

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Goodale:— Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise under rule 11 to file a petition on behalf of certain constituents in Assiniboia-Gravelbourg. This petition is signed by several hundred people, mostly from the Mossbank district in the vicinity of Old Wives Lake. These petitioners are concerned about a serious public health, environmental, and agricultural problem in their area that results from clouds of alkali dust blowing off that huge, dry salt flat that Old Wives Lake has become.

These petitioners ask the legislature to urge the Government of Saskatchewan . . .

Mr. Speaker:— Order. order. I believe that the member is getting into debate. I believe the member knows the rules of the House regarding the tabling of petitions — to simply state the intent or the purpose of the petition and to table it.

Mr. Goodale:— Yes, just a sentence, Mr. Speaker, I was about to do that. The petitioners concerned about the problem that I just mentioned ask the legislature to call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to take all necessary remedial action to correct that problem.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Crown Corporations

Clerk Assistant:— Mr. Speaker, Mr. Kopelchuk from the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations presents the second report of the said committee which is as follows:—

Since the committee's last report on October 30, 1987, your committee has held four meetings during the intersessional period.

Your committee has completed consideration of the following 1985 outstanding reports of corporations:—

Crown Investments Corporation, 1985
Potash Corporations of Saskatchewan, 1985
Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation, 1985
Saskatchewan Government Printing, 1985

Your committee has completed consideration of the following 1986 reports of corporations:—

Crown Investments Corporation
Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan
Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation
Saskatchewan Government Printing
Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation
Saskatchewan Power Corporation

Souris Basin Development Authority

Your committee is pleased to report that this now completes all the outstanding work of the committee. Your committee will begin reviewing new reports as they are tabled.

Mr. Kopelchuk:— Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move, seconded by the member from Regina North West:

That the second report of the Standing committee on Crown Corporations be now concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Martin:— Mr. Speaker, It is my pleasure to introduce to you, and to the members of the House and to members of the gallery, 22 students from Wilfrid Walker School in Regina in Regina Wascana. Many of those students — or several of them at least — were here on Monday for the opening of the Legislative Assembly and enjoyed it then; I hope they enjoy it today as well. They are accompanied by Bruce Baldwin, who is their teacher. I would ask all members of the House to please welcome the students from Wilfrid Walker School.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Possible Sale of Sask Minerals

Ms. Atkinson:— Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Can the Premier confirm that the minister of privatization will be holding two public meetings tomorrow in Chaplin, and that the first public meeting will be held with the employees of the Saskatchewan Minerals, and the second with the people of Chaplin? And can the minister confirm that the purpose of these meetings is to announce the sale of Saskatchewan Minerals?

Hon. Mr. Devine:— Well, Mr. Speaker, I can't confirm or not whether that meeting will take place; it may be. But the minister will certainly be prepared to elaborate about the meetings on public participation and privatization to the hon. member. But I don't have the minister's agenda or itinerary before me, so I just can't say whether that's the case or not. It may be; it may not.

Ms. Atkinson:— Supplementary. Could the Premier confirm that the meetings are to announce the sale of these two provincial assets to Agassiz Resources of Toronto? And can he tell us what steps, if any, were taken to tender the sale of Saskatchewan Minerals?

Hon. Mr. Devine:— Well, Mr. Speaker, I can say that that and several other public participation possibilities have been actively reviewed and researched, and the minister will be glad to respond to them in considerable detail. So yes, they have been considered and several others have, and he's probably involved in discussing them with people even as we speak.

Mr. Calvert:— Mr. Speaker, my question is also to the Premier, and perhaps this is a question he can answer. Mr. Premier, why in the world would you want to sell off Saskatchewan Minerals in the first place? Mr. Premier, as you know, or should know, for the past 40 years this company has year after year after year shown a profit. It has paid out, as you should know, \$61 million in wages. It has paid over 12 million to the province in royalties. It has paid over 40 million to the province in dividends. It has retained earnings of \$6 million. In these times, when these kinds of revenues are so desperately needed for health care, for education, and highways, youth employment, why would you want to give them to your friends?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine:— Mr. Speaker, the opposition says that they understand privatization and public participation. They say that they are not necessarily against it and they would endorse it. But they will say they don't particularly like the items that we are allowing the public to participate.

If you have a profitable operation, you would like to allow people to participate in that, and it's one of the basic arguments for, say, Power bonds where we said, we've got a Crown corporation; it's a utility; the people of Saskatchewan would like to participate. Now the NDP never did that and allowed Saskatchewan people to get in on it, or they never allowed the public to participate in anything else except to say that it's just owned by the government.

We have done that in privatizations like with Weyerhaeuser, to take a debt and turn it into a profitable situation and create new jobs. We will look at combinations of things that we can do in the computer industry and others, so that we can create new economic activity. And with respect to operations like this where, in fact, we can explore the possibilities for employees to participate and they . . . and not usually recommended by the NDP. In fact, normally they're against having union members participate in a company for a profit-taking situation. We encourage that, Mr. Speaker, and we have in this case and we will in others.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert:— Mr. Premier, we're talking about Saskatchewan Minerals here. I asked you why in the world you would want to sell Saskatchewan Minerals. I have another question. How is it that you can describe a sale of a Saskatchewan company to a private firm like Agassiz or some other private firm, how in the world can you describe that as public participation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine:— Mr. Speaker, I have already been through the arguments with respect to both privatization and public participation in the legislature and in public. Generally what we want to see is the economic activity improved and increased so that we can have more jobs.

The best example, and the opposition are against, is taking a public corporations like PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp Company) and selling it, privatizing it into the private sector hands like Weyerhaeuser and creating a profit in creating new jobs. About 150 to 200 new jobs will be opened in August — I believe August 1 or August 15 — which is a brand-new industry here in the province, because we have decided to privatize it. That makes good sense. The NDP forced us into a position where we lost \$91,000 a day, and we're going to be making a great deal of profit. We want to do the same sort of things to create economic activity wherever possible, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert:— Mr. Premier, we're not talking about Weyerhaeuser; we're not talking about SaskPower; we're talking about Sask Minerals at Chaplin and Ingebrigt. If you're selling Sask Minerals to Agassiz or some other private corporation, please tell me how that becomes public participation?

Some Hon. Members:— Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine:— Every time we do one of these, Mr. Speaker, the opposition stands up and said, well, why would you sell it to the private sector, or why would you allow employees to participate, or why would you allow the public? I'll tell you that you're quite a ways behind the public. The public wants to participate. They want to see it grow, and they want to see profitable operations, and they want to see us in a prosperous situation. Now we inherited many, many, many public corporations that were not doing that well, or that could do much better.

We, Mr. Speaker, have allowed the public to participate in this, and we've privatized some so that we can go on and look at a situation where we're creating economic activity, and this is exactly the case here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Collective Bargaining for Teachers

Mr. Rolfes:— Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education. Mr. Minister, the teachers in this province, as you well know, are a patient and dedicated group of individuals, Mr. Minister. However, the morale of the teachers has been going down very steadily, and I am concerned that the quality of education is going to be going down very quickly unless we have some resolution to the collective bargaining procedure. Your colleague, Mr. Minister, the Minister of Finance, didn't hesitate to intervene in the bargaining position with his zero and zero announcement.

Mr. Minister, my question to you is this: when are you going to use your office to intervene and have a fair and reasonable offering to the teachers of this province?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth:— Well, Mr. Speaker, I continue to be optimistic that the process that has worked over the last decade, more relative to teacher bargaining in this province, can work again. I continue to be optimistic that there will be a satisfactorily concluded agreement. I acknowledge that while negotiations and the satisfactory

agreement is outstanding that it does hang like a dark cloud over teachers' heads and does probably curb enthusiasm in terms of getting on with a very busy and positive agenda in education.

At the same time we are there bargaining in good faith. There's a new deal on the table, a good deal, a fair deal, a reasonable deal, I think. A mediator has now been called in, and I may view that as having been somewhat unnecessary, but if that can bring this deal to a successful conclusion, then I favour that, and I indeed do believe that we will have a successfully concluded contract negotiations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes:— Mr. Minister, you told the teachers three weeks ago that you were optimistic and that you had made a new deal to the teachers of zero, zero, and three.

Mr. Minister, I'm asking you again. You violated, through your government, your zero, zero announcement when you made an offer to SaskTel, SGI, and SaskPower. The Minister of Finance violated it when he sent out the \$1,000 to those employees. I ask you, Mr. Minister: do you not believe that the teachers in this province are as important as your own patronage appointments that you gave increases to? And don't you think that the teachers in this province deserve the same kind of raise that the managers of your Crown corporations, the friends of the Premier, received just recently?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth:— Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm . . . nor do I think the hon. member would want us to, or . . . this is not the forum nor the process that negotiations should take place in. I'm not here to negotiate. And in so far as that is or isn't on the table, I'm not so sure that the hon. member has a good understanding of what in fact the new offer as it relates to teacher may well be.

And in so far as how well the bargaining is going on, I think it's significant, Mr. Speaker, that the bargaining team, up until yesterday, had met six out of the last eight days, including all through Saturday and all through Sunday and, as I understand it, Monday morning as well. Yes, a deal not yet concluded, but I continue to be something more than cautiously optimistic, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Rolfes:— Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Mr. Minister, let me ask you again. The Minister of Finance did not hesitate to intervene, but that has been the stumbling block for the last 25 or 26 meetings that were going on. Not one offer made by the negotiating team on your side of the first 22 meetings, basically because the Minister of Finance had intervened in the collective bargaining process. I ask you now, Mr. Minister: do you think it is fair on your part, as Minister of Education, to let the quality of education suffer because of the interference of your colleague, and now you won't interfere to make sure that the teachers of this province get a fair and reasonable offer? Mr. Minister, I ask you: will you assure this House that you will get involved and settle this dispute so that the teachers can get on with their job of educating the children of this province? Would you

give us that assurance?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth:— Mr. Speaker, I and our government are involved. The negotiations agree that we represent one-half of the government-trustee bargaining team. It is true that about a year ago now the Minister of Finance, on behalf of our government, put forth an economic statement. The whole basis and the reason for putting out that economic statement was this: is that in dealing with the economic realities and making sure that we have our economic house in order so that the very children who are in school today will not see their education jeopardized, the whole base for the economic statement was to lay out some guide-lines so we could deal with the teachers and the nurses and our own public servants and Crown corporations, and the list goes on and on, in a fair and even-handed way.

What we were saying to the public of Saskatchewan is that we're all in this together, and we're not about to start picking and lining up sides or driving wedges in between one group and another. And I think I, and I think many of the teachers, would dispute your statement about the quality of education in our schools. They are professionals, and I have every reason to believe that this very day they're giving 100 per cent, as the true professional would. And they are true professionals, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker:— Final supplementary.

Mr. Rolfes:— Final supplementary question. Mr. Minister, don't you think it's somewhat unfair, first of all, for the Minister of Finance to intervene? And that's fair for everybody, you say. But then you intervened again, your government, and gave raises to people who didn't even ask for that raise.

Secondly, you gave a raise to your Crown management people of up to \$10,000. I ask you, Mr. Minister:— how do you think that that is fair to the teachers of this province when you give to your own friends these huge increases? When are you going to start to be fair to everybody?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth:— You raise the point relative to fairness. It seems to me the only way that you can judge that is if you have some understanding of indeed what is on the table and what has been discussed at the table with the teachers. I don't believe that you do have a good understanding, and I think if you did you would see that indeed we are being fair, and we aren't interested in driving a wedge between one sector or another — rural versus urban, teacher versus farmer, or any other scenario you might like to raise.

Task Force on Health

Ms. Simard:— Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health. Yesterday, Mr. Minister, the Premier spoke in glowing terms about his

task force on health care issues, but just last year, on April 7 to be exact, you appointed Mr. Elmer Schwartz, president of Saskatoon City Hospital, to undertake a 12-month study of the provincial health care system.

Mr. Minister, we haven't seen Mr. Schwartz's report yet, and yet you're still talking about another study. Is it that the Schwartz study is not to your liking, Mr. Minister, or is it that you're planning to use the task force to steer the heat that you are taking on your government's poor performance in health care?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod:— Mr. Speaker, just a quick reference to the report the hon. member refers to, the Elmer Schwartz report. Elmer Schwartz did a study as it relates to the role of regional hospitals in this province — a very, very narrowly defined study, and so on, and that's fine. And those kinds of things will go on from time to time. They have for a long time, and they will continue in an enterprise as large as the health care system in a province like Saskatchewan. That's one thing.

But as far as the hon. member's suggestion that this task force . . . and we heard it from her leader here yesterday, standing in the lead-off question of a brand-new session and condemning the idea that people in this province who will represent excellence in the province, people who will represent excellence and a good cross-section of this province — and we'll announce that as time goes on with the members of that task force — and they come forward and say:— oh, this will not work; this is the kind of thing that you're trying to do as some kind of a partisan whitewash job — all the kinds of rhetoric that you hear coming from that side of the House, Mr. Speaker. We've heard it for — how many years now? And the new leader comes into the House and brings his new Health critic in with the same rhetoric that's been around for — what is he into now? — the third decade of his time in the House, and the same issues are being raised by them.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to this task force for this reason: the demographics in this province are changing. The need for significant expenditure as it relates to high technology and the kind of technology which will serve the society well is extremely important to understand. There's a whole series of issues surrounding health care which are far too great to be tied to the kind of rhetoric that comes from the mouths of those members over there, Mr. Speaker.

This province will be very well served by the task force that comes forward, and the citizens of this province will welcome it, as we have seen from the press reports from people in the health sector.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard:— Mr. Minister, the public would like to have this study of Mr. Schwartz made public. You will have heard, Mr. Minister, that Dr. Scharfstein, president of the Saskatchewan Medical Association, has in effect said that there are enough health care studies sitting on government shelves, and we don't need another one unless it has some teeth.

Now, Mr. Minister, have you been in contact with Dr. Scharfstein, and have you been able to convince him that this study is somehow different and that it will not be proposing the same old outdated PC policies?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod:— Mr. Speaker, when I say that the health care sector in the widest possible sense will include representation of the doctors, Dr. Scharfstein being the president of the SMA (Saskatchewan Medical Association — Dr. Scharfstein is one of the people in this province that I've talked to at some length about the need for a blueprint in the development of a health care system, which is more than just a discussion of — if this task force ever came to be just a discussion of the costs or just a discussion of some narrow aspect, Dr. Scharfstein's fears that you quote would be well founded, I agree with that. But Dr. Scharfstein knows, as well, that that's not the intention.

And you see in the press today, representatives of the SRNA, the registered nurses association, asking for an opportunity to be very much involved in this because they see the need for just this kind of blueprint developing mechanism.

You go across all of the sectors; the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association are asking for this kind of thing. This is a response, this is a reasoned and thoughtful response to the kind of representation that have been made to us, and they say: come forward with a blueprint, come forward with a mechanism whereby this society — this society, not just this political party, but this wider society which holds health care very dear — has an outline for the future. And that outline for the future must be beyond next Tuesday or beyond the . . .

Mr. Speaker:— Order. Order. Order.

Ms. Simard:— Mr. Minister, I have to laugh when I hear rhetoric about you holding health care dear when you decimated one of the best dental programs in North America . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard:— . . . all in the name of ideology, Mr. Minister.

Now, Mr. Minister, almost a year ago you fired more than 400 dental care professionals connected with the school-based children's dental plan, and I understand only about 50 of them have been able to find employment since then, and it's not all full-time employment. Have these dental technicians, Mr. Minister, been invited to sit on your task force?

Hon. Mr. McLeod:— Mr. Speaker, I have in my hand . . . The members opposite will stand in the House, two days in a row now, and suggest that the mechanism of a task force, that kind of thing, is inappropriate. She says it's inappropriate and once again she stands today. I have in my hand: *Health, a Need for Redirection, A Task Force on the Allocation of Health Care Resources*. One of the

commissioners, Mr. Speaker . . . here we are, Joan Watson, chairman; Roy Romanow, B.A., LL.B., QC . . .

Mr. Speaker:— Order. Order. Order. Order. The hon. members knows that the members' names are not to be used.

Hon. Mr. McLeod:— I do realize, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize for using the name of a member, although I was quoting from the book and showing you the picture which had his name under it. But he was on there.

Some of the recommendations of this task force — that the member condemns the idea of task forces on one hand and on another hand will have served on a task force — which among the recommendations were: quit building new hospitals; stop building new hospitals, is what he said in here, and now as a new leader will stand and say, here you have a whitewash in the task force. Was that member involved in a whitewash exercise when he was a commissioner? Is that his view of the way task forces are done?

I don't deny that this task force did some good, or I don't deny the existence of it or anything else. I deny the way those folks will stand on one side — on one side of their mouth they will say, this task force proposed by you and by the health sector of Saskatchewan is somehow wrong, but a task force that that now leader served on is somehow right. Mr. Speaker, that makes no sense.

Mr. Speaker, the task force proposed in our throne speech is a task force which will well serve the people of this province, not only now, but into the future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard:— Mr. Minister, we want to know who you appointments to this task force are going to be. Your record in the past has been less than good, I might say, with patronage appointment after patronage appointment.

Mr. Minister, in the city of Saskatoon we have almost 11,000 people who are waiting for hospital beds in order to receive necessary surgery. Have you asked these patients, Mr. Minister, to chose a representative to sit on your task force?

Hon. Mr. McLeod:— Mr. Speaker, the task force, as I have said, will have representation of excellence in this province. There is no question about that.

And I just invite the members to wait, and when the task force is announced I will be willing, and I will be very quick to quote back some of these things they are saying about the kinds of members that will be on the task force. And we'll see what they will have to say at that time, as they sit here in advance and condemn people who will serve on this task force.

But that's good. I want to see this. I'm very pleased they're taking the attack that they are. It's the attack that I couldn't believe that they would do, but they are now into it. That's wonderful, as far as I'm concerned.

Mr. Speaker, I quote once again from the same task force report, one recommendation, one of the things, and I quote now, Mr. Speaker:

The health problems we face today are complex and difficult to solve (said the former commissioner). Moreover, it would seem probable that tomorrow's health problems will be at least as complex as today's and will continue to place further demands on our resources.

One of the things . . . All of these things that he was involved in are the kinds of things which we are trying to grapple with, as we are involve din the responsibility that is ours at the present time to try to bring a health care system to this province which makes sense in a financial, as well as in a service point of view.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard:— Mr. Minister, if your government was a little more competent, we wouldn't need a task force on health care issues.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard:— Now In the last provincial convention, many members of the PC Party expressed the opinion that we needed a health care system, that what we need in health care was deterrent fees.

Now I know you say you're going to appoint good people to the task force, and we're waiting to see who you appoint, but quite frankly, Mr. Minister, we don't trust you, and nor do the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard:— What I want to know is how many people who put forward the resolution for deterrent fees in the PC Party are going to sit on this task force? Can you tell us how many, Mr. Minister? And isn't that the real reason for this task force, to validate the PC Party policy for deterrent fees in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod:— Mr. Chairman, once again the very narrow view, that what should be noted here is the very narrow, extremely narrow view of that New Democratic Party opposition. Extremely narrow. She says we don't need a task force if you were more competent. She says that everybody in the health care sector, not only in Saskatchewan but in this country, knows that this health care system in our country, 25 years old, an excellent system, has served us well, needs some good hard looks in terms of the service into the future. She says, oh, we don't trust you. Well I can tell the hon. member this much: I won't be the chairman of the new task force; I'll tell you that much. I won't be the chairman, so you can rest assured of that, that's fine.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod:— And the people that will be running this task force and will be part of it will be people who

will represent excellence in this province — people who have served this province in various capacities in the past and will serve this province well in the future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Van Mulligen:— Before orders of the day, I'd like to raise a point of order. You have ruled on many occasions that members shall not use direct quotations when putting a supplementary question in a question period. I wonder then, is it proper for a minister to also then use quotations in answering a supplementary question.

Mr. Speaker:— I will take not of the member's point of order and bring back a decision at a later date. Order, order.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Mr. Neudorf.

Mr. Romanow:— Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to resume the debate on the Speech from the Throne. Yesterday I touched on what I thought were some of the major flaws and shortcomings evident in that Speech and have made this government opposite, Mr. Speaker, probably the most unpopular government in the history of the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— And this afternoon I intend to expand on some of those themes, perhaps not at too much length. But basically I want to make one point clear, and to make one message, if I may, in the result of my remarks this afternoon, and that is that this Speech from the Throne is evidence beyond any doubt that this government in Saskatchewan at this time in its history, Mr. Speaker, has no game plan, has no blueprint, has no vision for the people of the province of Saskatchewan — none whatsoever, none whatsoever.

It has no idea as to how it is going to get the farm crisis resolved or eased; it has no game plan for young people unemployed — the jobless rate's sky-rocketing, the welfare rate and those on welfare also increasing; has no idea as to what to do with taxes except to pile more on, and I'll have a word to say about that; has no idea as to how to bring the fiscal house of Saskatchewan into order, a cumulative debt of \$3.5 billion at least. This, Mr. Speaker, is a government which is rudderless, leaderless, and visionless, and this Speech from the Throne verifies that beyond any doubt whatsoever, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— Now let me give you a specific example. In question period today a good deal of the time was spent on the question of a task force on health care services, and it's also in the Speech from the Throne, so it's very relevant to my remarks.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I invite you to consider what's happening here. This administration was elected in April of 1982. We are now in operation under the Progressive Conservatives in Saskatchewan for approaching six years. In that six years . . . inaudible interjection) . . . Thank heavens, somebody opposite says there. I wonder if they'd say thank heavens to one of the 11,000 people in Saskatoon alone, many of whom are suffering from serious illness like cancer, who can't get in a hospital bed. I say shame on the opposite member opposite who says thank heavens for that.

Under a health care system, 11,000 people without hospitals beds in Saskatoon alone, 5,000 or 6,000 in Regina. Mr. Speaker, we have had, under this administration of six years, the decimation of the children's dental scheme — finest program in Canada, if not North America; we've seen the denuding of the prescription drug plan; we've seen an attack on the health care system both at the medicare level and the hospitalization level, probably the likes of which we have not seen since the days of the late premier Ross Thatcher; and we've seen a repeated rhetoric, a repeated drum beat message put out by the Premier and the Minister of Health as we do today again, saying that all of this is justifiable. All of this misery which they wrought upon the ordinary people of Saskatchewan is justifiable, they would have us believe, because of some crisis, financial crisis, which the health care system has imposed upon the province of Saskatchewan, when the truth of the matter is that it is the profligacy and the waste and the mismanagement of this PC government that has brought about the financial crisis.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— No one, no one, Mr. Speaker, would oppose a legitimate discussion of the services and health care and where we're heading in our health services. I think it's time to take a look at health care services. No one's attacking the potential nominees of any such task force on health care services. That's not the issue that is here.

But there are two issues here. The first one has to be asked and has not been answered: why is it that after five years of decimation of health care, all of a sudden this PC government has decided that it needs now a task force to study the future of health care? Why is it, after five years of, in effect, attacking and tearing it down brick by brick, they are now going to put this thing on shelf, virtually for a year or two years — nobody knows the timetable either of this task force — to study it in detail.

I say, Mr. Speaker, there's an easy answer why they're doing that. This government is doing this for one simple reason — its unpopularity generally. But its unpopularity about what it's done to health care is at such an all-time low that the task force is the only possible way of saving the political bacon for the government opposite, and that's the real reason behind this force.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— The Minister of Health in question period referred to my involvement with the Canadian medical Association task force on health care costs. That's true. He says he can't deny the existence of the report. It's pretty hard for him to deny the existence of the report since he's waving it around.

I wish he would read the report. I think the report was a very, very good study, limited budget, a limited timetable, limited agenda for the report. But given the circumstances that we were provided, the commissioners that were involved on this privately commissioned review of the task force services of health care did a job. You may accept or reject the recommendations, but we did a job.

But the point that I ask here, Mr. Speaker, is this, of the government. If health care is such a big drag on the treasury, as the Premier would have us believe, as the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Health would have us believe, if health care needs a new reorientation and a direction, if this government would have us believe that it's on top of the job, that it knows which way it's going, that it truly is managing the affairs of the province in the best interests of the people who are ill and those who need access to our health care system, why is that they're not able to tell this legislature and the people of Saskatchewan the details of the task force, namely, who is going to be on it, what are the terms of reference, what is the budget, what is the timetable? Why don't they let the people of Saskatchewan in on this secret so that we all know that their intentions are honourable?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— Mr. Speaker, I have a belief that one of two answers can be given to that question. Either the Premier and the Minister of Health as of this day don't know the answers to those questions, because so much of their policy is policy which is just grabbed out of the air seemingly in response to political opinion making, and now they're rustling to political opinion making, and now they're rustling around trying to make phone calls to individuals in Saskatchewan, asking for the circumstances and who would ask to contribute.

Last night I spoke to the Saskatoon and District Medical Society. A hundred doctors were in attendance. Question period asked: did I know anything about the task force on health services in the province of Saskatchewan? I said I didn't know, but I'd ask questions. I asked the doctors, did they know anything about the task force on health care services? Not one doctor there volunteered any information about their participation or involvement about the task force on health care services, Mr. Speaker, not one.

Nobody knew it, no openness, no consultation, no consideration with the nurses. No wonder everybody approaches the Minister of Health today and says: look we want in on this task force. You know why they want in on this task force because they have seen the record of this government, that if they're excluded from serious studies, the damage that this government is capable of could set medicare back even a further 25 years than it's

been set back under this administration.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— But I think there is another aspect also to this question that I ask about: why is it the government cannot provide the details? We'd be prepared to support a task force on health care, if the composition is one of independent and concerned citizens; I will support that task force. If this task force is given a proper budget and a proper time table and a free and open mandate, we'll support them to study it.

But there is another ominous aspect of this whole question and answer and of this Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, which I think needs to be brought out. Yesterday in question period I directly and purposely and simply asked the Premier two or three questions pertaining to his understanding of what the mandate on this task force would be.

I asked him and the government whether or not the issue of deterrent fees would be excluded from the mandate. I don't care who you asked to serve on the task force, Mr. Speaker; if you limit the terms and the conditions of the study, you're going to get a certain result. I've asked the Premier in question period; my colleague, the critic for the Department of Health, the member from Regina Lakeview, today in question and answer period did the same thing.

They could solve a lot of the confusion that they say we're sowing in the seeds of the province of Saskatchewan by telling us in simple straightforward terms: have they ruled out in this task force the mandate of looking at deterrent fees as a way of controlling what they say are runaway costs in health care. And the Premier refused, flatly refused, not once but three times yesterday, to deny that that was on the agenda.

I say to you, sir, and I say to the Premier and the PC government opposite, what they are doing is this: they are establishing repeatedly through this rhetoric of the costs of health care by the way of false allegation. Our Canadian Medical Association task force study — it's dated now, about two years ago — proved that Saskatchewan's and Canada's portion of devotion to the health care scheme is not wildly out of control, that we don't have runaway, sky-rocketing costs in health. That documentation is there. But I think that this rhetoric, Mr. Speaker, is being put forward specifically to set the stage to establish a task force which could look at the question of deterrent fees or some other imposition of penalty on those who are sick and those who are needy.

I say to you, sir, that the lack of information in the Speech from the Throne about the task force; I say to you the evasiveness in the answers given to us by the minister; I say to you the gamesmanship given by the Minister of Health and the Premier should sound off warning bells and alarm bells for everybody who loves and cares and is concerned for the medicare and hospitalization system of this province. And for our part in opposition, Mr. Speaker, we are going to be asking these questions until we get the answers, and we're going to be monitoring this task force to make sure that they don't further dismantle health care

in the province of Saskatchewan.

(1445)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— Because, Mr. Speaker, the record of this government is that; it's a record of dismantlement at every stage of the game.

I want to turn to an issue which turns to be the corner-stone, or one of the corner-stones, of this government's policies announced in the Speech from the Throne — privatization. Now, Mr. Speaker, I take the position that privatization, when it's advanced, should be taken a look at by all members of the legislature and the public, and the proposal should be examined carefully before a pronouncement is made on what the proposal is.

But I don't think that's the government's approach. They're not viewing privatization from a pragmatic point of view. They're not advancing it as something which is in a common sense proposition. Privatization to them is an article of faith, Mr. Speaker. Privatization to them is an ideologically blinkered, right wing, small c, conservative message which harkens all the way back to the 1930s and beyond. There is nothing new which is at the core, at the fundamental core, or privatization. It's been the message of every dinosaur Conservative and Liberal Party that's ever walked the face of the political map in Canada and North America.

Privatization belongs to those groups of men and women who say that there is little role for government, or virtually no role for government. They would denude the role of government in some key, important areas.

I say to you, sir, that the prosperity of this province, before this gang opposite you, to the right of you, took office in the province of Saskatchewan, was based because our forefathers and those of us who still care and love this province believed in a mixed economy. We knew that private enterprise alone could not do it. It's handicapped by vast distances. It's handicapped by the climatic decisions. It's handicapped by Conservative governments and Liberal governments in Ottawa which are remote and have many thousands of miles of distance from our needs. They don't know the problems.

We're handicapped by the railways and the discriminatory freight rates. We're handicapped by the grain exchange in Winnipeg, in Manitoba, in the historical purposes. We've been handicapped, the private sector has, at every stage of the game. And every successive government, whether it's Liberal or NDP or CCF — with the exception of this one that is here today, the PCs — has understood that the private sector alone can't make the economy work in the province of Saskatchewan.

What's taken place? In recognition of this reality, Mr. Speaker, we have understood that we've had to build a mixed economy, that we had to have three engines working for us. We had to have a strong, healthy private sector; we also had to have a strong, healthy co-operative sector which arose partly in response to the

circumstances that I've just described; and we also had to have, where necessary, a vital, active public service or public involvement, public enterprise, in the mixed economy.

Private enterprise. First and foremost, the Saskatchewan business men, they make it work. They provide the jobs; they take the risk; they should be given the reward. The co-operative sector, because they have another ideology and philosophy — but they too provide jobs; they too are Saskatchewan, and where necessary, the people of this province, through government involvement and government intervention. It's a mixed economy, and in proper proportions the three of them working together are like the engines that fuel the economy of this province to some wealth generation.

And that wealth generation can be redistributed so that we can have medicare, and we can have hospitalization, and we can have roads, and we can have the finest educational system — which we had prior to 1982, because all governments believed in that mixed economy and those three engines. Now once in a while you'd have a Liberal administration like the late premier, Ross Thatcher. His emphasis, because of ideology, might be to put more approach to the private sector. Under a CCF of NDP some might argue there might be more emphasis on a co-op sector or, on occasion, a public sector. I think that's subject to some debate, however. There have been these differences, but all three sectors and all three engines have been relied upon regardless of the political ideology of the government of the day.

But not so with these new people, these new centurions that are in office in Regina. Not so, Mr. Speaker. They now want to take us back to the 1930s. They want to take us back to the days of pure private enterprise right here in the middle of the prairies where we have to pay excessive and exorbitant freight rates, where we have difficulty getting our products to the markets. What they want to do is, they want to cancel out two of the three engines. They want to privatize ideologically, blindly, without any economic sense, those aspects of public enterprise which contributed to our economy, and they want to hinder and to hobble the co-operative sector. They want us to be working on one cylinder only, the private enterprise cylinder — one only.

And I tell you, the minister over there from Regina, the member from Regina South, who is the biggest advocate, and the one who sits on the right wing of that administration more than anybody, not only Saskatchewan small business he wants to ignore, he wants to have us run on one cylinder. And that one cylinder, by his notions of grandeur, must be from Weyerhaeuser in Alabama or from Pocklington in Edmonton or from the big boys outside of Saskatchewan. They're even hurting their own Saskatchewan businesses . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— What stupidity, what folly, what short-sightedness! These people have got themselves now so seduced by the office of power, they have some of these big boys come in from Washington and Dallas for

half an hour for a coffee, they give them a bit of a scheme about how they're going to have the private sector work, and the next thing you know you've got a Weyerhaeuser deal — a Weyerhaeuser deal where we underwrite \$265 million, or whatever the figure is, and the boys from Alabama come in and they take all the profits, and all the profits go right back to Alabama. There's nothing for the roads or for the hospitals, nothing whatsoever.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— These boys, these people right opposite there, these people who come from Regina South and elsewhere, they think they can handle the Americans in their negotiations. The member from Regina South, the Premier, they think they're going to outslick the Americans when they come into negotiations. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, they say on the privatization, you know, not only that, Mr. Speaker, but I tell you we are downright angry, and we're going to pass this law on potash as if the American nation comes tumbling down breaking before the Ayatollah of Saskatchewan. What petty-minded, narrow-minded people. What folly there is. I mean, I could almost accept it if the minister from Regina, and if the Premier said, I want to defend Saskatchewan chambers.

Look, I'd tell the minister opposite, I'd tell the Premier — get out there and speak to the Saskatchewan business men and the Saskatchewan business women. Listen to them. They're having difficulties. The bankruptcies are at an all-time rate. They're having difficulties in keeping their businesses afloat. The taxes that you've imposed upon them — I'll have a word or two to say about that — are driving them out of business. The paperwork is driving them out of business. They have to hire more accountants and more lawyers. You have ignored them.

Your tried to sell them a dream which is turning out to be a nightmare, that somehow Weyerhaeuser and Pocklington are going to save the bacon for Saskatchewan business, and in reality you are destroying the economic foundation of the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— And the record on privatization, Mr. Speaker, has been damning, damning. They privatized the highway workers. Do we have more jobs on highways? No. Do we have better roads, Mr. Speaker? No.

This is one of the oldest jokes in all of Saskatchewan, but it's got to be said. It happened to me when I was driving up to a rural Saskatchewan speaking engagement and somebody said, I hear that you came up — well I can't say it according to the rules — but you came up the Premier's golf course, Highway No. 41, I think it was. And I said, what do you mean by that? Eighteen holes to the mile. Not 18 holes to the mile now, Mr. Speaker; I'll tell you, this year it's 24 holes to the mile. That's how bad it's got.

No jobs, no roads. Lower costs, Mr. Speaker? Have there been lower costs? None whatsoever. Privatization. But now they're free to be privatized.

What about the children's dental plan? What's the record there on privatization? Are there more jobs there?

An Hon. Member:— Eighteen holes to the cavity.

Mr. Romanow:— As my colleague says, 18 holes to the cavities of the young people with respect to the privatization of the dental plan.

What about the privatization there and the service to rural families? Do they have anything more? What about the privatization of PAPCO to Weyerhaeuser? Enough has been said. I'm not going to repeat that this afternoon. Or the privatization of Saskoil. More jobs there, Mr. Speaker, for Saskoil? — 275 less.

More resource revenue, Mr. Speaker, for Saskatchewan and privatization? No. More dividends to the treasury so that we can build our schools and settle the problem of teachers — none whatsoever.

An Hon. Member:— Yes.

Mr. Romanow:— The Minister of Education says yes. I'll want to see that evidence when he takes part in this debate. More dividends in the treasury — no.

And what about . . . well the Minister from Education is talking about the 21st century. How about his great dream? This was going to be the high-tech industry — north Saskatoon. And do you know what they did there? The Minister from Science and Technology . . . they privatized a company that was functioning and working. It was called SED Systems. One year ago the former minister of Finance, now the Minister of Economic Development, the member from Kindersley, issued a press release one year ago saying, don't worry ladies and gentlemen of Saskatchewan, we're going to privatize SED, but there isn't going to be a job lost, he said. Don't worry, they're not going to take any of our technology to Ontario. Don't worry, we're going to have the decision-making power here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the results — the bitter, said results today are simply put: 80 people without jobs; 80 families without jobs. They fired people yesterday — 15 more people fired. The management has moved from Saskatchewan to Ontario. It's another example of privatization which has gone belly-up because of this government's inability to manage; its short-sighted, ideological, narrowly-blinkered, right wing, antediluvian ideas which Saskatchewan people reject and will reject strongly at the next chance that we get.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— So how in the world is it that in a province like Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker . . . I invite you, and I invite the back-benchers of the government opposite to ask themselves this question. I ask the hon. member from Rosthern back there to answer this question to himself: why is it that in Saskatchewan we have a population of approximately a million people, and why is it straight south of the 49th line in the United States, in the Dakotas and Montana, the populations are 550,000,

600,000? Same topography, same kind of economic benefits, same kind of . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . there are differences. Yes . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . that's right, we have potash, we have . . .

Mr. Speaker:— Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Order. Order. I don't think that we need two speeches or debates simultaneously. I would ask the members to allow the Leader of the Opposition to continue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the question that I've asked is:— why is it that that's the case? And I tell you what my answer to that is, is because, Mr. Speaker — and I will drop this point by emphasizing — because we have worked in a wise way, regardless of ideologies of political parties, the best that is capable of us, the private sector, the co-operative sector, and the public sector, through potash and through uranium and the God-given resources that we've had.

We've done this through a sensible set of taxation policies and other legislative programs. We have done it because of the mixed economy. We have not killed two of the three engines in doing it. In the United States their only engine is the private sector engine, and it is the large private engine.

And I tell the small business people of this province, and I tell every farmer of this province, if you want Saskatchewan to go down to 600,000 people in population, if you want an infrastructure which cannot be supported in rural Saskatchewan in your small towns and in your R.M.'s, then all you have to do is to continue to follow the Pied Piper of privatization, the Premier from the province of Saskatchewan, and we'll have that result.

I tell you, Mr. Speaker, for our part we're going to use the pragmatic, common sense approach of a mixed economy to build for the young people and for the working man and woman of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— And of course the results are obvious everywhere, Mr. Speaker, with that kind of mismanagement. The results of where we're at in the province are there to be seen. We have a cumulative debt, operating debt, Mr. Speaker, of \$3.4 billion. I can't imagine that amount of money. The debt takes about \$300 million a year in interest charges alone — in interest charges alone. If we ever should balance our budget, the amount of money coming in and the amount of money going out, we need to have a surplus of \$300 million just to pay the interest rate alone without touching a penny of the debt that those financial wizards over there have accumulated in six years. God help this province if they should be given another two to four years, given that kind of fiscal record.

This is an enormous burden, Mr. Speaker. This debt of \$3.4 billion is like a drag, a major drag, on any kind of economic or social enterprise that we might want to embark upon. This is a debt which places us captive, Mr.

Speaker, to the lending institutions of the world. Whether they are in New York, or London, or Toronto, I don't care. But it now means that the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Education must come cap in hand, like little supplicants that they are, to the lending institutions, begging approval for subsequent expenditures for the people of the province of Saskatchewan. And what's worse, there is no game plan to tackle in a responsible way this deficit of \$3.4 billion.

(1500)

One of the ironies of this is, Mr. Speaker, that they claim that they are a business-like government. Those people opposite say that they know how to run a business-like government. Mr. Speaker, any treasurer or any Finance minister who racked up a debt of \$3.4 billion would be fired, and fired summarily, and that's what should happen to the Minister of Finance of this government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— But of course we're going to have to wait for a complete firing; that is to say, when the next provincial election takes place. I think we might see a few of the little straws in the wind whenever the Premier has the courage to call the two by-elections which are forthcoming.

But you know this debt just doesn't sit there, Mr. Speaker, unaddressed. Somebody has got to try to service it and to pay off this debt. And typically again in the 1930 style of these free enterprise people, who do you think pays that debt, Mr. Speaker? Where do you think the burden for paying that debt falls? On whom does it fall to shoulder?

Well the first thing that we know that takes place is that there's been a massive attack on our social service programs and our health care programs. We see that; the record is documented. But the taxation load, Mr. Speaker, is absolutely unconscionable. The taxation load on Saskatchewan people as a result of this debt, Mr. Speaker, is not only unconscionable; I tell you, Mr. Speaker, it is an outrage. That's what it is.

Let me just run through some of the figures and some of the statistics. We're paying for this debt all right. In the six years of this administration, Mr. Speaker, we now, this province is the second highest provincial income-taxed province in Canada — second highest only to be topped by the province of Quebec. That's how high we are topped. We are almost, in the words of the Premier, first class and world class and the highest provincial income tax loads in the province in Canada we've ever had, per capita debt.

Now this means that a Saskatchewan family of four, to give you a specific example, with an income of \$35,000, the PC tax man, the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden, takes more than \$2,800; or in another way, 8 per cent of family income, and that's after applying all the credits that this government can give to it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this government is very fond of talking about support for the family. Is that support for the family? Working men and women working hard hours, nine to

five, or even harder hours, extra hours, to keep their homes together. They're worried about the future of themselves for their jobs and for their families. And after he works like this, or she works like this, the PC government takes a tax bite which is the equivalent of 8 per cent, nearly 10 per cent of the family income.

Now the PC government stops at the family well for taxation way too often, sir. Personal income taxes now supply almost one-quarter — one-quarter — of all provincial revenue. Stop to think of that, Mr. Speaker. One-quarter of all provincial revenue comes from you, from me, from the working person, from the farmer if he can afford to pay the tax, from individual income tax, compared to something less than 15 per cent in a short five or six years.

But in contrast, what do these people opposite do with respect to corporate taxation? The individual income tax is 25 per cent share of the revenue, but for corporations it's 4 per cent, large corporations, and it hasn't budged, Mr. Speaker. It remains at 4 per cent, and possibly is even going to go down. That's exactly the same percentage which has taken place over the last four or five years of this government's administration.

What conclusion can be made? Well the conclusion is we've got a massive debt; someone has to look after it, but the Conservatives aren't going to ask their big-business friends from Weyerhaeuser or Pocklington to help pay their fair share of the load. No. The people who are going to pay are the hard-working people in the cities and in the mismanagement and it's unfair, and the people won't stand for it in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— Mr. Speaker, I could make, and I intend to do this during the budget speech, a lengthy talk about this record of taxation to support this massive debt. But I just want to give you one other statistic which I think is very interesting — 47 per cent increase in utility rates, that is to say, electricity, home heating, car insurance, and telephones, 40 per cent in five years of this administration. That's nearly a 50 per cent jump.

And by the way, when we're talking about question periods, I tell the minister now — we'll give them notice — I would like to know, this side of the House would like to know when it is that the other shoe is going to drop on SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance). We know that there's a secret cabinet memo around that says that there's going to be a \$25 surcharge — when you've had an accident or you haven't had an accident — \$25 per car surcharge on top of that; that's not even factored into the 47 per cent. We're going to want this government to explain that kind of a taxation load as well.

And then there is the flat income tax, 1.5 per cent, Mr. Speaker, now rumoured to go up to 2 per cent. These ordinary families will have to pay \$500 extra in the flat tax if that 2 per cent actually takes place at budget time. We'll see that in about a week's time.

Mr. Speaker, and those who may be watching this debate,

if you haven't filled out your income tax yet, I invite everybody watching, I invite the back-benchers with the Progressive Conservative Party — take a look at your income tax form, fill it to, and ask yourself that old cliché question, but it's more relevant in Saskatchewan than anywhere else:— are you better off today in taxation or worse off? And I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that with utilities and with the flat tax and with the sales tax and with the broken promises on taxes and the fact that we are the second highest individual taxed province in Canada, I say that we are worse off.

I say, Mr. Speaker, this is a government which can't manage a peanut stand. It has brought this province virtually to its knees, on the verge of bankruptcy. It's making the ordinary people pay when they can't afford to pay. It's attacking the small-business men, the farmer, the young person and the worker. Mr. Speaker, it's time for this government to go and go it must — go — because of its financial policies.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— Oh, but we're not to worry because there'll be a task force on health care which is going to be coming down the pipe, Mr. Speaker, a task force on health care.

Now let me just move to another area. This government prides itself with respect to the question of family farms and agriculture. The statistics, of course, show that what's happening is a steady and rapid erosion of family farms in the province of Saskatchewan. To be fair to this government, some of the problems are beyond its control. There are international factors which are at play. One has to be fair about that and to be quite frank.

But this is the government that says that it really represents rural Saskatchewan. It's the government, it likes us to believe that understands what's happening at the farm gate. Mr. Speaker, this government has double-crossed and betrayed the farmers of Saskatchewan, and I want to point to one program in particular, although there are a number, to make my point.

In 1985 farmers were given hassle-free cash, \$25 per acre at 6 per cent. Today in 1988 when the crisis is far worse, this government has forced the family farmers of this province to make the difficult choice of scrapping up money wherever they can to either pay on under the old scheme or, in the alternative, sign a Draconian 10-year extension contract which raises the price of that money, that hassle-free cash, from 6 per cent to nine and three-quarters per cent.

Now there are a lot of arguments about the provisions on the security. I won't belabour the house about the legalities there as to whether or not it cuts off the operating loans of farmers. I've had many farming people tell me that the banks, the credit unions, are worried now that because of this 10-year agreement they're not going to be able to get operating capital.

The Premier tells us he's got a deal with the banks. He says the banks and ACS (Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan) have agreed now that operating capital

will still be coming to the farmers. That's what he says. Mind you, nobody has seen this deal, which by the way, in parenthetical terms, tells you something about the state of government in Saskatchewan.

Here you have a program which affects how many farmers — 50 thousand-plus farmers, 58 thousand farmers? Here is a program which affects virtually every farmer working person farming on the land in Saskatchewan who has to make a critical decision, and that farming person is not even given the courtesy of being shown the details of what that secret deal is between the banks and the Premier and this PC government which would allow, presumably, the security provisions and operating capital to flow to the farmer.

Now maybe the problem has been solved. I don't know. Maybe the problem has been solved. But if the problem has been solved, why in the world doesn't the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture table that agreement to the people of Saskatchewan? Why didn't he table it today? Why didn't he table it long before today, to put at ease the worries and the fears of the family farms in this regard? Why has he kept this deal a secret deal?

I tell you, Mr. Speaker, there's a problem here. Because if there's an agreement between ACS and the banks, that's one thing, but that agreement doesn't extend between ACS and the farmers. The farmers are not privy or they're not a party to any agreement that they may be entered into between ACS and the banks.

And so here we have this kind of a confused situation where the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture continues to hide behind the bland assurances that say simply: trust me, we've got a deal which will look after the family farms. I hope he has, and if he does, we'll congratulate him on it.

But my question, Mr. Speaker, is, if he's got such a deal . . . not my question, my challenge to the Premier is, and to the Minister of Agriculture: table that deal in the legislature tomorrow so that all the farmers can see and judge for themselves whether the situation has been solved or not.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— But what really is at issue beyond the details? I don't want to talk about the details of the production loan because I think they're fairly well-known, certainly by farmers, judging by the several phone calls a day that I keep on getting. What's behind this is an attitude of this government which pretends itself to be a rural Saskatchewan-based farm party. It isn't. It isn't such a farm party. This government has lost touch with the family farms. This ACS story is proof positive that it's lost touch.

No consultation with an farm organization before the change in plan. Hurried consultation afterwards. No revelation of the deals. But the most important thing, Mr. Speaker, is a betrayal, a basic betrayal of the principles of that 6 per cent, \$25 per acre production loan which was to be a hassle-free proposal to be given to the farmers of

Saskatchewan.

I say, Mr. Speaker, and I say to the Minister of Agriculture and to the Premier, that is a betrayal which has cost this government deeply. They don't believe it. But I can tell the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Speaker, that the very last people to know that they've lost the confidence of the farming people will be the government itself, and this government has lost the confidence of the farming people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— Then what about the debt load situation? Here we've got a major debt load crisis. In Saskatchewan today, it's estimated by economists and others that we've got a debt load of \$6 billion on the farmers — maybe more. By the way, the production loan is about 1.3 billion of that 6 billion. Something that started out to be a part of the solution has now become a part of the problem, a major part of the problem — \$6 billion.

Mr. Speaker, can you or can any member on the government side opposite bring to my attention a reference in the Speech from the Throne with specifics which tells us where the leadership is to try to get us out of that debt morass? That is probably the most serious crisis, the debt crisis. Pricing as well; it's all very serious — that needs to be addressed. One point two billion is farm debt occasioned by the ACS production loan, maybe about 2 billion — I haven't done the exact numbers. But a large portion of that 6 billion falls right within the provincial coffers of the government opposite itself. If, in other words, has got the answers, or a great deal of the answers in its own hands, if it wanted to do it. Nothing.

Mr. Speaker, they set up a committee of back-benchers to go out there in the December and January period of the legislature — when the legislature is not sitting — to explore the idea of equity financing. That's their only idea to date. What happened? At every one of those meetings, those task force members, the PCs, were virtually hooted and hollered out of the town halls because the farmers didn't accept it, because they know what's behind this.

What they want to do is to set up a scheme where private, large-scale investors from Bay Street — and with free trade, perhaps even New York; it doesn't matter where it is, maybe even from Saskatoon; I don't care — they want to set up a system where investors will own the farm land and the farmers of our Saskatchewan will become the tenants or the share-croppers for these big investors.

Now the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture and those opposite were very, very fond of criticizing the land bank. It wasn't perfect, that's to be sure. But they're switching from land bank to bank land, Mr. Speaker, and I predict that the equity financing side-show or road show by these back-benchers is going to be rejected. It has been rejected, and once again this government is left without no game plan to deal with this devastating crisis — nothing whatsoever.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the only policy that the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture has in farming, if you look at it, is reduced to one. Well basically, two. One, is to plead

with Prime Minister Mulroney for deficiency payments. As a farmer told me, he said, I wish you had an election once every three months; we'd be sure of getting deficiency payments to help us out.

That's the one strategy, that umbilical cord relationship between the Premier of our province and the Prime Minister of Canada. These two are like two peas in a pod. They are inseparable. They are tied by that political umbilical cord. Mr. Mulroney says something and out Premier salutes, aye, aye, captain. Our Prime Minister says, here's free trade; our Premier without even giving it a second thought says, aye, aye, Captain Mulroney. Our Prime Minister says, don't worry about the CF-18, it was all looked after, according even to the insider's books from the Prime Minister's office. And our Premier says, aye, aye, Captain Mulroney, I won't question you whatsoever.

(1515)

Our Prime Minister says, we're not going to do anything for the family farm right now; and our Premier says, aye, aye, Captain Mulroney. It's either aye, aye, or hallelujah, I'm not quite sure which.

Mr. Speaker, the farmers of Saskatchewan don't need a Premier who is going to play the role of being an hallelujah choir boy. The people of Saskatchewan and the farmers want a Premier who is going to stand up for them, is going to stand up for Saskatchewan, and that means stand up to Prime Minister Mulroney if it's in the best interest of Saskatchewan to do so. That will leave us what we need.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— So that's one part of the strategy. One part of the strategy is to say, aye, aye and to sing the Hallelujah Chorus, and the other part of the strategy is almost as insidious and more dangerous. The only other panacea for the farmers that the Premier offers is something called free trade. They say it's free trade. We're going to open up this great hope of free trade for the farmers, they say.

Notwithstanding the fact that the free trade deal will not open up any markets of any significance, that it attacks our canola industry with the Western Grain Transportation Act subsidies to the West Coast being done away with — ask Ted Turner of the wheat pool. Notwithstanding the fact that the ongoing working group, as the free trade deal talks about, for the next five to seven years is going to look at a whole range of farm programs and policies ranging all the way from the PFRA (Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration) to the stabilization programs and WGTA (Western Grain Transportation Act) and the whole host of Canadian programs which we've built up over the years to help our family farms.

Notwithstanding all of those things there is, to be fair, perhaps an advantage in the short run for the red meat industry on the free trade deal. I wonder how good that'll stand up, however, when the dollar and the exchange rate equalizes. I wonder how that'll stand up when the beef from California and Texas starts coming back the

other way.

But nevertheless there is perhaps an advantage there, and that is it, Mr. Speaker. It is a chimera. It is an illusion. It is like one of those little things that you see down the highway on a hot summer afternoon as you're driving. You think it's another town or another city where you can stop to get some refreshment, maybe some relief. That's what these people opposite are trying to sell. They're trying to sell us a mirage. They're trying to sell us this hope that by linking our ship irrevocably to the United States in agriculture, that somehow we're going to be able to give some relief to the family farms, Mr. Speaker, that will not happen in Saskatchewan, and if it ever should happen by some stretch of the imagination, which it won't, by the time it gets going there won't be a family farmer left in Saskatchewan to provide for services on the family farm.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— No, Mr. Speaker, we have provincial government in farming which has abandoned, if it ever did have these roots in rural Saskatchewan.

I always felt that that was more of a public relations gimmick than it was a reality. Farmers in this province know who it was that dealt with them in indifference over the years historically. Farmers in this province know which party stands for the commitment of the family farm and which doesn't. I always felt that image that they were a party of rural Saskatchewan was just what it is proving to be, an hallucination, a chimera, a phantom, a mirage, an image, a dream which is turning fast into the nightmare.

And this government, in this Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, not having any specific policies for the family farms, not having anything concrete to offer, is proving that to be the case. This government is so preoccupied with free trade and all the big, flying ideas in the world, that it's forgotten that farmer on three quarter sections or section and a half, who is worried as his debt load is weighing him down, who sees his family being broken up — this government's forgotten.

And I have one piece of advice for the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan. He would do himself a great favour, and I say this on a personal basis, and you'd do a great favour for the farmers of Saskatchewan if the Premier of this province fired the Minister of Agriculture and put a full-time minister to do the job for the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— Mr. Speaker, I said yesterday, before I moved to a conclusion in my remarks, I said yesterday that there is in this government a listlessness. Not a listlessness — individual ministers are not listless. Some are very enervated and they're agitated and they do their announcements and they make their statements and some are listless and some . . . I don't mean listless. This government is not listless. It is . . .

An Hon. Member:— Rudderless.

Mr. Romanow:— Rudderless, somebody said.

An Hon. Member:— Incompetent.

Mr. Romanow:— Okay, I don't want to invite my caucus because we could end up with all kinds of adjectives.

But what I'm trying . . . The word that I'm searching for here, Mr. Speaker, is a government which has lost a will, not even a will, that has lost a vision or lost a dream — if it ever had one; I don't think it ever did have one — about the kind of Saskatchewan it wants to build.

You note the dream that I'm advocating — the mixed economy and the commitment to the family farm and the points that I've raised with respect to health care in my remarks. But this government seems to have lost the drive. There is no punch. I don't mean punch in speeches; there just is no punch in the documentation and there is no punch in where they proceed.

It's a flip-flop government. They decide to raid the wildlife fund, and then they flip-flop and give it back after enormous pressure by our former Environment critic and other members in the wildlife federation. And then they introduce this 10-year agreement on ACS, and the member who's a legislative secretary for the Premier, he defended it. He actually went to Yorkton and he said that 10-year deal was good. Then they flip-flopped.

And then they made an announcement on abortion as a result of the Morgentaler decision. The Premier came out and he said it was going to be abortion on demand. And the president of the Progressive Conservative Party, Mr. Speaker, I remind you, Dr. Peter Matthews, the very next day ended up saying, yes, this was a bold, courageous statement. Why, he said, he even couched it in philosophical terms, because, Mr. Matthews said, that's the essence of Conservative philosophy, individual right — abortion on demand.

Of course the problem was that Dr. Matthews made the statement on the 17th of February and on the 18th of February the Premier again flip-flopped. And this is that now on health care, after five years of beating down the nurses, after five years of beating up on the medical profession, after five years of allowing 11,000 hospital beds, after at least a year on the drug plan, after a year on the children's' dental plan, after wrenching everything they can out of it, now they're trying to flip-flop with a task force report on health care. Now you wonder our scepticism. I repeat again, if this is a study done by independent, interested, and competent people, we'll give support to it. But how can one take with credibility and seriousness and gravity that kind of an approach

Mr. Speaker, this government has lost its control of the agenda. This government's only hope for survival is that something called free trade comes about. That's what they're really hoping for.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to remind you and the members of this house that virtually nothing that we will say or do in this legislature will affect, other than in the larger scheme of the public debate, the outcome of the free trade argument. It will be decided in Washington and Ottawa, regardless of what the Premier says or does, although we

all have opinions on this. But I do want to make one point as my opinion on this free trade, which is the last straw, the last hope for survival of this administration.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, without being an alarmist — and maybe I am an alarmist — this deal holds the threat, the danger to Canadian and sovereignty independence, the kind of which we have not seen ever since 1867. This is a deal, Mr. Speaker, which is more than an economic arrangement.

Free trade is a brand-new economic, social, and inevitably political arrangement, Mr. Speaker. It's a wide-ranging comprehensive deal. The Premier is very fond of saying, well you know, we want here in Saskatchewan what Ontario has. Well I have news for the Premier. I want in Saskatchewan what Ontario has in terms of per capita living. But I'll tell you where I disagree with the Premier, when he singles out the auto pact, which is but one chapter, small chapter, in the free trade deal, and tries to compare the auto pact to a comprehensive 14- or 15-chapter free trade deal — I don't have it in front of me — which covers everything from services to agriculture — which, by the way, was not to be on the table — to energy, to financial services, to investment operations. We are talking, not about a trading arrangement, we are talking about a new social, economic, political arrangement with the United States and Canada.

And I want to make something else abundantly clear for everybody. Nobody on this side of the House is opposed to trade. Everybody on this side of the House would make trade a corner-stone of our economic development policy. We believe trade with the United States is very important. We want to see it expanded; I want to see it expanded. But I'll tell you something else. We don't want to say that it's free trade with the United States, full stop, period. It's free trade with the world's countries, with the Pacific Rim and the others. That's where the growth area happens to be.

We have . . . I don't say this, it doesn't give me any pleasure to say this. I just visited the United States for five days for family matters. This is a society which has contributed a great deal to our North American way of life and to the world. But the reality is that it is suffering from major economic problems itself. It's debt load now is the largest in the world. It moves from a large creditor nation to the largest debtor nation. The smoke-stock industries are dying. There is a new form of industry, the shape of which no one can really describe in any accurate terms. The capital has shifted elsewhere to Japan and to the Far East.

What in the world are we doing as Canadians in linking up with an economic situation and a country of this nature facing these economic circumstances? I tell you what I worry about. I worry about that we in Saskatchewan or Canada may be linking our lifeboat to what could very well prove to be the American economic Titanic, and they do this with a willing compliance.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's not so much that I oppose that they're for free trade; I disagree that they're for free trade. They have a right to hold that view, but they do it with no

analysis. There has not been one internal government study tabled in this legislature or anywhere, to the best of my knowledge, which shows who the winners or the losers of free trade are in Saskatchewan or Canada — not one. And we have studies that said there'll be jobs, up to 500,000 which are lost. There isn't one independent study tabled by the Minister of Economic Development, the member from Kindersley, not one that shows that he, himself, has analysed this thing — not from some ideologically right-wing, Conservative point of view, but in the best interest of the province of Saskatchewan. If there is, table it. I plead with you: table such studies.

We'll be putting a motion on the order paper asking you: table such studies to at least show that we're wrong if you want to score a political point. But if you don't want to score a political point, at least assuage the concerns of the farmers who fear that in the next five to seven years the wheat board may be next on the bargaining table, that the supply management programs may be next on the bargaining table, that the egg management programs and dairy programs — those will be gone as well. Show us the studies if that isn't going to be the case but no blind allegiance and adherence to a union, a potential union, which is more than just simply trade.

And, Mr. Speaker, the evidence is everywhere. In energy . . . I'll tell you what galls me particularly on a personal basis. When I was in this legislature on that side of the House in the late 1970s, we joined forces with another Conservative government, the Government of Alberta, Mr. Peter Lougheed, and we fought on the issue of resource control.

(1530)

The provinces should constitutionally control resources over oil and natural gas and potash, because our theory was that, with fair taxation, we could get the profits from that natural resource, God-given natural resource, and we could redistribute it to our health care system and to our education system so that we wouldn't have the crisis of faculties striking and teachers striking and doctors bickering and 11,000 people on hospital bed waiting lists.

We adopted that policy of provincial control over resources so that we could distribute to the businesses of this province the benefits of this God-given blessing that we have here. And we fought it in the constitution, and we gained it in the constitution, and we did it at great peril at a time in Canadian history, when at one time it looked as if maybe the country would break apart. We did it and we achieved it, and it's now a constitutional right. And with one simple stroke of the pen the Premier of this province has given it away, and we have no control any more over our resources.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— Given it away. Sure we have the constitutional provision which stays there, but what good is the constitutional right if you have signed a treaty which says, I own the resources but I will not have the right to charge the price for the resource; I will not have the right to charge the amount of the volume of the resource that is

to be given. Americans must be charged the same that I am charged as a Saskatchewanian. If I cut back in case of a supply shortage, I must cut back in the same proportions to the Americans. I fought for that!

And by the way, they supported us when they were in opposition in that fight. The leader of the opposition, not the current Premier, but the leader of the opposition, the member from Souris-Cannington, supported us in that fight. The Conservatives in Alberta supported us in this fight.

And out of this free trade deal they have signed by treaty — international treaty — they have given away the one major competitive edge that we could have used to build up small business and diversify our economy. I say shame on the Premier of this province of Saskatchewan, shame on the Conservatives, shame for denying the future generations of Saskatchewan hope for prosperity and growth.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— There are examples which are legion in this regard, Mr. Speaker, legion. I want to close on free trade by just giving you one other one which troubles me a great deal.

I don't know if this interpretation is a correct one. I suspect that there are alternate interpretations which can be given, but I tell you the one that I look at troubles me. It's under the services section for free trade, and this is a provincial issue — under the services section, Mr. Speaker.

Now I need not remind you, but if you'll bear with me I must do so, to remind you of this. When Donald MacDonald's royal commission studied free trade a few years ago and recommended free trade, the MacDonald commission recommended itself that there ought not to be — I underline, sir — ought not to be a provision on services. He said for a number of reasons. The Americans, this was their next growth industry — services. And we weren't ready.

And he said also that services had great potential for working women in the service sector. That's where the majority of our women work — I might add at underpaid wages, at second-class wages, at discriminatory wages. This is where the first onslaught on a services sector trade agreement implemented in Canada will have the impact on. It'll impact negatively, first on the working women, many of whom are single mothers. That, I'm sure, the studies will support.

But nevertheless, under the services section, Mr. Speaker, if you haven't seen it, I invite you to take a look at the annex of what services are identified. There are over 300 different services identified, from advertising agencies to accounting firms.

And what does that free trade's provision say on services? It says this: It says that if an American company or individual should come in to provide a service under one of those categories in Canada, that person or corporation must be treated the same way as a Canadian providing the

same services is to be treated. And in theory we could do that same thing, presumably, to the United States.

I want to identify one area with health care. And this is something I ask the Minister of Health to ask his task force to take a look at because under the services section there is a specifically identified provision which says — I don't have the text in front of me, but the words of it are this way, in essence they're correct: health services management facilities are now allowed under the services section of the free-trade deal between Canada and the United States.

Now let me paint a scenario to you.

There are 11,000 people . . . I say this to the Minister of Health:— there are 11,000 people waiting to get a hospital bed in Saskatoon. Now that's a jam-up. Supposing some American entrepreneur or hospital, because there they have many fee-for-service, private, profit-oriented hospitals — you can name them — supposing some private hospital said, now look, looks like a pretty good market existing up in Saskatoon because there are 11,000 people who want to get in and they can't. Now we don't have to build a full hospital, but maybe we can build a specialized set of hospital services or a special facility under hospital management services, and out of the free-trade deal we'll come in and we'll ease that backlog of 11,000 patients, many of whom are desperate.

They're scared, they're worried, they're frightened. Their finances, everything is at issue emotionally, and do you blame them? And if they came in and one of those people said — or a number of those people said:— Well we're going to try this new facility coming in from the United States. What does it mean?

It could mean, it could mean that since under the free-trade deal they've got to be treated the same way as St. Paul's Hospital, that they would get the benefit of SHSP (Saskatchewan hospital services plan) taxpayers' dollars that we all pay — this imported/importing United States health care service. But they could do something else; they could charge a little extra on top, Mr. Speaker, because they're profit oriented, because that's the way they work. And those who could afford to pay, or those who are do desperate and worried to pay, would pay, and, Mr. Speaker, we would have the beginning of a two-tier system for health care. Mr. Speaker, if that happened we would have the beginning of the end of medicare and hospitalization because of the free trade deal. That's the result.

Maybe there's another interpretation that's possible. I want to hear the Minister of Health or the minister in charge directly, next to the Premier in negotiating this free trade deal, to explain otherwise. But that's the danger of it.

Energy, agriculture, health care services, financial investment services. You know this equity financing . . . I'll give you one last example, Mr. Speaker, on free trade. Supposing the Tories ever do get their equity financing program going — and now we have bank land inventory — under the free trade deal, Mr. Speaker, do you know that the first \$150 million of investment, nobody in

Canada will be able to check after a certain period of time? So that the ownership of that farm land — it is not too preposterous to say; in fact it's very likely — will move from ownership of Canadian investors, which I think is wrong in principle to begin with, to American investors, be they New York and Dallas.

Is that the vision and the future that this government is building for us? Are they heading us to the 500,000 people of Montana and North Dakota and South-Dakota? They're killing the public sector. They're attacking the co-operative sector. They're putting all of their eggs in the one basket of private enterprise, big private enterprise, and now they've opened it up to the free trade deal of the United States and they think we can do better than North Dakota. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that if anybody thinks that free trade has worked well in the United States, go down to North Dakota and ask yourselves how well it's worked for them and the United States.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— And the conclusion will be there for everybody — no medicare, no hospitalization, no government insurance, none of the amenities that we have, none of the civilized society and the developments to of this Saskatchewan and Canada which have made us so different will exist. That is what this free trade deal has imperilled, and that is what the Premier and the ministers are not telling the people of Saskatchewan.

I say to you, sir, I say to the members in this House, I say to those who are watching and listening to us: if you have no vision of this province, join the Tories. If you've given up in building an independent Canada, join the Tories. If you've given up hope on Saskatchewan and the family farms, join the Tories. They say that we are timid and cowards. They say that we're afraid to compete in the world. No. The challenge of this country has been those who have had the encourage and the guts to build the country east and west, not north and south. Those who have been courageous have been those who have built the CN and AirCanada and even the CBC — God bless its soul — and to build all those institutions of federal-provincial institutional support for development in industry and development — those are the courageous people, Mr. Speaker. Those are the courageous men and women who are dedicated to a sovereign, free, independent, civilized Canada, not those timid souls who have no vision except to turn themselves over to the United States. Those are the visionaries.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— In fact, Mr. Speaker, I would say that the Premier should stay a little more at home, rather than going around on the free trade thing to all over the world. He's travelled so far and so wide, selling free trade, and he's come back with such a passionate commitment to free trade, I think that what we ought to do is title his experience and his travels and we should call it Gullible's Travels. That's what I think we should call it, Mr. Speaker, because that's what it is.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— Well, Mr. Speaker, there is a better way. There is a better way. It's a tougher way, it means that we're going to have to pull together Saskatchewan people in a co-operative fashion to build on all of our strengths. There is a better way which says that there is room, encouragement, support for small business and for co-operatives and for the public sector where necessary. There is a better way.

There is also a role for compassion in government, and honesty and decency and political honesty. You know, I noted with interest some of the members in this debate who've talked about moral values. I commend them for doing so. I think public policy is about moral values very often. We develop priorities among various moral values and moral issues. We seek practical and effective means which are morally sound to achieve the ends of the goals that we have set. And I don't impugn any motivation malevolent to my colleagues opposite in this regard. In my view, Saskatchewan politics should be morality, to a large extent, public morality. Today in our province and here in this city, children go to bed hungry, Mr. Speaker. Families are forced to rely on food banks, Mr. Speaker. That is immoral. That's morality, but it's immoral.

Today here in Saskatchewan, families with pressing medical needs are forced to make the choice between prescription drugs and groceries. That, Mr. Speaker, is immoral.

Today in Saskatchewan, men and women are forced to wait six months or more for a hospital bed for surgery, as I've pointed out, at a time, sir, when this government of yours is pending more than \$8 million per year on empty office space. That is immoral, Mr. Speaker — that is immoral.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— Today in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, working men and women, young people, families, are being scarred by the tragedy and the waste of unemployment. That, Mr. Speaker, is immoral.

And thousands of farm families across the province have been betrayed by a government that said that they were of them. Families, communities, Saskatchewan's infrastructure is threatened, and it's not good enough to give them the illusion, the nightmare of free trade. That is immoral to do so, Mr. Speaker.

So morality is important in politics. And let us seek compassion and understanding and empathy and tolerance, Mr. Speaker, in this House. Let's shun those who would impose their own narrowed, blinkered and bigoted, sometimes, view of morality and the world.

Mr. Speaker, here in this provincial legislature we're bound to concern ourselves with Saskatchewan affairs primarily. That's our responsibility first and foremost. But to state the obvious, sir, we in Saskatchewan are also part of a larger world, and as part of that larger world we have an obligation, I would say a moral obligation, sir, as citizens of the world to concern ourselves and involve ourselves with the issues of the larger world.

And over the last several days we've all been reminded by the tragic events around the world — in Northern Ireland, in the Mid-East, in Central America — of the fragility of peace, of the decade of man's inhumanity to man, reminded that free and democratic institutions are rare. They must be nurtured and protected. That is morality, and we should be talking about it, reminded that the peace we enjoy is not enjoyed by all.

And as this legislative session gets under way in earnest, I would like to think that we could rededicate ourselves to banishing — and banishing for ever — a limited view of morality but basically banishing in the pursuit of our policies and our programs what I think are probably the four greatest threats to civilized life in our province today: ignorance, fear, hate, and want.

(1545)

And, Mr. Speaker, what this Speech from the Throne did not do is address those ideals or those objectives. It lacked that vision. It told us nothing about the future of the province.

And while the government opposite may not know it, or may try to ignore it, I think the ordinary people of this province do have a vision, sir. I've experienced it in my travels, now virtually non-stop in the seven months or so that I've been involved in the leadership, in taking over the leadership of this great party. I tell you around the kitchen tables, meetings of which I've held — well, I won't say hundreds, but tens — they have a vision, those people do, a vision that respects and builds on our traditions and our history and respects our positive and valuable traditions in the province, the best place on earth to live and to raise a family, a tradition that respects and builds so the future will even be brighter.

Those people tell me they have a vision of an economic prosperity, not needlessly shooting ourselves twice and killing the engines of our economy in two of the areas, but using everything that we have for economic development and security for all. They have a vision.

Farmers have a vision, the backbone of rural Saskatchewan, the backbone of this province, a commitment to the family farm. In some quarters you almost think that that's an old-fashioned commitment. Well, Mr. Speaker, it may be an old-fashioned commitment. I might even be accused by the members opposite of saying the same old thing about the family farm.

I want to tell you, sir, that as long as I hold this position, and as long as I am in this legislature, that is a vision, a family farm, and there are numbers of family farmers in this province that will be healthy and strong and contribute to the moral and economic fibre of this province. They have that vision and commitment; a vision of economic development which is compassionate; a vision of economic development which places jobs; a vision for the environment that the water and the land and the air should be clean; a vision of a better and brighter future for Saskatchewan where the public good is not sacrificed for private gain, where there is a balance, where there is a decency and pragmatism.

And a vision, Mr. Speaker, where a government and our government leaders seek to unite us, not to divide us; that the leadership should be to build bridges and not to destroy those bridges.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— A vision of a society that realizes that we are only as strong as the weakest minority; a vision that does not pillory those who cannot defend for themselves; a vision which builds bridges; a vision which seeks to build the common co-operative and decent society in Saskatchewan.

There's a great agenda out there. I've touched on some of them, Mr. Speaker. Our job in opposition will be to nurture those visions and to flesh out in detail the weeks and months and the years ahead as we move to the by-elections and as we move beyond that to the great provincial election coming, we will be fashioning a vision of democratic socialism and a vision of co-operation and decency and wealth creation and redistribution which will be consistent with the history of our province, which has faith in our people, which says Saskatchewan first.

We can do it here alone. We don't need free trade, and we don't need Weyerhaeuser's. We'll get business coming in here, but we'll do it on the values because we are the courageous party and province that will build this history and this people of the province of Saskatchewan. That is a vision.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— And, Mr. Speaker, this Speech from the Throne has no vision. This government has no leadership. This government is ready for defeat. Mr. Speaker, it must be and will be defeated because of its betrayal of Saskatchewan people and the double standards and the errors and faults that it has exhibited to using the years of its government.

Before I close, and I do close, I want to make two very brief additional statements if I can, Mr. Speaker. This is directly related to the Speech from the Throne, in one instance for sure, and it deals with section 110 and the Father Mercure situation, and the fact that the Speech from the Throne was absolutely silent about it. I talked about minorities and decency and civility and the weakest links. Not a word from the Speech from the Throne on a decision and a law and an institution which affects Canada the way it is.

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I'm, I think for the first time in my address, referring to a note, but I have to.

Monsieur le Président. En effet il est très étrange qu'il n'y a pas eu mention de la décision de la Cour suprême du Canada sur le dossier Mercure et l'article 110 dans le discours du trône. Quelle est l'intention de ce gouvernement vis-à-vis le respect de l'article 110? C'est vrai que la Saskatchewan se vantait d'être la première province anglophone à ratifier l'accord constitutionnel du Lac Meech. Il est donc nécessaire que la Saskatchewan respecte l'article 110 et le droit des

francophones.

Au nom de l'opposition et de tous les gens de la Saskatchewan, je dois dire que je suis surpris que le gouvernement n'a pas encore consulté l'ACFC (Association Culturelle Franco-Canadienne) au nom des francophones concernant la meilleure façon de mettre en application l'article 110 et la décision Mercure. La communauté francophone demande d'être consultée et demande que la décision soit respectée. J'aurais espéré que cette consultation aura déjà eu lieu et que le gouvernement soit en position de nous annoncer cette décision au sujet de l'article 110. Il est primordial que tous les politiciens des deux cotes de cette chambre respectent ces droits humains fondamentaux.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— Merci, Monsieur le Président.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, as I close, this is March 23, as we know, and I must close with a very brief, with your permission, tribute to my friend and colleague, the member from Regina Elphinstone — with you permission and the permission of the House this one time only — Mr. Allan Blakeney, whose last day in the legislature in the province of Saskatchewan is today.

Mr. Speaker:— Is leave granted?

Leave granted.

Mr. Romanow:— Allan Blakeney served in the Saskatchewan legislature for 28 years, as everybody knows, as MLA, leader of the opposition, and premier of this great province. Throughout those years, Al Blakeney has personified, in my judgement, all that is good about politics, all that is good: dedication to public service, a desire to help change people's lives for the better, tolerance of others' views, hard-hitting in debate — not personal in debate — hard-hitting in debate, and tolerance. That is Allan Blakeney.

He was a politician who led by example, and his example has inspired certainly all of us, and certainly me. I consider it a great privilege — speaking personally and on behalf of some of my colleagues like the member from Regina North East, my desk make, and others, the member from Quill Lakes — but speaking personally, I consider it a great privilege to have served under Al Blakeney during his years in the premier's office. Sometimes cabinet meetings were run like school classes. We had to know our stuff and know it very well, but it was debate of public issues in the highest order.

And I consider it an honour to have followed him in the position of Leader of the New Democratic Party. His achievements in early 30 years of public service are too numerous to mention, but I would like to just mention the one important area of health care which has been mentioned before.

Allan Blakeney was minister of Health when the province became the first jurisdiction in North America, in 1962, in medicare. And during his years in this province as premier, this province was the first to introduce the drug

plan, the dental plan, the province-wide home care system.

I also have fond memories of him in the constitutional — how do I describe it? — battles or discussions of the late '70s and early '80s, where Blakeney's intellectual prowess and vision of Saskatchewan and Canada played, in my judgement, when history records it, one of the most major roles in finally ending that ignominious period of our life where we were ostensibly an independent country but had the humiliation of seeking patriation of our constitution from Great Britain. He was a giant in that process.

Al Blakeney will be missed by the people of Regina and Saskatchewan and Canada, and by his colleagues in the caucus and by the people here in the party and by me. And I'm sure that all Saskatchewan people would want to join with me in wishing Al Blakeney all the best as he ends his career and launches in what will be, I know, a new and productive career in academic life.

Mr. Speaker, not for the last words, but for all the other preceding words, I cannot support this Speech from the Throne. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martin:— Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to rise this afternoon and speak on behalf of the Speech from the Throne. I would like, however, before I get into the meat of my comments, to make some reference to the Leader of the Opposition who spoke briefly about morality and ethics. I ask you, sir, where is the morality in allowing interest rates to rise to 22 per cent, breaking farmers and home owners around this province? I ask you, sir, where is the morality in accepting money from a law firm who represents a bank that closes down farms, and then have the audacity to stand up in this House and say that you represent the family farm in this province? The people in the country know who you represent, and it ain't the people in this province, I assure you of that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martin:— You talk about morality in financial ways. Morality, sir, I suggest to you, should be talked about in terms of the family, the family life, and not financial terms. Get your head out of the law firm and into the people of this province. Understand what they're talking about.

Mr. Speaker, for the record I wish to express to this Assembly my confidence of the government of our province and equal confidence in the Speech from the Throne.

The constituents of Regina Wascana entrusted me to represent their interests in this legislature. The people of Regina Wascana, in electing me to this legislature, also put in my the trust in our Premier and the Progressive Conservative Party. And I say with pride that that Speech from the Throne is a clear reflection of the goals and the aspirations of the people of this province. The Speech from the Throne is a vision of faith and the future of this great province. Our province is destined to solid

economic growth and prosperity because of the leadership of this province.

At the outset today, I would like to congratulate the government for its continued commitment to Saskatchewan families. Families are Saskatchewan's greatest strength, and safeguarding family life is of vital importance to the people of this party and to this government.

I also wish to commend the government for promoting excellence in education. The children of our province deserve a quality education in a quality environment.

It was my privilege, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to be the Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Education for this past year prior to January when I was named to Health. It was an opportunity for me to spend a lot of time in northern Saskatchewan, to talk to the people of northern Saskatchewan, to talk to the teachers, to talk to the children of northern Saskatchewan. It was an opportunity, for me to be involved with the Northern Lights board of education, to see their move from Prince Albert, which is not seen as to be in the southern as a northern part of the province, to move their head office to Lac La Ronge and set up an additional office on the west side of the province.

The people of northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are aware that this government is concerned about quality of education, and in the months to come new curriculum will be introduced into northern Saskatchewan.

I assure the people of this province and the members of this House that the people of northern Saskatchewan, that is, north of Montreal Lake — not Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker, but in northern Saskatchewan — know that this government is committed to a quality education in northern Saskatchewan. It's very important that they be educated so they can take part in the economic growth of this province in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I favour free trade. Free trade will give Saskatchewan a new edge in the global competition for skills, technology, and trade. Free trade will promote positive economic growth.

I congratulate the Premier of our province for his leadership in bringing about Canada, the Canada-US free trade.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the critics opposite and the critics of free trade talk about, we'll lost our cultural identity somehow with free trade. Well I say to the people opposite and the people who are opposed to free trade that if our culture is so weak that we have to be insulated from forces outside of this country, then we have no culture.

(1600)

But I say to you that the Ukrainians, the Poles, the English, the Norwegians and all the others in this province who call themselves Canadians today will remain as Canadians. I have no fear whatsoever about losing my

Canadian identity because of the free trade agreement.

Mr. Speaker, they talk about, how can we in Saskatchewan, a small province of a million people, compete? Well I say to the members opposite, the only time you have to fear competition is when you're trying to flog an inferior product, and they should know about that.

The Speech from the Throne announced that this government will establish a new Department of Public Participation, a department that's now under way, and I welcome that news. Public participation represents exciting new economic opportunities for Saskatchewan people. As stated in the Speech from the Throne, public participation is something that Saskatchewan people can look forward to and take part in. It can be exciting. It will give every citizen an opportunity to invest in what should rightfully belong to the people. They can be part of it.

Oh yes, there's the prophets of doom and gloom who will frantically oppose this because of their hard-headed ideological commitment to the socialist agenda. That is their prerogative, Mr. Speaker, but public participation represents a new wave for the future. I confidently predict, within a matter of time public participation will be so successful that every other province in Canada will follow the Saskatchewan example.

You know health care has always been a prime concern of Saskatchewan people, and indeed it should be. We have a proud legacy of building a health care system that is known far and wide for its excellence. The architects of Canada's medicare plan are from Saskatchewan.

Today I want to spend a few moments to reflect on our health care system. I am proud of the record of this government when it comes to health care. Indeed, some months ago when I was appointed Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Health, I seized that opportunity to not only learn more about the health care system in the province, but maybe take part in helping to make some of those renovations that we'll perhaps be hearing about in the future.

I can say with a degree of authority that our Health minister and the many dedicated public servants who work for Saskatchewan's Health department are working together to give the people of this province a first-class health care system. Let me remind this Assembly that our province spends over one-third of its entire budget on health care. We spend \$3 million a day — \$3 million a day on health care in this province. Last year alone our health care budget was the highest ever in the history of the province. Those are clear, undisputable facts, Mr. Speaker.

This Progressive Conservative government has worked to build a health care system that is considered by professional observers to be one of the best in North America, yet there are those people in the province who persist in attacking and undermining our health care system for political reasons. They sit on the opposite benches of the legislature, and we heard some of it this afternoon. Their scare tactics are so irresponsible that I feel, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I must set the record straight.

After coming into office in 1982, we found a health care system that was the third worst in all of Canada. Don't take my word for it. All you have to do is check Justice Emmett Hall's medicare report. That was the state of Saskatchewan's health care system in 1982 when this government came to power. The NDP had created a myth about our health programs and literally pulled a cruel hoax on the good people of Saskatchewan. They manipulated and used scare tactics.

We're all too familiar with the cruel tactics that the NDP used in years gone by. They'd go into seniors' homes and tell them that if the Tories come into power they're going to close down the homes and throw them out on the street — such shameless and outrageous tactics. And the sad thing is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they continue that today.

Who can forget the NDP medicare scare of the 1970s? The NDP went up and down this province telling people medicare would be abolished by the Tories, and they continue that same line today — the same scare tactics. Well the people didn't believe them in 1982, and they sure don't believe them today — another example of the shameless practices of the NDP. We hear them over and over and over again, the same old line — but then of course, Mr. Speaker, it's the same old faces.

The time has come to set the record straight with respect to health care. Since 1982, Saskatchewan's health care budget is up 63 per cent, to more than \$1.3 billion, the largest in the province's history. Health care spending in this province is at its highest point in history because of the leadership and commitment of the progressive Conservative government.

Now, Mr. Speaker — and I ask the members of the press gallery to take note of what I'm about to say next because I know they're watching back in television, if they're not up in the rafters up there. It's a sad fact, and take note of, it is a fact that we intend to make all Saskatchewan people aware of, and that is, since 1982 the NDP in Saskatchewan legislature have voted against every health care budget. Despite the increases, despite the new programs, despite the help for elderly, despite all the new programs that have been introduced which, of course, involve the 63 per cent in funding, 63 per cent increase in funding, the NDP have voted against every health care budget.

So I ask them and I ask the Leader of Opposition, where is their commitment? Where was their so-called commitment to medicare? They would have denied the people of Saskatchewan increases in health spending. The record speaks for itself.

There are other facts that we intend to remind the people of Saskatchewan about. Prior to 1982 there was extra billing on health care in this province. Those people who could not afford extra billing, especially the seniors and the needy, had to pay extra dollars out of their limited incomes for certain health care services. At the same

time, the members opposite were allowing interest rates to rise to 22 per cent. People couldn't afford to pay for anything under those interest rates. And did they do anything? Not a thing.

Where was the NDP caring and compassion when they imposed extra billing on health care? It didn't exist, Mr. Speaker. No compassion, no caring. The NDP refused to take off extra billing, but history will record that it was a Progressive Conservative government, that this government that had the passion and the decency to remove the unnecessary burden of extra billing to senior citizens and those who didn't have the money to pay for it. I can understand the members of the opposition not wanting to face the reality of history. There's nothing so powerful as the truth.

I'd like this Assembly to know some other important facts about health care. The NDP neglected senior citizens by putting a moratorium or freeze on the construction of special care homes for seniors. From 1976 to 1982 the NDP refused to build any nursing homes. To correct those years of neglect, this Progressive Conservative government approved for construction a total of 2,190 special home care beds.

Cancer treatment services were allowed to deteriorate during the NDP years. This government put a stop to that, I'll have more on that in a moment. With the leadership of our Premier and the commitment of the Progressive Conservative government, we have a health care record that we can be proud of. Since 1982, there has been a 157 per cent increase in funding for ambulance services. There has been a 90 per cent increase in funding to help deal with the serious social problems of drug and alcohol abuse.

The Speech from the Throne made mention of the first-class 1.5 million Whitespruce Drug and Alcohol Treatment Centre, Canada's first specialized youth treatment centre. And of course along with that goes provision for after care.

This government has established a chiropody program to provide foot care services throughout the province. There's been a 78 per cent increase in home care funding. Six new CAT scanners have been placed in Saskatchewan hospitals to provide modern diagnostic technology.

Mr. Speaker, all of those facts represent the record of a government that has a solid commitment to excellence in health care. We do not want to shy away from speaking about health in this legislature. We welcome the opportunity to compare the records.

For instance back in 1978 the NDP Health minister of the day, the member for Saskatoon South, said the sign of an efficient hospital system was long waiting lists, that was his attitude. And he sits here today in the opposition, and, of course, that is no wonder.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, in 1985, in a speech to the Canadian Hospital Association, opposed increased hospital construction. The member who was just on his feet a few minutes ago talking about how he cares about

the people of this province was with a government whose minister of Health said that the sign of an efficient hospital system was long waiting lists, and he opposed the increase in hospital construction. Well it's certainly not the approach of this government. We believe hospitals are an integral part of our health care system.

Since 1982 we have implemented a major program of hospital construction that has brought about this government's investment in rural and urban health care centres to over 50 million. Regina and Saskatoon have also benefited with major expansions to Regina's General and Pasqua, and Saskatoon's University and St. Paul's hospitals. In addition, the Premier recently announced the construction of a new City Hospital in Saskatoon. Saskatchewan stands out like a beacon for its excellent health care system.

The Speech from the Throne shows this government has the vision and leadership to keep on building on the excellence of that system well into the next century. That is why a task force on health care has been and will be established.

I think it appropriate that 1988 marks two important dates in our history. Fifty-five years ago this year, in 1938 . . . That's 50 years ago, in 1938, John Diefenbaker became the first public figure to publicly call for a health care plan. Yes, 50 years ago he laid the foundation for what we proudly call medicare. Twenty-five years ago medicare became a reality in Saskatchewan. Tommy Douglas, as premier of Saskatchewan, earned his place in history for making medicare a reality. Our province has been a pioneer in building health care that is a shining example for Canada and indeed North America.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, rather, I conclude my remarks on health care by emphasizing our commitment to meet the changing health needs of our province. The Speech from the Throne clearly states that we have a commitment to see that Saskatchewan continues to have the best health care system in Canada. In my duties as Legislative Secretary for Health, I shall personally work for those goals.

The pages of Hansard are full of speeches in response to throne speeches of years gone by. That does not alter the fact that today we have the same pride and optimism in our province that those in the past displayed. Today especially, we see the making of a new Saskatchewan, a new province in economic opportunities and of advancement, all because of the leadership of the Premier and of this government.

I'm proud to be part of this team, the Progressive Conservative government caucus in this legislature, and I proudly support the Speech from the Throne. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet:— Mr. Speaker, this is my second Speech from the Throne, and I will be dealing with the issues in relation to the province of Saskatchewan, and also the North, and also on Indian and Métis people.

Being that I only have experienced one budget speech of

which did not impress me in the least, I thought maybe there was just a mistake on that one particular year.

As I listened to the debate throughout last year, I started recognizing that that wasn't the case, that as we look at this new throne speech it reminds me of the whole of last year, or in simple terms, the PC government simply hasn't listened. It simply doesn't seem to care. And under the rhetoric of building it continually, slowing starts destroying the fabric of many people in this province.

I will give my examples. The first thing is in relation to the province of Saskatchewan. As I was going on my initial phases of work, I happened to be working in Ontario and looking at the health care system in Ontario, and also looking at the insurance system in Ontario. And when I lived there for a five-year period and I came back, I was able to compare the two systems and I learned to appreciate what a Saskatchewan resident felt in terms of what a good health care system was, and what good insurance rates were.

I will deal, therefore, on the aspect of health. The throne speech mentions only the task force, but as I look back into this past year and have learned to deal with the promises, the glowing promises of this government, and I started looking at the reality, I have to reflect back on my experiences at the community level.

(1615)

When, for example, the prescription drug plan was brought in this past year and there was glowing terms of how it was going to help health in Saskatchewan, a lot of people were caught by surprise, and they were wondering, is it really going to help. Well the fact of the matter is this:— in northern Saskatchewan a lot of people came up to me and complained about how difficult that prescription drug plan had been.

We're in a situation where there is high unemployment and very little in regards to up-front money on a daily basis. And all of a sudden the people were expected to have the up-front money to pay for their drug costs. It was extremely difficult for the seniors, and also it was extremely difficult for the parents, especially with their children who had special problems. It was an extremely difficult time for people.

And many people will recall the story in northern Saskatchewan where there was a mix-up in the initial stages, and I will talk about the mix-up in the best way possible.

(The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.)

And the point that I'm making here is this: that a lot of the people, in a second language context, speaking Dene and in Cree, were unable to fathom a lot of the historical changes in the law that were taking place in regards to the prescription drug plan.

There was a death, I remember, in Ile-a-la-Crosse last year which was connected to the change in the law of the drug plan, and of course the government automatically denied that there was any connection. But a lot of people

recognized that although there wasn't a complete connection, that there was still a partial connection; that people were beginning to realize that this government would rush into things — they would rush, rush, rush, and push their laws through without any consideration of the people in northern Saskatchewan.

As a result, many people were puzzled. A lot of people were mixed up in regards to exactly what the law had to say. Many did not know exactly the procedures to follow, and as a result of a lot of this drug plan, which was a mix-up for people in general in this province, was especially more difficult for people in a second language context. There was nothing done in that regard to get people to translate the information out to people in the North.

Because — simple — it was simple. I found out this government was uncaring. They didn't care. You raise that question, but they wouldn't care; instead they would deny that there was any connection. They would try and defend their position. They would not try and work with people.

So as I looked at other issues, a lot of people were also a little bit scared. They heard about the dental plan being taken apart in the South. A lot of people had recognized that tremendous benefits the dental plan had been to the little people in the schools. They knew that, when they compared the history of 20 years ago and the introduction of the new dental plan by the NDP government, that a great degree had changed in terms of better health and healthier teeth and so on, that there was a regular place for their children to be taken care of. When they heard this, they were wondering, is this government going to move the next year on this case. And the information that was given to me also came from not only the people but the doctors up there. They have recognized that tremendous improvement.

The other thing that I would like to mention in regards to where the throne speech doesn't mention anything on, is on the seniors. Many of our seniors are forced to get out of northern Saskatchewan and get into a different social and cultural context, and they more or less have to slowly die away from their communities.

A lot of them want to come back and have these things, these facilities, in northern Saskatchewan, but there is absolutely no mention in the throne speech about the need for not only facilities for the elderly but on even promises such as the building of hospitals such as in La Ronge. And these things we do not see at all in regards to general statements of improving facilities in the throne speech.

The only thing that we hear is a very defensive statement in regards to the fact that oh, maybe we're spending too much on health. And of course it says, quote, in all the throne speech: we can't have everything in terms of all specialists and all kinds of services in every town, in every village, in every city.

Of course this in one sense is a false statement because we don't even have the basic services in a lot of our hospitals and in our communities in northern Saskatchewan. So in the first place, we're not at that stage.

So the government is building their information base on false premises. They're not telling the real truth about what their intent is, and of course we know.

As a person who was a critic for Indian and Métis programs last year and also this year, I know very well what studies mean. We know that Indian and Métis people ought to be put in a situation where studies preceded cut-backs.

So when I look at the proposal for a task force, I look at it in deep suspicion. I would not be suspicious if the record of the government was indeed on solid ground, if the government had done things in a positive way, but I am concerned because I have seen the complete opposite. I am worried that the task force is just an excuse for the old efficiency syndrome of this government. They will say, we're trying to effectively deal with this on an administrative basis so we have to do these cut-backs. So it becomes a rationale for cut-backs.

Not only that. In many cases, as we've seen in Brian and also in France and in the United States, that indeed these efficiency syndrome-type task forces are built at a time when the privatization question is an important question, and we see that more deliberately in England. When we look at England we know right now that health is the number one problem. You see that in the headlines if you read any of the newspapers in England. We know that. But when we talk about the erosion of medicare in this province, this government will say we are fear mongering.

Well when we raised questions last year about dental plans and they cut it back, they would call that fear mongering. When they cut back on services to prescription drugs, they would call that fear mongering. But this is not fear mongering. This is the reality of right wing governments and the justification for getting at the privatization question. That is what the intent is in this statement on the throne speech.

When we look at another aspect of the throne speech, we look at the question of the Mulroney-Reagan trade deal. Now if you look at the Mulroney-Reagan trade deal, it's couched in soft sell rhetoric. It's no longer the Mulroney-Reagan deal or the free trade deal; it's now fair trade. And I looked at it and said, fair trade. And I know right away they're trying, the PC government, Mr. Speaker, is trying to soft sell this item, basically because historically we know that it has been defeated on every case that it has reared its ugly head.

When we look at the questions of free trade, one has to examine it in regards to the Canadian historical dimensions. The questions have to be, really: why are you trying to change from the existing system that's there to getting into a continental American policy system? Why are we moving, unquestioning the basis of control that exists so that another form of American big corporate control will take over? Who will benefit in the long run from the free trade arrangements? And the answer of course is pretty clear. All we have to do is look at the historical context of Canada.

When we started the free trade debate, and I listened to

the Premier, the Premier mentioned that it was more like the building of the railroads. Somehow it would be in the context of, let's say, the building of the CPR (Canadian Pacific Railway), that it would be in the spirit that it would be built.

Well I must remind the Premier of history. Number one:— the question of the building of railroad was not one where it went north and south; the building of the railroad went east and west. It was built to unit Canada. And that was the essence of the railroad at that point in time. Of course there were certain other aspects to the question of the railroad which may more relate to the reference that the Premier had made at that point in time.

One must remember that there was another aspect to the railroad which caused one of the PC governments to fall at that point in time in 1973, and that was in relation to the Pacific scandal. And a lot of the Canadian terminology came to be in regards to this, that people, ordinary people ended up paying, you know, for part of the costs in regards to the building of the railroad. So the word of being railroaded came into effect.

And as I look at the different railroads that the Premier has built in this province in the past while, we recognize that there was an open-for-business railroad in 1982. And later on he talked about this four pillars of strategy railroad that he's now dismantling. A lot of people would now say that the Premier is simply trying to railroad us into another one of his simplistic and gullible deals.

(1630)

As we look at the question of free trade, in the historical context and when it was defeated in 1911, and even when it was brought out into a different context in the '70s, a lot of people thought it was completely ridiculous and incredible that the former leader of the opposition, Dick Collver, would have raised the point that we would join the United States. As a member of the PC Party and government — not government — as a member of the PC Party at that time, they were talking about becoming part of the 51st state. There was a lot of people in the Tory party who felt that there should be a deeper connection with the United States. This was in the middle '70s period. And of course everybody thought, well that's a little bit off the track. I think this railroad, you know, was going to a little bit off the track. So now you see the Premier couching his rhetoric in words like free trade, of all things.

Well getting away from it, the question is: who benefits? We all know that the benefit to free trade will be the American big corporations. That's where the benefit will be. It will not be to the ordinary people in the United States or to ordinary people in Canada but it will benefit the large-scale corporations. What we are looking at therefore is the fact that as we benefit the large scale corporations, where they take more of our land and they take more of our resources and so on, what we are seeing in Saskatchewan is that we are paying more. Our taxes are going up. There is not enough money for our schools; there's not enough money for the waiting lists; there's not enough money for the elders; there's not enough money this and that. In the long run we pay. And this is the type of system that this Premier and his PC government are

promoting.

I would say to the Premier in regards to the free trade debate, the Mulroney-Reagan deal, I would say that, number one, the Premier should have more faith in the people who built Saskatchewan, that the Premier should have more faith and work beside the people of Saskatchewan in continuing to build the base that they've already started to work on in the past.

Secondly, I think it's important to recognize that a continentalist policy in this day and age is not the correct policy. The best way is to trade on an international footing. This trading on a bilateral basis is not enough. We have to go on the international front to be able to sell our resources all over the world. But we need to, number one, go back to the first point, that we want to control those resources rather than have other foreign multinationals control them for us.

As I look at the other aspect that is deeply connected to the free trade question — that's the question of privatization — and as I look at it again the government, the PC government, goes on a soft sell image. They already know that privatization in Britain meant poor services; it meant lesser services; it meant higher costs for those services; it meant less jobs in many situations. They already know that so they want to soft sell it. Instead of dealing with those questions directly they want to go and talk about public participation.

This is the same government who has not consulted people in education, in health, in economic development, in any particular issue that this province has seen in this past six years. And here now it's couching its privatization deal under public participation — soft sell rhetoric.

When you look at what really happens in the question of privatization, one has to look at Weyerhaeuser and Pocklington. The deal is basically to give away our resources, part of our agricultural industry, to outside people, rather than control it ourselves over here. It also wants to give away our forests to be controlled from the outside — well, I look at the example of Weyerhaeuser.

Weyerhaeuser, we talk a lot about interest rates and the farmers, interest rates for the ordinary people and how they're going up. But when you look at the Weyerhaeuser deal, what does this government do for big business? We know very clearly that Weyerhaeuser doesn't have to pay a cent of interest if it doesn't make any profits I mean, if it was that kind of deal for the rest of the people in this province, we'd be on solid ground. I mean, right now there is a great degree of unfairness and inequality in the way the PC Saskatchewan government treats ordinary people and how it treats big business.

And when you look at not only the interest rates, we look at the fact of land in the Weyerhaeuser agreement. We look at the issue of 12,460 acres of land provided for Weyerhaeuser with no taxation. While taxation is paid by trappers in northern Saskatchewan from people who are living off the land who are trying so hard to feed their families, Weyerhaeuser gets away scot free.

While a lot of farmers are losing their farm land to big banks, we also see in northern Saskatchewan, this government forcing the issue of greater taxation on all of ordinary people. We know that there is one law in regards to land policy for big business, and one way of treating ordinary people, farmers, and trappers of this province.

When you look at the other aspect of privatization, you have to also look at Weyerhaeuser in regards to highways. We know that the towns and the municipalities in northern Saskatchewan have been meeting with the cabinet minister and the Premier, and even at the SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) convention people did raise the issue of highways. Resolution 48, for example, this past year said that:

Be it resolved that the Minister of Highways, after consultation with northern municipalities, implement a rigorous improvement and development northern highway program.

And a lot of people recognized the need for highways because not a stitch of one kilometre had been built in regards to the improvements on Highway No. 102 north of La Ronge, and many other highway systems in the North. And I looked at Weyerhaeuser — they got \$8 million last year, \$7 million on the transfer of the agreement, 32 kilometres per year to be built, but not a stitch for the North.

So when I look at the whole question of the throne speech in regards to privatization, I know very clearly that it benefits only the large-scale corporations and the friends of the Tories and not the ordinary people.

In regards to the question of the North and the question of Indian and Métis people, I think the issue is very clear. One is, in the historical context in the past six years there has been tremendous neglect of the North and also Indian and Métis people. When I look at the budget, nothing, absolutely nothing, is mentioned for Indian and Métis people. And I think that's an historic first in Saskatchewan in the throne speech. There is no mention at all. And I say to this government in relation to Indian and Métis in the North: is there any compassion or fairness when you don't even mention jobs? Is there any fairness or compassion when you don't talk about positive resource-use policies in regards to mining, in regards to forestry, and in regards to traditional resource use in northern Saskatchewan?

There is no mention of . . . Is there compassion and fairness in regards to no mention of health facilities or housing or the building of bridges in the North? No mention.

When I raised the point last year, a lot of people were amazed that this government in 1983 put down in their map that in northern Saskatchewan there was beautiful lakes and drivers but no people. We are seeing in 1988 that they are continuing this policy where they are stating . . . where there is absolutely no mention, and I think this sin of omission is a deliberate one. It's a deliberate one to put down people who are down already.

This government believes in beating up on people who are already down and out. We have seen that in 100 per cent cut-backs in regards to Indian and Métis people and their AMNSIS (Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan) — 100 per cent cut back on the native court worker program; 55 per cent cut back on Indian economic development. These examples from last year show that this government simply doesn't care about what happens to the people in the North and what happens to Indian and Métis people.

I would say that, in closing, we are looking at this throne speech, and I am extremely disappointed. I feel that this government has really put the people in a terrible situation, not only Indian and Métis people, not only people from northern Saskatchewan, but a lot of people in the whole province of Saskatchewan.

I feel that they're trying to rhetorically say, yes, we are building, but what they are doing is destroying the very foundation of what made Saskatchewan what it is today; that indeed they have destroyed a lot of the base of what families learn to live with on a daily basis. They have destroyed the aspect and the initiative for northern development. They have destroyed many other essential services that Saskatchewan learned to live with.

And I would say that when I look at the throne speech, the only thing that I can remember about it, and a lot of people remember, and it's really a sad thing — and when I did relay some talk with people in the North, and the only thing they could remember was the issue of — not the people of the North or Indian and Métis people — but the only issue they could remember was dangerous dogs. And of all my experience when you talk about the aspect of fighting for jobs fighting for health, fighting for education, fighting for this and that, fighting for daily existence, and all you can remember from the throne speech is dangerous dogs, it's a sad day in the history of Saskatchewan.

(1645)

The 1988 throne speech by the PC government will go down in history as a day where the concern of dogs overrides the concerns of people from the North, Indian and Métis people, and for many other people in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Petersen:— Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with great pride that I rise today to remark on His Honour's Speech from the Throne. I'd like to comment on a couple of things to begin with and to emphasize, and that's the optimism and commitment of this government to the future of Saskatchewan. All three of those words are unknown in the rhetoric of the NDP.

Now we recognize the hardships that people in this province and this country, and indeed countries around us, have endured during some pretty difficult economic times. I'd even go so far as to say that members across the way recognize that we've had some sharp drops in commodity prices and sharp drops in resource prices. So

what makes us different from that? So what makes our Premier and our PC government unique from all other political parties? Optimism and commitment to the future, Mr. Speaker.

You see, Mr. Speaker, on this side we take recognition of difficult economic times, and we take it one step further than the members opposite. We recognize and we act. We act, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to bring realistic solutions forward for the people of our province. Now over there, well you heard it today, rhetoric, empty rhetoric, time and again.

Saskatchewan has made its mark in history as being a place that was built by common sense people, and we plan to continue that proud tradition. One of the most integral parts of Saskatchewan's fabric, Mr. Speaker, is it's ability to never, never lost sight of their vision for the future — for the future generations and for their children. The members of this government represent that kind of a commitment, that kind of a vision, because we're that kind of people; we look forward. We are the doers, the movers, the shakers, the builders. Across the way, the complainers, the whiners, the fear mongers, the buyers — the buyers of potash mines. Never build anything, just buy it. Don't build, just buy.

I see you people opposite today busily thumbing through their rule books on NDP policy and solutions, their old, tattered book. They're looking for answers for today's questions in their old, tattered book, time and again. The rest of us, Mr. Speaker, understand where the answer lies. They look pretty funny over there, despair on their faces. We know what the answer is. Nowhere in that NDP rule book can you find the word future. The good old days, the past, so on and so forth, let's go back to the past, let's go back to the Regina Manifesto.

We heard it today in question period, the same old rhetoric on health care. The Tories are going to tear it down; the NDP are the guys who are going to make sure that it continues. Well, Mr. Speaker, during our administration we have spent more on health care than the NDP ever did — an increase of 63 per cent, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But the Tories are going to tear it down, aren't they? So says the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, we have the right in this province to pursue every opportunity available to us. We've got the right to produce the best products that we know how. We've got the right to market those products to our largest trading partner to the south, without penalties and tariffs, I might add. We've got the right to compete for those markets without political interference. We have the right to free trade with the United States, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

What will happen if people are denied that right? What will happen to the thousands of people in this province who rely on our potash industry, our oil and gas, our beef industry, our hog industry, our forest industry? Members of the opposition would have us hang on to it, close our doors — close our doors to that market.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I believe the damage in doing something like that would be endless. They want to isolate this province from this country, from our

neighbours to the south, and if they are allowed to do so, Mr. Speaker, they are guilty of maiming us from now until for ever.

Those who deny our people the right to free trade are essentially stunting the growth of this province and of the people that live here. They're guilty of putting a padlock in the door. They want to throw away the key. In 1982 that key was taken away from them, and it was denied to them in 1986. We want to provide all Saskatchewan residents with a key to the future, with a key to opportunity, that they can open at their own discretion.

Public participation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in our province's economic growth is another opportunity laid out in His Honour's throne speech. Our Progressive Conservative government believes very strongly that Saskatchewan people have the right to invest their skills and their capital in areas that may not have been available to them in the past. Programs such as we're seeing with respect to Saskoil share offerings, SaskPower bond issues, the reorganization of the delivery in some areas, some government services, are examples of the ways that the public can be involved.

Mr. Speaker, this government looks forward to the many ideas and proposals from the public, from workers, from companies, involved to help develop new, effective, efficient ways of providing services to Saskatchewan residents — the best services and the best investment opportunities available.

Let me assure you, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Saskatchewan, the legislation that will be introduced to mandate the new Department of Public Participation, will ensure the quality of government services. It will ensure that it will be retained. The rights and the privileges of the public sector employees will be fully respected.

The Speech from the Throne outlined, for all to see, the strong commitment of this government in the areas of free trade and public participation, but outlying the commitment that we've made in Saskatchewan's agriculture sector. And I just want to dwell on our agriculture sector for a moment since that came up in today's question period . . . pardon me, yesterday's question period.

The members opposite, in their ever-expanding search for new rhetoric, talked about the production loan program, the PLP. The member for Humboldt was very indignant in his questioning. The member for Riversdale was trying to be perhaps a new minister of agriculture, should the NDP ever get re-elected — I'm not too sure. But they were questioning the production loan. That production loan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was put forward at a time when farmers needed help, with a three-year pay back. We asked people in a time of some concern over their ability to pay back, what should we do? We talked to Sask Pool, the SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities), and they said, you know if we had 10 years to pay that back instead of three, I think we could make it. Well, Mr. Speaker, that makes some sense to me. It's a lot easier to pay back a tenth at a time instead of a third at a time. Obviously, Mr. Speaker. Well we did that.

We provided that for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that today there are some comments that certain members wish to make, and with your permission I would beg leave to adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

RESIGNATION OF MEMBER

Hon. Mr. Devine:— Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity with leave of the Assembly to acknowledge the fact that the member from Regina Elphinstone will be leaving the legislature for the last time today, and I wanted to say a couple of things to express my appreciation for his long contribution here in the Saskatchewan Legislature.

Mr. Speaker:— Is leave granted?

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Devine:— I want to add all the good wishes from the members of my side of the House to the former premier of the province of Saskatchewan and the leader of the New Democratic Party in the province of Saskatchewan for his distinguished service, not only to Regina Elphinstone and the people there and to the people of Saskatchewan, but indeed for his significant contribution as a Canadian.

His retirement from political life in Saskatchewan indeed turns a page on a long and colourful chapter in our history. I want the member to know — and I've expressed this personally to the member — that I consider it my privilege to have had the opportunity to be in the legislature with a distinguished debater and parliamentarian, a man of quick wit, of good humour, and, frankly, a man who will be sincerely missed by both sides of the legislature in the province of Saskatchewan.

On the other hand, I'm sure that there will be new generations of lawyers graduating from Osgood Hall and the universities of Toronto and other places that will have a lifetime of experience laid out before them and will benefit tremendously from the member's experience and his wisdom, and I know that in years to come he will continue to leave his mark on the lawmakers of the country and on the general public.

I will say one last thing. One of the comments that the member made in this legislature, and I believe has made it at one other function that stood out in my mind, was about this institution. Mr. Blakeney said the following — he said, and I'm just paraphrasing, that this is not a very efficient institution, but it's not supposed to be. The institution is where free men and women express their views in a democracy, and they can do so at will, and that they can speak on the kinds of things that they are supposed to be able to speak on and want to speak on for about as long as they want to speak on them. And he said we should remember that that's what this is all about, that it's a place where free men and free women can design their own laws and govern themselves and probably,

thank goodness, economists don't run the legislature — and I'm again paraphrasing and I wouldn't dare put words in the member's mouth. But I thought it was from his experience and from the time that he had been in here, it sort of summed up his views and it hit me that he would have reflected on that about the Saskatchewan legislature.

We have many a long, hard debate in here, and you'd often wonder: are we wasting the people's time, our own time, or money? And he made it very clear, this is not a place for quick decisions, and it's not a place for a textbook definition of efficiency in the classic economic sense.

So I say to the hon. member, I believe that he was right. The institution itself, and what it represents, and what it stands for world-wide, is more important than the individual members and probably the debates of the day on any one of several different issues.

So I would just again say, it's been a pleasure to serve with you. You have made a significant contribution. I view you, and we all do, as a man of integrity and honour, and a great Canadian.

And on behalf of all the people of Saskatchewan, I wish you and your wife, Anne, a very happy and rewarding future, and the best of health to you and your family.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane:— I would like to join with the Premier, if I may, Mr. Speaker, and I do this with some trepidation because when he hon. member from Elphinstone leaves this Assembly, I become, I understand, the dean of this Assembly, and it's not something, I can assure you, I aspired to when I was first elected. I checked the members' handbook to see what the advantages were, and I didn't find many in that. But it brought home to me that 17 years this June that I have been associated in this Assembly with the hon. member, and I want to congratulate him for only his contribution to the people of this province but for his contribution to the parliamentary system.

When I recognize the event of today and thought about it, I have many happy memories from my association in this Assembly.

(1700)

I must say I've lost a lot more than I ever won in my debates with the hon. member, but I came through with a tremendous admiration, not only for his integrity, but for his dedication, but for his political skills. And I, as I say, having been on the short end of the exercise of those skills from time to time, I have nothing but admiration for them.

I can recall one of my first debates in this Assembly where the then leader of the opposition, Mr. Steuart, had done a very, very effective job in rousing his troops and getting the government troops down, and the member from Elphinstone coming into the House, and I watched him very carefully. He talked to one or two of his members, and that was it — and came in and got up and gave a

speech that just turned the whole debate and the emotion of the House right around, and we went crawling out. I learned something that day, I must say.

I admired, much to my frustration if I may say so, sir, trying to pin you down in a debate through a potash nationalization and the tremendous frustration in the opposition as we tried to get the then premier hooked with this debate and his skill at staying above the fray. And there was a tremendous frustration in the opposition during that period of time with our inability, and that was a tribute to your skills.

I remember suffering the tremendous strategy that you have to take credit for in the 1978 election, and we all knew the political environment at that time, and I thought that was, frankly, a superb political victory by your party. I certainly didn't say that at the '78 election time, but I have no hesitation in saying it today.

So I reiterate what the Premier said on your contribution and . . . but I would like to say, from one politician to another, sir, I had nothing but respect for your political skills. I've always admired your love of this Assembly and the way you've dealt with the Assembly and dealt with the members, and I've appreciated that for some several years.

I, with others, wish you a very enjoyable and certainly a very healthy retirement. And to your wife, Anne — so many times we forget the contribution of spouses, and I know that her contribution to your success is something that you can measure better than any, but certainly, on behalf of myself, I would like to extend best wishes to her as she now has to put up with you a little more than perhaps she had to in the past, but I'm sure that she's more than capable. So on behalf of myself and the government members, we certainly wish you well.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow:— Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will not speak at length because I made most of my remarks in the course of the Speech from the Throne, the debate on the Speech from the Throne, other than to say the following two or three things.

This is kind of a day of mixed feelings for me. Here I was on my first occasion as the new Leader of the Opposition making what I thought was this great, fiery speech in response to the Speech from the Throne, but I realize now that all the headlines will be in honour of Mr. Al Blakeney — can't win.

My other recollection, of course, is back in 1970 — perhaps I shouldn't be acknowledging this far back — but the great leadership contest that we had in 1970 within our own party, and Al Blakeney, I'm sure, will remember that. My recollection was, apart from the vigour of the debate, that it was conducted in relatively civilized terms. That sometimes is very difficult, as we know, in political campaigns of various kinds. And when I stop to think that as things unfolded in 1970, that I was within something like 56 votes of actually winning, today I absolutely wake up in a cold sweat to think that I would have denied the province and the country a man of the intellect and the

ability, and the integrity of Allan Blakeney, but it all worked out to the best. He won and moved on, as we all know, to the great contributions in this province that have been mentioned by the premier and by the Minister of Finance, contributions which span all the way from the civil service to Premier to Leader of the Opposition, back to Leader of the Opposition, accomplishments from the Wascana Centre and health care programs and resource policy and constitutional involvement.

I guess I'd have to say that, in my judgement, one of Al Blakeney's finest yours — and it turned out to be a long four years' hours — was post-1982 when our party suffered a mild rejection at the polls — shall I put it that way? — at the hands of the Premier, and it must have been difficult.

I was one of those who retired with the consent of the majority of the people in Riversdale in 1982, and therefore didn't have to be here. But it must have been difficult with eight or nine people in opposition to take on the task and try to rebuild the party and to develop a new set of guide-lines and approaches for us and for the new caucus members that have come on stream subsequently. I really do think that that tells, for me, much about Al Blakeney and Anne — a dedication to public service, a dedication to doing the job. It just simply had to be done, and he did it with, as the Premier says, integrity, intelligence and principle and compassion — hard-hitting debate to be true.

All that I can hope for on a personal basis is to emulate in a small way some of those great attributes that we've all described. I'm sure that I won't be able to fill his shoes. My only answer is that I've got my own shoes.

We in this cause very much appreciate, Al, your guidance and leadership and contribution. We wish you and Anne Blakeney and the family happiness, good health and, I know, continued public involvement. Don't be surprised that if from time to time you get a phone call late in the middle of the night from me and perhaps others again seeking your advice and help in this very important and challenging task in which we're all involved. So, my congratulations to Al and Anne Blakeney for a job very well done. Thank you, sir.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brockelbank:— Mr. Speaker, I hadn't intended on speaking this afternoon, however — and I rise with mixed emotions to speak — first and foremost, I was very relieved to see the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden rise and take upon himself the mantle of dean of the House. Perhaps it was thrust upon him. For that reason I had some fear that it may fall on this side of the House, and I'd rather not have it.

The other opinion that I wanted to express this afternoon, and I felt a feeling in my heart that I had to say something about the member for Elphinstone who was here before I came here . . . in this place. And I had the opportunity of serving in the legislature on both sides of the House with his guidance, and I found it invigorating and always had a refreshing turn to it, something that I appreciated over the years. I never felt I was up to the standards he set, but

sometimes I attempted to achieve them, and that was refreshing that I could come reasonably close.

So it's with a great sense of happiness that I say to the member for Elphinstone: good luck. I know that you will acquit yourself very well in the new field that you've chosen, and it will be a great benefit to those people that you are associated with.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney:— Mr. Speaker, I don't intend to detain the House long. We have had an opportunity last fall to say our goodbyes, and I very much appreciate the kind remarks which were directed to me at that time, and I certainly appreciate the remarks which were addressed today.

The member for Riversdale suggested that this was perhaps unfortunate and that I would be taking away the headlines from him today. All I can say is that he's taken away the headlines from me a great many times.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney:— And if I'm able to recoup one today, I've got . . . (inaudible) . . .

I noted the member for Qu'Appelle-Lumsden complimenting me on my political skills. I certainly thank him for the kind words. I only wish the political skills had been a little more evident in these last few years, which they singularly have not.

I also thank him for the remarks directed to my wife, Anne. She has been . . . In a serious vein, I say she has been my helpmate and a colleague with me for my years in public office, and I'm sure that the spouses of members well know the pressures which fall upon a spouse, particularly if one is in an executive capacity with the Government of Saskatchewan. The demands on one's spouse and one's family are considerable, and I have to thank her for bearing with me during those years when I was in that position.

I will pass on to her the high opinion which the member for Qu'Appelle-Lumsden has of her staying power, and I think that she has demonstrated it in the past and will, I believe, be able to deal with the somewhat traumatic situation of having me around the house more than has been previously the case.

I had an opportunity earlier to say what I thought this institution meant to the people of Saskatchewan and the people of Canada and indeed the people of the world. When I say this institution, I mean the institution of parliamentary government. We are practitioners in our own back yard of that particular institution, and I won't say further why I think it is a valuable institution and why the word we do is therefore important. However unlikely that may seem, if we sit here and listen to the proceedings for a day or a week, we sometimes are not fully apprized of the fact that we are doing valuable work, but in my judgement we are.

Basically, Mr. Speaker, what I wanted to do today was to confine my remarks to thanking all the members on both sides of the House for the courtesies which they've extended to me over my years, now approximately 28 years, in this House.

I say, while I suspect all will agree with, that it's a privilege to have the opportunity to serve in this House, and for that we all will thank the voters who sent us here and the voters who we serve, even though they might not have voted for us in the particular constituency. And I thank them and have taken another opportunity to do so.

My purpose today is to thank the colleagues who I have served with in this legislature, colleagues on both sides of the House, because ultimately we are all colleagues in attempting to make this institution work and in attempting to serve all the people of Saskatchewan. I have enjoyed the opportunity to work with all of you and with the members of previous legislatures in our common cause. It is not all that serious. There is a serious element, but fortunately there is an element of camaraderie which makes the life here in this legislature, the drab and dreary aspects of it from time to time, somewhat more endurable.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and to all of the others, thank you for the courtesies you have extended. I leave this House with mixed feelings, looking forward to new opportunities of course, since when one closes the door, one doesn't look back, but also remembering fondly the opportunities which I've had to serve and the friendships which I've made from members of all parties.

Thank you all; thank you again.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Assembly adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

CORRIGENDUM

On page 13 of the *Hansard* No.2A Tuesday, March 22, 1988, the last line at the end of the sixth paragraph on the right-hand side of the page should read:

that is unavailable to all except public employees.

[NOTE: the online version has been corrected.]