

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Clerk: — I hereby present and lay on the Table the following petition by Mr. Rolfes, of Our Lady of the Prairies Foundation of Saskatoon.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Gerich: — I give notice that I shall, on Friday next, move that this Assembly hereby commemorate the 25th anniversary of medicare in Saskatchewan and acknowledge the desire and the right of Saskatchewan people to have a high quality medicare system based on the principles of universality and accessibility.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

25th Anniversary of Medicare in Saskatchewan

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Premier. And, as he has been apprised, tomorrow marks the 25th anniversary of the institution of medicare in Saskatchewan, the first publicly funded universal health care plan in North America. And can the Premier advise the House what public events his government has planned to commemorate this important anniversary in the history of our province?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health will be making a ministerial statement after question period with respect to the designation of a unique day in our province, and he will be elaborating to some extent on the past history of medicare and on the future of health care.

And if I could just say, Mr. Speaker, in this province we have enjoyed — enjoyed — not only the history, but in the last few years, a significant increase in the determination and the allocation of resources to health care in the province of Saskatchewan, which has been significant. And as well, Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, a great protection for the public, including the removal of extra billing, consistent with the whole principles of medicare, accessibility, and universality across the piece. And we're very proud to celebrate the 25th anniversary at this time.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is it the intention of the Premier in commemoration of this anniversary to announce that the previously announced cuts in the prescription drug program and the children's dental program will no longer go forward, and that the medicare plan will be continued intact, and not in a truncated form?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, if we had to continue it intact as it was when we took office, it would mean that we'd have to take back a whole bunch of money with respect to the allocation of resources we put into health care. I mean, let me say, Mr. Speaker, that the CCF, I believe, deserve some credit. The former premier, Mr. T. C. Douglas, deserves some credit with respect to health care. That does not carry consistently, Mr. Speaker, onto the NDP.

We had to take over at a time when there was a freeze on nursing home construction in this province, and we built them. And we were glad to do that. We had to increase the funding, Mr. Speaker, by 63 per cent, from 700 million to 1.2 billion. We were happy to do that, Mr. Speaker.

We've looked at making modifications to the chiropody program. We've removed extra billing, Mr. Speaker. The NDP didn't do any of those. So I am happy to say that health care in the province of Saskatchewan is in better hands today, and will be for the next 25 years as a result of the change we've recently made.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will you, Mr. Premier, again confirm that your government will not proceed with the proposed changes in the prescription drug program and the children's dentistry program? Or is your government going to persist in the erosion of medicare by the virtual elimination of those two programs?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that when we send children to the dentist and pay for it, it's not an erosion of the dental program. Mr. Speaker, that is an improvement in the program, and the people in public health will tell you that, that the professional people are looking after the children, and we're paying for it all, Mr. Speaker. Our expenditures in health care are up 63 per cent from when we took office. The hon. member knows that this isn't destroying the dental program; this is a better dental program, a better dental program for those young people because they're going to the best professionals any place that you can find in Canada to have their teeth fixed, and we pay for it all. We pay for the whole thing.

Now he'll say, Mr. Speaker, ah, but what about the teenagers in health? And I will challenge him any place with respect to the priorities in health. When they started the idea in '44, when it was initiated in the '60s, you didn't have the drug problems you have today; you didn't have the alcohol problems. They want to go back to the past and say, cavities are the problem of the '60s. Well, Mr. Speaker, they're not the problems of today.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. We have heard the Premier say that to ask someone to go from Nokomis to Regina or Watrous to seek dental care is an improvement of the program. Are we now to expect that those same people will be told that the Nokomis hospital

is going to be closed, and they can go to the Regina or Watrous hospitals, and that will improve the program? Is that your proposal?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that the NDP record on the closure of hospitals and the demise of rural Saskatchewan was under his administration, not this administration. You will see more dentists and more doctors in rural Saskatchewan than you've ever seen before, Mr. Speaker. We are dedicated to rural Saskatchewan. We wouldn't take \$1.5 billion in rural programs, gas distribution programs, power line burial, individual line service — all those commitments. You wouldn't stand up for rural Saskatchewan. You forgot it in the '60s; you forgot it in the '70s; and you won't have a chance in the '80s, Mr. Speaker, because we're going to look after it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Final supplementary, Mr. Premier. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It may not be the final supplementary on that account.

Will the Premier concede that the greatest closing of rural hospitals that this province has ever seen was in the days when the now Minister of Finance was advising the Liberal government? That was the days when he was a Liberal and we had — yes indeed — and we had eight rural hospitals closed in one week. Will the Premier concede that the same man who is giving him advice on improper budget figures is the man who advised on closing eight rural hospitals? Will he concede that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, he can't . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order! Would you please allow the Premier to answer the question.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, it's clear that the hon. member can't defend his record so he has to go back to the old Liberal record. I'll say our record, the Progressive conservative government, when it comes to rural nursing homes, when it comes to integrated units, when it comes to the provision of health care and the amenities of life in rural Saskatchewan, this government's record will stand against any government in the history of the province of Saskatchewan, and he knows it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order.

Hospital Waiting Lists in Saskatoon

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Premier, on this 25th anniversary of medicare, we have more than 10,000 people on the waiting list in Saskatoon, and we have more than several thousand on waiting lists across the province. Yet your government has cut funds available to Saskatchewan hospitals while it spends more than \$17 million per year on expensive political advertising. How can you justify

those kind of spending priorities when we have more than 10,000 people on the waiting list in Saskatoon?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of sympathy for people who are on waiting lists. And I want to say to the hon. member that we are in the process of examining health care administration very, very carefully in the province of Saskatchewan for the following reasons. Mr. Speaker, I want the member . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order. Order, please. Would you please allow the Premier to answer the question.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — The member from Quill Lakes is resorting to his old habits, and the people of the province, Mr. Speaker, know that there is a loud voice in this legislature that booms all the time, and it's the member from Quill Lakes, and he won't . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order, please. Order, please. We can't have an orderly conduct of question period if we have constant interruptions of the individual attempting to answer the question, so let's try it again, please.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I will answer the hon. member from Saskatoon. As the hon. member knows, waiting line-ups are a problem, and we're looking at it from a historical point of view as well as into the future. Let me give you an example.

We spend more money per capita on health care, on health care, Mr. Speaker, than anybody else in the world. We spend ... We have more beds per capita, Mr. Speaker, than anybody else in Canada. We are 31 per cent above the national average. We have over 7,000 beds and, at the same time, Mr. Speaker, we see that we only use 5,000.

Mr. Speaker, when you start to look at some of the characteristics and the reasons for that particular problem, spending more money than anybody else in Canada, more beds than anybody else in Canada, and you still have a line-up, and you see the line-ups growing, with a 63 per cent increase in health care expenditures . . .

Now we start to look at the number of physicians in Saskatoon, compared to other jurisdictions — 100 to 150 more physicians in Saskatoon. You see, as the number of physicians are growing, you see the line-ups in the hospitals growing. Is there some correlation, Mr. Speaker? You look at the line-ups in other jurisdictions across Saskatchewan. Is the line-up as high in Regina? No. Is the line-up as high in Moose Jaw? Are the waiting lists as large in Estevan, Prince Albert, Melfort? No, Mr. Speaker.

What's it saying? We're spending more and more money per capita than anybody else, increasing at a very rapid rate, more beds than anybody else, more doctors going into one centre. And, Mr. Speaker, what do we see? We see the line-ups increasing. We're going to examine it, Mr. Speaker, because we believe we can address the problem.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Premier, there's no question that you spend more per capita on advertising, political advertising, than any other jurisdiction in this country.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — And, Mr. Speaker, there may be some questions to the number of beds in Saskatchewan, but we also have the largest number of bed closures in this country this summer.

My question to you is this: will you not realize that these reductions, these cuts, will mean longer waiting lists and . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. We're having difficulty hearing your question, so would you please repeat it?

Ms. Atkinson: — Will you not admit, Mr. Premier, that these cuts in hospital spending will mean longer waiting lists and, more importantly, longer waiting times for access to hospitals? Will you now admit that?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, no, we will not admit because, first of all, there have not been cuts in hospital spending, Mr. Speaker — a very important point to make. Despite the rhetoric, very heated rhetoric, from the member opposite, that's the fact.

Last Friday, Mr. Speaker, in the city of Saskatoon, I was there — as was her colleague and one of the members from the opposite benches — at the opening of a day surgery unit at City Hospital, a significant event in the life of the hospitals in Saskatoon as it relates to reducing the waiting lists in Saskatoon. That day surgery unit is from this government, \$1.3 million over and above any other hospital grants that are going in there based on the regular formula : — \$1.3 million into that particular unit to address waiting lists and \$750,000 from the patient care fund, as well, over and above.

Mr. Speaker, this government is addressing the waiting list problem. This government acknowledges the waiting list problem in the city of Saskatoon. And we will continue to address it, and we must address it in a step-by-step and in a logical way, which is what we are doing.

Ms. Atkinson: — Supplementary to the Minister of Health. Mr. Minister, was not that day surgery unit ready to open on April 1, but because City Hospital couldn't get any commitment out of you for additional funding, they weren't opening it until the government would come up with additional money?

And, in fact, that hospital day surgery was there waiting for over two months, but you people weren't prepared to make . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the circumstances as outlined by the member from Saskatoon Nutana are

simply not so.

Funding of Hong Kong Trading Office

Mr. Solomon: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance. The minister should understand that when the government is pleading poverty, as he has been doing and as the government has been doing, and preaching restraint to everyone else. Taxpayers have a right to know exactly who you are spending their money.

A few weeks ago, the government cut \$34,000 from its grants to the Voice of the Handicapped, with the argument that every dollar counts. Yet the Provincial Auditor's report, tabled in this legislature, shows clearly that your government spent \$31,000 buying furniture for its Hong Kong trade office : — \$31,000 for its Hong Kong trade office furniture.

Mr. Minister, if the deficit is your chief concern, why didn't those dollars count?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to clarify one part of the member's argument that the deficit was the chief concern. I think we have indicated today, with hospital expenditures up 2 per cent, significant increases in other areas of government expenditure, that the deficit is a major concern, but to say it is the chief concern and the only concern is not accurate. The specific details of the expenditure, I'll ask the member, or the minister responsible for Economic Development and Trade, to answer.

Mr. Speaker: — Next question.

Mr. Solomon: — Mr. Minister, you preach restraint on one hand, yet your government practises unrestrained spending on the other. How can you justify spending \$31,000 to buy furniture for a government office in Hong Kong, and \$504,000 to lease that office space in the first place, when you are preaching restraint at home and raising everybody's taxes? How do you explain that double standard?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, all provinces in Canada are looking to the Asia Pacific region as a very important trading region of the world, an area of the world that we rely on for significant sales of potash, of canola, of wheat, of uranium, of a variety of other things that we produce in this province. It's imperative and important, Mr. Speaker, that we have a presence in the Asia Pacific, just as Manitoba, Alberta, B.C., Ontario, Quebec, and some of the maritime provinces have a presence in the Asia Pacific.

I can advise the member that the dollars being spent over there, while high, because that's ...It costs a lot of money, whether you're in Japan or whether you're in China, or whether you're in Hong Kong or wherever. But the dollars being spent by the province of Saskatchewan are lower than the dollars being spent by their friends in Manitoba, far lower than what is being spent by Alberta,

British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec.

That they are to argue, Mr. Speaker, somehow, that we should not bother going to Asia Pacific, that we should not somehow bother with trying to increase our trading markets for our businesses, for our farmers, I think that is misguided, I think it is short-sighted, and I think it is backward looking.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Employment of Former MLA as Consultant

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Deputy Premier. On Friday, June 19, you took notice, Mr. Deputy Premier, of a question concerning the employment of a former PC MLA for Moosomin, Mr. Birkbeck. I ask the Deputy Premier: is the former PC MLA, or any company he is involved with, employed by or under contract to any government department head, agency, or Crown corporation? And further, has Mr. Birkbeck at any time been involved or any company that he's been involved with, has he been employed by any government agency, Crown corporation, since last October?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — The question was rather long and convoluted. Let me understand the question. The question is: is the former MLA for Moosomin working for any government, Crown, or agency, or department, or whatever? The answer is no.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, has any company that the former PC MLA been involved with, or is involved with, been employed by the government or contracted by the government, of any Crown corporation, or agency, or department of the government?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I obviously, Mr. Speaker, don't know what multitude of companies this individual may be involved in. But I can say, not to my knowledge, no company that this person is involved in is working for any government department, agency, or Crown.

Rumoured Sale of Saskatchewan Transportation Company

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the minister responsible for Saskatchewan Transportation Company. On June 24, on page 696 of *Hansard*, you told this Assembly, and I quote:

We are not in the process of negotiations for the sale of Saskatchewan Transportation Company at this point in time.

Can the minister tell us how that statement jibes with what the Premier said the very next day in Saskatoon when he told reports, and I quote:

Will we bring in new management? Go into joint venture with somebody else? Has somebody offered to buy it? I won't say anything.

Mr. Minister, if there's no sale and no negotiations for a sale, why wouldn't the Premier make the same straightforward statement you made? Did you mislead this House last week, or is the Premier's office in total charge of transportation and handling this sale, leaving you and your officials out in the cold?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I take a fair bit of exception to the member's allegation from the opposite side of the House that I or the Premier in any way misled this Assembly or the public of Saskatchewan. I stated a number of days ago, and I will state again: we are not in the process at this point in time of negotiating the sale of the Saskatchewan Transportation Company. I think the words that the Premier spoke in Saskatoon were along the same lines. I see absolutely no discrepancy between what the Premier said and what I stated a few days ago.

Mr. Trew: — Again, to the minister responsible for transportation: can the minister make it clear what options the government has in mind to "improve the operations" of the Saskatchewan . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order, please. Order, please. The member ...several days ago we ruled that we would not use quotes in our supplementaries, so I would ask the member to please adhere to that rule.

Mr. Trew: — Fair enough, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister tell us what, indeed, what are the improvements in operations that you're speaking about? What is it that is going to happen, and do these options include the sale of the bus company or do they not?

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, for the hon. member's information, I would like to stress to you, and I would like to stress to the public of Saskatchewan, the direction that this government is taking and will be taking in the future with respect to the Saskatchewan Transportation company.

I can assure you, Mr. Member, that this government is committed to providing a comprehensive, affordable, convenient, reliable, safe transportation system to the people of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Summer Bed Closures and Critical Surgery

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, a question for the Premier. One of the examples of erosion, in fact, in our medicare system in Saskatchewan is the long line-ups at our hospitals everywhere, most particularly in the city of Saskatoon. The policy of summer bed closures this particular year, Mr. Speaker, is the largest and the longest ever, including, I am told, 18 out of 42 beds closed on pediatric wards in the city of Saskatoon.

Saskatoon neurosurgeons have advised me that they have at least five young children with skull deformities, where the surgery needs to be done at a very critical time — it's not something that can wait a week or two; timing is critically important — and the pediatric bed closures are,

in fact, preventing or threatening . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. The member's question is becoming overly long, or the preamble to the question. Would you please place your question.

Mr. Goodale: — Yes, I certainly will come immediately to the question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that those pediatric bed closures are threatening timely surgery, will the Premier give us his commitment that those bed closures in relation to the pediatric wards in Saskatoon will, in fact, not proceed this summer and cause that difficulty in the city of Saskatoon?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I would just ask the hon. member if he would provide me with the names of the patients, and the name of the hospital with the specific procedure. The Minister of Health will be glad to look at it. Let me say at the same time, the hon. member knows that closures in the summer time are nothing that is particularly new in the province of Saskatchewan.

Secondly, when we're looking at addressing the problem, the hon. member is not quite accurate when he says that we have line-ups all over the province of Saskatchewan. We have a concentration of the line-ups in the city of Saskatoon at the hospitals, not all over the province of Saskatchewan. And, in fact, if you could have more and more people getting their tonsils out and some other minor operations around the province, there would be more beds in Saskatoon. That's precisely what we're trying to do, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary dealing with the suggestion the Premier has made about enhancing regional hospitals to take the pressure off of the larger urban hospitals. I have received information that in respect of the Union Hospital in Moose Jaw that one particular orthopaedic surgeon in that city is perfectly prepared, equipped, ready to go, to do a large number of hip surgery operations in that city this summer and through the year, and he has been specifically limited to no more than 12 of those operations annually.

If there are that sort of limitations, Mr. Premier, on regional hospitals like the one in Moose Jaw, how in the world can pressure be taken off the larger urban centres when there is that kind of a restriction at the regional level?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member outlines a specific circumstance of which I, you know, am not aware of the detail of, but I'll certainly take notice of it and check into it if the facts are as he outlines, and we'll report back to him within a few days, Mr. Speaker.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

25th Anniversary of Medicare

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, 1987 marks the 25th anniversary of the introduction of medicare in our province. In recognition of this milestone in the history of health care services in Saskatchewan, I've been pleased to proclaim July 2 as Medicare Day in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, our province has a long and proud heritage in the health care field. It's a heritage characterized by people working together to build facilities and programs to meet the needs of their communities. The introduction of medicare in 1962 was in many ways the culmination of decades of hard work by Saskatchewan people, the next logical step in the development of a provincial health care system.

Over the past 25 years we have seen the health care system grow steadily, mostly in terms of the services provided and the costs associated with them. Today in Saskatchewan we have a health care system of which we can all be proud, one which is second to none in Canada in the range and quality of services it provides to the people of our province.

Mr. Speaker, medicare has become an integral and essential part of the fabric of Canadian society and its preservation is something which all Canadians support. There's no denying that fiscal pressures are presenting governments right across our country with major challenges in the health care field.

However, our government has taken the initiative to meet these challenges in a fair and sensitive way, in a way that will ensure the preservation and enhancement of medicare in Saskatchewan for many years to come.

As we mark the 25th anniversary of medicare in our province, it's appropriate that we recognize the contributions of Tommy Douglas, and other Saskatchewan people like him, in making Saskatchewan a leader in the health care field. At the same time, it is appropriate that we reaffirm our commitment to maintaining an effective health care system into the 1990s and beyond, so that future generations of Saskatchewan residents will continue to enjoy the finest health care in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, on July 2 I urge all members of this Assembly, and indeed all residents of this province of Saskatchewan, to make a point of recognizing Medicare Day in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I welcome the announcement made by the government. I deplore the fact that they would announce on June 30 that we're going to have celebrations on July 2 with respect to medicare. If they had the slightest, if they had the slightest intent ...(inaudible interjection) ...Mr. Speaker, do I have the floor, or does the member for Qu'Appelle-Lumsden have the floor?

Mr. Speaker: — You have the floor.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: — He has the floor.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Now I deplore the fact that this government did not move a muscle to commemorate medicare until I sent to the Premier this morning the text of a resolution which I intended to introduce today. The resolution now being introduced by the member for

Redberry – in exact same words – indicating that until . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. I believe both sides of the House are getting into the debate. Will you allow the Leader of the Opposition to make his statement.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — ...indicating that until 9 o'clock this morning this government had neither indicated any desire to commemorate medicare, nor put anything on the order paper to commemorate medicare.

Now at 9 o'clock on June 30, they decide that they must do something because July 1 is coming, and people are wanting to acknowledge the triumph that was achieved in July 1, 1962 over the opposition of ...some of the most bitter opposition that this province has ever seen.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — I expect, Mr. Speaker, that they will put in charge of these celebrations the Hon. Senator Barootes, because he led the opposition to medicare. He and other PCs resolutely opposed medicare, and to this day oppose medicare, and are attempting to wrap themselves in the cloak of Tommy Douglas and Woodrow Lloyd and others who were the genuine pioneers of medicare.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — But, Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the fact that the words come dripping with hypocrisy from members opposite; notwithstanding the fact that these same people who opposed medicare vehemently in 1962 and eroded it – and I speak now for the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden – particularly during the period from '64 to '71 in imposing deterrent fees and all the rest; notwithstanding the fact that they have set out to erode the additions made in the 1970s – and I instance the chiropractic care in 1972-73, and the children's dentistry program in 1974, and the drug program in 1975, and we all know their commitment to those programs.

Notwithstanding the fact that members opposite have no status to commemorate medicare in this province, we will join, not with them, but with the people of Saskatchewan in acknowledging the victory won on July 1, 1962, and the fact that everyone in Saskatchewan and indeed everyone in Canada is the beneficiary of the work of those pioneers on July 1, 1962, who instituted for Saskatchewan, and ultimately for all Canada, universal comprehensive medicare over the opposition of members of the Conservative Party at that time. And that opposition is carried on to this day by the members of the Progressive Conservative Party at this time.

We acknowledge the pioneers. We believe that this is something which ought to have been part of the government celebrations – 48 hours before the event they decide they're going to do something. We welcome the fact that Saskatchewan people, whether or not the government agrees, are complimenting those pioneers and are saying that we in Saskatchewan are the better for their work, they deserve to be acknowledged and commemorated, and we propose so to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Celebration of Canada Day

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I just want to join with members of the Assembly and people in Saskatchewan and across Canada in the celebration of Canada Day tomorrow which marks the 120th anniversary of the country of Canada.

Now I'd like to say, Mr. Speaker, that not only are people extremely proud of this country – proud of what has developed over the past 120 year. But we look forward to the next 100 years and clearly into the next century, Mr. Speaker, making some major and significant changes in a new era for Canada.

And let me refer to a couple. Let me refer most recently to the Meech Lake Accord which would knit together the entire country under one constitution. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that will mark a new era for this country. The amendments to the constitution and the resolution will be introduced in this session, in this legislature, and in legislatures across the country, and I believe it will pass, Mr. Speaker. And it will say a great deal for this country in that we will be knit together for the first time in history under our own constitution and have all jurisdictions part and parcel of this great nation; a new era, particularly so that we know that the province of Quebec and the province of Saskatchewan and provinces from coast to coast will be on equal footing for the first time in our history.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we will now have the opportunity for some major reform in this country that will make us stronger. Reform to the senate; reform to the way that we operate in this country; changes with respect to new provinces perhaps, and we can look forward to that; changes with respect to native issues; changes with respect to trade, Mr. Speaker.

We're looking at a new era around the world with respect to the global village. And we are proud that Canada now takes a leadership role, not only in agricultural trade, not only on the multilateral negotiations, but in fact we see increasingly the provinces having more and more influence on the world, not only on the federal government, but in part on the world, and the way that it looks at trading with people right across the globe.

We look forward to the advancement of new technology and the use of it we have here. We look forward to new world leadership opportunities. We look forward to the diversification, the processing and the manufacturing and the new jobs and the new excitement in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I just say we are so proud to be part and parcel of this great country as it celebrates its 120th anniversary. This country was put together in 1867, and here we are in 1987 with a bright future, with many changes that we are going to make – many that are on the drawing-board right now that will be historic. And I just join with all other people in Saskatchewan and all those across Canada in saying, Happy Birthday Canada, your future looks tremendous.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I would want to join with the Premier in commemorating Canada Day. One hundred and twenty years since confederation and this country has grown and prospered and, I think, provided a fitting home for people from many lands and many origins, some who were here for many tens or hundreds of thousands of years, and some who have been here only a short number of months, a fitting home for them to develop their lives and develop their potential.

We in this country believe that we are something unique and different, that we have a sense of being Canadian, a sense of having some concern for our neighbour, a sense of having a somewhat more compassionate society than exists in some parts of the world. I think this is what makes us distinctly Canadian, and I hope that this will be nourished in the years ahead. I hope that we can be internationalist in our outlook, not narrow. The Premier has referred to Meech Lake. I hope that that accord can be explained to the people of Saskatchewan. I hope that there will be widespread hearings so that the significance of this accord, which the Premier has referred to, can be understood by all Canadians, and particularly all those who are in Saskatchewan.

I hope that there will be opportunities for the people of Saskatchewan to put their views on the perception that the people who live in the Territories and aboriginal peoples have been left out of this accord. I hope that that happens.

I look at trade, and I hope that Canada continues to be internationalist and multinationalist in its approach, and that we do not withdraw into any narrow North American trading block, shutting out the rest of the world; but that we take that act of faith, that we decide that we can compete with people all over the world, and that we can trade with Japan and with Europe and Africa, and that, therefore, we don't withdraw into any trading block which will inevitably have tariffs shutting out the rest of the world.

Those, I think, indicate direction. Canada has always been — or at least in recent years since World War : — internationalist, very, very supportive of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and really quite opposed to little trading blocks around which tariff barriers are built.

But I leave aside the questions of the constitution and trade, and come back to the spirit that has made us Canada. And I think it is important, Mr. Speaker, that this July 1 coincides with the 25th anniversary of medicare, because in a very real way the health care programs, the social support programs which have been instituted on a nation-wide basis here in this country, are a distinctive feature of being Canadian.

They are what distinguish us as Canadians from people in other lands. And I hope that we have the wisdom to recognize that what is distinctly Canadian is a sense of caring for our neighbours from coast to coast, and a sense of belief that we can act through things like medicare and

the hospital plan and the Canada Assistance Plan and many others, to see that every Canadian is protected from the worst rigours of poverty and deprivation, and that every Canadian has the opportunity to develop his potential, to which I earlier referred, his potential physically, mentally, and spiritually. That, I think, is the essence of being Canadian, and I'm happy to join with the Premier in celebrating it today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1045)

ROYAL ASSENT TO BILLS

At 10:46 a.m. His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber, took his seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following Bill:

Bill No. 13 — An Act for Granting to Her Majesty certain sums of Money for the Public Service for the Fiscal Year Ending on March 31, 1988.

His Honour retired from the Chamber at 10:47 a.m.

STATEMENT

Resignation of Member

Mr. Martineau: — Before orders of the day, Mr. Speaker, I regret to inform you that as of this day I am resigning my seat as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan for the constituency of Saskatoon Eastview. My business commitments are such that I cannot fully serve the needs of my constituents. I regret my inability serve full term, on their behalf, as they deserve and expect from their representative. The constituents of Saskatoon Eastview have honoured me with their trust, and I in turn must afford them the opportunity to have a representative in this legislature that is able to fully commit his time to their service.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the constituents of Saskatoon Eastview and my executive for the support they have given me in this endeavour, and at this time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish my best to all members of the House. I thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I would wish to rise to commend the member, that has just been on his feet, for his courage and his integrity in making a very difficult personal decision. Those of us who serve in the Chamber know of the many pressures of the legislature and how they bear on family, and business, and opportunities in our professional careers.

Mr. Martineau has decided to break cleanly, and with honour, to return to the private sector. I personally wish him the very best, and as the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, I gladly accept his commitment to continue to serve the people of Saskatchewan and our party for the years to come.

I know, Mr. Speakers, that all members join me now in

wishing Mr. Martineau the very best in his future endeavours.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I rise pursuant to rule 39 . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Excuse me. Excuse me, sir. If I may just have a couple of words before we get there.

At this time, members of the Assembly, I would like to acknowledge the resignation of the member from Saskatoon Eastview, and I declare the seat for Saskatoon Eastview vacant.

MOTIONS

Rule 39

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise pursuant to rule 39 to seek leave of the Assembly to move a motion on an issue of urgent and pressing necessity. I will take a moment to identify the issue and indicate the motion I see to move.

I advised the government opposite this morning by way of a letter to the Premier that I would be seeking leave, and advised him of the content of the motion. We have already heard the content this time under the name of the member for Redberry, but I will move forward from that.

It's 25 years ago that universal comprehensive medical care insurance was launched. It is a matter of great pride for the people of Saskatchewan, and I know that all of us share that pride. Tomorrow is the day, and it seems appropriate that today we act to pass the motion and commemorate the pioneers.

Across the province a number of health care institutions and associations have taken steps to have special commemorative events over the last month, and I have attended some, and I suspect others have. I think it would be fitting and appropriate for the Legislative Assembly to undertake such a commemoration today.

I, therefore, seek leave of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, to move a motion along the lines that I ...the exact words that I gave to the Premier earlier this morning. I will read them into the record:

That this Assembly hereby commemorates the 25th anniversary of medicare in Saskatchewan, and acknowledges the desire and the right of Saskatchewan people to have a high quality medicare system based on the principles of universality and accessibility.

Those, Mr. Speaker, were the words of the motion that I forwarded to the Premier earlier this morning. I think they are still very fitting. I don't know who objects to them. I take it members opposite do not. I believe that today is the day when we can appropriately commemorate them, and I sincerely hope that all members will agree that this motion should be passed today. I invite all to join in supporting it. I rise, Mr. Speaker, pursuant to rule 39

seeking leave to so proceed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Leave not granted.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MOTION UNDER RULE 16

Saskatchewan Economic Diversification

Mr. Gardner: — Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to again rise in this House, and it particularly a privilege to move the following motion:

That this Assembly commends the Government of Saskatchewan for its vision and foresight demonstrated in the economic diversification thrust initiated by it; and further commends the government for having the courage to make the changes necessary to have our young people prepared to participate in and to capture the opportunity presented by this diversification.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, there are really two elements to the motion.

The first deals with the general need to broaden the base of our economy to bring it in step with the rest of the world and to work diligently and creatively to establish new economic activity throughout the province. The government's record on economic diversification is indeed impressive. I'm sure you know the list fairly well, Mr. Speaker, but I would like to point out a few examples to get across the importance of diversification.

If any member were asked, Mr. Speaker, what is the basis of the Saskatchewan economy, regardless of political stripe, he or she would surely answer that it is agriculture and natural resources. Saskatchewan was in fact built almost entirely upon agriculture, upon resources, and upon the resilience and skills of its people.

The fur trade was the first natural resource that brought development to our province, and it was followed some time later by wheat. You may find it interesting to know, Mr. Speaker, that before Saskatchewan was settled, the CPR sent out a fellow named Palliser to study the potential for settlement in our province. Palliser came and drew a large triangle that took up a good deal of southern Saskatchewan, an area that has since become known to geography students as the Palliser triangle. This land, he said, was not fit for human habitation — not fit, Mr. Speaker, for human habitation.

Now you would have to agree that this is quite the challenge to deal with and, in a sense, quite the diversification challenge. Our forefathers went into the Palliser triangle anyway, Mr. Speaker. They did not listen to those who said it can't be done. They disregarded the pessimists, the people who counselled staying at home and avoiding the challenge. Instead they went forward and built something with hard work and ingenuity. They learned new skills, new techniques, and new approaches to problems.

Mr. Speaker, not only did they diversify their economy, they diversified themselves. They did this because one was not possible without the other. And they came up with one of the most productive agricultural areas in the world, Mr. Speaker. I talk about this bit of history because it is very much the kind of process and the kind of attitude that is needed today and that this government has embodied with its vision for our province.

Just as there were before our province was settled, there are people today, Mr. Speaker, who say: do not go forward, do not change, and do not diversify. And that kind of person won out in the ...had that kind of person, Mr. Speaker, won out in the beginning, there would be no Saskatchewan today.

Mr. Speaker, the members across the way are like that. They do look backwards, but they only look so far. They look back to '71 or '81. But, Mr. Speaker, just as their vision is so limited when looking forward, I suggest it is limited when looking into history. And I ask them, Mr. Speaker, just for a minute to get beyond themselves and their own personal remembrances to try to find out the great lessons of history for a while and to avoid the trivial pursuit of ego satisfaction.

If they do that, Mr. Speaker, they will see that this government is indeed right. The lesson is simple: we must diversify our economy; we must diversify ourselves. So how do we go about that, Mr. Speaker? We can all agree that the basis of our economy is agriculture and resources. And included in those resources, if we are wise, we will count the talent and the ingenuity of our people. So, Mr. Speaker, it seems pretty straightforward that we must build on that base.

I want to use a few examples. Because we are an agricultural economy, Mr. Speaker, we are obviously dependant on a great deal of agricultural equipment. Now we need to buy parts for that equipment. So would it not be a good idea, Mr. Speaker, if we could somehow create the necessary conditions that would see those parts manufactured right here in our own province.

Mr. Speaker, one new business that recently opened without too much ado is an example of such progress. I'm referring to the agricultural belts manufacturer who started production right here in Regina, Mr. Speaker. Now instead of obtaining them from Ontario or the U.S. or wherever, the great variety of belts needed for combines and bailers and the like will be made right here, providing employment opportunities and generating investment dollars.

(1100)

Another much larger example, Mr. Speaker, is the heavy oil upgrader. For 11 years the people across the way promised upgraders to almost everyone. But they didn't know how to go about it, Mr. Speaker. They found the job of grappling with new technologies and massive scales just beyond them. This is too big a job for a little province like ours, they thought. And so although they continued to promise upgraders to all industry, they never delivered. But it was not beyond the ability of our people, Mr.

Speaker. This government went and joined with that huge integrated corporation with all its subsidies and interlocking directorships. No, Mr. Speaker, I'm not talking about Imperial Esso; I'm talking about the other big corporation, the Co-op. So we joined with the Co-op, and we built the upgrader.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, the NDP were right about one thing. We did not have all the technology needed to make a go of it. But, Mr. Speaker, we are not isolated in this world. No one has told us that we have to stay home and be content with what we have; rather, no one except those people across the way. We needed to acquire new technologies, new skills, and the ability to deal with a project of massive scale. So a moderate-sized engineering firm from Saskatoon entered a joint venture with a larger firm from the United States, and by working with that firm they obtained the needed technologies and the needed skills. They didn't say, not us; we've never done it before. No, Mr. Speaker, instead they said, what an opportunity to diversify our firm. And they did. But there's more, Mr. Speaker, because the U.S. firm did not have all the technology needed either. That's right. The largest economy in the world – the U.S.A. – was short when it came to the things required to build an upgrader in Regina.

So did we sit down and throw in the towel? You know we didn't do that, Mr. Speaker. We went to Japan and we negotiated a deal. And part of that deal resulted in more Saskatchewan employment. And parts of the upgrader technology were transferred here, and parts were manufactured here by yet another Saskatchewan company. Now that is a very instructive example, Mr. Speaker.

We have a resource in this province: heavy oil. By itself, it fetches a price, but not the best price, and the price that is deserved by the people of Saskatchewan. The government could have approached it in one of two ways. It could have said: we're not happy with the price we're getting, so we'll nationalize it – as happened with the NDP and the potash industry. And we could have ended up with not one more job, not one more bit of technical know-how, and not one more bit of economic development.

Or, Mr. Speaker, we could have proceeded as we did. We got together with people who wanted to develop – people in the Co-op, people in firms in Regina and Saskatoon, people in the United States, and even people in Japan. We got together with all these people, and we said: if we work as a team, we'll succeed. And you will note, Mr. Speaker, that we did succeed, and Saskatchewan has its upgrader.

As a result, we will get a better price; we will get new technologies; we will get more employment; and we will get an expanded tax base; and we will get several Saskatchewan firms in a new position to compete and deal in the world market.

But we have a new government ...I'm sorry. With those choices, Mr. Speaker, I find it hard to believe that the NDP always opt to take things over. But we have a new government and a new attitude, Mr. Speaker. So we are

diversifying.

And the second part of this motion, the part about preparing our young people to capture the opportunities, is a vital part of that diversification. Just as our forefathers had to learn new ways of farming dry land, and just as they passed on these skills to their children, today we must pass on new skills to our children. And that does take courage, Mr. Speaker, because change is generally uncomfortable.

Instead of an oil upgrader, Mr. Speaker, we needed an education system upgrader. And in that, Saskatchewan had to look no farther than the city of Weyburn. But it can cause some concern, especially when jobs are lost and the oil familiar courses are changed. Yet, Mr. Speaker, I ask you whether you believe that the people of Saskatchewan are so timid and so unwilling to change that they would rather be comfortable in the old system than assure their children's future with the new.

There are no more Model T's to repair, Mr. Speaker. And if we had the attitude of those people opposite, we would still be teaching our young people how to repair those Model T's. The Thunderbirds, the Datsuns, and the Chevrolets would all break down, with today's mechanics waiting for someone to bring in a Model T.

Mechanics, I think, is a good example, Mr. Speaker, because that field is changing rapidly, even today. Not too long ago, if you knew the mechanical side, you could work on the entire car. It was all levers and nuts and bolts. But today, Mr. Speaker, there are computers that regulate the flow of gas, maintain checks on oil pressure and engine temperature and all manner of other things. Instead of a straightforward carburettor, they're fuel injected. Instead of a radio, they have high fidelity Dolby-adjusted equalized stereos. And soon, Mr. Speaker, they will have onboard computers with maps and voice interactions, and only the imagination can tell what else.

So a mechanic from the schools of 10 years ago would have a great deal of difficulty dealing with the entire car of today. Without exposure to computers, Mr. Speaker, that same mechanic will be totally lost with the car of tomorrow.

I don't want my children to be lost in an economy that has been penetrated by computers and information exchange and newness everywhere. I want my children to be comfortable around these new things, and well educated in some of them, so that they will be able to see the opportunity rather than confusion, so that they can get a hold of these new things and make them work for them, rather than be intimidated by them. That's what I want for my children, Mr. Speaker, and I think the parents of Saskatchewan want the same for theirs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gardner: — This government has shown a determination and courage to ensure that our children are well prepared. Education is taking on an importance that perhaps no single human activity has ever held. And it is taking on new forms as well, Mr. Speaker. The institutes

the government is establishing in tourism and entrepreneurship are an example of those new forms.

Now the members opposite do not approve of the institute for entrepreneurs, Mr. Speaker. But I have to say that I was amazed to hear that the member from Regina North West, in his budget remarks, ranting and raving against private enterprise — rapacious capitalism, I think he called it.

That member, Mr. Speaker, has run, or has tried to run, private business himself. And I can understand how he might feel that capitalism is rapacious, considering his unpleasant experience with Dairy Queen. But, Mr. Speaker, I ask him to keep perspective.

Perhaps, if there had been an institute of entrepreneurship, this would have not happened to him. Perhaps someone more experienced in the ways of the market, and with a bit more developed business judgement, could have given him some guidance, Mr. Speaker.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, he should not let one failure sour him on allowing the rest of our young people a chance to acquire the skills needed to succeed in business.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gardner: — And that, Mr. Speaker, is exactly what he's doing when he opposes the entrepreneurial institute.

The tourism institute, Mr. Speaker, will also be a source of education diversification. We will use that institute to prepare the employers and employees in that industry to keep them up to date with new developments in the field, and to provide them with the basic knowledge to ensure Saskatchewan's tourism industry grows and contributes greatly to this economy.

Mr. Speaker, there are other changes that are being introduced by the Minister of Education that affect the whole range of activities that we usually talk about when we speak of the education system. One of the most fundamental of these improvements is the consolidation and renewal of our technical education systems.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I am excited about the prospects that this renewal holds for our province. While it is true that, in comparison to others, we are a relatively small province, the Minister of Education has devised a method to bring the economies and the power of scale to technical education in Saskatchewan by consolidating the various separated and smaller institutes into a renewed Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology. The allocation of resources, and the ability to maintain the highest standards will be greatly enhanced.

By directing the innovation of new course . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. The member's time has elapsed, so now I would like to ask him . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. The member's time has elapsed, but he has not moved his motion, so I'd like to ask him now to move the motion.

Mr. Gardner: — Mr. Speaker, in closing I would like to move the aforementioned motion, seconded by the member from Redberry, and I ask that all members of the Assembly support the motion:

That this Assembly commends the Government of Saskatchewan for its vision and foresight demonstrated in the economic diversification thrust initiated by it, and further commends the government for having the courage to make the changes necessary to have our young people prepared to participate in, and to capture the opportunity presented by, this diversification.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gerich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise today and second the motion. As my hon. colleague from Pelly has so ably pointed out, we in Saskatchewan have a history of overcoming obstacles and doing things people said could not be done. The people of Saskatchewan have never backed away from a challenge, Mr. Speaker. They have never said, it's too tough, and it can't be done. No sir, they persevered time and time again.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we face a new challenge. Our traditional economic base has been badly shaken. Our agricultural and natural resource industries are victims of a depressed market and international trade wars. Mr. Speaker, some may say that this has happened before, and it has to some extent. The boom and bust cycle is familiar to the people of this province. Sometimes governments even plan their economic strategy with the idea that after every boom ...or every bust comes a boom. The more spectacular the boom the greater the bust.

I mention this, Mr. Speaker, because back in the late 1970's, and early 1980, Saskatchewan was experiencing quite a boom. And the NDP government of the day acted as if it would go on for ever. They didn't diversify the economy because they didn't see the need. Instead they bought more potash mines and uranium mines, mines that were already there. They didn't build and they didn't put anything away for a rainy day. They spent their time and money on projects that were already established.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when the Conservative government took power in 1982, the lack of planning on the part of the previous NDP administration was very obvious. Their Heritage Fund was a myth, a paper tiger, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They had left the adult education system in a run-down state. And worst of all, Mr. Speaker, they had left us without the economic diversification to survive in a downturn in our economy.

I don't need to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that our province suffered through high interest rates, droughts, and low resource revenues. The members opposite, though, seem to have forgotten what our province went through

because they hadn't been prepared.

Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government went to work immediately, broadening our province's economic base. We brought in programs that encouraged manufacturing and processing. We worked to bring in outside investment, and worked to increase the competitiveness of our province's exports.

Mr. Speaker, our government's efforts to diversify have paid off. We have a new heavy oil upgrader being built in Regina. We have a new paper mill being built in Prince Albert. And we have three new manufacturers and processing plants in North Battleford: the bacon plant, the RV plant, and a door manufacturing plant, Mr. Speaker, we're proud of these jobs that have been created by these new and other diversified projects. The hundreds of new jobs are critical to our province's economic health.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, projects like these, which create hundreds of jobs each, are going to be the exception and not the rule of the future. The rapid rise of high technology has caused a great shake-up in the world's market-place, plus cutting job positions. Natural resources have become less important, while information, knowledge and high technology have become more important. Small- and medium-sized companies that deal in these areas are springing up all over the world. And they, Mr. Speaker, are the driving force behind the world economy. And they're creating the jobs of tomorrow.

(1115)

It's interesting to note that this is happening in countries like Japan, West Germany. And in these countries they have very powerful economies. And if we want to participate in this new market-place, we must try to encourage high technology companies.

I am pleased to say that we have already started doing just that. In Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, almost 100 high technology companies have been set up since 1982, creating some 3,000 new jobs. People across the world are discovering Saskatchewan's high technology companies, companies that are already making their contribution to our province's future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government has created closely with these companies and with other groups active in high technology research, through the university research councils in particular. They told us that we were headed in the right direction, and our efforts are to diversify the economy. They also told us that we need to train more people and work in the new technologies of today. They said we need people that can work with computers, we need people that are familiar with biotechnology and, I should say, more people, Mr. Speaker. Our province's education system has trained many young men and women in the technologies of the future, but we still need more.

Our government saw the need to re-focus the province's education system. Government revenues being what they are, we must deliver the most effective, efficient, and

relative adult education system that we can possibly do. That means concentrating our resources so that excellence can be delivered from each and every educational institution in our province. That means changing our educational priorities so that programs being offered reflect the needs of our province today and in the future.

Mr. Speaker, our government worked hard to ensure that our post-secondary education system reflects the province's needs. We have built new technical institutes and expanded others. We have added on to our universities and we have begun the process of getting them ready for the 21st century through initiatives like university renewal and the development fund.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the Finance minister's recent budget presentation, our government's efforts to continue this process of building our education system for the future, we've outlined once again. We will continue to make our universities and our technical institutes more effective and more efficient. We are restructuring our community colleges into nine regional colleges which will have a new mandate, concentrating on skill training and a university extension program.

Mr. Speaker, we are combining our four technical institutes and four urban community colleges into a super institute with increased specialization on each campus.

Mr. Speaker, we are taking action now so that our province will have the trained young men and women it needs to build and diversify in the future. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the education system will adapt and rise to the challenge of training these young people, just as Saskatchewan's people have proven equal to the challenges of years gone by. That is why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am proud to second this motion. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am very pleased to be able to rise and to enter the debate on this motion. And I can only say that here is a government completely out of touch with reality, self-enamoured with themselves and, I say, with a lot of gall to come to this House with the state of the economy and what they're doing to young people and to working people in this province, and to start to pat themselves on the back for a wonderful job.

I want to take a look at the reality of the situation in Saskatchewan today. And I want to say that if you take a look at the fiscal management of the government opposite, we have seen that over a five-year period a decimation of this province's fiscal management. We have seen a government over five years increase the gross debt of this province to \$10 billion. They have increased the consolidated debt to \$3.4 billion. They have heaped upon the people of this province accumulated interest payments, every year, of \$294 million. And they come into this legislature and they say they're patting themselves on the back for the wonderful job they did.

Well I'll say, if that was real, today we wouldn't have seen what we saw in the House here today, one of the

members walking away from the mess and the sinking ship that exists across the way.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, they have put this province into fiscal collapse. We have become now a slave to the bond dealers, the banks, and the multinational corporations.

At one time, when they took office, this province was in one of the best financial shapes of any province in Canada. We had the lowest per capita debt in Canada. We had the lowest taxation on our citizens across Canada. I want to say that the economic growth outstripped any other province in Canada. That is what they took, and with a surplus of \$139 million. And they're patting themselves on the back and they've said, we've done a wonderful job for the people of Saskatchewan by placing this burden of fiscal mismanagement on the backs of the taxpayers of ordinary citizens of Saskatchewan.

And I want to say, there's another aspect to this government. Not only fiscal mismanagement, but there's a philosophy about the birds across the way. I'll tell you that they are not prepared to use every economic tool for the development of this province. They are in a strait-jacket; they worship at the altar of so-called free enterprise; they are guided, as I said before, by the Fraser Institute centred in Vancouver. That is who's drawing the blueprints for the people across the way.

I can say to you, Mr. Speaker, that in order to have an economic development here in Saskatchewan, what we have to do is use all the tools available to us. And that's what we did in the past.

I'll tell you, what we need is public investment, we need private investment, we need co-operative investment, we need joint ventures. We cannot go into a strait-jacketed tunnel vision of handing over our assets to multinational corporations.

And let's take a look at the evidence of some of their great diversification, as they call it. What diversification resulted from handing over a coal-mine to Manalta Coal? What diversification and what benefit to the people of Saskatchewan? None at all.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, wasn't that a great transaction of diversification when they handed over a pulp mill, worth \$248 million, without even a cent paid to the people of this province? That's what they did with Weyerhaeuser. And they call it diversification.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that one of their friends came in from Edmonton, Peter Pocklington — Gainers. And they set up a plant over in North Battleford. But I'll tell you, if the facts were known, Peter Pocklington didn't put up a cent. The taxpayers of Saskatchewan financed that operation for him, and in fact paid him for creating jobs at the rate of some \$11,000 is what was paid for every job created. Great diversification if you're a Tory and you want hand-outs. They're doing fine; business is good, as usual.

And I want to also indicate that there is other diversification, not helping the small business men

throughout Saskatchewan who are the heavy employers of young people in this province. But no, the multinational corporations, they set up a design of handing out to Peter Pocklington and sending out to Weyerhaeuser. And other multinational corporations have said to them, we want a hand-out too, or we're going to leave the province.

Well let's take a look at some of the evidence. And I have a letter here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and this is their diversification method. It really benefits because it's the taxpayers' money again.

And here's a letter to the vice-president and general manager of Canada Packers Incorporated: "I am pleased," — and this is a letter from the Minister of Economic Development and Trade and I'll read it in part — "I am pleased to enclose a cheque for \$1 million."

A grant to Canada Packers, \$1 million. And they call that diversification. A million dollar grant, but they cut the school facilities, they cut the courses, they fired teachers. But they got a million dollars for their corporate friends.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and one of the gems of their great diversification is when they came to this legislature and they said, what we got to do is give the people of Saskatchewan an opportunity to participate, and we had Saskoil. And two years ago we came into this legislature and Saskoil had made for the people of this province \$4 million : — \$44 million in profit that could go into providing programs. And in their blind dedication to right-wing philosophy they said, we're going to let the people of Saskatchewan who already own it — it's their Crown corporation — we're going to let them participate.

And so what they did is sold off shares. Well the people of Saskatchewan didn't participate, my friends across the way. Out of the shares that were sold in Saskoil, the amount, 75 per cent of all the shares in Saskoil, both common and preferred, are owned out of Saskatchewan. That's diversification all right.

And you know, as soon as they privatized Saskoil, do you know what happened? Saskoil packed up, laid off people in Saskatchewan and said, we're heading for Alberta to develop oil. Great strategists, there. Really diversified. You should be proud of yourself.

And then I want to relate, prior to the last election, boy did they want Quill Lakes. And they came out to Quill Lakes, and they announced that they were going to have a potassium sulphate plant. And they had great big headlines. There were going to be a lot of people working there — 150 people in construction. And they set it out . . .

An Hon. Member: — Are you against that?

Mr. Koskie: — No, I'm not against it. But I'm against your hypocrisy and the way in which you try to bluff the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — And what they announced just prior to the election, that it was going to employ 75 permanent

people, there was going to be 150 people in the construction. They had researched the markets. This was diversification. Well they hadn't. It was one of these promises that they made before the election. Headlines, but no substance, because when we look at what they did in respect to it ...Here is a recent indication of where this is going. As I said, it was to employ 75 people, it was to produce 300,000 tonnes a year of potassium sulphate. Well the recent announcement is that it's going to scale down a little, but the plant will only employ now 9 people — a loss of 4 from what they initially had at the pilot project, of 13. And they're going to be producing something like 10 tonnes a day. And this is their great diversification that they indicated prior to the election . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — I must interrupt the member from Quill Lakes now. The 10 minutes have expired.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kopelchuk: — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to speak to this motion. It is a motion which, I believe, deserves the full support of this legislature. Essentially, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the motion recognizes the need for our province to move forward, and it recognizes the government's success in helping the province move forward.

In my constituency, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a small but very beautiful village called Endeavour. That community was named as a symbol of the people's willingness and determination to move forward, to expand their opportunities and to provide opportunity for their children.

(1130)

And the people of that community, and indeed of all of that Canora constituency, Mr. Deputy Speaker, continue to endeavour. They want this government to endeavour as well. They want to feel confidence for the future even, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when some of them have their backs to the wall, with low prices for their grain, and poor income because farm sales are down.

They do not say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, oh, times are tough, so let's forget about the future. The people in my riding are wiser and more visionary than that. What they do say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is how can we try to make sure that our children grow old? They won't be tied to the same ...so that they won't be tied to the same forces that we are. How can we try to build a future that is more secure from the cycles of international prices? How can we prepare ourselves and our children for the new opportunities that must be created.

And they know the answers, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They know that it is vital that this province diversify its economy, upgrade its skills, and get in tune with the 1990s and beyond. That is why the people of the Canora constituency support this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because it is renewing and diversifying and upgrading.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the past five years more economic diversification has occurred in this province than perhaps in any five-year period before in our history, certainly

more than has ever happened under 11 years of the government of the NDP.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've heard some of the members opposite question the diversification that has taken place. In fact, I believe it was the member for Riversdale who asked, where's the benefit? The implication was that the development was benefiting friends of the government, and if the NDP had their way, either these things would be owned by the government, or they would not happen.

Well first of all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a strange idea that the only way that this province can benefit is if the government owns the thing. Now I am not claiming that that is exactly what was said, but there was certainly the implication — where's the benefit.

Or, as the member from Regina North West asked in this Assembly, who really benefits? Then he launched into an attack upon the oil companies and Weyerhaeuser and the North Battleford bacon plant and so on. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I really think these people don't know. They really don't know where the benefit is.

Why don't they visit Wolseley and ask the people working at the Canapharm facility, where's the benefit? Why don't they ask the union workers building the Co-op upgrader, and maybe also ask the Co-op members, where's the benefit? Why don't they, Mr. Deputy Speaker, ask pork producers and the people of North Battleford about the bacon plant, where's the benefit?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is really amazing. The NDP demand we create jobs. They demand that we do something to turn the economy around. The jobs are being created, and the process of building the economy is going full steam ahead. And what do they do? They ask, where's the benefit?

That tells you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, exactly where their minds are at. Well, we have to diversify. The people of Canora surely support those efforts. They do not expect it to happen like magic. They do not live in a dream world where government is expected to replace God in performing miracles. But they expect government to endeavour, Mr. Deputy Speaker — to endeavour to do more with less, to endeavour to bring new industry and new technology and new knowledge to our province and to our people. And a political party that will not endeavour to build the future of this province will be relegated to this province's past by the people of Canora.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do face some difficult decisions in preparing for the future. I can tell you that it does not make me particularly happy that some people who are teaching outdated courses, or who have positions that have become redundant in the new Saskatchewan, are asked to find new jobs. It is never pleasant to leave the security of your old job and have to seek a new one. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it has to be done.

We must renew our educational system. That includes bringing together all the resources of all our separate technical institutes. It means forging them together into one strong, province-wide educational facility that can

deliver the needed skills and knowledge to our people. It means taking resources that have been going toward duplicating programs here and there, and using those resources to provide excellence instead of duplication. It means, Mr. Deputy Speaker, having the courage to say yes, change is necessary.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kopelchuk: — And you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? This government has had the courage. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is like a man who has walked down the same path every day to a stream. On the way to the stream he passes by another path, but he never goes down that path. He isn't sure what lies along that way, and besides there's no real reason to go down that path until, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the stream goes dry.

Now that man has two choices. He can, Mr. Deputy Speaker, go down that other path in search of water. It would take him some courage, and it might even require that he be a bit adventurous, but he will either take that path, or he will lay down and die.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of this province are not ready to lay down. Times have changed, and they will even change more. Our stream of revenues from resources has dried up. The output from our educational institutions is not up to par, but we are not going to give up easily. We are going to take another path, the path of diversification, the path of new knowledge, the path that leads us forward into the next century, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kopelchuk: — And I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I invite the members across the way to join us on that journey. Because if they hang back they will find that they have also passed up their only opportunity. It is not inevitable, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They can join with us and join with the people of Saskatchewan in coming forward with new solutions and new approaches. They can give up that attitude that was displayed so sadly during the budget debate, that attitude of no change, no new ideas.

I know they can do it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if they really try, because they are still Saskatchewan people. But I am not hopeful that they will even try, and because of that this province will be forced to leave them behind as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, while we face difficult times, this motion and the substance of this debate, at least as far as you've heard from this side, proves that there's still much more to be excited about, much to be proud of, and much yet to be done. I am proud, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to be part of that, and I assure you that I will be supporting this motion.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to take part in this debate. At a time this debate

comes, and the motion that the government members opposite are moving to praise the government for its initiatives in creating jobs for young people, comes at a time when we have record youth unemployment in this province, Mr. Speaker.

This resolution comes at a time when we have 14 per cent unemployment among Saskatchewan young people. It comes during a year when in the first five months of this year, Mr. Speaker, 5,000 young people left Saskatchewan, looking for work outside the province because the employment opportunities in Saskatchewan were so dismal.

This resolution, Mr. Speaker, comes at a time when, in comparison with June of last year, 6,000 fewer people, fewer young people, are working in June of this year than were working in June of last year, Mr. Sapper. Now I say to the members opposite, and to the people of Saskatchewan, how can we have a government come forward with a resolution praising their efforts for creating employment for youth with those kind of statistics before us, Mr. Speaker? I say that this resolution smacks of hypocrisy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to specifically focus on some of the comments that were made by members opposite with respect to creating new training opportunities for young people. The members opposite claim that young people are going to be able to capture new opportunities from the consolidation that they're undertaking of our technical institute courses. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that that's simply not the case.

What they've done, in fact, is they have eliminated 1,150 spaces from our technical institutes — 1,150 fewer opportunities for education this year than there were last year, and hundreds of young people having to leave Saskatchewan, because not only can they not find a job, but they can't even find an educational opportunity in one of our institutions. Not only have you closed the technical institutes to hundreds of young Saskatchewan people, but you're also now saying, as a result of your funding cuts to the two universities, that there's going to be fewer spaces on the university campuses for young people as well.

For the first time in the history of Saskatchewan, we're seeing an enrolment quota on the College of Arts and Science at the University of Saskatchewan, for instance, Mr. Speaker. Those are the kinds of cuts in opportunities that we're seeing, and they fly in the face of the resolution that the members opposite are advocating.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are claiming that there is going to be new opportunities for young people to take part in economic diversification. If that's the case, why are they cutting things like truck driver training and heavy equipment operation courses from STI in Moose Jaw? Why are they cutting accounting, business programming, and dental therapy at Wascana? Why are they cutting office education, eliminating the certified nursing assistants' course, eliminating the dental assistants' course from Kelsey? Why are they virtually eliminating the agricultural machinery technology course at Kelsey? Don't these courses fit into the plans

that members opposite have for diversification? I say they ought to. Why are they being eliminated?

Now, Mr. Speaker, what we're seeing as a result of the overall economic strategy of this government is not more opportunities for manufacturing and business in this province, but less. And I want to give a couple of examples.

In 1982, for instance, members opposite claimed, under the slogan, Saskatchewan open for business, that they were going to create hundreds of new manufacturing plants in this province. There were 1,500 manufacturers operating in Saskatchewan in 1982, Mr. Speaker. Today, in 1987, there is just over 1,000. We've lost over 450 manufacturers in Saskatchewan between 1982 and now ...and you call that economic diversification. I say it's not, Mr. Speaker.

They claim, Mr. Speaker, that they wanted to increase the number of manufacturing opportunities in this province, and they set up a number of programs in 1985 that they claimed would do that. They created the employment development fund; they created the industrial incentives program; they used that industrial incentives program to facilitate new jobs being established by their friends like Peter Pocklington in North Battleford. And they claim, Mr. Speaker, that there would be new manufacturing opportunities created through these funds.

Well in 1987 we see the elimination of the industrial incentives fund. We don't hear anything about the employment development fund any more. Those programs that you set up in 1985 are now gone in 1987. The very pillars of your program for economic diversification have just been dismantled in the 1987 budget.

That's the facts, Mr. Speaker. And I want to close, Mr. Speaker, by pointing to the forest industry in northern Saskatchewan as an example of what could be done in terms of economic diversification. What have members opposite chosen to do with respect to PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp Company). They've chosen to give away a public asset that had been virtually fully paid for by the people of this province : — worth \$350 million. They chose, Mr. Speaker, to give that way. They chose to give that way for not a penny in the form of a down payment; for no provisions for annual interest payments; for no provisions for annual principle payment s: —except for half a million dollars each year. No provisions at all, Mr. Speaker.

(1145)

Instead, Mr. Speaker, what could they have done? What they could have done, Mr. Speaker, is undertaken a program of intensive forest management in northern Saskatchewan. They could have opened up the opportunity for small contractors throughout the North and the area around Prince Albert to bid on opportunities for logging and forest contracting in our northern communities, Mr. Speaker. They could have made available opportunities for small contractors in communities like Pinehouse to become more involved in harvesting the forest around their community, Mr.

Speaker.

They could have undertaken a number of small-scale economic development initiatives in the forest industry that, added together, could have created several hundred new jobs in this province. They could have moved towards the kind of model that we see in Sweden, where the forest ...where we have an excellent example of reforestation, intensive forest management. What do they do instead of increasing reforestation? They cut the reforestation budget by at least 50 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

Now what they've done then is instead of harvesting a resource, preserving a resource, initiating reforestation, pursuing conservation, decentralizing the forest industry, and creating new opportunities for small contractors, they've centralized their activities. They've essentially handed the forest industry over to Weyerhaeuser corporation of Tacoma, Washington, to run as they see fit. And in addition to giving away the resource, they've promised Weyerhaeuser that they'll get \$9 million a year from the province of Saskatchewan to build roads in the North, at public expense.

Now that's the kind of economic diversification that we can't afford in this province. That's not an example of diversification; that's an example, Mr. Speaker, of the centralization of power in the hands of one multinational, instead of the forest industry belonging to the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — And I say, Mr. Speaker, I say that that's a prime example of the kind of policy that this government has pursued.

So what do we see in closing, Mr. Speaker? We see an example of a government that has only diversified and expanded in one area, and that is diversification and expansion of our public debt, Mr. Speaker — our public debt. We now have a situation where every family of four is having to pay \$1,200 a year in interest just to finance the debt. And every family of four is now \$13,600 in debt, just as a result of the last five years of this government's operation.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that's the only example of diversification and expansion that we've seen in the economic history of this province over the last five years, and therefore I'll be voting against the resolution, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLaren: — Than you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I, too, want to join with my colleagues from Pelly and Canora and join in this debate on diversification in the past four or five years.

The policy of this government with regard to diversification, especially during these difficult times, is one that should make every member of this Assembly proud. That policy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, talks to all about what is best about our province and our people. It marks a genuine departure from the past and a bold step into the

future.

Past governments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have always looked inward, and especially the NDP and their socialist attitude. They have avoided bringing in new ideas or new ways of doing things. Even today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we see that old head-in-the-sand attitude reflected in the politicians of the NDP opposite. We look back to what happened to the dinosaur. The dinosaur didn't change, and he disappeared from this earth. And the farmers, back many years ago, hooked up a plough and some horses and did their farming. We can't do that in today's society. Things have changed. Farming practices have changed.

They say, please do not change anything. They believe that Saskatchewan could or should try to remain isolated in this world, and the only ideas they want to bring in from outside is from Sweden. This government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will not allow the world full of opportunity and with its fair share of risks — we will not allow the world to pass Saskatchewan by.

We look for co-operation and team-work among all people to help us build the future. And we know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the goals of a more diversified economy and a modern education system are not easy goals. They are especially not easy goals for a government that is facing the most difficult economic situation since the Dirty Thirties. We all are acutely aware of the dramatic decline in the prices of our grains and our oil and our uranium and our lumber, and so on.

I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I am aware of the hardship that farm families are facing in this province. I was born and raised on the farm, and my younger brother is still farming the family farm. I am aware of the distress in the minds of this province as falling prices threaten jobs and futures. And my own company that I worked with for 31 years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is today shut down — 400 people without jobs in the community of Yorkton. But do I hear any snivelling or tears being expressed from the members' opposite? No it's because it's in the private sector, that's why.

Leon's manufacturing, same thing. They've got people laid off. You can talk to Degelman's, you can talk to all the farm machinery manufacturers. They're having difficult times because we are having to depend on agriculture. And it's time that we broadened our blinders and our blinkers and saw what diversification can do for us in this province.

And I am aware, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of the expectation that government gets its house in order and conducts itself in a responsible and fair fashion. But with that awareness, Mr. Deputy Speaker, comes a certainty that diversification is an absolute necessity. Diversification is the opportunity to be free of wildly fluctuating prices for basic resources. Diversification is the opportunity to provide our children with the best skills and the most current knowledge available. Diversification, Mr. Speaker, is our insurance policy to ensure that all of our programs or protection, from health care to interest rate protection — can be maintained and developed far into the future.

Some people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, talk about diversification as if all it meant was finding someone to invest money in a business. But I suggest to you that it means a great deal more than that. It means creating the infrastructure and educational facilities to make new enterprises possible and probable. It means initiatives like the new Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology. It means creative vehicles for improving access to knowledge. It means innovating systems to bring our rural communities in closer touch with the rest of the world. It means, Mr. Deputy Speaker, adjusting the whole range of policies and institutions that impact upon our economy, to get them working together and efficiently. And this government has created a plan and a policy that accomplishes just those things, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that is why I'm proud to speak in favour of this motion.

I mentioned the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Technology and Science. It is another example of this government's commitment to protecting the future of its people. The entire program this government is developing in education is an ambitious and thoughtful one. The new province-wide institute will provide a new capability for teachers all over the province to be aware of developments elsewhere. It will allow a co-ordination of effort in our technical educational system that was not even conceived before now. It will create the critical mass to generate exciting new ideas and ambitious new projects.

It will, in short, Mr. Deputy Speaker, mean Saskatchewan will have a technical education system that is as good as anywhere in the world. It has meant that some redundant or out-of-date courses have been dropped. And I am not confident, for example, that government will continue to fund the teaching of basket weavers through the technical institute. I question whether or not you will find courses for quilting or needle-point. And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, a lot of the ladies in my riding could teach some of the teachers how to do those things better than they know it themselves.

The point is that classes like that are from another time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They have their place in the recreational life of our province. But they are not the be-all of our rural people, and they do not make a major contribution toward the economic opportunities of the students learning. It may be that there is a nostalgic sense when we think about such things. But the truth remains that, if we wish to train our people to be successful in the 1990s and beyond, we will be training them in new skills.

I know the people in Yorkton want to have access to higher education, and they want their children to be able to learn new skills, like the use of computers, just as much as city people want these things for their children. And it is a positive step, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to see that the government has established an education outreach fund to provide the delivery of university classes to our smaller centres.

Now members opposite will say that the people of Yorkton had access to university courses before this program. And it is true, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they could travel to Regina or Saskatoon to enter university.

But what if, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you held a job, and you just wanted to take one class each school term toward enhancing your knowledge? Well then you did not have access to the higher educational facilities unless you lived in one of those two major cities, and that is where your job was located. Otherwise, you just had to go on without the benefit of university training.

That will now change. I also am especially pleased at the steps being taken toward the development of an educational television network that will have the capability to deliver educational courses right into the homes of my constituents, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Perhaps more than any other program televised, education may revolutionize our educational system.

I would just like to talk a little bit about the diversification that has happened in our province. And it appals me to hear the members talking about Peter Pocklington. Peter Pocklington, that's all I've heard for the last year. Let me tell the members opposite, when they are ready to do and build the cut-and-kill plant, the member from Yorkton and his council will be doing everything possible to get that plant to Yorkton, Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLaren: — You make it sound like a great big give-away. He got a loan, just the same as any member opposite could have got a loan to start up an enterprising project. But they wouldn't do that, no. They don't believe in that kind of thing. He borrowed the money. He's going to have to pay it back to Sedco. To get the balance of his money he had to perform, he had to create jobs before he got another penny. He's no different than anybody else in this province . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — Order, please. The member's time has run out.

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to join in this debate. Let me begin by saying that from my perspective, the objective of diversification for Saskatchewan is something which all governments of all political ideology and strife have adhered to in the past. Obviously we want to get away from the dependency on resources, on agriculture, to move beyond that straight primary processing, primary industrial base, into a secondary and secondary manufacturing mode.

We've seen over the history of Saskatchewan and western Canada, the attempt by political parties, as I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, regardless of political ideology, to achieve the question of diversification, to achieve that objective.

But it's not easy, sir, to get diversification accomplished in Saskatchewan or indeed in western Canada. The obstacles are formidable. The obstacles of geography, which obviously immediately raises the question of transportation and transportation costs. The question of population and market size. We are only 1 million people or less in Saskatchewan and we therefore don't have the

kind of markets which other Canadians in other areas, notably central Canadians, eastern Canadians, have. Climate. A domination of the resource mentality. The idea of agriculture, and oil mining, potash, and the like have dominated much of what we've attempted to do from an economic diversification standpoint.

(1200)

So the thrust of all political parties has been diversification, but it's not been a very easy task to achieve. In fact, Mr. Speaker, why I oppose this resolution is because this government is approaching this formidable and worthwhile objective from the wrong point of view totally. In order to achieve this objective, there is a requirement, and indeed a demand I would argue, for a concerted game plan on the part of provincial and federal governments to make sure that the diversification thrust in fact does achieve success.

And in that regard the objective has to be an objective to build up Saskatchewan business, and Saskatchewan business in areas which are indigenous to the Saskatchewan economic circumstances; how we can get secondary manufacturing and secondary processing off agriculture, off the main resource areas, and to a number of areas which are indigenous to this region, to this province. In effect, if you will, Mr. Speaker, this is perhaps a narrow and somewhat chauvinistic point of view, but I would argue a Saskatchewan-first basis.

The provincial government and the federal government have failed in this objective because there has not been this concerted game plan. Federally, we've had very little bit of an assist from them with respect to diversification. The most notable example of in effect, no help, but perhaps even a direct slap to western Canadians, was the CF-18 fiasco. Here was an attempt where the federal government could have helped us to diversify, not directly Saskatchewan but the western Canadian prairie basin, by a CF-18 decision to which all the economic and political indicators pointed to Manitoba. But indeed, as we all know, it went elsewhere.

In effect, federally the PC policies of the Prime Minister I think have been an abject failure of stimulating regional economic development generally. I think this is reflected now by the discontent in the polls. In fact I would even go so far as to say, Mr. Speaker, that there has been an abject failure because there has been no policy or no concerted game plan.

Provincially the same results are available for all of us to see. In Saskatchewan, provincially, in order to overcome these formidable obstacles of geography and climate and markets and distance and all the things I identified at the beginning of my brief remarks this morning, sir, in order to overcome them, we require an economic thrust which has a proper mix of private enterprise, a support for small business and private enterprise in Saskatchewan – something that I encourage; with public enterprise in limited and carefully selected areas – something which I also encourage; and of course the other component which is important in Saskatchewan terms, the

co-operative sector.

It is a proper mix of those three which permit the province of Saskatchewan to strike out on its own on a diversification policy. It's when we, sir, throw these three components into disjunction, when we allow one of them to predominate the other two, or a combination thereof, that the very difficult business of overcoming these obstacles is in effect made all the more difficult and more impossible to achieve.

And what we've seen by the Devine administration – or I take that back, Mr. Speaker – by the Premier and his administration, mindful of your ruling, is an imbalance predicated on an emphasis on free enterprise which is not indigenous to Saskatchewan. This is a mix or a diversification thrust which in effect is based on hauling into Saskatchewan the large free enterprisers outside of this province. Thus the emphasis on the Pocklington plant at North Battleford. We know all about that, by the way, funded by government money. Thus the emphasis on the Weyerhaeuser and the paper plant expansion.

This is a megaproject policy which is based on ignoring in effect the small Saskatchewan entrepreneur. In fact those diversification thrusts which have succeeded, essentially have succeeded because this government has pumped in millions of dollars into the limited projects which we have seen.

I can go down the list: the Pocklington proposal, Weyerhaeuser, proposed Estevan power development, and so it goes. There has been virtually no success whatsoever in the absence of a large amount of public taxpayers' funds going into the pockets directly of the large entrepreneurs.

And the result I think, Mr. Speaker, is plain for everybody to see. Saskatchewan small business has been ignored. Everywhere that I go in my law practice, everywhere that I go in my political contacts. Saskatchewan business men say that they are disillusioned with the administration that is currently in power, both provincially and federally. In effect it's summarized, Mr. Speaker, in these terms: everything for the big fellows; nothing for us as the small Saskatchewan business men. And in effect that's the result. The result is that they are facing economic hardships and the inevitable bankruptcies.

I have here in front of me, Mr. Speaker – time does not permit – a documentation of four pages, four pages, sir, of Saskatchewan business, a lot of it indigenous, local to this province, a lot of it built up through the hard sweat and work and risk taking of business men in our province. Bankruptcies, gone up because of the inattention of this government, the preoccupation with the administration to larger megaprojects or, if you will, to large private enterprises from outside the province of Saskatchewan.

We see it statistically in another way. The number of new businesses as a percentage of total businesses in Saskatchewan has decreased sharply since 1982. In 1982 it was approximately 11 per cent, the new businesses of the total small businesses. In the last year it is virtually in a minus position.

Take a look at all of the indicators tabled by the Minister of Finance in his own budget a few days ago. Those show a sharp decrease in GDP, in housing starts, in private starts, business starts, and on it goes – private investment. These are all on a very precipitous slide downwards.

And so the record, I would argue, sir, of this administration has been bluntly abysmal because it's pumped all of its money into the large corporations and has ignored the Saskatchewan small-business men. The facts speak for themselves in that regard.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, this policy is in effect a harkening back to an old bygone era. Back in the 1930s, back in the 1940s, this large megaproject approach was what dominated. It was only after co-operatives in the public sector and Saskatchewan private small business got together that the ability to diversify took real meaning. And what this administration is doing, sir, is throwing us back to another Dark Ages period – throwing us back to that point where in fact the entrepreneur of Saskatchewan is shrinking, and this province is shrinking in terms of population, in terms of economic clout and, accordingly, political clout.

And there is one other very ominous cloud on the horizon, which I think is part of this negative approach, and that is free trade. The members opposite talked about diversification in the sense of being outreach to the international community. With that I agree. But what this Premier and what this government federally has done, is that it's hitched their star, our star, inevitably to one country only – the United States. Diversification has meant, for them, unification with the United States. And all that that means, sir, is even a further unalterable locking it to the pattern of very large business taking over Canadian business. And I find that to be unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me pleasure today to enter into this, and speak in favour of this motion. I won't devote any lengthy time to this subject because I'm sure we'll have other motions in this Assembly devoted precisely to this subject, and many other positive subjects.

But I do want to ask the members to seriously think about the implications of our province if we succumb to the hide-from-the-world mentality. All our best efforts at diversification and at education will be wasted if we do not enhance the trade relationships we now enjoy. We will be passing our skills to our children to prepare them for a non-existent market, so I just wanted to ask members to think about that, Mr. Speaker.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I think that the level of rhetoric directed at our business community, at our economic system of small business, big business, co-operatives, the market system, Mr. Speaker, and the rhetoric directed at the members of this Assembly, is not only personally offensive, it is in fact economically harmful.

It says to people who are considering opening a business in Saskatchewan, don't do it or the member from The Battlefords will threaten you. And don't do it because the member from Regina North West will compare you with the Nazis and Hitler. Or don't do it because if you make a profit, the NDP will accuse you of exploitations and oppression. And if you don't make a profit, they'll accuse you of intentionally avoiding taxes.

That is the kind of thing we have been hearing every day in the Chamber, Mr. Speaker, That is reprehensible on a personal level, and it is obvious. I think the fact that it is detrimental to the future of the economic development of our province bore stating in this debate.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate to you that I can personally speak on behalf of my constituency, a constituency that has refused to take part in the hard economic times that this administration has had to face over the past four and five years. We have not ... This government has not had an easy year. We have had to meet many, many disasters head on, and to carry and help the people come through this hard economic past. We are, indeed, Mr. Speaker, showing and developing the path . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Time has elapsed for the debate.

MOTIONS

Resolution No. 1 – Changes in Canadian Patient Legislation Affecting the Price of Drugs

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to join in the debate on this motion. The federal Conservative government changes to the Patent Act provisions regarding medical drugs are extremely important, and at the end of my remarks I will be moving the following motion:

That this Assembly condemn the Government of Canada for proposed changes to Canadian patient legislation which will limit the development of low-cost, generic prescription drugs for low-income families, the sick and the elderly.

Mr. Speaker, this decision of the federal government will significantly affect the quality and accessibility of health care available to millions of Canadians.

Saskatchewan New Democrats have a proud tradition when it comes to medicare, for it was our CCF government, under the leadership of Tommy Douglas, that implemented Canada's first public hospitalization insurance plan in 1946, and Mr. Speaker, this first implementation happened in Saskatchewan. It was also a New Democrat government, under Woodrow Lloyd, that implemented the first public medicare insurance plan in 1962, and tomorrow we will celebrate the 25th anniversary of that plan.

And it was interesting, Mr. Speaker, I sent over some pins recognizing the 25th anniversary of medicare, and very

few people, very few members across the way chose to put them on. And I think that indicates to the people of this province where the commitment lies when it comes to medicare.

And it was also, Mr. Speaker, a New Democrat government, under the leadership of Allan Blakeney, that implemented Canada's first comprehensive public drug plan in 1974. And tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, that comprehensive drug plan will be a historical fact, because it will no longer be in existence.

It was through the pioneering efforts of CCF and New Democrat governments in Saskatchewan that Canadians have developed a high-quality health care system built on the principles of universality, accessibility, and affordability. But, Mr. Speaker, these principles, these very important fundamental principles are now under attack. Instead of going beyond medicare, the members opposite are going backwards. They're not Progressive Conservatives, they're regressive Conservatives.

(1215)

A distinct feature of our medicare system that is consistent with the principles of accessibility and affordability and universality has been the widespread availability of low-cost, generic drugs. Their widespread availability and their benefits have been possible by the provisions of the Patent Act.

And so, therefore, it's a great disappointment to the people of this province that the federal Conservatives changed the Patent Act provisions, and it was even a more important disappointment, a more devastating disappointment, that the members opposite chose to endorse those changes to the Patent Act.

I'd contend, Mr. Speaker, that universality, accessibility, and affordability are an essential component of medicare, particularly when it comes to drugs. Undermining that component, Mr. Speaker, is a direct assault on medicare. But that doesn't seem to be anything new for the provincial Conservatives these days. Here we are, we have a party that in 1982 said that they would never do anything to undermine medicare. In 1986 they said the same thing. They said medicare was sacrosanct.

But what are they doing? Let me talk about what they're doing. On July 1, tomorrow, when most citizens in this province will be celebrating the 25th anniversary of medicare, we will no longer have the drug plan that we had – a drug plan that we've had since 1974. That drug plan, Mr. Speaker, allowed Saskatchewan people, regardless of economic circumstance, regardless of health problems to have access to drugs. They didn't have to worry about affording 20 or 30 or 50 or \$300 a month. All they had to do was come up with \$3.95 in a dispensing fee and they had access to those drugs.

But what will happen tomorrow? Tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, we will have to come up with the money up front, and that has serious implications for people who are sick, for people who are poor, for people on fixed incomes, and for senior citizens. But do these people care? They don't.

It was interesting, Mr. Speaker, about two weeks ago in question period I asked the Premier of the province whether he realized that people – many on fixed incomes, particularly senior citizens – would have to come up with more than \$300 a month to pay for their drugs, money that they'd have to take out of their old age pension and supplement, and perhaps go without some of the necessary things of life, like eating.

He said, tell me the name of the doctor; give me the name of the pharmacy, and I'll talk to them. Well, Mr. Speaker, that did not ease the fear of that particular senior citizen couple. Because, Mr. Speaker, they have to have those drugs. The Premier of the province, talking to the doctor or talking to the pharmacist, is not going to change the fact, the reality, that those people must have their drugs in order to survive. They have heart conditions, they have arthritis, they have high blood pressure, and numerous other ailments.

And I thought, Mr. Speaker, that as a result of the debate on the budget and some of the comments that were coming from this bench and some of the letters that were sent to the Premier and the Minister of Health, that there might be a faint hope, a faint hope that these people would rescind their decision to introduce the drug plan changes and introduce a deductible system. But we haven't seen that forthcoming.

And then, Mr. Speaker, last Friday, a week ago, we introduced a petition bearing more than 15,000 signatures – petition that was put together in less than nine days. And I thought, Mr. Speaker, based on the dental workers coming to the legislature and the outpouring of letters from people around this province and the signatures of thousands of people, and even the Regina Public School board indicating to the government that they want that dental plan in Saskatchewan schools and in Regina schools, I thought they might change their mind. But they haven't.

And I think it's fairly indicative of a government that it doesn't matter what the people of Saskatchewan say to them, it doesn't matter how loud the voices are, or how loud the concern is, this government simply does not listen, and it simply does not care.

And we've had other attacks on medicare in recent days. Mr. Speaker, I represent a constituency where there are a large number of senior citizens and a large number of disabled people, a large number of sick people. And those people have come to rely on home care, not as the only source of their care, because their families are intimately involved in their care, but families need relief, and home care has provided a valuable support system to families of disabled and elderly people.

Mr. Speaker, senior citizens and disabled people were shocked, absolutely shocked, when the government of Saskatchewan decided to increase home care fees by 66 per cent. It's a big fee increase.

And, Mr. Speaker, the interesting thing is that in the past, home care boards, in consultation with the government and their association, they have been the ones that have

decided what fee increases there would be.

And once again, Mr. Speaker, the government of Saskatchewan chose not to consult with the people who are delivering this service, and arbitrarily increased the fees by 66 per cent to the disabled and elderly population in this province. Mr. Speaker, my fear is that people will not be able to maintain themselves in their own home because they won't have the support, and they will end up in nursing homes.

I want to talk about nursing home fee increases because it's another example of how this government has chosen to undermine medicare. Mr. Speaker, once again, the Government of Saskatchewan, in an arbitrary fashion, decided to increase nursing home fees by 15 per cent or \$73 per month. And the government said senior citizens and disabled people don't need more than \$100 a month for personal necessities, that we've given them enough; that's enough.

But, Mr. Speaker, I've had a number of senior citizens and a number of people in nursing homes contact me saying that they will no longer be able to afford Christmas presents and birthday presents for their grandchildren; that they'll no longer be able to afford the odd new dress or the odd new shirt; and that they will be relegated to staying in the nursing home and not being able to get out, because they won't have any new clothes, and they won't be able to provide Christmas presents and birthday presents to the grandchildren. And I think that's an absolute hypocrisy, and it attacks the fundamentals of medicare in this province.

And then we have the chiropractors, Mr. Speaker, we have on numerous occasions . . .

Mr. Speaker: — I'd like to draw the attention of the member from Saskatoon Nutana to the motion:

That this Assembly condemn the Government of Canada for proposed changes to Canadian patent legislation, etc., etc.

I'm afraid what she is discussing now is off the topic, and I would like her to come back to the motion.

Ms. Atkinson: — My apologies, Mr. Speaker. I'm trying to relate how the changes to the Patent Act have undermined medicare, but there's been other instances in the past couple of weeks where medicare has been undermined in this province.

Mr. Speaker, despite the many benefits of the present Patent Act provisions, the federal government is proposing to amend them; in fact, they already have. What they're proposing to do is to reduce the availability of generic drugs by providing an extended period of exclusive patent protection for the benefit of large pharmaceutical companies. And while the rationale for these proposed changes and any possible benefits to Canadians that May be produced are unclear, the likely costs seem clear and quite alarming.

The commission of inquiry concluded that the present Patent Act provisions encouraging the wide-spread

availability of generic drugs saved Canadians, in 1981, \$211 million. Its chief commissioner, Dr. Harry Eastman, has stated unequivocally that the government's proposed Patent Act changes would delay generic competitions for some of the new drugs and, in consequence, delay reduction in their prices which such competition causes.

The Canadian Drug Manufacturing Association has estimated that Canadians will pay an extra \$650 million per year by 1995, including an extra \$26 million per year for Saskatchewan alone, if the proposed changes are implemented — which I understand they will be.

The point here, Mr. Speaker, is this. We have a government that did away with the drug plan. People will have to come up with those costs up front, as a deductible. They'll be reimbursed 80 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

But had this government agreed to oppose the Patent Act changes, that alone would be bad enough. However, Mr. Speaker, because they chose not to agree, they've done away with the drug plan here in Saskatchewan; people in this province will have to pay for their drugs up front, and with changes to the Patent Act they'll have to pay even more.

So instead of families looking at 3 or \$400 a month, Mr. Speaker, it's quite conceivable that they'll have to come up with 5 or \$600 a month because of these changes to the drug patent legislation. And does this government change ...does this government care? Obviously not. Obviously not.

The Progressive Conservative government, over a year ago in Saskatchewan, cautiously estimated that the changes to the Patent Act would cost the prescription drug plan about \$15 million a year — if these changes were passed. And they were very concerned about it.

And it was interesting that last December they came out in favour of those changes, Mr. Speaker. And no wonder. It's not going to cost the provincial treasury any more money. It's going to cost the people of this province more money by increased drug costs. It's going to cost the elderly, the sick, the disabled, people with small children, more money.

And all they're doing is simply removing those added costs from the provincial treasury, where it's all of our collective responsibility to make sure that people don't go without drugs because they don't have the money, to the individual: —onto the backs of the individual. And I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that there are individuals in this province that do not have the money up front to pay for increased costs to drugs. They do not have the money to pay for changes to the government's drug plan. And if people go without drugs, we will see more people in hospitals; we'll see more people in nursing homes because their health is deteriorating. And this government simply does not care.

It's also interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the proposed changes to the Patent Act, which will restrict the availability of generic drugs, would serve as a dangerous precedent in a different area of fundamental importance

to Saskatchewan, and that's agriculture.

Whereas we now have the availability of generic prescription drugs, there is an extended period of patent exclusivity for farm chemicals. For several years, farmers, farm organizations, and others, have sought to reduce this period of farm chemical patent exclusivity, and therefore permit the availability of low-cost generic farm chemicals.

Such changes, Mr. Speaker, were introduced and recommendations were proposed by the member of parliament from Yorkton-Melville, Lorne Nystrom. For almost 20 years Canadians have enjoyed the benefits of low-cost generic prescription drugs. Similar arrangements should also exist for Canadian farmers, so that we could begin to see . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. I really quite fail to see where the issue of generic farm chemicals is related to this particular topic.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, because they come under the provisions of the Patent Act, and I'm talking about the Patent Act.

Mr. Speaker: — We are talking about the Government of Canada for proposed changes to Canadian patent legislation which will limit the development of low-cost generic prescription drugs, not farm chemicals.

Ms. Atkinson: — Anyway, there is a bit of a relationship, and if you'd let me conclude, I'll show you.

The Patent Act changes now being proposed, however, will not only severely curtail the benefits of low-cost generic drugs, but they also make it much more difficult to make future changes, Mr. Speaker, change available to allow for low-cost generic farm chemicals. And for that reason these proposed changes would be an unfortunate and dangerous precedent.

Mr. Speaker, the widespread availability of low-cost generic drugs is an integral component of Canada's high-quality medical care system. That system has been built on the principles of universality and affordability, and it has served Canadians well. But at a time when we should be working together to improve and extend medicare in Canada, we are unfortunately being forced to defend it from erosion and overt attack.

The federal government's changes to the Patent Act constitute just one such erosion of medicare. I've listed the other erosions earlier in my remarks, when it comes to this particular government. These changes will seriously and severely reduce the availability of low-cost generic drugs. They will weaken the fundamental principles of universality and affordability.

I would therefore like to move, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Centre, the following motion:

That this Assembly condemn the Government of Canada for proposed changes to Canadian patent legislation which will limit the development of low-cost generic prescription drugs and thereby

increase the cost of prescription drugs for low-income families, the sick, and the elderly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1230)

Ms. Smart: — I am pleased to rise in support of this motion and second it. I wish that it could have been heard in the House last December when we first submitted it, because it was more important at that time to speak to the issue of condemning the government about the proposed changes in the Patent Act, changes which have now gone before the Senate and are about to become law. But because the legislature was not called back for these many months, we haven't had an opportunity to speak on this issue until now.

I want to speak to it as the critic for Consumer and Commercial Affairs, because it's very much a consumer issue, and because I didn't hear any comments coming from the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Affairs to oppose this legislation when it was brought forward, the federal government. And that's too bad because it's an issue that many, many consumers are very deeply concerned about.

I've listened over the past few days since the budget came down, with some amazement at the way in which the government has been defending its support of medicare, when it's brought in the changes to the drug plan which were inevitable as a result of this Patent Act going through. The Patent Act means that now multinational corporations will be able to produce drugs in Saskatchewan at a much higher price than the generic firms which were operating before. And that higher price is being passed on to the consumer. Obviously something would have to happen, and the drug plan had to change.

It's very unfortunate that the drug plan has had to change. And it's really amazing that the government opposite, which promotes itself as creating positive alternatives and being all for change and wonderful progress, would dismantle the drug plan which has been in effect only for — since 1974. Not so many years, but a very great change when it was developed, and a great possibilities for the future in providing drug care to people at reasonable cost. It's not unusual that the drug plan would come into effect then because that's when drugs were being developed — remarkably, many drugs being developed to help people when they were sick.

And the drug plan came into being as a result of the development of drugs in the medical field, as a way of helping people. And I know in Saskatoon Centre constituency for example, where Crocus co-op operates in support of people who are mentally ill, that drugs have made a tremendous impact on the lives of people with mental problems in helping them to continue to live in the community. And I'm very deeply concerned about what's going to happen to people like that to be able to afford the costs of the drugs that they have to take over periods of time continually. The costs are going to be very high, and they're going to have to continue to have to pay at least 20 per cent of the costs of these expensive drugs, even though they get back 80 per cent at some time in the

future.

But we don't even know when that will be, whether it will be at the end of the year or whether it will be every time they pay for their drugs. A lot of money will have to be available up front for people who are taking drugs, to pay for them before they get anything back from the government, and what they get back from the government will not be by any means the whole cost of drugs. And I know there are many people who are looking at the possibility of having to spend 100 or \$200 a month of their incomes to help themselves to stay well in this society.

In the earlier 1970s it was very interesting for me to be part of a movement in Saskatoon called the Women in Drug Use Society, which started up at that time because one of the groups of people that were being treated for overdose of drugs in the city hospitals were housewives, and they were being treated for prescription drug abuse in the area of valium and librium and the mood modifying drugs that were very popular when they were first developed. And as a result of our group of people talking to the doctors and talking with the consumers, we were able to have a tremendous impact on the use of those drugs and cut them down and cut them back, so that the prescribing of mood modifying drugs did not take place at an accelerating rate.

That was one way of stopping the cost of the drug prescription plan from going up. It was a very useful idea. We had an impact. It's the sort of thing the government could be doing from now on in the future – talking with doctors, talking with consumers about the use of drugs, and helping to control the use of drugs which would then control the price of the drug plan without destroying the drug plan. This is an opportunity that's been missed. It's something that could have been done, and I know from my past experience that it can be a success.

Another thing that could have happened was for the government to oppose the Patent Act being changed, because that would have meant that we could develop generic prescription drugs in Canada – continue to develop them and have them available. Of course the cost of the drug plan is going to go up tremendously with multinational drug companies being involved in the production of drugs under the protection of the Patent Act. They can charge whatever they like herein Canada and we will have to pay for it, and the inability of us to now produce our generic drugs will have tremendous impact.

And I want to link that issue very much to the issue of the development of generic agricultural chemicals, because in the budget speech the government said, we are continuing to support the production of generic agricultural chemicals in Saskatchewan. That's a direct result of the Patent Act which we're now discussing, and it's entirely reasonable to look at what will happen when generic farm chemicals are produced in this country. The cost of farm chemicals will go down.

When we had generic drugs, prescription drugs being produced in this country, the price was lower. Very logical; cause and effect – something that the

government seems to not pay any attention to. You can't have it both ways. You can't support the generic production of agricultural chemicals for a lower cost and at the same time do away and support a government that does away with the production of generic prescription drugs. That's a contradiction that's unacceptable to reasonable people in Saskatchewan. And that's why so many people are opposing this destruction of the drug plan.

Now in question period the other day the Premier told us that if we knew of people who are having difficulties with the drug plan, that we were to get their names and addresses and their stories to him and he would do something about it. I find that completely unacceptable as a prescription of what to do to help people to afford the cost of drugs. We would all have to be going door to door across this whole province to find out who is hurting from these drugs, and make sure that their conditions are brought forward to the Assembly.

That's a very unprogressive prescription, It's unrealistic. It's totally unacceptable. I will do everything I can to help people who get caught with high drug costs now that this is going through. And I make that pledge to the constituents of Saskatoon Centre constituency, that we will do all we can. But it is unacceptable to say that each individual case has to be looked at in a unique way, because many, many people are not going to get that attention. And many, many people are going to be having to make a choice between whether they buy their groceries or whether they buy their prescription drugs.

There are so many people living on low incomes in this province. I'm afraid the government opposite doesn't understand what it's like to live on \$700 a month or \$400 a month. In my constituency there are many people, and again I say it's mostly women – women who've been widowed early, women who are not senior citizens. They are not eligible for the old age pension; they are not eligible for senior citizen benefits; they are not eligible for the \$50 initial prescription fee, they have to pay the 125. They may be left with their house which is considered an asset, and they are not eligible for social assistance, and they are going to get no help. They're going to have to pay for their drugs up front. And many older people, before they become senior citizens, are already suffering from some sort of disease or illness that requires them to have expensive drugs.

I am so concerned about these people and how they're going to manage. I don't understand how people can manage on such low incomes when housing is so expensive, when city taxes are going up because the municipal government is not getting the money from the province to help pay for the property taxes, when the cost of transportation's going up, the cost of sales tax is going up. People are just going to be absolutely desperate, and I know that they're going to hurt when it comes time to try and pay for their drug plans.

So I speak as a person concerned about consumer affairs, particularly concerned about people managing to pay for the cost of their drugs, now that this Patent Act has come forward, and we've already experienced these changes in our drug plans here.

New drugs are supposed to be new developments. The drug plan was a creative innovation, a plan for helping people to deal with this new development. This government says it's all for change and development and I can't understand how they would destroy the drug plan when they prescribe, with great rhetoric, to such progressive ideas. They're not progressive, not one bit, when they can do this sort of thing.

Drugs are important for keeping people out of nursing homes, keeping people out of hospitals, keeping us going in our community as much as we can. And the fact that we have not opposed the drug plan ...The Patent Act changes indicates that we're quite willing to let a lot of people go through a lot of suffering. And that is not progressive. That is not progressive one bit.

Twenty-five years of medicare, and we're going back in time – rapidly back in time. The people of Saskatchewan know it, and they're deeply concerned.

You could have, if you wanted to be useful, you could have supported educational seminars and worked with consumers and with doctors to cut down on the drug plan costs and the prescribing of drugs. You could have done that. We did it, as a group of women, in the early '70s, and it worked; it was successful. That's a progressive thing that you could have done.

You could have supported the development of generic drugs in this country, and that would have kept the costs down. That would have kept the costs very much down.

That's what you could have done, and you chose not to do it. You chose to go with the multinational corporations, you choose to go with the high price of prescription drugs for everybody in Saskatchewan, and yet you will not see that if you supported the generic development of prescription drugs, you could have kept the cost down. Just like you want to support generic farm chemicals, and that's fine, you won't do the same thing for prescription drugs.

You think that a multinational corporation's going to come into Saskatchewan and market the drugs cheaply? Well, the example in Manitoba – and you love to refer to Manitoba so, by all means, let me refer to Manitoba – there's a multinational company there producing fertilizer, the Simplot Chemical Co. Ltd. Of Brandon, Manitoba. And the drugs that that multinational corporation develops in Manitoba sell for a lower price in North Dakota ...(inaudible interjection) ...And I'm sorry that the members opposite are yelling at me as I'm trying to tell this, because I guess they don't want to hear it.

But this farm chemical, manufactured by the multinational and the North Dakota ...in Manitoba sells for less than North . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order, please. I am sure we all realize ...I am sure we all realize we're having a little difficulty hearing the member from Saskatoon Centre, so if you could just quieten down a little bit, please.

Ms. Smart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm trying to make the point that the multinational operating in Brandon, Manitoba is selling its product cheaper to North Dakota than to the farmers in Manitoba where it's produced by a multinational corporation.

You want to bring a multinational drug corporation into Saskatchewan. It's not going to work; they're not going to come. But if they do, the prices are going to be just as high. They're going to be higher for us in Canada than they are in the States. You'd better learn from what's already taken place. And you'd better get your act together and promote generic chemical production of farm chemicals and of prescription drugs so that people will have the benefits of cheaper drugs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Smart: — I deeply regret that it's take so long for this resolution to be discussed in the House because of the moves that the federal government have already made in enforcing the changes in the Patent Act.

And on behalf of the people in Saskatoon Centre, I want to again reiterate our great disappointment that this legislature was not called earlier this year so that these issues that are so important to the people of Saskatchewan could be debated in time to make some changes.

Instead you put on the backs of the people of Saskatchewan the cost of this Patent Act change, the cost of the multinational prescription drugs that are coming in, and you are making the people that are already living on relatively low incomes, or very low incomes, an even heavier burden for them to carry.

I'm concerned. I'm disappointed. I support this resolution, very strongly urge all of you to, and hope that we can do better in the future in preserving medicare and preserving good health systems for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1245)

Mr. Sauder: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Health in Saskatchewan, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this debate on a topic that I'm sure is of great interest to many people in our province.

As with any other policy related to the government, whether it be the Government of Saskatchewan, or the Government of Canada, I think it's important that the people be given accurate information so they can understand the issues and weigh them properly.

Mr. Speaker, I must admit that, as I enter this debate, I do so with a twinge of regret and disappointment – disappointment because members opposite put forward resolution which once again displays their attitude of having their head in the sand, of living in the past, of not wanting to look to the future.

The member from Saskatoon Nutana has put forward virtually the same motion as was put forward 6 months ago, in December. She and her colleagues had failed to put forward any convincing arguments at that time. Yet, if they insist on being reminded again of their weak and illogical position, I suppose we must take the Assembly's time to cover the same ground all over again.

Therefore, at the end of my remarks I'll be moving an amendment to this motion as follows:

That Resolution no. 1 be amended by deleting all words after the word "Assembly" and substituting the following:

commend the Government of Canada for changes to Canadian drug patent legislation which will enhance research and development in Canada in the area of prescription drugs, and will provide Canadians with better quality health care, and increased employment.

In my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I want to set the record straight with regard to the proposed amendments to the Patent Act. Unfortunately, in putting forward this motion, the NDP has once again displayed its consistently negative attitude to any economic development that isn't directly controlled by government. It's also displayed its tendency to use an attitude of frightening seniors, low-income families, others on fixed incomes, with predictions that dire consequences are in store for them – an abhorrent and disgusting attitude toward the people of this province, the electors who supposedly elected responsible members to the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe those kind of tactics have worked in the past, and they're certainly not going to work in this present time when the people understand the issues and are prepared to get the information on them and to make decisions based on the information that's available to them.

Many times we've seen a display of that attitude by the members opposite in this House – ignore the facts; ignore the realities; live in the past; not only live in the past, but try and take everybody else back to the past with them; try to create unfounded fears and anxieties amongst the people; not try and work together with other people in this country to move ahead, to move into the future, to see new developments, to create economic development and diversification.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I find it a deplorable tactic, but perhaps it's the only one that they have left since they certainly don't seem to have reason or common sense in their arguments on this particular issue. Mr. Speaker, the NDP claims that the proposed amendments to the Patent Act are going to result in substantial increases in the cost of prescription drugs for seniors and low-income families. Mr. Speaker, let's keep in mind that this Act pertains to new developments, to new drugs. Drugs which are presently being produced in this country will still be available, whether they be prescription, whether they be patent drugs, or whether they be generic chemicals.

Mr. Speaker, that argument of theirs once again is simply not true, and if the NDP believe it is, then they obviously haven't take time to understand what the amendments are really all about. Let me just provide some very relevant and important background information, Mr. Speaker. When the amendments were being developed, our government was in continuous contact with federal officials with regard to these amendments. The legislation which was tabled in the House of Commons, and which is now being reviewed, contains several major revisions that came about as a result of this consultation.

Let me highlight some of the ways in which the final version differs from the one proposed earlier. A clause is now included to clarify that all generic drugs currently being produced are exempt, as I said earlier. For new drugs, exclusive rights are effectively reduced from 10 years to seven years – provided the generic manufacturer makes the ingredients in Canada – thereby, employing Canadians and helping to develop our drug industry. The earlier version specified 10 years for all new drugs. On average, this seven year period represents very little change from current practice.

The industry must now provide sales revenue information for all their drugs in Canada, not just on patented products as earlier proposed. This will help the prices review board hold industry to its commitment to double research and development expenditures to 10 per cent of gross sales by 1995. And it is expected to generate an extra \$1.4 billion in research dollars.

As well, the legislation now provides for drug price review board hearings to be public. And to ensure a fully independent board, the federal minister can now establish a panel to advise on review board appointments.

Mr. Speaker, all of these new features in the proposed legislation will help to make it more effective and reduce the price inflation we have seen for many years now.

As I have said, they have come about because of the federal government's willingness to listen and respond to Saskatchewan's ideas and suggestions, not to be held up to ransom to companies who are producing drugs elsewhere in the world and are only importing them into this country.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health, my colleague from Meadow Lake, wrote to the federal Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to reinforce Saskatchewan's interest in three major aspects of this legislation.

Number one, we want to ensure that Saskatchewan receives a fair and appropriate portion of the proposed \$100 million compensation fund. Number two, we want to see a fair share of the new research and development come to this province, something new for Saskatchewan, a new industry, to get away from the resource-based dependency that we've had in the past. Number three, we want to see that the prices for review process is truly an effective one.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, we analysed the proposed legislation carefully and weighed its implications. We

identified areas of concern in the original proposals and presented our case to the federal authorities. We worked co-operatively with those officials and were able to secure a number of substantial changes that have resulted in a piece of legislation that will be beneficial for Canada and Canadians.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:57 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, that's a far cry from the doom and gloom approach of the members opposite. We just heard the member from Saskatoon Riversdale talking about diversification, and I found it very strange the topics that he chose to discuss for diversification. His main point of contention was the CF-18 debate that recently went on between western Canada and eastern Canada. I find that topic especially interesting coming from the benches opposite when one of their major beliefs and proposals, if they should ever come to government, is to do away with defence spending, to get out of our NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) commitments. But yet they want a dependency in western Canada built up on those types of dollars and those types of expenditures from the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, let's contrast some of the things that they want: they want to return to the past; they want to go back to what they had years ago. I would contrast that to what we're looking for: we're looking for diversification; we're looking to build to the future; we're looking to get away from a dependency on resources that we've had to live with in the past. They want a dependency on foreign suppliers; they don't want a Canadian industry. We would like to move forward into the future, get some self-sufficiency built into our drug plan, our drug availability in this country, and the development that will come from money spent on research and development in that area.

They want the R&D, the research and development money spent elsewhere in the world. They want it to go out of this country; they want the money that we pay for our drugs to be spent elsewhere. Mr. Speaker, we would see that spent here in Canada. We would see that jobs created here in Saskatchewan and the rest of Canada, and we would see further diversification into something new.

Mr. Speaker, they would destroy the incentive that there is available to people to create new things, to research new projects. They would pirate on somebody else's time. They would pirate on somebody else's investment. They would rather just stick to what somebody else has done and develop only a generic industry.

Mr. Speaker, if we're to have true economic development and diversification, there must be some incentive for people to spend money on research and development. There must be some incentive for them to invest their money in our country and in our province. Mr. Speaker, it's absolutely imperative that we must move into the future and away from the past and the resource-based dependency that we've had if we're to live in the new world of the 1980s and the 1990s.

Mr. Speaker, I have many, many more things that I would like to raise on this debate. Seeing as it is nearly 1 o'clock and time to close, I would move that we adjourn this motion at this time. I would like to adjourn debate.