two single commodities. We want to broaden and deepen our economy, and that's been the fact, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say at the outset, because some have thrown the odd criticism at us, and at the Minister of Finance, that we didn't talk about the problems or the difficulties facing the province of Saskatchewan in the last two or three years, or particularly during the last fall during the campaign. Well the facts are, Mr. Speaker, we've been talking about them since we were elected in '82.

We were elected, in fact campaigned, on one of the problems — high interest rates. We talked about it and we fixed it. And we brought in interest rate protection. It was extremely important to people on farms and homes and in communities and for senior citizens who were frightened about losing their homes.

We did the same in 1986. We got some severe problems, we say. We got revenue problems. We're going to have to have, and we introduced, a flat tax. We said we were doing to have to make major modifications to down-size government; we talked about that. We said we got severe problems in agriculture and we're going to have to deal

with that. We're short farm income. We had to make changes in crop insurance, we had to make changes in tax systems to help people during these difficult times.

I'm sure everybody will acknowledge, most of the campaign in 1986 was about me talking to the federal government, saying, we're in some trouble. We need some assistance, we need at least a billion dollars in cash, and we've got to have it here because our economy can't stand it and the farmers can't put up with \$2 wheat. Well everybody knows that's the case.

It takes courage, Mr. Speaker, to face the facts. The truth was then, and the truth is now, that we're short revenue because of international prices and subsidies and protectionism. It takes courage for the Minister of Finance to say, I'm going to trim my operation; I'm going to down-size government.

Now nobody said that would be popular, particularly for the employees that you have to say, this position is not there. It's not easy, and we understand that. But the alternative is just to let it grow. And that would not take courage; it would just put your head in the sand and say, I don't have the money, and I have a deficit now, but I will just continue to borrow and it won't matter.

Well it does matter, Mr. Speaker. And somebody has to get a hold of it and say, I will not let the size of this government get out of hand. If I can be more efficient and more effective and provide good service, now is the time to do it, to protect people in 1990 and 1995 and well on into the future. And that's precisely, Mr. Speaker, what we've done.

(1445)

And we talked about the down-sizing, and we talked about what we're going to have to do to diversify and strengthen this economy. And, Mr. Speaker, I will just spend a couple of minutes on how we're doing that so that people can recognize that, in fact, that it is the case.

We've encouraged people to expand in the pulp and paper business in Saskatchewan, and everybody knows that. We didn't have a paper industry here before. We will now have one. And it's a lot of jobs and it's a long-run industry, Mr. Speaker.

We didn't have an upgrader, but we're building one right now. The largest oil project in the world is taking place in Regina right now. One of the largest paper projects in North America is in Prince Albert — \$500 million going on with PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp company). PAPCO's finally making money, Mr. Speaker, and it feels good for the Saskatchewan taxpayers. Finally that pulp company is making money and very good money and it's the first time in a long time, through our diversification, that it is making that kind of money. And we're building a new paper mill and one of the largest projects you'll find in Canada. The upgrader here is about a 7, \$800 million project. There will be 1,800 to 2,000 men working in Regina on that upgrader this fall. It will be jobs now, in construction, jobs at that plant, 1,000 jobs for a long time out in the field supplying the oil, 50,000 barrels a day, Mr. Speaker. Building a refinery, a co-operative effort, with

the Co-op and the Government of Saskatchewan.

And with any reasonable margins we're going to pay that off, Mr. Speaker, because it's based on the differential. It's not on just the raw price, the difference between light oil and heavy crude. And if you run anywhere between 6 and \$7 or more, we pay it off in about 10 years to 11 years. Then, Mr. Speaker, we have major sources of revenue coming in — tens upon tens of millions of dollars that we'll get going through an upgrader rather than just pumping oil and send it to Chicago or Minneapolis or to Coch Refinery or someplace else.

The diversification in processing, in manufacturing — I'll just touch on a few, certainly in Intercon it is . . . we're very happy with that expansion. We're happy with recreational vehicles expansion in North Battleford and processing of bacon there. Obviously we're looking and working closely with the Japanese, with Marubeni and Hitachi on manufacturing turbines. We've finished a power project. We're in the middle of another one. Mr. Speaker, we're looking at chemical manufacturing. I had good discussions with the President of France, François Mitterrand, when we were looking at Cdf Chimie and a fertilizer project that we're doing here, manufacturing in the health care field, expanding in tourism.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, these economic activities broaden and diversify the economy in Saskatchewan so we can sustain ourselves through these difficult times. When the winds of international trade say that their prices will go down, we will have processed and manufactured goods that can continue to provide us with revenue in this province. And the infrastructure for that is important. The gas distribution systems so that we can have natural gas and that processing plant out there in Wynyard is very important. So we can have natural gas to the farmers in the hog business out in rural Saskatchewan is very important. Top-notch communication, individual line service to people all over this province is very important. To bury those power lines and manufacture the cable in Moose Jaw is very important, Mr. Speaker. Those are the kinds of expenditures, up to \$1.5 billion, diversifying our economy so that we can build.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if you have lots of money and the price of wheat is \$8 a bushel, and the price of oil is \$35 a barrel, and the price of potash is 150 bucks a ton, and you've got an extra billion dollars a year in revenue, it's not that difficult to find where you could spend it and it could be very enjoyable. The flip side of that, Mr. Speaker, is when it isn't . . . or in cast it might not be the case in the future, what will you do to manage this economy to make sure that you can handle it and have top-notch health care and top-notch education and the various kinds of social programs. That's the key. That's the \$64,000 question.

How will we manage this economy in good times, and in not so good times, to make sure that we have the health programs and the education programs and the other safety net measures that people want to have? Well, I just point out, Mr. Speaker, we have set a course for economic activity in Saskatchewan, and we'll compare it with any in North America. We have had some difficult times with drought and with prices and some other things and protectionism. But we're not easily intimidated. We're

elected to govern, to manage, to protect, and to build and diversify. And that vision, Mr. Speaker, goes on into 1990 and the year 2000, and you will see, Mr. Speaker. Mark my words!

Today in the province of Saskatchewan there isn't a better health care system in Canada than right there. And today in the province of Saskatchewan there isn't a better education system any place in Canada than right here. The social services system is by far the best in Canada. The tax system is by far the fairest. The only province that has lower taxes in Alberta, and I still think we have some better provisions, even though they have a lower absolute tax. But we're number two in absolute levels, and much more fair, and I'll touch on that in a minute.

I say, Mr. Speaker, and to the people of Saskatchewan and to the people of this country: you look again in 1990 and you look again in 1995, and you look again at the turn of the century, and Saskatchewan will continue to have the lead because we have planned for it. And we have managed for it, as we did in '82, and said: we need a new agricultural college; we need rural gas distribution systems; we need the diversification; we need some outside investment. We did. We planned for it. We got it.

And, Mr. Speaker, we didn't only win in '82, we didn't only win in '86, we will win again, Mr. Speaker, if we provide the kind of vision and the kind of strength and the kind of management skills the people of Saskatchewan expect from a government. They don't want somebody who will just say: I have no alternatives. They don't want that. They want to say: look at it carefully, make up your mind, and stick with it to build into the future to make sure that we can.

I know my colleagues have gone to the numbers, and I'm not going to go through them in any great detail, but I want to touch on two or three things with respect to education and health care and social services and welfare, and then end up with a couple of comments about some comparisons that we have in terms of the economic base we have here.

Our government is so committed to first-class health care that we have increased expenditures since we were elected by 63 per cent — from 700-and-some million dollars to 1.2 billion. Some would say: yes, but that's partly of Social Services. Well, if you look at the Social Services budget, it's up, too.

So any way you want to add it up, Mr. Speaker, we have made a major commitment to health care, and it's with hospitals, and it's with nursing homes, and it's with technology, and it's with equipment, and it's with the entire package.

Mr. Speaker, it's good, but it isn't excellent. It is not excellent. Just money alone won't solve all the problems. We have to learn to administer the regional-wide health care system that we have. We've got to learn to administer hospitals as best we can. We've got to provide services, and in the four corners of this province, so we all don't go to just one or two hospitals and have the line-ups there that are inordinately long.

We have to make those kinds of changes. And we've got to make some decisions to take courage with respect to priorities. And I want to just talk about a couple — the drug program and the dental program because we changed them, and Mr. Speaker, with good reason — with good reason — to provide better health care and better dental programs for the province of Saskatchewan that will outrank anybody's in the country.

Look at the drug program. We started that program. We spent \$17 million dollars. If we had've kept it up this year, it would have been 80-some million dollars. By 1990 you are close to \$100 million, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan, with the same population base. Free drugs — \$100 million a year, free drugs.

When they first found out it was free they spent 17 million on drugs. And as they got accustomed to the procedures and accustomed to the things that can go on with free drugs, it would soon be \$100 million a year in free drugs. I'm not so sure that's healthy, Mr. Speaker. And I say that in all seriousness. The drug problems, and the alcohol problems, and the combination so drugs and alcohol in society, is serious, and they are serious. The administration costs of our drug program have gone up 400 per cent — 400 per cent.

I wasn't happy with the administration of the program either — it could be better — since we initiated it. But the cost of free drugs, and obviously the use of free drugs, went from 17 million to — by the next decade, which is in three years — to approximately 100 million a year free drugs, with some abuse.

Now we canvassed the country. What do other people do? We looked at the program that our neighbours had, and said: we understand that it's a problem right across Canada. But we've got a program that we're not happy with — responsible program, that says people are going to start to watch what drugs they use. They're going to start to ask the doctors what drugs they use. They're going to start to ask the pharmacist, is that the lowest-cost drug? They're going to start to ask people and their relatives and they're going to start to ask their kids and they're going to start to ask their parents, are those the right things that you should be taking? Is that the amount? That's healthy, Mr. Speaker, not only financially healthy and management healthy, but it's healthy in a generic sense.

A hundred million dollars a year on free drugs because the taxpayers is going to just do it. Well, we changed the program and we brought in the Manitoba program to Saskatchewan, and we made it better; we've modified it. We picked up more of the cost and more of the protection. But I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, we'll get people thinking about drug use and drug abuse, and how much it costs, and how we can maybe manage those costs, so we will have a better health care system. Not just more of it, but better, and responsible, and manage to 1990 and the year 2000.

Anybody in this legislature can stand up and say, 200 million a year in free drugs and that would be tremendous, and only if you did that would you have first-class health. I don't buy that. I don't even think members of the opposition buy that. Not many people in

the public would buy that. It's responsible, Mr. Speaker, to make very sure that we treat people fairly, and we manage their money, and we watch the programs we design.

Let me just touch on the dental program — and they're connected; they're related. Parents were saying to us, the best place to get the teeth fixed, for children from 5 to 13, is at the dentist's office. We train dentists for a reason. It's a professional thing, and they've got to go to university for a long time, and they have to know how to diagnose the teeth, the jaw, the bite, the entire head. It's a professional that needs to do that if you want top-notch care. You can have assistants look at it, Mr. Speaker, but an assistant doesn't have the qualifications, or the education, or the training, or the professionalism that graduate dentists have, and if they did, we wouldn't have dentists; we'd just have assistants.

Parents said, I . . . And many of them did already, they didn't even go to the program that was in place. For my children — and I know that the braces they need, and I know the treatment they have, and I know the diagnosis that they have to have — my children are going to the dentist. Could you pay for that, Mr. Premier, for the very young children from five to 13. We said, right on. Let's do that. Let's take the children, and mom and dad will have to, I admit, take the child once a year — maybe more often if they've got problems — to the dentist to get the professional care, and we'll pay for it all. There isn't a better system any place in Canada. I don't think there's one in North America. There might not be a better one in the world.

For a five-year-old to 13-years-old, we pay for it with the best-trained people that you'll find any place. I assume that because they are graduates of the dental college.

They will hire employees. I admit, it's not easy for those who were in another program, like the dental assistants, to say, well I had it this way, and you're going to change it. But if it's right, you have to have the courage to change it. You have to do that. There comes a time when you have to make up your mind. You're going to fish or cut bait, as they say. It's right to have the children treated in the dentist's office.

Now the second part of the program is: well, how about the teenagers? It's cost us \$3 million or more to fix their teeth if we sent them to the dentist. We said, well, fine, we can do that. Do we have any other priorities? Well, Mr. Speaker, parents come back to us and said, yes, as they did in the drug program. The problems with the teenagers aren't with their teeth, in most cases. They got a cavity, they can get it fixed. They can go to the dentist.

The problems are education associated with life today, living today, with the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs, and the combination, and the mixing. I say it is very clear, and people in this room know that. I mean, it's one thing to have a bottle of beer, but it's another thing to combine it with a chemical. This new combination of drugs and alcohol can be literally deadly. People need to be aware of it. They need to be treated, and they need to have awareness programs.

So we said, we're going to allocate the money to educating young people and treating young people about the social consequences of their actions in society today. Social consequences — as we talked about in question period today — with respect to social diseases, particularly with respect to AIDS. Serious, Mr. Speaker, very serious. Deserves our money and our attention an awful lot more than having the public pay for a cavity for a teenager. Not easy to make the change, Mr. Speaker, but by God, the right change to make.

(1500)

When you're looking at the kinds of things we face and our children face, and the problems they get into, the suicide rates with young people, and the problems in homes, and the chemicals they face, and the unscrupulous people in the streets that provide them with this, it's time we took it on. It's a lot more significant than the dental program for teenagers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — People know that it's right. They'll know a year from now, Mr. Speaker, that we've made the right decision putting that brand new treatment centre, alcohol and drug treatment centre, in Yorkton, outside of Yorkton. It's the right thing to spend the money on. We don't have extra money, but with the money we have, we will make choices for the best health care and the best dental care and the best social services programs that you will find in Canada, bar none.

And we'll stand by that and we'll keep funding them. And we will not put our heads in the sand. And I can say people did put their heads in the sand, and people opposite, when they were in government. And I mean that. That's the reason we're here today, and the people know that. And they can ballyhoo all you like. When interest rates were 20 per cent, they put their heads in their sand — and no help. When people wanted nursing homes, a freeze for five years — no help. When people wanted tax relief — no help. The record speaks for itself.

They were talking about the polls today. The NDP lost in '64, the NDP lost in '67, the NDP lost in 1982, and here it is '87, and they're still over there, Mr. Speaker, for a reason. They have no solutions. They go to a convention — no solutions. Just put it into government and make it bigger — make it bigger. Well, Mr. Speaker, I won't dwell on that, but obviously I very much believe in the changes we've made, including welfare reform.

People opposite said, oh you've got to give teenagers a bunch more money because they're on welfare. Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know many conscientious parents on that side of the House, or any place in the world, that would say, give a young, healthy teenager more money on welfare so that they could leave home and go downtown and set up shop, light housekeeping, and live on the government.

They're saying, give them \$800 or \$1,000 a month to go downtown as an 18-year-old girl and live there because she's not happy at home. Don't treat them in drug and alcohol or give them awareness or anything like that. Fix

their teeth and give them \$1,000 a month to go live outside the home. We said, no! And sometimes you've got to say no to your children, not because you don't care; it's because you love them. And we said, you will not get more money to leave home and to go downtown. You will not be able to do that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — We'll give you money to go to school; we'll give you money to get a job. And our welfare statistics on young people going back into education and back into the job market are the best in North America, Mr. Speaker — the very best.

And when people look at the results year after year, not just when they want to complain and say, well jeepers, isn't this terrible, because they've got welfare reform, ask yourself: why does the Premier of Saskatchewan want education reform and health reform and welfare reform and tax reform? why? Don't you think that I'm just as competitive politically as anybody in the country? Well if not, I'm damn close to it.

I live in a competitive market, and I've thought an awful lot about the things that we're about to do and we're doing. And they're the right things to do. And I firmly believe — firmly believe — that in the next year and the year after and the year after that, when we get the programs in place, people will say, that's a fine facility that you built in Yorkton. And that's a fine new hospital that you built in Estevan. And that's a fine new hospital that you built in Saskatoon, and a tremendous new nursing home you built in Moose Jaw. And we can't do them all at once. I understand that. And the people understand that.

They got farmers who don't have money. You have people in the oil patch that don't have money, and the potash industry that don't have money, and they're saying, I understand that you have to manage.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to go through all the programs that we have, and I would enjoy doing it. But I want to make one comparison because the alternatives stand out.

I have a particular aversion to a tax system that is regressive . . . regressive. That is, that it will pick on the poor. I think your tax system should be progressive. As you have more money, and your ability to pay, you should pay more. And we have done that over and over and over again. When we got elected, the government of the day was taxing the poor on gasoline — taxing them. They were taxing the poor on clothes — taxing them. We didn't see the tax breaks for people. They were taxed on their utility bills. When you had a Sask Power bill you paid 5 per cent sales tax on it if you had no money at all — on welfare.

And at the same time, the high interest rates were the most regressive tax anywhere that anybody had ever seen in the history of Saskatchewan. Regressive because those on low income trying to make their payments — on your house payments if you had \$14,000 income, or \$8,000 income, your payments went from \$150 to \$300 a month,

or 400 to 800. And the low income people paid in spades under an administration that said: we defend the low income . . . we defend the low income.

They talk a lot about it, Mr. Speaker, but talk is cheap. They talk and talk and talk and talk, but when it comes time to deliver, they hide. They did not deliver. And the truth is in '82, and before '82, the poor paid all these taxes, and they did. And in our budget today — and the minister has gone through it, and I can go through it again — all the tax breaks for low income people . . . low income.

And for seniors, Mr. Speaker, what did they do for seniors? Now, Mr. Speaker, they didn't provide a heritage program; they didn't provide the assistance to senior citizens like you see in this province. It is the best in Canada.

Now I can talk a lot about them — I'm not, because they are not in power. But obviously I can compare our record to theirs, and they don't stand up. They can talk easily about it, but they don't stand up. But I can talk about the only NDP government that is in power, that they keep telling me about is providing such great service. When the government and the NDP administration is in power today facing the same difficulties we face — the same difficulties — what is their choice? Right? Because obviously if you have a deficit and you don't want to cut and you don't want to tax, they are contradictory. You've got to deal with it. You either have to cut something, or you have to raise taxes, or else you've got to get lucky and get a whole bunch of money from the resource sector some place else.

Manitoba faces the same problem. I want to compare, Mr. Speaker, how a socialist government deals with the poor, and deals with diversification, and deals with protectionism, and held up to the whole country in the North America their answer to difficult economic times, compared to our answer to economic times. And you can find publications that will verify all the figures, and their budget is just out.

Well first, a 20 per cent increase in taxes. A 20 per cent increase in taxes by the NDP in Manitoba. Now philosophically, Mr. Speaker, they are hidebound by it. They're hidebound by it. They're hidebound by their philosophy. They say, well, if I can have more people in government and I'm paying them, more people will vote for me; and the bigger the government, the more stable I can be politically. And they plan it. They plan it at their conventions. It's the philosophy, the classic Marxist philosophy which says if I can have more and more of them working in the government, I will continue to have more of them on the take. And if you go back and look at Lenin and Marxism, and all the others that have done it — from Mao — it's the same thing.

Mr. Speaker, they're philosophically bound to bigger, bigger, and bigger government. Now if I can give you the numbers. The number, Mr. Speaker, of government employees under the NDP administration has increased 43 per cent in the last five years. The size of government up 43 per cent under an NDP philosophy which says, we'll make government bigger.

And how do we finance it? Not by trimming and managing but by taxing — but by taxing. And then you look at the tax increases: a new tax of 2 per cent on net income; additional 1 per cent tax on sales tax; a land transfer tax that hit Manitoba home buyers; a new 7 per cent take out tax on food; a payroll tax up 50 per cent to 2.25 per cent; and a new water tax. Hydro rates up 9.7 per cent; telephone rates up 11 per cent; Auto-Pak premiums up 9 to 30 per cent; workman's compensation fees up 20 per cent; all other government fees up 20 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, and if you look at the poor. Do the poor pay tax on gasoline in Manitoba? I ask every social organization, every church group, everybody else — compare the tax in Manitoba to the tax in Saskatchewan. Do the poor pay tax on gasoline in Manitoba? Yes, they do. Do the poor pay tax on their clothes? Do seniors pay tax on their clothes in Manitoba? Yes, they do. Do the seniors pay tax on any other items — the sales tax — things in Manitoba that are exempt in the province of Saskatchewan? Yes they do. Utilities, Mr. Speaker? Food, Mr. Speaker? Imagine people paying tax on food in Saskatchewan. Do they do that in Saskatchewan? No, Mr. Speaker. You add up this tax line, the opportunities, the protection for seniors. Do the seniors in Manitoba get \$500 apiece or \$700 per couple if they're low income? No. You add it up any way you like.

The regressive nature of the socialist tax is clear, Mr. Speaker, clear for anyone to look at. Compare Saskatchewan before we got into power today, or compare Manitoba today to Saskatchewan, and there isn't anybody in the country won't say the tax system is more regressive in Manitoba than it is here. It was more regressive before we got in than it is now. And those are the facts, Mr. Speaker. And we will, Mr. Speaker, stay the course to protect low-income people, to protect our health care system, to protect our education and our social services and our agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, we trimmed the size of government. It wasn't easy, but we cut the expenditures so that we wouldn't just have to have the massive increases in tax in Manitoba. We cut those expenditures. And that's a good thing to do. And it's a healthy thing to do. It's not easy, but you have to have the courage to do it, and I give the Minister of Finance all the credit in the world for taking the bull by the horn and doing it. I give little credit to the Minister of Finance in Manitoba who said, well, I don't know. We probably can't take the heat, I guess we'll just raise taxes 20 per cent, increase the size of government by 40 per cent, and tax the poor. And when they have to pay for food and tax on everything in Manitoba — no interest rate protection program like we did.

Well let me just say this, Mr. Speaker, in summary, in wrapping it up. It's extremely important that when the people of Saskatchewan elect public officials like ourselves, that we take the job seriously. When interest rates are high, we've got to deal with the problem. When farm problems are difficult, we've got to do it. Farmers this month got \$675 million in cash in Saskatchewan — the first time in history they've every got anything like it. And they'll get it again and again and again, Mr. Speaker. Nobody's every anywhere close to it, in the federal

government or a provincial government?

When we have difficult times, we will have the courage to manage. When we have better times, Mr. Speaker, we will certainly have the best programs you will find any place because today they're the best.

I will conclude my remarks by saying I wholeheartedly endorse the courage and the direction, the protectionism, the building, and the financial security and the management put forward in the budget by the Minister of Finance, and I certainly will be supporting it when it comes time to stand in my place.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is my first opportunity to speak in the legislature since my re-election in the October, 1986 general election, and therefore my first chance to congratulate you, sir, on the election to the very important post of Mr. Speaker. I can assure you that we on this side of the House will try to make your life a little bit easier, given the give and take of the debate in this legislature. And certainly I will try my best to do that for you.

I also want to thank the voters of Saskatoon Riversdale for having re-elected me to represent them in the Saskatchewan legislature for the constituency of Riversdale. The five years that I spent out of public office was salutary, to say the least. I learned a lot and I enjoyed meeting many of the friends and neighbours on an individual basis — going door to door in Riversdale and having other life experiences.

I'm not so sure I would recommend retirement from politics in quite exactly the same manner that occurred to me in 1982. But I think I can say to a lot of the PC back-benchers, sitting behind the Premier who just concluded his address, that they ought to start thinking a little bit about it because they too may find it salutary.

(1515)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — So I thank the people of Riversdale for the election and the re-election, and will promise to do all that I can to represent them as well as I can here at home, and here also in the legislature in Regina.

Well now, Mr. Speaker, we just were treated to a show by the Premier in an attempt to defend this budget. And a show, I think, is about the best way to describe it. In my judgement, about 90 per cent of what the Premier said cannot be believed by anybody in this legislature, based on his performance in question period and elsewhere.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — But there are some things that I do believe, Mr. Speaker. I do believe that he strongly believes in what he's doing. That, Mr. Speaker, I do believe in.

And that, I think, Mr. Speaker, makes this Premier and this

government all the more dangerous to the people of Saskatchewan. This is not a collection, a motley collection of men and women from all over the province of Saskatchewan who have sort of been elected and act aimlessly and incompetently, notwithstanding what their actions might indicate. This is a group of men and women, Mr. Speaker, who, as the Premier has indicated, believe in what they're doing.

I accept that part of the Premier's message. That's precisely what makes the premier so dangerous to the people of Saskatchewan. It's precisely what makes this PC Party such a dangerous threat to the future of 1990 and beyond, to the people of this province and this great province of Saskatchewan. I believe that.

And I also believe that he has a plan. That plan, Mr. Speaker, is to wed his government and to wed this province unalterably, irrevocably, to the directions of the market forces which flow basically on a national and international basis, and to say that the people of Saskatchewan's fortunes will likewise go up or down, depending upon those economic fortunes going up and down elsewhere.

And he has said, because that's his game plan, that he won't do anything using the Government of Saskatchewan to intervene on behalf of, and in the benefit of, the ordinary workers and farmers and people of Saskatchewan. That's his plan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — I believe him that he has a plan. I want to say a few words about his commitment and his plan in a moment or two.

I said that's the 10 per cent of the address that I support. But the 90 per cent of the address, some of which I will talk on very briefly, is pure shibboleth, jingoism, it's pure sloganeering, it's purely a question of saying anything almost any time to anybody in order to get over a very disastrous or difficult political circumstance. That's exactly what the budget in 1987 has put this government in.

The Premier talks about facts. I tell you, Mr. Speaker, the Premier wouldn't know or recognize a fact if it hit him in the face over and over again.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — He talks about Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. He's fond of talking about Manitoba; he's fond of talking about every province in Canada. I say to the Premier, it's about time that he stopped talking about Manitoba and every other province and started to look after the people of Saskatchewan, and talking about he problems here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Why in the world would he compare Manitoba? Manitoba, as everybody knows, doesn't have the wealth, the good fortune that mother nature has given to us with respect to uranium and oil and potash — does not have all these opportunities that we, in the 1970s,

building on the traditions of this province, built to the point where the province of Saskatchewan broke out of the have-not shackles that had been placed on it by the last free enterprise, committed government of the Liberals — broke out of those shackles and developed a combination of private and public and co-operative economic activity, and a scheme of social policies and programs that were the envy of every other Canadian and every other province in Canada. That's exactly what we did.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And we did it because we had this resource base; we're blessed with that. We were also blessed, if I may say so, with a premier and a leader, the Hon. Allan Blakeney, who had the foresight and the wisdom to build on that tradition, to use that largess, to use that bounty that was given to us in order to build that greater Saskatchewan.

Look, you don't have to accept my words. I can ask . . . you ask any business man, you ask any farmer, you ask that person how their pay cheque compares in 1987 to 1978 or at any other time of the Blakeney administration, and the answer will be a resounding yes — yes, to the wealth and the opportunity that was created during that period in the 1970s.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — So to compare the province of Manitoba, given the obvious disparities and their opportunities, to ours is false and misleading. It's not even a good debating point. Manitoba has never had the opportunities. If one can recite the litany, the so-called litany that the Premier has given to us about Manitoba taxations — which I don't believe for one moment, Mr. Speaker, and I tell you nobody in Saskatchewan does.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — But even for the moment, assuming that you believe the statements, it is ever been thus in Manitoba, it was twice, 2.5 times worse under the administration of the Conservatives in Manitoba. At least 2.5 times. In fact that was a one-term administration in Manitoba, because not only did they not have the largess and the wealth, they brought to their government the same kind of sterile, cruel, outdated, antediluvian policies that we're seeing the Devine administration bring to the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — One term, Mr. Speaker, one term. So I say, to compare Manitoba to the province of Saskatchewan, is irrelevant.

In fact, I say more than that, Mr. Speaker, I say that the Premier of this province insults the intelligence of this House. The Premier of this province . . . forget about this House, he insults the intelligence of the people of Saskatchewan by those kinds of specious comparisons. I say to the Premier of Saskatchewan, stick to your knitting. Look after our interests right here in Saskatchewan and

defend your actions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Now there are many, of course, statements taken by the Premier which are subject and must be subject to some very careful scrutiny. But I tell you that of the many outrageous ones was an outrageous attempt to defend what his government has done, or is doing, to medicare. That is outrageous, his speech.

All one has to do is to pick up the budget and go through all of the cuts, now well-documented: dental technicians, the drug plan, the waiting lists two to one, vis-à-vis any other province. We don't have, for example, the Alberta ones to confirm that yet, but we're working on it. That will come up in question period. The jam-up of people trying to get entry in hospitals and the Premier rather flippantly says, oh well, that's because people are going out to have abortions elsewhere or doing this elsewhere — all factually and statistically wrong.

All that one has to do is take a look at what the Hon. Minister of Finance has done in his budget, and we know exactly where this government stands on the issue of medicare. It's not building on medicare, Mr. Speaker, it's not building on that foundation. What it is doing is it is dismantling that foundation. It is not giving us a little nick here or there in medicare or hospitalization to improve it. What this government is doing is firing 420 dental technicians. That's not a nick, that's a slash. That's a destruction of a program which has served such an invaluable job to the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And then I think this most specious example of false arguing — false arguing, Mr. Speaker, by the Premier just a few moments ago — was his defence of the doing away with the drug plan. His argument was: well, you know the drug plan shows that a lot of people are using drugs. And from there he leaped logically to say, and our young people are using drugs, and that's why we cut out the drug plan in the province of Saskatchewan. He said, you know a lot of people have gone from \$17 million expenditure in drugs to \$100 million in drugs, and that's why we're cutting out the drug plan, because our young people and some others are abusing drugs.

Now I think that the general attitude that one should take, that we ought to be leery about the medication that's prescribed to us by doctors and ask doctors, is something I don't think we need Premier Devine, with the greatest of respect, lecturing us on. I think most people in Saskatchewan do that. Nobody wants to take a drug when they see a doctor.

But how fallacious, how insulting it is, I say to the people of Saskatchewan, that this Premier would make that kind of leap to logic, supposedly — or if you will, leap to illogic — to try to defend the dismantling of a drug plan which gives hundreds of thousands of Saskatchewan people necessary assistance when they're ill, when they're suffering from heart disease, when they're suffering from diabetes, when they're suffering from all other kinds of diagnosed illnesses, and their doctors say that they've got

to take this kind of medication. What kind of illogic, specious, fallacious reasoning is that to do away with a plan?

And in any event, who prescribes these drugs? It's as if my mother at 82 years of age goes around looking for drugs to get a fix on some sort done. It's as if the sick people walk from White's drug store to some other drug store, even to Pinders drug store, if I raise that to the hon. members opposite, and say, I need any annual fix, or I need my medication. It's the doctors who do the prescribing of the drug plan. It's not Grant Devine. It's not the individual patients. If those . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. I would ask the member not to refer to other members in the House by their name.

Mr. Romanow: — If it is Grant Devine, as leader of the PC Party, on the hustings who says this, he is saying an untruth on the hustings, Mr. Speaker. If the Premier of Saskatchewan is saying this in legislature, he is equally telling an untruth to the legislature of Saskatchewan in this area, Mr. Speaker.

Then he goes on to say: and you know we don't have any money. We don't have money to fight this battle of drugs. Well I know something about this issue of youth and drugs. I happen to serve on the board of directors of PRIDE (Parents Resources Institute for Drug Education Inc.) on an honorary basis, and I think it is a major problem. I have already pointed out the fallacious notion of connection between the two. But then he says, we don't have money. Why don't we have money? If we don't have money, why don't we have money? I ask the people of Saskatchewan to ask that of every PC back-bencher. Why don't 'we have the money? I'll tell you why we don't have the money, Mr. Speaker. We don't have the money because this Premier and this government deliberately and wilfully gave away billions of dollars to their large corporations outside of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And I tell you something else, Mr. Speaker, not only because we don't have that kind of money because of their tax policies; I'll make a prediction; not only do we not have a drug plan for those people who are phoning me almost on a daily basis; not only we're not going to have a drug plan, we're not going to have a drug plan for drug abuse by our teenagers and youth either, because we don't have that money. I make that prediction to you as well.

So the record is there. These people have launched a wholesale attack on medicare and the other social institutions in our province. I'm not going to recite, because other members have talked about it already: the native court worker program, the John Howard Society, battered women . . . (inaudible) . . . programs and on and on. The litany, the sad litany, the tragic litany of cut-backs has been documented by everybody here. What this amounts to, Mr. Speaker, is an unprecedented attack on the very fibre that is Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And I tell you something else, Mr. Speaker. Not only is it an unprecedented attack, I tell you something else. Mr. Speaker, there is more to come. This is not the end of what they're doing to medicare. There is more to come.

First of all, in the budget address, there the Minister of Finance says the ominous words, which the Premier attempted to defend a few moments ago, about something called "rural hospital rationalization." I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, I've been around in this legislature long enough to have heard that phrase before, rural hospital rationalization. You know, the last time it came forward, it was when the Liberals, under the premiership of Ross Thatcher, the great Ross Thatcher, the late Ross Thatcher — great Ross Thatcher in the mind of the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, and maybe even in the minds of some of the members opposite there. They introduced a program of rural hospital rationalization. Don't take my word for it, check the record. It's a fact.

And the hon. member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden, the Minister of Finance, was in those days a very important actor in the Ross Thatcher Liberal government in this program of rural hospital rationalization. He was there. He was there defending it, he was there advocating it, and in fact, he even urged it in subsequent elections. And now in his budget speech of 1987 he is talking about rural hospital rationalization again, 20 years later to the day, almost, on the same kind of a buzz-word.

(1530)

I tell you, Mr. Speaker, I'll say not too many good things about the Ross Thatcher government, but Ross Thatcher as premier, and his government, has the competence-level, and at least the sense of decency in the pursuit of its goals, which out-matches this bunch to your right, five-fold, at least.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And even with his buzz-words, even with his rationalization of rural hospitals, and even with all of his abilities, Mr. Speaker, what it translated to, pure and simple, was: rural hospital closures. That's what it was, pure and simple.

I'm telling you that what the Minister of Finance today, in 1987, the same deputy, the same executive assistant in 1967, has in mind is the same approach in 1967, rural hospital closures, pure and simple, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to ask some of the members back there, the silent back-benchers, the member from Redberry, the member from Pelly, the member from Wakaw — you tell me, have you given the Minister of Finance, the member of Wakaw, your list of hospitals that you think should be rationalized? How about the member from Wadena? Where's he seated? Member from Wadena, tell us what list of rural hospitals you've given to the Minister of Finance to be rationalized. I tell the member from Saltcoats, has he given his list of what rural hospitals are

to be rationalized? How else can it work, Mr. Speaker?

If you're going to concentrate regions of health care in some regions of rural Saskatchewan, it stands to logic that even the Minister of Finance can understand that in that regionalization a whole shack of rural hospitals are going to be closed, make no mistake about it—closed.

I tell the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, I tell the rural communities in Saskatchewan, beware. I tell the rural community leaders and the hospital board leaders right now what this government has in store is phase two of its unprecedented attack on medicare.

There are other phases; I'll come to this in a moment. But this is phase two which rural hospital shut-downs, not rationalization. The scheme is half-baked, it's concocted scheme that the Minister of Finance has advocated and the Premier attempts to defend. The scheme is the same as it was in 1967, because I tell you, Mr. Speaker, the Gary Lane of 1967 as the deputy executive assistant to the Liberals is the same Minister of Finance to Grant Devine in 1987 — nothing changes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — The only thing that's changed, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Minister of Finance, is that the sweaters have changed temporarily on the team that he supports. But that's the only thing that changes.

And then there is something else. Not only, Mr. Speaker, can they not do anything else but move to this rural close-down of hospitals, but I tell you something else, Mr. Speaker, they can't be trusted with medicare, and the Premier's speech identified that.

I'm not in the habit of mentioning members who do not sit in their House because of other duties. I won't be in my House, the chair, from time to time, and I realize that all the people who can't be here all the time is the Premier. I understand that. I'm sorry, however, that he left right after his speech. I'm sorry because I tell you what I would've challenged him to do when I say in this area the Conservatives can't be trusted with medicare — and there's more to come yet.

This budget is being dribbled out, Mr. Speaker; it was dribbled out before June 17. And you know something? It's being dribbled out after June 17, outside the budget. The Minister of Finance is still dribbling along in telling us what's coming in the budget — now there's going to be an increase in the flat tax.

But I tell you this — and this is why I'm sorry the Premier is not in his chair. I'll tell you this: the people of Saskatchewan can't trust the PCs on medicare, not only because of their past record — many of them were involved in the “keep our doctors” committee fight of 1962 — not only for that reason, but I tell you there's another reason — their statements are inconsistent. Their statements are inconsistent, Mr. Speaker, they're inconsistent and they're unbelievable.

Let me give you one example on a very important issue. This is the issue of medicare and hospitalization

premiums. Yesterday, the Minister of Health got up in his chair in defence of this budget — I don't know how in the world it can be called a defence — but that's what he endeavoured to do. And he tried to tell the House that we don't need to worry about a return to the premiums for medicare and hospitalization, Mr. Speaker. That's what he tried to say.

Yesterday, the day before that statement, I have here in front of me from the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald*. The headline tells it all: “Tories want to see medical care premiums restored” — one day before the Minister of Health's statement. Here's what the body of the statement says; this refers to the minister of consumer affairs who is not in her chair. She says this, quote: “If there was strong support in the province for premiums, the government would certainly look at it again.”

That's what she said. The member said, quote: “It was surprising that when we had premiums people on social assistance and seniors did not have to pay these (premiums).”

Then she says, and I underline these words to the Premier and to the Tories opposite: “Premiums could still be an option to us.” End quote. I repeat that, Mr. Speaker: “Premiums could still be an option to us.”

Well, the hon. members laugh at that; they laugh at that. But how is it, how is it, Mr. Speaker, that they say, how is it that they say — the Minister of Health gets up yesterday and says, no, no, don't worry about premiums being re-injected, re-inserted. And his colleague, the consumer affairs, almost desk mate right next door says, yes, premiums could be injected again.

How is it that two differing concepts can be stated so obviously flagrantly contradictory to each other, in this legislature, with a bald face as the two minister have done? No wonder the people of Saskatchewan don't trust anything that the PC government says about medicare. No wonder they don't trust them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — I tell you, this premium tax is regressive. We heard the Premier talking about fair taxation. If premium is \$100 a year for a \$20,000 a year wage earner, it's something. For a \$100,000 a year wage earner, it's something entirely different, \$100 — a lot less.

I say these Tories are going about the task of getting premiums injected back into hospitalization and medicare. That's why the Minister for Consumer Affairs raised this. And I tell you something else — and this is the part that I say why the Premier is not in his chair and he should've been, because he could have proven me a liar. If he says that I'm wrong, that premiums are not going to be re-inserted again, he has one easy solution — and I still challenge him to do it — he should tell either the Minister of Consumer Affairs to resign or the Minister of Health to resign, because they both can't be right.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — But, Mr. Speaker, he's not going to tell

them to resign because I don't think he's discharging his duties as Premier. He allows this kind of fundamental policy dissension which raises the doubts about medicare to float out there in rural Saskatchewan, either because he's not caring — which I suspect is the case — or because he believes in a philosophy of medicare which is totally different to ours. He wants to compare the philosophies. Well I'm proud and pleased to compare the philosophies.

When they take apart dental care; when they take apart the dental technicians' program; they take apart the drug plan; they put the jam up on hospital waiting beds; when they make these statements that premiums are next on the chopping block; when they made the statements about hospital rationalization, that is a philosophy of privatization of medicare. It's a philosophy of privatization based on some notion that this is being efficient or being forward. That's where the commitment part comes in on his statement.

Oh yes, he believes what he says in this regard. They are out to privatize the medicare and hospitalization system. And I tell you, Mr. Speaker, I tell the Premier and the government opposite, they're not going to succeed. The people of Saskatchewan will see to that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Of course, Mr. Speaker, we should be looking at new programs in health. We should be looking at the old programs. Of course we need to look to the 1990s about financing them. We should be looking at wellness models in health care — something the Premier didn't mention. We should be looking about de-institutionalizations — something the Premier did not mention. We should be looking at community clinics controlled by the consumers of health care — the Premier didn't mention. We should be looking at life-style, cutting back on the kinds of life-style things which destroy health. Not this government. They don't cut back on life-style issues; they spend more money, or are allowing more money, in the advertising of booze on television and radio, which destroys our health, than they do for a lot of other programs. Of course we should be looking at those kinds of things. But that's not what they're talking about.

Make no mistake about it, Mr. Speaker. What they're talking about is privatization. What they're talking about is the old free enterprise ethic to medicare and hospitalization. And I repeat to you again, sir, it's not going to happen. It didn't happen in 1971 and it's not going to happen in 1987 or 1990.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — The Premier also goes on to talk about the question of agriculture and agriculture policy. And I want to say a few words about agriculture and agriculture policy . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, it'll take a little longer than a minute, and I hope that you stick around to listen for a little longer than a minute because there is another myth about. The other myth about, Mr. Speaker, is that the Premier understands farmers and farming needs. The myth is that this farmer from Albert Street South understands farming. The argument is, he's the

only Premier with a permit book. I want to speak to that for the moment because I don't care if he's got a permit book or not. I tell this Premier-cum-Minister of Agriculture that the job that he's done in five years as Premier has been lousy when it comes to protecting family farms and agriculture in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Look, you don't need the statistics from me. You don't need it. The hon. member from Kindersley, he ignores the fact of 4,000 farmers less since the Devine government has entered this government position — 4,000, that's not even counting what's happening in 1987. That's how this Premier, with a permit book, acts.

I tell you why it hasn't worked, Mr. Speaker. It hasn't worked because this philosophy of privatization, this philosophy of, in effect, selling off Saskatchewan — which I talked about in medicine — is exactly the philosophy that he's bringing to agriculture problems; exactly the policy that he's adopting there. This is the part that I do believe.

He has a coherent plan for farming, Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt about that. And I tell you what that plan is. It is his belief that the Government of Saskatchewan must be tied, irrevocably, to the free market forces in agriculture, and that the province of Saskatchewan and the governments of Canada, basically, can't do anything about it. We know what's going to happen and what is happening under those circumstances. We know right now, with the green revolution and the glut of agricultural products, what's happening to prices; we know what's happening to costs on the other hand; we know that farmers are being squeezed out and driven out by the droves; we know the circumstances that are facing our community. This man, this government does not want to commit the resources of the Government of Saskatchewan to defend the family farmers, the backbone of Saskatchewan. That's what this government is doing. I say it's a myth that they defend the farmers.

Take a look at what's happened . . . what's happened, Mr. Speaker, right here even in the last little while. Just take a look at the budget. I have the figure in front of me here. In the year where farmers in Saskatchewan are facing the most serious crisis probably since the Dirty Thirties, this Minister of Agriculture, who happens to be the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan, permits a slashing of the budget of over 22 per cent in income in the most desperate year.

Let's take a look at another matter. This is the most difficult year for farmers in the history of Saskatchewan since the Dirty Thirties. We need somebody, Mr. Speaker, to be looking after the concerns of the farmers, full time, Mr. Speaker, not part time. We've got a Premier who's a part-time Minister of Agriculture. The House is coming down on a fire, in agricultural terms, and the Premier is out there with a bucket of water, trying to put out the flames. That's what he's trying to do. He's part-timer — part-time Premier, part-time Minister of Agriculture.

(1545)

I'll give you another example. We have hundreds of Crown tenant farmers. These are farmers who have leases for farm land owned by the farmers — hundreds of them. And just a few weeks ago this Premier and this government, in the most difficult years for those land tenant farmers, has cut off their leases and is forcing them off the farms. Why? Because the free market forces say that that's what's got to happen.

What about the farm protection legislation, Mr. Speaker? That's a sham. Why? Because he doesn't want to monkey with the free market forces of the banks and all the other financial institutions that are involved.

What about the debt adjustment legislation? The farmers' debts are climbing. There is a crying need for a policy by the provincial and federal governments to deal with this issue. What have we heard by the Premier? Absolutely nothing on farm debt adjustment. Absolutely nothing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Why? Why? Because it's going to tinker with the market-place, that which something he slavishly adheres and devotes himself to.

What about the variable freight rates, Mr. Speaker? CN comes in and says they want to get variable freight rates; now they want to be able to jiggle the rates and thereby jiggle the communities and the delivery points for all the farmers of Saskatchewan. Not a word by our Minister of Agriculture in opposition to that. Not a word about our part-time Minister of Agriculture. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because he's allowing the market forces to run — again the way he wants to do it.

What about the support for the farm communities? Take a look at all of the grants, the municipalities, large and small; by every statistic they're down. I don't mean marginally, but they're down drastically. Not a word even for those little towns that are struggling to keep a little post office alive. We may not be able to keep all of them alive, but in Aylesbury this Premier arrogantly, that Prime Minister in Ottawa even more arrogantly, have told the Aylesburys of the province of Saskatchewan: forget it. We're not even going to meet with you. That's how much support we're giving to the farmers and the farm communities of this province.

And then, of course, the ultimate commitment to the market-place in farming: the ultimate commitment, of course, Mr. Speaker, is free trade — the free trade negotiations which this Premier is avidly, fervently pursuing, the free trade negotiations that this Premier is content to play the role of singing the Hallelujah Chorus to Mr. Mulroney as he begins to sell out Canada to the ultimate place of the free market-place, the United States, without any consideration of what that's going to do to the Canadian Wheat Board; without any consideration of what that's going to do to the poultry industries, the feather industries; without any consideration to the eggs and egg marketing agencies, or the egg producers; without any consideration even to the wheat farmers.

What in the world does the Premier think he's going to achieve by a United States free trade agreement, entering

— locking, not entering — locking Canadian farmers, who are fighting for their lives, into a trading arrangement with American farmers who are also fighting for their lives? What kind of economic sense does this person and this government adhere to?

But you see the strategy that I'm trying to say to you. They have a plan. They have a plan. It is a plan of this devotion to — devotion to — this market force which will, in effect, reduce the capacity and the independence of our family farms that survive in our communities to survive in doing it. And there is such a job out there to be done.

Do we hear anything about soil conservation? Not one. The Minister of Agriculture had a chance to give an address in this House a few moments ago. Anything on soil conservation and management in spite of all the crises that have been identified? Not a word.

Did he come to this legislature and tell us what he is doing about variable freight rates? Did he come here — not a word. Did he come to this legislature — the Minister of Agriculture — this was his time to speak. Did he tell the farmers what he is going to try to do about pricing for farm products? Not a word. Did he tell us what he is doing to do to Mr. Mulroney and what he is going to try to do internationally, through Mr. Mulroney, to get an international pricing agreement and some sort of sense on the international market? Not a word. Not a word. Not a word.

Mr. Speaker, I repeat again what I said at the very outset: this Premier and this government has led us to believe that it is a government for farmers. I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that that proposition is a lie. This government is not for the farming community of Saskatchewan, it's for the big farmers; it's for the big agri-business, and it's for a free trade association, but there's nothing there for our farmers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And there is something else in this whole thing which I think is appalling. Something else which is appalling and which will get the biggest of condemnations — much sooner maybe than 1990 or '91 the Premier might expect — and that is, this callous policy in the 1986 election of dividing, or attempting to divide — I'll put it that way — farmers from the city people. I saw that everywhere that I went on the campaign trail. In fact, I suspect that this is still what they hope will be their last card of survival in 1990 and 1991, this playing off of farm versus rural. They, the members opposite, do this all the time. They give us the catcalls about where your farm policy is and so forth, and they get up here and talk about how their Premier, how the member — the farmer from Albert Street South — is the permit book holder. That's what they keep on doing. They divide . . . they seek to divide.

I tell you, Mr. Speaker, I can't think of a lower objective in public life than to seek to divide a small community like

Saskatchewan. I can't think of anything which could be worse than dividing our farmers from our workers, from our youth, from our small businesses, which is the political strategy of these people opposite. Nothing works.

The role of the Premier should be to heal; the role of a Premier should be to get the people together, to unite them, not to divide them. The role of a Premier should be to explain the problems of farmers to the people in the cities, and the problems of the people in the cities to the people on the farms. Not a word in that regard. Their strategy, I predict, when they introduce the legislation for the boundaries, will be to further exacerbate that.

Well I've got news for the Premier and the PC government — it won't work — it won't work, Mr. Speaker.

And not only that, I've got more news. I think the people of Saskatchewan want a government that does work to heal these divisions. I don't think they care about people coming from the cities or from rural Saskatchewan. Obviously the farmer from Albert south is evidence of that. What they want basically is men and women who have a forward vision and a determination to grapple with what is probably the most awesome crisis in farming facing us since the Dirty Thirties, if not even greater than that in the Dirty Thirties.

What they want is a government which says we're not tying our policy to the United States. We're not tying our policy to some free market slavish devotion of principle and philosophy. What they want is a government and a Premier that says, I'm elected to stay in Saskatchewan and to fight for the farmers everywhere because that is what Saskatchewan's about. That's what the people of this province want.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And then of course the Premier, in what I think is yet another abject example of absolutely fallacious remarks in this debate, Mr. Speaker, incredible debates, talks about he open for business policy. Well he didn't mention it as open for business. Got rid of that slogan. There's a new one coming up — an abject failure. He says we're diversifying to get jobs. I'm not going to go through the litany of the record here, but it's clear.

Let's compare the economic performance here in Saskatchewan with other provinces. You know, Mr. Speaker, we're 10th in job creation — 10th out of 10 provinces. Economic growth? Virtually no growth according to the economic council and other authoritative bodies. What about manufacturing? Over the last two years the value of manufacturing shipments have barely increased. In fact, they've really decreased when one compares them. That's where we are, at the bottom.

But we're also at the top on some things, Mr. Speaker. We're almost number one in bankruptcies. That's what we are. We're almost number one in farm bankruptcies, and we are certainly getting very close in business bankruptcies. We're second best in driving people away from Saskatchewan. We're second from the top there.

Only Alberta, another PC government, has lost more people than the PC government here. And I tell you where we are number one. I can tell the Premier it's the only statement about being number one that he's correct on. We're number one because we have the largest per capita deficit of any province in Canada. That's where we're number one.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — What a shallow, superficial argument about jobs. Who do they expect would believe them on this? Again, Mr. Speaker, I could take the next balance of the afternoon going through the business closures alone. GWG in Saskatoon, my riding, gone; Intercontinental Packers in Regina, gone; Dad's Cookies at White City, gone; Pro-Star Mills in Saskatoon, gone; Dominion Bridge in Regina, what happened to that? Gone. Molson Brewery in Prince Albert, what happens? Gone. Saskana Sausage, gone; Ward Johnston Electric, gone. What about the Supercart International? What about that great announcement? Where is it? It's gone. How about Central Canadian Distilling company in Weyburn — what happened there? Gone. McGavin's Bakery, where's that? It's gone. And I could go . . . Yes, indeed, the members go like this, that's right, they sort of mock it and it's gone. That is five years, that is five years, that is five yes, five years, five years of open-for-business economic policy.

That unemployment rate is high. It is now double what it was prior to 1981-82. Those businesses are closing down. But you know who is not gone, Weyerhaeuser, multinational. They're here. They're here. Oh yes, the Deputy Premier applauds. Peter Pocklington, he's here from Alberta. Yes, he's here from Alberta. They're not gone. The upgrader; they've got that on the go, to be fair. That is here. The upgrader up in Lloydminster, it's not here. Just weigh this out. Look at all of the Saskatchewan business men who have been gone, forced out by these open-for-business policies of the Devine administration. This slavish devotion that somehow Saskatchewan is going to hitch her star to the United States of America and that the private market forces and private capital are going to determine what our future is.

Mr. Speaker, the history of this province is Saskatchewan businesses working together with their government's help to build jobs. It's not some large megaproject idea of these large corporations coming in to rape our resources and exploit our workers and take our profits and then when they do, what happens then? They're gone. It's a joke. It's a joke, Mr. Speaker. But it's not a funny joke; it's a cruel joke that the Devine administration is making on the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And I want to make just one other point about this philosophy, this private enterprise philosophy unbridled . . . Oh, they believe that when the Premier says it. I know he believes that, and they're committed to that. I want to say one thing about free trade.

Just ask yourself, Mr. Speaker. . . I ask the people of Saskatchewan to ask themselves this: do they know what's on the table or what's not on the table? I invite the

Minister of Economic Development to tell us what is on the table, because I say that the Canadian Wheat Board is on the table and if I'm wrong, he can tell me that it isn't. Nobody knows what's on the table.

I ask the Hon. Minister of Economic Development and the Premier: what provincial input is there into the negotiations to protect this province's interests? I say to the Premier — not Manitoba's, not Montreal's, but this province's interests — what provincial safeguards do we have in those negotiations to protect our interests? You know what we do? We send the Premier down once every three months to Ottawa and they get together in some hotel room, smoke-filled back room, all the boys, the Premiers and the Prime Minister. He gives them, Mr. Mulroney, a three-hour dissertation on what happens on free trade and, with the exception of one or two of them, they come out singing the Hallelujah Chorus — at least our Premier comes out singing the Hallelujah Chorus. That is the input.

Oh, we had a puny little committee travel up and down the province of Saskatchewan for a month. Selected invitations, I might add, Mr. Speaker; wouldn't invite the ordinary people because they knew what would happen there. Just selected people to make their presentations on the free trade thing. And even there, the results were that there's a great deal of confusion and upset. That is the sum total of input on what could be the most important economic and political initiative that could affect Saskatchewan and Canada in our history. And then there's a third problem.

(1600)

I ask you to imagine this, Mr. Speaker. And I ask the hon. member from Kindersley back there in the front bench to consider this too. And I ask him to tell me about this. Let's assume that Mr. Reisman and Mr. Murphy negotiate a free trade pact. Can he tell the Minister, can he tell this House and the people of Saskatchewan what guarantees we're going to have to make sure that if something that's been negotiated in that free trade pact isn't going to harm significantly the province of Saskatchewan?

Let's assume, for example, that the Canadian Wheat Board is either damaged or done away with. Let's assume that a social program like medicare or hospitalization or unemployment insurance is damaged or done away with because, in exchange, the Canadians think they're going to get access through the Congress in the United States to U.S. market. Supposing that happens; that would be clearly to the detriment of Saskatchewan farmers. What safeguards does the province of a million people or less have? What ratification process? Absolutely none? Well I guess we can say the safeguard we have is fighting Grant Devine, the Premier, coming down to the . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. This is the second time I cautioned the member not to use another member's name. Please refrain from that.

Mr. Romanow: — What do we expect? Do we expect the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, Mr. Grant Devine, and the Premier in this legislature to come forward and to defend . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. *Beauchesne's*, paragraph 319(1) says:

It is the custom in the House that no Member should refer to another by name.

There isn't a list of exceptions to the rule, in what capacity they may serve or where they might be. It just says that:

It is the custom in the House that no Member should refer to another by name.

And I think we should try to abide by that rule.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I abide by your ruling. I promised at the outset of my remarks that I would abide by your rulings where possible, and I abide by your rulings.

I repeat again the third point.

An Hon. Member: — All rulings.

Mr. Romanow: — Yes, all rulings. I abide by all rulings. And I would invite the hon. member of everything there, from Melville, to start abiding and learning the rules. That might help a little bit, as well . . . all rulings.

But my point is this, Mr. Speaker. How do we know that what's being negotiated is going to be safeguarded — for Saskatchewan, I mean? We're only a province of a million people. Deputy Premier says that Premier Devine is going to safeguard our interests. Well I tell you, the way Premier Devine, the Premier, has negotiated . . .

Mr. Speaker: — The hon. members know why I want to interrupt. I'm sure he won't use the Premier's name again in the course of his speech.

Mr. Romanow: — Did you say not to use the Premier's name in vain again? That I will not do, sir. But I want to say this about the Hon. Premier. If they think that anybody on this side of the House, or the Government of Saskatchewan, is going to be safe in the knowledge that our Premier is going to be the safeguard of our interests on free trade negotiations, they've got another thing coming. This is the person who negotiated Weyerhaeuser. This is the person that negotiated Pocklington. If he can't negotiate in the interests of Saskatchewan, those relatively small deals, I'll tell you one thing, he's going to sell out Saskatchewan's interests. That's what I say he's going to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And I tell you one other thing, Mr. Speaker, if I may, on free trade, I oppose free trade as recommended by the Prime Minister and as supported by the Premier, not because we shouldn't be trading from other countries. Far from it. This is a trading province. We're a trading nation. We've got to have a trading policy. What we don't have to have is a trading policy which locks us in totally to one country. What we don't need.

Mr. Speaker: — The member for Rosthern is on his feet and I believe he wants leave to introduce some guests, so if you ask . . .

An Hon. Member: — How do you know that? How do you know?

Mr. Speaker: — Just a minute. Just a minute! Let's have some order. I think we're making a big issue out of nothing. There's a gallery of students and I was just assuming that's what he wants. But if it's going to please hon. members . . . and I don't want any heckling or talking from your desk. If you have something to say, stand up and raise a point of order, but don't heckle from your desks when the Speaker is on his feet.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And yes, I would like to confirm that I would take this opportunity on the behalf of my colleague, the member of the Legislative Assembly for Biggar, to stand in for him in introducing on his behalf through you, Mr. Speaker, to this Assembly, some students, some 60 students from the town of Asquith.

And I'm assuming, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member asked me because I do have some relationship with the town of Asquith, mainly in the form of my brother Abe who has lived in Asquith all his life. And he has taken seriously the admonition to Abraham to go forth, to multiple, and cover the earth, because he has produced an even dozen children that have gone through the school of Asquith. I can see some smiles from the kids up there, so they must recognize some of them.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce to the Assembly all of the 60 students from Asquith; their teachers, Verona Stack, Lois Keller, Mona Brooks; and their chaperons, Sharon Rice, Lorie Klemkie; and the bus driver., Orville Augustine. And I would ask all members to join me in welcoming the students. I'll be meeting you in room 218 as soon as you leave the gallery, in the west end.

Please join me in welcoming these students.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too join with the hon. member from Rosthern in welcoming the students.

Mr. Speaker, I was saying before the intervention, to close off on this portion of my address with respect to free trade,

I say to this House, Mr. Speaker, that I believe in trade. I believe in a Premier who pursues trade policies. I believe in a government that has a trade policy. I do not believe in trade policies, as I said, which link inevitably and irrevocably this province's trading programs to one country. That is what essentially a comprehensive free trade package, so far as we can tell, is attempting to do.

I don't agree with that, not only because pragmatically we ought to be searching for markets elsewhere with other countries. I don't agree with that, not only because the United States itself is now moved to being the largest debtor nation in the world — higher than Brazil or Argentina — followed by the way, very closely by Canada, which strikes me as some sort of odd economics and odd reasoning to link two countries like this, with the grave economic problems that they have on international banking and marketing and production and efficiency. Not only do I oppose it for that basis, but I oppose it for another basis.

I oppose it also because this government and the federal government have not given the Canadians a chance to tell us what they want to achieve out of free trade. They've kept the talks secret. They have not trusted the people to be knowledgeable to make an opinion . . . an informed opinion on free trade.

And I oppose it for another reason, Mr. Speaker, as I close this segment of my address. I oppose it because given these two PC governments with their slavish devotion to the private enterprise, market-driven systems of North America, cannot be trusted to negotiate a deal which will still leave Saskatchewan and Canada a sovereign independent and unique country and province in which to live.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And I want to say to every farmer who might be watching this address, or to any small-business man, or anybody else who's watching it, look carefully at what this PC Devine, PC government is doing with respect to free trade, and everything else. Because, Mr. Speaker, it is the final ribbon on the package of a government which has a reactionary, in my judgement, right-wing commitment to these private enterprise forces which will, in fact, I believe damage Saskatchewan irreparably, which brings me to the final point of my remarks this afternoon, and why I'm going to oppose this budget.

Because I tell you, Mr. Speaker, and I tell the Hon. Minister of Health, we're at a crossroads in Saskatchewan. Right now we're at a crossroads. There's no doubt about that. We're at a crossroads because of two radically different visions of what this province is about in histories.

I argue that the history of the province of Saskatchewan is this. Partly forged by the necessities of climate and geography and indifferent governments in Ottawa, and the exploitation in the early 1900s and '20s by railroad companies and by grain exchange companies and by banking institutions, what the people of our province did is they banded together by those forces to try to build a

unique province called Saskatchewan.

And they didn't do it from any blinders or any ideological blinders on them, they did it as matter of pragmatic necessity. They did it also because of vision. They did it because they wanted to break that exploitation. And they set up their own co-ops, and we set up our credit union movements, and we set up the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. Many of the same people involved in those were also the same people who were involved in the political movements of the day, the CCF and now the NDP. And we attained office here in the province of Saskatchewan. We did it.

And working that principle of co-operation and that sensitive balance of private enterprise and the role for small business, with the role for co-operation and the limited role of government, we built a province second to none. We built medicare, and hospitalization, and Saskatchewan government telephones, and Saskatchewan government Insurance, and the whole variety of Crown corporations aiding and working with private sectors. Because to do otherwise would have left Saskatchewan 400,000 people, just like they are in North Dakota, who didn't do the same thing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And what men and women of vision they were. When they got the Depression, they didn't say, we're going to look to the United States or somewhere else. They said, we're going to tackle these problems here with the wheat pool and the co-ops and the credit unions. When those banks started to foreclose, the farmers, my relatives, and other in Saskatchewan, they didn't say to the banks, yes, come on in because we're open for business, they organized to fight back and they set up the co-ops and the credit unions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — What men and women of vision they were. They said that we're not going to be a situation where there's not one head office, not one head office of a major corporation in Saskatchewan. We're going to organize a little bit of our economic activities so that not only can we provide jobs, but we can provide this province with independence; that we can provide this province with the freedom to innovate and to do things which is not only Saskatchewan, but things like medicare which now means a part of being Canadian. That's what they did.

They did it because we believed in that sensitive mix of private enterprise and small businesses, Saskatchewan-based, and co-operatives, and government involvement. And we did it from '44 to '64, and we did it from '71 to '82, and I guarantee you we're going to do it from 1990 to some time for a long time thereafter again.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, you don't have by accident SGI headquarters in Regina. That's because we did it. We, the people, working together did it — the

elected men and women. It's not by accident that we have the head offices of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, and other head offices, some now of which they have dismantled. We did it.

In 1964 to 1971, under Ross Thatcher, the last great big free enterprise government, there wasn't one major head office in Saskatchewan. And I invite the members opposite to tell me where the major head offices are in Saskatchewan after five years of open for business. Absolutely none, Mr. Speaker. None! And not only that, but what they're trying to do is to fly in the face of history because what they're going to do is they're going to not only do nothing in terms of working for ourselves; what they're trying to do now is they're going to destroy that which our pioneers set up to make an independent Saskatchewan.

(1615)

Now they're going to sell off SGI, Mr. Speaker. Now they're going to sell off STC. Now they're going to sell off SaskTel. Now they're looking at selling off Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. Actually, they don't have to sell PCS. They've in effect given PCS to IMC. That's the most friendly take-over going. Why? Because they are flying in the face of the history of this province of Saskatchewan.

They are betraying the vision of those farm leaders and farm business leaders and farm people and the small-business leaders and some of the grandfathers; they're flying in the face of that because of their slavish devotion. You see it in medicare, as I said. You saw it on open for business policy. You're doing it in farming policy now, by the Premier's approaches. That's what they're doing. They're flying in the face of this kind of an approach, Mr. Speaker.

What they have done is they have put us so much in debt, Mr. Speaker, that our people no longer have the freedom to innovate socially to recapture that spirit of growth and building for Saskatchewan. They've made us a debtor province of the highest order.

They are trying to reverse that history. They don't believe in the proper mix of co-operation and private enterprise and government. And I want to tell the Premier and the ministers opposite that the people of Saskatchewan appreciate that kind of a mix. They don't want any government going too far one way or the other. I tell you that when a government slips over the right-wing edge, as this government has in privatization and allowing all the large corporations to come to Saskatchewan, it is going to be defeated in the next election because it flies in the face.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — No longer. Mr. Speaker, put yourself in the Premier's chair. I ask any one of the back-benchers to dream for the moment and to put yourself in the Premier's chair. You want to innovate. You cannot innovate. Yes, I'll dream. Everybody in this House should dream. To be a leader of any political party, that's an important objective today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — I invite any one of them, I invite any one of them to dream about that, and I ask them now: what can you do by way of innovation in that history and spirit of Saskatchewan? You can't. You have a \$3.4 billion debt. You have bankrupted this province. You have no freedom there. You've sold out. You've closed down all these businesses that I've talked about. Now you've got all the foreign multinationals that are in the Weyerhaeuser's. I don't know whether Pocklington is a multinational, but he's certainly foreign to Saskatchewan.

Who is going to decide the economic policy of the province of Saskatchewan? Now you've said to the CN Railways, no longer are we going to fight the railways as our pioneers did. You come in and implement variable rates as you want to do it. That's what they're going to do. You do whatever you like with it. It's the market force . . . the conviction of somehow that an unbridled, continentalist, North American economic policy is going to work. That is exactly what they're doing. And I tell you, Mr. Speaker, they are flying in the face of history; and they're flying in the face of common sense. In the next election . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — So the result is clear: a budget of \$600 million deficit after all the wreckage and carnage which has been imposed upon us by the Minister of Finance. They evidence is clear. I'll tell you what else is clear, Mr. Speaker, out of this. When we don't have that flexibility, we lose our freedom.

This Devine, this government, this PC government, Mr. Speaker, has taken away this province's freedom. We don't have the freedom to innovate in any new programs because we're broke. We don't have the freedom to start new economic policies because the decision-makers are in Tacoma and New York and Denver. We have no freedom.

Our young people don't have the opportunities to go to school because they've virtually slashed all the post-secondary education programs and the elementary and secondary educations. They have no freedom.

Our women, those others who need special actions of support in a society — which still has, unfortunately, stereotypes and discrimination — have been cut back in policies and programs. They have no freedom, Mr. Speaker.

That is the legacy of this administration: no freedom. And I tell you what else, Mr. Speaker, when you have no freedom and when you have fear reigning the land, you have no hope. And that's what I'm getting, no hope.

They want a government and politicians to give them a hope, not lies, not phoney figures, not illogical arguments, not shibboleths, not public relations firms, not polling agencies. They want hope. And what they want is a hope based on that dream, that dream that we can work together, that we have to work together, that there is a room for Saskatchewan business and for farmers and for

our young people and for the workers.

And I tell you that what we are offering this side is hope. I tell you, Mr. Speaker, we, because they're not going to do it, are going to stand up for that history and tradition, and come the next election in this province of Saskatchewan, you won't see a conservative elected anywhere because they've betrayed our pioneers and they've betrayed the province's history and traditions. I guarantee it, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And I want to make one or two other points, Mr. Speaker, about these people over there on the right. They will do almost anything and say almost anything to achieve their goals. You know in October of 1986 what they told us, and what they did now. The Premier says, oh, we levelled with the people of Saskatchewan, he said. I won't spend the time because I've taken a lot of time. I can go through those — all of my colleagues have done this — those 1982 books, 1986 promises of how they were telling the people about the truth. I just don't believe that. I don't think anybody believes what he says about this. But they deceive us.

And then medicare premiums. Oh, the Minister of Health says, no, you don't have to worry about medicare premiums. Of course the Minister of consumer Affairs gets up at a PC panel and says, we're going to introduce . . . they've deceived us. The party has lied to us. Pure and simple. The PC party has lied to the people of Saskatchewan, and I don't mean in any minor way, not that that makes it any better, but in a major . . . In 1986 and 1982, that when you lie of this magnitude, you destroy the credibility of a government once and for ever. And I guarantee you, this Premier and this government will never recapture the confidence of the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Because, Mr. Speaker, they're prepared to say and do almost anything. How bitterly ironic, in this October of 1986 election, the Premier got up and he said, you know, he said . . . this is an example of what they'll say. You know, he said, if Tommy Douglas was alive today he'd be PC. How bitterly ironic that would be. How bitterly and so cruelly ironic. By this cavalier — and I don't intend to spend much more time — rather insignificant in some ways, except for his actions, minister from Melville. How bitter that statement is.

What person would say this in the light of what this government has done? What person would say this in the light of what Tommy's history has been in the sense of building up the province as I've described it? How bitterly ironic and how bitterly hurtful those comments are, not of us, but of all the people who worked to build up this province of Saskatchewan. I tell the Premier, and I tell the PC government, that statement will come back to haunt you just as much as your budget actions are going to come back to haunt you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And up to now, Mr. Speaker, they've done it with very little critical review by some in the media, and some in the public — very critical review. But no more. Those statements and half truths, that kind of action in question period, these kinds of performances of the Premier this . . . No more. Those kinds of ideas that the Premier can throw out, of an identification, so false and so bitter, about Tommy Douglas — no more. Because I tell you, Mr. Speaker, we are going to determine and make it absolutely certain, in question period, and in this session, that what I say is right. No more is that kind of story going to be put out by the PCs — none whatsoever.

And that's why, Mr. Speaker, they're at 27 per cent of the polls — before the election. That's before the election, That's why they are at . . . they are, tomorrow . . . today, at an unprecedented 28 per cent, nearly 30 per cent gap between them and the next party. That's before the budget — unprecedented.

Oh they can laugh. I don't think this has ever happened anywhere. They can pretend a bit, force it; they worry it. Some of them say, some of them say, oh, it'll change; oh, it'll change. You know they say, we did this before. Yes, they did it before. They did it in October of 1986. They were down in the polls, and then they came in and they made statements, and they did it before, and they got elected. And then the PC Party lied. And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, they'll never ever be able to do that again; no sir! They did it once before, but not again — 28 per cent.

And I want to say just before I close here, Mr. Speaker, that I think that there are some PC back-benchers who know that what I say is correct. Not on all things, but they must know what I say — some of the things that I say — is correct. They know it. And they themselves must feel bitter. They themselves know how bitter the circumstances and the results are of the situation. I know that to be the case.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I've never done this in my political career here, I don't believe. It could be checked in the records. I can't remember it. But I invite those back-benchers, if they got any sense of decency, any sense of commitment to Saskatchewan's history and culture, I invite them to try to do something about it . . . to do something about it to try to save Saskatchewan. It's not too late yet. We can stop — maybe not this budget because we are voting tonight — but it's not too late to stop this government dead in its tracks. Look, I'm not even asking you to come over to our side. I'm not even asking you to come over to the Liberal side. I don't care whether you set up your own political party. I don't care what you do — whether you resign, or what you do — I'm just asking you to stand up and show some guts for your constituents.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — I'm asking you — those back-benchers — you can stop these people dead in their tracks. Everybody knows what's going on in the corridors of this legislature. You're mumbling and you're murmuring about the possibilities of defeat next time round; you're worried about what's taking place; you don't like the way they treat you; there is no consultation on the budget;

they are going to be closing down your rural hospitals; they're going to be attacking medicare; they're defeated.

Look, what is it worth? Is three years more sitting here worth that, in order to see the province of Saskatchewan be destroyed? Come on, I say to some of you. Show your leadership. Show your guts. You don't have to come here or to the Liberals. You can set up your own party. Mr. Speaker, I challenge them to do that.

I want to tell you one other thing, Mr. Speaker. Maybe I'm hopeful, but I'll make one other prediction; that none of them does have the guts. That's the prediction I make. That's right, end up the way I started off. Because they are determined, that's what the Premier says — you're doggone right, they're determined. They're determined, they got the determination, and they go that game plan. They're going to do this — direct Saskatchewan. But maybe, just maybe, some one or two or three of them have got the guts.

And so the clear choice is before us. The clear choice in this budget, Mr. Speaker, and the clear choice I say to the people of Saskatchewan, is before us. The clear choice is here. We can take the Premier's plan and determination, and undermine out history, and turn back the clock — as reactionaries would have us turn back the clock — fifty years or more. We can see medicare torn apart, we can see us linked to the United States, or, Mr. Speaker, the choice is to chose a party which is steeped in our tradition, which is going to work from that tradition to solve the problems of the 1990s and beyond.

That's a choice. We have a choice. We can have a premier go down to New York, begging the New York bankers to ease the noose that they have around this province's debt, or we can have a premier and a government that is going to be free and independent and stand-up for the people of Saskatchewan. That's a choice that we can have.

(1630)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Oh yes, there is a choice. There is a choice. We can have a premier going down, cap in hand, to the Prime Minister of this country, timidly and quietly begging the Saskatchewan interest behind secret doors, or at 5:30 in the morning on the deficiency payments. Not a matter of policy, but a matter of political survival that that money came through. We have a choice. We could have a premier going down timidly begging for the crumbs from Ottawa's table, or we can have a premier and a government that is going to stand up for Saskatchewan and fight our case in Ottawa, regardless of political stripe. That's a choice that we've got.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Oh yes, and we have another choice. We have a choice of giving our young men and women hope. We have a choice of building on the traditions and building the new hopes, the new economics, the new farming; to assist our family farms; to build some respect to this institution and give it fidelity; to tell the people

honestly what the situation is, not to lie to the people. We have that choice, or we have a choice of continuing on with the kind of shell game and sham which has destroyed the credibility of this government as to put it down to 28 per cent. That's another choice.

Well I tell you, Mr. Speaker, I've made that choice, and my colleagues on this side have made that choice. And I tell you, Mr. Speaker, 56 per cent of Saskatchewan people, at least, have made that choice. And that choice is for that caring, sharing — it may sound like cliché, but it is true none the less, more true today than ever — caring, sharing, co-operative, forward-looking, exciting province that we once were. And that choice is by defeating this budget. Vote for the amendment, I say to the opposition back-benchers. Vote for the amendment, bring this government down, and all of Saskatchewan will be the winners in the process.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order. I think that clapping for a colleague, shaking his hands, and those sort of things are all very, very parliamentary and, in fact, becoming of members. But I do feel that members standing — however many of them were doing it, I'm not sure — and singing in unison: no more lies, no more lies, in this legislative Chamber, is certainly not the parliamentary way for us to conduct ourselves.

Quite frankly, I'm very distressed at that particular aspect, and I would hope that that performance never repeats itself again. It actually took way from a very, very excellent speech.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's a Chinese proverb around and it has been around a long time, and it says simply, may you live in interesting times. I want you to know that I and all members in this House have indeed been blessed with living in interesting times. I might add, today we had the privilege of hearing a leadership and a campaign speech just finished. Mr. Speaker, I want you to know I wasn't looking for a leadership speech from the opposition. I was looking for reason and logic. And what I got was the October 1986, anything for the farm vote.

Mr. Speaker, I was looking for some solutions to come from the infamous member from Saskatoon Riversdale. And what did we get? We got the member fighting 1967 issues when we're into 1987 — pure and simple. I want to give the member, Mr. Speaker, the assurance, the member from Riversdale, that we on this side of the House will express his regret that our good Premier was not in his seat to hear his speech. But, Mr. Speaker, in the interests of fairness and co-operation, I want the hon. member from Riversdale to express his regret, and our regret, that 21 members in the NDP caucus were not in their seat to hear the Premier give his address before that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — We've had some fairly good challenges, Mr. Speaker, from the member from

Riversdale and, I might add, the other members within the NDP caucus. The member from Riversdale talks about decency. Do we, in fact, know the culture and the history of this province? You bet I do. I was born and raised in this province. And I want to tell the NDP that it is not the family of Crown corporations; it's not the nationalization of uranium, potash, oil, or whatever they may want to nationalize; and it's not the New Democratic Party. It's people — for the better part, most of them apolitical — wanting to carry about their business without some of the rhetoric that we get going within this House.

He's also challenged our members on this side to come across the floor, and he has the pure audacity to stand in his place and say, I have never in my entire political career — and I will admit it goes a long way back, Mr. Speaker — ever done this before. Well I want you to know, Mr. Speaker, prior to 1982 and prior to 1978, I had the good fortune of being a guest in the Speaker's gallery and listening to the member do exactly the same thing that he did today. But he says he's never done it before. Maybe there's a credibility gap.

Mr. Speaker, having listened to the opposition members now for several days on the budget address, I have to admit that I quite frankly wonder often, many times, what the public thinks. We seem to have strayed away from some decent parliamentary rules within this House over the last week. I'm like my energy critic across the way. I have great faith that that's not going to carry on, and that we're going to work hard to make sure that it doesn't. I also have a great deal of faith in your authority, Mr. Speaker, to bring some of it back.

Mr. Speaker, we in this Assembly arrive in this Assembly with the vote and the respect of our constituents to represent all constituents once you get here. I would suggest they have some very clear expectations of what we do in here. One of them is that they want us to be constructive and they want us to be co-operative. The energy critic I'm sure agrees with that.

I would also suggest that they want us to be open in manner and honest in actions. To do otherwise is to fail in our responsibilities to our respective constituencies. And to do otherwise only serves to add to the cynicism of this institution. To do otherwise, Mr. Speaker, creates a fear and an uncertainty. And for what? May I suggest, for political expediency.

The opposition members have challenged our back-benchers and even our cabinet ministers to speak out on this budget. Tell us what you really think of it, comes the cry from across the way. Well, Mr. Speaker, just so there's no mistake about my position or misconstruing my words, let me make it very clear to my hon. colleagues across the way, I will vote no on the amendment and I will be voting for the budget. And why? I have heard absolutely nothing constructive from across the way to convince me otherwise. The other day I heard the member from Moose Jaw North try a solution with the statement that all we had to do was put Social Services back the way we found it, and everything would be okay.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the member from Moose Jaw North of some of the things that we found.

And you know what he was really saying with that statement? What he was really saying was things like, take away the skills development program that's in the welfare reform program. People on welfare don't need education; they don't need jobs.

He was really saying we're going to put it back to prior 1982 — battered women outside of Regina, Saskatoon, and Moose Jaw don't need the services of transitional houses, support services, or anything like that. And that statement, Mr. Speaker, goes one step further and it suggests that communities like Melfort and Yorkton and even organizations like the YWCA should not have the moneys that they have for support to battered women.

If I took it another step further as the member from Moose Jaw North has suggested, we on this side of the House would say, why do foster parents need a million dollars? They don't 'need a million dollars to look after the children of Saskatchewan. That's what he's saying with that statement. Is he asking us if we're putting too much money into day care with that statement? More money, more spaces. I have to assume that he is, when he says, put it back the way you found it.

Mr. Speaker, the moneys allocated for Social Services are fair and just. While no one can ever be all things to all people this budget ensures security and protection to those that require it the most.

Mr. Speaker, much has also been said on the health budget. There's been a deliberate effort by some to create the impression that medicare has been dismantled. That's the quote, medicare has been dismantled. They want us to talk truth in here; we should talk truth in here. What they haven't said, or what perhaps they have forgotten in all their rhetoric, Mr. Speaker, is that the basic foundation of medicare is there. The access to a doctor, access to a hospital . . .

An Hon. Member: — Ten thousand in Saskatoon.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Yes, the member . . . Yes, that's true. We have a problem there. Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt that Canada and the provinces face a challenge in maintaining a high quality health care system. And the member from Saskatoon South, if he would listen, I will get to his problem of his 10,000 beds.

Mr. Speaker, we have to look at the dollars spent in health. We're over \$1 billion. We know we have a problem when at the same time you look at the rising costs and the rising revenues going in — 63 per cent in five years, Mr. Speaker. And yet at the same time, and the member from Saskatoon South is correct, there is a waiting list supposedly of around 10,000. Now surely it is reasonable to ask why. Why the waiting list? How can it be? Well, he says, it hasn't been run correctly. Is he saying that they don't know how to run the hospitals in Saskatoon — the board, the administrators? I'm not sure what he's saying, Mr. Speaker. Surely it's reasonable to expect a voice of reason in finding some solutions.

Many of the members from across the way have brought forth letters and complaints on various health issues over this last week related to people in their constituencies.

Mr. Speaker, I want to do the same thing because I don't believe any of us on this side of the House have taken that opportunity. And I briefly want to tell, in particular the member from Saskatoon South, about two of my constituents and some health problems, as it relates to the problem that we have in ensuring a strong foundation for the basic premise of health care in this province.

Some time ago I had a constituent come to me with concern for his young teenage daughter. And she had simply not been feeling well, and she'd been to a doctor, and she'd been diagnosed as having a polyp in her throat. She was to go to Saskatoon, and she was put on a waiting list for surgery. Now all of that in itself was of not great concern, because the parents had basically been told that what she'd been diagnosed with was not . . . was usually benign, not malignant, and that it was not urgent, nor was it life threatening. Well, Mr. Speaker, the girls' health deteriorated, and badly, and quickly, while she remained on the waiting list to get into Saskatoon.

(1645)

The polyp grew, she had difficulty breathing, she lost weight, she lost her appetite. She was very active in school, in music and athletics, and she could no longer sing, and she no longer had any energy to participate in the extra-curricular activities. And she finally started missing school. And with that, Mr. Speaker, her grades started to drop.

And with her listlessness was dehydration to the point where her lips were cracked and bleeding, and still there was no bed. And two very scared parents, with nowhere to go, finally came to the government, and they said, we don't understand. They keep telling us that this is not a problem, that she will get in. she isn't in, and yet her health keeps going down.

Well, Mr. Speaker, after some serious discussion with the Minister of Health and the hospital concerned in Saskatoon, she went in for surgery, and unfortunately it was found to be malignant.

On a more positive note with it, Mr. Speaker, she is responding well to treatment and is back to her normal activities.

The other constituent, Mr. Speaker, is my husband. And I consider him a voter and a constituent. As most of the members in the House know, Ed is a paraplegic. Mr. Speaker, from time to time that requires ongoing medical treatment to ensure that good health is maintained. He visits Saskatoon hospitals on a regular basis for some very normal medical procedures with his condition.

And what started out to be a very normal check-up over this last year, with a bladder procedure in January, turned into something else. Everything was fine and he was back home after two or three days in Saskatoon. And then he received a notice that he was to come back to Saskatoon for another check-up. So he thought, well, somebody knows what they're doing, and he went back. However, the doctor was quite surprised to find that he was actually there, and didn't remember, I suppose, that he had given the order for him to come in. Then we received another

notice, Mr. Speaker, two months later, and he was to go back for his hospital visit to Saskatoon again. And I said to myself, oh, for what? His check-up was fine — the very first one — so why is he going back? He didn't go, Mr. Speaker.

But I raise that one along with the one, the young girl that did not have the good fortune that Ed had, and I point them out, Mr. Speaker, because they are so totally contradictory with what is happening. On one hand we had a young girl with cancer who could not get into the hospital and was kept on a waiting list. On the other hand we had a very healthy man who had the opportunity to be in that hospital three times within the span of four months. He had no problem with the waiting list.

Well, Mr. Speaker, as my 70-year-old father would say, there's something out of whack in the system. And it's not a simplistic view of dollars. That has nothing to do with it, and you know it.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to see in this budget that the Minister of Health is going to be looking at rationalization of the hospital system. And while the member from Riversdale says the rationalization of the rural, I suggest that the urban system needs to be rationalized also.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, the issue of utilization, of regional based hospitals, are important not only to where I live in this province, but to everybody, and the health care system as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, the decision taken on the drug plan and the dental plan were not done in haste. And it was not done without a great deal of discussion. Those kinds of decisions, and yes, choices, are not easy to make, but in the interests of the basic premise of medicare, they were made.

Mr. Speaker, I want to touch for a moment on education. Much has been said by the opposition on the issue of the amalgamation of the two departments. As a long-time trustee, serving for about a decade for the Swift Current school system, and then having the opportunity to serve as minister of Education for three and a half years, I am pleased to see the amalgamation taking place.

For many, many years the K to 12 system has struggled, and has complained about how the post-secondary is the one that drives the K to 12 when, in fact, it should be the other way around. Mr. Speaker, there was concerns when we did the public consultation on *Directions*, that said if changes were actually going to happen within the K to 12 system, changes first had to take place within the post-secondary.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that would never happen if you have two separate departments, two different ministers, run by two different bureaucracies. It simply will not happen.

As you recall, this province adopted, with support by trustees, teachers, and parents, a new set of goals for education— goals, Mr. Speaker, that have not previously

been reviewed for over 20 years. And one of the goals that this province adopted for our K to 12 children was that education shall be lifelong.

Mr. Speaker, the amalgamation of the Department of Education and the department of advanced education is simply a step towards being able to work towards that goal.

My friends across the way have had a lot to say about choices — we made the wrong choices. They say: tax the oil companies; that's a solution. The Leader of the Opposition, the other day in the *Leader-Post* — that was his statement: tax the oil companies. And members across the way, including the member from Regina North East, a past minister of Finance, has charged the give-away of 1 billion. I believe it started out at 1 billion, and every time a new member gets up, it goes a little bit higher.

An Hon. Member: — About 1.5.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — One point five, the member from Saskatoon South says. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk briefly about energy and to some of the allegations and accusations made by the members opposite. Coming to this portfolio in November, Mr. Speaker, my first thought was that there are better times to be Minister of Energy. But there is probably no better for a challenging time, in order to make the system work and to see this province grow in an area that it has not been particularly active outside of the last few years.

Revenues, or the lack of them, are very much a part of any budget, whether it's your budget at home, or the government's budget, or the Department of Energy. I believe that it's very important for all members, including opposition members, our back-benchers, and cabinet ministers, to understand the magnitude of the impact of those revenues.

I also believe that every elected member should understand their party's position and philosophy on resource development. And why do I say resource development? Because it is a major component for extra revenues for this province. Quite frankly, I'm not sure that they do understand it. I know they don't understand the impact and I'm beginning to wonder if they even understand their own position.

I wonder if the old guard along the front here has brought the new guard at the back up to date on how the NDP has responded and might respond in the future. I've heard a lot of new members respond on this budget debate with a lot of vigour on oil and royalties. But I wonder if, in fact, Mr. Speaker, they've done their homework.

I've never been one to dwell on the past. But I also believe that you must know where you came from in order to chart a course for the future. And I want to have a quick look at where we came from in the oil and gas industry, for starters. Prior to 1982, Mr. Speaker — 11 years of NDP rule — this province, in fact, had a dying industry. Not only was the industry dying, but the reserves were being depleted.

It was an industry that in fact was propped up because of transfer payments through the Trudeau government. One of the worst things that happened in that period of time in this province was that we lost an infrastructure, technology, and worst of all, the people that go with it, the people with the know-how. And they left the province. Today it would be my guess that you could go across Canada and the key figures within the energy industry, by far the majority, would have come out of Saskatchewan — born and raised and educated in Saskatchewan. And they had to leave because they could not find work. Quite frankly, our loss was Alberta's gain.

And we know what happened to the energy sector in Alberta during the '70s. They thrived and we withered. Mr. Speaker, I often say that the window of opportunity for Saskatchewan was slammed shut. And if I think it was slammed shut on oil, when I look at our gas industry, they didn't even begin to open it. We were in a situation where we actually had to import gas when we had gas to be developed in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, today that positions been reversed.

Mr. Speaker, in 1982 when we came into office . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . yes we are doing well, for the member from Quills Lake, in the gas industry. Very well, Mr. Speaker.

In getting an industry going, Mr. Speaker, one of the main questions became: if you are in a catch-up position, and you have a main competitor, what are the factors that you put into place to make it go? How could we possibly compete with Alberta? How do you convince people that Saskatchewan, in fact, is a good place to come home to and a good place to invest, when they didn't have that under the NDP?

Well, Mr. Speaker, what we did, and I will let the record and the facts speak for themselves: July 1982, this government put a drilling incentive — and they've had lots to say about an incentive — into place for oil. Not bad.

It paid off, Mr. Speaker, in jobs, in taxes for the municipalities, growth for communities, and revenues for the province. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, it worked so well that in 1986 Alberta . . . And NDP Manitoba to the east adopted an incentive program in Manitoba along with the royalties.

Well, Mr. Speaker, 1986 came along and we had a downturn, price of oil — 5,000 people out of work, the possibility of another 5,000 to go. And we reviewed the incentive program again, Mr. Speaker. And along with the royalty rates, the price of oil was moving up and down. Mr. Speaker, we moved to a price-sensitive system similar to Alberta's, I might add.

And for the member from Regina North before we go for supper, I want to tell him what a price-sensitive system is. It simply means, when the price is low, the royalty rate will be lower; when the price is high, Mr. Member, the royalty will be high. And in fact under this system, when the price of oil gets to a certain level, the royalty rate kicks in at a higher level than under the NDP.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that was part of it for our goals on the oil policies. And I can get into the policies after supper but being that it's near 5 o'clock, Mr. Speaker, I will quit here.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.