

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Clerk:** — I hereby advise the House that under rule 11(7) I have examined the following petition. I hereby lay it on the Table for reading and receiving.

Of certain residents of the province of Saskatchewan, praying that the Legislative Assembly may be pleased to urge the Government of Saskatchewan to take immediate remedial action with respect to the problems at Old Wives Lake.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Legislative Assembly, a group of 36 women from the constituency of Melfort. These women belong to the Melfort Progressive Conservative ladies' organization or association.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — They are seated in your gallery. They are accompanied by their bus driver, Mr. Alex Glanville, the only male in the crowd.

And, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe I've had a higher honour while being a member as I am today, Mr. Speaker, being honoured by these guests from the constituency of Melfort. They are a fine group of women who I had the pleasure of having lunch with this afternoon.

The women have a busy day scheduled ahead of them. They're going to be here for question period and some of the debate this afternoon. They are going to be touring Government House, and they might even get in on a little bit of late night shopping tonight, I understand.

So it is just my pleasure to introduce and welcome this group of fine women from the constituency of Melfort, and I again am deeply honoured to have you all here.

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

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Concerns of Groups Representing Non-Governmental Organizations

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Mr. Speaker, I have a question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, today a group of people who represent people who work for shelters for battered women, and day-care centres, and crisis intervention centres, and sheltered workshops, just to name a few, tried to meet you or representatives of your government to bring their concerns to your attention, and I will lay their brief on the Table at the appropriate time today. Mr. Premier, why did you and your government refuse to

meet with these people?

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

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, I agree to meet with groups all the time as long as they will allow me just a little bit of lead time to set up an appointment. I was not in the city until noon today. I left at a quarter to nine, and whether it's me or cabinet minister, some lead time is necessary. Secondly, I have met with many, many of these groups before, and people that are on that list that you want to table we have met with here in the legislature in Room 218, and we have gone over many, many of the issues. So I can say that, Mr. Speaker, we have met with them, we'll continue to meet with them, but nobody can realistically expect to walk in and meet a cabinet minister without any notice. It's really pretty difficult, and it is for me as well.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — New question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, with your countless numbers of ministers and legislative secretaries and staff people, you could have arranged to meet with someone.

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

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — These are the people who represent those who have to go to food banks and can't afford essential medication, who wanted to speak to your government and you failed to give them the opportunity. On page 3 they make it clear that they disagree with your priorities and your policies. Now, Mr. Premier, is it that you're afraid to meet with these people, or is it that in your new and arrogant way you refuse to meet with anybody who disagrees with you?

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

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, I can say to the hon. member that if individuals are serious about meeting with me or cabinet ministers or caucus members, then indeed we can arrange to meet.

We had caucus this morning and the people were together going through, and even in some of the offices that these people went to see they didn't even call for a meeting; they just left a brochure or left something else or a broken cookie as their invitation to meet, but they didn't ask for a meeting.

And so you stand in here in the legislature; you stand in here in the legislature and say that, well, any group that wants to walk in should be able to meet just like right now, any minute, any second, all the time, when we are, Mr. Speaker, working full time, and meet with them on a regular basis as long as we have any sort of lead time so that we can respond sincerely to requests to meet on any particular issue.

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

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Mr. Premier, that is just not true. These people tried to meet with you or representatives of your government, requested a meeting and you refused to meet with them. Mr. Premier, what are you afraid of? Are

you afraid of the underprivileged and the poor and those who are handicapped that you will refuse to meet with these people to address their concerns as you, as a responsible Premier, ought to.

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

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, I think the whole country today knows that this side of the House works very hard for the poor. And this side of the House . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. Order.

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, if you . . . I want the media to watch their reaction to this. Okay? You watch. This party and this side of the House defends the poor with pension programs and health care and nursing homes. I will say, Mr. Speaker, and I want to make it very, very clear — very, very clear — Mr. Speaker, this side of the House and the PC Party of Saskatchewan does not buy votes from the poor as the president of the NDP Party of Saskatchewan does.

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

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — And I want the whole country . . . And I give a lot of credit to the people in the media who have been reporting it on the front page of the paper because it is not a national issue yet, but it will be a national issue, where the NDP president of Saskatchewan says it's okay to cheat as long as they're poor, and I will buy the votes of the poor. And then you turn around, Mr. Speaker, and the Leader of the NDP party says: and I will foreclose on the poor as long as I can get paid for it.

Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you, if you want to stand up and defend the poor, we'll put our record on the line any single, solitary day in the next five years or the next 10 years.

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

### Regulations Regarding Use of Community Pastures

**Mr. Upshall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is also to the Premier, and I'm sure that for poor people of this province that will build their trust, I'm sure.

Mr. Premier, my question is this, in relation to the community pastures. As of November 1 last year you changed the rules for community pasture patrons. They now have less service for more cost. Mr. Premier, this elimination of services seems to be an extension of your ideological run to privatizing everything in this province extending to the community pastures — and certainly this won't benefit the patrons.

Mr. Premier, is it your aim to remove community pastures from your government department eventually and privatize them?

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

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Chairman, we have talked to the farmers and the ranchers who keep their livestock in community pastures. Some of the farmers and ranchers

want to have their own breeding stock in there. We said we would accommodate that. It's now about 70 per cent public breeding stock and about 30 per cent private. We said we'd be prepared to go to 50-50 on any of the community pastures where they wanted their own breeding stock, and it's completely flexible. We will provide sufficient breeding stock for the small operators if they don't have their own, but at the request of individuals we're giving them the option if they want better breeding stock in their own, then we'll provide them that opportunity.

**Mr. Upshall:** — New question, Mr. Speaker. In February, Mr. Premier, there was approximately 30 farmers and ranchers came into Regina. I met with them. The member from Kelvington-Wadena came over and met with them, and at the meeting he said, and I quote, "I guess the thing I learned from this is any time that we have change in a program it's going to have to be laid out in point from."

Mr. Premier, do you agree that your government failed to properly advise producers on this policy change?

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

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Well I will admit that I found out last night that you agree that the agriculture policies of Manitoba are going to defeat that government over there, and you were going on radio saying so, and particularly associated with the livestock industry. I was there with you announcing the expansion of PAMI (Prairie Agriculture Machinery Institute), and talking about the diversification of the livestock industry and research. Then you went on radio later and said, well when they lose in Manitoba, it will be a lot different trying to get along with the government over there.

Well I will say to the hon. member, I know you've given up on terms of agriculture policy. The NDP in Manitoba are going to get wiped out in rural Manitoba because of NDP agriculture policy.

Mr. Speaker, the suggestions that farmers want to have their own breeding stock never did fit well with the socialists, but it fits fine with people from the PC Party of Saskatchewan and of Canada.

**Mr. Upshall:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, your secretary, the member from Kelvington-Wadena, at that meeting admitted that the government did not consult with the patrons of community pastures, but he promised it would never happen again.

I ask you, Mr. Premier, why should any farmer in this province, or anyone else for that matter, trust you and your government when you don't consult with them; you won't talk to the NGOs (non-governmental organizations). Why should they trust you? You haven't talked to them on production loans or the drug plan or the dental plan or the gas tax, and it goes on and on. Why should they believe you, Mr. Premier?

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

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, I can say that people

on this side of the House don't go out with memberships and buy the vote of farmers and buy the votes of the poor and then stand up and say it's okay to do that as long as they're poor, as long as they're poor. It's one thing, Mr. Speaker, to stand up here and say that you should help the farmers. They didn't help them when they had 18 per cent, 20 per cent interest rates. They didn't help them when they couldn't get cash advances. They didn't help them when they wanted deficiency payments. They didn't help them at all. They just went out and bought their farm from the poor and took it from them and then said, we'll sell it back to the kids at twice the price. That's what they did, Mr. Speaker. And they can drop their heads because it's the same policy over and over and over again — that's why you have no support in rural Saskatchewan, and you're going to get your nose cleaned in Manitoba.

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

**Mr. Upshall:** — Mr. Speaker, the question was about . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, order!

**Mr. Upshall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Premier was: why does he not consult with anyone in this province, including the farmers of this province, before they make an ideologically motivated decision? Obviously, he didn't want to address that question.

So, Mr. Premier, will you now in light of all the discussions and the complaints from farmers in the community pasture program, will you do the honourable thing and tell those farmers that you will withdraw your new policy, and if there's any change to be made they will tell you, sir, because they're the ones involved in it, if there should be any improvements to this program. Will you now withdraw this policy?

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

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, the policy is to allow the farmers flexibility to either have government breeding stock or their own, and we're not going to withdraw that. They have asked for that flexibility. We will make sure there is sufficient number of public breeding stock there, and if they want their own we will accommodate that as well, Mr. Speaker. They have asked it; we have responded. They wanted 10 years extension on production loan; we have responded. They wanted cash advances; we responded. They wanted deficiency payments; we have responded.

We spent a long time always listening to farmers and to the SARM Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) and to the wheat pool and to many organizations. And they respect the fact that we have responded much more than the NDP ever did in the past, and certainly more than they can do now just whining about the fact that they're not in power and wishing they'd have changed their mind in many of their policies of the past.

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

#### Review of School-Based Dental Program

**Mr. Anguish:** — My question is to the Minister of Health, and in addition to the government's bites dog section in the throne speech, we were surprised that there was no mention of plans for the dental program in rural areas of the province. Your own party convention last November stated that this government had made a mistake by privatizing the school-based children's dental program, and the response to that was that the program would be reviewed. What are the results of the review, and when can we expect dental services to be restored in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Minister?

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

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — It's interesting, and as the member will know and as I have said on several occasions in this House in the past, the concern that is expressed about the lack of dental services in rural Saskatchewan by and large comes from urban Saskatchewan. Hear that clearly.

In rural Saskatchewan in the communities that now have dentists' offices or satellite dentists' offices where no dentist has ever been before. Those are important and those are important innovations in those communities — communities in this province that now have dental service that did not have dental services.

People in those communities say: this is the kind of policy that we have because it addresses something larger. It addresses the enhancement of rural communities, and the enhancement of rural communities is an extremely important issue with members on this side of the House, and that encompasses many departments including the Department of Health.

People in those communities want those services on the main street for the children, for the parents, for the grandparents, for all people in the community. So that's the service. There are encouraging signs that there are more and more of these dental offices opening, and they will continue to open across rural Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Anguish:** — To the same minister, Mr. Speaker. The rhetoric of the government is starting to have some decay about it on this topic. Can the minister then confirm today that under the school-based dental program there was a 92 per cent utilization rate in the province of Saskatchewan, some 152,000 children that were eligible and took part in the program. Today, under your privatized program, there's a 60 per cent utilization, down to about 45,000 children who are actually utilizing the program. How does the minister reconcile this, and what are the plans to put the rest of the people back in their . . . mainly that come from rural Saskatchewan that aren't getting the services as you put out in your rhetoric?

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

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Mr. Speaker, another example of misinformation coming from that side of the House. They have said, and they said in the last session, there would not be registration by the children or the parents of those children across the province, that registration would not

be there. Mr. Speaker, the facts are, as the member said, there was about 92 per cent of the children were registered under the former plan. About 87 per cent, just slightly more than 87 per cent of children that are eligible, are now registered in this province.

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

**Mr. Anguish:** — Same minister, Mr. Speaker. We'd like to see those results because the information we have is that about 45,000 people are enrolled in the program now as compared to . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, Order. Order. Order. Does the minister have a . . . or the member have a new question, or a supplementary?

**Mr. Anguish:** — New question, Mr. Speaker. The figures that we have is that there's now only 45,000 people registered in that program, compared to 152,000 before. Now will the minister tell us today what the plans are to restore those dental services, and will the people that were formerly employed in the dental program, the school-based dental program, be employed in this new, revised program that you're planning for Saskatchewan and the dental services in this province?

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

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Mr. Speaker, as I have said, slightly over 87 per cent of the eligible children in this province are now registered in the new dental plan — slightly over 87 per cent. I'm not surprised at the information put forward, or misinformation if I might say so, Mr. Speaker, from the members. It's happened before. But all I will say is: the facts are, over 87 per cent are registered and more people are being registered as they take their children to the dentists, and as they'll do that for the most part on an annual basis, so more people are being registered all the time. We're very pleased with the response — 87 per cent.

So what I will say to the member: while you will have your question, but if you base your questions on the wrong premise and facts which are not there, well then there is no validity to the question, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Mr. Speaker, it seems that the minister if playing of the terms of registration versus utilization.

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

**Mr. Anguish:** — I would not doubt in the program that 87 per cent of the eligible people are registered in the program, but only about 60 per cent of that group are utilizing the program, because it's inaccessible to them.

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

**Mr. Anguish:** — The program is inaccessible to people in Saskatchewan; therefore, they're not utilizing it.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. Order. I hope you've gotten to the question because you are asking a supplementary and it was a rather long preamble.

**An Hon. Member:** — Well he was just on the question.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. Order.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Can you tell us, Mr. Minister, when the promise is going to be backed up of October last year to the people of Gravelbourg where your Premier promised them dental services, a clinic, something to improve the situation for dental services? We're now way, way past October of '87. Nothing's happened. That's why people can't trust the Government of Saskatchewan, the Premier sitting there, because you don't honour the promise that you make. It's all rhetoric.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Mr. Speaker, two things, two things, Mr. Speaker, two or three things. First of all, Mr. Speaker, the registration is over 87 per cent, as I have said. The member suggests that utilization would be that everybody . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. The member . . . the Minister of Health cannot answer if he's constantly interrupted.

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — What the member would suggest from his question, if you take it to its logical conclusion, he would suggest that as soon as they register, they would go to the dentist on the same day. Mr. Speaker, that is not the case. The people who are registered will use dental services, but they may not all use them in the first three months of the year — a point for you to understand. This is the month of March.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to Gravelbourg, I believe the member from Gravelbourg could tell you — I'm not sure if he could, but I believe he could — that the people in Gravelbourg, if you would take the interest in phoning the community or whatever, there is a dentist on his way into Gravelbourg. There will be a program in Gravelbourg. And I don't know the exact date of when he'll be there, but the arrangements are made. The arrangements are made in Gravelbourg, and the dentist will be in Gravelbourg, as I said before in this House.

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

### Application Fee for SIAST Students

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education, and it deals with the unfair tax that is being imposed on the youth of our province by this government. Mr. Minister, will you confirm that your department is now charging students who are applying at the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology an application fee of \$25, and will you confirm that this is over and above the normal tuition costs and that this fee is non-refundable, even if the course applied for is full?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Mr. Speaker, in response to the hon. member's question, I am aware of a fee, the details of which I am not fully conversant on. I will take notice of

the question and bring back the details, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Mr. Speaker, I would add a supplementary to the minister, a new question to the minister. Mr. Minister, I have in my hands a letter, which you have signed, in reply to the member from Regina North West on this very topic, and it deals with the regulations. And for your information, Mr. Minister, I would advise that the real problem is that you've cut back spaces, 1,100 spaces, in the technical school, and now you're imposing a deterrent fee so that there will not be so many applications.

What I want to know, Mr. Minister, is: why is it, if the class is full, why can't the fee be refunded? It just does not seem fair.

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Well as I said, Mr. Speaker, I'm aware of the fee; I'm not fully conversant with all the details and the rationale behind the fee.

But the hon. member should remember that one of the major changes we made in this legislature at the last sitting, Mr. Speaker, was to allow our institutes, who were formerly run by the Department of Education head office, downtown Regina, are now autonomous and a separate institute — the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology.

And just as the board of governors runs and has some fair say in terms of running the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina, we are now moving to the same format with the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, and they too have much say in how they shall run that new autonomous institute, Mr. Speaker. but I'll bring back the details relative to the question.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — One more question, Mr. Speaker. . . (inaudible) . . . this particular form, and it is my understanding that we are now under the operation of an interim board which is chaired by your deputy minister, so I hardly call that arm's length.

Mr. Minister, would you break the tradition of your party — you did not consult with the farmers, you did not consult with the farmers, you did not consult with the people in the rural area on the dental program — will you break tradition and consult with the students the next time you're going to review your program, which you've promised to do at the end of this year?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hepworth:** — Mr. Speaker, we have consulted with students, student bodies, whether they be institute students or university students, and in fact I would go so far as to say we've had excellent co-operation with them in putting together, for example, tuition fees and addressing tuition fee questions, student aid questions, all those kinds of issues that speak directly to the issue of accessibility for our young people to our post-secondary institutions across the province, Mr. Speaker.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill No. 1 — A Bill to amend The Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan Act

**Mr. Upshall:** — Mr. Speaker, because of the problems the government has caused with the farm production loan, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Agricultural Credit Corporation Act of Saskatchewan.

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

Motion agreed to and the bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

## STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

### Ruling on a Point of Order

**Mr. Speaker:** — Before orders of the day, I should like to read a brief statement. Yesterday before orders of the day, the member for Regina Victoria raised a point of order that the Minister of Health used quotations in his answers to supplementary questions. I deferred my ruling at that time. I have reviewed the verbatim record and find that the minister did use a direct quotation in answering a supplementary question.

But before ruling, I would like to clarify the current practice of this House with regard to the use of quotations in all questions. The use of quotations to frame a question has been permitted in this House.

Supplementaries, however, are an entirely different matter. I remind members that the purpose of a supplementary question is to seek specific clarification of the answer to the main question; in reality, it should be put without preamble. This precludes the use of quotations in supplementary questions.

On the other hand, it is reasonable that if the initial answer requires clarification, then ministers may be permitted to add detail to their answer by using a quotation. For this reason, I rule that the point of order is not well taken.

Having said that . . . Order. Order, please. Order. Order, order. Having said that, I should point out that where quotations are to be used, then they should be relevant to the question.

Furthermore, at this early juncture in the session, I would like to point out that exhibits are strictly forbidden in this House. Upon reviewing the verbatim records, I find that the minister used a picture in the book he was quoting as an exhibit. I point out to all members that exhibits in any form are out of order.

May I also make . . . May I also take . . . Order, order. May I also make one or two brief statements at this time. I would like to take the opportunity to do that.

Since this is a new session, and as you are aware in the last session, generally speaking, members conducted themselves well and engaged in a spirited but high level of debate; however, there were two areas where I trust we will experience an improvement in this session. One area was the use of unparliamentary language, and the other

was the use of unduly long preambles to questions and supplementaries combined with unduly long answers to questions and supplementaries. I trust that all hon. members will co-operate in working towards rectifying this area of concern in this House.

### QUESTIONS PUT BY MEMBERS

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, we will move all questions put by members to Motions for Returns (Debatable).

**Mr. Speaker:** Motions for Returns (Debatable).

### MOTIONS FOR RETURNS (Not Debatable)

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, on Motions for Returns (Not Debatable) I would like to move to Motions for Returns (Debatable).

**Mr. Speaker:** — Motions for Returns (Debatable).

### 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. Petersen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I gave place in my remarks in order that we honour a man who's been in this legislature for some 28 years, and I would like to resume where I left off.

My comments were dealing in the field of agriculture and how the commitment of the Progressive Conservative Government of Saskatchewan has helped agriculture here in our province. And when I say here in our province, Mr. Speaker, I mean here in our province. I don't mean in southern Saskatchewan or northern Saskatchewan, I mean our entire province. I don't just mean for people of one particular ancestry or another particular ancestry, I mean for all people in Saskatchewan.

Too often agriculture in Saskatchewan has been looked on as simply growing of wheat, raising of cattle. Well, Mr. Speaker, the member for Cumberland went on yesterday about how there was nothing in the throne speech, nothing at all for the people of northern Saskatchewan, especially those of Indian ancestry. Well, Mr. Speaker, that is just not quite the case. This government has shown its commitment to all people in Saskatchewan and the diversification of our agriculture situation, consistently.

And I'll go back to my theme of wild rice and the enhancement of that as a world-wide crop — a crop to be marketed in specialty markets, a crop to be marketed in ordinary supermarkets. I'll talk about funding, federal government funding combined with provincial funding. Over a million dollars was put into that particular industry in the last year.

Not only do we have wild rice, we have the

Saskatchewan Indian agriculture program that we worked with in trying to address some of the concerns that the member for Cumberland was talking about yesterday.

Yes, there are changing ways of life. Yes, there are problems. Yes, I will admit that the unemployment rate for people in the North is higher than it is other places. We're trying to address that, Mr. Speaker. We trying desperately, but when the member for Cumberland will not admit that we have done anything at all, I take exception to that.

I would also like to take exception to one other little thing he said. He said, and I paraphrase him, that this government cared more about mad dogs than it did about the native people in the North.

I don't care, Mr. Speaker, whether you happen to be from La Ronge or you happen to be from Assiniboia. I don't care if you happen to have Hungarian or Ukrainian ancestry, English ancestry or Cree, what have you. I don't care what it is, if you're eighty years old and a mad dog attacks you, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the results are liable to be the same no matter what your ancestry was. I would suggest that if you are a little girl of seven years old and a mad dog or a vicious dog attacks you, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the results are liable to be the same no matter who your parents were.

Mr. Speaker, I know that you've just ruled that exhibits are not allowed in the House, and I came prepared today with a number of reports from various newspapers outlining the very serious problem we have of vicious dogs. And for a member opposite to make light of that, for members opposite to sit there and chortle and chuckle and snort and guffaw when the throne speech was being read is incomprehensible to me.

They talk philosophy. They talk looking after poor people. They talk about defending the rights of the helpless and the innocent and yet, when a government has the courage to say: yes, we are going to deal with this; there is concern out there — life-styles have changed, attitudes changed; we're going to deal with the problem of dogs, vicious dogs — they laugh. They laugh! They don't care about seven-year-old girls that get mauled by vicious dogs. They don't care about senior citizens who can't go shopping without being attacked. And the member for Cumberland chuckles and laughs and all the rest of it — who yesterday so sanctimoniously sat there in his chair; pardon me, stood there in his place, and talked about the fact that we had forgotten about the people of northern Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not the case, that is not the case. In educational programs, we have tried to reach out to people. In our agriculture programs, which I am most familiar with, we've tried to reach out to people. And I might add, we've been successful, we've been successful. Many of the people who are operating wild rice leases today are very successful people, and it's an expanding industry.

I was up in La Ronge last summer speaking with people, asking them what they needed. They said we need some

changes to some policies here that don't let us carry on the type of traditional agriculture that we may be able to carry on. It's kind of hard to explain, but we made some changes, and today we see wild berries, we see dried mushrooms — a very, very lucrative gourmet market is being utilized by these people; it's being taken up.

And the member from Cumberland sits there and says, yes, but you know you didn't do anything for us, you didn't do anything for the people of the North. At the same time he says, well, you know, since you didn't, the best you can do is have a mad dog throne speech. He shows his total disregard for human compassion and understanding of the problems of the day, and I want all of Saskatchewan to know that.

In the country, in agricultural land where I farm, we are able to take of a dog that's mad and it's stray and it comes onto our property. We have very simple manner of taking care of that, and it's accepted and it's understood. However the discharge of firearms in the city is not allowed. How are people to defend themselves if we don't have laws regulating the vicious dogs — some of the wild, vicious attacks that have happened? I've deal on that for a while, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to go on to other agricultural programs that we have taken the initiative in.

The ag credit corporation livestock cash advance program, Mr. Speaker, which other members will dwell on at length, I'm sure, has been a very good one and widely accepted by the people of the province. Livestock investment tax credit — why not get some of the money out of people who would like to invest and need a little bit of an incentive to help them invest in this industry instead of MURBs (multiple unit residential buildings).

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. Order, please. I would ask the hon. member to not continuously interrupt the speaker.

**Mr. Petersen:** — Mr. Speaker, I have no problem with heckling from the opposite benches. I have come to expect it. It shows the level of their intelligence.

The Saskatchewan beef market assurance programs, counselling and assistance for farmers, Mr. Speaker. Farmers are in trouble in Saskatchewan and we have come through with a program to help them, and it is not delivered by someone who doesn't understand the daily needs of farmers; it's delivered by a group of their peers. It's well accepted and it's helped thousands.

The ag development fund — \$200 million into agricultural research; some of that went into the North, Mr. Member for Cumberland, just so you've got it straight once and for all.

The farm input price survey — we monitor the price of chemicals and fertilizer in the province. A good thing to do, I think to make sure that nobody's gouging. We can put out a paper showing where the best prices can be had and a suggested price that looks fair.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on, but I'd just like to conclude my remarks on the throne speech by talking about PAMI, the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute.

You heard the Premier allude to it today, and the member for Humboldt crawled away some place, I don't know. he couldn't take the answer, I guess. But . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Please sit down. Hon. members are aware that they're not to refer to the absence of members in this House, and I draw that rule to the attention of the member.

**Mr. Petersen:** — Mr. Speaker, I won't refer to him not being here any more.

The Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute, Mr. Speaker, is an important part of our testing procedures in our ag machinery, and it's one that we endorse and we will continue to endorse. The Premier was there last evening, and I think a lot of the problems are worked out.

Mr. Speaker, I can only say that in agriculture alone I could talk for days on all the things that we have done and have put in place for the people of Saskatchewan — all of Saskatchewan. I will say that we will continue that commitment, and the throne speech backs me up.

I will be supporting the motion by my hon. friend from Rosthern. Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and it's indeed my pleasure to enter into this debate on the throne speech of the second session of the 21st legislature. And today, Mr. Speaker, I address you and members of the Legislative Assembly, not as Minister of Highways and Transportation and not as minister in charge of Indian and Native Affairs, but today, Mr. Speaker, as the MLA for the Melfort constituency. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I am indeed pleased and proud to represent the constituency of Melfort.

(1445)

And, Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that the throne speech that we are speaking on today is a throne speech of very, very great importance and significance to the people of the Melfort constituency. That throne speech, Mr. Speaker, has a thrust of commitment — a thrust of commitment, Mr. Minister, that has been our totem since 1982.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that the commitment that we have shown the people of Melfort constituency and the people of Saskatchewan since 1982 is a commitment that I believe is one that has gained the trust — gained the trust — of the people of the Melfort constituency. And that trust has been gained because of the consistency, the consistency of the actions and the consistency of the programs that we have initiated in this province. And today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to demonstrate some of that consistency and some of the commitment that we have made to the people of Saskatchewan.

That commitment, Mr. Speaker, is demonstrated in the commitment we have made to the people in rural Saskatchewan; a commitment that we have made to health care, Mr. Speaker; a commitment that will design a blueprint for the health care system in this province well

into the year 2000; a commitment to the individuals, Mr. Speaker, the individuals in Saskatchewan; a commitment that those individuals can develop their own potential and go up that ladder just as far and as high as they may . . . as their abilities and their desires will take them. They are not stifled by big brother government, the big brother government mentality of the NDP in their prior years.

We have a commitment, Mr. Speaker, to families, a commitment to family life. A commitment is demonstrated on trading, trading with our neighbours to the South especially, Mr. Speaker. This commitment is extended to public participation, commitment to diversify the economy, and on and on, Mr. Speaker.

Specifically now I will turn to the commitment respecting health care. Health care, Mr. Speaker, is a very important subject to all people in Saskatchewan, a very important subject to the people in the Melfort constituency.

Our health care system as a whole is some 25 years old, and I believe it is time that a prudent government examine health care in Saskatchewan. That system, being 25 years old, is in need of taking a good strong look at. It is a fine system. It has been working well. It has been serving the people of Saskatchewan very, very well over 25 years, but any government who would turn their face away from it and say, no, we don't have to look at it, we don't have to examine it, is not a government that is representative of the people of Saskatchewan.

I was distressed to see the other day, Mr. Speaker, that the members of the NDP Party said, no, you don't need any task force; no, we don't want any task force on health care; no, you don't have to examine health care. I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, when you are spending a billion and one-quarter dollars on health care, when you are spending more than one-third of the provincial annual budget on health care, you bet you had better have a look at it, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm not saying that a billion and one-quarter dollars per year, I'm not saying that more than \$1,000 . . . \$1,250 per man, woman, and child is too much to spend or not enough. What I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, is it bears a good look at where we are spending those dollars. Are we spending those health care dollars in the best priorities, Mr. Speaker? And, Mr. Speaker, that task force will examine those specific types of issues.

I speak specifically about health care in the Melfort constituency. The record of health care in the Melfort constituency, Mr. Speaker, is one of which I am extremely proud. I go back to my home city of Melfort and I take a look at a new hospital built just a few years ago, some 7 to \$8 million expended on it by this provincial government. And, Mr. Speaker, if you don't think that I am proud to represent that constituency when I see that new addition to that hospital, you're sadly mistaken, because I am a proud man, Mr. Speaker. And I will tell you that the people in Melfort, the people who were in the galleries today, the citizens of my city of Melfort and surrounding areas are indeed proud of that commitment to health care.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — We have, Mr. Speaker, in the city of Melfort, one of the finest health care boards, I believe, in the whole province — an aggressive health care board with whom I have met time and time again.

That health care board, Mr. Speaker, together with the provincial government, in that new hospital of ours has expanded the range of services. Today we have an ultrasound unit in the Melfort hospital. We have had for some time, I would say one of the first ultrasound units to come into the province of Saskatchewan was put into the Melfort hospital.

I would tell you further, Mr. Speaker, we have a full-time surgeon in the Melfort hospital, a full-time surgeon who is performing operations on a daily basis. When the people in the Melfort constituency are ill and they need to go to have surgery, well we have a surgeon back home that may not be able to perform every operation there is, but he can serve well the needs of the people in the Melfort constituency.

We have other health care services in the Melfort constituency, Mr. Speaker, that I dearly would love to have, that I chat with the Minister of Health on many, many times. And I speak of such things with respect to the Melfort hospital as perhaps gaining regional status for the Melfort hospital. I have chatted long and hard with the Minister of Health on that, Mr. Speaker. It is a goal that we in the Melfort constituency have, to further expand the services that we can provide to the people in the Melfort constituency be gaining regional status. It is a goal we are working towards, Mr. Speaker, and, I feel firmly, a goal that we will attain.

Other things that we would like in the Melfort Union Hospital include such things as a drug and alcohol abuse centre. We in the north-east of Saskatchewan are no different than other areas of Saskatchewan. There are drug and alcohol problems. It is a goal, Mr. Speaker, of myself; it is a goal of this government; it is a goal of the Melfort Union Hospital Board at some time in the future to have a full drug and alcohol abuse centre within our Melfort hospital.

I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker, and talk about all the other health care facilities we have in Melfort and Melfort constituency. We have level 2 and level 3 and level 4 homes in the city of Melfort, Mr. Speaker. I speak of the level 4 home called Nirvana, level 3 home, level 4 home called Nirvana, and the Parkland Hospital. These are tremendous facilities, Mr. Speaker, staffed by some of the best health care professional, I believe, any place across this country. And those types of facilities I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, I am extremely proud.

I speak, Mr. Speaker, of nursing homes as well in other areas of the constituency, and I look at the fine community of St. Brieux, a French dominated community just some 20 miles to the south-west of Melfort. That constituency, or that area, Mr. Speaker, has been searching for a nursing home for I don't know how long — I would expect some 20 years.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, over the years when we had



NDP governments they promised the residents of St. Brieux a nursing home this year and next year and next election. But did it come, Mr. Speaker? No, it didn't come. What did the NDP do instead? They adopted a policy of moratorium on nursing homes in the year 1978 and they did not build nursing homes. They put a freeze on them and they said, that's enough. And yet they continued, they continued, Mr. Speaker, to mislead the people of St. Brieux and say, we'll build you a nursing home. At the same time they had, in written documents, a moratorium on building nursing homes.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you that the citizens of St. Brieux will have a nursing home in the very near future.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, that in St. Brieux a nursing home was to be built this year. I'm not certain that we can accomplish that. Nursing home projects, in some cases, have had to be deferred. But that nursing home, Mr. Speaker, will be built, and you can count on it and the residents of St. Brieux and the people in the Melfort constituency can count on it, and they know it is true.

Mr. Speaker, I turn now to something that is very close to my own hear, and that is the subject of agriculture. That is the subject of agriculture, Mr. Speaker, and my constituency is predominantly a rural constituency. And I look at the towns and villages, Mr. Speaker, and most of them are small. I look at St. Brieux and Gronlid and Star City and Beatty and Naicam, and those communities, Mr. Speaker, are predominantly agriculturally dominated. The people throughout those villages and towns in those area know the problems that are on the farm.

Mr. Speaker, those people know and they full well understand that when times are tough on the farm, times are tough in town. And, Mr. Speaker, we all know of the problems of agriculture, and the question becomes: is this government addressing the problems of agriculture? Does this government have a good record with respect to addressing the problems of agriculture? Mr. Speaker, I have no hesitation in walking any place in this province or throughout this country or any place in the world and defending the record of this Progressive Conservative government when it comes to agriculture.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — The members of the NDP Party full well know and understand that they lack any agricultural policy whatsoever. The members of the NDP Party know full well, and it has been documented and it has been verbalized by the now Leader of the NDP Party, that they do not have an agricultural program.

Mr. Speaker, when I think of the NDP, when I think of the Leader of the Opposition, and when I think of agricultural policies, do you want to know what the first thing is that pops into my mind? The first image or picture that I get is the now Leader of the Opposition, just a few years ago around election time, mimicking, making fun of farmers, and wearing a cowboy hat on backwards in his fancy three-piece suit and stating the words, "anything for the

farm vote." Mr. Speaker, that's the first picture image that I get in my mind.

The second picture image that I get in my mind is that same, is that same lawyer in those \$800 three-piece suits going in and signing documents to foreclose on farmers who are currently in deep financial trouble. And it is a know fact throughout the province of Saskatchewan that that new Leader of the opposition is currently, currently employed just doing that — foreclosing on farmers. and he has the gall, he has the gall to suggest that they may some day have an agricultural policy, Mr. Speaker.

I don't know what the words are, the correct words are, that are deep in my heart when I think about that, and I dare not even say them, Mr. Speaker. But it is not right, and it is not fair, and the people of Saskatchewan will see through that man. The people of Saskatchewan will see through that party just as clear as looking through a freshly cleaned glass.

Mr. Speaker, I prefer not to be so negative, and I prefer now to concentrate on the programs and policies that this administration has adopted with respect to agriculture. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't need notes to talk about our agricultural policy. I don't need a handbook or a whole bunch of briefing on this because, Mr. Speaker, it's all at the forefront of my mind and, Mr. Speaker, down on the farm, the farmers as well have this type of information right at hand.

They say, Mr. Speaker, that just two years ago, that when farmers were in desperate need of a deficiency payment, who was the single man who had the single most influence on the federal government in this country to gain a billion dollars in deficiency payments? Was it the current Leader of the Opposition? Was it the current member for Humboldt, one of two rural members in the NDP Party? No sir, Mr. Speaker, it was our Premier, our Premier from the constituency of Estevan, our current leader; a many who currently holds a permit book; a man who is currently the Premier of this province; and a many who went to Ottawa, and I won't say single-handedly, but by golly he had an awful lot to do with getting a billion dollar deficiency payment in 1986 for the farmers of this province. And it is a man whom I am extremely proud to work with.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — I'll speak, Mr. Speaker, of our interest rate protection for farmers, offering them 8 per cent money for young farmers as opposed to buying, nationalizing farm land to farmers. And you ask the people of Saskatchewan, you ask the farmers, or you ask anybody which program might be a little more representative of the true heart of Saskatchewan — buying land or offering some interest rate relief? Fairly easy to figure, Mr. Speaker, fairly easy to figure.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to take a look at our individual line service, private line telephones for farmers. Look at the underground power lines for farmers. Look at the interest-free cash advances for livestock, whether it's hogs or whether it's cattle or even horses, Mr. Speaker. Interest-free cash advances, a program started,

administered, and currently in place by this Progressive Conservative administration, Mr. Speaker, and a program that I'm extremely proud of.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — I would talk at length, Mr. Speaker, on more farm policies, but our record does speak for itself. The lack of record, the lack of foresight, or the lack of policies by the NDP administration with respect to agriculture, as well, speaks for itself.

I'd like to turn, Mr. Speaker, to another commitment made in that throne speech, and that is the commitment with respect to trading, trading with our partners to the South, the United States. And, Mr. Speaker, it's strange to see that the members of the NDP Party currently aren't talking much about free trade. They're currently not talking much about it, Mr. Speaker, because they know they're on the wrong side of the fence. Mr. Speaker, they know deep in their hearts that the only reason that they have opposed free trade, the only reason they have opposed free trade is one of pure, simple, unadulterated politics. They do not care about what is good for the people of Saskatchewan. They do not care what is good for the economy of Saskatchewan. The only thing that they care about, Mr. Speaker, is power — is power, and they dream and they hope of the day that they may return to power. And they . . .

**An Hon. Member:** And they chose the wrong track to power.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Exactly. They were on the wrong track on this one, Mr. Speaker. Today we know, that the elected officials in the United States are in a very, very protectionistic mood. We know, Mr. Speaker, when that trade Bill is passed down in United States — it is what they call the omnibus trade Bill — that will shut out many of the trading partners that currently the United States has. Now we have the option, Mr. Speaker, of being with the Americans as a trading bloc, an economic bloc, or against them.

(1500)

And, Mr. Speaker, this free trade deal is a good deal for the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I could talk at length about all of the benefits on free trade. But let me sum it up to say that I was out having public town hall meetings, old-fashioned town hall meetings in the north-east of Saskatchewan, and we had very good representation of the grass roots people at those free trade meetings. And they were a little bit confused about free trade, they were a little bit scared about free trade, and so was I until I really got looking at it, till I really got examining the benefits of free trade.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that the people in my constituency who came out to those meetings don't have to be sold on free trade because they full well know and understand that a vast majority of the products that we produce in this country are exported, and we have to protect the access to those markets. The people who raise livestock know and understand that if we do not have access to sell our beef and our hogs down into the United

States, we are in deep, deep trouble. The people of the Melfort constituency know and understand that we are the biggest potash producers in the whole wide world, and that if we do not have access to the United States market to sell that potash, this province, economically, is in deep, deep trouble.

The people of the Melfort constituency, Mr. Speaker, know and understand that we are big producers of uranium, and that if we do not have access to the United States market we are in further deep, deep trouble. Mr. Speaker, the people of the Melfort constituency know and they understand that on their consumer purchases alone some 3 or \$400 per year will be saved, perhaps on the cowboy boots that friends like the member from Redberry wears — probably save 30 or \$40 on a pair of cowboy boots — or maybe it's a refrigerator or maybe it's a shirt or maybe it's a television. Whatever the case is, Mr. Speaker, there are good economic benefits to free trade. And I tell you, Mr. Speaker, once again the people of the Melfort constituency do not have to be sold any more on free trade. They know and understand that it's a good arrangement for us.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to turn now to an item that was in the throne speech, another item of commitment, and that is respecting public participation — public participation — allowing the residents of Saskatchewan to own, to develop, to encourage investment throughout this province. And I talk, Mr. Speaker, of such things as Saskatchewan Power bonds. I speak of such things, Mr. Speaker, as the Saskatchewan Oil issue shares that have been a good deal for people.

Mr. Speaker, our people want to invest in Saskatchewan. Our people have the confidence in the growth of the economy of Saskatchewan to the extent that they will put — they will put their hard-earned dollars into these types of secure investments. And, Mr. Speaker, this will involve some of what we call privatization. And I know the word "privatization" with the members of the NDP Party is not a friendly word.

The mentality of the people in the NDP Party believe that only "big brother" government can provide services to the public. They feel that only government can provide these services that are so much needed to the people of Saskatchewan.

I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, that indeed there are some fundamental services that should for time immemorial be provided by government employees and by the government. But there are many, many services that can be provided at a more efficient and a less cost to the taxpayer by the private sector. And I'd like to use my own department as an example, Mr. Speaker, and that is the Department of Highways and Transportation. And the members of the NDP Party have made the case, well your highways today are not being built as good as they were before.

I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, that we did have government crews building highways, and I am proud of the record of those government crews, and they built good roads, but, Mr. Speaker, the private sector has traditionally, fundamentally been involved in the building of roads in

this country and in North America since day one. Those contractors, Mr. Speaker, are very, very capable of building good roads throughout Saskatchewan. And it is a slur on the construction industry as a whole, it is a slur on the millions of dollars of investment that those contractors have made, that you people in the NDP Party would say the roads aren't being built to the same standard they used to be. Mr. Speaker, it's not true.

It's not true, Mr. Speaker. The roads we are building today are as good as they ever have been. I'm not here to say, Mr. Speaker, that there's not an awful lot of roads that need repair; certainly there is. I'll be the first to admit that our system is ageing, that we need more money to be spent on highways, and I am one of the strongest advocates there are to spend more money on highways. But don't tell me, my friends, that the roads today are not being constructed to a good level of service.

I speak as well, Mr. Speaker, of the other services provided by the Department of Highways and Transportation, mostly the fundamental maintenance services that I talk about. These services are today being provided by government employees. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the vast majority of these maintenance-type services will be continued to be provided by government employees. And I am proud of the employees that I have in the Department of Highways, Mr. Speaker, they do an excellent job for me. They are out working right as we speak today, a Mr. Speaker, and they are proud individuals, proud of the job that they have, proud of the services that they perform for the people of Saskatchewan.

And I take a look at one of the things that we did the last couple of years with respect to advertising — advertising to protect those maintenance workers that we have. You may have seen, Mr. Speaker, on television the advertising campaign that we had called the "orange zone." That advertising campaign was a public campaign to try and get the public to recognize these government employees working on the roads of Saskatchewan, trying to get the public to slow down, be more safe and save the lives of the people in the Department of Highways, Mr. Speaker. And that program is working, Mr. Speaker, and I'm extremely proud of the results we have had with this program. I'm extremely proud of the attention that the public has paid. And, Mr. Speaker, the employees of the Department of Highways are extremely proud that we would think that much of them to have a massive campaign like that. The NDP may say, well you're spending too much money on advertising. Well, Mr. Speaker, this is not the same political type of advertising that the NDP did for years and years; this is good, straight, program advertising of which I am proud.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to turn now to our commitment in the throne speech as well, the commitment to economic diversification. And, Mr. Speaker, diversification has been a thrust of our programs and our policies for a good many years, and the results, Mr. Speaker, are starting to show all over, all over Saskatchewan.

I'm not here to tell you that the economy of Saskatchewan is booming; of course it isn't. We have a difficult time right now with factors that are mostly beyond our control. But, Mr. Speaker, I will tell you one thing: the spirit of free

enterprise is alive and kicking and doing very, very well in Saskatchewan, and it is due to a large extent by the programs and the policies of this administration.

And I turn to my own constituency for instance, Mr. Speaker, the constituency of Melfort, and I take a look what we have in Melfort. Today one of the big industries we have in Melfort is that of Thomson Meats — a meat processing facility that has expanded under the policies of this government, is employing a good number of people, processing the livestock, a value added type of an industry that is doing very, very well. I would dearly love to have more industries in Melfort.

I take a look at the other industries. I take a look at the village of St. Brieux that has Bourgault Industries, a manufacturer of cultivators and a manufacturer of air seeders — and I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, those products are accepted very, very well, not only across Saskatchewan and not only across western Canada but across this entire country and into the United States — a firm in St. Brieux, Mr. Speaker, employing some probably roughly a hundred people, and a good, solid, firm economic base to this village of St. Brieux.

I take a look at Taylor Industries — Taylor Industries in Beatty, Saskatchewan, manufacturer of grain bins and various odd assorted farm-related type products. I take a look at a new metal fabricating business in the town of Naicam — another fabricating business, Mr. Speaker, in my constituency that I am extremely proud of.

I take a look at my own home town or home city of Melfort, and we would dearly love to have more industry in Melfort. Our city of Melfort, Mr. Speaker, in downtown Melfort today is suffering just a little bit. The morale is not good in the city of Melfort with respect to business because times are tough.

But I'll tell you one thing, Mr. Speaker, the business men in Melfort and in the Melfort constituency are a tough lot. They have seen the good times and they have seen the bad times, and they are there, Mr. Speaker, to stick with us and stick through the thick and the thin of it. And, Mr. Speaker, those business men will survive.

Those business men know that our economic policies are working very well today in Saskatchewan, attracting investment and attracting industry, and we are searching hard, Mr. Speaker, in the city of Melfort, to gain more industries to add to our economic base. And, Mr. Speaker, those industries will come. Once again, Mr. Speaker, this spirit of free enterprise in the Melfort constituency and, I believe, through Saskatchewan is alive and doing very, very well.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to turn to some specific legislation that was mentioned in the throne speech, and that is the all-terrain vehicle legislation. Mr. Speaker, I believe that that legislation proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that we as a government are committed to the youth of this province.

Mr. Speaker, in this spring session of the legislature, legislation will be introduced respecting all-terrain vehicles. This Act will help responsible owners and

operators to continue using these all-terrain vehicles. This legislation will help to ensure the safe and the proper use of these vehicles. The government will not take all of the responsibilities for the safe and proper use of these vehicles — parents, children, and others will have their responsibilities as well.

But, Mr. Speaker, the fundamental message that I give to you is that we do have a commitment to the youth of this province, we do have a commitment to safety. It will be well demonstrated by this legislation. I have worked very hard over the last couple of years to develop this legislation. I have had a transportation caucus; the transportation caucus members in this administration have spent hours and hours poring over the details of this legislation.

And I, at this time, would like to pay tribute to a good friend and a good colleague of mine, and the chairman of the transportation caucus, the member from Redberry, who is a former member of the RCMP, a family man with children of his own, a man who has lived on the farm, a man who knows and understands things like all-terrain vehicles. And he and the other members of the transportation cause, I feel, have done an excellent job of bringing this legislation forth . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — . . . of bringing, of giving me some really good grass root advice on the all-terrain vehicle legislation, and I predict, Mr. Speaker, that this legislation will meet with the vast majority of approval by the people in Saskatchewan.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, the people of the Melfort constituency know and well realize that 1987 was a difficult year for us. But, Mr. Speaker, they are optimistic about our prospects. I believe that this throne speech confirms the optimism that I share with them. This, once again, Mr. Speaker, is a throne speech of commitment, commitment to a number of things that I have outlined here today, Mr. Speaker. And I do hope that I have demonstrated and made a good case to you and the members of the Legislative Assembly that this government is once again committed to the health care, to the diversification of the economy, to the agricultural base in Saskatchewan, to the health care system, to the protection of our youth, and other items that I have mentioned here today.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with my colleagues in the legislature; I look forward to working under the capable leadership of our Premier, and it is certainly me pleasure as the MLA for the Melfort constituency to very much openly endorse this Speech from the Throne on health of the constituents of Melfort constituency. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Upshall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I find that I am very lucky to have followed the member for Melfort because I just have a couple of things to add, and I hope that some of his people will stay around. Just to prove how the rhetoric came through, I'm going to start

off with the deficiency payment.

That member from Melfort, in the spring of 1986, voted against the deficiency payment that our members put forward — voted against it. And now he comes around to here, in front of his people, and says, "We're the only ones that could give this community a deficiency payments." What type of hypocritical statements do we have here?

This is exactly the method, a prime example of how this government talks out of both sides of its mouth. It says one thing in rhetoric and his actions are totally different. He talked about the land transfer program. What land transfer program, I ask? There is none right now.

(1515)

He talked about cash advances, cash advances in these hard trying times that this government cut back on and asked the farmers to pay a portion of it back because they were getting too much, obviously, they thought. What type of double standard rhetoric and betrayal to the farmers of this province?

This, Mr. Speaker, this budget that we are debating, this throne speech rather, that we are debating, I believe is simply a puff ball. There is nothing . . . very, very few references to agriculture. In times of crisis, when farmers are expecting some type of guidance from the government, when small business and small rural communities are expecting some type of leadership, what is there in this throne speech about agriculture? Almost nothing. Nothing of substance, that's for sure.

I would like to say, when the Premier of this province back in 1982 went around howdy-doodying everybody, he talked with the language of the folk. He said, we can do it because it's doable, stuff like that. And he convinced people that maybe he had something going for him, maybe there was something behind this man who was to be Premier of this province. And so he got elected.

But let's just take a little bit of a look at what happened from 1982 till now. We have seen in these years a steady decline in income, a steady increase in input costs, ever greater pressure on the farm economy. And what programs, what design, what plan does this government have to address those things? The rhetoric is there; the actions aren't. We saw a Premier who said, I'm the only one in the world that can give you a deficiency payment — planned very well before the 1986 election. But what has he done from the standpoint of this legislature?

I think, Mr. Speaker, that there is a mood developing in this country, in fact throughout the world. It's a mood of neo-Conservatism, where these people, this party in power in this province, I believe, are moving toward privatizing everything they can. The only thing they'll control is the police and the military, and when they control the police and the military, they control the people. That's the direction, that's the mood of this government, that's the mood of the B.C. government, and that's the mood of the Alberta government, and that's the mood of the government in Great Britain, that's the mood of the federal government, and that's what this province

does not need.

It's Tory "idiology" — or ideology — all in the name of progress and change, tearing down what was good in the past, all in the name of ideology — tearing down things that were good, tearing down the health plan, tearing down the dental plan, tearing down the drug plan, tearing apart people's lives, Mr. Speaker. That's what these people are doing, all in the name of progress and ideology.

They're transferring the control of this province and the money into the hands of a few, the power of certain people over the other people to control. The result is a widening, a gap between the poor and the wealthy in this province, and that gap is, as I say, getting wider. The result of that, Mr. Speaker, is that this government is driving people out of this province. There's no jobs for them, there's no hope for them, because the government does not have any idea of how to govern. They have ideas of how to promise and betray. They have ideas of how to promise and not carry out promises. The people don't trust them.

Mr. Speaker, this government says it has a blueprint. It has a blueprint for Saskatchewan. But I tell you, Mr. Speaker, the legacy of this government will show that their blueprint is drafted with red ink, and the people of this province are paying for that.

And I ask: exactly who is going to pay for this blueprint? Is it going to be shared equally, a plan this Tory government has? Is everybody going to contribute to building this province? Well, let's just take a look at it. Individual taxpayers on a per capita basis are the second highest taxed in Canada — second highest taxed in Canada. So they're paying their share.

Now let's look at the corporations. Corporations since 1981-82 have had a tax increase of 7 per cent — 7 per cent. In the same time period the individual taxpayers of this province under this government have had an increase of 84 per cent. We know who's paying for the blueprint of this government. We know who the blueprint is being designed for. And that is being witnessed over and over again by the people of this province, whether it be Pocklington or Weyerhaeuser or the patronage or whatever it may be.

And then there's the other increases. The utilities are up, retail sales tax is up, property tax is up, drug costs are up, licences are up, more tax on the people of this province. And a 7 per cent increase in the last seven years on the corporations — 7 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

But with all this tax money we could expect more services. But oh, oh, sorry, we don't have any money — no more services. So where's the money going? As I said, the money is going to Pocklington and Weyerhaeuser and George Hill and the patronage to nearly every ex-Tory MLA that was in this province. What a decrepit way to run government, Mr. Speaker.

These people have taken power on promises to build this province, and they have betrayed every person in this province except their large corporate friends.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to just more over into agriculture for a minute. We have the people paying more for services, more taxes, and more in agriculture. We saw the last budget that came out here. We have an increase in the soil test lab fees where it comes out of farmers' pockets because the government had to give money to somebody else.

We saw an increase in the feed test lab because the government saw fit to give that money to somebody else, and the farmers are paying up to 60 or 65 per cent more to get their feed tested with a lesser quality of test, because they just can't afford to do a better test.

We've seen the horticultural societies — and I have letters from these people. They're just being affected now because they're planning this year's fairs. They're saying, please try to convince the government that we are out here to live, we're not out here to scrape our way through this . . . an existence through this lifetime of ours. Please tell them that we have to have some money because we have no money left in our own pocket, and yet we have to have some semblance of society out in the rural part of this province with some dignity. But no, the government says no to that because they gave the money to somebody else, some large corporate friend.

The R.M.'s are holding the line; they've had no increases. And what's the result of that? Property tax. Property tax up 62 per cent from 1981 to 1986 — 62 per cent, when in comparison the general increase in expenditures on the farm were up only 23 per cent — tripled, because this government chose to give the money to somebody else and not to the rural municipalities, so the farmers out in the rural part of this province have to dig in their own pocket to maintain their services — another tax.

They laid claim to their farm purchase program. A great promise — had it for a little while, and gone. And now we have no plan. They have no plan under which a farmer can transfer his land with any assistance. In the most critical times that we've had, Mr. Speaker, for many, many years, there's no plan so that a farmer can retire in dignity and somebody else can take over his farm.

They're void of ideas. They're void of a commitment to the rural part of this province. So what do they come up with? Equity financing. Equity financing could be the cure. They're bringing in experts from Australia and Vancouver to tell us how we're going to figure out a program to finance farm land, and they ran up and down this country hollering about the New Democrats and their land bank program. And like any program, I'm not going to stand here and say it was perfect, but it was much better than nothing. It's much better than nothing, Mr. Speaker.

And that's what we have now from this government, absolutely nothing, because they took their equity financing proposal out to the country and out to the people of this province with a plan to get investors to come in, to invest in farm land, to help out the farmers. A farmer could sell off part of his land to this equity corporation, get money back to get himself back on his feet. Well let's just take a little closer look at that.

A farmer buys four quarters of land in the late '70s, early '80s, for \$100,000 a quarter; that's \$400,000. So the government proposes to bring in an equity financing corporation whereby he can sell off half of that because he's probably in hock up to his ears and can't get out of it. So he can sell some of his land off to get some money back to get on his feet. So he sells half of it off. But the problem is, Mr. Speaker, the land is only worth half of what it was, so he gets \$100,000 back and he's got a \$400,000 debt. That's a great plan for those people who are in deep trouble — equity financing — a great plan.

It's no plan at all, Mr. Speaker. It's no solution. But they say, well we're going to get people to come in and we're going to get them to invest in Saskatchewan farm land, and we even may have the shares trade on the stock market.

The problem is, when somebody's investing in farm land, Mr. Speaker, they're investing in it to make money. And if the value of that land starts to go up, and the farmer says to himself after he sold his land to the equity corporation, well I want to buy this land back because, you know, it's going up and I want to get it for the cheapest price possible. Maybe I'd better go out and find some other money and get it back. But the person who has invested it says, just a minute. That's my share. I'm in it to make money. I'm not going to sell that share until that land is at top value. Who is the government protecting? Who is the government interested in — the farmer or the person with money to invest?

I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, the member from Kelvington-Wadena says he likes to call it share capital. Well I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, what will happen if they bring anything like I see this equity financing corporation to be — it won't be share capital, but they'll turn farmers into share-croppers.

That's exactly the direction of this government. That's the blueprint. That's the blueprint of the Tory government with rural Saskatchewan.

And they can stand in their places and they can say farmers know who's behind the farm. And farmers have had since 1982 to find out, and now they're beginning to tell me. I've had people, Mr. Speaker, who have worked for these members opposite in the last election tell me, I believed what they said. And this is the honest truth. They said; I believed what they said, and I thought that they could do it a better way. And that person tells me now he will never again work for a Tory. That's what's happening.

And they'll stand in their place and they'll say, we're behind the farmer. And I hope they continue to say that, because every time they tell the farmers that they've consulted with them, that they're behind them, that they're going to do this and they're going to do that, they go down one more point in the polls because the farmers of this province know they can't trust a Tory.

I'll give you an example, Mr. Speaker — community pastures, a subject that I brought up today in question period, a subject that I brought up today in question period, community pasture. Last fall this government,

without any notification, any consultation, dropped a new policy down on the table of those patrons at their fall meetings and said, the rules are changed. The people said, but we didn't ask for a change. It's a good program. It's running well. It's breaking even on the whole pasture program. So why do you want to change it? Why fix what's not broken?

And they went and they met with the government. They met with the government over at Kamsack and they said, please don't change the policy; it doesn't have to be fixed.

(1530)

And the government didn't listen. And so they came into the legislature here, 30 people from many pastures around the province. Only at that time did the member from Kelvington-Wadena come and talk to them and listen. And he admitted that they didn't consult with the pasture people at all before the program was changed. But he says, I'm going to listen to you next time, fellows.

How can they trust him? How can those people trust this government from here on in? And they're asking me, they're phoning and writing and saying, look, please try to convince this government that no change is necessary; we want the old policy back. And what's the result? What's the result? Here's a letter from one, I'll just quote. It's a lengthy letter, talking about community pastures and how good it works and the programs, and I'll quote. It says:

In my opinion it has been a worthy program, and the impact would be negative if discontinued.

Tory ideology, privatizing, one step at a time ... (inaudible interjection) ... Talk about the bull program. That's the most important issue, as the member from Weyburn mentions bulls. They're going to do away with the bull program over a period of time. That's what they wanted to do. And finally, when backed up against the wall, they said, well, maybe not. And the community pasture people still don't know exactly where they're at. It's a good program; keep it. They're going to increase the fees for fewer services. They're going to have to buy their own salt, which is going to cost them about \$20 a patron extra. There's no more compensation or insurance program. They're going to do that themselves. Tagging, breeding — it goes on and on.

Another little message I got from a group concerned about it, and I'll quote from it:

We do not want any changes in this policy.

There asking, don't change the policy.

Therefore, why change something that is running smoothly and breaking even or making a profit?

And does this government listen to these people? They not only don't consult with the people in these programs, they won't listen to them after they're down on their knees saying, please don't wreck it. And that's the legacy of this government.

And it continues, it continues with regard to the production loan program. And this has to be a classic example, Mr. Speaker. Production loan program began in 1985, \$25 an acre. I'm the first one to admit that the farmers needed the money. I didn't agree with the process by which it was put out, and I think the government members now will admit that if they had given a little more thought — a little more thought — to tell the people that they don't need the money or do need the money, but just a little organization, they wouldn't be in the mess they are now.

And they're in a mess, Mr. Speaker, and they know they're in a mess. And yet they stand in their place and they say, everything's going good. The farmers are behind us. Well I hope they keep thinking that, because I know, because I get call after call after call, after letter after letter, telling me the disgust that the farmers have for this government.

They took \$25 an acre and they said it was a program for their farmers. And initially everybody thought that was right. But it didn't turn out to be a program for the farmers, because what happened? It was put out before an election, it was used as an election program, and the government got elected. I say it was a program to promote self-government, not for the farmers.

So the government got elected; the farmers got the debt. And how do they handle that? Things got worse. Twenty per cent last year. Twenty per cent the year before, with great lot of pressure. Last year they asked only for the interest back, but no, this year they have to fix it. They say, we're going to give you an extension. They say the farmers asked for an extension. They asked for changes. The Premier said the farmers asked for nine and three-quarter per cent interest and asked for a tough security agreement. I don't think many would agree with him.

How can anybody trust this government when they start a program, politically motivated, and end it up by coming down hard on the farmers of this province? I'll tell you, that is disgusting, and the farmers of this province know it.

They said it was a hassle-free cash. The member for Weyburn, when he was minister of Agriculture, called it "hassle-free cash." Just a promissory note; that's all you need. Walk in, get your cash. And then after that, the people started feeling the pinch and they started getting a little upset that they couldn't pay it back, and others had the government defer it.

The next year the rules change. And I say that this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was simply baiting the trap because they put the money out under one set of rules. Times get tougher. They change the rules, put greater pressure on the farmers, and now — and now they are taking the farmers for everything that they have, everything that they have under this security agreement, because they don't have any compassion, they don't have any ideas and they have no regard for the rural part of this province, despite their rhetoric.

So now they have, Mr. Deputy Speaker, become part of

the problem. They've become part of the \$6 billion debt that farmers have today. And they stand in their place and they say, trust us, fellows, we're behind you. What a joke. What a joke! And the farmers are knowing that this government has double-crossed them, has betrayed them, and they can't trust them.

But they say, you've got an option; you've got an option of one program over three years, or the second option is that you can go over 10 years with tough security agreement and higher interest. But I'll tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's say I'm a farmer who has no money — many, many have none, operating on borrowed capital; they have many debts — if I'm in that much debt, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't have the option. There is no option but one, and that's to tie yourself into a tough new security agreement.

And that's why I introduced the legislation that I did today, because under this new security agreement, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government, if the farmer goes down, can take the chairs out of his kitchen and the living room, and the crop on his field, and the tools, and his car, and everything he owns. That's what the security agreement says.

**An Hon. Member:** You're just a fear monger.

**Mr. Upshall:** — The member for Rosthern says I'm a fear monger. Well I'll tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if there was any other government in this province except this government, I wouldn't be afraid, and nor would the farmers of this province. But I'll tell you they are afraid, because they've seen the broken promises, they've seen the betrayals, and they've seen the lies, and they've seen the deception. That's why they should be scared — and they are — and that's why I introduced the legislation.

Put the government on the same basis as lending institutions. The farmer does go under, leave him with a bit of dignity. Don't chase him to his grave trying to get their money. Play under the same rules.

So they have an agreement with the banks. And I'll tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the banks, I believe, basically wrote this agreement because they had to know who was going to be in charge. But I'll tell you something else — I don't think anybody knows who's going to get the first right on this land, because it'll have to come to court first.

It just reminds me — I can just picture it — here's a couple of old vultures sitting up in a tree, side by side. There, down below, is the carcass of the dying family farm. And the old vultures in the tree are having a discussion, and they say, we've got to have an agreement because we've got to know who can pounce on that carcass first. That's what this government did. They were more concerned about deciding who was going to get first jump on the dying family farm than they were about trying to keep the farm there. That's the type of government this Tory government is in this province.

Their rhetoric says, we're behind you, boys, and their actions show how they jump out and pounce on you and take you for all they're worth. And that's why they were down in the ratings, and that's why they're going to

continue to go down — promises made and promises broken.

And what do they say about Weyerhaeuser? The point I made the other day: Weyerhaeuser, the large U.S. corporation, has an agreement with the government that it doesn't have to make a payment on the loan until they make a certain amount of profit. They don't have to make a payment but the farmer, he doesn't get the same deal as this huge U.S. multinational — no, sir! He's got to make his payments. He's got one option or the other option, or he's going to be foreclosed upon. The government will come and get him.

And that's another thing: Weyerhaeuser is farming the forests — huge, millions of acres. They've got a farming operation; they're farming the forests. Farmers have a farming operation; they're farming the grain. It's basically the same thing, but when Weyerhaeuser farms their forests and don't make money, they don't have to pay, but when the farmer farms his grain and doesn't make any money, he has to pay. What kind of a double standard, what kind of a government puts large, huge U.S. multinational corporations before the people who are the backbone of this province, and that's the farm society that we have today. A Tory government does it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I could go on and on about this ag credit corporation production loan, but I think the farmers of this province know now the true colours of this government when it comes to looking after the rural society.

Another example is that I'd like to bring up is PAMI. Last night the Premier made an announcement, and there was nobody happier than me to hear that at least there was some, that someone had got through to the Premier to say that PAMI was a high-class operation. It served the farmers, the manufacturers; it was well-known around North America, well-known around the world. In fact, some of the other countries took the exact blueprint of PAMI and built one in their own countries.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we went two years, the workers at PAMI went two years not knowing if they were going to be there in the next year. The manufacturers went two years without knowing if they started a project whether it would be continued the next year.

These people took two years of putting hardship in an institution recognized world-wide to decide that, well, maybe because the people at PAMI were lobbying, the town of Humboldt and the chamber of commerce were lobbying, our caucus was lobbying, the Manitoba government was lobbying, everybody was saying, yes, Mr. Premier, we need PAMI. And two years later it says, well maybe we need PAMI. That's the type of government we have. Finally decided there was enough pressure that maybe he should do something because he knows he's slipping down in the polls. And I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if it wasn't for him being so on a downhill slide, he wouldn't have done that either, because two years of inaction tells me that there was somebody deciding whether or not the existence of those families in Humboldt and this institute and the farmers that use it were going to have access, were going to have jobs, were

going to have information. That's the type of government we have. And we will yet to see what the agreement is.

I do not call down anything that is good. And my first impression is finally something is coming after two years. So I will reserve judgement on to how the funding is going to be there. I say it has to go to PAMI; it has to be a million dollars a year or more. It can't be fudged in an administration. It can't be reduced. It has to be there, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to turn to the trade deal for a minute. The trade deal, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is something that I'm very much opposed to. I know the last speaker stood up and said the trade deal is good for western Canada, it's good for beef producers, it's good for the poultry producers and it's good for everybody in the province.

Unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he didn't tell me one reason why it was good. And that's the way they sell the deal — it's good, trust me. Well I'll tell you, the people of this province don't trust you. And I get a different message than the member from Melfort. My message, when I go around to farmers, is they're scared of this deal. They don't know what it's about, and I'd just like to give you a few examples.

(1545)

First of all, the agreement designated identified the freight — rape-seed, mash and oil going to the west coast ports — identified as a subsidy, it had to come off. But did it identify the Mississippi water system that is completely maintained by the Corps of Engineers in the U.S. which is totally subsidized? Not one mention of it. That's the type of bargainers that the people over here and the Prime Minister of this country are. They couldn't bargain their way out of a wet paper bag.

The member from Melfort said, how are we going to improve our beef marketing if we don't have access to this great American market? Well I'll tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to have someone over there tell me how many times there's been a shipment of beef from the country stopped at the border because we couldn't ship it to the United States because there's been a cap on export. Not once in recent history.

We're not shipping enough now to meet the maximum. What's this trade deal going to do to all of a sudden create this booming beef industry? People down south of the border, cattlemen down there are saying — they're laughing — they say, if these guys think that they're close to California, well we're a heck of a lot closer, and if they think they're going to get advantage over us they're crazy, and I think they're right. Not to mention the fact that what happens when the dollar gets up to 85 cents or more. People have said when the dollar climbs, and it's climbing right now, when it climbs up there'll be no advantage for the people to come up, for Americans to come up here and buy, because they wouldn't have the advantage of the dollar. The same applies to the pork industry. They don't know what they're talking about. They're trying to build — the Prime Minister of this country — build them another election. It won't work,



gentlemen; I tell you it won't work.

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

**Mr. Upshall:** — Another thing, this government says there's no fear, supply and management is protected. Supply and management is not protected, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'll read to you from Article 706, Market Access for Poultry and Eggs:

the level of global import quota on chicken and chicken products, as defined in Annex 706, for any given year shall be no less than 7.5 per cent of the previous year's domestic production of chicken in Canada;

That's come up just over 1 per cent — 1.2 per cent — it was 6.3 before, and the indication is it will keep climbing.

But then let's slip over the Annex 706. And it says:

For the purposes of article 706:

chicken and chicken products (meat) means chicken and chicken capons, live or eviscerated, chicken parts, whether breaded or battered, and chicken products manufactured wholly thereof, whether breaded or battered;

But then we move down, number 2:

Without limiting the generality of subparagraph 1(1) . . .

Now listen closely gentlemen, for those of you who think you're protecting supply and management in this country . . .

**An Hon. Member:** And ladies.

**Mr. Upshall:** — Ladies and gentlemen.

Without limiting the generality of subparagraph 1(a), chicken and chicken products does not include (now listen) does not include chicken cordon bleu, breaded breast of chicken cordon bleu, chicken Kiev, breaded breast of chicken Kiev, boneless Rock Cornish with rice, stuffed Rock Cornish; boneless chicken with apples and almonds, chicken Romanoff Regell, chicken Neptune breast, boneless chicken Panachee, chicken TV dinners, old roosters and "spent fowl" commonly called "stewing hen."

Those are things that are not included. And how much, do you think, of that market is supplied by our chicken producers? Did you wake up over there? All of a sudden, maybe this isn't going to be so good. These things aren't included, so they can come in. This is going to cut into the production of chicken in this province drastically. It's going to weed out the people. Sure they'll still have supply management, but you won't be there. That's the type of deal this is. That's just one example, and there's many. There's many examples like that.

But, Mr. Speaker, I believe I've gone on long enough. I'm

sure the government over there would like to learn more about free trade so they could go out and tell the truth about it, but unfortunately I don't have time to do that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the government has a deceitful plan. They have a plan to put people, ordinary people of this province, at a disadvantage, and they have done that through all the cuts that they have had in this province. And I don't have to mention them again. They put them in a tough situation so that they're trying to clamour and survive in an economy that's not working because the government has turned the key off in the engine of this economy.

But what's the plan, what's this deceitful plan? Then the government turns around and says, well, we'll give you something back.

I was at the SARM meeting. They said, well there probably won't be another cut-back for the SARM this year. Everybody said, oh good, oh boy, that's great. There should have been an increase; there was no increase last year. And the Premier gets up and says, well, we're going to give you the rat control program back. And everyone says, oh good, isn't he a great guy.

So you take it away from them and make them feel good. You kick them in the teeth and then make them feel good when you pull your foot out. That's what this government's doing. And that is deceitful, it's dishonest, it's a betrayal, and people just won't trust him anymore. And I'll tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of this province are going to fight back. They're not going to stand for this government. I'm hearing it now, other members are hearing it, and I know they're hearing it. And I know, they talk about scare tactics.

They should be scared, because the people of this province will fight back; they will stand up; they will run this Tory government right out of here, right out of the province into oblivion where they belong. Thank you.

**Mr. Britton:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's indeed a pleasure to enter the debate on the address in reply to Her Majesty's Speech from the Throne, and I'm proud to do this as the representative of the people from the Wilkie constituency, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I was quite pleased to listen to the previous speaker making up for all the silence of the last session while he was here. I don't think he made any sense, and I didn't understand much of it, but at least he got his time in, Mr. Speaker.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that that speech highlights not only the commitment demonstrated by the government but indeed the challenges faced by the province and its people. As chairman of the government caucus committee in agriculture, I must say that I was particularly pleased with the clear priority agriculture gets in the deliberations of this government, Mr. Speaker.

And I must also say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I share the sentiments of the member from Rosthern who indicated when he introduced the motion that we are debating today that there must be more expected from political

people than condemnation and complaint.

Mr. Speaker, it does not take a financial wizard to know that this province is subject to the very real difficulties in agriculture, and it is no longer even interesting, Mr. Speaker, to listen to the Leader of the Opposition and his whining, snivelling cohorts — from Humboldt — when they tell us that they have finally found out that there's problems in agriculture. It's disappointing, Mr. Speaker, that it took them so long to realize that there were problems.

**An Hon. Member:** Disappointing, but not surprising.

**Mr. Britton:** — Disappointing, but not surprising. And now they have the realization that we could expect maybe some mental effort from them over there, some genuine thought to some possible solutions. And I appreciate the attention I'm getting, and I sincerely invite them to share their ideas if they have only to take the time to come up with some, because, Mr. Speaker, it's all fine and good to say the government is doing this wrong and that wrong and heaven knows, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that no one is perfect. So if we're doing it wrong, tell us plainly and simply what policy you would . . .

**An Hon. Member:** You're doing it wrong.

**Mr. Britton:** — What would you propose?

Because, Mr. Speaker, farm families are not quite so naive as the banker from Riversdale would like to believe. They understand the challenges better than he can ever imagine, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They will not be satisfied so easily, Mr. Speaker, simply because someone's saying everything is wrong and if you let me run it, I can make everything right. Tell us how.

Today the member from Riversdale said we didn't have a policy. Well I tell you, we do have a policy, Mr. Speaker, because this government has been direct and forthright with farm families. It has committed larger amounts of dollars to direct assistance for farm families than any government in the history of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker — any government in the history in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now that is a pretty profound speech, Mr. Speaker. This government has committed more financial resources to farm families than any ever in the history of Saskatchewan. And the member from Humboldt, when he does speak, says that's wrong. He tells us that's wrong. And the Leader of the Opposition for the most part says nothing at all — nothing at all about farm families of agriculture. And let there be no mistake, Mr. Speaker, farm families expect more than restating problems, more than pretence and fabrication. They expect genuine policy options. They expect actions on the matters of grave concern to them. They demand the respect that is demonstrated by serious attempts to find solutions and not simple harping and complaining and continual name-calling.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I challenge the Leader of the Opposition to show some character and put some agricultural policies on the Table for discussion, because

farm families will respect him more, even if they disagree with them, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They will respect him more if he shows them some respect.

And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that farmers do not always agree with everything that we say. But let me say this, Mr. Speaker, when that happens, we listen to them and we take guidance that they offer us. That's the difference, Mr. Speaker. If we can't get agreement, we at least listen. But, Mr. Speaker, the one thing farm families always know about a Tory that is even when we disagree, the fact is we are trying hard to come up with some real answers, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We are not just harping on how bad things are. That kind of thing is of no information to anyone.

Mr. Speaker, what fool doesn't know that things are bad. And I don't intend to imply that the Leader of the Opposition is a fool. That's not my intention. I do wonder though, with the farmers in my riding, I wonder if he has the courage to put forward some real solutions, or if he simply doesn't think that farm families are important enough to devote some time to coming up with some solutions. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, enough about the Leader of the Opposition and his dismal failure to demonstrate even one tiny thought about agriculture in this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what of government? The fact, Mr. Speaker, is that this government's record on agriculture speaks for itself. We have provided protection from high interest rates, protection that the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues denied farm families when rates were 20 and 21 per cent. We have provided cash advances and drought assistance and deficiency payments and irrigation programs and all the other programs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have provided security against farm foreclosure and we know who is doing those foreclosures for the banks. Some of those people are sitting in this very room and needless to say, Mr. Speaker, they're not on this side of the House.

(1600)

We have consulted with farm organizations and put in place mechanisms to develop even better programs and stronger responses. These are all things this government has done and the NDP has said no to. These are things that are done. They cannot be talked away. They cannot be ridiculed away. They are there, they are facts, and they will stand the scrutiny, Mr. Speaker. These are things that this government have done, not talked about.

And it's very interesting, Mr. Speaker, to have a group of people stand up and defend Progressive Conservative policies, policies like the production loan program. That is also fact. It is very interesting because when the program was first introduced, what were they, over there, what were they saying? They were saying it was a program for the rich farmers. They were saying it's just another give-away to farmers. They were saying it was inappropriate and unfair.

And then the Minister of Agriculture heard representations from farm organizations, Mr. Speaker.

They said to him, we would like you to introduce an option where the repayment period can be extended. And so the government did just that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They listened to the people and they done what they asked. That is fact. That can't be talked away. That's there.

It provided the option to go a 10-year repayment instead of three. It continued to guarantee the lowest interest rates in Canada — the lowest interest rates in Canada. And what do the NDP do? They say the government is being unfair, unfair.

Well, Mr. Speaker, let's take a look at the logic of their argument. When the program was introduced they said it was for rich farmers and that it was a give-away. the government provides an extension and the NDP say the government is hurting poor farmers. Well what we say, Mr. Speaker, is hey, it's not a give-away, and to prove it we will ask for a modest security on the 10-year loan. And the NDP now says, but you shouldn't ask for security, Mr. Speaker, it's not fair. Where's the logic, where's the logic?

Well I'll tell you what's not fair, Mr. Speaker. It's not fair when a political party that thinks they can change their claims as the wind blows. And what is not fair, Mr. Speaker, is a bunch of guys who wouldn't know a farm from a sanitary land fill trying to stir up the farm families with all kinds of utter total nonsense.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the thing the NDP will say is most unfair will be when, in 1990, farm families stand together and say you bunch of slick hypocrites, that's what's not fair, and we aren't going to have you around any more.

And it will be a pleasure indeed, Mr. Speaker, to see Humboldt, Quill Lakes, The Battlefords, the Prince Albert ridings, all once again represented by Progressive Conservatives, people who have some respect for farm families and know a little whereof what they speak.

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

**Mr. Britton:** — Now, Mr. Speaker, I will just briefly touch on some other areas of the throne speech.

I want to particularly say that I am pleased with the continuing demonstration of commitment that this government has shown to health and education, and I again invite the Leader of the Opposition to tell the people where he stands, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The member for Rosthern made reference to the game of musical chairs being played over there. And I would just like to ask the member from Riversdale to quit playing games and come clean. If you are going to promise more of everything to everyone, you must, as an honourable gentleman, tell us how much more you are promising, to whom are you making these promises and where are you going to get the money.

Now that member has made some noises about taxes, the member from Riversdale. And he has complained about the deficit. He has complained that not enough money is going into health, schools, universities, public service salaries, welfare payments, municipal grants, road

building, provincial parks, third-party organizations like Planned Parenthood, and innumerable other things, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So I ask him to bring before this House his proposal for a budget. He can have it ready for March 31, and he can get all kinds of media attention by showing us exactly how you increase spending on everything, reduce the deficit, and cut taxes all at the same time. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the media attention of this miracle will be so great that people will come from all over the world to witness this magician. But of course, Mr. Speaker, there is no magic, just flimflammy, distortion, and willingness to promise the earth that he might take domain over the land in which we live. The power of the premiership.

And I leave the member from Riversdale with this thought. You may not be prepared to put forward your budget, but I'm taking a count of every promise you make, every dollar you are committing, and when you promise things like salary increases for everyone without specifying how those increases will be paid and how much, I will just have to guess at your generosity on my own. And in a very few months, Mr. Speaker, perhaps at the end of this session I will present his budget for him if he hasn't had the intestinal fortitude to do so himself.

Before I close, Mr. Speaker, let me say that it is apparent to all that we are living in challenging economic times. But we are also surrounded by opportunity, and I for one am determined that this province shall take hold of the opportunities and not be tied hand and foot by the obsolete thinking of the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, I have one more subject I'd like to address. Before I finish my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I must comment on something that greatly disturbed me in the debate so far, and which has truly upset some people. Part of the throne speech announced that the government would take steps to deal with the problem of dangerous dogs, and the members opposite found that amusing, Mr. Speaker. they laughed when the Lieutenant Governor spoke — aloud — and I didn't like that, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition made light of it in his reply to the Speech from the Throne. He also made light of it in the media. And again today, again today, Mr. Speaker, they make light of this. They chuckle and they chortle over there, and it bothers me, Mr. Speaker, it bothers me. And they are amused again today because I am addressing the issue. That shows the mentality they have over there.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you a story that was related to me at the tea following the throne speech. A lady came to me and told me how important she thought that one item was. In fact for her, Mr. Speaker, she said it was the most important item in the throne speech. Yes, the most important. That's what she told me.

And she was indignant; she was livid. Because you see, she has a seven-year-old daughter. This seven-year-old daughter had her jaw literally torn off by a dog. And because of the expertise we have in our medical profession today, that child is well and that lady has a daughter.

I can tell you another thing, Mr. Speaker. She told me

about her neighbour, a lady, a senior citizen going home carrying two bags of groceries, attacked by a dog. She could neither fight nor could she run. If it hadn't been for the intervention of neighbours, who knows what would have happened to that senior citizen. And they laugh. The people's choice over there laugh. I can't . . . it makes me a little upset, Mr. Speaker. (As a matter of fact, the lady told me her daughter almost died as a result of that attack. And I have to ask the NDP members, I have to ask the NDP members on the other side if your children and your seniors do not have the right to expect the government to provide some physical protection for them against such threats; do they not have that right? And you laugh and have a good time . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Right, right.

I am not surprised at the member from Quill Lakes because it shows his level of mentality. It is certainly not amusing to me. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure of the ruling. I understand . . . Can I quote from these . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I would like to quote. I would like to show some pictures. If there's anyone in this room, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . .

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** — The member is not allowed to use displays. He's allowed to quote from the material but not allowed to use displays.

**Mr. Britton:** — Mr. Speaker, if there's anyone in this room thinks that this is not a serious problem . . . Do I have your permission to table these documents? For those people who are so amused at it can . . . These, Mr. Speaker, are documented attacks of dogs, vicious dogs. I asked to table them . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I don't have to quote from them, Mr. Speaker, they tell their own story.

And I can tell you truthfully, Mr. Speaker, that the disrespect these people on the other side have shown for the people subject to such attacks has made me more than a little angry with them. I just don't think . . .

**An Hon. Member:** They're insensitive, totally insensitive.

**Mr. Britton:** — Totally insensitive is right.

And perhaps if they received some letters from some of these people they won't think it's such a laughing matter any more. So I thank that Minister of Urban Affairs for recognizing that not every problem deals with international markets or the intellectual ideas.

Mr. Speaker, there are other things like the protection from dangerous dogs. And we certainly congratulate the Minister of Urban Affairs. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support the motion by my friend, the member from Rosthern. I will support it. I thank you for your attention, Mr. Speaker, and for the time you've afforded me.

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

**Mr. Koenker:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Speech from the Throne that we heard earlier this week is very typical of this government, and is very typical of this government's, or this PC government's policy. It's an embarrassment. This Speech from the Throne is an

embarrassment because it contains no new ideas, no solutions to the problems we face, and no concern for the problems that Saskatchewan people are dealing with on a daily basis.

Oh sure, in this speech we hear about a task force on health care, a plan to study health care yet again. But why wasn't health care studied before the cut-backs that were introduced last spring? Now the government wants to study health care after it's gutted the dental program, gutted the drug program, and penalized people who need medication and hospital care — after there are waiting lists of 11,000 people for hospital space in Saskatoon, and now we have a study.

How wonderful. How thoughtful. It's an embarrassment. It's an insult to Saskatchewan people for this government to suggest a study in this Speech from the Throne after it's taken major initiatives in health care to destroy it in the budget and its actions of last spring. This Speech from the Throne really ought to be an apology to the Saskatchewan people for the actions of this government over its past year. This Speech from the Throne ought to explain why some of these actions were taken.

People ask, how can it be that the Premier and his cabinet ministers have no constructive agenda to offer in this speech, to offer to the problems that we face. Based on the performance of last spring and of last year, I think most Saskatchewan people can answer that question very handily. And the answer simply is that the only thing the government knows how to do is to slash and destroy, to hack and cut at the programs that Saskatchewan people have built over the years, indiscriminately I might add. They use no consultation; they simply cut and destroy. They use no logic; they simply cut and destroy, plunging blindly forward on what amounts to an ideological agenda to get government off the backs of people.

Well Saskatchewan people know that there is a positive role for government to play, to provide health care for Saskatchewan people, to provide educational services, and they don't want these services destroyed. They don't want a government that wrecks Saskatchewan's institutions and ruins people's lives.

(1615)

This Saskatchewan Progressive Conservative Speech from the Throne ought to be looked at from the perspective of what is really progressive in it, what progress we have seen in higher taxation from the government, what progress we have in terms of a flat tax that progressively increases, and people feel or believe that it's likely to be increased in the budget to be brought down next month; what progress we see, what progress in the sales tax increased to 7 per cent by this government; what progress we see in a gas tax reintroduced when the Premier of this province solemnly promised to Saskatchewan people that a gas tax would never again darken the doorstep of Saskatchewan homes.

What progress indeed! We have a Premier and a government that goes back on its word and Saskatchewan people pay record taxation because of it.

Families in our province now pay the second highest level of provincial income tax in the entire country — only the province of Quebec has higher personal income tax rates than does Saskatchewan. And for a Saskatchewan family of four people with a total income of \$35,000, this means that the PC government takes \$2,800 out of their pocket every year, 8 per cent of Saskatchewan people's income, and that's after applying what few credits and rebates the government still has left intact.

Personal income taxes, another way to put it, now supply or fund one-quarter of all provincial revenue — one-quarter of all provincial revenue from personal income taxes compared to 15 per cent when this PC government, this Progressive Conservative government came to power. Well that's progress all right — progressive taxation on the backs of Saskatchewan families.

And in contrast what do we see with the corporate tax rate? It supplies 4 per cent of government revenues, one-sixth of what Saskatchewan families provide, exactly the same percentage of six year ago when this government took office. And this represents a progressive tax policy. Well this is one tax policy, one progressive tax policy, that Saskatchewan people can do without.

And while taxes continue to grow, Mr. Speaker, so do SGI rates, so do utility rates, so do licensing fees, and the like. Even young Saskatchewan couples going to get married this spring will find that the registration cost for their marriage certificates have increased. All of this when we have a record deficit. And there's progress on this front too; successive record deficits from this government, if you can call that progress. After giving millions away to oil companies, we now have a deficit of \$3.4 billion.

And simple arithmetic will tell people that at 10 per cent interest, that some \$340 million a year that Saskatchewan people pay in interest on this deficit of \$3.4 billion — \$340 million a year approximately on interest payments on that deficit, 365 days a year, we have what approaches a million dollars a day being spent by this Progressive government to finance its deficit, a deficit that was not there incidentally when it took office.

And what does this Progressive Conservative Speech from the Throne propose to do about this deficit? Not a thing. We hear not a word about the deficit in this Speech from the Throne. The Premier, as we know, can go and rant about free trade, can go across the country and proclaim how great and how wonderful it is. And this same Premier can go and he can beat up on homosexuals and other groups of people such as people on social assistance. And he has all sorts of rhetoric of how he's helping farm families but he sure doesn't want to talk about the deficit that he's inflicted on Saskatchewan people, and he sure doesn't want to talk about the mismanagement. And there's not a hint of that, not a hint of a plan to deal with the deficit in this Speech from the Throne.

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

**Mr. Koenker:** — That's the last thing in this world that the

Premier of this province wants to own up to. He'd just as soon have us all forget about it.

So we have what amounts to a Speech from the Throne that comes from a Progressive Conservative government, a government that's really a wrecking crew, a right-wing crew, a regressive group of people, a regressive Conservative Party, a reactionary party, rigid ideologies that believe only in less government, getting government off the backs of people. Well that's not the issue at all. The issue is good government, government that takes care of Saskatchewan people and government that is as good as Saskatchewan people.

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

**Mr. Koenker:** — And what kind of progress, again, do we see in this Progressive Conservative Speech from the Throne? Let's look at the highway system, for example. What does the Speech from the Throne have to say about highways? Nothing. Nothing about highways, nothing about the progressive deterioration of the highway system.

Let's look at job opportunities. What does the Progressive Conservative Speech from the Throne have to say about job opportunities? Not a word. Nothing for the unemployed in this Speech from the Throne — progressive deterioration of the economy and of the job situation, and not a proposal, not a plan, not an idea, not a clue to deal with the unemployment problem.

And the same is true for education. There's nothing in this Speech from the Throne for young people in terms of their educational future, as there isn't for their job future. One-third of Kelsey Institute staff cut in Saskatoon last year, admissions frozen at the University of Saskatchewan, and not a word in this Speech from the Throne for young people looking for an education. Progressive deterioration of the educational system, just as we have progressive deterioration of the social fabric as the line-ups increase at the food bank in Saskatoon each month, and in Moose Jaw and in Regina. Legal aid, progressively dismantled; the John Howard society, dismantled; and we could go on and on.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, we need yet to look at this Progressive Conservative Speech from the Throne and to ask ourselves just what it does conserve. Does it conserve or protect our health care system? Not really. Although it proposes the task force on health care, it basically amounts to a recipe for user fees, deterrent fees and more cut-backs to the health care system. And the problem then with the health care system here in Saskatchewan is not that there's too much money being spent, as the government would want us to believe, but that this government is mismanaging the money that it does spend.

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

**Mr. Koenker:** — This Speech from the Throne says nothing about the 422 million given to Peter Pocklington — why would it? It conserves privilege for people like Peter Pocklington, but it indicates that this government can't afford money to address the problem, the real

problem, of waiting lists in Saskatchewan hospitals; \$248 million dollars for the Weyerhaeuser corporation, but there's not a cent for people needing dental care, and nothing in the Speech from the Throne to deal with that problem; fat patronage pay-offs of \$100,000 a year for people like Paul Schoenhals, and nothing for people needing prescription drugs.

Mr. Speaker, this Conservative government conserves some things very well. It conserves power and privilege for itself. That's what it's here for, to preserve power and privilege for itself. It preserves privilege for defeated PC candidates like Ralph Katzman and Jack Sandberg and Gordon Dirks. It preserves and conserves lush patronage appointments and, in fact, when we look at the ultimate in patronage, we can see that this government preserves privilege and power for the Premier himself, with the Shand-Rafferty project. There's a billion dollars plus for the Shand-Rafferty project in the Premier's backyard, but nothing in the way of help for Saskatchewan people in this Speech from the Throne.

And so what do we find in the Speech from the Throne? — a continuation of the Conservative policies in the form of privatization. This is a bit of a new dynamic on the Saskatchewan scene, part of the new agenda of this government.

And what is privatization, Mr. Speaker? What is privatization really, but the transfer of public investment into the hands of the wealthy and the privileged. Privatization is the conservation of privilege for supporters of the PC party. Those who have, get, with privatization.

And people who are reliant on the food bank don't participate in privatization. Farmers owing government farm production loans don't participate in privatization. The unemployed certainly don't participate in privatization; nor do students looking for jobs or an education; nor do senior citizens who face increased drug prescription costs. And ordinary families paying the flat tax and the sales tax and the crazy gas tax, they don't participate in privatization. Yes, the privatization plans of this PC government are conservative. They conserve special privilege for friends of the PC party, but they sure don't serve the public interest.

And so I conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying this Speech from the Throne is an incredible embarrassment for Saskatchewan people. It's an insult to Saskatchewan people. It's incredibly self-serving; it's vacuous and empty; it contains no answers to the problems we face, and for these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I and my colleagues will not be supporting it. Thank you very much for your attention.

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

**Mr. Hopfner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, it's definitely a pleasure for me to join in this debate to express my support for the Speech from the Throne. Let there be no doubt about it, I'm proud to stand in this legislature to speak in favour of our Progressive Conservative government.

There are three points, Mr. Speaker, that I wish to state at the beginning of my remarks. One, on behalf of my constituents and the people I represent in this Assembly, I am proud of the legislative goals of this government as stated in the Speech from the Throne. Two, I consider it an honour to serve in this legislature as part of a Progressive Conservative government. And three, I wish to state my high regard and respect for the leadership of the Premier of Saskatchewan who has the courage and the vision to build a better Saskatchewan.

It is during a debate on the Speech from the Throne that we who are members of this legislature can express our views on a wide range of issues facing Saskatchewan. Today I intend to do just that in my remarks. The Speech from the Throne is an important part of our legislative affairs. It sets out goals of the government of Saskatchewan. This government has, through his Honour the Lieutenant Governor, presented this Assembly with a throne speech we can take pride in. Let me say . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, Mr. Speaker, I know there are people here who would think otherwise, but let me say that I see many fine measures in the throne speech that will benefit my constituents and Saskatchewan people in general.

(1630)

I want to start off by dealing with agriculture. All over Canada our province is known as the bread-basket of the nation. Our farmers are the backbone of Saskatchewan's economy. With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make reference to a report by Dale Eisler in the Regina Leader-Post of today, Thursday March 24, 1988. It deals with agriculture. Allow me to quote from the article. Eisler wrote, and I quote:

Back during the 1982 election, when Grant Devine was weaving a spell over Saskatchewan people, it was often fascinating to watch him. As he trekked back and forth across the province, Devine displayed an uncanny ability to touch a nerve with the farmers. In countless town hall meetings, in front of large and small crowds, Devine talked about how rural Saskatchewan was founded on pride of ownership.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Eisler also writes of our Premier, quote: "His message was compelling." Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan farmers know and trust our Premier. He has never let them down. In tough times Saskatchewan farmers knew that their Premier would go to the wall for them.

Yes, there's trouble in our farm community, in our farm economy. Nobody knows and understands that more than the Premier of Saskatchewan. His commitment to farming is real and genuine. After all, Mr. Speaker, he farms himself.

Mr. Speaker, we all know the excellent record of the government in defending and protecting the family farm. I believe it is worth repeating in this Assembly. No other government in the history of Saskatchewan has done so much for the farming community. In his leadership role as Minister of Agriculture, our Premier has made agriculture

a number one priority — let me expand upon that, Mr. Speaker — a number one priority that has touched every corner of this world. He has brought it to a national and international scene.

And the Speech from the Throne states that this Progressive Conservative government will continue to provide policies to preserve the rural way of life in Saskatchewan. Measures will be introduced by this PC government to provide even greater protection for rural families when times are difficult.

Mr. Speaker, just a reminder. It was the NDP Leader of the Opposition who in the 1970s was one of the fathers of land bank. It was the NDP Leader of the Opposition who, back in the dark days of double-digit inflation, said no to protection programs for farmers. Now this same man thinks he can put on a pair of boots and a cowboy hat and pretend he is the farmer's friend. Mr. Speaker, my only response to that is purely hogwash and baloney. Saskatchewan farmers will not be fooled by an urban cowboy.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier and the Progressive Conservative government and those of us who are in this legislature as government members continue our commitment for the farmers. Our record and our commitment to farming will continue the partnership with our farm families and this government.

I mentioned farm families, and I want to take a few moments to talk about Saskatchewan families. Our Premier is known nation-wide for his leadership and his moral convictions in defending families. Far be it from some of the members on the opposite side that are making fun of this, but to our Premier and this government, the family is a sacred unit that has made Saskatchewan a great province.

This government believes in the dignity of families. That is why in the past we have had such family protection programs as mortgage protection, mortgage protection during high interest times, home improvement programs as to help families, then a record health care spending program. Those who believe in the family know that they can count on this government in upholding traditional family values. As a member of this legislature, I am proud to be associated with a government that stands up for families.

The NDP Leader of the Opposition has already spoken in response to the Speech from the Throne. I must say that there is a marked difference between him and the previous leader of the opposition. The one-time member from Regina Elphinstone, Mr. Blakeney, had a sense of decorum when he presented his ideas in this legislature. Obviously we did not agree with him totally or . . . well, at times he did kind of come our way, but we respected his decorum and thoughtful approach to issues.

But the member from Saskatoon Riversdale has taken a backward step in his style. The Leader of the Opposition came in here, into the legislature, and ranted like an old-time political boss with no consideration of sounding either credible or reasonable.

Mr. Speaker, for the record I want to state that I resent it when the leader of an opposition mocks a Speech from the Throne because it contains a provision to bring in legislation — and it may be minor to some — but legislation to protect people from dangerous dogs. And it's been mentioned by my colleagues previous. The Leader of the Opposition made a joke, and now members opposite still joke about it as they did when the member from Wilkie had brought it to the attention in this House too. But I wonder if he thinks the attacks of pit bull terriers on elderly people and children is a laughing matter. I really wonder.

And I also invite the members opposite, the members of the NDP caucus, to take a look at those pictures that had been tabled in this Assembly, when we see little children, babies, and on up to the adult and the senior citizens of this province, when we see those types of pictures . . . And it's too bad that the public, the general public out there in TV land, couldn't see those pictures because the bloody, gory, scarred-up mess of human flesh which normally took . . . and basically took the near lives of individuals — and there they are laughing yet, thinking it's funny when you describe it. It's not funny.

On another point, I refer to page 20 in *Hansard* of March 22. The Leader of the Opposition said, and I quote: "Everywhere he travels." Everywhere he travels, he travels to a prayer breakfast in Washington. I want to repeat that once more because this is a quote: "Everywhere he travels." He travels to a prayer breakfast in Washington. The Leader of the Opposition was making reference to our Premier of this province travelling to a prayer breakfast in Washington.

Now I wonder, Mr. Speaker, why the leader of the NDP opposition would have an objection to the Premier of Saskatchewan attending a prayer breakfast of leaders, world leaders, including the President of the United States, in Washington. I wonder what he would have against that. These leaders joined in fellowship to pay respect to God and spiritual values.

And yes, they joke and laugh about it over on the other side of the House. But maybe that's just it. Maybe they just don't believe in values, in prayer, in a lot of things. I have to wonder why the Leader of the Opposition would make it a point to single out the Premier's attendance at a prayer breakfast. I have to wonder.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne symbolizes the difference between the Progressive Conservative government and those who sit in the NDP opposition. Let me tell you some more reasons why. The Speech from the Throne contains bold and positive measures for farmers, for education, a new public participation plan, economic diversification, free trade and excellence in health care. What does the opposition leader have to say as an alternative? Well this so-called man of new ideas — there are no new ideas. After 20 years in politics, the leader of the NDP opposition is bankrupt — bankrupt of new policies and bankrupt of new ideas.

What is the NDP's opposition answer to free trade, for instance? Rip up the deal — rip it up, throw it out, no

good. Let them join in with their brothers Ed and Bob from Ontario in denying western Canada new economic opportunities with free trade — let them. What is their policy for agriculture? Well the last I heard, they were calling for a return to some sort of land bank that they had.

And remember the Leader of the Opposition has been quoted as saying, my position is simply that the party leader's job is to implement party policy. Well, Mr. Speaker, that was a quote by the new leader of the NDP. And well I remind him of another quote he made; he made this quote back in 1982 when he said, Mr. Speaker, and I quote: "We deserved to be defeated in 1982." Yes, he said, we deserved to be defeated in 1982, and to that I say, you served to be defeated in 1986 and in the future.

Mr. Speaker, take a look at any of the excellent items from the throne speech; health care, for example. This Progressive Conservative government has increased health care expenditures to a record high of 1.1 billion last year, the highest ever in the entire history of Saskatchewan. What is the opposition response to our health care measures? They oppose them. They oppose them. They say it's not enough. Well, Mr. Speaker, you and I will both agree to that part; it's not enough. But we will not agree to the part that it's no good, that we shouldn't do those things. There is more and more money continually needed in all realms of everyday life, and we have to manage that; we have to manage that.

(1645)

This Progressive Conservative government, as I had stated, has put the money into health care like any ever had in this history of this province.

What is the opposition response to health care? As I said, they oppose them. Little wonder their leader is a man who supported measures such as extra billing on health care, a freeze on nursing home construction, and a decline in health services during his years in office.

And I want to just point out to you that he was one of the instigators in my riding for the closure of a hospital district, my home town, the town of Lashburn, Saskatchewan, whom had a hospital at one particular time. And it was by his hand that it disappeared, and they lost their hospital district. Are we to believe that he is a new version of the old version?

Let me talk about the real leader, a real leader in every sense of the word, our Premier of Saskatchewan. When it comes to the protection for farmers, the Premier is a leader. When it comes to building the Saskatchewan economy, the Premier is a leader. When it comes to excellence in health care, the Premier is a leader. When it comes to speaking out on traditional and moral values, family values, the Premier is a leader. The Speech from the Throne is a document that represents the visionary leadership of our Premier and this government.

I wish to reflect a few moments on our province. The Saskatchewan I remember as a kid is Saskatchewan. . .

the slow, rural living Saskatchewan has bloomed as one of the most dynamic, industrious, successful provinces in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is the future. Yes, we do have our problems in Saskatchewan, but far greater than that is the confidence, the sense that despite it's growing pains this province can master its own destiny, shaping a new Canada, a freer, a fairer, a more prosperous Saskatchewan for all our children.

Nowhere is this confidence more evident than today right here in Saskatchewan. From the Prince Albert pulp mill to the upgrader in Regina to a new coliseum in Saskatoon or a new hospital in Lloydminster, the spirit behind the shaping of this great province is very evident.

Mr. Speaker, I mention the content and the main issues of the throne speech for a very valid and specific reason. Mr. Speaker, these are the issues of concerns to Saskatchewan people. These are the issues that Saskatchewan people and Saskatchewan families want its government to focus on. They want us to develop new ideas and new ways of dealing with these issues.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are very clear in their message to this government. They want the continuation of new ideas. They do not want to turn back the pages of history and deal with old ideas. They want these issues to carry forward, and in a very strong . . . and with a very strong leadership which we, and I am very proud to say, have here in Saskatchewan today.

Mr. Speaker, and specifically to those members in the opposition benches, listen carefully, and I mean it. The people of Saskatchewan are depending on you to provide them with a credible and sincere opposition, so listen. As my hon. colleague has already said, put down the worn and tattered copies of your NDP rules and regulation books, quit using the same old answers for the new issues of today and those of the future. There are no answers in those old books of yours.

The people of Saskatchewan told you, and I repeat, the people of Saskatchewan told you in 1982, and they've told you again in October of 1986, to get your heads out of the book, out of your books, you old books, and start listening to what the people of the great province are telling you. Stop misleading and stop misinforming the people. Stop trying to scare them at every turn. Stop scaring young people with your dishonesty. Stop scaring the workers who keep this province growing. And I warn you, and I warn you stop scaring the elderly. These are people who built this province, and they did it despite the regressive policies of your former administration. They did it in spite of you. And they will not allow your party to take away the things they have built.

The people of Saskatchewan are demanding that you put that old book of NDP rules and regulations away. They want some new ideas from you. They want you to be responsible representatives of their concerns. No more hypocrisy. Do you hear me? Mr. Leader of



the Opposition, I'm asking you, do you hear me? No more hypocrisy; get a hold of your party. And I ask, and I'll repeat that again, Mr. Speaker. I would like the Leader of the Opposition to get a hold of his party, get a hold of it now.

Quit trying to buy votes. It's scandalous. You had better learn a few things quickly, my friend, because if you don't it won't be long before we'll be saying goodbye to you again. The people of this province and all of them want to know where you stand on issues.

Mr. Speaker, people are tired of the NDP hiding from them. Tell them what your party believes in — and I challenge you that — tell them what your party believes in. Quit running away from the people. Now I know that you have a great deal of difficulty in getting your caucus to agree on any issue. Nevertheless, the people of this province want to know what your party stands for, and they are not going to tolerate your dancing around the issues any longer. We want you to speak up; we want you people to speak up.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan deserves far better from the opposition than they have been receiving, and I have no doubt they'll have plenty to say when we go to the polls at the next election.

Based on the performance of this opposition to date, I doubt if I will see many of the familiar faces on that side of the House back here. The people of Saskatchewan are simply tiring of the NDP Party.

And I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that when you hear of the issues of the NDP out buying votes it really makes me want to know from them as to where their ideals really are. To buy power, Mr. Speaker, I have never, ever in my entirety have every heard of something so low, so undignified, Mr. Speaker, it is totally, totally, an impressionable act that they have pulled in the past.

The president of the NDP organization in this province out in the constituency of Elphinstone buying votes — buying votes, buying from poor people, he says. There's a man in a three-piece suit out there trying to buy power from poor people. Well I've never heard of anything so degrading, disgraceful, disgusting, immoral, despicable. I have not ever . . . I was really shocked, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Hopfner:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to say that with the particular throne speech, this particular throne speech in which it's spelled out in the honesty and the direction and the moral values of this government, that we have to, and the people of this province have to put up with the degrading speeches, the negative speeches of the opposition. Well I apologize to the people out in TV land because that's just part of what we've been putting up in this House for the last six years. They talk about taxation, and they talk about this and they talk about that, that we're just taking the people to the cleaners.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I have dealt with many of the various different issues, that when we, as a government, have announced the various different programs in this province and have spent the millions of dollars throughout the ridings of this province and have taken off the moratoriums and the health care, of expanding in the

educational field, have protected the farmers, have gone to the wall for farmers and will continue to go to the wall for all people in the province of Saskatchewan . . .

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

**Mr. Hopfner:** — . . . it's kind of hard to believe that those people can stand on the other side of the House and be that negative.

Well I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, that it's definitely a pleasure for me to take part in a throne speech here to try and deal with just a few of the particular issues that have been mentioned in the throne speech. And it is definitely my pleasure to join with the member from Rosthern, who is my caucus colleague, who had moved the motion of the throne speech, it is definitely my pleasure to join with him, and I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, I am very proud, very proud to be able to say to you that I am going to support the Speech from the Throne. Thank you.

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

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.