

EVENING SITTING

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Mr. Neudorf and the amendment thereto moved by Ms. Simard.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to join in the debate and, as well, congratulate the member from Rosthern and the member from Moosomin for an excellent job of moving and seconding the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

I thought tonight, Mr. Speaker, I would cover three areas particularly as it relates to the Speech from the Throne delivered last Monday, March 21: talk about the kindergarten to grade 12 system, Mr. Speaker, review the last year and look at the upcoming agenda; and spend a few moments on the post-secondary education side, the universities, colleges, etc.; and end up with a few remarks relative to my constituency, and particularly as it relates to the opening of the legislature this last week, Mr. Speaker.

On the kindergarten to grade 12 side, Mr. Speaker, because I am not an educator by profession I have used the last year as a learning experience, largely. And over the past year particularly, I've used one day a week — usually Mondays, Mr. Speaker — to go into the schools across this province. I know you and some other MLAs have had occasion to accompany me on some of these visits, and it has been a tremendously valuable experience to myself.

The usual format for these visits has been to spend some time with the teachers in the staff room, then to spend some time with the students answering their questions, and then coffee or lunch, for example, with the members of the board. And over this last year, or year and a few months, we have now had an occasion using that format to meet something in the order of probably 900 to 1,000 teachers. Very often their concerns relate around the core curriculum, and as well, of course, more recently the outstanding contract negotiations.

In this same format I've had a chance now to meet something in the order of probably 10,000 young people, and then take their questions. I find them extremely enjoyable and their questions are always interesting. They range from what do I do, what about free trade, what do MLAs get paid, will I get into university, why did you spend \$10,000 on the tree in the foyer of our new high school when what we need is new textbooks, my dog is sick — I even had that question once, Mr. Speaker — how does our educational system compare to other countries, and are we losing ground. Some very thoughtful questions, Mr. Speaker, from some of these young people.

And as well, when I've met with the boards, and I think I've had a chance now to probably meet one out of seven, one of the six boards across the province, and I find these are very genuine and sincere individuals who have a very good understanding. I've learned a lot, Mr. Speaker, over the last year and I know there's lots more to learn.

But this evening, Mr. Speaker, what I would like to do is share with you and other members of the legislature some of my observations over this past year, some of my observations seen and felt. They may not be the reality, Mr. Speaker, nothing is ever as it seems, but some observations and some perceptions.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I wish all people in Saskatchewan could see what I have seen on these tours of Saskatchewan schools. I've seen fancy buildings, and I've seen some not-so-fancy buildings. I've seen new schools and I've seen old schools. I've seen the young people in the shops and industrials arts, and I've seen the children in their libraries with their books, and I've seen them in their resource centres, and in their class-rooms with their computers. I've seen children in the class-rooms, and I've seen children in the labs. I've seen native children in an alternate school; a slain deer ready to be dressed as part of their studies. And while all of this is important, Mr. Speaker, mostly I've seen happy children and enthusiastic children.

Now I'm not pretending to have seen it all, or to know it all certainly. And I probably can't appreciate fully, as the teachers on the front line can, the implications of changing family structures and child abuse and child hunger and over-zealous parents and so on, Mr. Speaker. But I can't help remark at what tremendous opportunities these children of ours have in the schools today, what tremendous strides forward, Mr. Speaker, in our schools over the last decade or two. Certainly, what strides forward since I attended grade 1 some 35 years ago at Hepworth School in a small country school in rural Saskatchewan. Indeed if one sits back, Mr. Speaker, and surveys and thinks about what I have seen as Minister of Education, I and you and all members of this legislature have every reason to feel good and to be proud.

Even on the funding issue, Mr. Speaker, those who came before me left a very solid foundation. Over the last half decade we have seen something in the order of a 60 per cent increase in per pupil funding for education and yet there are 4,000 fewer students in the system. So we have more money, less students, and even after inflation, Mr. Speaker, this is a very healthy increase.

The public, too, Mr. Speaker, feel very good. I asked about education, asked if it is doing a good job, over 80 percent of the public will resoundingly say, yes, our school system is doing a good job. For the most part the public feel good about education.

And yet, Mr. Speaker, and yet I detect some slight undercurrent in society, some sense that they aren't totally confident in our school system. I detect some hesitancy; I detect some insecurity; I detect some reservations about what we are doing. There are some

nagging doubts, Mr. Speaker, and there are some bothersome questions. It's almost paradoxical. I see all these wonderful things in the schools across Saskatchewan, and yet there are the questions and the reservations, Mr. Speaker.

Now maybe the questions aren't really surprising when one thinks about it. I spent much of the last year talking about the new economy, the shift from the resource-based economy to the knowledge-based economy, the information era, the technological era, call it what you will, Mr. Speaker. And in this era I've talked about how education will be critically important to our children's future.

Now probably every minister of education who came before me has said education is important. Maybe they even said education is critically important. Society has always viewed education as important. But I say to you, Mr. Speaker, in the knowledge-based economy of the future, education will indeed be critically important.

Now I know that you and I when we go to our constituencies on the weekend or during the evenings or on the time we are not sitting, and if you are to go on to coffee row or on to Main Street, you wouldn't hear people talking about the knowledge economy or the information age. That's not how they articulate this changing world that faces us. They don't sit and talk about the implications of the technological era or the knowledge-based economy while they are sipping their coffee. What they talk about is, will my child get a job, will he get into university, how will he deal with the changing world, how will he deal with these technological changes that faces him or her.

But underneath, Mr. Speaker, they know that it is indeed education that will be the key to their children's future opportunity, to their children's future security, and to their children's future prosperity. They are pinning their hopes on education, Mr. Speaker, and I would suggest to you that they have a phenomenal expectation, a phenomenal expectation of the education system.

Because of this, Mr. Speaker, and it was indeed about a year ago when I spoke to the spring council of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, I said then, Mr. Speaker, that we would see education under intense scrutiny, that education would go up on the Richter scale of public concern.

But what has happened since I made that statement a year ago, Mr. Speaker, to the STF spring council? Well, look at some of what has happened over the last year. Has education gone up on the Richter scale of public concerns? Well, I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that it has. And I would refer to you a study that was undertaken this last year by Southam Inc., a very good study on illiteracy across Canada. And we've seen over this last year headlines that read . . . for example, there's one from the *Leader-Post* of last November '86, "Illiteracy rate in province said about 32 per cent," Mr. Speaker. Another headline here from a September '87 *Star-Phoenix*, "Americans score higher on literacy test." And indeed, Mr. Speaker, the *Leader-Post*, recognizing

the importance of this issue certainly to the print media, did a special report on the whole issue of literacy itself, which I think underscores the point I was making, Mr. Speaker, that here's one dimension of education, the whole question of illiteracy in the adult population, as being a critically important one and the fact that we're starting to see more and more about that.

As well, Mr. Speaker, over the last year, we saw the *Toronto Star*, another eastern-based publication, do a report card on their schools. Not very often that we see that kind of thing being done in the media, but they did a report card on education in Ontario.

Closer to home, Mr. Speaker, the University of Saskatchewan Alumni Association, in their publication called *The Green and White* — for those of you who graduated from the University of Saskatchewan, you probably received that — they published the results of a quiz that was given to first-, second-, third-, and fourth-year university students. And a headline in the *Star-Phoenix*, dated February of this year, the headline read: "U of S students fail pop quiz." And some of the kinds of questions on this quiz, Mr. Speaker — this was a quiz given to first-, second-, third-, and fourth-year students — was, for example: who was the Leader of the Official Opposition, Ottawa; what is the name of the first book in the Bible; identify things like: SDI (strategic defence initiative), the Group of Seven, Meech Lake accord, and those kinds of things, Mr. Speaker. And it made a fair headline and a fair story because the reality is the students didn't do nearly as well in this quiz as one might have expected. Interesting that the quiz was being done, Mr. Speaker.

As well, over the last year, we saw a book on education make the *Time's* best-seller list, Mr. Speaker — Allan Bloom's book, *The Closing of the American Mind* — made the *Time* best-seller list. Now I'm not saying that by raising this example, Mr. Speaker, that I subscribe to what he said in the book, but it's been a long, long time, at least not in my recent memory, when a book on education actually made the *Time* best-seller list. And that's doing something in this day and age when we see all the books on diets and exercises and all those kinds of things that make the best-seller list, Mr. Speaker. And also, Mr. Speaker, that led to a review even in some of our own papers here. "Book raises questions on value of today's education," was one of the headlines as a result of that. Another headline in recent days was, "Yen for educational excellence puts Japanese on top." And even last week in the *Leader-Post*, March 25, we had a headline, "Canadian students lag behind in science." And the article went on to say:

Canadian high school students are among the world's worst at mastering science, while its 14-year-olds are among the best, a new study indicates.

An international education agency, tested high school students in 13 countries on their knowledge of advanced biology, chemistry, and physics and Canada (Mr. Speaker) ended up 11th or 12th in every category.

And this professor here suggested that we ought to have a national debate on Canada's education system. Well I, myself, Mr. Speaker, have suggested a national education strategy, or at least a national agenda.

(1915)

As well, Mr. Speaker, over the last year we've seen the whole issue of private schools here and in other provinces gain some exposure, partly, I suppose, because of the fact that over the last 10 years enrolments, while still small, have doubled in this province. Enrolments in private schools have doubled. Now that sounds like a lot, but in reality we've gone from about one-half or three-quarters of 1 per cent of our 200,000 school children in private schools to 1.5 per cent. So it's not a big number but it's doubled, and perhaps there's something there for us to take note of.

As well, Mr. Speaker, just in this last month the CTV (Canadian Television Network) network did a survey of grade 12 students across the country — co-operating networks, including the one here in Regina, CKCK-TV, and they gave a quiz to some 500 or 550 grade 12 students here in Regina. "Testing the Class of '88," I think it was entitled. And one of the questions that they asked in this test that they gave to the grade 12 students, Mr. Speaker, was, name two premiers and the provinces they represent. Another one of the questions was, they showed the students a map of the world and they said, shade in the area that represents Canada, draw in the map of Canada.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the first instance, name two premiers and the provinces they represent, only one out of three students could do that correctly, Mr. Speaker. And in terms of drawing a map of Canada, only one out of two students could do that correctly, Mr. Speaker.

Now those are fairly disturbing results, Mr. Speaker. But whether it's the literacy study or *The Green and White* survey or the articles or the books or the private school studies or even the CTV quiz, Mr. Speaker, you can see, as I said earlier, that education is higher on the Richter scale, there are more and more people expressing an interest in it, including the media, Mr. Speaker.

Now one can legitimately ask, are any of these studies or books or quizzes or articles accurate or useful? And that's up for debate, Mr. Speaker. But there is a larger question, and that question is: why all of a sudden are we seeing all these studies and books and quizzes and articles on our educational system? And all are asking, at least in the authors' minds, whether our children have a solid grasp of the fundamentals. They're asking about basic knowledge — the premiers and the provinces and the maps of Canada and who's the leader of the official opposition and what does Meech Lake mean. They're asking about the fundamentals, literacy, reading and writing, and numeracy, Mr. Speaker, arithmetic, history and geography and science — general knowledge, the fundamentals, how do our children stack up. That is the gist of all of this, Mr. Speaker.

And consider as well that these books and articles and quizzes are not the work of some ideological self-interest group out to prove a point or grind an axe. Some may be

out to press a point, but most are not. So I ask you and other members, Mr. Speaker, then why all the public attention of education in the popular media? Why, when in the past, for the most part, the only thing you ever saw the media commenting on was the minutes of the local school board meeting? Why then all this attention?

I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that they are reflecting some of the same concerns and nagging doubts and questions and observations that I spoke of earlier. I would suggest to you that in the public's mind, when it comes to the fundamentals in education, there is uncertainty about our school system. Let me repeat that, Mr. Speaker. I would suggest to you that in the public's mind, when it comes to the fundamentals in education, there is uncertainty about our school system, Mr. Speaker.

A further example of what I'm talking about, Mr. Speaker: there was a paper presented at the Canadian Education Association conference in Vancouver last summer. In this conference, in this paper, the presenter surveyed some trends and some questions that had been asked of society in general about education. And it was a retrospective survey, Mr. Speaker, and one of the questions went like this: when people in 1964 were asked — this is 1964, Mr. Speaker — parents were asked, people were asked, in 1964, do you think your children are getting as good as or a better education than you got when you were in school — this is 1964, Mr. Speaker — well 74 per cent of the population then said, and believed then, that their children were getting as good as or a better education than they got. That's in 1964.

In 1987 when that same question was asked, 1987: are your children getting as good as or a better education than you got; the percentage dropped down to 41, from 74 down to 41. And when they surveyed those who themselves had some education, maybe not unlike in this room, Mr. Speaker, the percentage dropped down even further to 29 per cent. Twenty-nine per cent believe that today those who have some education . . . At least 29 per cent believe that the children are receiving as good as or a better education than they got.

Now those of us who know what is going on in education and who have seen what I have seen, would say, nonsense. Yet, Mr. Speaker, that is what the perception is.

In the same survey, 88 per cent said, we are either going to have to make major or minor changes to the educational system if we are going to overcome the challenges that face Canada. Now these are Canadian numbers, Mr. Speaker, and we need to explore them further relative to Saskatchewan. We have done some work on this, some surveying, and I'll have more to say on that later when we get those results in. But I doubt, Mr. Speaker, if the overall trends will be different.

Well, Mr. Speaker, as I said I've had some sense of some uncertainty, some nagging doubt, some reservation, some questions, and I've not been alone as I think all these surveys and quizzes and articles would point out. And it has very much to do with society's view of how well our children are being schooled in what you and I might have called the fundamentals.

But I also sense, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a general unease among parents with some of the teaching methods we have been using. Every time I talk to a group of parents, I emphasize the new issues we want to deal with, like creative thinking and critical thinking and independent thinking — the new basics, social and personal development.

And what do they raise with me? Well, they raise that their kids can't spell and that they can't write grammatically correct. It almost seems as if some of the professional methodology that we have introduced, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is becoming between us and the parents. And on the issue of standards and exams, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I sense we are vulnerable here also. There is more desire to see some greater uniformity of standards than we have come to feel comfortable with. There is a desire for a high standard of academic attainment, and we must look at this issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and I'm not referring to some kind of survival of the fittest mentality — but we must look at this question of standards and assessments rationally and humanely and honestly. We must too look at the notion of some form of standardized provincial assessment process.

As well, I sense that we may be perceived to be emphasizing process at the price of content. And there is a message here for colleges of education and the way they plan and allocate time in their curriculum for students. There is also an important message for educators and how we think about and talk about our goals for education.

Well if I could summarize in one sentence what I think parents are trying to tell us here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is this: we must put behind us the notion that it doesn't matter what we teach, it's how we teach that counts. We must put that notion behind us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because the public clearly believes that it matters very much to them what we teach, it matters very much to them what we teach. And we must put behind us that notion that it doesn't matter what you teach, it's how we teach that counts. Well it does matter, and I would suggest to you that perhaps there is a feeling that we are neglecting an important part of what many view as our intellectual heritage. We must find and strike the right balance, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now I'll be the first to admit that tours through schools, articles, quizzes, papers, what — you name it — that these signals are not conclusive, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I have to tell you that this is what the vast majority of parents are telling myself and, I believe, other elected representatives.

What I am talking about, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is not an ideological or political issue. Indeed some of the references I made were from other provinces right across this country. I know that some of these issues — departmental exams and assessment and standardized testing and some of those kinds of things, Mr. Deputy Speaker — I know these are highly contentious issues, but we have to talk further about them. We must tackle the issues head-on. The public expects us to address these concerns, and if we do not, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will feed existing suspicions that the educational system is out

of touch.

Well I ask, Mr. Deputy Speaker, an examination of these issues. Do we fear the answers? I say I doubt it, but the public expect us to examine the issues. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to contemplate or at least speculate on why the public have some of these questions and reservations and concerns I've talked about. At least, I'd speculate on one reason why, and I would speculate especially relative to that 70 per cent of the people in society who this very day do not have children in school, but who are taxpayers, and who are interested because they may have grandchildren or nieces or nephews or just because they themselves know the importance of education.

I want to speculate, and I would offer up this scenario, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Consider someone watching this television debate tonight. Perhaps they don't have children in school; maybe they're not unlike my mother, who is somewhat close to being retired on the farm, a former teacher herself, obviously very interested in education. But if she listened to this debate and other debates in this legislature on education, or this afternoon in question period, she would have heard us talking about educational funding and universities, professors on strike. Through the estimates last spring she would have heard us talking about core curriculum, common essential learnings, EDF (the education development fund) aesthetic education, in-service; all those kinds of things, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But I ask you, do you think the average person sitting there tonight watching this debate really understands what the system or the professionals are talking about when they talk about things like common essential learnings, or even core curriculum, or the education development fund? Does that really tell you anything? Or in-service — does the average person really know what that means?

Well I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the average person does not understand what we are talking about when we talk in those terms. If we talked about an excellence fund in education or a fund that put books and computers in hundreds of schools across this province, then it would mean something, perhaps. But to talk about common essential learnings when more likely people understand the situation better if you talk about reading, about oral communication, written communication skills, literacy — they understand that. But common essential learnings, I'm not so sure, Mr. Speaker.

Well I would suggest to you and other members of this legislature that we in education over the years haven't clearly and simply articulated what we are doing. And I say that, knowing full well that we have more open-house nights in our schools, more parent-teacher interviews than ever, more newsletters than ever. But I would suggest to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we haven't clearly and simply articulated to the larger public what we are doing.

And I would say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we must tell in every way possible our philosophy of education and what we are indeed doing. In the next year I see myself turning my head to that task particularly. We need to tell

people, we need to tell people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that our society remains firmly attached to the traditional concept of a well-educated person — a strong command of language, both written and spoken; an understanding of the fundamentals of math and science; a sense of past striving and future hopes of our country in as many cultures; or the old basics, as some might have called it.

And if our children, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are to master the new technologies, it is vital that they acquire a firm footing in the knowledge and the wisdom upon which these technologies are based. We must, too, equip our children with the new skills they will required in the 21st century, Mr. Speaker — a familiarity with computers, the ability to learn independently, a capacity for creative and critical thinking — the new basics, if you like, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And in all of this we must provide for students with special needs. Simply, clearly, our philosophy must be told. And in this context, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we have to reconsider whether some of the modern approaches have gone too far in stressing flexibility. Society values clarity in expression, Mr. Speaker. They value precision in grammar and spelling. And they feel we may have had insufficient emphasis here, I would suggest. We need to take a close look at what is going on in the teaching of language arts.

(1930)

Well the framework for all of this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is provided by *Directions*, that five- or six-year study that led to the blueprint called *Directions*. It was concerned with finding how best to deal with the new pressures, the new issues, and the new technologies that confront us. The legacy of that exercise is that we have a huge agenda of exciting and challenging new ideas to incorporate into public education. And I look to these ideas to invigorate the profession, the department, the officials involved, the trustees, for many years to come.

Well perhaps the best way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to take account of what I have said tonight relative to the kindergarten to grade 12 system, perhaps the best way to take account of it is in the form of some caveats or backstops. I think what the public are asking for is a kind of guarantee or assurance, a guarantee that in the process of change we will respect community values and expectations — that we don't throw out the baby as we change the bath water, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Well what will be some of the initiatives, issues, and questions that we will be dealing with in the year ahead? First and foremost is the implementation of core curriculum. Certainly we must address the extent to which the new curriculum will define measurable standards of attainment. And it must be made clear that in the area of basic academic skills we are aiming for a higher standard. We all appreciate also that a major in-service training program will be needed, and work is going on within the department to develop mechanisms for achieving this lifelong learning for the teachers themselves, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The knowledge and skills obtained by young people

through the core curriculum are those needed by all students regardless of their future goals. The core curriculum will serve well that nearly 60 per cent of our grade 12 graduates who go on to post-secondary education, and as well will serve those students in the same way who enter the work-force directly after high school.

At the same time as we develop core we must also strengthen support and programming for students with special needs, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is something I feel strongly about, and a working group has been set up between the departments of Education, Health, and Social Services to look for better ways to deal with the problems of handicapped children, child abuse and neglect, and other social problems.

As you know, a ministerial advisory committee on monitoring and evaluation has been set up to look into student assessment and other issues. As I have said, this is clearly an area in which we have to come to terms with public expectations for both higher standards and greater uniformity of assessments.

In northern Saskatchewan I will be setting up a . . . Sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In northern Saskatchewan I have set up a task force to look at a range of issues, including the high drop-out rates. I would like to see some innovative new approaches to delivery of education in the North.

M. le président de la chambre, comme vous le savez, notre province a signé et ratifié l'accord du Lac Meech et nous en sommes fiers. Ce gouvernement n'a pas hésité à se compromettre pour assurer un Canada uni tout en respectant la... accueilli le Québec au sein de la Confédération canadienne a aussi assuré la préservation de la langue et de la culture des minorités officielles.

Selon l'esprit de cette entente que nous avons endossée de bon coeur, la province se propose de travailler conjointement avec la communauté francophone non seulement pour préserver la langue et la culture françaises mais aussi pour les promouvoir. Ce gouvernement a l'intention d'aider sa minorité francophone à réaliser ses attentes et à combler ses aspirations. Nous ferons donc tout ce qui peut être fait raisonnablement et dans la limite du possible.

C'est ainsi que j'ai l'intention de convoquer sous peu des représentants de la communauté francophone à me rencontrer, afin... conjointe à la question de la gérance des écoles fransaskoises. Dans un esprit de respect mutuel et de collaboration nous arriverons, j'en suis sûr, à une entente qui bénéficiera non seulement à la communauté francophone mais aussi à la population de la Saskatchewan en général.

In the field of employment equity, we will be pressing for measurable results in improving promotion opportunities for women and minority groups in the profession, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And finally, with respect to private schooling, we have not finalized our plans relative to the Dirks report. Feedback is still coming in and all responses will get serious consideration, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

As you can see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a formidable agenda. It will push all of us to the limits to achieve it, but I truly believe these measures, if we are to sustain the high measure of public support and the high level of standards that we have this very day, that this is indeed an exciting and right-minded agenda, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It's not a time for finger pointing. I would say to you that this is an exciting and challenging agenda that we can all be a part of. The system — all of us — is under intense scrutiny. There's a phenomenal expectation by the public and it's not just the teacher, or just the trustee, or just the administrator, or just the government, or just the department. We're all in this together and I look forward to working with all of those in education as we embark on this very exciting agenda in the months ahead, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And now as it relates to the post-secondary education system, just a very few words. As all members will know, last year was a very busy time in our post-secondary side — a year of change, a change of some new directions, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I just want to again publicly make note of the tremendous effort and co-operation and dedication by those who work and serve at universities, and community colleges, and our technical institutes, and in adult basic education; volunteers who serve on boards; volunteer tutors relative to literacy. I just want to acknowledge their tremendous effort and dedication and co-operation over this last year.

I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that much has been done in terms of restructuring our post-secondary education over this last year, but it was . . . And change is never easy, but I'm more convinced than ever that these changes were the right changes to position Saskatchewan ahead, literally, of the rest of the world when it comes to new directions and new opportunities for our young people; for lifelong learning for all of our population as we approach the 21st century. So my thanks to all those who were involved.

We've seen positive changes, Mr. Speaker, in adult basic education. Saskatchewan probably leading the nation as it relates to the literacy initiative. Certainly in the skilled training, the institutes with their new autonomy, the new Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, with the flexibility. Their centres of excellence, the universities — in many instances they've sharpened their focus, not trying to be all things to all people.

In native education, certainly, some major strides forward. The new Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology is the result of an agreement struck with Gabriel Dumont Institute. We have joint management of the Saskatchewan institute. We have a native studies division, Mr. Speaker. The Gabriel Dumont Institute has contracted to provide the management for us on that and when that board is struck, Mr. Speaker, I expect to have native representation there as well. So we'll have it at both the management level and at the board level, Mr. Speaker — very exciting, and I would suggest, charting some new territory across North America once again.

The standardization between our two universities of first- and second-year arts and science so that we can deliver arts and science, not just in our universities — our two universities, our two campuses, where we have some overcrowding, Mr. Deputy Speaker — but as well the standardized arts and science delivered through this regional college network, the new regional college network across the province. They're out of basket weaving, they're out of aerobic dancing, and they're into more adult basic education, more institute programming, and more university programming. What a great day that'll be when we can offer first- and second-year arts and science across this province.

Or what about, Mr. Speaker, this summer in fact, very shortly, the summer centre of . . . Summer School of International Languages at the University of Regina, in conjunction with Luther College — an initiative, I would suggest to you, that will serve our people well as they go into the global village of the . . . in the next two decades as we approach the 21st century. A chance to take that language, whether you're a business man or a student, whether it's one of the languages that will serve one well in the Pacific Rim countries of south-east Asia or in South America or wherever; an opportunity to get some sense of the language at this international language centre, Mr. Speaker, some sense of the language and some sense of the culture. That will give our people the competitive edge in doing business in that important trading area of the world.

The national forum in Saskatoon, the National Forum on Post-secondary Education, that was quickly dubbed the Saskatoon forum — Saskatchewan and Saskatoon once again distinguishing itself in terms of taking a leadership role in charting the course for post-secondary education for the 21st century and beyond.

The Distance Education Council. I would acknowledge their help, Mr. Speaker, as they help us formulate the use of new technology to deliver more education across more and more of this province. You know, we can line these satellites up around the earth, Mr. Speaker, and deliver Saturday night hockey. We can deliver the Olympics; we can just about deliver anything; but somehow we've been behind in terms of delivering educational television programming across the vast geography of this province. And how useful that will be, not only in the what we traditionally call southern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, but as well, in northern Saskatchewan particularly.

The national education strategy. Our efforts there are ongoing. We hope to have something ready for the first ministers when they next meet. The new agriculture college at the University of Saskatchewan, a green light even in these tough times, Mr. Deputy Speaker; and the upgrading of libraries not only in Saskatoon but in Regina — the deal that Ernie Ingles put together here with UMI (University Microfilms International) where he levered one million dollars into two or three millions of dollars in microfiche technology, etc., etc.

He continues to be very innovative. The other day he stopped by my office and he's got a program going now entitled, "Bushels for Books." And in conjunction with

the wheat pool, farmers can make a donation to the University of Regina by dropping off grain of any grade, and the proceeds can be earmarked to the University of Regina to buy more books and magazines for the university library.

And he points out in this brochure that it's the University of Regina that's looking at a way to turn grain into bio fuel. They've got research relative to a computerized tractor, and they are doing work with grasshoppers and other pests that are well known to our farmers. So there's an example there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, an example of innovative funding and financing for the library, good for the farm community and good for the University of Regina. And my congratulations to him and to all his colleagues at the University of Regina.

As well, we've seen an additional half a million dollars last year pumped into our regional college and our regional library network — all those community libraries and towns, like in my area, in Stoughton and other small centres, the bookmobiles, an extra half a million dollars across the province to sort of regenerate their book stock, Mr. Speaker, was well received out there.

Well, now I'd like to close off, Mr. Speaker, with a few remarks relative to my constituency. And I want to particularly just concentrate on one area tonight of my constituency. And it has to do with the opening of the legislature. I had occasion to invite as my guests to the opening of the legislature, eight young people — one of them was my son, but seven of his former class-mates from the Weyburn Comprehensive High School in Weyburn.

And, Mr. Speaker, these young people that came as my guests, how impressive they were. And I have no doubt that these young people that came as guests — who watched the proceedings and the opening and attended the banquet — that these people represent our future leaders, Mr. Speaker. I had with me a young lady by the name of Cathy Grams, and another young lady by the name of Tasha Fogel and Heather Radine and Pam Mainil and Brigitte Piwarski and Sandy Bergveinson and a young fellow by the name of Aaron Woodard. And they joined us in here, Mr. Speaker, in the Chamber for the reading of the . . . Lieutenant Governor reading of the throne speech. And afterwards I had a chance to meet some others who had come to the Assembly for the tea. I was able to take them on a tour of the Legislative Building, Mr. Speaker, and include a couple of extras that most people don't get a chance to see when they visit here. I took them into the cabinet room, and, as well, the Premier — although busy in his office — took five minutes to say hello to him and show them his office.

(1945)

And, Mr. Speaker, I raise this because here were seven or eight young individuals — such fine young people — and I was absolutely proud to be able to have them as my guests, and humbled to be able to accompany them at this opening session.

And I have no doubt that if we were to meet these young people 10 and 20 years from now, that there'll be

agrologists and doctors among them, business men and business women amongst them, entrepreneurs, teachers, writers, journalists, musicians, and they'll be filling the jobs of the future, Mr. Speaker. They distinguish themselves, they are fine young citizens. And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and all members of this Assembly, they did their school proud and they are going to do their province proud in the future as well. I just have that sense, Mr. Speaker.

And of course, they went to the dinner that night. I suppose it was their first exposure to the group of protesters that were across the street from the Ramada Renaissance, a coalition number . . . whatever that was. And I'll have a little more to say about coalitions later on. And as well they went to the banquet, Mr. Speaker, and they enjoyed this aspect of it. And I think it was important; I think that's one of the big advantages of the opening night, is that it's one of those nights, as you well know, Mr. Speaker, politics is set aside. If the Lieutenant Governor speaks, and you speak here, Mr. Speaker, and the Premier speaks, and the Leader of the Opposition speaks. Politics were set aside that night, as always, Mr. Speaker. The politics were set aside and all of the speeches, including your remarks, Mr. Speaker, focuses and focused rightly so on what parliament really means, about what this parliamentary democracy really means, and about the freedom that comes with it — that privilege that we enjoy, the responsibilities that we as citizens have to ensure that that privilege is maintained and strengthened, Mr. Speaker.

I think it was important for our young people to see that dimension because too often what they see is that 20-second clip or that three paragraphs in the newspaper, that confrontational, sensational aspect that, I guess, is what sells newspapers and what buys advertising on television, Mr. Speaker. And I think it was important for these young people to see this because it gives them a larger sense, perhaps, of why really we are in politics, why all of us, I suppose, are engaged in public policy, and in the ongoing matters as it relates to public policy on a daily basis.

Well, Mr. Speaker, these young people will be the decision makers of the 21st century. I believe those students left here and went back to Weyburn with a better understanding of this institution and what it stands for. And I say, Mr. Speaker, what an absolute pleasure it was for me to host these bright and energetic and intelligent and enthusiastic and idealistic young people. Let me tell you, they are ready to take on the future.

Now here, Mr. Speaker, are these young people, these youth, ready to take on the future. And what is one of the biggest threats that faces their future this very day, Mr. Speaker? What is one of the biggest threats to the economic and social well-being of these young people as we approach the 21st century? Well I'll tell you what it is: it's the view of the NDP and Liberal Party in Saskatchewan and in Canada, that they want to tear up their future by tearing up the free trade deal, Mr. Speaker, because that's what that deal speaks directly to. It speaks directly to their future prosperity, their future economic security, their future social well-being, and to whether in fact they will have the job opportunities of the future, Mr.

Speaker. Because that's what that free trade agreement is all about. It's about opportunities for our youth, quality jobs for our youth, Mr. Speaker. And we're not talking about having a future for these young people where we'll see them relegated to some mere service sector economy, but we're talking about jobs in the area of biotechnology and hi-o-tech, and processing, and manufacturing, and upgrading, and paper plants, and packing plants, and those kinds of things, as we continue to diversify our economy and trade with not only the United States but all nations of the world, Mr. Speaker.

Well unlike the NDP and the Liberals who say we will tear up the agreement, the PC Party of Saskatchewan and our Premier stand for opportunity for those young people, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — The Liberals and the NDP will tear up the agreement; they will tear up the opportunities for these young people; they will tear up their enthusiasm; they will tear up their idealism; they are ready to go into the 21st century, but it's the doom mongers and the naysayers of the NDP and the Liberals in this province and across this country who would deny them that, Mr. Speaker. And they have the audacity to say they support the young people of this province. They say they support the young people.

Interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the finance critic, in the days before the House opened up and some of the rhetoric of the other opposition members — they said, well going into this legislature, we're going to make sure the people understand what's happened relative to taxes in this province. In fact there was a headline in today's paper: "Koskie calls for tax break."

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order, order. I'd just like to remind the hon. member that it is not permitted to use other member's names in the House.

Order. Order, please. Order.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — You're quite right, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize for that slip.

The point I wanted to make here, Mr. Speaker, is somehow the opposition are concerned about taxes in this province and this country. That's what they say out of one corner of their mouth, Mr. Speaker. On the other hand, they say that they don't want the free trade deal. And what the free trade deal would do, Mr. Speaker, is move those duties and taxes and tariffs off the goods that our people will buy.

Now how do you square that, I ask them, Mr. Speaker? How on the one hand do you say you're in favour of lower taxes but on the other hand you say we want nothing to do with this deal — keep the duty on, keep the tariff on, keep the taxes on that put consumer goods higher and higher and higher, that make shoes more expensive, that make this suit more expensive, that make half-ton trucks more expensive, that make refrigerators more expensive, that make microwaves more expensive. And I'll tell you what, Mr. Speaker, it's those duties and those tariffs and those taxes

that hit the people the hardest because they spend, relatively speaking, a larger percentage of their income on those very items — clothing and shoes for themselves and their family.

So I ask you: when the NDP and the Liberals say they're against the free trade deal, they're against our young people, Mr. Speaker. That's who they're really against. And they're also against the poor because they want the poor to continue to pay those taxes on all the things that they have to buy on a daily basis. And they have the audacity to say that somehow they are the only ones who have an understanding of those sectors in society. I say, Mr. Speaker, they are sadly mistaken and they have a double standard here.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I made mention earlier of these young people that I had as my guests, their first exposure to some demonstrators and some picketers across the street from the banquet at the Ramada Renaissance that night. And, Mr. Speaker, the other thing I've noticed about the NDP, over this last year, it doesn't matter what the issue is there is an NDP-inspired coalition to deal with it. I mean, we have seen so many coalitions spring up over the last year, Mr. Speaker, you almost have to keep track of them by assigning a number to them.

And it was with interest therefore, Mr. Speaker, that I read that the January-February 1988 issue of *Briarpatch*, a well-known magazine across Saskatchewan, the article is entitled: "Saskatchewan Coalition for Social Justice." This just underlined the observation that I, myself, had made, Mr. Speaker. As I go through this article, you have so many . . . It just makes the point about how everything is dealt with today, at least in the NDP's eyes, by coalition. Coalition number one was entitled here, Equal Justice For all, a Saskatoon welfare rights group proposing developing a network in the city to share information and plan action around the cuts.

Number two, the Saskatchewan Social Justice Network. Okay? Now they've got some laudable goals and objectives. They've included a public call for Grant Schmidt's resignation. Now there's a laudable . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Might I once more remind the hon. member that he is not to use another member's name in the House.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Sorry, Mr. Speaker, again. Okay, here's the third one, Mr. Speaker. The Prince Albert Citizens for Tomorrow, or PACT for short. And they're there to oppose the economic and social policies of the government. That's a blank there - I have to put a blank in.

Oh, then there's the fourth one. PACT supported by another coalition, TEARS, which organized to oppose the closure of Prince Albert North Park Centre. Now it doesn't say in here what TEARS stands for. T-E-A-R-S. That was number four coalition, Mr. Speaker.

Then we went over to the fifth one here. Since the summer, PACT has changed its name to the Prince Albert Coalition for Social Justice. Now I hope I haven't confused you or lost you in this, Mr. Speaker. What we

had is we had PACT, which stands for the Prince Albert Citizens for Tomorrow. PACT changes its name to the Prince Albert Coalition for Social Justice. Are you following me here, Mr. Speaker? That's coalition number five. That's the easiest way to keep track, is assign a number. That's coalition number five.

And then here's the good news. A further meeting on May 2, attended by more than 80 people from 50 organizations, established an interim planning group - that's an IPG, Mr. Speaker. That's number six.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Somebody said is that 80 out of a million in the province. Well, anyways, Mr. Speaker, all I'm telling you is that I've lost track of all these NDP-inspired coalitions, but for those of you who are interested, watch for the coalitions people's congress set for April 1 and 2. And at that time, it will all come together. We will have a coalition vision statement, and I'm sure we're all awaiting with baited breath for that day, Mr. Speaker.

The other day as well in the debate here, Mr. Speaker . . . if it isn't coalitions, the favourite subject for the NDP is, you know, those rotten multinationals. And they have sort of rotten multinational speech number A, they have speech B, speech C.

Well you know, it never fails to amaze me how the member from Prince Albert, for example, and he must just cringe when he hears this talk go on, because I've been into his town on several occasions over the last six months, and in fact our caucus and cabinet met there in the last couple of weeks and we had a fine tour of the new paper plant that Weyerhaeuser, this multinational company, Mr. Speaker, is building there. And I'll tell you, before that we went to Hudson Bay and I had a chance to tour the aspenite plant there, learn a lot more about the forest industry — and I thank my colleague, the member from Kelsey-Tisdale for helping arrange that tour. It was just an excellent tour, and in fact this summer I hope to return there and take my children through there so they have a better understanding of the forestry industry.

Buy anyway, back to Weyerhaeuser, Mr. Speaker, they always are picking on these big rotten multinationals. And I had to question that because it was just this past January where I read in the local paper here, the *Star-Phoenix*, the headline went something like this: Weyerhaeuser converts PAPCO into profits. That's a pretty good deal. Not only do they give us a bunch of money to buy it but they turn it into profits, Mr. Speaker.

Then there was another one of these rotten multinationals, Maclean Hunter donated \$3 million to schools, and Weyerhaeuser's helped us with a school that burned down, put some portable Atco trailers there for us, and we thank them for that. You know, I have to ask myself when I see stories like this, does this somehow sound like a rotten multinational, Mr. Speaker? Well I doubt it.

But the story I want to get to is the one that relates specifically to Weyerhaeuser and education and what they're doing there because I want the whole world to know what this multinational is doing in Prince Albert

with this new paper mill. Because when we had this tour, I had a chance to talk to a number of the people there and they explained a number of things to me, Mr. Speaker. But one of the things they explained to us was some of their key beliefs and practices, and in fact their education philosophy that they bring to that city, Mr. Speaker. And their philosophy talks about things like education as an ongoing activity, it's based on assessed need, it's consistent with adult learning objectives.

Or to put this in a much more practical sense, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you what they're doing at that mill as they move into the start-up phase. They run five shifts there, Mr. Speaker, and you know what? Every fifth week, your shift, that shift, when it gets into production, that shift will not go onto the plant floor, Mr. Speaker. All those people, instead of going onto the plant floor to watch and control and manufacture the paper, you know where they'll go, Mr. Speaker? They go into the classroom. every fifth week, they spend an entire week in the classroom, constantly, so in 50 weeks of the year — what is that? — ten weeks spent in the classroom.

(2000)

Now can you imagine that, Mr. Speaker, if before you and I could do our jobs in this legislature, every fifth week when we came here they sent us to school to get it right or to study it or to do it better? Or the nurses in this province — every fifth week when you come to work, you don't go onto the nursing floor, you go into a classroom or an institutional setting to learn more about your profession. Or doctors or veterinarians or teachers — every fifth week is spent on education.

Now I take my hat off to that multinational corporation. What a tremendous investment in their employees. What a tremendous investment, Mr. Speaker. And what do they do in that week? They do education, training and safety, continuous improvement, problem solving, learning about the plant operation from A to Z, and sufficient time during working hours to do the above, and this value-added time will be made available indefinitely, Mr. Speaker. Well I take my hat off to those people, let me tell you, and I say, what a tremendous, tremendous opportunity for people in Prince Albert and area.

Well I want to close with an issue, Mr. Speaker, that . . . I want to close with an issue and spend a few minutes on an issue that surfaced over this last week, and it has to do with the shenanigans, at least as they are reported in the papers, relative to the NDP — the shenanigans leading up to the NDP nominating meeting. The NDP Party president of the constituency . . . and what I'm talking about here, Mr. Speaker, was reported in the newspapers, and these were all Leader-Post, March 23, 24, 25. First headline was: "Membership issue stokes hot NDP nomination race," and the story goes on to read, and I quote:

Only days before the NDP nominates a new candidate in Regina Elphinstone, some party members admit their memberships have been bought from them by those seeking the nomination or by individuals working for the candidates.

Another one talks about emotions flaring: one candidate withdrew; another denied he had paid for party memberships in return for support. And then another — the final headline this past Friday was “Rules Committee clears up NDP membership issue.” The story went on to say, and I quote:

The controversy over membership irregularities erupted this week with reports that some individuals had their \$8 membership fee paid by candidates or individuals working for candidates.

And so I raise that, Mr. Speaker, as one dimension of what I want to talk about.

But I would also refer you to a story in one of the earlier newspapers that talked about an NDP . . . Well here it is. This was in the *Leader-Post* in the last month or so, I don't have the exact date. The headline on this one was, “Romanow . . .” Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order. Order, please. I'm sure the hon. member from Weyburn will not want to keep doing this in the remainder of his speech. That's the third time now and I ask him to try to remember not to break that rule.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I do not want to be disrespectful of your Chair. I get caught up in the enthusiasm of debate, and I apologize again to you and other members of the legislature.

The headline went on... It referred to the hon. member from Riversdale, the Leader of the Opposition, and it went, “(This member) . . . and free food lure few students.”

And it talks about:

An offer of free food and beverages is usually enough to bring budget conscious university students running. but Tuesday a free lunch wasn't enough to lure more than a handful of university students to see the opposition leader, and he was at the university as a guest of the University of Regina Young New Democrats, a group that booked the Education Building auditorium in preparation for a crowd. But the crowd never materialized and by 12:30 p.m., the time he was to speak, only one student was seated in the auditorium.

And that was in spite of the fact that there was free food as a lure, Mr. Speaker. I know we've got free memberships, we've got free food, but then again that story shouldn't have surprised us because when that same member went to the university in Saskatoon last fall, the headline at that time said, the same member faces flak from U of S students. So despite what they like to say about their close connections with the youth and somehow that they relate to the youth and their lure of free food to the youth, Mr. Speaker, they are sadly out of touch with our youth.

And I raise this issue, Mr. Speaker, and this whole question of the shenanigans at Elphinstone last week because the question comes right down to this: what does it really mean to be a member of a political party? What

are the principles and the philosophy behind holding a NDP Party membership or a PC Party membership? Well I don't know what the NDP Party membership says, Mr. Speaker, but on the back of my Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan membership card this is what it says. It says:

A heritage of freedom based on individual initiative, honour, integrity, and individual moral responsibility.

It says, “equal rights under the law without discrimination.” It says, “government as the servant not the master” and, “social progress based on the needs of people, not as a means to power,” Mr. Speaker.

Now I don't know what it says or what it means to be a card-carrying NDP member, Mr. Speaker, but given what has happened over the last few weeks and what I've referred to here earlier tonight, I wonder if it means the party is involved in those kinds of apparent shenanigans. It seems to me the first line strike out . . . a heritage of freedom, Mr. Speaker, based on an individual initiative, honour, integrity, and individual moral responsibility.

Well, Mr. Speaker, through all of this, whether it's the education opportunities we shall provide for our young people and indeed all adults; whether it be the Weyerhaeusers of the world or in our traditional school systems and educational systems; or whether it be the free trade initiative and what it means to our youth; or for that matter, any issue that faces in an economic or social sense, Mr. Speaker, the issue is one of the world is changing and so must we.

And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that we're going to bring the NDP into the 21st century whether they like it or not. They may come dragging and kicking; they may want to go back to the future, Mr. Speaker; but the reality is the world is changing and so must they.

We haven't seen much of it yet. They cling to the old ways. They're change resisters; they don't want anything to do with free trade; they don't want anything to do with opportunities for our young people. They don't want anything to do with diversifying our economy. It might have a multinational in there, whether it's the agriculture economy or any other. But that is what sets them apart from the rest of us, Mr. Speaker, because our youth are ready to take on the future, we're ready to take on the future. Sure, there's uncertainty. Making change is never easy, but if we do not take it on, Mr. Speaker, we do a disservice to our young people.

I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, these young people are so perceptive. I've been into these schools. Like I've said, I've talked to about 10,000 of them and they ask such good questions. And they know, and they know. They know in this free trade agreement, for example, that there are no ironclad guarantees. There is no ironclad guarantee in that free trade agreement that they'll be assured of economic and social well-being. They know that. They don't even expect that because they know there are no free lunches and they know there are no guarantees in

life.

But they say one thing, Mr. Speaker, that agreement represents one tremendous opportunity, and it's an opportunity we are going to make sure that they get, Mr. Speaker. And for that reason I'll be supporting the main motion, Mr. Speaker, and voting against any amendments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to rise in this throne speech debate, particularly after hearing the previous speaker, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education.

I sat here and I listened very . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . and as my colleagues here say, and I listened and I listened and I listened. And there's a few things that I would like to reply to at this particular time, Mr. Speaker — reply directly to the minister on some of the issues that he raised, because I think there are a few issues that he raised that need to be addressed from another point of view, not just the point of view that the minister talked about. And I'm going to be talking about some of the educational issues that he raised, Mr. Speaker; some of the misconceptions that he left about Weyerhaeuser, Mr. Speaker; some of the misconceptions that he's leaving about what free trade does for our youth, Mr. Speaker.

Let me start, first of all, with a couple of comments that the hon. minister made regarding initiatives in education. The minister talked about illiteracy, and of movement towards illiteracy, and his initiative, and his government's initiative towards illiteracy. Every time that he talks about illiteracy he approaches it from the same point of view, Mr. Speaker, and I saw him do it again today. Mr. Speaker, you can approach the point of illiteracy in Saskatchewan by looking at the past record and you can say, we in Saskatchewan have gone from 50 per cent illiteracy to 25 per cent illiteracy in 30 years, so Saskatchewan's school system is doing a good job.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — Is that what we're getting from the minister? Is that what we're getting from the minister? No. He keeps raising the issue from the point of view of: we've got 25 per cent illiteracy. Gee, our people are illiterate. And he raises all these studies, and he quotes from the *Star-Phoenix*, and he quotes from the *Toronto Star*, and always from the same approach, as if to lay the blame, to set the mind-set to lay the blame. Who is to blame, Mr. Speaker? I think it behooves the Minister of Education to promote education not to try to discredit it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — He talks about private schools and the need and the demand — a demand that has increased from three-quarter per cent to 1 and a half per cent, yes. And how does he address that issue? Knowing that in this rural areas that we cannot have our public system. We can't have it vulcanized, we can't afford to have it

vulcanized. There's a school system out north-west of Swift Current, Success and Pennant, that are struggling to keep their little schools. And what is he promoting? He's promoting privatization by putting on a study of privatization; a study commissioned to one of the former defeated ministers, a Mr. Dirks, who works for a private school at this stage, Mr. Speaker. That is not helping the public system. That is not helping the public system deal with the problems that it has come up with.

The minister says, why are we seeing all this? Why are we seeing all of these questions and these articles in the newspaper? If the minister had been around, he would know that this is nothing new. The education system in Canada and the education system in Saskatchewan thrives because it does a critical self-analysis. And this is good; it should continue to do a critical self-analysis. It doesn't mean that things have gone to the dogs as they put down in their throne speech. It's the government that's going to the dogs, not the education . . . (inaudible) . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — We want to talk briefly about the methodology that's coming into place, Mr. Speaker, the methodology that the education system is putting into place; the methodology that deals with integrating what is becoming known as the common essential learnings.

I put it to you, Mr. Speaker, that in five years the idea of common, essential earnings should become just as well known as the idea of social studies and mathematics and sciences to the ordinary person here now. That's what should happen, and that's what will happen if the department doesn't get in the way.

(2015)

I look at this as a breakthrough. It is not something that's happening, that's going between the department and the parents, or between the teachers and the parents — it's a breakthrough, it's a great big breakthrough. And if we really want our children and our future generations here in Saskatchewan to compete in the 21st century as the minister mentions, this breakthrough should be supported so that we can make it. Because if we don't make it in education we're not going to make it anywhere else.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — Now, Mr. Speaker, the minister previous talked briefly about Weyerhaeuser. And he indicated that they have an excellent, excellent education program, and on that I will concur with you, Mr. Minister. I had a visit with the folks at Weyerhaeuser and I will back you up on what you said there — their five-shift system with one-fifth of them always on educational in-services leave is good. I only wish that we were all able to participate in it in our school system and more industries were able to participate in it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — But your alluding that perhaps it was such a good deal, I want to deal with that. Because I want

to set the record straight on that, because there was the member of Shellbrook-Torch River who misled us somewhat the other day as well.

Now let me just go back to that. And when I say these things, I say nothing bad or I do not intend to cast aspersions on Weyerhaeuser or their employees. But I want to set the record straight on what exactly happened in the entire deal. Let's look at the deal. This is the government that decided it had to privatize all of our public assets and it started quite early with the idea of PAPCO. This is a company that has assets of over 300 million — had assets of over 300 million. They made a profit for Karl Landegger, who was the chief executive officer for the company of Parsons & Whittemore. They made a profit in 1980 when PAPCO bought the company — the province bought the company over — made a profit of \$27 million; in 1981 made a profit of \$24 million. And at that stage the government had taken it over because we needed to rationalize the usage of the wood.

Well, Mr. Speaker, then the Tory government got into power. Unfortunately, they lost money three years out of four. But even taking that into account, that they lost money three years out of four, if you average that with the previous years, the average profit of PAPCO would still have been in the vicinity of 20 to \$30 million a year. And that money, a lot of it was used to put in the services like education and health in this province.

But what happened is they made an announcement. This government made an announcement that they sold PAPCO for 248 million. And they added to that. Not only did they sell the PAPCO assets, they also gave them, gave Weyerhaeuser a forest lease management agreement — gave them rights to the complete forest. They spent \$7 million on highways, or they're spending in the vicinity of \$7 million on the highways. And I want to relate this back, Mr. Speaker, to the throne speech. So what has happened is after all of this was brought to the public, Mr. Speaker, that they sold this mill for \$248 million, and it was disputed? They concocted a story that the mill was losing \$91,000 a day.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it looked to me that if the mill was able to make money in the years of the Blakeney government in '80 and '81 and then lost money for three years out of four during the present administration, was that a reason to sell PAPCO, or was that a reason to get rid of this government?

But they made up this story. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's bad enough that the mill was sold for under price. But the thing is, to this day, we have not collected a cent. And that is one of the reasons why our provincial deficit is so great. Not one cent. They sold it to Weyerhaeuser saying that Weyerhaeuser doesn't have to make a darn, a payment at all unless they make 12 per cent profit - not at all, unless they make 12 per cent profit. Now what a deal.

I could sell the minister's land if he would like me to. So I could give it to anybody for no money down and I wouldn't have to make any kind of repayments until they make 12 per cent profit. I could sell your car, Mr. Hon. Member, for the same kind of a deal. I could sell anything

under those conditions. And I would have liked to have been offered the deal to buy PAPCO, I know I could have found people that would have bought it at that kind of a deal. That's the problem with that deal, Mr. Speaker.

Well as a result of the knowledge about the deal, along with the concocted story of \$91,000 cost per day, the people of Prince Albert, in my district . . . the people of Prince Albert and the people of Saskatchewan questioned this and said, hey, this government can't be trusted — they can't be trusted. And as we look at more, at additional things that happened, we can see that the privatization aspect that they are including is becoming more like privatization — as my colleague from Moose Jaw North has indicated over the past few months, that it's privatization — because what happened next? We have privatization, deregulation and harmonization and free trade — all these things fit in the same basket.

What happened next? We had the deregulation of natural gas sales in Saskatchewan. Now by this deregulation, the city of Prince Albert lost \$424,000 from the pulp mill, because Weyerhaeuser no longer bought their gas from Saskatchewan Power. Well the city was somewhat embarrassed by this. They went into negotiations with Weyerhaeuser, and Weyerhaeuser said yes, it may be a little stringent on your budget, we'll come through with a \$250,000 gift. So they came through with their gift for the city of Prince Albert, in lieu of that, in lieu of those taxes which we were not able to collect.

Well that particular act of privatization cost the city a difference between 424,000 and 250,000. The difference is 174,000, Mr. Speaker — that's what it cost the city of Prince Albert. And it did cost the city of Saskatoon an amount as well for Saskatoon Chemicals, because they are, I believe, under the same condition. Well that's two acts of privatization, but that's not where it ends, Mr. Speaker. What about the third act? On November 5, right here in this Chamber, we passed . . . the government introduced and passed Bill 77, and this Bill exempted Weyerhaeuser from a surcharge on power now - an exemption of \$510,000. Now remember, we're talking about this poor company that's only making about \$80 million this year.

Well, Mr. Speaker, do you think they might have consulted the mayor and the city council of Prince Albert? Do you think they might have consulted the MLA from Prince Albert, or my colleague from Prince Albert-Duck Lake? Not a chance. They may have consulted the member from Shellbrook-Torch. Now the mill sits in his riding, but the taxes are paid to my city.

Mr. Speaker, I ask: who needed that relief from taxation at this time? Who needs it? Small business or a giant multi-national like Weyerhaeuser, who as I said, is claiming to be making over 80 million this year. Who's doing it? Well I'm not here to blame Weyerhaeuser. I think that they went into the negotiations like any corporation would. A corporation is there to make profit for shareholders, and they went in there and negotiated and negotiated hard. I only hope that the government and their negotiators, those that are negotiating on behalf of you and me, Mr. Speaker, had half the smarts that

Weyerhaeuser has.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that is what this business of privatization is doing to the taxpayers in Saskatchewan. Let me give you a few more examples. The Saskoil shares that were sold two or three years ago. We remember Saskoil as a company that was doing well, was paying dividends. These dividends were being used, in a small part, to pay for our schools and our roads and our hospitals and more than that, it gave us a window on the world of oil - it gave us a window on the world of oil. Because we know that in order to tax that accurately, to tax justly, we have to know what the oil industry is doing, just like if you're going to deal with PAPCO or with Weyerhaeuser, you have to know what they're doing. Well what happened? Because they sold that, they gave away the evidence. They gave away the evidence which resulted in a loss of \$1.5 billion of oil revenue to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan.

Let me explain that, Mr. Speaker. In 1981, during the time of the Blakeney government, the oil revenues, the taxation revenues to this government was 1.1 billion . . . Pardon me, the oil revenues were 1.1 billion, and then in '82, the oil revenues total to the oil companies went up to 2.2 billion - that nearly doubled. Well what happened to the government revenue in that same period of time?

An Hon. Member: — It must have gone up.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Do you think it went up? Do you think it doubled? It went from 720 million, Mr. Speaker, to 680 million - 680 million. Whoops! Oil revenue going down, but which way are our taxes going? The ordinary taxpayer, which way are they going since '81? Have they gone down?

What about our deficit? What about our provincial deficit? Has it gone down? It's up at \$3.4 billion. But what we have, Mr. Speaker, is a government that's gone to the dogma; gone to the dogmatic dedication to privatization.

Do you think that they're trimming expenses, Mr. Speaker? Do you think they're trimming expenses in office space? So what's the latest news? A 10-year lease for some brand-new office space in a hotel that charges \$100 a night during the week. That's going to cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan \$12 million a year for 60,000 square feet of prime space, luxury space, while other spaces like T.C. Douglas house is becoming empty, buildings that are paid for — T.C. Douglas Building.

What's happening here, Mr. Speaker, is this government is using public money, your and my money, for private profit.

I want to talk a little more about privatization in a different area, Mr. Speaker. I saw, in Prince Albert, 180 aged, mentally retarded citizens moved from their home to a new home . . . to new homes. They were privatized. This place that they lived in was accepted. They loved it. When they were forced to move, the families were somewhat upset because it caused difficulties with families. North Park Centre used to be . . . work as a respite home as well, but the place was privatized or piratized. And what happened, some people ended up

being moved to Valleyview and some to satellite homes. And I hope they'll do as well there. There's no reason they shouldn't, after the displacement. But what we did is, we lost a program. What we did is we lost a program. We lost a program . . .

An Hon. Member: — I'm going to quote you on that one.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Now the minister says here he's going to quote me on it. Please feel free to do so. Please feel free to do that.

(2030)

We now have a piratized building. The pirates came in, moved everybody out. The building is empty, Mr. Speaker, the building is empty. What are you going to do with the building? When are you going to let us know what you're going to do with the building?

In the meantime, we have some people that have been moved to satellite homes. Now the satellite homes, there is a loss of program for the people and there's a decrease in the number of staff. They were used to having staff which would come shift after shift after shift, always being fresh and being cheerful. It's pretty difficult, Mr. Speaker, to work in an intense environment like that for 12-hour shifts, and expect to keep your spirits up year after year after year.

Well why did they do it? Because they were bent on piratizing and because they were bent on union busting. You and I both say, Mr. Speaker, 400 dental nurses sitting here in that gallery - in your gallery. We saw them in tears as the dental plan was piratized. What has the result of this privatization been? We went from a dental plan which had 92 per cent utilization by children in Saskatchewan down to a dental plan which now is recording 60 per cent utilization. And as I travelled through the rural areas in the Shellbrook-Torch River and in the Kinistino area, and over towards the Biggar area, I heard the same thing mentioned over and over again. The farmers, the young farmers with young families keep saying, you know, the other plan was no problem, but what I'm seeing now is an increase in cost to myself. I see that I have to take some time out to travel to take my children to a dentist, and also I have to take them away from school. Now we're waiting, Mr. Speaker. We're waiting for the minister and the Premier to announce how they're going to replace this dental plan.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk briefly about privatization in education, what is happening there. Last year we saw the government remove the control from local areas in the cities — remove control for the community colleges in the cities. What they did is they put the control of the community colleges into SIAST, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, and then together with those they started their act or privatization.

Now what is the first act? You've got to discredit the system. That is the first act of privatization. If things are working good, discredit it so that you can use your dogmatic approach to privatize it. Discredit it. So what did they do? Well first of all they cut 1,100 spaces — cut 1,100 spaces. I visited Wascana Institute today, and they

tell me that the enrolments are down. I asked them why are the enrolments . . . the enrolments, why are they down? The applications for next year are down. I asked them why. They said, well, there is confusion. With 1,100 spaces cut, some people feel that maybe there are going to be more programs cut this year. Some programs have been shifted and moved around from one place to the other. They said, but mostly what's happening, is that there is no proactive campaign to let people know, and let students know, where the programs are. So they're trying to reduce the demand.

Another way of reducing the demand is to put a deterrent fee on for applications. Now we know that there's never been a fee for applying to an institute in Saskatchewan until last year. Now we've got a \$25 fee, which is non-refundable, every time you want to apply to the institute. So a person is going to think twice. If there's a big line-up, as there was for a while right after the cuts, instead of thinking, well, gee, I'd like to go to school, and I'm willing to take two programs — I'll apply for this one and this one, hoping that one will come in, now what happened is we've got this \$25 fee. So now they're thinking twice and sometimes not even applying because they know that there's a waiting list and they can't get their money back if there's a waiting list.

Mr. Speaker, now what's happening is that the people are getting tired of waiting to be able to get into our accredited schools, like SIAST, and more and more are turning to the private schools in Saskatchewan. They're being forced to turn on it. Now what's happening there is, instead of paying in the vicinity of 900 to \$1,400 tuition, they end up paying 3,000 or \$4,000 a year tuition. All right, that's a choice a person can make and that's fine, but if they pay \$3,000 or \$4,000 tuition fee, I would . . . And if my daughter did that, or my neighbour's son, I would expect that they would get a top-notch course every time, guaranteed.

Now the difficulty here is, Mr. Speaker, I've had student after student come to me and tell me, look I took a tourism and travel course at a private vocational school and when I went to look for a job, they laughed at me. They laughed at me. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, there's a group of students in Saskatoon now who are suing one of their private schools because the quality of education offered was below their expectations.

Mr. Speaker, the private school situation in Saskatchewan, the post-secondary, private school situation in Saskatchewan is in a buyer beware situation because the minister has not addressed the problem of regulations.

Now I have written to the minister on behalf of students, and he has replied, yes, that he thinks it should be looked at. Mr. Speaker, I would urge the minister to look at it and look at it quickly. And we need to act on it, Mr. Speaker, because there's no point, there's no reason why the youngsters of Saskatchewan who are looking and trying their damndest these years to get an education and get something that will help them into the job market, there's no reason why they should have to get into a buyer beware situation. That is why we have governments. That is why we have departments of education so that those

things are looked into, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — Before I close, Mr. Speaker, I have one more remark I want to make, and that is relating to the day-care centre that is supposed to be in at Woodland Campus of SIAST. In the fall of '86 and prior to the fall of '86, when the planners were building the school and prior to that when they were planning the school, they decided to put an early childhood development course in there, because we knew that there was a demand and all educators knew and the industry knew that there was a demand for more workers in day-care centres. So in their wisdom, they decided to establish a course at the Woodland Campus. There is already a course also at Kelsey.

The government of the time built the facility, followed up by adding \$41,000 worth of equipment to the facility, followed up by hiring at least three people to run the facility, followed up by spending money, by writing a brand-new program — I would estimate that would have cost them in the vicinity of 40 to \$50,000 — followed up by enrolling students in October of 1986 in that program, 30 students who had been there since this time; followed up by applying for a licence to the day-care centre. And what do you think has happened, Mr. Speaker? Do you think we've got a day-care centre there now?

An Hon. Member: — Must have.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Well you'd think you would. You'd think you would with all of that money put into it. But what's happening, Mr. Speaker? Sadly there is no day-care licence. We've got everything there, all of the components there, except the little children. A specialized facility made for a special program, but no commitment to putting a licence and to getting the children in there, Mr. Speaker. Rather a sad situation.

Now after repeated attempts by the professionals involved, the government continues to refuse. Now what is the reason? Are they putting a quota on day cares, a quota on children? It just doesn't make sense, Mr. Speaker, it does not make sense. I've written three letters to the minister and all I've got is that he's . . . The only reply that I've gotten is to the effect that he has some "concerns about a day-care laboratory". Well, Mr. Speaker, the decision has been made.

And I ask the members of this government to follow up and give Woodland the day-care centre licence that it needs. There are 30 students in that program right now who were told back in October that they would have that licence in December of '86; then they were told they would have it in March in '86; then they were told they would have it in September; then there were told in this legislature that they'd have it by December of '87. And it's still not there. And I ask this government to come clean, give us a day-care licence so we can go ahead with the job.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, it saddens me when I see a

government that is more bent in a dogmatic direction to pirate this province than it is to fulfil the needs of this province. It's too much like a bunch of pirates who have robbed and looted and are out there selling it off. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I will not be voting for the budget, I will be voting for the amendment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to take part in the debate, and I think the hon. member from Saskatoon Nutana for so graciously yielding and allowing me the opportunity to take my place next in the debate.

Mr. Speaker, before getting into any substantive remarks, I should be remiss if I did not congratulate, albeit in absentia — and I hope you forgive me for saying that, Mr. Speaker — the new Leader of the Opposition. We look forward to his participation in the legislature as leader. We look back with fond memories on his past record of service to the people of Saskatchewan and look ahead to working in the rest of the term of this particular Assembly over the next couple of years, working hopefully co-operatively together, looking for solutions to some of the problems that currently beset the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I also extend to you good wishes on being back in the Chair. It is good to see you back, sir. You do bring a degree of impartiality to this House. You are respected, I believe, by all members, and I would like to say, sir, that I really admire your patience and good humour. I honestly don't know how you do it most of the time.

Mr. Speaker, just a word or two about my own constituency. Being a minister I don't often get the opportunity to take part in a lot of the debates that go on in the House — private members' day, some of the other things that happen, so I don't get often the opportunity to mention the constituency of Turtleford which I have the honour to represent here in the Legislative Assembly.

It is a fairly large constituency, Mr. Speaker, it sprawls over some 150 miles wide and 90 miles long. The backbone of that constituency, of course, is our agrarian society supported to some extent by the forest industry — no small extent, one should mention. And I want to comment on that perhaps a little later, too.

But it is a constituency that is in a particularly attractive area of our province. The country is rolling. We have lots of nice little hills, or as the Duke of Edinburgh said when he was here, what hill my friend, because he couldn't see it that way. But to those of us who've lived on the prairies for a number of years — and Lordy knows I haven't lived here all my life; as everybody here knows, I've been here about 22 years; my heart is here, Mr. Speaker — I do see this constituency as being set in one of the prettier areas of Saskatchewan. And I don't think there's too many people who'd dispute that.

But probably more so than the attractiveness, the physical attractiveness of the area with its rolling hills and numerous lakes and rock and bush, probably more

attractive to anybody who visits the area, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that it is populated with some very friendly, amenable, amicable folks in that particular area of the province. They're pioneers by and large, or the sons and daughters and the granddaughters and grandsons of pioneers, Mr. Speaker — people who arrived from other parts of the world, as I indeed did myself, people who chose to settle in that area, to take on the back-breaking job of farming in an area that was covered with rock, that was covered with scrub bush and an area that is, as I said earlier, heavily forested for most of it.

(2045)

I'd like to turn, Mr. Speaker, to a couple of other issues, a couple of things that have tended to distress me in probably the last 12 months since I've been a member here. For the first few years perhaps, Mr. Speaker, you may even recall, sir, that I was quite possibly branded as one of the less disciplined members of the House. Now I don't know if that was a fair assessment of my conduct in the House, sir. I do recall that I did sit over there in the Tory overflow of 1982, and I was never slow to join in debate from my seat. I certainly wasn't slow to get into what I now realize was nothing less than mud slinging on occasion.

But, Mr. Speaker, I came to realize that it doesn't take much intelligence and it doesn't take an awful lot of thought to get into an exchange of insults. It reminds me of people who talk about going camping and say, I'm going to go out there and I'm going to rough it, Mr. Speaker, the skill in going camping is to be comfortable as one can possibly be in the outdoors. Roughing it — any ass can live rough in the wilds; anybody can walk out totally ill prepared.

Now my analogy, Mr. Speaker, is just meant to demonstrate that in our daily exchanges here in the legislature, it really doesn't hurt if we try to treat each other with some dignity and some respect.

And I think that's important, and more importantly, sir, probably when we leave the legislature because we do get into moments of rancour, and a little acrimony comes in, and perhaps a few vituperative comments pass across the floor, and we don't always feel particularly good about it afterwards. At the time there's probably some small gratification and some small satisfaction in saying, I got in a zinger today and I really insulted someone, and perhaps, Mr. Speaker, I really hurt somebody's feelings. And I'm not really sure that we serve our constituents in our own constituencies, or in fact the people of Saskatchewan, when we engage in that type of debate. And very often, sir, it's not debate from our seats. And I'm just not sure that that is the best way to serve the people of the province.

It was pointed out to me by the various school groups in the past who've sat in these galleries, Mr. Speaker, who said that, in conversations afterwards in the members' lounge or in my own office, well, why do you people behave like children?

And at first I used to laugh that off and think, well, we're

not behaving like children, we're just engaging in a little friendly exchange of insults. But, Mr. Speaker, perception becomes reality, and in fact, what happens is so many of these people see the daily conduct her in the Legislative Assembly, they perceive what is going on, and they translate that into being reality, and saying, these people are behaving like children. And when I hear that - on several occasions, more than once, Mr. Speaker — then I become concerned about, what do people think of my role as an elected official? How do they see my conduct in here? Do they see me as being a reasonable, sane individual trying to make rational comments, ignoring comments from people who are still on their seats, Mr. Speaker, and not being drawn down into some kind of gutter debate — get in the gutter, lie down and shoot up? I mean, surely there has to be something more meaningful to being an elected representative, not only in the province of Saskatchewan but in any province in this country or indeed to the national parliament.

I don't believe my job is to come in here and attack the members of the opposition. I don't believe my job is to exchange insults. I do believe that as long as I am in government I have an obligation to listen to the members of the opposition and listen for creative solutions that they may want to bring forward. I believe that is what the people of Saskatchewan are looking for. I think in the last 12 or 15 months, especially since the last election — and I've really had time to reflect on this — that that more accurately reflects that attitude and the aspirations of the public who were gracious enough to elect all of us to the high office, and indeed, sir, it is a high office and an honour to be a member of this Legislative Assembly.

And I had partially this conversation with the member from Saskatoon Nutana at the end of one of the sittings last week, so this comes as no surprise, at least to her. I know it may come as a surprise to some of the other members of the opposition, especially those who were here in 1982 and would remember some of the comments I directed at the former Leader of the Opposition and perhaps some other members of the opposition at that time. But I assure you, sir, that this position which is occupied by all of us is one that is not to be taken lightly. It's not something that should be demeaned by poor behaviour in the Assembly or certainly not by bad manners.

There's an old saying: manners maketh the man — probably maketh the woman too, sir. I think it's very true. And I think we are being judged by the public of Saskatchewan to some large extent on how we conduct ourselves when we are on our feet in the Assembly or even on our bottoms in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, for the people who sit in the galleries during question period and at other times of the day.

Now having said that, sir, I will be taking issue with some comments that have been made by various members of the opposition. That, sir, is the strength of our democratic parliamentary system, and that, Mr. Speaker, is why we are elected. We do have partisan political parties in Canada. That is the strength of the system. The fact that within our democracy we not only tolerate but we encourage diverse opinions, is what makes the system work. This system, sir, cannot work if we do not have

freely elected representatives who will support and advance different viewpoints in this forum, that was set up for just that purpose. So naturally, as a politician, as an elected member for the Progressive Conservative Party, I am partisan, no less or no more partisan than the members of the opposition who have taken their turn in advancing their viewpoints. Naturally, sir, I intend to advance my viewpoints, which, in some cases, are diametrically opposed to opinions that have already been forwarded in the House to our side of the House.

I'd like to begin, Mr. Speaker, by making a comment or two about the situation in Big River which is in my constituency. It's been alluded to in the Assembly earlier today by an old friend of mine, an old sparring partner actually because he's my critic for one of my responsibilities, the hon. member from Athabasca.

Now, Mr. Speaker, yes, yes, there have been some problems in Big River in that some people are going to find themselves out of work — not a lot, but a few will find themselves out of work in a few months, with changes that Weyerhaeuser corporation is making in the way that they do business in that particular community in supplying the needs of the Big River mill. Sir, it gives me no comfort whatsoever to know that there are a handful of families going to be affected in this manner — it gives me no comfort whatsoever.

I do intend to speak, and I have already, with officials from Weyerhaeuser. We have talked about people who are working in the mill and giving them the right of first refusal of jobs in Prince Albert so that they can continue to be employed. And I want to explore with those officials what other possibilities may exist for the families in that area. But having said that, sir — and not trying to defend any company because it's not my role and I feel no compunction nor compulsion to do so . . . However, I have to point out, sir, that when Weyerhaeuser came into this province and Weyerhaeuser wanted to take over the operation of the Big River saw mill, they took over a losing operation. They took over a concern that had lost millions of dollars over the years. This was a sieve, sir, and the money was just freely flowing through it. It could not be allowed to continue for ever. That was the reality of the situation. The people of Big River were aware of that, and they knew that the government couldn't go on for ever pouring taxpayers' dollars — millions of dollars a year — into that operation and a losing concern.

What Weyerhaeuser did, Mr. Speaker, was take the mill, turn it around and turn a half million dollar loss in the first half of the year into a half million dollar or more profit for the rest of the year the first year they were in operation — and they're doing better now. What they have done is ensured that the mill is viable for the future, and for the people who are working there. They didn't say at any time they could continue with exactly the same numbers they inherited in the mill, or they could use the same number of contractors or the same number of truckers. They're changing the trucking system to become more efficient. In fact the discussions are still going on about using the triple-axle system and the heavier weights. I don't believe that that is a viable alternative to the current trucking situation there. Our resource caucus is still discussing this, and we want to have further discussions before any

final decision is made in that regard.

But sir, I do appreciate the problems that are being sustained currently by a few families in Big River who are looking at six and eight months from now of potential unemployment. And everything will be done, everything will be done to mitigate that situation as far as possible.

M. le président, je n'ai pas parlé français il y a vingt-cinq ans. Ainsi, j'ai oublié pas que beaucoup de vocabulaire et beaucoup de grammaire. Mais, je crois c'est très important pour moi à essayer à parler en français, à parler au communauté francophone. En effet, c'est très important pour tous les membres de la législature à essayer à communiquer avec le communauté francophone. J'ai l'intention cet été, peut-être à Jonquière. Ed Broadbent, chef de NPD, NPD en français, a étudié à Jonquière cet hiver. J'ai l'intention d'essayer à parler meilleur que maintenant. Je ne parle pas bien, mais si on parle lentement, je comprends. Mais tous les gens - non, pas tous les gens; beaucoup de gens de langue français parlent trop vite pour moi. Mais si on parle lentement, je comprends.

J'ai un ami qui est francophone. Il dit même chose. Anglais, il dit les anglais parlent trop vite pour lui. Ainsi, même chose, tous les deux. Peut-être nous avons peur de parler en français parce que nous avons peur de faire erreur. quel dommage, M. le président. Il n'y a pas de quoi. Mais, c'est important pour nous à essayer à parler en français.

Mr. Speaker, I feel strongly that we have to make some movement, given the recent court decision towards a recognition of French language rights in Saskatchewan. And saying this, sir, and standing here tonight and baring my should, I know that this is not without some degree of controversy. But, sir, I would also remind the members of the Assembly that Saskatchewan under the leadership of our Premier, and supported by almost all of the other members in this House, did in fact ratify the Meech Lake accord, and we were the first province outside of Quebec to do so. And, sir, that's very significant and that indeed is very important. And we should not lose sight of that, because right in the Meech Lake accord it says Canada's a bilingual country. And, sir, that includes us.

Now that doesn't mean, in my view, that we are saying to all of the people of Saskatchewan, it has become necessary for everybody to become immediately bilingual. That is not the intent, Mr. Speaker. I believe the intent is to say we recognize that we do have a francophone minority who are part of an official language policy of Canada that has been instituted in years gone by, the Official Languages Act came in in 1969. It's been here for a long time; that's almost 20 years. We had a constitution passed in very recent history that, in fact, excluded the province of Quebec. We now have an opportunity to include the province of Quebec within one country of Canada and within our constitution. I think, sir, it would be a terrible pity if we did not pursue this and bring about a successful and mutually advantageous conclusion to the types of discussions that are going on now.

(2100)

In my area of responsibility within my portfolio, I have some responsibility for multi-culturalism, which is one of the areas I enjoy the most. In that regard, sir, I have contact with various members of the francophone community representing, perhaps, different viewpoints. Sir, they are not strident, for the most part, the people I deal with. They are not bigots, and they are not zealous. They are asking us to live up to the Meech Lake accord which was duly ratified within this Assembly.

I, for one, like the terms of the Meech Lake accord. I like what it tries to do, and I would like to bring about, in some form, an agreement with which we can all live, as I said, a mutually advantageous agreement for both the anglophone and the francophone community in Saskatchewan.

We're not being asked to go overboard. The issue is not French immersion. The issue is the laws of Saskatchewan and their translation into French. And I believe that our laws that can be translated into French and perhaps ought to be translated into French, at little pain, at little cost to the government or the rest of the people of Saskatchewan. And I think, sir, that we are going to have to move some degree in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, I turn now to some comments that have been brought up in the Assembly in the course of debate. And I realize tonight I'm following some fairly emotional speeches and some spirited speeches. Certainly one of the advantages of getting into the debate some days along, is that one does have the advantage to peruse speeches, particularly of members of the opposition, because you know we don't always agree and we have ways of expressing to each other, perhaps not always in the most polite terms, our disagreements. So I'd like to just explore this a little further.

One thing I'd like to take a look at is some of the things the Leader of the Opposition had said. Well he admitted in his opening debate, Mr. Speaker, that he had some big shoes to fill. He's absolutely right, he does have big shoes to fill — the former leader, a distinguished parliamentarian, a distinguished leader of his party, and certainly a distinguished former premier of this province. What did worry me though, was when the Leader of the Opposition indicated he wouldn't be trying to fill those shoes. I began to get a wee bit nervous as to exactly what he meant by that. I thought he would have come up with some fresh and meaningful ideas, as I said earlier, perhaps some creative solutions. I for one, I believe I'm an open-minded individual, and I'm open to listening to constructive criticism and to ideas no matter what the source. And if the Leader of the Opposition has some of those ideas I'd be pleased to hear them and consider them.

But, Mr. Speaker, what did we hear? We heard the same old socialist litany — encouraging private enterprise and individual initiative and truly supporting freedom of individual citizens is somehow suspect and somehow evil. That concerns me, Mr. Speaker. That makes me very worried.

Acknowledging the influence and the importance of the market-place in the provincial, national, and the international economies is wrong, was what I heard from the Leader of the Opposition. And the problem with members opposite is that when they governed they ignored some basic tenets of effective administration and economic theory.

An Hon. Member: — Oh, oh, oh, you just talk about administration.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Speaker, please don't call the hon. member from Quill Lakes to order; I excuse his bad manners all by myself. He should save his bad manners, his rudeness, his ignorance for someone who may be impressed by it. I certainly am impressed by none of those failing attributes which he so aptly displays day after day here in the legislature. Actually, Mr. Speaker, I find him a constant source of embarrassment, as not only do most members here but anybody who happens to sit in the gallery. And I invite him to continue to make a fool of himself so he continues to make those of us on this side of the House look good. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Speaker, effective administration isn't handling every detail yourself, running every facet of a huge and varied enterprise as though you, as the administrator, were an expert in every area. Mr. Speaker, that's just not possible. Yet that is what the opposition tried to do. That's what they wanted to do when they were in government. They said government should be in the business of farming; government should own all the land and just let the individual farmers rent it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, last week I listened, as did most of the members in here, to the Leader of the Opposition when he delivered a lecture to us on morality. That's right, Mr. Speaker, a lecture on morality. But, Mr. Speaker, I ask you, in 1980 and 1981 when the people over there were in opposition, and the now Leader of the Opposition was in fact the Deputy Premier at that time, where was the morality in allowing 22 per cent interest rates to drive people off the land and drive people out of their homes? I ask you, Mr. Speaker, was that moral?

Mr. Speaker, when the opposition decided that they would buy land from farmers and then rent it back to them — take the land away and rent it back to them — was that a moral decision? And, Mr. Speaker, where is the morality in a leader of the opposition who ignored 22 per cent interest rates, who bought the land from farmers and said you can rent it back? Where is the morality in that gentleman who lectured us? Where is the morality in that gentleman being involved in a law firm, working on behalf of a bank who is now foreclosing on those very same farmers and saying, you are now driven off your own land?

Mr. Speaker, the opposition, when they were government, also said, government should be in the business of owning and operating potash mines, uranium mines, and the oil industry. They said, government should be in business, and they proceeded to use revenue and future revenue, by borrowing, to get their government into the business of farming, potash business, uranium business. And they fixed it so that they would

basically be telling private oil companies how to do business in the oil patch. As a result, there was very little activity in Saskatchewan's oil patch under their administration.

Mr. Speaker, in effect what we had were socialists in capitalist's clothing. They had a chairman of the board mentality; create Crown corporations, appoint their ministers to be chairmen of the boards — socialists in capitalist's clothing.

Instead of sticking with encouraging the development and the diversification of our industrial and business sector, regulating it, Mr. Speaker, and then sitting back to collect the tax revenue and take pride in the creation of jobs and related economic activity, the opposition felt that because government already had its hands in so many different pies it just needed a few more responsibilities. So instead of concentrating on the areas of health care and education and justice and the protection of our citizens, where government truly ought to be involved, Mr. Speaker, the opposition wasted energy and financial resources on getting government into business — getting government into business, Mr. Speaker, even though the track record of government in business is something less than impressive; even though governments the world over have a record of taking even profitable enterprises and making poor business decisions and losing the taxpayers' money, all in the name of business.

Mr. Speaker, this government has chosen a different path. We don't believe that this government, or any government, should waste the time, energy, and money of the people of Saskatchewan by being involved in areas where private enterprise is perfectly willing to put up capital and take the risks. We're concentrating on what we believe should be the involvement of government — protection of our citizens, protection in the areas of health care and education, to give them the best chance in life possible, and, Mr. Speaker, doing this in the most efficient and responsible manner which we can muster, keeping in mind all of the time it is the taxpayer who is footing the bill.

The Leader of the Opposition said, there's only freedom and private initiative if you have money. Mr. Speaker, I have difficulty in believing he said that. I would hope that when he said that there was some other meaning than the one I'm taking from this. But the bare words were — and again we go back probably to perception becomes reality — and the perception of what he said that day was: if you have money, then you have freedom, and you can afford private initiative.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there are hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands of people, immigrants, who came to this province, grandparents and great grandparents who came here without money. They came here to Saskatchewan and they chose Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, because they were choosing freedom over some other life-style which they could no longer support; over a life-style which was struggling them and they have to get out and they wanted to get away and, Mr. Speaker, they chose Saskatchewan.

And what did they ask for? Freedom. That's all they asked for. They came with no money, seeking freedom, and they found that freedom in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Immigrants are still coming into this province today, men and women who do, in a very real way, contribute to our cultural mosaic and our economy and, Mr. Speaker, they do it with very little more than their own individual initiative.

The first responsibility of government is to regulate, to ensure that those with power do not abuse it — that our laws are obeyed for the safety of all of us. Equally as vital, I feel we must provide our citizens with health care and with education, the necessities that will give each of them the ability to use their individual initiative to find a meaningful and a productive place in society. And thirdly, I believe — and this government, I am sure, believes — we must foster an environment where individual initiative can flourish and can be rewarded.

We also have a responsibility, Mr. Speaker, to those in our society who, through no fault of their own, through sickness or perhaps other circumstances, find themselves in the most unfortunate position of where they cannot look after themselves. Mr. Speaker, we have a moral obligation to those people to look out for their welfare, to look out for their health, to look out for their well-being. Mr. Speaker, unless we have fostered, created, and nurtured a prosperous society, we will find ourselves unable to fulfil our moral obligations and duties to our fellow human beings.

Yes, certainly there is an ideological difference between this government and the members opposite. We both recognize that and we both freely admit it. We believe in individual initiative and of course we believe in freedom. I know the members opposite would probably reiterate those sentiments. Perhaps the difference lies in how each of us want to go about achieving individual initiative and freedom.

We believe in private enterprise and recognizing the folly of unnecessary government interference in business. We believe in providing our citizens with opportunity, Mr. Speaker, but I believe that the members opposite think that government, somehow omnipotent, must take control of every aspect of life in our society, whether or not the government really knows what it is doing. And as the Leader of the Opposition did, they call into question the qualities of individual initiative, of private enterprise, and most surprisingly, Mr. Speaker, of freedom. These are qualities of our society that this government respects, and we will fight to preserve on behalf of the people we serve.

(2115)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Speaker, I shall be supporting the motion and voting against any amendments which are offered. Thank you for your patience.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I would first of all, like many of the other speakers before me, want to

congratulate the mover and seconder of the throne speech, the member from Rosthern and the member from Moosomin. I think that it is generally conceded, at least on our side of the House, and I think generally conceded by the public, too, that their job is a difficult one, even as our job is a difficult one trying to speak with the Minister of Education again hyping away from his seat.

But their job is a difficult one, for their job is to sound optimistic, to sound positive, to sound upbeat about a throne speech that really wasn't. Their job is one of sounding that they're overwhelmed about a throne speech that's generally conceded to be one of the more underwhelming ever. So theirs is a difficult job, and they deserve our congratulations for doing the best under trying circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, if the throne speech reflects the government's vision of the future, then it might be said — looking at that throne speech — that the government is myopic indeed, that they do not see things clearly, that they only see the future very vaguely. And this comes as no surprise. This comes as no surprise to the people of Saskatchewan, not any more. They know that the government is listless. They know that this government and the PC Party has lost its spirit, has lost its drive, has lost its innocence.

Let me put this in some perspective, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This was a government that was first elected in 1982 on a tide of optimism, on a tide of great expectations for the future.

I think all of us can remember their slogan, there's so much more that we can be. The people of Saskatchewan remember that slogan, and the people of Saskatchewan believed the PC Party that there is so much more that we can be. They believed that as the PCs did, that whatever problems face Saskatchewan, whatever problems there might be, the PCs would solve these problems and move Saskatchewan forward to new heights. They all believed that there was so much more that we could be, and that's what the majority of people believed.

And that's why they elected in 1982 a PC government with the largest mandate that's ever been enjoyed, I think, by any government in this province. It was simply overwhelming. There was never more a case of where a party running for office and trying to form the government that was more in sync with what the people were believing and thinking — never more.

But I think that faith and that confidence, that confidence was shaken badly during the first term, shaken very badly — and I'll get to that — but obviously not shaken enough because the PC government was re-elected. They were re-elected with a majority of the people of Saskatchewan supporting them. But given our system of constituencies, we understand that. That's the type of democratic system we have, even if the Minister of Urban Affairs has some ideas about that type of system not now being good for urban governments, whereas it might be good for rural governments. But that's the system we have.

Today is an altogether different matter. Today, a year and a half after the last election, the great majority of people in

Saskatchewan are disillusioned, if not fundamentally opposed to the present government.

And I guess we need to ask ourselves, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what accounts for this. What accounts for this massive reversal of public opinion from 1982 when the people truly believed that this government represented all of their best interests, to the situation we have today where so many, where the great majority of people in Saskatchewan stand fundamentally opposed to the PC government? What accounts for this massive turnaround in a space of less than six years, where it has taken many previous governments many more years to get to that point? What accounts for a party and a government reversing from one of hope and optimism to one of hopelessness and despair? What accounts for government reverting from one of ideas and creativity such as they were in 1982, to one of mental stagnation? What accounts from turning from energy and enthusiasm in 1982 to one of tiredness and listlessness today? What accounts for a government turning from compassion, such as it was in 1982, to a fundamental lack of caring in 1988? And what accounts for a government that was generally conceded to be a populace government, turning from populism to one that is increasingly perceived to be serving narrow, narrow interests.

I might say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that not only the general public but I think that also many members of the Progressive Conservative Party are disillusioned and are beginning to turn their backs on the PC party. And I think we have to recognize that most PC party members are, or perhaps I should be speaking in the past tense now, were honest and decent people. And I certainly, and I think others, would disagree with their perception of how society should be run, of how government should work, about how various sectors of the economy might come into force in running this province; we might have those disagreements. I recognize, and I think many others recognize, that in the main the PC party members are, or I should say were, honest, decent, and, I think, compassionate people, and after all this is a party that has a strong, strong strain of civil libertarianism. This is the party that was the home of John Diefenbaker, a man known throughout Saskatchewan and through this country for his compassion, a man known for his strong stands on fundamental human rights. And so when I think of the members of the PC party, at least in the past, I think of honest, decent, caring people.

And I wonder, too, what accounts for their lack of passion now, and what accounts for their lack of support for their government.

Why is it that the throne speech is lost on them as it is lost on the public? Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to do a brief comparative analysis of events in 1982 — to look at the type of government in 1982 and then to look at what we have today. I think that it would be illustrative. It's important for the people of Saskatchewan to focus back and then to look at the present to really begin to understand why it is we have such a throne speech; why it is we have the government we have today.

And first I'd to look at the question of consultation. If any words describe the PC Party in 1982 they were the words

of listening and consultation. This was a party, in 1982, and a government that believed strongly, very strongly, that listening to the people, consulting the people, was fundamental to running good, sound, solid government. That's what they believed, and they set out to practise that. They made it clear that they did not, could not, relate to the NDP. They said the NDP in 1982 had not been listening, and that's why there was such a great turnover in public support, and that they were not going to go in that direction, that they were going to listen, that they were going to consult, and that they were fundamentally different.

Well what about today? I think that it's increasingly clear that this government no longer listens, that this government no longer consults. There is an increasing perception that this is a government that is more inclined to want to push its own views of what they think should happen in Saskatchewan. Not for them to listen to the public, but to go to the public and to stage manage public hearings to push their own points of view.

I have a sense, and members on this side have a sense, that the government is now afraid of the public. If we look at the hearings on the trade deal, the Mulroney-Reagan trade deal, if we look at the hearings, first by a government task force taking care to meet with selected people, and then the so-called free trade town hall meetings stacked with Tory supporters trying to make sure that only the right questions would get asked — and I say that that's illustrative not of a government that wants to listen, not of a government that wants to consult, but of a government that is afraid of the people's opinions; afraid of the people's points of view; has its own very clear ideas about what it wants to do, and will manipulate things in a way to push those views down the throats of people.

If we look at privatization, we look at the recent article by Bruce Johnstone in the *Leader-Post* where he quotes the member from Indian Head-Wolseley, the minister for privatization, who says:

My role will be to talk to Saskatchewan people and I don't want any secrets. It's all going to be laid out . . . (the member for Indian Head-Wolseley) said.

And Mr. Johnstone goes on to describe how the minister travelled to Chaplin to talk to the Sask Minerals employees about the sodium sulphate plant. And Mr. Johnstone says he, the member from Indian Head-Wolseley, the minister responsible for privatization — they call it public participation, or participation — that:

He wouldn't tell the employees who the buyer is. He wouldn't say . . . there will be any lay-offs. He wouldn't say anything about the deal . . .

And Mr. Johnstone goes on and said that if the minister

. . . was serious about getting the public involved in the privatization process, he would have met with Sask Minerals employees weeks, if not months, ago to discuss the government's

privatization plans. He might have asked . . . (them a number of questions).

But in any event, Mr. Johnstone concludes that privatization, as such

. . . won't succeed if it's done in a hasty, half-baked manner, with little or no consultation with the employees or the public. (And) despite their assurances to the contrary, the Tories are continuing to do the latter.

Mr. Johnstone has an interesting perspective that what the government seems to be more interested in doing is not consulting, not listening to the people, but seems to be more interested in doing something that's called damage control. But damage control is not necessarily listening or consulting the people.

One only has to look at another recent example, the question of farm equity financing, to know that this is a government that's afraid of the points of views that farmers might express, and has articulated its own ideas about what needs to be done, and has sent out a road show of MLAs to go around the province and say, well this is what we want to do, pushing their own views on the farmers of Saskatchewan, but not really opening up and not really listening to the people of Saskatchewan. They've been going through the motion, they've been orchestrating consultation. They really do not believe that the people have anything valuable to say to them any more.

If they are listening, or if they are consulting, Mr. Speaker, it's sure not with the people of this province. When you consider the fact that last year 90,000 names were tabled in petition form in this Legislative Assembly; when you consider the fact that 11,000 people, in the largest demonstration in Saskatchewan history, would go to the steps of the legislature, and the Premier and the government refuses to treat their concerns in any real, substantial fashion, but simply sides it off by saying, well those are just NDP supporters — you know, I'm glad that he said that because I had no end of calls from people that signed the petitions, to say, well I'm no NDP member, but I'd like to be one now since they called me one.

(2130)

But is that listening to the people of this province when one-tenth of the population expresses concerns about health care and the government can do no more than say, well those are simply NDP supporters? Now is that listening to the people? Is that saying the people have real substantial concerns, concerns that need to be acted upon? That's not what the government did.

Mr. Speaker, they do seem to be listening to some people however, at least that's my perception. I have a perception that they are listening to Brian Mulroney, and the minute Mr. Mulroney, the Prime Minister, says something, they listen. How else are we to interpret, for example, the issue of de-indexation of pensions? How are we to interpret senior citizens in this province, as in many others, being outraged by the federal government's plans of that day to de-index pensions.

How are we to interpret a Premier who would not, not on their behalf, express his concerns to Mr. Mulroney about the federal government's plans. Luckily enough, Mr. Mulroney, in that instance, did listen, and his Minister of Finance did back down. But I tell you, it was no thanks to the Premier of this province; it was no thanks to the government of this province. They didn't listen to the people of Saskatchewan, or if they did listen, they simply ignored them. They chose to listen to Mr. Mulroney instead.

And I might add that another good example of that is the question of the CF-18 contract, a contract that notwithstanding the opinions of experts and government civil servants in Ottawa, that should have been awarded to Winnipeg and to Manitoba, was awarded to Montreal instead. And people in western Canada were outraged, with the exception of the Tories opposite, because they listen to Mr. Mulroney, they do not listen to the people of Saskatchewan.

Another group that they seem to be listening to, Mr. Speaker, are the bankers who handle our debt, the bond dealers, the credit rating agencies. A quiet word over the phone lines from New York, Toronto, from the bankers there seems to count for far more than the voice of the people. How else does one explain the very drastic action that the government has taken with respect to the farm production loan program? How does one explain a situation where farmers were in crisis some two years ago, and on that basis the government gave them a farm production loan to help them in their time of need, and now that times are even worse, and it's generally conceded that farmers are even in a tougher crisis than they were two years ago, in far worse shape than they were two years ago, this government is now setting out with extremely tough security provisions, extremely tough security provisions, to get the money back. Now's the time they could use the money, but now's the time the government is saying, we're calling in the chips. We want our money back.

There's no such thing as being able to carry the debt forward. There's no understanding that perhaps we might tie a repayment to an improvement in the farm economy. No, this government wants the money back. And this is a government, if the government members are to be believed, this is a government that prides itself in the close support that it has of the farmers. This is a government that states almost daily that we have a close relationship with the farmers. The farmers trust them, and we're the farmers' friends. That's what they say.

Well how does one account then for this get tough attitude, these drastic measures with the farmers, other than the Minister of Finance gets his calls from the bankers in New York and in Toronto and they say, we have some concerns about the size of your debt; we have concerns about the interest rates that might be charged in the future unless you begin to do certain specific things; that money that you've loaned out to farmers has got to start to be repaid, because if you don't do that, the interest rates will reflect our opinion.

So very clearly, Mr. Speaker, we have a sense that if this

government is listening to anyone, they're listening to the federal government, to Brian Mulroney; they're listening to the bankers in New York and Toronto, but they're certainly not listening any more to the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — You know, the very, very thing that they accused the NDP of in 1981 and '82 has now beset them, and then some. And the people know this; and is it any wonder that the people of Saskatchewan are now tuning them out.

In 1982 the government made it clear that it represented all of the people. That all were to be included in the government's planning for our future — that none were to be excluded. There is a sense that this is a populace government, that it represented all. It represented farmers and workers, employers, and employees, big business, small business, the rich, the poor, the middle class, rural, urban, young, old, native, non-native, men and women. And there is a sense there, a strong belief that this government represented all the aspirations of the people in Saskatchewan.

And what do we have today? Do we have a populace government today? No, we do not, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have a government that has introduced deep divisions in our society, a government that seems to believe that you can win if you divide and conquer, if you play that game; that if you divide the population enough, that you just might be able to conquer the population.

This is no longer the government of all of the people, but only of enough people to hopefully get re-elected next time. And I say that there is a major difference. This is a government that has alienated urban areas with extreme ignorance and, I might say, incompetence on the part of the minister. It alienated the poor with savage attacks. It alienated the sick with attacks on health care. It alienated working people through pandering to the interests of big business. It alienated the elderly. It alienated the middle class with attacks on their pocket-books. It alienated small business because of the incompetent handling of our economy, and it alienated the youth because of the attacks on the education system and the lack of any real action on youth unemployment. And they have alienated women through their insensitivity. And now the government also is alienating the farmers and those in the rural areas.

At one time most people believed that the PC government represented their points of view and their dreams and their aspirations — no longer. They see the member from Melville, the Minister for Social Services, picking on those who cannot defend themselves, and they ask themselves, well, who's next? They see him at meetings in the countryside, wearing his commie-busters' military cap and say that this is not representative of the problems facing Saskatchewan. They see a minister with a vicious sense of morality and with little compassion. They see a Premier who seems increasingly receptive to the views of U.S.-based religious leaders who espouse extreme narrow points of view, and they are concerned. And is it any wonder the general public feels alienated? And is it

any wonder that many members of the PC government are disturbed? And remember again, that this is a PC Party of John Diefenbaker, a man who believed passionately in the rights of people, and one who cared for the downtrodden.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan know that this PC government, which once believed in the politics of inclusion, now practises the politics of exclusion, and they cannot support this. And I would suggest to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that if there is no other reason — if there is not other reason for the defeat of the PC candidates in the upcoming by-elections, if there is no other reasons than for a PC defeat in the next general election, it will be because the PC Party has turned from a party of practising the politics of inclusion, or believed in the politics of inclusion, but has gone from that to a party which practises the politics of exclusion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — One of the hopes of many in Saskatchewan was that when the PC government was elected in 1982, that they would at least maintain the standard of ethics and morality in government, if not supersede the standards of ethics and morality in government.

Many hoped that when it came to the question of patronage, that the PC government would decline to participate. That's what people believed. If for no other reason then, the PC's in opposition had raised this to be a significant problem. They said, this is something that must be cleared up. And how quickly and how devastatingly those hopes were dashed.

Have we ever before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the history of Saskatchewan, seen such avid practitioners of the art of patronage as this government? Have we ever seen such avid practitioners? Whether it's George Hill, Louis Domotor, Pal Rousseau, Paul Schoenhals, Ralph Katzman, Gordon Dirks, Tim Embury, Paul Schoenhals we've mentioned. Gordon Currie was mentioned by a member opposite. Jack Sandberg was mentioned. The government House Leader says there is a couple more. Keith Parker, the former member for Moose Jaw.

You know, when you look at the list of former PC cabinet ministers and former MLAs, when you look at that list, you would say that the government is practising the politics of inclusion, that they want to include that old group when it comes to handing out work and rewards, because certainly there are very few excluded. I think the former member for Regina Victoria, Metro Rybchuk, might have been excluded, but we're not entirely sure about that. And we asked a question last year, what was wrong with Metro, and why wouldn't you give him a job as well? because you gave everyone else a job.

I think the point of the message is, Mr. Speaker, that when it comes to patronage, their government's purse knows no draw-strings.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(2145)

Mr. Van Mulligen: — And when it comes to selling assets, when it comes to buying supplies, when it comes to renting services, or what you have, this government does not display any sense of fair play.

You know, the public tender call is like the whooping crane, like the call of the whooping crane; it's rare indeed; it's like an endangered species in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — This government has a new creature, or listens to a new call. It's called the proposal call, you know, where the lowest price for the best produce need not stand in the way of other political patronage considerations — and this wallowing in the trough disgusts the public. It has especially disgusted those who have traditionally done business with the government and are used to fair play.

You know, and in defence of this new record of patronage, this patronage of immense proportions, the government offers a timid defence. They say, well everybody does it. They're saying in effect that two wrongs make a right, and this is supposed to placate the public.

But you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, even if the public subscribe to the notion that everybody does it, they also know that nobody does it quite like the PC government has done it in this province, and if the general public, or more of the general public had been at the opening dinner for the Legislative Assembly this session, they would have been treated to the spectacle of the president of the property management corporation — dare we call it the patronage management corporation — the person who's in charge of the day-to-day patronage for the government, standing arm in arm, arms around the shoulders of all the big Tory fund raisers also present at the dinner — and the public of Saskatchewan, they would not approve.

You know, government advertising provides another interesting example of a government saying one thing but doing another. I think we can all remember the attacks on the NDP government prior to 1982 about, oh, you shouldn't use taxpayers' money for advertising. And I happen to agree basically with that point of view; I agree with that. The PCs said, no more, no more of that if we form a government. Yet we see a government now that's spending record sums on advertising, and all their friends in those agencies making sure that the Phil Kershaws and the Spence Bozaks and the like are all amply rewarded for past service to the Conservative Party.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, notwithstanding a booming economy in the years preceding 1982, the PCs made it clear that they would do better, and this is their strongest belief of all. They said, look at the support we have from big business, look at all the people in our caucus with business experience. They said the defeat of the NDP would signal that Saskatchewan was indeed open for business. They even had a conference called, open for business, the open for business conference, chaired by that former close friend of the Premier, and I might say a

former financial wizard, Will Klein.

And people now ask: what has happened? Well the record hasn't changed, but the reality has. Virtually very little major economic development takes place in Saskatchewan without the government paying heavily to see that it takes place or stays afloat. Whether we look at the oil patch, which members opposite are fond of boasting about, but we have to remember that we paid a price of one point some billion dollars to ensure that kind of activity would take place; whether we look at the upgrader that they're very fond of talking about, but if one examines the financing of the upgrader it's clear that governments are virtually paying all of the bill for the upgrader; when one looks at the bacon plant in North Battleford, one recognizes that that would not have happened if it hadn't been for massive give-aways and grants to Peter Pocklington; when one looks to Canapharm which couldn't stay afloat without heavy government intervention; when one looks at the high-tech companies that seem to be going under in this province, that are not doing well, and the government having to support them; when one looks at a major hotel and convention centre development in Regina and begins to understand that if it were not for the government's involvement, it wouldn't take place.

You know, the Premier is fond of saying that the NDP buys, but I ask, pray tell, just what the PC government is doing, if not buying economic development. And I say to the government, you can fool the people, or you can try to fool the people, but they know that you have let them down. You have let them down because they expected a great deal more from you than you have delivered. They believed the rhetoric of 1982; they believed you when you said there was so much more that we could be.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the PC government's economic development strategy is a joke. They have no clear idea of what they are doing, other than buying economic development activity. The people laugh. The people laugh because they hear the rhetoric, but they see the reality.

There was a very strong expectation, Mr. Speaker, in 1982 that the PC government would be as competent, if not more competent than the preceding NDP administration when it came to managing the affairs of the government. There was a sense that, given the business expertise that the government had — and they had it — there was a sense that, given that business expertise, the affairs of the government and of the province would be well-managed.

Of course we know the reality is much different, and I need not go much further than the government's record of yearly deficits to illustrate my point that this government is truly incompetent. There is hardly any other word to describe them in that sense. They are incompetent. The PC government spent money like drunken sailors, and I would say that I would apologize to any drunken sailors that I might have offended — spent money like there is no end, and, surprise! — the incurred deficits.

After 11 years of surpluses, the PC government has rung up deficits every year. Now most people that administer a

budget — whether it's the household budget, whether it's a business budget, any kind of budget — know a simple truth, and that is that if you spend more than you take in, if your expenses exceed your income, you're going to incur a deficit. Most people know that. But it seems that successive PC finance ministers have become immersed or so engrossed in the exoteric of financial management that they've forgotten a simple truth, that if you spend more than you take in, you'll end up with a deficit.

And not only had they sight of that basic action, but when it comes to forecasting deficits, they've really taken incompetence to new heights. How can a Minister of Finance project a deficit of \$400 million one day and end up with an actual deficit of \$1.2 billion. And how is that possible? No, either the minister prevaricated, or he's grossly incompetent. And I'll be kind on this occasion, Mr. Speaker, to say and to suggest, that he's grossly incompetent.

And the people of Saskatchewan recognize that. They recognize this government is incompetent. And there is other reasons that they believe that. They remember a sell-off of Highways equipment on 10 cents on the dollar. They remember the Pioneer Trust fiasco. They see the government paying handsome rents for empty office space throughout the province. And they see a cabinet that has over time been filled with more than its fair share of people who — well, for want of a better term — seem to be rowing with one oar in the water.

You know, when it comes to health care the people really know that they've been led down the garden path. You remember that this is a government that promised in 1982 that the NDP was not doing enough when it came to health care and that they would do far more, and that whatever problems there were in health care would be resolved, and that we were moving forward with a PC administration to bigger and better health care.

Well what do we have? The people of Saskatchewan know the reality. They know the reality of a gouge prescription drug plan. they know the reality of a dental program for children which has been decimated. They know the reality, even if they're personally not on it, but certainly from friends and family, of long, long waiting lists in Saskatchewan as never before.

And now the government says we cannot afford health care. We should go study it and come up with some creative solutions. But you know, no matter what the government says about spending more on health care, the people of Saskatchewan, when it comes to health care, will simply not believe them any more because the divergence, the gap between what they said, and the actuality, the reality, is just so, so far apart.

One aspect of this government that has been much debated in this House is the matter of taxes. And I guess one really needs not go beyond the question of taxation to know why so many people in Saskatchewan are disillusioned and turned off with this government. People still remember the promises — we're going to lower your income tax; we're going to do away with the sales tax — but again they know the reality. And no matter what you say, they know the reality of increases in tax, of new taxes,

of flat taxes, and they know, too, about the increase in the sales tax. Again, a very large gap between what you said then and the reality now. And you wonder why people are disillusioned.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I could go on and on and on, even in Regina, about the water problem in 1982, that the solution proposed by the government of the day was not adequate, and that we were going to have a pipeline — without question — and they still don't have the pipeline. Instead we've reverted back to the solution that was being put forward by the government of the day.

In any event, I could go on and on, but my time is running out — go on and on about why the people of Saskatchewan are disillusioned with the government and why they can no longer relate to the government. The throne speech confirms what they know; a government that had creativity, a government that had energy, a government that had enthusiasm in 1982, is simply no more. They have a government that is exhausted; they have a government that is tired; they have a government that is listless; they have a government that is devoid of original thought; they have a government that no longer listens. And I suppose that, too, describes the throne speech, because I tell you, it surely does not capture the hopes and aspirations of the people of Saskatchewan. It does not level with the people of Saskatchewan about the situation that we find ourselves in today.

And it's for those reasons I cannot support it. But I just want to go back to one thing that I said, Mr. Speaker, one thing that they should know, that as long, as long as you want to turn away from the politics of inclusion to practising the politics of exclusion, to keeping groups out, to dividing, to say we don't want that group support; we don't want that group support; we're going to beat up on this group because it might get that group support — as long as you play that particular game, you will lose in the upcoming by-elections; you will lose in the upcoming general election.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot support the motion, but I will be supporting the amendment. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 9:59 p.m.