

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to rule 11 of this Assembly to present a petition from several hundred Saskatchewan residents who are deeply concerned about medicare; they are among thousands of people who have signed petitions about medicare. The petitioners who have signed this petition are urging that the government not place an arbitrary and unfair limit on insured chiropractic care under medicare.

These petitions are from several communities including Melville, Moose Jaw, Yorkton, Langenburg, Bredenbury, Saltcoats, Canora, Saskatoon, Preeceville, Esterhazy, Theodore, Pilot Butte, Regina, and Rocanville.

**Ms. Simard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in accordance with rule 11 of this Assembly to present a petition signed by more than a thousand Saskatchewan people. They are alarmed by the government's erosion of medicare and specifically urge that the children's dental plan be preserved and protected.

These petitioners are from many communities in Saskatchewan including Lafleche, Coronach, Moose Jaw, Mossbank, Assiniboia, Pelly, Melfort, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Porcupine Plain, North Battleford, and Regina.

**Mr. Koskie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise also pursuant to rule 11 to present petitions from several hundred Saskatchewan people regarding the children's dental plan. They seek to register their opposition to the government's destruction of the school-based children's dental plan, and they urge that it be restored as a vital part of medicare.

These petitions come from many communities throughout Saskatchewan including Spruce Home, Paddockwood, Prince Albert, Estevan, Christopher Lake, Melville, Swift Current, Theodore, Fort Qu'Appelle, Cut Knife, Pelly, Regina, Saskatoon, and Sturgis. I so present.

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today pursuant to rule 11 of this Assembly to present a petition signed by more than 1,000 Saskatchewan people. They are alarmed too, Mr. Speaker, by this government's erosion of medicare and specifically urge the children's dental plan be preserved and protected.

These petitioners are from many communities in Saskatchewan such as Paynton, Saskatoon, Biggar, Yellow Grass, Coronach, Big Beaver, Broadview, Lumsden, Yorkton, Tantallon, Chamberlain, Churchbridge, Springside, Saltcoats, Willowbrook, Kamsack, Runnymede, Veregin, Canora, Regina, Swift Current, Weyburn, Estevan, Moose Jaw and Regina, and many other communities, Mr. Speaker. I do so table the petition.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Smart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise today in accordance with rule 11 of this Assembly to present a petition signed by more than a thousand Saskatchewan people. They are very alarmed about the government's erosion of medicare, and they specifically urge that the children's dental plan be preserved and protected.

These petitioners are from many communities in Saskatchewan including Rockglen, Yorkton, Milestone, Shaunavon, Weyburn, Estevan, Archerwill, Naicam, Rose Valley, Gravelbourg, Esterhazy, Melville, Hudson Bay, Saltcoats, Regina, Saskatoon, Invermay, and Moose Jaw.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to rule 11, I also rise today to present to the Assembly a petition signed by more than a thousand residents of Saskatchewan. They are opposed to the erosion of medicare and the attack on the prescription drug plan. They urge the government to preserve the universal, accessible, and comprehensive drug plan under medicare. They are from several different communities including Kindersley, Saskatoon, Outlook, Aberdeen, Asquith, Loon Lake, Harris, Vanscoy, Meadow Lake, Estevan, Swift Current, Bienfait, Regina, Eston, Wadena, Kelvington, Lumsden, Riceton, Pilot Butte, Weyburn, White City, and Lloydminster.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Goulet:** — Mr. Speaker, pursuant to rule 11, I rise today to present a petition from more than 1,000 Saskatchewan people. These petitioners are deeply opposed to the undermining of medicare, and particularly the attack on the prescription drug plan. They urge that the government stop its attack on the drug plan and its attack on medicare. These petitioners are from many different communities including Speers, Marcelin, Spiritwood, Martensville, Kamsack, Porcupine Plain, Pike Lake, Shaunavon, Val Marie, Eastend, Admiral, Moose Jaw, Saskatoon, Regina, Meadow Lake, Chaplin, and La Ronge. I so table.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Anguish:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise under rule 11 today to present a petition to the Assembly, signed by more than 1,000 residents of the province of Saskatchewan. They're opposed to the erosion of medicare and, more specifically, the attack on the prescription drug plan. They urge the government to preserve the universal, accessible, and comprehensive drug plan under medicare.

And they're from several different communities, Mr. Speaker. They come from the communities of Pense, Moose Jaw, Martensville, Saskatoon, Regina, Allan, Cudworth, Asquith, Dundurn, Meacham, and Colonsay, and they submit to you as follows, Mr. Speaker:

To the hon. Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

in legislature assembled, the petition of the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan humbly sheweth that it is not in the public interest for the Government of Saskatchewan to increase the direct cost to consumers of prescription drugs in this province, and that low-cost health care is the right of all citizens of Saskatchewan, and that increased costs of prescription drugs is a direct threat to the health and well-being of the citizens of Saskatchewan who may forego medication because of the cost.

Wherefore, your petitioners humbly pray that the hon. Assembly may be pleased to urge the Government of Saskatchewan not to change the cost formula of the Saskatchewan prescription drug program, and thereby ensure the continued access to necessary medication for all residents of this province. And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise pursuant to rule 11 to present in this Assembly a petition signed by more than 1,000 Saskatchewan people who are deeply concerned by the government's erosion of the prescription drug plan. They urge that the universal and comprehensive prescription drug plan be protected under medicare.

Mr. Speaker, these petitioners are among more than 32,000 Saskatchewan people who have signed petitions to save medicare in the past . . . (inaudible) . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, that's more than 32,000 people, and we're getting petitions daily. These petitioners are from several different communities including Tisdale, Perdue, Meacham, Saskatoon, Craven, Yorkton, Southey, Cupar, Glenbain, Spalding, Swift Current, Watson, Annaheim, Regina, Tisdale and Macdowall.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Clerk:** — Yesterday, I received a petition which was laid upon the Table. I have examined it under rule 11(7) and hereby read and received the petition:

Of certain citizens of the province of Saskatchewan praying that the Legislative Assembly may be pleased to urge the Government of Saskatchewan to retain the school-based dental plan.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Maxwell:** — Monsieur le Président, encore une fois, permettez-moi à présenter des étudiants qui sont ici aujourd'hui, s'il vous plaît. Nous avons dans la

législature, dix-huit étudiants de la belle province et leur professeur, Monsieur Mike Little. Pourquoi pas Michel Petit?

C'est un plaisir pour moi, au nom du gouvernement, de vous accueillir ici à la législature et à Regina. Bonne chance quand vous étudiez la langue anglaise à l'université de Regina. Bienvenue.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lyons:** — Merci, Monsieur le président. Comme les autres membres de l'Assemblée législative de la Saskatchewan, je voudrais dire, bienvenue à Saskatchewan, bienvenue à Regina et bonne chance.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Policy Regarding Medicare and Drug Plan

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Premier or the Acting Premier. We have just presented in this legislature, petitions signed by more than 9,000 Saskatchewan people who oppose your government's attempt to erode medicare. This brings to more than 32,000 the number of Saskatchewan residents who have signed various health care petitions in recent weeks. And more are coming in each day.

Saskatchewan people strongly oppose your cuts to medicare. They're saying that if you need to cut costs, you should look elsewhere, and don't cut at the expense of the sick. Will you now listen to the people of Saskatchewan and admit your mistake and begin to retreat from your strategy of eroding and undermining medicare?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, we do and have and will continue to listen to the people of Saskatchewan. And our strategy, as it relates to the enhancement of health care in the province of Saskatchewan, has been well laid out by the Minister of health on other occasions. And I will leave him to be the spokesman for that particular strategy, Mr. Speaker.

And I'll therefore, Mr. Speaker, simply say that in answer to your question - will you listen to the people of Saskatchewan? - we have, we will, and we will continue to listen.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Acting Premier, you are one of the most powerful men on that bench, and talk is awfully cheap.

Mr. Speaker, I have a specific question dealing with your destructive cuts to the Saskatchewan prescription drug plan. Many times in this Assembly the Premier of Saskatchewan, the Minister of Health, has said that your government will deal with unique situations where a particular person or family faces catastrophic . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. Order, please. It seems very much to me that the member for Saskatoon Nutana is quoting

from some article. She knows that that is not acceptable, and I would ask her to put her question without what seems to me to be a quote.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — I'm not quoting, Mr. Speaker. I am trying to ask a question. My question is simply this. When there are particular people in this province or families that face catastrophic drug costs as the result of your cuts to the drug plan, what specific policy announcements do you have which will deal with these extreme hardship situations? If you have no policies, you can't help these people. What's the policy?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, both the Premier and the Minister of Health have said on several occasions, here and in other places, that the kind of unique situations, as have been alluded to by the hon. member, will be dealt with upon being made aware of them. And as it relates to any policy relative to health, they will be announced by the Minister of Health, as is the normal course of events.

The fact that unique situations are dealt with, Mr. Speaker, I know to be the case. In fact I turned one over yesterday to the Minister of Health. And I got a call from that constituent this morning, thanking me for the expeditious way in which that matter had been resolved. I don't know the details of it, but I do know that that particular individual was very happy with the way that the Department of Health resolved that particular matter.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — New question, Mr. Deputy Premier, we have provided your government with the details of a number of hardship cases, but we have yet to get a single response from the Minister of health or the Premier of Saskatchewan. We have yet to get a response in terms of solving these problems, and I have two more right here.

I have a letter from a family in Esterhazy with a child who suffers from asthma and a number of serious allergies. They show in their letter how they will have to pay more than \$6,000 this year to buy medications for their child.

I have another letter, Mr. Deputy Premier, from a woman whose prescription drug bill each month will be \$970, and that's more than her monthly income. These folks don't want your sympathy. They want answers. What specific policies to do you have to offer these people, Mr. Deputy Premier?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member has forwarded that letter to the Minister of Health, or I wonder if she just brought it in here to put it on the record, Mr. Speaker.

I think that that particular unique situation could be dealt with very expeditiously if the hon. member would just give it to me. I'm not a clairvoyant. I can't deal with problems that I don't know exist. And I'm sure if the Minister of Health was made aware of that particular situation, he would without hesitation look into the matter and deal with it as expeditiously as possible.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Supplementary. Mr. Deputy Premier, the family from Esterhazy gave their letter to your Conservative MLA from Saltcoats who said he would deliver the letter to the Minister of Health, himself, and they have not received a response. And they gave the letter on July 4. This other letter was given to the Minister of Health on June 29, 1987, and these folks have not yet received a response. What sort of reply do you give people, and what is your policy?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member tells me that on a particular date, at a particular place, a particular letter was raised with the MLA for Saltcoats. That may or may not be true. And if she tells me . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Just let the minister answer the question.

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, it's just with a great deal of suspicion that I take everything taken from that side of the House at face value. I have said to the hon. member that if I am presented with the case that . . . the unique case that is alluded to by the member, I will deal with it. As it relates to the allegations that she has made about the MLA getting it on July 4, etc., etc., I will look into that. I think that if that is true . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. Order! Order. The minister is answering the question. Please permit him to finish.

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — If that is true, Mr. Speaker, I think personally that that turn-around time is unacceptably slow and will have to be rectified. But as it relates to this particular case, Mr. Speaker, I'd be more than pleased to look into it personally if the hon. member would provide me with the information.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Supplementary. Mr. Speaker, I will send these letters over to the minister. I would ask him to give us a full report on how these particular cases were handled, because it's quite clear that they're not handling cases. And I would like to know when these particular cases were dealt with?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Collapse of Supercart International

**Mr. Mitchell:** — My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, and it deals with the January, 1987 collapse of Supercart International in Regina. When Supercart went under it left unpaid wages totally more than \$46,000 which were owing to 25 employees. Under the Labour Standards Act, your department issued a certificate respecting the payment of these wages. And my question is: can the minister tell the Assembly whether these wages have been recovered on behalf of the workers in question?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Schmidt:** — The member opposite knows that in order to recover wages you have to have somewhere or someone to recover them from. They cannot be a matter of pulled out of thin air. I know that we have worked hard to try to recover those wages. I'll take notice, and I will give you further information as to how progress is being made.

### Prosecutions Regarding Non-Payment of Wages

**Mr. Mitchell:** — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Last year your department handled more than 3,100 formal complaints from Saskatchewan workers concerning violations of the Labour Standards Act. That was the busiest year in your history, but you only launched 20 prosecutions under the Act, which was less than half the level of three years ago. My question is: can you explain the reasons why, when the number of formal complaints were at an all-time high, the number of prosecutions fell to such a low level?

**Hon. Mr. Schmidt:** — Well, I don't have personal knowledge of each one of those 3,100 complaints that you refer to but, generally speaking, we take whatever action is possible, and we take action where we think there is any chance of success.

**Mr. Mitchell:** — A new question, Mr. Minister, who seems unaware of what's happening in any of the departments for which he's responsible. I have here a document which suggests why your department is failing to protect the interests of working people by the laying of complaints. This is an internal document, a report of the annual activity which is from your labour standards branch, and it gives a reason, and I quote from it:

Prosecutions are down significantly this year for two reasons: (a) there was an election during the year in question; and (b) the difficulties that your branch has been experiencing getting prosecutions approved from the Department of Justice.

Mr. Minister, I want you to tell Saskatchewan workers how the law of this province, The Labour Standards Act, changes in an election year or changes because of a policy decision in the Department of Justice.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Schmidt:** — First of all, an election should have nothing to do with the operations of my department, so I am very interested to see the document you refer to so I could take the appropriate action to see who is dragging their feet, if anybody. So if you will table the document, I will take notice and I will take the appropriate action if necessary.

**Mr. Mitchell:** — I'll be delighted to table the document right now. Mr. Minister, the document is perfectly clear . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. I don't want to interrupt your supplementary, but I'd like to direct these comments to both sides of the House.

We're a little lax. And when we're directing comments to other members in the House, please remember that you should always direct it through the Chair.

**Mr. Mitchell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was saying that I'd be pleased to table the document, and I do so now.

**An Hon. Member:** — You can't table documents in question period.

**Mr. Mitchell:** — I'll be delighted to table the document right after question period.

My question is: do you deny the plain words of the document that I have spoken . . . that I've quoted from, namely, that the reasons for the low number of prosecutions is that there was an election during the year in question, and that your department has had difficulty getting approvals on prosecutions from the Department of Justice?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Schmidt:** — I am very pleased that you, as a member of this Assembly, have shown the fortitude to table the document. And I will see it after question period, and I will examine it and take notice of your question and give you an answer, once I've seen the document.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Final supplementary.

**Mr. Mitchell:** — Can you tell me, Minister, can you tell me - if the Minister of Finance is finished briefing you on a question which you haven't yet heard - can you tell me if you know about this problem of getting approval from the Department of Justice; and if so, who is responsible for that policy of getting their approval; and how do you justify what is in effect ignoring the law of Saskatchewan for the reasons that are apparently advanced in this memo?

**Hon. Mr. Schmidt:** — I told you earlier that an election should have nothing to do with the operation of my department, and I will look into the matter. If they were dragging their feet during an election, I certainly didn't tell them to do that. I don't know what they were doing during the election, but I will find out what they were doing during the election. If they are dragging their feet or doing other things than their jobs, I will look into the matter.

I can tell you that I have had no problem with the Minister of Justice. He will prosecute anything that has a proper case. And I have had no problem with it, and my staff has not brought this problem to my attention, and maybe they are remiss. I will examine the document and I will give you an answer when I have taken notice.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, order. Order, please. I have indicated the last . . . in the last supplementary that it would be your final supplementary. However, I would like to once again remind hon. members that in making comments to each other and answering and asking questions, to always refer to other members through the

Speaker.

**Mr. Mitchell:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I want to be clear, Minister . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — I've indicated last time that that was your final. If you would like to ask a new question, you may do that.

**Mr. Mitchell:** — A new question, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the minister so that we're very clear. Is it a requirement that your department obtain approval from the Department of Justice for laying prosecutions under The Labour Standards Act? If so, when was that policy instituted; and have you had difficulty getting approval from the Department of Justice for cases which you, as the minister responsible, feel should be prosecuted?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Schmidt:** — Mr. Speaker, could you please tell the member opposite that I have taken notice of the question.

### Grain Price Deficiency Payments

**Mr. Upshall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Acting Minister of Agriculture, and it has to do with the need for a grain price deficiency payment for the 1987-88 crop year which begins on Saturday.

Farm organizations, the New Democratic Party, and even your government, has called on Ottawa to provide this deficiency payment. The Mulroney government appears to have committed itself, at least in principle, to a second payment. My question is this: have you pushed Ottawa to make this payment in one instalment only, rather than two? And has the Mulroney government agreed to make this payment in the fall of this year, as soon as possible after harvest?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Certainly our government and our Premier recognizes that the difficult times and the bizarre practices in the global market-place, as it relates to the grain side particularly, are continuing. Prices are dropping, and hence the need for a deficiency payment this year is as great or greater than it was even last year. And I know our Premier continues to lead the charge on this, and in fact at the western premiers' conference in Humboldt I think they established some numbers which were carried forward to the ministers of Agriculture meeting from all across Canada.

Our Premier's track record is sound in this area. He's the man who led the charge last year for a deficiency payment. The federal government delivered, and I suspect that history will repeat itself, and perhaps even this year the payment will be larger than last year. And certainly the arguments in favour of a larger payment can be substantiated. In so far as whether it'll be one or two or when, I can't offer any of those details at this point in time because some of those decisions have not yet been made. But certainly our Premier has been there on the forefront making the case for a deficiency payment.

**Mr. Upshall:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, Saskatchewan farmers know that both the Premier and Brian Mulroney played politics with the last deficiency payment to buy a Saskatchewan election.

They don't want to see their cash flow depending on politics again this year. So I ask you . . . I'll ask you again: you must have some indication whether the payment will be in a one payment basis or two. And can you assure us, can you assure the farmers, the farm suppliers, and small communities in Saskatchewan that they will receive a deficiency payment and receive it this fall, and not in the spring of 1988?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Well my sense, my sense as far as what farmers are looking for when it comes to deficiency payment are they are not so concerned about whether it's one payment or two - (a) they want to know that there's going to be a payment; and they (b) want to know that the Premier and their provincial politicians are there carrying the ball for them. And certainly our Premier has been leading the charge, as I mentioned earlier.

The facts are well-known. In fact, as recently as the July meeting, this very month, when the ministers of Agriculture got together, high on the agenda was the whole question of deficiency payments. And the Government of Canada has called on . . . or the premiers and the ministers there called on the Government of Canada to make an early announcement relative to that payment. But more importantly, they went on as well to address the root cause, if you like, of why we're into deficiency payments.

Now all the farmers I know would just as soon not have to rely on deficiency payments for their livelihood. They would rather rely on the market-place to return them a reasonable price for their product. Such is not the case because of the international practices . . .

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

**Mr. Upshall:** — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, your government hasn't carried the ball on the variable rate issue, where they're lengthening the crop year, and a number of many other issues that are funding the farmers of Saskatchewan this year.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Upshall:** — Surely in all your negotiations with the Prime Minister you must have some indication . . . Surely you must have some indication whether there's going to be one payment or two payment - very important to the farmers of this province who are not in very good financial shape. One or two payments. And surely you have an indication of whether it's going to be this fall or next spring. Or is this government a small dog on a short leash held by Brian Mulroney?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Well, I would say again when it

comes to the issues of deficiency payment, our Premier has consistently led the charge. And I'll tell you what, Mr. Speaker, he didn't wait until day 44 of this legislative session to make it an issue. He's been on it since last year's deficiency payment was made, and he'll deliver for the people of Saskatchewan, the farmers of Saskatchewan, and the people of western Canada again.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. Order, please. Order, please. Order. The minister is answering the question. And while I'm on my feet, I will once more remind members to direct their remarks to other members in the House through the Speaker. Unfortunately, the minister has not done that.

**Mr. Upshall:** — Mr. Speaker, I did not hear an answer. I would like the minister to tell the farmers of this province who are trying to plan their year in advance; to tell the farm supply dealers who have to know what the situation is going to be with regard to farm finances; to tell the people, from the grocery store to the equipment dealer, what the situation is going to be.

Surely, this government, if they are leading the fray as he says, surely they have an idea of when the payment is going to be made. And I ask him, specifically, will it be made before the end of this year?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Mr. Speaker, I can't say for sure when that payment will be or whether it will be in two instalments or three, or whether it will be, in fact, modelled after the payments of last year. The important thing is that we do receive a deficiency payment, and that is what our Premier has been working for.

And as well, because the root cause of this problem is global in nature, that is why our Premier has taken a leadership role. And this very day . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. Order, please. Order, please. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Upshall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, we have a situation in this province whereby last October the people were hung out on a clothes-line not knowing when the deficiency payment was going to be, and this government used it as a political tool to win government. I do not want to see that happen again for the next federal election, hanging the farmers and the rural people out to dry. I ask you, with all your negotiations, all your talks with the Premier, surely you who propose to be the saviour of Saskatchewan farmers, surely you shouldn't let them hang there - and tell them when this payment is going to be made.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Well what I can tell the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, is at the July meeting, this very month, when our Premier met with the other provincial ministers of Agriculture and the federal Minister of Agriculture, there was unanimous support and unanimous resolution for a deficiency . . .

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

minister is attempting to answer the question but is not being given that opportunity.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — . . . unanimous support for the need for a deficiency payment. And at the meeting in the member's own riding in Humboldt, the kinds of numbers they attached to that deficiency payment in terms of specifics was a payment somewhere between 1.6 and \$3 billion. The reason for the 1.6, Mr. Speaker, is a direct reflection of the fact that initial grain prices are going to drop something the order of 20 per cent in the new crop year, Mr. Speaker.

And while I'm on my feet, I took notice yesterday of a question relative to . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please.

### Farmers' Quota Deliveries

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — The question I took notice of yesterday on behalf of the Premier was to the effect that has the government contacted the federal government and requested that the '86-87 crop year be extended, and what was the response from Ottawa?

The Government of Saskatchewan has asked the federal government to ensure that producers will have the opportunity to deliver all their grain in the current crop year. In fact, in July 9, '87, a letter to the Hon. Charles Mayer, minister in charge of the wheat board, Premier Devine requested additional quotas, and an extension to the crop year be implemented if necessary. And in fact a news release to that effect was put out on July 10 of this month, Mr. Speaker. It indicated our concern that producers may not be able to deliver all their grain by the June 31 deadline.

I am happy to say that the federal government has acknowledged our request and is currently reviewing this issue to determine any changes . . . if any changes are necessary. And as well, at that same time, our Premier raised with the federal government the whole question of the changes in the producer car allocations, which is another issue that surfaced in rural Saskatchewan, and the implications for the 20 per cent drop in initial prices as we move into the new crop year, Mr. Speaker.

### TABLING OF DOCUMENT

**Mr. Mitchell:** — Before orders of the day, Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the document I referred to during question period, which is a report of yearly activities from the assistant director of the labour standards branch to the deputy minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, which document is dated April 23, 1987.

### MOTION UNDER RULE 39

#### Extension of Crop Year for Farmers

**Mr. Upshall:** — Yes, Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day. I rise, pursuant to rule 39, to seek leave of the Assembly to move a motion on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity. If I may just take a moment, Mr. Speaker, I will indicate to the House the nature of the

issue and the nature of the non-partisan motion I seek to introduce.

Mr. Speaker, as all members know, the 1986-87 crop year is drawing to a close, but in many parts of the province farmers will not be able to deliver their full quota because of severe congestion in the system. This is a serious problem which faces many farmers.

In some previous years such as last year, the federal government allowed deferred deliveries, or extension of the crop year. The Mulroney government should do so again this year. This is clearly a pressing matter, Mr. Speaker. It is clearly an urgent matter.

I seek to introduce a non-partisan motion to deal with this issue along the following lines:

That this Assembly unanimously call on the Government of Canada to recognize the present severe problem of congested elevators and the substantial quantities of undelivered quota, as the 1986-87 crop year draws to a close, and;

Instruct the Canadian Wheat Board to make arrangements for deferred delivery permits or an extension of crop year, which will allow prairie farmers to deliver their full quota at the 1986-87 price, and;

That the Speaker communicate the content of this motion to the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board and the Prime Minister.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous leave of the Assembly to proceed with that motion.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

Leave not granted.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### MOTION UNDER RULE 16

#### Ensuring a Viable Uranium Industry in Saskatchewan

**Mr. Sauder:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today pursuant to rule 16 to move the following motion of which I gave notice on Friday last. I'll move the motion at the end of my remarks, but I'll read it now:

That this Assembly encourages the Government of Saskatchewan and the Government of Canada to pursue strategies that will provide access to Canadian, United States, and world uranium markets, in order to ensure a viable uranium industry in Saskatchewan, to provide employment for northern Saskatchewan, and to protect the significant investment of Saskatchewan tax dollars that has been made.

Mr. Speaker, it's a very, very serious and grave matter that

we're facing at this time in our uranium industry. The situation facing it is a difficult one. It's a situation that has been caused by protectionist forces in another country, forces which we in Canada, or in Saskatchewan for that matter, have little control over.

A situation which represents a risk to the taxpayers' multi-million dollar investment in the industry, but most importantly - and far more important than the risk of those dollars involved - is the situation that puts in jeopardy the livelihood of many Saskatchewan workers and families, particularly workers and their families in northern Saskatchewan, an area which we all know and admit there's not an over-abundance of real job opportunities or economic opportunities there at the moment.

Mr. Speaker, we as an Assembly must do all that we can to ensure the survival of the uranium industry in our province. And every member of this Assembly, regardless of his particular political persuasion, has a duty to protect the people of this province when there is a threat to their livelihood or well-being. Mr. Speaker, the threat is very real to some 1,300 people who are directly employed in the province's uranium industry. Their jobs are on the line, their livelihood, Mr. Speaker - 1,300 jobs, 1,300 families.

As well, Mr. Speaker, some 5,000 additional people whose jobs are indirectly tied to the uranium industry are facing a more uncertain future today. This is simply unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. It's unacceptable to this government, and it should be unacceptable to all members of this Assembly. Yet this situation goes beyond the issue of employment. It touches upon the need for economic development in northern Saskatchewan and the vital role that the uranium industry has played and is doing in regards to filling that need.

Mr. Speaker, the uranium industry generated some \$30 million in royalties for the Government of Saskatchewan last year. But such a figure does not show the true importance of the industry to our province's economy. It must be kept in mind that well over a billion dollars has been invested in our province's uranium industry since the mid-1970s. And each year tens of millions of additional dollars continue to be invested through exploration efforts and the expansion of current operations - investments that are continuing to create additional jobs and further opportunities in, particularly, northern Saskatchewan.

(1445)

Mr. Speaker, the people of northern Saskatchewan, where the mines are located, see the industry from a different point of view. They don't see it as just dollars generated for Saskatchewan. To the people of northern Saskatchewan, the uranium industry represents opportunities that simply did not exist prior to the industry coming to their part of the province, opportunities to work on the exploration teams, on the construction projects, in the mines, in the various support services; opportunities to start up new businesses to service the industry; opportunities to start up new businesses to

service the workers and the families that are there: opportunities to help build the infrastructure that the mines need - the roads, the power lines, the mine sites; opportunities to have such a thing as roads brought into their area to provide access for them to the outside world, to the rest of Saskatchewan, to the rest of Canada - a link that they've been cut off from in the past, Mr. Speaker, and this has been a means to provide that link for them.

Yes, the industry is an important one to northern Saskatchewan. I'm sure that the representative from the North, particularly from Athabasca, the hon. member there, would agree with me. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, it seems like the members of his . . . his fellow caucus members and the party that he represents to do not agree with him.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that when the news of the recent American court ruling on uranium imports reached the NDP caucus, they probably broke out the champagne. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because they want to shut those mines down. That's why.

They want to shut down the very mines that, just a few short years ago, they poured hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars into the development of. They want to tell those 1,300 people who are directly affected, who depend on those mines for their livelihood: sorry, we don't have a job for you. Go home. They want to tell those 5,000 other people: sorry, there's no work servicing this industry. Mr. Speaker, I don't think that's fair to the people of northern Saskatchewan. I don't think it's fair to anyone in this province.

What makes this position truly amazing is how the Leader of the Opposition has flip-flopped on this issue. I'd just like to call the attention of the members of this Assembly to some of the past, and his stance on that, to show what it's been. I'm sure that he remembers most of his various stances on the issue, but let's put them on the record for the people of Saskatchewan to take note of.

Back in 1978 when uranium development was an issue in this legislature and in this province, the then premier, the present Leader of the Opposition, had this to say, and I quote from your NDP newspaper, *The Commonwealth*, of June 28, 1978. And I quote:

This issue is not over. But I, for my part, made a moral decision. I think I did the right thing, and I'm prepared to defend it.

I'd like the present Leader of the Opposition to stand up and defend that position today - defend it to the people of northern Saskatchewan.

Such a statement seems to me to indicate some conviction, Mr. Speaker. Yet a few years later, that same member for Regina Elphinstone was on open line radio shows, like the CFQC open line on November 7, 1985, saying, and I quote:

The NDP would phase out uranium mining.

Mr. Speaker, one can conclude . . . one can but draw one of two conclusions from these statements. Either the

people of this province were grossly misled by the premier, the former NDP premier of this province during the 1970s and early 1980s, or moral decisions by the members opposite do not hold the same force that they do with the rest of us.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the member for Regina Elphinstone how he can reconcile two such divergent positions that he is holding with regard to uranium mining. When he tells the *Leader-Post*, back in October 11, 1979, that he sees a bright future for Saskatchewan's uranium industry, it seems that he supports the industry. And then when he's out of power, he's championing the NDP's policy of phasing out the mines. I ask him, Mr. Speaker, is that the position that he and his party hold to today? Do they care about the workers whose jobs are in jeopardy? Do they care about economic development, particularly in northern Saskatchewan? Do they care about diversification and opportunities in the North?

When the Leader of the Opposition was asked if the NDP's phase-out policy had workers in the uranium industry worried about their jobs, he said, and I repeat his quote once again from the CFQC open line show, November 7, 1985:

I suppose that at some time in the future they may have a worry.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the future is now for the uranium industry. The threat of the NDP shutting down the mines has been replaced by protectionist action from abroad. The workers and their families are concerned about their jobs. They're concerned about their future, and they need our support. They need the support of every person from this legislature. Mr. Speaker, they'll get that support from this government and from this side of the House. Our Progressive Conservative caucus will continue to press to the utmost for their cause.

But will they get support from the member's opposite? I know that they'll get support from their representative, from their MLA, the member from Athabasca. But I suggest that that member is lonely over there in that caucus. His concern for his constituents and the future economic health of the North have made him a lonely man in that NDP caucus.

Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that when we're dealing with a situation that is so fundamentally important, and so important for the economic well-being of his areas, that he's not even here to speak on it, to raise his concerns, to voice his support.

I would ask that member, and I would all members opposite though, where is the support of their leader on this issue? I would ask the people of the North: do they have the support of the party that their member is representing?

Can they expect support from the member from Saskatoon University, Mr. Speaker? Can they expect support from the member from Cumberland, the other person representing many of the uranium mines in northern Saskatchewan? Can they expect the support of the member for Regina North? I think, likely not. Will the



members for Saskatoon Centre, Regina Rosemont, or Moose Jaw North give them more than a pat on the back? I doubt it, Mr. Speaker. I doubt it seriously. Because they and their party want to shut down the uranium industry and they don't care how it's done.

Mr. Speaker, I would think they possibly view this as the easy way out; they'll try and view this as a way for them not to have to come out and do what they would like to do and what they profess they are going to do.

Mr. Speaker, their position has not went unnoticed. A prominent political columnist from *The Globe and Mail* recently commented on the Saskatchewan NDP's taste for avoiding important issues and engaging in political gamesmanship. He talked about skewed priorities, and I believe he was right. He talked about dealing with partisan political politics as opposed to dealing with real issues of the day; the real issues of the people - jobs, economic development, employment opportunities in their communities and in their areas, development of the resources that are there.

The question that he was asking, one that the people of Saskatchewan would like to know the answer to as well is: are the NDP more concerned about their policy positions and internal divisions and infighting than the thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars that are at risk.

Judging from past statements, the answer, I'm sorry to say, would have to be a yes, Mr. Speaker. But then it seems to me that ideological positions like those held by the NDP often ignore the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan.

Their opposition to a freer trading arrangement with the United States is just such an example, one that relates directly to this motion, Mr. Speaker, a position that they can't even square with their federal counterparts in Ottawa. Their federal counterparts have said, let's negotiate the best deal possible. They've recognized the importance of trade to this country. They've recognized the importance to every one of it. Mr. Speaker, they go blindly on their way saying . . . calling for an end to discussions regarding freer trade.

As these recent American moves against our uranium industry show the need to ensure continued access to U.S. markets and to have a fair trade dispute settlement mechanism in place, that need is greater than ever. Yet the NDP continue to remain fundamentally opposed to working towards such an agreement, not out of an interest for the people of Saskatchewan, particularly for the people of northern Saskatchewan, but out of an anti-American, big labour view of trade.

Mr. Speaker, I say, and encourage the members opposite, now is the time to put aside their ideological blinders and take into account the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan, particularly those of northern Saskatchewan who do not have numerous economic opportunities available to them, and join the members of this government and the members of this caucus in supporting a motion which I move, seconded by my colleague, the Minister of Energy and Mines, the member

from Swift Current:

That this Assembly encourages the Government of Saskatchewan and the Government of Canada to pursue strategies that will provide access to Canadian, United States and world uranium markets, in order to ensure a viable uranium industry in Saskatchewan, to provide employment for northern Saskatchewan, and to protect the significant investment of Saskatchewan tax dollars that has been made.

Mr. Speaker, I so move.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to second the motion that has been put forward by my hon. colleague, the Member from Nipawin. He has very clearly laid out not only the problem, but the impact of the problem on Saskatchewan and its people.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is rather simple. It's about jobs, and it's about employment in northern Saskatchewan, employment for miners, and the support for their families. Mr. Speaker, this resolution is about economic development for the whole of Saskatchewan but, in particular, for northern Saskatchewan where it is often difficult to provide the level that should be there. The resolution is about giving a sector in this province an opportunity for growth.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is also about investment, investment of dollars, an investment which provides the jobs for these families and the much-needed economic diversification for the area in northern Saskatchewan. It's also, Mr. Speaker, about protection - protection of taxpayers' dollars that were invested into the uranium industry in the mid '70s.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, it's about protection and ensuring the province is given a fair return on its resources, through royalties, for the millions of dollars that have been invested from the '70s until today.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard during the last week, and it is true, we face a very serious situation within the uranium industry. It is not the first of our resource sector to feel the impact of protectionism, and it probably won't be the last.

In looking at the industry, Mr. Speaker, I'm often amazed as to how people perceive industry in itself. For many people - and I suspect a few across the way - when I say, the uranium industry, the first thing they think of is perhaps simply the mining company, without any association whatsoever for the people that go with it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the situation that we are in today is one of jeopardizing the existence of some of our northern miners and their families. Besides that, it jeopardizes the communities that have been slowly building up, for now and for the future.

The situation, Mr. Speaker, that we are referring to today is the decision by the United States Appeals Court to uphold the district court ruling that prohibits the United

States Department of Energy from reprocessing, in the United States, any uranium produced outside their country.

(1500)

Given that fully 40 per cent of Saskatchewan's uranium is destined for the United States market, this court decision could close a very vital market to our producers. This market currently, Mr. Speaker, consumes over 6.7 million pounds of Saskatchewan uranium. To many of us, Mr. Speaker, the position is one of intolerable. And I call, like the member from Nipawin, on the members across the floor to support the motion and present a united front.

I suspect, Mr. Speaker, there are some doubts across the way as to why they should support the motion. And I would like to put forth some very good reasons as to why our hon. friends in opposition should support it.

Saskatchewan currently directly employs some 13 to 1,500 people in jobs within the uranium industry. Mr. Speaker, that means within a year a payroll of \$55 million that goes out into those communities and, in turn, to other communities in the province. It's money that stays within this province.

Indirectly, Mr. Speaker, this particular industry employs approximately 5,000 people. You add the two together and you've got well over 6,000, direct and indirect, that are employed by the industry.

To put that into perspective, Mr. Speaker, according to StatsCanada, on average every Saskatchewan worker supports 2.3 people. Now when you take that into account, your 6,000 workers become enough to populate a city the size of my home town of Swift Current, or perhaps North Battleford or Yorkton. And when you allow for the multiplier effect, you have enough workers to support a city the size of P.A. or Moose Jaw.

Other reasons that the opposition should support this, Mr. Speaker. Ongoing uranium exploration activities saw a further \$22 million invested last year in northern Saskatchewan alone - northern Saskatchewan. And I know that the member from Athabasca supports that and supports this motion.

Mr. Speaker, this investment offers opportunity for the North and its people, as well as being vital to a further diversification of northern Saskatchewan. We know, Mr. Speaker, that diversification is imperative if the North is going to become economically on par with the rest of the province.

Another reason, Mr. Speaker: the sales. Let's take a look at the sales from last year. The uranium sector in 1986 generated revenues of \$460 million, or about 12 times the amount generated by our entire forest industry. The industry, Mr. Speaker, also paid royalties to the province of approximately \$30-some-million. And without that, Mr. Speaker, we could not maintain some of the services that Saskatchewan people have come to expect. And of course, Mr. Speaker, we cannot forget the millions of dollars of taxpayers' money that has been invested over the last 12 years.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, it would be irresponsible on the government's part, and in fact on this Legislative Assembly's a whole, if we did not work together on this one and stand behind the uranium industry, in light of the court action that has been taken against them.

The members on the other side, some time ago when they embarked on expanding this industry, I believe today have to stand up for what they did then and what the industry stands for now within this province. I would suggest that perhaps there's even a moral obligation to do so. If not, they in turn have an obligation to tell the Saskatchewan people why not.

I have a difficult time, Mr. Speaker, believing that all members would not support this motion. I have a hard time believing that they, in fact, are willing to see 6,000 jobs down the tube, their investment of taxpayers' dollars lost. And I think that they would have a hard time letting go of an opportunity for adding to the diversification of northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it's very clear that we need a united front on this. The issue of protectionism is growing world-wide. The barriers to trading with other countries are well known. The removal of those barriers however, Mr. Speaker, is another matter, and it is one that is going to take co-operation from all in this House.

As we know, the uranium industry in the United States has experienced a significant decline in production levels, from over 38 million pounds of uranium in 1981 to just under 14 million in 1986. This, Mr. Speaker, illustrates the serious problem facing the industry. Due to declining ore grades and older, less efficient facilities, American producers are not competitive. The U.S. utilities, therefore, have increasingly shifted their purchases of uranium to lower cost, foreign sources, including Canada. And if there's one that we in this Assembly know about our people in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, they are competitive and they do produce.

It is expected that the United States Department of Energy will appeal this decision to the Supreme Court, and of course it is our hope that they will be successful. However, failing this, there would be severe adjustments required within the international uranium trade, since the absence of the American demand from world markets would doubtless result in lower free market prices, lower levels of production, and considerable disruption in the production industry. In the meantime, the United States Department of Energy has filed for an emergency stay of the Appeals Court decision.

Mr. Speaker, our . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. The member's time has elapsed.

**Mr. Mitchell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The resolution asks the Assembly to approve a motion to pursue strategies that will provide access to the markets of the world, including the American market. While it was a bit difficult to understand that either the mover or the seconder of this motion had actually read the motion, I take it that that was intended to be the debate that took

place in this House, and certainly we're prepared to debate it on the basis of its plain wording.

In the past three years, Mr. Speaker, Canada has seen a number of trade initiatives aimed against it by the United States. These initiatives have come through three different routes. The first has been the imposition of countervailing duties on some of our products. The second initiative comes in the form of legislation in the Congress of the United States respecting trade with other countries including Canada. And the third route that we have now seen in connection with the matter that's before the House today involves the use of the American courts to intervene and to make orders in respect of a trading matter.

Now until recently in the history of our country, we've had an outstanding record from the point of view of the defence of our vital economic interests. Through successive national governments, of whatever political stripe, Canada has a proud record of being able to defend and advance the vital trading interests of our country.

Now that situation continued to exist until a very short time ago. And I suggest it was about the time of the election of the present administration in Ottawa. And at that time things started to get unravelled. Suddenly Canada was faced with initiatives to which it seemed unable to respond.

I think of an example of the softwood lumber industry and the moves on the part of American interests to impose a type of countervailing duty on the importation on softwood lumber. That situation was not a new one. That was an argument that had been made to the American Department of Commerce in years gone by. Canada was always able, and certainly was able the last time the subject came up, to fight off that effort, to convince the administrative bodies responsible in the United States that there simply was no case for a countervailing duty, and to head off, through a variety of diplomatic and political measures, the effort to restrict the importation of Canadian softwoods.

But now, suddenly we don't seem to be able to do that any more. And it is my submission, Mr. Speaker, that it is the weakness and the incompetence of the federal government in dealing with the Americans and others on these trade issues that is the real problem and which underlies the matter that is before the Assembly today - the question of the importation of uranium into the United States.

Now as I say, we have seen in the very recent past moves to impose countervailing duties, moves in the congress to pass legislation that will limit the importation of goods into the United States, and now court actions. And I think that we're seeing such a plethora of these moves simply because the Americans have taken a long look at Canada and have made the judgement that we're a "soft mark"; that we're easy; that you could do what you like with Canada and the Canadians won't respond; that you can take whatever kind of action you like to impose duties, to limit our imports from Canada and the government in Ottawa just simply won't do anything about it.

Now I suggest that the moves of the federal government with respect to softwood lumber, and shakes and shingles, and now potash and steel, have been weak and uncertain. They've been confused. Our case has been badly prepared and weak. Our diplomatic efforts, in so far as one can tell, have been almost non-existent. They have followed certain formalities in terms of the handing over of notes, but they seem to lack conviction and sincerity, and certainly lack intensity. And this is the reason why Canada is having as many trade problems as we appear to be having.

Now part of the real problem is that the federal government seems to think, as do the members opposite, that this is somehow just a matter of personal relationships - the charm of the Prime Minister in his relationship with the President - the special relationship. And we hear suggestions that we might use route again with respect to this uranium problem, that if Brian will just phone his friend, Ronnie, then some moves will be taken and all this problem will go away. And of course, things don't work like that.

The question of fighting for the vital economic interests of a country is a complex matter requiring a wide variety of instruments: diplomatic, political, lobbying efforts, personal contacts, a proper preparation, the vigorous advancement of your case, and so on and so forth. And these are matters which are well understood by Canadian diplomats and by a lot of Canadian politicians. Apparently, however, they are instruments that are not known to the present government.

We are also seeing the federal government, with the active encouragement of this government, putting all of its eggs in one basket. In the last year or so, every time a trade question has arisen, whether it's softwood lumber, or shakes and shingles, or uranium or potash, or whatever, we're referred to the free trade negotiations. We're told that a free trade agreement would somehow resolve all those problems.

And I suggest that the Prime Minister and the federal government and the government opposite know that that simply is not true; the free trade agreement is not going to be any kind of a panacea; that it is naive and, in some respects, deceptive to suggest that it will.

In the uranium case that we're concerned with this afternoon, the culprit is a law passed in the early 1950s, and there's nothing in a free trade agreement that is going to make that law go away.

(1515)

I suggest that we have to go back to time-worn principles with respect to our trading relationships with all of the world and with the United States. Canada's vital economic trading interests must be protected in a complex, comprehensive fashion.

These involve, as I have said earlier, Mr. Speaker, a diplomacy, appropriate political moves, lobbying, properly prepared cases - and not quick fixes, not the quick fix of a hastily negotiated bilateral trade agreement; perhaps within the framework of GATT, a multilateral

agreement that can tidy up a lot of world trading questions. But that, as members will know, is a slow incremental process that is the very opposite of a quick fix, but involves a gradual, reasoned, logical move towards a world that will trade freely.

The idea of a world that would trade freely appeals to everyone. There's no question that that has been an objective of our country and an objective of progressive liberal countries throughout the world.

Now the resolution asks us to pursue strategies that will provide access to the world markets for our uranium, and I would say that we must find such strategies, and we must pursue them. Now I did not hear in the presentation that were made to this House earlier what those strategies ought to be. I have suggested . . .

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** — Order. The member's time has elapsed.

**Mr. Goodale:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the face of it this resolution is a sensible one. In a motherhood sort of way it expresses a sentiment which all members of this House should be able to support. It seeks strategies, federal and provincial, to ensure the viability of Saskatchewan's uranium industry, to provide growth and jobs in our North, and to protect the Saskatchewan tax dollars which are now at risk. And all of this makes good sense, Mr. Speaker, and I support it.

However, Mr. Speaker, what it purports to say on the surface is not the real intent of this resolution. Its real intent is to paint the NDP into a box to show the folly of investment decisions made by the NDP when they were in power 10 years ago, when they put at risk many hundreds of millions of Saskatchewan tax dollars.

The resolution's real intent is to show how the NDP has subsequently contradicted itself. The leader of that party, the member for Elphinstone, was, and probably still is, deep down, an advocate of uranium development. But his party is now taking an opposite position. They now want a way out from their avarice and lust for power which got them into a problem in a very expensive way.

And that puts the NDP party, Mr. Speaker, at odds with the real views of their leader, and also at odds with the conscientious views of some of their membership, like the MLA for Athabasca. That is the real motivation behind this PC motion - to make the NDP uncomfortable.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity of this debate this afternoon to state my position on the substance of the issue before us quite apart from that little game that may be going back and forth between the government and the official opposition as to who can make the other the most uncomfortable.

First, I believe Saskatchewan's uranium resources ought to be developed, developed to the advantage of the Saskatchewan economy, and especially northern Saskatchewan. Secondly, I believe the economic risks involved in that development should be assumed primarily by the private sector, and not by taxpayers. If you want a classic example of where private sector risk

capital has the primary role to play, this is it.

Third, I believe government must not be in the position of being both the owner and the developer of this resource on the one side, and the policeman and the regulator on the other side, all at the same time.

What we have now is a clear conflict of interest situation. Government is trying to wear two hats. And in dealing with a commodity that is so sensitive as uranium, both economically and politically, with provincial, national, and international implications, the Saskatchewan government cannot afford to compromise or to appear to compromise its integrity by a conflict of interest.

Fourth, I believe that the government must always be vigorous and vigilant and tough to ensure Saskatchewan people obtain a fair and proper return from industry on the development of this resource, but that can, and it should be accomplished, Mr. Speaker, in my view, without the government also having to be the owner and the developer.

And fifth, Mr. Speaker, I believe Saskatchewan should become the world's leading centre for research and for outreaching initiatives to ensure that our uranium is developed in a responsible, safe, and environmentally sound fashion, and that it is used in the world for safe and for peaceful purposes. We have the resource. We want to develop it. In my judgement we have a duty to discharge to all of humanity, to ensure that it's done right.

We should have in Saskatchewan, therefore, a major research, education, and information establishment second to none in the world, that constantly pursues matters like safety, environmental protection, and the peaceful usage of this sensitive and strategic commodity. Because it is our resource, Mr. Speaker, we should know more and do more and work harder than anybody else anywhere else in this regard. When it comes to safety, a healthy environment, and the pursuit of peace for all mankind, let it be said of Saskatchewan that we took a back seat to no one.

In terms of the immediate crisis or near crisis situation, Mr. Speaker, we obviously have a major trade problem on our hands with the United States in relation to uranium. Significantly, this problem, like so many others in the recent past, comes not because of tariff barriers but because of non-tariff barriers, commercial action, legal action, or whatever, instigated unilaterally in the United States.

I think that is, unfortunately, a product of some of the wrong messages that our federal government has been dispatching around the world, and particularly to the United States in the recent past, messages in relation to trade matters that are confused, messages of weakness, messages that Canada can perhaps be taken for granted and taken advantage of. And I think the federal government has a lot to account for in terms of those confused signals, mixed messages, and wrong messages that they have dispatched around the world. Because it does, Mr. Speaker, in this case and in so many other cases, put Canadians and Canadian industry in a vulnerable and potentially dangerous situation.

One thing that is obviously indispensable, in terms of our relationships in trade with the United States, is to develop an alternative to the present state of affairs where we are so vulnerable. And that requires some kind of an independent dispute settlement mechanism that is not just the American commerce department, or the American court system, or some other form that is stacked against us, but in fact is an independent dispute settlement mechanism where problems such as the one that has arisen, in the case of uranium, can be taken before that kind of independent tribunal of one form or another; where we are not then at a disadvantage, but are playing in an equivalent kind of status with our American counterparts.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is one of the objectives that should be pursued in terms of our trading relationships with the United States. It is unfortunate that in the recent past we have not had that kind of independent dispute settlement mechanism that can provide us with a way out of the kind of predicament that we are now facing.

Mr. Speaker, in the hurly-burly of this highly partisan debate this afternoon, I would hope that these few thoughts might add a note of reason and common sense to the discussion. Thank you.

**Mr. Rolfes:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I too want to participate in this debate this afternoon, and lay before the legislature what I think is the real intent of this resolution that the government has put before us today.

And I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you analyse the words of the mover and the words of the seconder of this motion, it is clear that the government has no interest at all in trying to resolve the problem that is before them today, or before us today, and that is the unilateral action taken by the courts in the United States.

The sole purpose of the resolution today I think was, as stated by the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, and that is to try and score some political points in the legislature. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not opposed to that. After all this is a political arena, and if that is the intent of the resolution, then I think we can do that on both sides of the House. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a much, much graver problem before us herein Saskatchewan. And it did not start, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with the actions, or the unilateral actions taken by the courts in the United States.

The problems that are before us today started basically in 1984 when we elected the Mulroney government. And jumping into bed very quickly with Brian Mulroney was Grant Devine, our Premier, on the . . .

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** — Order. I have cautioned members many times in the legislature not to use members' names. I would ask the member to refer to other members by their position or by their constituency.

**Mr. Rolfes:** — Mr. Speaker, I certainly had no intention of insulting our Premier. I just wanted to let the people of Saskatchewan know who our Premier is in case some people do not know who he is. Sometimes one wonders

whether the Deputy Premier is the real leader in this province.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do want to make a comment on the Minister of Energy and Mines and what she said to the media yesterday morning. And I think herein lies the problem that the provincial government is really facing. In speaking to the media yesterday, the minister made the following comment, and she said that it would be . . . she lamented the fact that she had no allies in the problem that was facing her today in the action taken by the United States court.

And she . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, Madam Minister, I specifically heard you on television say that it would be nice - and I'm paraphrasing, but this is what you said - it would be nice if we had some support in Ottawa. These are the words that she used yesterday in the media. And I was very surprised that the minister made this statement because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it indicates to me that maybe now the Mulroney government wants to get off of the track of the free trade that it has been pursuing, and is leaving the provincial government in the lurch.

I think the true views of Brian Mulroney were - the Prime Minister of Canada - were expressed in 1982 and 1983 when he took on in debate at that time another potential candidate or leadership for the Leader of the Progressive Conservative party, John Crosbie, when John Crosbie was supporting a free trade agreement with the United States and Brian Mulroney, of course, was opposed to it. And in his arguments he said to John Crosbie, when you're dealing with an elephant, he said - and I'm paraphrasing - you've got some real dangers to keep in mind. He said, if you're sleeping with it and it rolls over, you're a dead man.

I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Prime Minister aptly put before us the problem that we are having today, and that is that the United States, which is such a powerful government, a strong and powerful country, simply is not going to change its policies in order to accommodate the country of Canada. And what this whole argument or the resolution is about, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is to see if we can't find a resolution, resolve the problem of finding markets for our raw materials. Whether it is potash or whether it is wheat or whether it is uranium or whether it is lumber makes no difference. What we need to do is find the market for our products.

(1530)

And that is where the fallacy comes in of the government opposite and the federal government. And the member from Fairview brought this out very clearly. They've put all of their eggs in one basket, and that is that they want to sign a bilateral agreement with the United States, and which bilateral agreement, I contend, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the United States will either never sign or would never adhere to. Why should it? And it is the most powerful nation in all the world. It doesn't need to respect the rights of other countries. And if it doesn't suit their purposes, it unilaterally changes it, as you people found out last week, as you people found out last week.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is where the government opposite has made its mistake. Rather than pursuing a free trade agreement with multi-countries around the world, it has spent all of its energy, all of its energy, in trying to pursue an agreement with the United States. And that, Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, is folly and should not be pursued.

Mr. Speaker, yes, I am not opposed to trading with Russia. I am not opposed to trading with China. And I assume that you people are not. And I am not opposed, Mr. Chairman, in trading with Japan. I am opposed, Mr. Speaker, to putting all of our eggs in one basket and signing a multi or bilateral agreement with the United States. That what I'm opposed to. And the member from Indian Head-Wolseley seems to indicate that he doesn't want us to pursue a multinational trade agreement, but that he wants to pursue it only with the United States.

And that is, Mr. Member, why we're having the problem that we're having today. That is why we don't have access to markets in other countries, because you people are spending all of your time trying to find an agreement with the United States.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the resolution, as I indicated today, concerns itself basically with free trade. And where do we stand on the issue of free trade? And how are we going to negotiate an agreement, not only with the United States but with other countries, so that we find markets available for our raw products? That is the issue that is before us.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of us on this side hope that the government is successful in signing an agreement with a number of countries, with a number of countries. And we advocate to them today - please forget about using all of your energies in pursuing an agreement with the United States, and use your energies to sign agreements with Japan and China and India and the other Pacific Rim countries so that you will have markets available for our raw products.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Rolfes:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have seen in the United States, in Congress, a mood that one can only describe as extreme protectionism. And that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, isn't good for Canada; it isn't good for the United States.

But one can certainly understand why it is happening in the United States, and that is why we in this country must set up avenues of lines of communications with members in Congress, talking to them, showing them the folly of pursuing that kind of policy. And if we were to spend more of our energy doing that, rather than spending all of our energy to see if we can sign a bilateral agreement, our interests here in Saskatchewan, and the interests of Canada, would be much better served by this government and by the federal government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have in this province a lot of investment in our resources. Whether it comes to uranium, or whether it comes to potash, whether it comes to oil, or whether it comes to our wheat, these are all

resources in which we have a tremendous investment, and it is incumbent upon this government and the Government of Canada to see to it that markets are obtained for our raw materials and our finished products.

What we need to do, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . .

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** — Order. The member's time has elapsed.

**Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, I wish to enter into this debate. And I thank the hon. members for providing me for the additional time of 20 minutes, for abandoning their one position, and I would like to take that opportunity to discuss the issue. So I thank the House Leader in his new spirit of co-operation to providing us the 20 minutes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my 20-minute address - which is a very difficult topic to cover in 20 minutes - I want to make, first of all, a little bit of an observation about some of the remarks which have been made to date by some of those who have entered into the debate.

First of all, the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg attempted to discuss in bitter-sweet terms, I suppose, what he perceived to be - and I underline the word perceived to be - disunity with respect to some members of this legislature.

I might just simply say in passing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when one watches the Liberal Party of Canada and its disassemblment on matters of free trade, sometimes they're for it; sometimes they're against it. On the question of the cruise and the testing of the cruise, sometimes they're for it, and sometimes against it. And one could go on and on that it ill behoves the hon. member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg to tell anybody in Saskatchewan or in Canada about the need for unity. In fact I would argue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg has rally unlocked the key to success for Liberal Party unity in Canada, and that is: elect just one Liberal.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Romanow:** — Now the real subject of this resolution, Mr. Speaker, and I quite frankly regret that the member didn't see fit to confine his motion to the real subject, stems from the decision a few days ago in the United States - in the court process a few days ago in the United States - the United States Court of Appeals which apparently, if its order and the wording of the judgement is as I understand it, restricts the U.S. market to only domestically produced raw uranium. And I think it's unfortunate that the hon. member who introduced this motion and that the government speakers who've spoken to the motion, although not all of them wandered off the topic - the Minister of Energy, I think, was more on topic than others - didn't really confine their remarks to this particular matter. Because it's this ruling, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which dramatically indicates again the shift in policy in the United States, which is in effect a policy of gradually embargoing matters of trade in a lot of areas - uranium being one - between itself and a number of countries.

Really this decision represents a serious violation of a variety of international agreements ranging from the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs, and other matters, other agreements, other statutory provisions, which the federal government has brought to the attention of the appropriate American authorities. And that really should be the subject of our debate. Members opposite, however, have chosen a widely drafted resolution and in so doing have attempted - rather poorly, I might add, Mr. Deputy Speaker - to try to determine perceived differences within the NDP about the policy with respect to uranium.

Well I'd like to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the members of the government caucus, that the policy of the New Democratic Party on the question of uranium development is clearly set out in the resolutions of our convention, resolutions which are obviously the product of ordinary rank and file members' debate and passage, and I would commend the members of the government side to take a look at that resolution if that's really what they're interested in knowing where the party stands.

But that is not, of course, what we should be debating. What we should be debating at this particular moment is the question of the U.S. court's ruling. And may I say here also before I get into that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to make a little bit of a remark about how shocking the government response has been to date. Really, this uranium embargo and this decision, the trade bill which was passed recently in Congress, I argue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, seem to have caught the current administration totally by surprise and by shock. The first that the hon. members opposite, the minister in charge of Economic Trade and Development, and others seemed to know about this was the newspaper reports which appeared in the publications at home and abroad about this decision.

That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is really a sad commentary about the competence of a government administration, regardless of what side you're on in the issue, in tending after the nation's business or after the province's business.

How do you feel, sir, to know about matters affecting this province by reading them in *The Globe and Mail* or the *Regina Leader-Post* as the first indication. And that's exactly what's happened and what's prompted this resolution.

And, in fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you take a look at this resolution which was introduced, sadly, I say, for purely political, or an attempt to be purely political and partisan purposes, the government even now, in the fact of this rising tide of protectionism and other problems in the United States, is flummoxed as to what they should do about the situation. Here is today's *Leader-Post* where a Mr. Gordon McIntyre reports, quote, in the first two paragraphs of the article:

Producers can only cross their fingers and wait while the government monitors legal wrangling over U.S. uranium imports.

"That's about all we can do at this time," Energy

and Mines Minister Pat Smith said after government and industry officials met Monday.

Here's where we are, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Minister of Energy, just as surprised and befuddled and baffled about what's happening, enunciates government policy on this matter by simply saying, "That's about all we can do at this time."

Well I think that the hon. members opposite would have been better advised - better advised to have told the House and the people of Saskatchewan where they were at the time of the initial court actions, representing Saskatchewan's interests. Why were the legal counsel? What advice did they get in pursuing the policies that they have pursued and why they've pursued them? This, of course, they are not able to do because the simple fact of the matter is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this government will go down in history as the most incompetent, ill-prepared government on any issue going in the province of Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Romanow:** — But I'll tell you something, by way of an opposition suggestion, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The hon. member from Swift Current, who is the Minister of Energy, says that's about all that they can do at this time. Well there's more that they can do at this time.

We say that this whole situation is tied up to a larger, mismanaged heretofore, free trade debate where our Premier has contented himself to sing the Hallelujah Chorus to the Prime Minister of Canada and the President of the United States.

The result has been that Canadian and Saskatchewan people - let's leave uranium out of the picture - potash, softwood lumber, on a number of areas had been kicked in the teeth.

And here I have another quote in the *Regina Leader-Post* of July 21, 1987. Quote:

Andrew (referring to the Minister of Economic Trade) even said that the decision could prompt Saskatchewan's Progressive Conservative government to re-examine its support for a free-trade deal with the U.S.

(1545)

We haven't heard anything today about whether or not the government has re-examined its free trade position at all, Mr. Deputy Speaker - not a word about this.

Well I want to tell the hon. member, the Economic Trade Development Minister, and the Premier of this province, and the Minister of Energy: you substitute the word "uranium," you put "potash," you put "Saskatchewan lumber," you put any Saskatchewan product in there, you put Saskatchewan agricultural products in there, and you are going to get this result all the time . . .

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** — Order. The member's time has elapsed.

**An Hon. Member:** — No, I don't believe so, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The hon. members opposite had an arrangement with us where I was to be the last speaker under the rules, and I have 20 minutes. And I shall continue, Mr. Speaker, for the remaining 10 minutes.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** — I have no way of knowing of any agreement between . . . Each member speaking to the motion shall have no more than 10 minutes in which to speak in the debate.

**Mr. McLaren:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today, Mr. Speaker, or Deputy Speaker, in this debate over rule 16. And I was rather amused at the member from Saskatoon South saying that it was in . . . not the proper thing to do, to work on a trade deal with the United States as far as uranium is concerned.

I would like to ask the member what we would do with the other 40 per cent of uranium that we sell to the United States. Would we sell it to Pakistan? Should we sell it to the Middle East? Or should we sell it to Chile? Where should we sell it? We've spent years in developing an offshore market, and 60 per cent of our uranium already goes offshore. So if we want to try and sell 40 of the extra 40 per cent, I would suggest to the member that it would be very, very difficult. And that's the reason why we do need to try and work out a trade deal with the United States and carry on with this debate and go on a non-partisan basis to get that trade deal in place.

I feel that the issue we are addressing today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is of critical importance to the future of our province - not only in terms of dollars and cents - and the number of jobs that are at stake. I believe my honourable colleagues have outlined the issue very well in those terms, and I, too, shall touch upon this.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are dealing with an issue that applied to more than one part of our province's economy. The issue that I speak of is that of trade and the need to work out a trading arrangement with our biggest trading partner, the United States of America.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this debate centres on the uranium industry, but it could be, and indeed has been over other industries that have suffered because of U.S. protectionism. Our province's forestry, the steel industry, the potash industry, and livestock industries have all been the victims of protectionism from the United States, and now it is the uranium industries which have been hit.

The NDP say that this is all a result of free trade talks going on between Canada and the United States governments. They pointed to every action that the Americans take and say, look at what they did. You can't trust them. Let's retaliate. Let's get back at them. Break off the talks. What utter nonsense, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP's solution is to stick their heads in the sand and pretend that it is the 1970s all over again. But we can't go back. The world has changed and so must we. The entire world economy has changed and with it the economy of the world's biggest trader, the United States.

The United States has seen many of its industries become

non-competitive and its resource bases depleted. It has seen third world and Asian countries dumping goods on its shores. All this has combined to threaten jobs, and with the political system they have it pays to protect those jobs, even though it may hurt their own country by doing so.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one can easily see the extent of protectionism in the United States, and it doesn't take much effort to find it. Protectionism is everywhere and it is getting worse. There are only two solutions to this problem: hoping that it will go away, which is the same thing as sticking your head in the sand, or negotiating a comprehensive trade arrangement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government of Canada is currently trying to negotiate such an agreement that will help to insure access to the United States market for all Canadian goods and services. But even more importantly, Canadian negotiators are working to get new fair trading rules in place and a reasonable trade dispute mechanism as part of a free trade deal.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, without some sort of tribunal in place, actions like the one taken against the uranium industry will continue to occur. Our Progressive Conservative government supports the efforts being taken to negotiate such an arrangement between our country and the United States. And unfortunately, the members opposite do not, or will not.

Such is also the case with the uranium industry, Mr. Speaker. The NDP were doubly glad when the U.S. court decision came down. Not only were they able to heap scorn on the Americans, but they saw the court decision as a great victory. Simply put, Mr. Speaker, the NDP want to see the uranium mines shut down. They call it phasing out, but it means shutting the mines down, in my view.

They say they would find other jobs for Northerners employed in and around the mines. I ask the member for Athabasca if his colleagues have found some way to replace all the jobs that would be lost. If they have found some way, we would be interested in hearing about it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there are 1,300 people whose jobs are being threatened because of the U.S. court ruling. And there are 5,000 or so other families who indirectly depend on the uranium industry for their livelihood. These people have the right to expect that their MLAs will stand up for their interests.

But will the member from Saskatoon University work to save the jobs of people in the uranium industry? No, Mr. Speaker, he will not lift a finger because he and his colleagues want to shut them down. Will the Leader of the Opposition live up to his original commitment, or has he given up on these 6,000-or-better workers? Will he reaffirm his moral decision that he made when he gave the go-ahead for those mines in the first place? Or will he continue to repeat his party's commitment to shut the mines down?

Mr. Speaker, I defy the opposition to present a unified position that reconciles their past statements with their current policies. They can't do it, Mr. Speaker, and I'm



sure they won't do it. I say to them, Mr. Speaker, that now is the time to put to one side their ideology and remember that they are here to protect the interests of all Saskatchewan residents, be they farmers or workers, in the uranium industry. And I urge all members of the NDP caucus to follow the lead of the member for Athabasca and join our caucus in support for this very important industry.

I can speak a little bit, Mr. Speaker, on trade, because of the company and the farm machinery side that I was involved with before getting into politics. And we used to trade with the United States, and we were able to ship farm machinery across the line with no duty, and they could ship farm machinery across the line this way without any duties.

But a lot of problems occur that can't usually be seen, Mr. Speaker, when parts become a necessity for farm machinery. We get attacked with tariffs on parts to service our own machinery. Yet the United States can sell parts to Canada and they come in duty free.

Some of the members opposite, and I'm going to quote four of them, one of them saying that the phasing out of uranium mining would do more harm for Saskatchewan than good. Another observed: I have concluded the use of uranium as a source of energy is inevitable. I simply see no other alternative. And in regard to his report for uranium mining, one said: I, for my part, made a moral decision. I think I did the right thing, and I am prepared to defend it. The last person I will quote, in support, said, and I quote: we support uranium mining and the operation of nuclear power plants. The fact that there has been an accident at a nuclear plant doesn't mean that nuclear plants should be opposed. End of quote.

These people, Mr. Speaker, these people who strongly support my position are in order, the member for Saskatoon Fairview . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Time has elapsed. Why is the member on his feet?

**Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Speaker, I had not . . . Earlier in the day, I had not intended, in fact, to be here, but hearing this debate was on, I rushed back, knowing there was two minutes made available to me to speak on the subject.

I want to say, in the two or three minutes that's available - and that's all that's available I gather - is that the area of trade has this government, and the government in Ottawa have, made an unbelievable mess of the whole area of trade. And I suggest to the members opposite, the whole free trade initiative, out of which this stems, was naive and ill-timed at a period of time in which the U.S. was clearly protectionist.

To stumble into that area and to open up a free . . . and to talk about free trade is asking for trouble. We have seen . . . And that trouble has come in spades. The latest outcome of that is in uranium where we face a serious, a very serious, problem for the industry in Saskatchewan.

I would suggest to members opposite that the basis of the problem goes back several years, when this government

and the government in Ottawa choose to ask the Americans for more. I think that's a fair interpretation of how they treated it.

After the war, Mr. Speaker, the U.S. was the largest creditor nation in the world. Now, forty years later, it's the largest debtor nation in the world. That's causing some serious problems in the U.S. Like people anywhere, they tend to look for simple solutions. The truth of the matter is, of course, a badly, in part, a badly mismanaged federal budget. But they look for simple solutions. And they . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. Time has elapsed.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## MOTIONS

### Resolution No. 9 - Provision of Adequate Funding for Health Care Programs

**Ms. Smart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising to speak to a motion which I will move after I have made some remarks to it. My motion calls on the Government of Saskatchewan to provide adequate funding to hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care institutions so that these institutions can afford to employ badly needed health care staff and thereby improve bedside care for Saskatchewan's sick and elderly.

This resolution was put on the order papers last December, but it's still very timely today. There are three reasons why I want to speak to this resolution and points that I will be making, because I think that the issue of health care and how we support it is a very important choice to be making in Saskatchewan right now.

(1600)

We have growing health concerns, especially for seniors. We have high unemployment which is continuing to be a very great problem, and we also have the real need to provide work for women in Saskatchewan - good work that women can do, not short-term solutions with work for welfare, etc.

Now one of the points that's being made about the Department of Health's budget is that it's been a big increase this year from last year. But if you look at the figures from the budget summaries, the 1986 to '87 budget was 1 billion, 1.36 million, with a supplementary estimate of 31 million; and the health capital in the property management corporation, 75 million, for a total of 1 billion, 242 million. The '87-88 budget is actually a decrease. It certainly isn't the increase that the government's been purporting because it's 1 billion, 173 million, with a health capital of 66 million, but a deficit of 15 million from the property management corporation.

On a straight and fair comparative basis the government has allocated \$18 million less in '87-88 for health expenditures than was allotted last year. They introduced the health capital fund in '85 with great fanfare, but it no longer exists. And the point that I want to particularly address is you introduce the patient care fund with great fanfare in 1986. And I would like to read from the

announcement that introduced this \$100 million for patient care - immediate release in 1986, in February:

A \$100 million program to enrich hospital and special care-home services, was announced . . . by (the then) Health Minister Graham Taylor.

It was to be a five-year program which will provide funds for services, staffing, and equipment, and it was to have two major components. Firstly, \$40 million being made available over the next four years to enrich patient care services in hospitals. And Taylor said there were three main goals for those funds: to reduce waiting times for surgery; to provide new equipment and diagnostic services; and to substantially increase patient care staff ratio, including the provision of about 500 additional nursing positions.

At that time the government said patient care is the priority. We wanted to go . . . we wanted a program that should go straight to the heart of the matter - patient care, Taylor said. That was in '86 before the election. It must have been another one of these election puffery-huffery promises that didn't amount to anything, because that patient care fund no longer exists.

Today we have a very serious situation in Saskatchewan. And I want to quote from a letter from Paul Kuling that was in the *Star-Phoenix* in April of '87.

Six months after a major election spending spree, which added significantly to the deficit, these loudly trumpeted commitments to patients and families have suddenly vanished. The government's intention to hold hospital and nursing operating grants to zero per cent for the next two years, regardless of patient needs, will result in a sharp decline in the quality of care for hospital patients and the elderly.

And I've received a copy of a letter which was sent also to the Minister of Health and many other MLAs, from a health professional who says:

I am extremely concerned about cuts and freezes that are presently having, and will continue to have, disastrous effects for our community's health and well-being. I believe that given the shortfall in nursing staff levels and other cost-cutting measures, a hospital would be a very frightening place to go; especially if you are ill. I am very worried by the implications of many recent announcements affecting health. We are heading in a direction that will threaten universal health care and create a two-tiered system; those that can pay and those that can not. We have been the most progressive in ensuring universal health coverage for all Saskatchewan citizens; this has not just been a fad of the day, but a strong commitment over a lot of years.

(She's) encouraging (us) to realign (our) aspirations, (saying that) Saskatchewan doesn't want to become a little U.S.A. with large industries (spilling great amounts of pollution and reducing employment through capitalization), and little

social fibre. Our goal is to be less concrete and more human.

That is a very important goal for me and one which I certainly endorse 100 per cent. I have a constituency with over 30 per cent people over the ages of 60, and when I was going door to door talking to people in the campaign, and even now I get phone calls all the time, about people who are having frightening experiences in hospitals because of the shortage of nursing staff.

We have a choice that we can make here in Saskatchewan right now. We have high unemployment, and we can choose either to fund socially useful work, which is valuable - and in the health care services there is certainly a great lot of work to be done there - or we can move more and more into unemployment for many, many people as a result of the high-tech which the government side is boosting so forcefully all the time, without any recognition of what's happening to people under high-tech that's being brought into work places and putting people out of work.

Given that development . . . and Develcon putting people out of work just lately is only another example of the many people that have been put out of work by high-tech. It has got potential to create new jobs, but it also has the potential to put a lot of people out of work.

So we have to look at what kind of socially useful work we can create for people. We have two choices. We can either require it to be done through privatization, where people pay for private nurses, for insurance, and for the cost of health care; or we can go for public service. I think the choice is very clear now in Saskatchewan, and I think it's being made by this government.

The choice of the government is to go for privatization, for saying that health care is for people who can pay for it, and for the rest of us, we can just get sick and die, I suppose. We need to turn that around. We need to make another commitment to universal health care for people and to make a commitment to the public service and to providing work in the public service.

I was particularly impressed by the many presentations that we've had from the nurses and from health care workers generally. In a meeting in January of 1986 with representatives of health care units, we were told that a survey of hospital nurses revealed that 92.18 per cent of nurses considered inadequate funding for staffing was their first priority concern. They pointed out then that the formula for hospital funding is currently based on the number of beds filled, not on the nature of the care required by the people in those beds, and that, increasingly, hospitals are providing acute care . . . and patients over the age of 80 often have multiple ailments and therefore need lots of care.

I've heard stories of very old people in hospitals who've tried to get out of bed and have fallen and have broken their hips or legs, and have had to then be in the hospital for longer than they needed to be initially. The nurses are very worried about this, and I support their concern 100 per cent.

The hospitals are providing - especially the hospitals in the big cities - increasingly acute care. And that care demands nursing services, not just based on the beds that are there, but based on the kind of care that the nurses have to give.

The nurses, in a statement of concern in January of '86, said this:

Our review of the most recent information from Statistics Canada . . . states that Saskatchewan has the lowest ratio of paid hours per staffed bed in Canada. We would need a 22 per cent increase to bring this up to national average. Paid nursing hours rank tenth and require a 15 per cent increase to meet the national average.

The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses is proposing that hospitals be staffed according to a patient classification system which assesses patient needs. A recent survey of five hospitals in Saskatchewan which utilize this . . . (service of assessing patient needs) demonstrated that although patient needs are assessed, the wards are not being staffed as required by patient needs. At present (as I've said all ready) only the bed is considered, but the diverse needs of the patients are ignored.

One of those hospitals surveyed was City Hospital in Saskatoon, a hospital that's in my constituency, which reinforces my concern about what's happening in health care.

In September of (1985) the nurses began providing SUN with the same information that has been regularly supplied to hospital administration. This provided evidence of extreme understaffing on some shifts where hospital wards were 49.35 per cent below requirements on the day shift, and 27.94 per cent below requirements on evening shift, and 45 per cent short on night shift.

In addition, nurses have documented over 550 incidents since 1980 where nurses believe that patient safety had been jeopardized by the lack of adequate nursing staff. Over 300 incidents have been documents to date this year, and that's in 1985. The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses in 1985 submitted a brief to the Minister of Health. This was followed by additional research data and documentation. It was clear from the responses received that it's the intention of the government and the Department of Health to continue to fund nursing staffs based on political and economic expediency rather than the needs of the patients in the hospitals.

This is a grave error. Basic nursing care is the critical foundation of the health system and it is being neglected. Following that release the nurses had an interview with the *Star-Phoenix*, with June Blau, then president of SUN (Saskatchewan Union of Nurses). SUN forwarded copies of the reports filed by nurses to the administrators and to SUN. The reports that were referred to were completed when the nurses felt that patient care had been jeopardized and they included repeated requests for more staff. And here are some of the situations that the

nurses documented.

On a very busy night shift in the medicine unit at St. Paul's Hospital nurses unfamiliar with the procedure were required to give chemotherapy. The chemotherapy spill and line reinsertions took one nurse three hours, forcing her to leave her patient load with an already busy colleague.

When I read something like that I also think of the person that was having the treatment done to them. Imagine having a chemotherapy treatment and being the victim of a spill and a line reinsertion, taking one nurse three hours to work over you. How terrifying that must have been for the patient getting that chemotherapy.

A friend of mine having a baby in City Hospital was hooked up to a new piece of equipment that the nurses had just got and hadn't really learned how to operate properly because the nurses are not given enough time to be educated in the use of this new technology that's coming in. Again, another example of what happens when you boost high tech and you don't look at what needs to be done to utilize it properly.

There's new machinery being brought into the hospitals and the nurses were practically reading the book of instructions as they hooked the patient up to this new machine. That is not acceptable. The nurses should not be put under that stress, Mr. Speaker. They deserve to have enough nursing staff so that this new technology can be used properly, so that the nurses have the opportunity to be trained and to have the support staff to work on it.

Another issue was that University Hospital, in the intensive care unit, nurses repeatedly had to leave their critically ill patients to do frequently turnings of heavy patients, and they were unassisted by an orderly. And for me it was interesting - when I'm talking to constituents in Saskatoon Centre, I meet many women over the age of 50 who've been nurses in the past and whose health is breaking down because they have to do this sort of work on their own. Unassisted by an orderly, they have to lift heavy people. And that is not acceptable, because the nurses that are put out of work at the end of it are still nurses looking for employment or having to go on unemployment insurance and eventually on welfare. That is not a good plan. That is not a good plan for health care services; it is not a good plan for creating work in the province; and it's certainly not a good plan for women's work.

Another example was in the pediatric unit at Regina's General Hospital. Two nurses attempted to care for 32 children, many of them quite ill. A unit clerk found a new administration having a seizure, while clerical staff discovered a two-year-old with a nosebleed. Those are the kinds of conditions that nurses have to deal with.

They complained that there was no replacement for staff members who were sick, so that when you are sick as a nurse, you have to make a choice. Either you stay home and put more burden on the nurses that are still there, or you go to work when you yourself are not well. That, again, is a very unacceptable position to put staff in when they're trying to staff nursing stations in the hospitals.

The demands on the nurses have also increased because patients are being discharged earlier and earlier. There's a greater turnover, and all the patients are much sicker. Many of us know people who've been sent home from hospital very early. We know that they need more care at home and we also know that the beds are being taken by other people who are just as very sick and need to have more care.

(1615)

There was a report in July of 1986, the Saskatoon joint planning committee on long-term care - a report that was went to Walter Podiluk as deputy minister of health. It represented the work of a six-month study on the delivery of long-term care in Saskatoon. This report found . . . this report limited the study to the elderly, define as persons 65 years and older, and it recommended that a special study be undertaken for younger persons in need of long-term care.

So this is a report directed to long-term care for older people. They received a total of 25 written briefs from interested groups and individuals in response to both private and public invitations. And eight verbal presentations were made to the committee by representatives from other interest groups. Now the government opposite has made much of the fact that they like to consult with people. So this is a report based on consultation with a number of people about long-term care in Saskatchewan.

And it too emphasizes the need for more nursing care for people in Saskatchewan, an increase in the provision of rehabilitation services. Presently there's an acute shortage of rehabilitation services in the city of Saskatoon - occupational therapy, physiotherapy, respiratory therapy, and speech therapy.

University Hospital is the only one of the three hospitals in the city that has a rehabilitation unit. The University Hospital rehabilitation home care program has experienced a frozen budget for the last two years. It provides home care rehabilitation services to discharged patients from all three hospitals. Only a limited number of the special care homes provide rehabilitation services to their clients. The shortage of this service in the city is primarily due to the lack of funding and the availability of qualified staff, the report found. And that's a report based on consultation, as I've said already. It's obvious that people are sent home from hospital before they've been properly rehabilitated, and then they have to struggle at home with the lack of home care. The recruitment and training of qualified professional and para-professional rehabilitation services staff in the city should be given top priority, and a school of occupational therapy should be established in Saskatoon.

Another issue that's of concern is the expansion of the geriatric assessment unit on a permanent basis. This unit, at University Hospital, has been of great value in the assessment of long-term care needs of the elderly and in the recommendation of rehabilitative programs. Unfortunately, the lack of a permanent head and the shortage of qualified staff in recent years has hindered the

unit's ability to meet the needs of the community. The geriatric assessment unit should be expanded on a permanent basis and the recruitment of qualified permanent staff should be given a top priority.

Increased provision of psychiatric services is another issue, and there's much work to be done in offering that service to people in Saskatchewan.

What is happening in Saskatchewan is that instead of funding the staff that are needed and the institutions that provide the health care, the nurses are being asked to co-operate with austerity measures. Delegates to a convention said, in April of 1987:

Delegates to the convention (on health) said University Hospital is closing beds, not replacing (the) staff on vacation or (staff that are ) sick, encouraging staff to take longer vacations without pay, and putting a hiring freeze on vacancies. Another hospital is reducing nursing staff when it is not busy on the wards.

It means that we are looking after the same number of patients, who have the same number of illnesses, with fewer nurses.

That's Lorraine Bray, a director of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses. It's interesting to me that those questions were being raised in April, because we've certainly heard that story over and over again through the summer, about how the nurses are being asked to take leave without pay, how they're being asked to take their holidays in the summer-time and not be replaced by staff on vacations, and how the beds are closed so that people are getting less and less care.

In June of '87, SUN said the elderly will languish in nursing home warehouses unless more nurses are hired to look after them. The union has asked the provincial government to try a new system that bases staff needs on the needs of residents. If the Department of Health, nursing homes, and nurses fail to effectively deal with the staffing question, we will be contending our elderly and long-term residents to a dreaded custodial care situation that so many of us have fought to prevent.

The nurses want registered nurses or registered psychiatric nurses on duty 24 hours a day in nursing homes. Failing to have nurses there around the clock is jeopardizing the health of residents. Residents and staff have been kicked, scratched and punched by some of these patients who aren't getting the increased supervision, special care plans, and environment they need. There are many documented cases of broken teeth, glasses, or various lacerations of staff and residents. This is a very serious problem that needs addressing by government nursing homes and care-givers. Some recommended the expansion of home care nursing services.

Those are terrible accusations. It really concerns me very much to think that nurses are working in these conditions.

And only last Saturday, a constituent came to me and complained that there are beds at the Parkridge nursing

home that are not filled because there are no nurses there to take care of people. The beds aren't being filled. And the nurses that are there, sometimes in the evenings are having to care for 80 people by themselves.

It's interesting that these complaints from the nurses have been going on for over a year, and they still have not been addressed. It seems to me so obvious that we should be addressing these concerns, because the health care of our province should be a top priority.

But yet, in July of 1987:

Isabelle Harris, the president of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses . . . (in Prince Albert) . . . said that increased closure of beds and wards at hospitals, coupled with the decreases in staffing over the summer are causing problems.

. . . (There's) the Victoria Union Hospital and the Holy Family Hospital (in Prince Albert) are closing operating rooms for six weeks over the summer instead of the usual four.

Four is bad enough. Six is really unacceptable, completely.

The pediatric wards are also shutting down for six weeks.

. . . staff have been asked to take holidays or unpaid leaves of absence at the Victoria Union Hospital. Others . . . have been sent to work in other areas of the hospital and this has the nurses concerned.

"... they're (being put) in . . . unfamiliar work area and there is almost no orientation time." . . . elderly patients have been complaining because of the unfamiliar staff taking care of them.

. . . staff is being overworked and this is effecting the quality of care patients are getting.

On Level 6, which is geriatric patients at Victoria Union . . . there are five nurses, per shift working five days a week and six for the other two days.

"This is far below the standard set by Nursing Information Saskatchewan," she said. "For that many patients . . . you should have 20 nurses in a 24-hour period and we have about 11."

The decrease in staff have also been creating problems with the 99 team at the hospital which responds to emergency situations within the hospital . . . when an emergency arises, two of the staff sometimes have to go off the ward on a night shift.

The stories of what's happening to patients continue to be told in the public domain. A letter in the *Star-Phoenix* of July 1987, listed the concerns again of the nurses. An Alzheimer patient died, unattended and alone, because staff was unable to observe, call the family, or stay with the patient.

Another Alzheimer patient wandered off the ward and walked for half an hour in January weather to reach his home, and his wife had to return him to hospital. A patient who got up to go to the bathroom did not request assistance because he thought the nurses were too busy. He fell and fractured his pelvic bones.

In 1986 the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses provided the Minister of Health with documentation of 32 cases from one month alone. In 1986 the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses also provided the minister with the internal hospital statistics, as I mentioned already, proving that many major Saskatchewan hospitals were, on average, 19 per cent understaffed.

We have a choice here to make in Saskatchewan. We have a choice whether we're going to provide work for people - socially useful, valuable work - available to everyone in the health care field, services available to everyone, and plenty of work for people to do; or we're going to cut back and cut back and cut back, and have people in custodial care, people who are sick, on waiting lists that are so long, that by the time they get attention it's too late; or we're going to have to turn this around, start providing proper employment for people, start meeting the growing health care concerns of our seniors and of our sick, start providing responsible work for women in the health care field, the work they want to do, the work that's available for them.

It's so ironic to hear people on the government side taking defence of the jobs in the uranium industry, jobs which we said we would provide alternative employment for before they were ever phased out. You express great concern about those jobs but not about the jobs as a dental therapist - the 411 women who've been put out of work. You don't care about the cut-backs in the health care services because it's . . . Why don't you do that? Why don't you develop an economic strategy that provides work that people can do in the health care services and meet the needs of the people as they've been documented by the nurses?

A great concern among a number of people is what is happening to the mental health services. They've had a staff cut of 100, according to the mental health association. That's 13 per cent. They expect to see a rise in the number of patients institutionalized again if all mental health nurses eligible for early retirement accept the offer. About 40 per cent of the 65 community nurses have been offered early retirement as part of the government's drive to attack the deficit. That was reported in May of '87.

Doug Garlick, the President of the Battleford's branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association said mental health out-patients in west central Saskatchewan will be waiting longer and travelling further for services. And these problems are result of government cut-backs which reduced the mental health position in the region by 73. Previously there were 300 positions in the North Battleford region - 150 to 200 were employees working with patients at the Saskatchewan Hospital, and the rest worked with out-patients.

The waiting list for some out-patients' services was three to five months before the cut-backs in May of '87. And now the waiting list is well beyond nine months. These staff cuts spell the end of preventative services and the start of a program responding only to a crisis. And when you respond to a crisis in the mental health field you're responding to a situation which has gotten far beyond the bounds of where it needs to be.

Preventative care in mental health services should be a top priority. We should be caring about what's happening to people in this area as well as the people who are physically sick.

The North Battleford region, which I've mentioned, covers the area bordered by Lloydminster, Meadow Lake, the Borden bridge, and Biggar. And the number of nurses covering that area will be cut from 11 to five. The report is that 10 nurses could barely cover the 650 out-patients in the region. Their case-load of 65 patients was double the recommended number of 30 to 35.

In March of '87, the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, again desperate to promote and present their position to the public, made a presentation to us in the legislature. Their concern, particularly regarding the Parkridge Centre in Saskatoon, I've mentioned that already, how the lack of funding for adequate staffing for adequate and safe care of the long-term care residents.

The work-load for the nurses has been significantly increased in certain areas. And people . . . Beds are not being filled when they need to be filled, by a government that boasts about how it's presented more nursing . . . built more nursing homes for people. But without the staff to staff the nursing homes, the service is not provided.

(1630)

I have a great deal more to say on the health care issue. But I know that the person seconding the motion that I'm to present would also like to have the opportunity to speak to it.

So with my concern, in conclusion, about the need for providing work in a time of high unemployment and many, many jobs to be created in the health care field; my concern that work for women be supported by this government and not destroyed, as it is being done with destroying the dental therapists and not providing the nurses with the support that they require; and my concern about the sick and the elderly who are being very badly beaten up by this government - with those three points, I want to present this motion to this Assembly:

That this Assembly call on the Government of Saskatchewan to provide adequate funding to hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care institutions so that these institutions can afford to employ badly needed health care staff and thereby improve bedside care for Saskatchewan's sick and elderly.

I am moving this motion, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Nutana, Pat Atkinson.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to second the motion put forward by my colleague from Saskatoon Centre and to enter this debate on this most urgent matter. We have an urgent and critical situation in Saskatchewan hospitals, Saskatchewan nursing homes, and other Saskatchewan health care facilities.

In Saskatoon for instance, Mr. Speaker, we have over 10,700 people on the hospital waiting list - people waiting for surgery, Mr. Speaker. Patients, doctors, nurses, administrators, boards of various health care facilities, other health care workers, want action and they want it now.

Mr. Speaker, I recall that the former Minister of Health, the member from Indian Head-Wolseley, released a press release with a great deal of fanfare on February 25, 1986, and that press release said, "\$100 million for patient care." And I'd like to read that press release into the record to refresh some of the members opposite's short memories:

A \$100 million program to enrich hospital and special care services was announced today by Health Minister . . .

The member from Indian Head-Wolseley.

The five-year program, which will provide funds for services, staffing and equipment, will have two major components. Firstly, \$40 million is being made available over the next four years to enrich patient care services in hospitals. (Taylor said) there are three main goals of these funds: one, to reduce waiting times for surgery; two, to provide new equipment and diagnostic services; and to substantially increase patient care staff, including the provision of about 500 additional nursing positions.

Secondly, \$60 million will be provided for staffing and other costs associated with new beds being made available under the five-year construction program announced last year. (Taylor said) plans for the 40 million phase were developed over several months through a detailed review of hospital needs and through discussions with health care officials.

He said patient care is the priority. And I quote:

We wanted a program which would go straight to the heart of the matter - patient care (Taylor said). And that is what this program will do.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this commitment was made prior to what the Tories thought was going to be a spring of 1986 election. This commitment, this promise, is now a betrayal.

The Tories won the October 20, 1986 election, and the promise is gone. Another betrayal. No wonder the public doesn't believe the members opposite. No wonder they can't take the Conservative Party at their word. These

were phoney funds whose sole purpose was political, and that was to get the members opposite elected. These phoney funds' sole purpose was to appease hospital workers so that these members opposite wouldn't be embarrassed - workers who know what's taking place in Saskatchewan hospitals and other health care facilities.

And I'd like to talk about what's happening in Saskatchewan hospitals, Saskatchewan nursing homes, and Saskatchewan health facilities. And I want to talk about bed closures.

Mr. Speaker, it's quite interesting. This summer in the city of Saskatoon we have St. Paul's Hospital, an institution that's been in our fair city for a number of years. This summer, Mr. Speaker, for the first time, we will have 69 beds closed for a two-month period.

City Hospital. City Hospital this year for the first time will close 110 beds from June 27 to September 6. they'll close two complete nursing units, and they expect to save \$400,000. Staff will take their vacation periods at this time, and some staff are taking leave of absences without pay.

It's very interesting, Mr. Speaker, last year there were only 50 bed closures. Last year we were looking at a possible election, and an election that did occur. At University Hospital, Mr. Speaker, we had 129 beds closed this summer - tremendous number of closures.

And I want to talk about some of those beds. In a surgery unit 3,000 there were 12 beds closed, out of a possible complement of 38 beds; in surgery 3,300 we had another 12 beds closed; in orthopaedics we had 10 beds closed; in neurosurgery, another 13 beds closed; in the geriatric unit, the unit that serves the older people of our province and the older people of Saskatoon, we had seven beds closed; in obstetrics, six beds closed; in gynaecology, 11 beds closed; in pediatrics 3,100, eight beds closed.

And I want to tell the members opposite that University Hospital deals with some of the very, very sick children in this province. In pediatrics 3,200 we had another 10 beds closed. The neonatal unit, Mr. Speaker, we had four beds closed, and the neonatal unit deals with very, very, very sick newborn babies - and the members opposite should be ashamed of themselves.

In the rehab unit we had four beds closed; in the kidney unit we had 12 beds closed; and in the cancer unit, Mr. Speaker, when we have men and women in our province waiting for up to four weeks to get into hospital, we had 25 beds closed - and it's appalling.

I also want to talk about the Regina situation. The Pasqua hospital, 37 bed closures; the Plains, 37 bed closures; the General, 27 beds were closed. And last year there were no closures at the General. Why? Because we were going to have an October election.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about what's taking place in P.A. hospitals. The Victoria Union Hospital will be closing its operating and recovering rooms, and surgical and pediatric wards, for six weeks starting June 12, according to a newspaper report.

This means, Mr. Speaker, that for almost one-quarter of the year, according to someone from Prince Albert, hospitals in Prince Albert will have surgical and pediatric facilities functioning at only half capacity. And that's appalling, in view of the former Minister of Health, the member from Indian Head-Wolseley's commitment to patient care. How appalling.

I want to talk about Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker. In Moose Jaw, they're closing 37 beds this summer for two months, instead of 20 beds last year. They're reducing elective surgery, and closing a hospital floor, and increasing accommodation charges and hospital meal prices because of the underfunding of hospitals in this province by the members opposite.

Mr. Minister, and Mr. Speaker, the situation in Saskatchewan is getting very, very bad. And it's time the members opposite woke up to the reality of what's happening in our institutions across this province and became aware that their policies, their economic policies, are seriously leading to the deterioration of our hospitals and other health care facilities in this province.

What does the Minister of Health, our famous Minister of Health, have to say? Well he says in a recent interview, and this was in May 14, 1987, that the hold-the-line budgeting approach won't affect the quality of health care in this province. Well, I can assure the members opposite, the quality of the health care in this province is seriously being undermined because of your spending priorities.

You can spend money on Peter Pocklington and his pork plant in North Battleford. You can spend money on your \$20 million advertising campaigns - some very sick advertising campaigns that we've seen in the last few weeks - new savings for Saskatchewan motorists, when you've introduced the gas tax. You can hire \$10 million worth of political staff who can't respond to letters from the members opposite when they're dealing with serious health questions in this province. And I'm thinking of the prescription drug plan - \$10 million for political staff, but they can't fund Saskatchewan hospitals. And as a result, what is happening?

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about what's happening in Saskatoon hospitals in terms of the waiting lists. We know that as of June 30, 1987 there are now 10,729 people waiting for elective, urgent, and emergency surgery in the city of Saskatoon.

**An Hon. Member:** — How many?

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Ten thousand, seven hundred and twenty-nine people. The University Hospital, we have 2,622; St. Paul's Hospital, 3,673; and at City Hospital, 4,434; for a total of 10,729 persons waiting for elective surgery.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have had citizen after citizen after citizen contact our constituency offices, concerned about the fact that they cannot get into hospital.

I can list numerous examples of people who've been on

hospital waiting lists for months and months and months, and can't get into those hospitals. And I really do congratulate the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses for setting up their SUN health hot line, because they have been able to, in a very credible way, draw to the attention of the Government of Saskatchewan and the members of the opposition some very, very serious health hazards and health concerns in this province.

And I want to talk about some of the comments that were made by people contacting the hot line. Here's an example. This woman needs bladder repair surgery. The operation can't be performed in a local hospital. She was told she'd have to wait because it's not life threatening.

Mr. Minister, can you imagine, because of the underfunding of the Government of Saskatchewan, we have a situation where a woman is in need of elective surgery, obviously in an uncomfortable state and she's having to wait because the members opposite won't properly fund our Saskatchewan hospitals. And I think that's appalling. I think it's outrageous. And I can't believe that you people are governing this province.

Here's another one. This person is waiting for gall-bladder surgery. The solution suggested was to keep beds open and don't decrease service. That's the solution for the person that contacted the hot line. And I agree with that solution. Let's keep those beds open and let's make sure that we don't decrease service, because that's certainly what's happening.

Here's another one. This man's been waiting for one year for a prostate operation. The condition is not cancerous, but it's very inconvenient - no kidding - it's inconvenient. The client suggests that we need to start petitions to keep the beds open.

Here's another one. The caller has cancer of the bladder and is having to wait two months for surgery, and yet we had a situation at University Hospital where there have been numerous beds closed in the cancer wing because of the underfunding of Saskatoon hospitals and hospitals throughout the province by the members opposite.

(1645)

Here's another one. This caller has been waiting for hip replacement surgery since November of 1986. She was asked, presumably by her doctor, if she wanted to be placed on the urgent list. She declined if it meant replacing someone with cancer. I can't believe it, I can't believe it, and neither can my colleagues. Here we have a situation where, if she were put on the urgent list, she'd get in a little faster, but she doesn't want to replace someone who is waiting for cancer surgery. And I really commend that woman. But I think the government opposite needs to start getting its priorities straight.

Here's another one. This caller had to wait one month for a bed to diagnose cancer. Because of the fear of cancer she became depressed. She feels she speaks for many seriously ill patients who have grave concerns about health care in this province. And she's absolutely right, she does.

Because we know numerous examples, Mr. Speaker, people who've contacted me directly, who have fear of cancer; they're waiting to get into hospital and they can't. And they're scared and I don't blame them. I'd be scared too, and so would the Minister of health, and so would the Deputy Premier, and so would all the other people over there. And I think it's time that we re-open some of those hospital beds throughout this province and started funding health care the way the people of this province expect and deserve health care to be funded.

Mr. Speaker, we have another example of a situation where this woman's been waiting for bladder repair surgery since '86. She's been given a possible surgery date in October of 1987. She noted her brother-in-law had to leave Saskatchewan and go to Calgary for bladder repair surgery. And it's interesting - I recalled members opposite talking about patients flooding out of Saskatchewan to go to Manitoba - we had no examples of that in Manitoba. But we have example after example after example of people leaving Saskatchewan because they can't get health care services here. They can't get into hospitals and they have to go to Calgary or other places for elective surgery.

And I think that's appalling in a province that for the last 25 years has seen health care as an important priority of its people. I think it's appalling that in the 25th year of medicare when we're celebrating the anniversary of medicare - at least the members on this side of the House are celebrating the 25th anniversary in medicare, and thousands and thousands of other people are - that we have a situation where people have to leave this province to get health care. And I think if the members opposite understood the people of this province and understood how important health care is to the people of this province, that they would make sure that they properly fund the health care system in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about some other people. This caller has a son who has ear problems. The problem was noticed in October of 1985, and they couldn't see a specialist until February of 1986. They then waited for a bed until August of 1986 when he had surgery. During this period of time the child lost 20 pounds. He dropped from 50 pounds, Mr. Speaker, to 30 pounds. Due to the long waiting list the child has a speech impediment and must see a therapist. He's also developed a heart murmur. He is behind in physical development. He is doing poorly in school. He's completely lost hearing on his right side.

And this is interesting, Mr. Speaker. This caller says that in 1982 her daughter had the same surgery and only had to wait two months from the time she saw her GP until surgery - 1982, Mr. Speaker. That's the year that we had been in government. That's the year that people of Saskatchewan still had some semblance of health care because these people hadn't had time to bring in their wrecking ball, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have another example. This caller's daughter waited seven months to get into hospital for surgery on her ear. Now the child is deaf, due to a long waiting list.

Mr. Speaker, I now want to talk about some of the staffing



problems and staff shortages that we see at hospitals and health care facilities around this province. And I want to talk about how the University Hospital, for instance, is dealing with the whole question of staffing. This is the phase one of their program, and this program apparently is designed to save as many dollars as we can, in order - and I quote - "to save jobs." And this document is as of April 2, 1987, and what it says is the following:

University Hospital has had to introduce these measures because of the funding shortfalls of the Government of Saskatchewan. All vacant staff positions are frozen immediately. All forms of relief for vacation, sick leave, maternity, will be severely restricted. Sick leave utilization will be carefully reviewed, and firm steps will be taken to promote responsible use of this benefit. Staff who have been off four or more times will be interviewed by their department head and employee health office. A more extensive health program with the appropriate counselling will be established, and a wellness incentive program will be announced. Student employment opportunities will be restricted to available government funds - and we all know that non-profit organizations did not get any student funds this summer because of the policies of the members opposite.

Hospital orientation and CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) training will be reduced or eliminated. Standing orders in diagnostic tests will be reviewed by the medical staff, and reductions will be made wherever possible. Opportunities to expand revenue will be explored. Reductions are to be made in all operating expenses, including the frugal use of all supplies. A decreased bed census for the period June 19 to September 7 is to be organized, including controls in out-patient volumes. Such a plan will permit staff scheduling, with a view to having employees exercise the option of taking leaves of absence without pay.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there we have it. That's how one hospital is responding to the critical nature of the underfunding of health care in this province, brought on by the policies of the members opposite, members opposite who aren't committed to medicare in this province.

I want to talk about the wellness incentive program. This is interesting. This is what we have taking place in our hospitals - one hospital - as a result of the funding of the government opposite.

The wellness incentive program, or initiative, is a program which is aimed at rewarding employees who have perfect attendance during an individual month and/or for an entire year. The program is effective June 7, 1987 and will run under a trial basis until June 6, 1988. Five employees who have had perfect attendance for two consecutive pay periods beginning June 7, 1987 will be randomly selected through the personnel computer, and each will receive awards of \$100.

Announcements of the awards recipients will be made at

the 15th of the following month. There will be 14 draws made using the above criteria. In addition, a further draw will be made of five randomly selected employees who have had perfect attendance for 26 consecutive pay periods, or one year. Further information will be made available as the results of the programs are known.

Mr. Speaker, I support employees coming to work, doing a good day's work, being paid. I don't support employees coming to work in health care facilities when they may be sick. My concern with this particular measure is that we have an incentive program that may, and I say may, encourage employees to come to work when they're ill. That's the kind of procedures we're having introduced in hospitals, one hospital, as a result of the underfunding of hospitals throughout the piece by the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, I wanted to talk about some of the other staffing problems that have been identified by the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses. And here's what the staff shortages have meant for a number of patients around the province.

Here's an example. The caller's sister-in-law passed away in July of 1987. The resident was ill . . . Pardon me, I'm reading the wrong one. Hospitals are not replacing staff enough. Nurses are having to do other jobs - example, housekeeping. These duties keep nurses away from nursing care. The caller asks that staff be allocated to coincide with patient needs, and my colleague from Saskatoon Centre certainly talked about that.

Here we have another example. The caller's husband had emergency surgery for an acute vascular problem. Before surgery, the husband was a strong, elderly man. Post-operatively, a lack of staff led to inadequate care. The patient had to sit up in a chair for hours. He received a scrape that didn't heal. The caller said this was not the nurse's fault. The caller said that she spent most of her day in hospital, Mr. Speaker. She fed her husband lunch and supper, looked after her husband, was called in by the head nurse to sit with her husband during blood transfusions, due to a shortage of staff.

The special care unit had only one nurse for four critically ill patients. The caller has seen nurses running down corridors to do their work. The doctors prescribe many medications to keep this caller's husband quiet. The caller feels her husband wouldn't be alive today if she hadn't been there to take care of him. The caller requested her husband be transferred from that hospital. He's not in another hospital recuperating. He's been taken off all of the medication and still has an unhealed wound from the fall. The caller states that more nursing staff is needed.

Here's another example. The caller stated in her experience as a critically ill patient that nurses become short tempered with their clients when they're chronically short-staffed. And obviously, Mr. Speaker, when you're run off your feet and people are asking you from all directions to help them, you don't have enough support help with you, you don't have enough professional colleagues with you, obviously you're going to be short tempered.

And I and a number of other people in this province, do not blame health care workers if they become a little short tempered because of these staffing situations in this province, because of the understaffing of health care by the members opposite.

Here's another example. This caller stated that in January of 1987 her mother was kept in emergency for 26 hours, then discharged. Her father was kept in a recovery room for a longer period because there was a shortage of staff. She encourages people to give information re problems with hospitals. And the list goes one and on.

Here's another one. The caller told the hot line that certified nursing assistants are being left alone on wards without R.N. supervision during Code 99's. How appalling. That's what hospitals and other health care facilities are having to resort to because of the underfunding of the members opposite.

Here's another example. This person's son was admitted to a pediatrics unit in a city hospital, only two nurses on duty for the whole ward. There were several interrupts during the admission procedure and while the nurse was starting his IV. Nurses never had time to read information on the admission forms. Caller states that there should be more nurses on the evening shift so nurses have time to read the information and do their duties.

Mr. Speaker, obviously we have to have people in hospitals that have time to read the charts. If we don't, patients' health care is undermined, and patients' health is put in jeopardy. We don't want that sort of underfunding in Saskatchewan hospitals where it could possibly lead to a situation where someone's life is in jeopardy and threatened. That's not the kind of health care people in this province want.

Mr. Speaker, here's another one. This caller knows a nurse who worked on pediatrics and two nurses had to look after 45 sick children on a regular basis. In one case she was carrying a child who was vomiting while tending to another patient. A young boy had to hook himself to a machine because the nurse couldn't get to him. The nurse quit nursing because it was too stressful. Caller feels this is an unsafe situation. Nurses are overworked and more staff should be provided.

I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I've spoken to numerous nurses. Some of them have left the profession because they cannot, they cannot put up with the stress of the situation; they can't put up with the stress of being constantly overworked; they can't put up with the stress of constantly being understaffed; they can't put up with the stress of being sick and feeling as though they have to go to work. Because if they don't, it may lead to ill feelings with their colleagues because it only means their colleagues have to do so much more work because sick nurses aren't being replaced. And I tell you, Mr. Speaker, the situation is critical and it's time the members opposite realize what was happening in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I have another situation. This caller is concerned about the cut-backs in the hospitals because she is booked for surgery. She called the office of the Minister of Health; she expressed concern in regard to

these cut-backs in the hospital. She was told to discuss these concerns with her doctors and the nurses in the hospital. Well isn't that something!

The Minister of Health and his staff who are responsible for the overall health care system in this province, the overall health care policy in this province, is contacted and advised that we have a patient here who can't get into hospital. And what does the minister's staff say? - call your doctor, call your nurse.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on at great lengths about this issue, as an important issue, as an issue that we will be raising on a number occasions in the months ahead. I would encourage the members opposite to support this critical and very urgent motion that we put forward. It's important to the overall health of this province. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — I have been waiting anxiously to get into this debate and I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:01 p.m.