

April 7, 1988

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to the order, I wish to report that I have examined the following petitions which were presented yesterday, and under rule 11(7) I now lay them on the Table:

Of certain citizens of the province of Saskatchewan praying that the Legislative Assembly may be pleased to urge the Government of Saskatchewan to stop eroding post secondary education in Saskatchewan.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Gerich: — Mr. Speaker, through you and to the members of the Legislative Assembly, in the Speaker's gallery I'd like to introduce from the RM. of Blaine Lake, the reeve, Fred Androsoff, and councillor Nick Kadaroff. I hope that they find the afternoon interesting and informative and entertaining. Please make welcome my guests.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sauder: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you, and through you to the other members of the Assembly, a guest from my constituency that's in town today, the mayor of the town of Carrot River, John Corner. He's seated in the west gallery. John isn't a stranger to this House. He spent one term as a member here and is now, as I say, in Carrot River and the mayor there. I just ask all the members to help me welcome him back and show their welcome to him.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, I join with the members from Nipawin to welcome my former seat mate who has had many, many discussions while he was in as a member of this House, and after he left this House, as a colleague in the teaching profession. So welcome to this House today, and I hope I can meet with you later.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to introduce a guest to this legislature. We don't get many guests to this legislature. We don't get many guests from my home constituency, and I'd like to welcome Mrs. Prebushewski, who is one of my neighbours. She's here in Regina visiting her sister and brother-in-law, and I hope you find some the afternoon informative. Welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to introduce to you, and through you to the other members of the legislature, a couple of gentlemen from my constituency of Melfort, I notice in your gallery, Mr.

Speaker. These two gentlemen are teachers in my constituency. I would bet that they are in here for the teachers' annual spring council meeting. I was unable to attend their meeting last night, and I would like to welcome these two gentlemen to the legislature and ask all members to join with me in welcoming them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the other members in the Assembly, a group of students here, adult students, with the urban native pre-employment program. They are accompanied by their teacher, Winnie Malbeuf. I ask all members of the Assembly to greet them in the manner to which we are accustomed to greeting visitors.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Farm Land Crisis

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the absence of the Premier and the Deputy Premier, I will go to the Acting Minister of Agriculture. My question, sir, is that today we have the Farm Credit Corporation becoming a major holder of land. Most current figures show 1,160 quarters of land that they own — 185,000 acres, or about 290 square miles. We are also finding that land is falling into the hands of other lending institutions.

Your government ignores the crisis. When, Mr. Minister, is your government going to stop the rhetoric and, for the sake of the farmers out there, lay your solution on the table?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, as minister responsible for the farm land security board, I could perhaps respond to the question. While it is true that more and more land is being: (a) foreclosed, as members opposite are fully aware of; or land is being quit-claimed back to either banks or to the Farm Credit Corporation, that land falls in the hands of those institutions. Those institutions then put that land onto the market for sale, Mr. Speaker, and it becomes a situation where I think all concerned — if their issue is whether or not all this land should be put up for sale — then if it all comes on to the market at one time, obviously that has the effect of driving down the price of land and that hurts all farmers, and I think we should appreciate that.

So as it is put onto the market — and we certainly do not encourage the institution to hold that land — as it comes on the market we would see that particular sale. Now if the hon. member is asking as to whether or not, as he did the other day, that he wants a total moratorium on all foreclosures which is what you indicated two or three days ago in this particular assembly, I'm not sure that even the farmers support that theory, and perhaps you could expand upon that being your policy if it in fact is your policy.

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a supplementary question to the Premier, the Minister of Agriculture, now. We've just seen a case where Farm Credit Corporation is increasing that amount of land they are holding as are the lending institutions. We in the province of Saskatchewan have seen the farm bankruptcies increase in the province as opposed to across Canada where they declined. FCC (Farm Credit corporation) has 700 notices of foreclosure out . . .

Mr. Speaker — Order, order. Order! The hon. member is asking supplementary, and as such I would ask him to get to the supplementary question now.

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, in light of this crisis that we have out there, and everyone knows it's there and I'm sure you must too, you have nothing in the budget, nothing in the throne speech — why, why, Mr. Premier, can you tell me why you have abdicated all responsibility to the farm crisis in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that the general public would, first of all, endorse the protection and the money and the assistance that this administration and the national government have provided for the people and the farmers of Saskatchewan.

Secondly, they did not appreciate at all — and I believe we see it here reflected in this legislature — the fact that the previous administration, the NDP, would not help farmers with high interest rates. The solution was the land bank, where you went out and bought the farm from mom and dad and tried to sell it to the kids for quite a bit more money, which was not a solution. It was unfair. What did you do? You escalated the price of land. You went out into the market, bought a million acres from your mom and dad at one price, and you turned around and sold it to the children at 2 or 3 or \$400 more, so they could speculate with the value of the land — speculate, so that you could take it inside government. That was no solution; it was rejected.

What they want is real help against high interest rates; that's what they want — protection. They don't want the leaders of political parties foreclosing on the farmers. They don't want law firms, respected by political parties, going out there and working with financial institutions, focusing on farmers. They don't want that; they want somebody to stand up and fight for them. That's why there's deficiency payments; that's why there's 10-year agreements for long, low-run interest so farmers in this province can have some help. Why there's cash advances, Mr. Speaker, at zero per cent interest rates that were never here before.

Mr. Speaker, it is difficult, and we recognize that.

Mr. Upshall: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, we've all heard that so many times before. You continue to live in the past, while the farmers of today . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — . . . while the farmers are losing their land today and tomorrow.

Now, Mr. Premier, with all due respect to the farm land security board, as was talked about by your colleague over there, since its inception, 2,251 foreclosures dealt with; ruled in favour of the farmers, 106 — less than 5 per cent. In your opinion, Mr. Premier, is that a sufficient means of addressing the farm debt problem?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I please would request that the opposition review the reasons that the farmers are in some trouble.

The reason that the farmers are in trouble, one of the major reasons, is they experienced 18 and 20 per cent interest rates — 20 per cent interest rates, Mr. Speaker, and they asked government of the day, in 1981-1982, to please help them — 20 per cent interest rates. And do you know what the members opposite . . . not a dime.

If they'd have stepped in when interest rates were 20 per cent and said, you've got 8 per cent or nine and three-quarters or some protection, there wouldn't be half the problem, there wouldn't even be half the debt.

They lost the election; they lost two elections, Mr. Speaker, on that issue, and they're coming back and saying, well what are you going to do now. You've got interest rates settled down, you've got assistance, you've got deficiency payments. They say, well it still isn't enough, Mr. Speaker, they even make money on the backs of farmers by going out getting cash from financial institutions, foreclosing on them. And they're ashamed of it, and they should be. They didn't help them when there was 20 per cent interest rates; they go out and make money on their back right now, foreclosing.

Mr. Speaker, all I can say is we will continue to defend the farmers with our treasury, and we're not going to exploit them like the NDP did for years and years and years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — New question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Premier, that type of response makes me a little bit happy, a little bit sad. Very sad that the farmers of this province have to have you their Minister of Agriculture . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — . . . but happy for me because you're so far out of touch with the people out there it's incredible.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Premier, in 1977 you said, and I quote:

Realizing that most of our food is produced with less than 20 per cent of the farmers, society may not wish to support higher food prices or producer

security so that the non-productive 80 per cent of the farm population can live in the country at a profit.

That's what you said in 1977. Your action today shows that you still think that way.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — But for the record, Mr. Premier, I ask you: is it still your position that 80 per cent of our farmers are non-productive and should be wiped out?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — I just . . . I want to make the point that the NDP should learn that when farmers are in trouble, or home owners are in trouble because of high interest rate, it's not a time to capitalize on them and own the land for the government. And that's what the opposition did — they had a million acres in land bank.

Everybody agrees in the province. Today if the NDP was in power they'd have hundreds of millions of dollars in land bank so the government would own the land. Well, Mr. Speaker, the people don't want farmers to own the land.

Mr. Speaker: — Order. I think you should give the Premier an opportunity to answer the question rather than immediately interrupt him when the question is asked. Order. Order.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I would . . . the argument is very clear in the House. The opposition socialist party would want to own the land. We, as a Progressive Conservative Party, want the farmers to own the land. There's a significant difference, Mr. Speaker, significant difference.

At the same time, at the same time, Mr. Speaker, the opposition socialist leader can be involved in the foreclosing on the farmers for profit. He can foreclose on them, Mr. Speaker, and he can say there that this is the man who will defend it. They don't like to hear it, Mr. Speaker. Listen to them. I want the galleries to watch the NDP. They can't stand the heat, Mr. Speaker. Listen to them. Listen to them.

Mr. Speaker, the public of Saskatchewan needs to know the truth — the NDP law firms representing the leader will foreclose on farms and at the same time say that they're to protect them. They don't understand protection of families; they don't understand protection of farms. This side does. That's why there's billions of dollars going out to help farmers since we came in, and there wasn't a dime when the NDP were there.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Delay in Administration of Patients for Surgery

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday I took notice of a question, in fact of two questions, Mr. Speaker, one from the member for . . .

An Hon. Member: — Sutherland

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Sutherland . . .

An Hon. Member: — Nutana

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Nutana . . . and one from . . . Sutherland and Nutana. In any event, Mr. Speaker, they were dealing with medical emergencies and waiting lists, etc., and I'm sure the members remember that question. One of them was dealing with a 73-year-old woman, Mr. Speaker, . . . this woman, Mr. Speaker, had cataract problems and indeed she has a legitimate . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Order, please. Order. Order. Order, please. The Deputy Premier is trying to answer the question, but he can't if he's immediately interrupted.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, indeed this woman does have some legitimate reason for concern because waiting lists in ophthalmology are indeed longer than we would want them to be. We have a shortage of ophthalmologists in the province. The Department of Health has done some things to work with the hospitals and the profession to attract some more

The interesting thing about this being raised yesterday, Mr. Speaker, was that three months ago this woman raised the question with her MLA and the Leader of the Opposition's office, and in three months she heard nothing back from them, and so she called once again one week ago. Mr. Speaker, during that three-month period there wasn't one inquiry made by the opposition office to Health as to the welfare of this lady. Number two, Mr. Speaker, during the intervening period of her call last week — the one as to what had been done — there hadn't been one inquiry made. And so, Mr. Speaker, I raise that only to point out how seriously caring they really are.

Now I'll deal with the next one, Mr. Speaker, I'll deal with the next one. There were three asked, Mr. Speaker. I want to deal with all three of them.

The next one, Mr. Speaker, is a gentleman in Regina, the elderly gentleman in Regina who has blood clots in his legs. That patient, Mr. Speaker, went to see his doctor three years ago . . . I mean three weeks ago — three weeks ago. We had a little difficulty chasing this one down in our records in the department because the letter that I got from the member opposite had his name spelled wrong, but we did finally chase it down and we talked to that gentleman this morning.

What he tells us is that he went to see his doctor three weeks ago. He was put on an elective surgery list, and he asked his doctor if he couldn't get it earlier than that and the doctor told him — I think inappropriately told him by the way — that he should phone his MLA because only the government could get the urgency or the level upgraded.

So he did phone his MLA, the member for Wascana, three weeks ago. The member for Lakeview, I'm sorry. Not the member for Wascana. The member for Lakeview. Three weeks ago, Mr. Speaker. And in three weeks there was not one inquiry made — not one inquiry until yesterday, Mr.

Speaker.

Tell me, Mr. Speaker, how sincere are they in dealing with the concerns of these people, these people who are suffering some emotional strain, concerned about their own health and welfare. And these people, Mr. Speaker, dragged them through this place for their own cheap political . . . [inaudible] . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — I have a question for the Deputy Premier. Deputy Premier, as I explained yesterday, there are over 15,000 people on the hospital waiting lists in Saskatoon and Regina. As you will note, we have not seen a significant increase in the Department of Health budget. You will recall last summer that there were over 308 hospital beds closed in the city of Saskatoon and over 100 hospital beds closed in the city of Regina.

I would ask you this, sir: in the light of the fact that we have 15,000 people in this province waiting to get into hospital; in light of the fact that you have not significantly increased your budget to deal with that tremendous health problem in this province, can you tell us today whether or not hospitals in this province are once again going to have to shut down hundreds of hospital beds because of your government's underfunding of health care and your government's incompetence?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the reason I stood up was I was asked a question. That may have gone over the head of the member opposite.

But, Mr. Speaker, I answered this question yesterday. It seems strange, to me at least, that from that party we get questions relative to funding of health care in this province, when never before has there been the kinds of money that's spent on health as there is today, in our history. Only yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the Premier and the Minister of Health opened a new wing at Regina General, and I went through that yesterday.

But, Mr. Speaker, The point that I want to make here is why did the Leader of the Opposition's office, if they are sincere in their caring about these people, if they are sincere, why did he sit on it for three months before it was raised with the government? And then in this House in a very inflamed way, if you like, a very inflamed way . . . I don't suppose it would have anything to do . . . I doubt it would ever have been raised except that there's a couple of by-elections called, Mr. Speaker. I just think that those people, Mr. Speaker, have absolutely no care in their hearts for these people. They're on a political agenda and nothing more.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Short supplementary. The Deputy Premier did not obviously hear the question. My question is this: are we, or are we not again this summer going to be faced with hundreds and hundreds of hospital bed closures? Will your government assure this House and

assure the people of this province that we will not have hundreds of beds closed again this summer? Will there be funding?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm quite prepared, and I'm sure the Minister of Health is quite prepared, to deal with the reality of health care in Saskatchewan during estimates and talk about the increase surgical procedures, etc., that have been done under this administration.

The final point that I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is that we are dealing with people, real people. And if those people have these kinds of concerns, I'm quite prepared, as I'm sure the Minister of Health is, I'm quite prepared to deal with them if they will get these kinds of situations to me. But they sit on them, in one case for three months, in another case for three weeks, and they sit on them, and they truck them out for a by-election, Mr. Speaker. It's absolutely incredible. Tell me how much they care.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Highway Construction for 1988-9

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Highways and Transportation and it involves the \$10 million in so-called new money you announced in the budget for highway construction.

Mr. Minister, despite all your lofty rhetoric and the fanfare, that figure is nothing but a desperate joke from a desperate government. Cost of highway construction runs at about \$250,000 per mile. That figure will get us about 40 miles or 64 kilometres of reconstructed highway. Are you telling the people of Saskatchewan that, given the state of highways in this province, that they should be overjoyed with that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In response to the hon. member's question, I think it would be fair to say that the public of Saskatchewan is indeed pleased with a three-year, \$30 million enhanced highway rehabilitation program.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I have had calls to my office pleased with the budget, and particularly in that respect. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that as early as this morning, at 7 o'clock this morning, I met with the entire road building industry at the Landmark Inn and had a nice breakfast meeting. And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the road building association, the people who invest millions of dollars in those businesses to construct highways in this province, are pleased with the budget of this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm not here to say we can't spend a little more, and we may in a year or two. But, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan, I believe are pleased with that level of funding.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, don't try and tell us about your great commitment to the highways of Saskatchewan. Every person in . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order. Order, please. Order. Does the hon. member ask a new question or a supplementary?

Mr. Trew: — If you will check *Hansard* tomorrow you will . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order. Order, please. I find it interesting that hon. members would take exception to that. It's normal practice in this House, as all hon. members know, to indicate at the outset of their question whether it's a new question or a supplementary. I ask for that courtesy.

Mr. Trew: — New question, Mr. Speaker, for the second time. New question. Your commitment obviously is not there. Your list of highway construction products, Mr. Minister, your list last year for construction projects, you bragged about 386 kilometres of road grade work. This year in your announcement that's been reduced to 307 kilometres, or a reduction of over 12 per cent. Of the 30 projects you list in this year's construction projects list, eight of them are simply re-announcements of projects from last year — eight out of 30. And in road surfacing, you also offer fewer kilometres this year than last, fewer kilometres. In fact 11 of the 61 projects re-announcements of last year's projects.

Mr. Minister, rather than worrying about bumper heights and license plate lights, why don't you address the real problem of the vehicle safety and get on with fixing the highways and the roads in this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I really wonder whether the member opposite was here for budget day and has paid attention closely to the budget that we announced. For the member's information, there were fairly healthy increases in such departments as health and education. There was a great emphasis on health and education. I was very pleased, as Minister of Highways and Transportation, to have had a substantial increase in the budget for Highways and Transportation, and yet what I view as a realistic increase.

Now the member can talk about the brochures and the projects and try and convince the public of Saskatchewan that we're not fixing more roads or spending more moneys. But the facts are, Mr. Speaker, that a new, additional, incremental \$30 million highway enhanced rehabilitation program was announced within this budget. It is a program of which I personally am very, very proud, and which the people of Saskatchewan, I expect, will be very, very much satisfied by. It is only members of the NDP who, for their own political gain, will stop and criticize a new program that is good for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Your words ring awful hollow when there's fewer kilometres of highways being constructed and resurfaced this year than last — by your own department records, what you issued for the public, fewer kilometres this year than last.

Mr. Minister, I would ask you this: can you tell the Assembly why the people of Saskatchewan should be satisfied with an additional, a mere \$10 million. going into reconstructing 64 kilometres of highways when your department has entered into a long-term agreement with Weyerhaeuser to construct 32 kilometres of road each and every year at a cost of \$6 million?

Why does one large multinational corporation rate \$6 million of your Department of Highways' budget, and the rest of the province only gets 10 million?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, firstly in response to the hon. member's allegation of some 64 kilometres or some such, I can tell you. Mr. Speaker, that the way highways are built in this province is through true competitive bidding by the road construction industry. And you will see how many miles are constructed, Mr. Speaker, and at what price. And there may indeed, at the competitive prices we are seeing today, there may indeed be a few more kilometres than what is listed.

With respect to your concerns about Weyerhaeuser, we have placed before you, sir, better than a year ago, a comprehensive document on our agreement with Weyerhaeuser. It is a document that I suggest you read and take careful note of.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite does not yet realize, but it will soon become public when the Weyerhaeuser corporation makes their payment to this province, we on this side of the House, the people of Saskatchewan, and in fact everybody but the NDP, will be happy with the payment that Weyerhaeuser will be making to this province that will enable us to build more and more highways and more schools and more health care, and on and on and on.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I rise, under orders of the day, to raise with you what I think is a very serious situation that is being developed in this House by the ministers who respond to questions.

We saw today a blatant and serious abuse of the question period by the Deputy Premier, Mr. Speaker, in which the Deputy Premier responded to a question which is questionable whether he really took notice the other day, at great length, longer by far than normally would be expected for a minister to be allowed to ask such a question.

Under those conditions, Mr. Speaker, unless you enforce the rule on ministers, this House will become disorderly. I ask you, therefore, to look at what happened here today.

Take the time you need to look at what happened here today on the part of the Deputy Premier, and make a ruling and make sure that this question period functions for the purposes for which it was intended, and that is the asking of questions and the answering of questions, rather than giving ministers an opportunity to filibuster and to debate in question period.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Speaking to the point of order, as I understood the point of order, Mr. Speaker, it was that I didn't have the legitimate right to respond to questions that I had not taken notice of. I suppose I could ask what members opposite do with their research money, Mr. Speaker.

It says on page 345 of *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker . . . in response to the question, it says:

Hon. Mr. Berntson (That's me, the Deputy Premier) Hon. Mr. Berntson: — (it says, Mr. Speaker) . . . I will take notice as well (Mr. Speaker), and I will be happy, Mr. Speaker, as well, to talk with that member . . . (etc., etc.) I will take notice . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — My point of order was the length, the length of the speech by the . . .

Mr. Speaker — Order. Order please. Order, please. Order, please. Order. Order. Order. Order. The members have the right to speak to the point of order, and I believe the member for Regina North East is doing that now, and I'm going to give him that privilege. I'm going to give him that privilege.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand why the members opposite would be concerned and not want to hear what's being said.

I want you to clarify for the House, in my response to my point of order, whether, having taken notice of a question, a minister then can proceed to give an answer or speak further, as happened yesterday in question period, and then come back another day and speak again to that question when he, in fact, has provided the answer and spoken on it after taking the notice. Is that appropriate? I would like you to rule.

Mr. Speaker — I have listened to the point of order, and I have listened to the member's arguments, and I will take note of it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of co-operation, and the sense of complete harmony in the legislature, the opposite House Leader and myself earlier agreed that we could, with leave, move directly to second readings and deal with the . . . My understanding at least was that, Mr. Speaker, to move directly to Bill No. 3 in second readings.

Leave granted.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 3 — An Act to provide for the Resumption of Instruction, Teaching and Examination of Students at the University of Saskatchewan

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to propose second reading of a bill to be a temporary cooling-off period at the University of Saskatchewan.

Before legislation of this nature is contemplated, Mr. Speaker, it is generally had in our society that two important conditions must be met. First, the normal collective bargaining process must have been given an opportunity to arrive at a solution. Second, there must be a clear showing that the work stoppage in question represents a serious threat to a vital public interest. I believe it is apparent that both of these conditions have been met in the present strike by faculty at the University of Saskatchewan.

Let me briefly review the situation, Mr. Speaker. The last contract, which provided for an increase of 4 per cent, ended in June last year. Since that time no agreement has been reached on a new contract. Negotiations broke down during the week of March 21 and a strike vote was passed by a small majority on Thursday, March 24. A strike was immediately called and began on Monday, March 28, Mr. Speaker. A conciliator was asked for by the administration, and he began meeting with both sides on Tuesday, March 29.

Following introduction of the provincial budget last Thursday, the administration tabled a new offer in line with other public sector agreements in recent times. It provides for approximately 7 per cent over three years. This has been rejected by the faculty association whose latest position called for approximately 20 per cent over three years.

I am advised today by the conciliator, yesterday rather, Mr. Speaker, by the conciliator, Mr. Sterling Gilmore, that talks have been adjourned by both sides and that major differences exist between the two parties. It is apparent then that no immediate prospect exists for an end to the strike. Certainly we cannot expect an end to the strike in time to allow for exams to go forward this Saturday, Mr. Speaker.

Let me talk a moment about public interest involved. The critical period of final exams is about to begin on campus. If the strike continues through this period, which lasts for approximately one month, the results will be devastating for our students

It is not an exaggeration to say, Mr. Speaker, that the academic careers of some of the students may be destroyed if the exams cannot be held. Many face external deadlines which cannot be delayed. Some will lose vital summer jobs without which they may be rejected by graduate programs elsewhere because their final standing is unavailable.

And above all, Mr. Speaker, there is the added worry and uncertainty for 18,000 students during what is already a very stressful period of their lives, and there are many moms and dads across the province who share the same worry and anxiety.

And just an example, Mr. Speaker, of some of the distress and anxiety and worry that's going on in the minds of some of these students, and in many of these students, Mr. Speaker, I've had many calls in my office — and one that I received yesterday morning was typical of many of those calls. It was from a distraught young lady, a student at the university in fourth year chemical engineering, Mr. Speaker. She explained to my office how she has a job waiting for her. Chemical engineering apparently is one of those areas that do have a number of job opportunities in it this very year, and she put it this way, Mr. Speaker: I have the stress and anxiety of this being my final year; I have the stress and anxiety of now coming into my final exams; I have the stress and anxiety of knowing that I have a job waiting for me, but that stress and anxiety is compounded by the fact that I don't know if I'll finish to get to that job that's waiting for me.

And that's typical of many phone calls I've had placed to my office, Mr. Speaker. So I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, to you and to all the members of this legislature, that this is a very sober understanding. It's one that the public views seriously; it is one that our government views seriously, and I would suggest to you that it is clear that this represents a vital public interest which no government could ignore — the interest of our young people, the students.

So let me turn to the legislation which I am introducing today. First, let me make clear that this is for a limited period only. The legislation will come into effect upon approval by the Legislature, and will cease to have effect on May 12 when exams are essentially ended. In this way we make provision for the main period of exams to go forward on schedule.

The right to strike is not removed by this legislature, Mr. Speaker. It is temporarily suspended to allow the exams to take place. The faculty continue to enjoy all of the normal rights of the collective bargaining process in the future.

During this cooling-off period, Mr. Speaker, the legislation makes provision for the appointment of a mediator. Hopefully both sides will be able to agree on selection of the mediator. If not, then after five days the Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment will appoint someone. The mediator will be asked to assist both sides in attempting to find a solution and report back to the Minister of Human Resources by the end of the cooling-off period.

It is my hope that both sides will continue working toward a negotiated end to the dispute. As I have made clear, this suspension of the strike is for a short period of time. Sooner or later the two parties will have to resolve their differences, and I would voice the desire of all citizens of our province that it be as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, let me close with a plea to my many friends and former colleagues at my Alma Mater, the many fine

professors and administrators I have known throughout my professional and political career. I realize that there is genuine discomfort on both sides. I do not wish to place responsibility for this strike action on either side. This legislation is designed solely to protect the interest of 18,000 students — 18,000 young people, Mr. Speaker, whose future is a trust we all share. And I ask that a determined effort be made by both sides to find a resolution to the situation quickly, in the interests of both the students and an institution which we all respect and love and cherish.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 3, An Act to provide for the Resumption of Instruction, Teaching and Examination of Students at The University of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, while I welcome this opportunity to enter the debate on the PC government's Bill before us today, I do so with some regret and with some sadness, for this is a regrettable Bill.

And this is a sad day. It's a sad day for our university system in Saskatchewan. It's a sad day for the faculty, staff, and students at the University of Saskatchewan. It's a sad day for education in this province. It's a sad day for Saskatchewan young people, Mr. Speaker. Therefore, it is also a sad day for this legislature.

(1445)

And I said this Bill is regrettable, and it is. But it is much more than that. It is arbitrary; it is unnecessary; it is hypocritical. It is a bad Bill, Mr. Speaker, and it should not be passed.

I listened with care to the minister's remarks. I heard this rhetoric; I heard his talk. I heard his excuses; I heard his self-justification, but I did not hear him say, Mr. Speaker, which of the two parties to the dispute had asked for this Bill.

Does the minister pretend that either of the two parties — either the faculty association or the university administration — actually asked for the Bill? Will he stand in his place in this legislature and say that the faculty association asked for this back to work Bill? Will he stand in his place and say that the president of the university asked for his heavy-handed and wrong-headed Bill? No, I don't think he will, Mr. Speaker, because here we have a collective bargaining dispute, a dispute between an employer and employees, a dispute that is certainly unfortunate, but where bargaining has been taking place, bargaining . . .

Mr. Speaker — Order. I'd like to ask the hon. members to allow the member to make his remarks without interruptions.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I said, here we have a collective bargaining dispute. The dispute is certainly unfortunate, but where bargaining has been taking place, bargaining could continue to take place, a dispute which neither party has asked for government intervention, and therefore a Bill that is unnecessary,

arbitrary, unjustified and wrong — unnecessary, arbitrary, unjustified and wrong, Mr. Speaker.

This Bill now before us illustrates all too clearly what has become a conscious and consistent policy of this government: its constant attempt to divide Saskatchewan to divide Saskatchewan people, to divide our communities. That is the Conservative policy, and this Bill is a clear example of that policy.

Mr. Speaker, it has always seemed to me that one of the true tests of wise and mature political leadership is whether the government seeks to divide the people or whether it seeks to unite them, to build bridges among them. That's a simple test of political leadership, and I believe it's a good one. And by that test this Bill is a failure, Mr. Speaker. And by that test this government opposite is a failure.

Today this government has divided the university community. With each passing day, the government is seeking to drive that wedge deeper with its decisive policy, its deliberate, divisive approach. Rather than seek to build bridges, Mr. Speaker, rather than seek to unite the university community, the PC government opposite are pursuing their cause of ruthless, deliberate divisiveness. Pitting faculty against faculty — that's our brightest and our best people; pitting students against students, our best and brightest students, undermining their actions, and by their policies and this Bill the balance and solidarity of the university community is also undermined.

We've seen that PC policy of divide and dominate before, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan people have seen the PC government trying to divide rural versus urban, trying to pit farm families against working families. Saskatchewan people have seen the PC government focus on vulnerable minorities, attacking those who are most vulnerable, trying to divide Saskatchewan — the PC policy of divide and dominate.

Mr. Speaker, when a government resorts to such tactics, it not only fails a test of statesmanship, it fails the test of leadership. And it also shows it is unscrupulous, unprincipled, immoral, and desperate. And that is precisely the impression of this particular Bill and this government's policy. It is leaving the people of Saskatchewan with that kind of an impression, Mr. Speaker.

They watch the behaviour of our Premier, they watch the behaviour of our Minister of Education, and they watch the behaviour of this government, Mr. Speaker, and that is what they see — a government that is unscrupulous, unprincipled, immoral, and desperate, Mr. Speaker, a government that seeks to divide Saskatchewan people, that has lost its moral authority, I say, to govern this province.

Mr. Speaker, the PC government wants to talk about almost anything regarding this dispute, almost anything but the real problem. The government says that this Bill now will somehow address the problem. But I question whether they even understand the problem. They certainly don't even recognize it.

The problem simply put, is this: the government has betrayed the university, the faculty and the students. The government has betrayed the future of Saskatchewan by its systematic understanding of the university education in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — The minister can try to spout all the statistics he wants. We've heard the numbers repeatedly. But listen to his numbers carefully. Does the minister claim that government funding has kept up with inflation? No, because he knows that's not true. Does the minister claim that his government funding has kept pace with student enrolment pressures? No, because he knows that that would not be true.

Mr. Speaker, the facts are there. Since this PC government took office, inflation in Saskatchewan, which is now the highest in Canada, has eroded the value of the dollar. It has eroded the value of the dollar by more than 30 per cent. And since this PC government took office there's been a steady enrolment pressure on the university. More and more young people eager for education, eager to make their contribution to the future of our society, enrolling in our university. Enrolment records, enrolment pressures, steady and heavy enrolment pressure at the university, but has the government's funding kept pace? No, it has not.

In fact, since this government took office the level of operating grants per student in real, constant dollars has declined; it has declined by more than 20 per cent, 20 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill which is now before us does not address that problem which is the real problem, PC operating grants, which on the basis of constant dollars per student have declined by more than 20 per cent. And that's the cause of the problem at the university, and that's the cause of the crisis of the university. The minister opposite knows these are the facts, Mr. Speaker, but he is unwilling or unable to address the real problems the real problems which his Bill ignores.

Last year, for example, the university grants were frozen. In fact, that's an effective funding cut. This year, at a time when inflation in Saskatchewan is the highest in Canada at 6 per cent, the minister tries to brag and boast about his 1.9 per cent funding increase. That's yet another cut, Mr. Speaker, a further attack on the quality of education by this PC government.

And what are the consequences of such PC funding cuts? Crowded classes, crowded labs, less opportunity for students to interact with and learn from their instructors, fewer library resources, ageing laboratory equipment, professors who have become demoralized, students who are short-changed. And most tragically of all, Mr. Speaker, enrolment quotas — enrolment quotas at the University of Saskatchewan caused by PC underfunding. Turning students away, that's the consequence of their policy, Mr. Speaker. No, that is the PC policy, turning students away, closing the door to their opportunities,

closing the door to their future.

This Bill, Mr. Speaker, does not address the problem of government underfunding to our universities and short-changing of our young people. That's their record and it's a sorry record.

I was not surprised to hear the minister's words, saying that his only interest here is the students. He claims that this Bill and this government have the students' interests at heart. Never in this legislature, sir, have I heard such hypocrisy. I do not use that word lightly.

Where was their commitment to students last year when they effectively cut university funding? Where was their commitment to students in the latest budget when, once again, they effectively cut university funding? Where was the so-called PC commitment to students over the last seven years when they cut the constant dollar funding for students by more than 20 per cent. Hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker. Where was their commitment when they attacked the student aid plan or when they cut summer jobs for students by 60 per cent? Where was their commitment to students when they were forcing university enrolment quotas, closing the door on opportunity, turning students away?

Mr. Speaker, never in the history of Saskatchewan has any government so betrayed Saskatchewan people, betrayed their future, betrayed the future of our province. And for that minister to stand in his place in this legislature and pretend that this Bill and that this government has the interest of students at heart, that is PC hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker, of the most contemptible kind.

Mr. Speaker, the minister likes to talk about spending priorities, but he's afraid to talk about the choices his government has made. Government and governing is about choices. Governing is making choices, and this PC government has made the wrong ones.

They've made the choice to give up more than \$2 billion to big oil companies, and the choice to have overcrowded classes; the choice to give more than \$20 million to Alberta Tory millionaire, Peter Pocklington, and the choice of funding cuts to the university. They've made the choice of funding cuts to the university. They've made the choice to waste \$20 million per year, Mr. Speaker, on political advertising, and the choice to turn students away. They've made the choice to spend \$34,000 a day on empty government office space. And the choice to undermine the quality of education.

Mr. Speaker, at the University of Saskatchewan, the students and the faculty would like this government to make a better choice. Choose to spend less money on empty office space, and choose to spend more money on crowded classrooms.

This Bill before us today, Mr. Speaker, is introduced by a government that indeed has made choices — has made the wrong ones. The government has created problems, Mr. Speaker. The government is like a drunken daddy — drunken daddy taking money for booze, where a family is left to struggle, struggle whether to make a decision as to buy boots or clothes or food. And this government is acting like a drunken daddy of education.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, the Bill before us here today is a bad Bill. It is an arbitrary, unwarranted, an unwarranted intrusion to the free, collective bargaining system. It ignores the real problem, the real problem of university underfunding, the problem caused by this government. The Bill provides one more example of the PC government's destructive policy approach — divide and dominate.

And moreover, Mr. Speaker, the Bill fails to resolve anything. It does not resolve the dispute; it doesn't even attempt to resolve the dispute. It is a bad Bill, Mr. Speaker, and I shall be opposing it at every stage, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1500)

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to add a few words in this debate, if my sore throat and cold permit. I want to say that this is indeed a very sad day for the University of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. No one can take joy or comfort, except perhaps some of the back-benchers in the government opposite, about this Bill being introduced now.

This day is a sad day, Mr. Speaker. My colleague said it so well — a sad day for students, for faculty, for the administration, for the parents of the students, a sad day for all of us across Saskatchewan who love that place in Saskatoon — the University of Saskatchewan. And it's a sad day for this legislature, Mr. Speaker.

It's sad because this Bill sets an unfortunate and alarming precedent. I'll say a word about that in a moment, but it's also sad, Mr. Speaker, because this is the first time — I think I'm correct on this — in the living history of the University of Saskatchewan that we've had to resort, as a legislature, to direct interference into the internal affairs of an autonomous, autonomously administered organization and body like the University of Saskatchewan — the first time.

There have been years in the past, in periods in the past, of restraint. There have been difficult negotiations, Mr. Speaker, in the past, involving both faculty and the administration; there have been hurt feelings, emotions running high. And for all of the difficulties in those periods, and for all of the ideological differences of any government that occupied, had the honour to occupy the front benches of the treasury, never ever in the history of this province, Mr. Speaker, never ever was there an occasion to introduce back-to-work legislation, to interfere with the autonomy and the independence of the University of Saskatchewan.

It took 75 years plus, and a Conservative government with this particular philosophy; it took 75 years plus, and this group of, frankly speaking, incompetent individuals to finally bring the university to its knees and to set the unprecedented move of direct back-to-work legislation in the area of university autonomy and university independence.

Mr. Speaker, that is a day which we should mourn; it is a day that we will live to regret, those of us in politics in Saskatchewan and in this legislature.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — I think the very fact that this legislation is being introduced by this government indicates grounds enough for opposing the legislation. Something is wrong. One can say that it is the faculty association; one can say it's the administration. But the reality is, what is wrong here is the lack of guidance and leadership, both financially and from an academic and philosophical perspective, by this government of what a university in a free and independent and democratic society should be all about. That's what's at fault here. It's the deeds and the thoughts of small-minded men and women who apply so rigidly a policy of fiscal restraint in a period of apparently economic difficulty — I might add, Mr. Speaker, in a period of economic difficulty largely created by the misdeeds and incompetence of this government opposite.

It is the slavish devotion to that mentality which has gotten this province into serious economic difficulties — a debt of \$3.7 billion. And I guess it's only inevitable that sooner or later that mentality would result in that crisis slopping over to the University of Saskatchewan and to the people there who are trying to make it work, and to establish this dastardly principle — there is no other way to describe it — dastardly principle of interference in the economic and the administrative independence and autonomy of the University of Saskatchewan.

This is a sad and shameful day for all of us in this legislature, Mr. Speaker, make no mistake about it. And it sets a precedent, Mr. Speaker, because if government can do this once, as this government seems prepared to do and determined to do, then the precedent has been set. It can do it again a second time and a third time and another time. And it may not be this government; it may be some other government that is purporting to do this.

This is a precedent which is dangerous, Mr. Speaker. If you believe that the corner-stones of a university are three: accessibility for students to university education; academic excellence, excellence in the quality of education; and autonomy and independence of a university as that place where men and women who are dedicated to knowledge and searching out the truth, as that place where they have the freedom and the independence to do it without the pressures of day to day society.

If you have that vision of university, which is my vision of university, then what you see is a government coming very, very short in support of those mainstems and those pillars. What we have here instead, Mr. Speaker, is a government which has no vision or notice or indication or belief of what a university should be in our free society.

This is a government that views this university like a department of government. This government views this university just as it would any line department, or Crown corporation, or any other agency. It does not revere it. It

does not place it in any era of speciality, or in any kind of compartment of speciality, and I say that is a shame. It's a betrayal of what our pioneers and our forefathers did when they built the University of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — How it used to be, when you look at the history of this province, back in 1905 and earlier, and in the period post-1905, when those pioneers who argued about how to set up a legislative building and get our parliamentary democracy going in this province, and also those pioneers who had the vision of building a centre of excellence called the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon; how they sacrificed and how they worked.

And they went, Mr. Speaker, through the Dirty Thirties. They went through difficult times. In those early formative years of a university and the province of Saskatchewan, imagine what kind of an argument could have been made for restraint; what kind of an argument could have been made by men and women of timid vision and timid souls and no approach to university life; what kind of arguments they could have mounted to say that we don't have enough to proceed with making Saskatchewan and the University of Saskatchewan a centre of excellence, a centre of accessibility for students, a centre of autonomy and independence.

But no! Luckily, Mr. Speaker, those were not little men and little women with little visions. Our pioneers came here with guts and with foresight and determination, and they found the money. They found the money in the Dirty Thirties when their fathers and themselves were being forced off the farm lands. They sacrificed in order to make sure that their children would get a better life and a better education.

There were no arguments during the J.T.M. Anderson period of government that they had to restrain, provoking a strike. There was no kind of activity by the minister of continuing education, in the midst of the disputes, which would escalate and provoke the situation. No!

There was a commitment to an ideal which I ask you to remember, Mr. Speaker, an ideal which is as important in my mind as this institution, the legislature itself, the ideal of a best university that one can ever get in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And what a university it's been, Mr. Speaker. It has produced the best of academics, and it's produced the best of students, and our Rhodes Scholars are here at home and helping and they're elsewhere, across the world, using that knowledge, building on what was given to them by their fathers and their forefathers, to be the leaders of our community, whether the community is Saskatoon or Regina or Saskatchewan or Canada.

And they co-operated. And they have their disputes, and they have their differences. And they were the brightest and the best, from Diefenbaker to all of the other graduates one could think of, who contributed in a

distinguished way because they were able to come to our university.

Now what happens, Mr. Speaker? Now what happens in the 1980s? In the 1980s we have a new administration with a new philosophy, a philosophy that says, in effect, this is the year of the rugged individual, and forget about the fact that we have created the financial mess for the province; forget about the fact that this financial mess that we created is now spilling over to our hospitals, and in this case to the university.

We now have this band of timid men and women who seek to apply that restraint to the university in a consistent way, to in effect starve it out under circumstances which are desperate. There's no doubt about it, given today's agricultural crisis — but surely no worse than they were in the 1930s, where men and women of greater spirit and greater determination were able to find a way because they had the will.

These people opposite have no will, they have no vision, and they starve out the university by denying that great institution of ours, funds. And they've done it not once, Mr. Speaker, they have done it repeatedly since 1982, and that is a shame on them. It's a shame on all of us in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — My colleague, the critic in continuing education, the member from Prince Albert, documented this very importantly, but it has to be stated again, Mr. Speaker. You take a look at the budgets, Mr. Speaker, of this government with respect to the university to highlight or to emphasize or to confirm, if that's required, in your mind the argument that I'm making here about underfunding.

The evidence is everywhere. In the last seven years, the operating grant levels to the University of Saskatchewan have failed to keep pace, Mr. Speaker, have failed to keep pace with the combined pressure of enrolment growth and inflation — failed to keep pace. And as a result, by whatever yardstick the minister would want to choose, the dollar level of per student funding has declined and declined drastically. In constant dollar terms that level of decline, Mr. Speaker, has amounted to at least 20 per cent on a per student basis — 20 per cent less in seven years, Mr. Speaker.

And that's at a time when we have high rates of inflation; that's at a time when the cost of living has gone sky-high. We keep on being told by the Premier about what his government has done to buttress people against inflation and the ravages of the economic circumstance, and yet nothing for the university with respect to operating grants.

And this provincial budget, Mr. Speaker, the one that we have temporarily postponed debate on today in order to deal with this important Bill, this provincial budget continues on in that vein. This provincial budget froze the university grant levels, virtually froze them, by giving the operating amount of money to about — what? — 1.9 or 2 per cent.

An Hon. Member: — 1.9.

Mr. Romanow: — 1.9. That, Mr. Speaker, does not even keep pace with the rate of inflation, 1.9. And last year's budget froze the university grant levels in nominal terms, again an effective cut. The budget provides inadequate funds. I don't mean marginally inadequate funds, Mr. Speaker; I mean, it provides inadequate funds on an ongoing basis in a grand scale — on a grand scale.

An Hon. Member: — There's never enough money.

Mr. Romanow: — This government . . . The member says, there's never enough money. I'll tell you, there is money for the university. If that is the priority that you choose to ignore, to put money into the shafferty process down in the Premier's riding, there is money for the university and the students.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — The member from Cut Knife, the member from Cut Knife says there's not enough money. That's right. He's got a billion dollars for his Premier in Estevan; he has nothing for the students. The member from Cut Knife says there's never enough money. He's got \$1 billion for the Premier's riding, and he freezes out the administration and the students. I say to that member, that silent member in this legislature, shame on him for his denial and rejection of the university world.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — There is never enough money. There is never enough money, Mr. Speaker, if you want to choose that there never should be enough money. If you want to put \$34,000 a day, Mr. Speaker — \$34,000 a day — on empty government space, of course there's not enough money. If you want to say that there's \$20 million for your Conservative advertising friends, of course there's not enough money.

Well I tell you, Mr. Speaker, I tell the minister, I tell the Premier and I tell all the members opposite, we don't accept that there is — there must be money for our students and higher learning in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And so, Mr. Speaker, what is the end result? The end result is obvious. It only stands to common sense, the end result is chronic underfunding, crowded class-rooms, crowded labs, ageing equipment, enrolment quotas, students being turned away, and this is a systematized approach, Mr. Speaker. I'm not even saying they're doing it in a machiavellian, deliberate, conspiratorial way, although I'll say a word about that. Maybe they're doing it because they honestly think that that's the way the economic situation should dictate them acting, but even so the net result can't be denied.

Whatever the motivation, the net result can't be denied. There's overcrowding. There's no space. The morale is down. This is a crisis which just hasn't arisen like that, Mr. Speaker. It's a crisis which has been brewing for the last

two or three years. It was inevitable that it was going to come to a head. Anybody who was reading about the university, knew about the university, dealt with the university people, ought to have known, Mr. Speaker, that this crisis was coming.

If the minister of continuing education was doing his job, he wouldn't act as if he was somewhat surprised by this crisis. He'd have been putting in the mediation; he would have been putting in the conciliation; he would have been getting the sides together. He would have been doing everything that needs to be done in an informal, supplementary, supportive way of this university. He would have done that which was needed to protect the independence and the autonomy of this great institution and benefit the students. But he was asleep at the switch, Mr. Speaker. He was asleep at the switch, and the result was absolutely the chaotic condition that we find now.

And I said this is a sad day in this legislature, and a sad day it is, Mr. Speaker, sad day because of the first point I make about the interference and the principle of university autonomy, but it's a sad day, too, because of this chronic underfunding. What we have seen here, Mr. Speaker, are dreams of young men and women jeopardized — no, in some cases, dashed. Enrolment quotas, denial to get into university.

(1515)

Remember, I said the three characteristics of a university — accessibility. A university is something that we should all, if we have the ability and the drive and the willingness to learn, we should have accessibility to it. For the first time in a long time, if not in the history of this university, the accessibility situation now has turned away young men and women, young children of farming sons and daughters who wanted to have opportunities for higher education; their dreams have been dashed, Mr. Speaker, they have been shot down by this government.

And that member says there's never enough money. That's what he says. Dreams of parents, farming parents. This government talks about the family. It talks about how it tries to defend the family. Mr. Speaker, what it does, in effect, is the reverse, by every social action, and this Bill is an example of it. What they do is they are tearing apart the family. They're not helping our young people stay here in Saskatchewan. They're not helping our families stay together.

No, what they do is they attack those who are less needy. They attack minorities, whether those minorities are French Canadian people, whether they are gay people, whether they are university students, whether they're working men and women, they attack; they don't seek to unite, they seek to divide, Mr. Speaker. I say this is a sad day and shame on the Premier, and the people of this province are going to take the opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And now what about the Bill, Mr. Speaker, and how the government handled this legislation. Let's even forget about the precedent. You just ask about your colleagues and farm families on

foreclosures, and we'll talk about that when the estimates of the Premier comes up at length, and your involvement.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, I ask this member opposite who does his thinking . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order. I ask members on both sides of the House to allow the member to continue.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I now come to my third point, the first being the precedent and the sadness of the day; the second point being the chronic underfunding. I now come to the third point, and that is this piece of legislation itself.

I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, in many ways this Bill is the worst of all worlds, and I'll explain this in a moment. This Bill is the worst of all worlds for a number of reasons. First, the Bill obviously is an interference in the process of collective bargaining, free collective bargaining. The government admits that; everybody admits that. Now this should be done, Mr. Speaker, only when the public interest is clearly demonstrated, and also it should be done, not only when the public interest is clearly demonstrated, but when it is obviously and patently clear that there has been no external interference by people like the people in the government with the free collective process. In other words, that it's been given its full, best opportunity to do its thing, if I may put it that way. That has not been the situation here, Mr. Speaker.

And here, as I said, I'd make a comment about whether it was negligence on the part of the minister, or whether there's a conspiratorial theory which can be attached. But I refer your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the intervention last week in the legislature, unprovoked, by the minister of continuing education, who got up and stood on his feet and said — unprovoked — that if there is no settlement, this government is going to introduce back-to-work legislation. No one asked him in question period. So far as I know, no one asked him from either of the parties involved to make such a statement. This, Mr. Speaker, came at a time when the conciliator, Mr. Gilmore, was doing his best; this at a time when the negotiations were at their most sensitive, their most important stage, Mr. Speaker.

Now the minister knew that. The Premier knew that. They named the conciliator to do the job. Why did the minister get up in the middle of those negotiations and say to the parties involved, we're going to legislate you back? Because I tell you, Mr. Speaker, the moment he did that, that was a signal to one or both of the parties that they didn't have to be serious about getting a voluntarily settled, negotiated, voluntary settlement agreement. One or both of the parties surely must have had running through their minds; well, what's the sense of settling; we'll just sit back and wait until the government legislates us back and there's an interruption in the free collective bargaining process.

If he had made that statement at the end, at the total collapse of the negotiations, and set out to the House and to the people of Saskatchewan why he's leading us to that conclusion, then I think one could say he acted in an

honourable and proper fashion. The collective bargaining process was going its normal course, but it failed, and then he could get up in the legislature and say: I, on behalf of the government, am now acting in the public interest; here is the public interest.

But this minister and this government didn't do that, Mr. Speaker. This minister and this government deliberately chose to get up in the midst of the negotiations and say that they were going to legislate back to work those participants in this dispute. I say, Mr. Speaker, that the minister knew full well what he was doing. I say that by doing this the result was non-confidence, both in the administration and in the faculty association.

But I say that there was even a better motive on his part, and that better motive was, he was setting the ground rules to introduce this needless legislation at this time for political purposes. That's what he was doing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — There can only be one of two explanations. He either got up because he was incompetent and he didn't know about free collective bargaining, which I'm not sure if I would accept of the minister opposite, or he knew what he was doing.

And I say, Mr. Speaker, that of those two options, while there's a little bit of truth for both of them, in my judgement the better version of events is that the minister knew full well what was going on. The minister knew exactly what his game plan was going to be, and in saying those words that he said last week, Mr. Speaker, he destroyed the free collective bargaining process and in effect sealed the fate of the actions of this government, forcing this sad day today with the introduction of this Bill.

But there's more, Mr. Speaker, about this Bill which I find to be in bad legal taste and in other ways. Let's take a look at this thing, Mr. Speaker, first of all this Bill does nothing before us to resolve the dispute; absolutely nothing before us, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the situation is this: the Bill clearly implies that on May 13, when the Bill lapses, the dispute may recommence, perhaps even more bitterly, and drag on then for a long time.

Now just get what we're doing, Mr. Speaker. For the members of the House, the back-benchers who may not have seen this Bill, what this Bill does is, it says you go back till May 13, you can't strike, and we'll appoint a mediator. Now nobody wants that.

Here the president of the university says, back-to-work law attacked by Krisjanson, and he says, with respect to the mediator, we don't want that. And he says we don't want interference in the university. That's the president in today's *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* and widely reported in the media.

But what does this government do? Notwithstanding that advice this government goes ahead and appoints a mediator, and then the government goes ahead on top of

that and says, this strike is going to last until, what is it, May 13?

An Hon. Member: — Twelfth.

Mr. Romanow: — May 12, May 12. And then on May 13 it lapses, Mr. Speaker, the Bill lapses and it's silent. What happens then, Mr. Speaker? What happens if that strike resumes, Mr. Speaker?

This Bill doesn't solve the disputes. What it does is it exacerbates the tensions. I mean, whether you agree with back-to-work legislation or not, whether you think this is an appropriate case for the dispute to be solved by legislation or not, you either do it or you don't do it.

But this is the worst of all worlds. You take away the right to strike virtually for the professors for a period of 30 days and leave them powerless, and you don't solve the dispute either. You put a mediation process to work.

Now I hope that the mediator can do his job during this 30 days. I mean, we all wish that. But surely, from the beginning of the statements made by the faculty association and the president, there is clearly no indication that this is going to be the end result of the developments.

I find that to be a very unusual feature of a back-to-work piece of legislation, and I invite the members opposite, the journalists, to check past precedents, and they'll find where the public interest has dictated back-to-work legislation this has not been the form. This Bill does not do the job. That's another point.

I make a third point with respect to this Bill, and I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this relates to a matter which may seem to be small on the surface but to the university community it is a major concern. This Bill does not have a minister assigned to it as the minister responsible for doing . . . administering the Bill. This Bill doesn't have a minister assigned to it. That too is very unusual.

But what it does, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is it does this: it give mixed signals to the university community. The member from Weyburn, the continuing education minister, he introduces the Bill, but the minister who is actually going to appoint the mediator is our good old friend, the member from Melville, the Minister of Labour. That's the person who's going to introduce the mediator.

Now apart from confusion, I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to be as objective as you can, and I ask you to put yourself in the position of either a faculty association member, or an administration member, or any fair-minded parent — what signal does that give to you that the member from Melville is going to do the job of appointing the mediator to try to solve this dispute between the faculty association and the university? What signal does that give to us?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't want to be personal against the member from Melville, but the reality is, the reality is, judging by his comments made yesterday in the course of the budget debate, which was widely reported, dealing with the United Church and the NDP, his comments

about minorities, his comments toward working men and women — all of his observations, Mr. Speaker, give people at the university grave fear about what this one individual alone could do by the mediation process.

Surely it's not beyond the capacity of the Premier, who knows about the sensitivities of the university people — perhaps better than anybody in this room — surely it is not beyond his capacity to understand that if he wanted to calm down the waters at the university, if he really wanted this Bill to do the job, apart from giving the Bill specific purpose and form, the last thing he would have done is appointed the member from Melville, the Minister of Labour, to be the person responsible for nominating the mediator.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in truth, the blunt, bitter truth is that nobody in university, and certainly few in the province of Saskatchewan today, have any confidence that they're going to get a fair break from that minister appointing the mediator in this dispute.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is an act of high provocation. It's anti-intellectual, it's highly provocative, and I say, Mr. Speaker, in the light of the comments made about a bad precedent with respect to the university, it also leads to the danger of potential conflict after the Bill runs out on May 12 and May 13 and beyond.

Now I've two other points to make with respect to this legislation. I know we'll deal with it in detail in clause by clause, but I wanted to make these two points on second reading as well.

There is the question of whether or not this government really knows what it's doing. I mean, having decided to legislate back to work, one would like to think that they'd do it as competently as they can do it. But look what they've done, Mr. Speaker.

This Bill forces the faculty and the administration to get back to get the exams written, a laudable objective. It runs out on May 12, Mr. Speaker, I am advised that there are colleges that are writing final exams on May 13, May 14, still. I don't know how many, but I'm advised that dentistry is one. They didn't even cover the date.

Convocation is May 27, Mr. Speaker. In order to convocate, the convocation relies on a faculty member naming those who are going to be the convocated people — May 27. That's an important act in the academic process. It's an act where families can get together and rejoice in the accomplishments of sons and daughters, but this Bill runs out on May 12 with a mediator that nobody wants, and has no other solutions offered, Mr. Speaker. This is a solution which totally misses the mark.

You wonder what in the world the Premier and the minister are doing? What are they thinking about? I mean, if they're going to act this way . . . I made my earlier comments about justifying it in the public interest . . . For goodness sake, at least they should be acting in a way that accomplishes the job rather than in a way which prolongs

the agony — no, not prolongs the agony, exacerbates the conflict which exists on the University of Saskatchewan, and that's exactly what this Bill does.

(1530)

And one last point with respect to this legislation, although there are other matters as well. The legislation talks about people who are on strike to go back to work. And by the way, there's some interesting language in there — to assume their usual duties; failure to perform their usual duties involves some sort of large fine. I'll make a comment on that in Committee of the Whole. But who is to enforce, Mr. Speaker? Who is to actually determine whether or not a faculty person goes back to work? On whom does the job of, if you will, enforcement of this legislation fall?

Who is going to be the tattle-tale? Who is going to say that this professor from history, or that professor from bachelor in arts and science course is not honouring the picket . . . not honouring the legislation, and therefore needs to be reported, and the penalties of \$5,000 and \$1,000 a day are to be levied? That provision, Mr. Speaker, implies clearly that it is the administration's job to in effect spy and to monitor the activities of their colleagues — because that's what this really is still, a collegial enterprise, notwithstanding the bitterness and feelings that are around — to monitor and to spy on their activities. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that provision will guarantee continued animosity, upset, and anger. That too is a failing of the Bill.

So if you look at it, Mr. Speaker, it is a tissue-thin, hastily concocted — perhaps not so hastily concocted — but a tissue-thin Bill which fails to do the job, a bad precedent for the University of Saskatchewan, a sad day for the university, a sad day for all of us in this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, a Bill produced by a government that can't get its house in order. From the gang that couldn't shoot straight, this Bill here is another example of how it misses the mark with respect to public policy.

And so, Mr. Speaker, what are we to do? What are we to do as members of this Legislative Assembly? Clearly no one wants to see the students penalized. That is an objective that everybody in this House wants to see achieved. We want to have those students get their exams and get on with their lives. We know that, but are we to condone how we got here?

Do the ends and the means justify themselves under these circumstances, given the facts that I've recited? How do we, as an opposition, how do we, as men and women of the community at large who love that university, who love the independence of it, who love what it's accomplished, who cherish its ideals — are we to stand by without registering our protest at the mismanagement and the deliberate policies of this government, idly, and to sit back on our hands and to vote for it? I don't think so, Mr. Speaker. I don't think we can do that.

I think if we're talking truth here, if we're talking truth about the interests of university students, we also had better start talking truth about the activities of the administration and also, more particularly, the activities

of this government and its administrations — the bitter truth. And the bitter truth, Mr. Speaker, is very, very clear for all to see, in my judgement.

This legislation is unwarranted; it's unhelpful; it's going to exacerbate the situation; it's badly drafted. The problem is underfunding. It sets a dangerous precedent for the University of Saskatchewan. It fails to resolve the dispute.

Mr. Speaker, nobody who has a conscience and a commitment to our university, and a conscience and a commitment to this legislature, could vote for this legislation. I'm going to vote against it. The members on this side of the House are going to vote against it. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder if I could have leave of the House to introduce a group of guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to have you join with me, and other members of the House, in introducing a group of students that are in the Speaker's gallery today.

It's my understanding that they're with the Association of Canadian Community Colleges, Kelsey campus, Saskatoon. There are 30 exchange students there, accompanied by four adult staff. The exchange students are from Holland College in Prince Edward Island. The teachers that are accompanying them today are Jerome Konecni, Laurel Myers, Jake Shaw, and Gail Caseley.

The students that are visiting here today have arrived at a very interesting time in the legislature. What you are hearing today in the legislature is a debate about Bill 3. Bill 3 deals with a dispute at the University of Saskatchewan, which is in Saskatoon; you may have gathered that by now. And I'm sure that when you leave the gallery today to meet with me outside, you will have made some judgements about the legislation which is being discussed in principle in second reading. Later on, this Bill will go to further stages for further discussion in detail.

I'm sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all members will join with me in welcoming this group of 30 students and their accompanying teachers from Kelsey Institute and from Prince Edward Island.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I, too, would like to, through you, welcome these students here on behalf of the government side and express our sincere apologies that we weren't the first to be able to bring greetings to you people and to Saskatchewan. But as you can well imagine, we're going to be at kind of a disadvantage, being my opponent has the opportunity to

speak to you after you leave the Chambers. So with that, I hope that you will . . . you could stay a little longer and just hear our side of the story before you leave the Chamber, so that you can make up your own minds. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 3 (continued)

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, I view this debate today on legislation to end a strike at the University of Saskatchewan as a very sorry day and a very sorry debate for this legislature and for the university. I don't come to participate in this discussion with any great sense of joy. There is nothing happy about it.

And I want to take a few minutes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just a few minutes, to put a few comments on the record and to put this sad situation in some context. The government is wrapping itself in the flag, so to speak, today, proclaiming its so-called commitment to post-secondary education in Saskatchewan and its alleged concern for the well-being of students at the University of Saskatchewan. All that fancy rhetoric, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is nice to hear, if only it were true.

But the hard, cold facts do not support, do not support, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the government's fine words. They have not in fact put their money and their real commitment where their mouth is. And in their Neanderthal way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government of dinosaurs is hostile to universities in Saskatchewan, and that hostility shows.

Throughout their term in office, since 1982, this Conservative government has consistently and chronically underfunded Saskatchewan's universities. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the root of that problem of underfunding stretches back into the 1970s, back to about 1977, when the cost-sharing arrangements between the federal and provincial governments were changed. The new EPF (established program of financing) system, as it is called, introduced at that time — about 1977 — produced more federal money for post-secondary education in Canada and at the same time more provincial autonomy in the use of that money. The idea was supposed to be that provinces would basically match the available federal dollars for education, but the Government of Canada would no longer be looking over the province's shoulder to ensure the province was honouring its side of the bargain.

As I said, that all began about 1977, and the erosion in provincial commitments to post-secondary education can be traced back to that point. So, Mr. Speaker, it is true to say that the former NDP government in Saskatchewan has a portion of the blame to shoulder in this situation. It was under that former government, in the late 1970s, that the problem got started. But it has continued, Mr. Speaker, the problem has continued and it has accelerated since 1982 under the Conservative administration to the point now where what was supposed to be a 50-50 federal-provincial, cost-sharing

arrangement is more like 75-25, with the federal government paying the larger share.

The province has clearly not honoured its side of the EPF bargain, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And what then are the consequences of that for post-secondary education in Saskatchewan? The consequences are many and they are serious.

Physical facilities are deteriorating, space is crowded and uncomfortable, teaching positions are being lost, class offerings are reduced, student fees go up, student aid is restricted, there are admissions controls and quotas imposed. The reputation and even the accreditation of our universities is subject to some question and some doubt; academic freedom and responsibility are under attack. Everyone's morale, to put it bluntly, Mr. Speaker, everyone's morale is the pits, and the best and the brightest of our students, our faculty and others in the university community begin to look elsewhere for a more favourable university environment. That is all part of what happens when your government is hostile, Mr. Deputy Speaker, or at the very least, when your government is ambivalent and indifferent about the well-being of universities.

And in large measure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the problem that lies at the root of the present dispute at the University of Saskatchewan. It is a chronic and long-standing problem. It is deep, and I think from the evidence we see in what we are debating today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is serious. And this government cannot escape its primary responsibility in causing this chaos.

The government pats itself on the back for presenting this particular piece of legislation today to end, or at least to suspend, the action at the University of Saskatchewan saying that it has no alternative in the circumstances and that it wants to defend the best interests of students. But, Mr. Speaker, the record must show that the policies and the practices of this government have been consistently contrary to the best interests of students and the faculty and the administration and all of those in Saskatchewan who are concerned about universities.

This government has been holding students to hostage, holding the faculty and the administration to hostage, holding parents and families who are concerned about the education of their children to hostage, holding taxpayers to hostage, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and holding that venerable University of Saskatchewan to hostage — a 79-year-old institution that has never before faced the kind of crisis that it is experiencing today.

The government's hostility and ineptitude in this matter has been demonstrated in another way, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Beyond its underfunding of universities generally, and its failure in terms of developing proper education policy, there is another more immediate illustration of the government's hostility and its ineptitude with respect to universities, and I refer specifically to the ill-advised and ill-timed public comments of the minister and his deputy and the Premier, suggesting the government was ready — indeed, Mr. Speaker, anxious to intervene in this dispute with legislation.

There is no other possible interpretation that can be put upon the comments that have been made by representatives of the government with respect to this situation.

They may, they may in fact deny that that was their intention. Most interesting, Mr. Speaker, the denials come after the fact, and the interpretation was there for all the world to see when the comments were first made about a week ago.

Before the conciliation process had hardly begun, the government was rattling its sabres with legislative threats. They sat on their hands for months, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for months and months doing nothing, doing absolutely nothing to assist or facilitate the bargaining process. They saw the process floundering, going from bad to worse. All the danger signs were there, and they didn't lift a finger constructively to try to help things along and expedite a settlement.

(1545)

And then at the eleventh hour they belatedly sent in a conciliator to become involved in the situation, after it was almost too late. And then before the conciliator had a chance even to get decently started, the minister and his deputy and the Premier started to make those ominous public comments. And that of course doomed the conciliation process from the very outset.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's not just my opinion. Both sides in this dispute, both the faculty and the administration, have said loud and clear and in no uncertain terms that this government bungled and bungled badly in its conduct in this matter. That point is universally agreed, except for the few folks who happen to sit on the government side who want to try to defend an indefensible position. The unequivocal view of all of those who have watched this situation is that the government stumbled and bungled with it in a very serious way.

And there is an obvious conclusion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that can be drawn from the government's conduct in dealing with this matter. Either the government was clumsy and just plain dumb in the verbal interventions that destroyed the work of the conciliator or, as the alternative, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the government was playing out the premeditated steps in a cynical political game whereby the government was deliberately provoking an impasse, contriving a situation where the 1988 spring exam schedule could be maintained or salvaged only by legislative action in this House. Those, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are the only alternatives: stupidity on one hand or cynical manipulation on the other hand. Either way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government deserves no credit.

The minister's claim to be the great friend of students in this situation rings very hollow indeed. The government has created a situation now that can only get worse. The legislation will allow the exams to proceed in a very messy atmosphere, but it's not likely that anything is going to be settled by May 12. We hope that it will be, but given what the government has done up to now, they have certainly made that happy outcome less likely.

Relationships, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are very likely to deteriorate further, and the problems thereafter will just be that much tougher to deal with.

The government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the government could have involved itself in helping to settle this dispute at a much earlier stage constructively, but the government failed. The government could have made some gestures in its recent budget to show that it was going to make some progress on post-secondary education. It could have done that constructively, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but again the government failed, and now we're faced with today's crisis. And it is one colossal mess.

If you ask any member of the faculty, if you ask any member of the administration, if you ask any student that has gone through this experience, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you'll find out how big a mess there is at the University of Saskatchewan today — how deep the trouble goes and how long it will take to heal the wounds. It is a very troubling situation.

This Bill to suspend the strike temporarily can not be regarded by the government as any kind of final solution. It is like putting a band-aid on a cancer, and the government created that cancer, in large part, in the first place. And whatever so-called peace this Bill may buy for the government in the next month or so during the examination period, that underlying cancer created by the government in terms of post-secondary education and, in particular, at the University of Saskatchewan — that cancer must be cured by the government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the government has that obligation.

The government must commit itself to adequate university funding; that is absolutely fundamental, both in the short term and over the long haul, in terms of the future development of the University of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, in my view, the government must work carefully and conscientiously with the administration, with the faculty, with the students and the public to restore confidence and trust in this situation, to improve the atmosphere and to draw people together constructively, rather than dividing them.

This Bill gives the government about a month — to May 12 — to get its act together with respect to post-secondary education. If the government, Mr. Speaker, has nothing further to offer in that space of time; if the government has nothing further to say constructively; if the government has nothing further to contribute to a solution; if this Bill is the sum total of what the government intends to do; if it's this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and nothing more; if the government's policy with respect to universities begins and ends with this legislation, then on May 12 this minister and the Premier and this government will find that they have an even larger problem on their hands, a larger and a messier situation than the one that exists today.

And in the face of those circumstances, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the government will stand condemned of chewing the heart and the soul out of the beloved University of Saskatchewan in the city of Saskatoon, that has such a remarkable record in the history and the

educational tradition of this province in serving Saskatchewan so very, very well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we may have very well no alternative but to deal with this legislation today, because the government in its conduct has left no other conceivable way out. But, Mr. Speaker, if the government has in its mind that now, with this legislation, it can wash its hands of the situation and walk away from the situation and pretend that they have nothing to do with the situation, Mr. Speaker, they will indeed find themselves with a much larger and a much more troubling problem. The problem is bad enough as it exists today, Mr. Speaker, but the government has a duty to deal with this situation in a far more constructive way that we've seen to date.

The members across the way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are extremely agitated. Obviously they don't like to hear some of the facts of their record on post-secondary education put on the record so the people and the public of Saskatchewan can understand the magnitude of their failure in dealing with these issues. And I'm glad to see the hon. gentlemen are that agitated and that concerned about the situation, and they ought to be concerned about the situation, because their record in post-secondary education is a complete and an abject failure, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

As I have indicated before, if the members opposite would for once, Mr. Speaker, turn off their mouths and turn on their ears and listen to some of the things that are said in the debates in this legislature; if they would just listen to the answer to the question that they have been asking in terms of the legislation . . . Mr. Speaker, because of government failures in the past, right up to and including last week and this week, there is virtually no alternative but to move forward with this legislation. But, Mr. Speaker, it is a sorry day indeed for us in this House and for the University of Saskatchewan that it has come to that desperate measure.

Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the vote is called on this matter, with the greatest of reluctance I will support the legislation, depending, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on our work in Committee of the Whole. But the exam schedule must be allowed to proceed. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the government surely, even though they giggle and they chortle across the way, surely the government, the Deputy Premier, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Education who giggle from their chairs and make light of this catastrophe at the University of Saskatchewan, surely, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they can take no satisfaction in a desperate situation at that university that they themselves have contributed so enormously to creating.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, their giggles from their chairs will be recorded in the records of this debate, and the people of Saskatchewan who are concerned about that institution will have an opportunity to judge these comedians across the way who think this dispute is a joke, who think the introduction of this legislation is a joke, Mr. Speaker. That will be a part of the condemnation of the people of Saskatchewan who will vote against this bunch in droves — in Elphinstone and in Eastview and in the next general election — to remove them from office in the fastest and most expeditious

manner possible.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that a constituent who phoned me yesterday afternoon put this matter into perspective when he said to me that if the government had stayed out, perhaps things would have worked out.

Mr. Speaker, he felt that government intervention at this stage in the situation on the university campus was totally and utterly inappropriate. He communicated to me just yesterday evening, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that students, for the most part, basically, have their exams under control and their assignments handily in place. He indicated that most professors had handed in exams to the registrar's office ahead of time so that all exams, as we now know, are basically set for this Saturday and about half of the exams, or more than half of them in fact, are ready in total. Most profs have seen to it that provisions are in place so that students are not unduly penalized.

And so this brings me then to comment on the real issue at stake here in this legislation, and that is chronic underfunding for the University of Saskatchewan. And I'd have you know at this point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I worked for five years on the campus of the University of Saskatchewan as Lutheran chaplain to students and faculty at that institution.

I have walked through those hallways and met with countless numbers of students and faculty, met with people in administration, and know first hand, from my own firsthand experience, what some of these people at the various levels of academia are having to put up with and have had to put up with for the last seven years since this government has come into power.

Now the minister said earlier this afternoon that sooner or later the strike is going to have to be settled; sooner or later the strike will have to be settled. Yet this same minister refuses to address the real issue in this strike, looming underneath it like an iceberg, and that is underfunding.

Today he can jump into the fray on campus. But from the day that they were elected, they have starved the university campus of adequate funding for first-class, excellent education, and deprived Saskatchewan young people of an opportunity to grow and to learn and to become competitive, which is what this government likes to talk so much about, in a competitive world.

And, Mr. Speaker, one only has to step onto the campus of the University of Saskatchewan to see that starvation firsthand. Since this PC government has taken over in 1982, we've experienced 23 per cent less funding per student on the campus of the University of Saskatchewan — 23 per cent less funding per student in the last seven years. And most recently we see this kind of trajectory perpetuated with a 1.9 per cent increase in funding for universities in this most recent budget.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, everyone in Saskatchewan knows about the waiting lists for people to get into

hospitals. Maybe people aren't aware that there are some 15,000 people waiting to get into Saskatchewan hospitals, waiting for health care. Maybe they also don't know that there are waiting lists to get into the University of Saskatchewan, waiting lists to get into the university. For the first time in the University of Saskatchewan's history we've seen admissions quotas imposed on students entering the College of Arts and Sciences.

(1600)

And it isn't just that there are waiting lists to get in, but once you get into the university there are waiting lists to get into labs, to get into computer rooms, to get into professors' offices. Many people on the university campus like to joke about the waiting to get into parking lots to find a parking space, but when it comes to waiting to get into the university and to talk to a professor, they sure aren't joking.

This same minister says he doesn't want to put responsibility or blame on either side; he doesn't want to assign blame. But he handily ignores the fact that neither side has asked, in the first place, for his heavy-handed intervention. In fact just this morning in the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* president Kristjanson of the university, the headlines read, "attacks back-to-work orders from the government." Administration and faculty don't want and don't need this kind of government interference on their university campus.

They are owed an opportunity by this government to sit down together and to consult and to see whether they can't work out some of their own internal problems on their own terms, and not on the government's terms. It's absolutely unnecessary at this time.

This same Minister of Education, Mr. Speaker, says this afternoon that he is acting solely in the interests of the students. I say, what a joke this is. Both the press reports and the personal reports that I have heard indicate, as I have said, that exams are set for this Saturday. That's no problem for students; students aren't threatened in that regard. And if more than half of the exams have already been handed in to the registrar's office on the university campus, that certainly doesn't constitute a threat to students.

So to talk about being concerned solely about the interests of the students seems a little bit full of duplicity when the minister talks that way.

I talked to a student this morning, Mr. Speaker, who had the initiative to phone me here in Regina, and he said that personally he sees no problems with exams, that his own exams aren't threatened, and neither are those of most of the students, the majority of the students that he's talked to.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think it was interesting that this particular young fellow noted that he didn't believe that the university was in any way an essential service that needed to be legislated back to work. Now I think, Mr. Speaker, that that is rather an insightful remark for a young man on the university campus to make — that his own education, when it is jeopardized possibly to some

extent, isn't viewed as an essential services.

On the contrary — and this is what I was struck with — he saw the strike as essential for the future of not only his own education but for the larger educational picture on the university campus. And this was a perspective offered by a third-year student in the arts college at the University of Saskatchewan — that the strike itself, he said, was essential for the future of the university and for education.

And for this minister then to say that he is concerned solely about the welfare of students doesn't quite fit with some of the facts of underfunding and some of the issues involved in terms of the larger questions of university governance and the quality of education that we will find at that university in the years ahead.

The minister's concern certainly didn't wash with this young man, because for him, Mr. Speaker, it's . . . a student's education or degree doesn't mean very much in the first place because it comes from a second-class educational institution where faculty are dissatisfied, underpaid, under-equipped, where there is bickering and quarrelling between the university and the administration over the resources available for student education.

This young fellow said, if students come from an institution like that, a degree from such an institution is not going to mean very much down the road. And he pointed out that while he may be inconvenienced in the next few days or in the next week or two with respect to some of his class work or his exams, he would rather be inconvenienced in that regard than to carry through life a degree that was inferior because it came from a second-class institution — and it would show up on every job application to which he applied later in life — and have people laugh at it because it didn't come from a first-class educational institution where faculty had adequate salaries, where there were adequate facilities for students, and a first-class educational environment.

I must say that I was impressed with the remarks of this young man, and I think they are very pertinent and very telling to the kind of legislation that was brought in earlier this afternoon. This young man had the maturity to recognize that a person can't always take into consideration what's best for himself or herself. An individual, a student, as he said, can't just look at the end of their nose and think that that's reality, but they have to look further down the road and to see what is, in fact, in their larger best interests. And he certainly didn't feel, Mr. Speaker, that this legislation was in his best interests or in the best interests of the university campus as a whole. He labelled it "undemocratic", and he saw in it a threat to the democratic process, to the process of consultation, collaboration, communication — all measures by which the real underlying issues between faculty and administration are going to be settled in the final analysis.

Legislating the faculty back to work won't settle the larger internal issues between faculty and administration; it will simply gloss over them and never really get at the real problem. And what is the real problem? As I indicated, Mr. Speaker, underfunding. The underfunding for the University of Saskatchewan is the real issue, and we've seen that consistently in the last seven years from this

government. Fewer students granted admission to the University of Saskatchewan, and now if we look at the present effects of this underfunding in terms of the strike situation at the University of Saskatchewan, we just might have fewer faculty as well.

Underfunding, you see, will force faculty to look down the road to see what other educational institutions are available for them to teach at and are willing to recognize their services and to pay adequately for them. University faculty realized that they shouldn't have to work in an impoverished environment.

I talked just yesterday evening to a constituent who again had taken the initiative to phone me and to contact me rather than the other way around. He indicated that right now, at this time, he is holding an offer, considering an offer from another educational institution — he didn't indicate where — but that it was a very excruciating experience to go through this strike and to wonder what he should do with his future, whether he should strike out and accept a future at another institution of higher education that might fully recognize and appreciate his services, or if he should decide to tough it out here at the U of S which is chronically underfunded, and gets into situations where the administration and the faculty can't talk to each other because of this underfunding.

He also was concerned that civil rights are being violated by heavy-handed government tactics. And he said that in such a situation as this strike these civil rights have to be measured in terms, not of inconvenience to people, but in terms of fundamental individual human rights. And this was a key concern of his.

I talked also, Mr. Speaker, to yet another constituent yesterday evening. Again the constituent who initiated the contact with me to bring her concerns. And the major issue for this individual was what she termed, and I'll quote her, "the supreme arrogance" of this government in bringing in this legislation — "the supreme arrogance," she said.

Shut up and do as we say — that's the message she got from the Minister of Education — and if you don't like it, we'll shut you up. That's the message that she got. And I must say, Mr. Speaker, that she communicated to me her dissatisfaction at the pure rhetoric that she heard coming from the minister. And I'm giving voice to her words and her concerns now and not simply my own.

And so we see, Mr. Speaker, that individual members of the faculty at the University of Saskatchewan and individual students are in fact very concerned, not just about the strike, and not just about this legislation — although they certainly are — but fundamentally, Mr. Speaker, they are concerned about the future of the educational institution that they hold near and dear.

These are people who are committed to the University of Saskatchewan or they wouldn't have been there in the first place. And these are people who see no commitment, no corresponding commitment from their own provincial government adequately to fund their enterprise of teaching and learning in that academic environment.

I know, Mr. Speaker, from firsthand experience at the University of Saskatchewan campus, that the faculty there is committed. I know, again from firsthand personal experience, that the administration there is concerned about the quality of education that they offer to students. What's the problem then? If we have a faculty that's committed, if we have an administration that's concerned about the highest quality education that they can provide, what's the problem?

The problem is very squarely with the provincial government not funding the University of Saskatchewan adequately. That's the problem. The government is the problem. Underfunding is the problem. Because you can have all the commitment in the world from the faculty and you can have all the concern for high-class education on the part of the administration, but if they don't have money to work with, they won't get very far in terms of providing educational excellence. They won't get very far.

This government wouldn't be stepping in now to interfere with the independence of the university if it had been adequately funding it over the last seven years. Instead what we have seen is the administration having been pressed into the role of a miser. What else was the option if they didn't have money there? The administration has been pressed into the role of grasping, self-serving individuals, and that's certainly not the case in either instance, Mr. Speaker. These are people who are committed and concerned to what they're doing there on the university campus. But they are pressed into that role by this government that is totally unprepared to make a full and adequate commitment to excellence in education.

Just yesterday evening I visited with educators from the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and received a button that said, "Make Education a Priority." Make education a priority: it didn't say education is a priority, because with this government it isn't. We need the verb, "make," the imperative: make education a priority — because with this government it isn't. It isn't a priority on the elementary school level or the secondary level or the post-secondary level, and that's why we see the need for this government to bring in the legislation in heavy-handed fashion.

(1615)

This government has perpetrated the problems between faculty and administration at the University of Saskatchewan. I say, Mr. Speaker, it has perpetrated these problems over the past seven years because it has no substantial commitment to higher education and educational excellence at the University of Saskatchewan. I say that on the basis of firsthand experience; I say that on the basis of communications from students and faculty, from my constituency which adjoins the University of Saskatchewan directly.

And for these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I speak against this unnecessary, arbitrary, and undemocratic Bill 3. Thank you very much for your attention.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Even if the public is not aware of all the issues underlying the dispute, of all the issues underlying university underfunding, all the issues underlying the problem here before us, I think that the public and the people of Saskatchewan do understand some simple concepts such as preventative maintenance. Even if the words are long, I think they understand the concept.

I think people understand that in order for things to run successfully, you have to pay attention to the things. You have to make the minor repairs and the minor adjustments to make sure they run right. You make sure that the thing has the right fuel or energy so that it can run.

I think that people understand, for example . . . and most people have a car, and let's take the car as an example. Most people understand that their car needs a regular oil change from time to time. Most people understand that their car needs lubrication from time to time. People understand that you need these things to make sure that the car runs well, to make sure that you will avoid future repairs.

People know . . . and even if it's sometimes from painful experience, Mr. Speaker, they know that if you ignore something such as an oil change, and if you ignore something such as a grease job, that you will have problems in the future. They know that if you ignore the oil changes, your engine will ultimately wear out, and much faster than if you did not make the oil changes. They know that if you do not undertake the necessary lubrication that you're going to have to be spending money far ahead its time for things such as tie-rods. People know those things. People know that.

And I would submit, Mr. Speaker, so it is with the university. What we see today is the logical outcome, the logical outcome of years of underfunding, years of neglect by the PC government. I think that there is very little dispute on these points. I think that it's recognized by students, it's recognized by the teachers, it's recognized by the administrators in our universities. It's recognized also by the people of Saskatchewan. They know that successive budgets by the PC government have starved education, have starved health, have starved a number of things in this province. And so it is with the university, Mr. Speaker — starvation.

Now the government members will try to point out and try to make the pitch that, well we've increased operating grants to the universities; it's more today than it was in 1982 when we took office. And I would have to agree with them that they're correct. There's more money today for the universities than there was in 1982. It's true enough, but it's not enough.

What the government members fail to take into account, what they fail to mention, is that since 1982 we have seen an increase in inflation in the order of about 35 per cent. What they fail to mention, what they fail to take into account, is that there has been a substantial increase in student enrolment since 1982, and I think that enrolment increase is understandable given the limited employment

opportunities for our young people in Saskatchewan since 1982.

Increasingly, young people have gone to the universities to seek a better education, to better prepare themselves to take advantage of the limited job opportunities that there might be in this province and elsewhere in Canada. And I understand also that they're leaving Saskatchewan in record numbers, Mr. Speaker, to seek those opportunities elsewhere.

Well when you take all those things into account, when you take into account inflation, when you take into account increases in student enrolment, a different picture gets presented, and it becomes clear that real operating grants for students, per student, have declined drastically.

Operating grants, Mr. Speaker, in 1982-83 approached \$9,000 per student — 1982 is when the PC government took office in Saskatchewan — this has declined to \$6,900 per student in '87-88. This is a substantial decrease, a decrease of 23 per cent since the PC government took office. That's the Tory record — a Tory record of underfunding, a Tory record of neglect, and is it any wonder that we see now the outcome of that neglect? Is it any wonder that we see now the outcome of that underfunding, Mr. Speaker?

This Bill is not the first symptom or the first sign of that neglect. Reference has been made in this debate to crowded classrooms. Reference has been made in this debate to a shortage of facilities, facilities such as libraries, facilities such as laboratories, laboratory equipment.

Reference has been made to this House by university students as recently as yesterday, and throughout the years that this government has been in power, that they are underfunding, that they are undercutting higher education in this province. The government chooses to ignore that.

The university community knows these things painfully, and it's no surprise, Mr. Speaker, that the morale on the part of students, the part of teachers and our administrators at the university is at a very low ebb; that their morale is sinking and continues to sink. And it's no surprise that, given the neglect and underfunding that we experience, a dispute over wages and conditions within the university community should erupt. I think that's the logical outcome of the kind of neglect that we've seen from the PC government since they took office in 1982.

It's no surprise to the university, it's no surprise to this side of the House, and it's no surprise to the people of Saskatchewan. And it may be a surprise to the government, and that doesn't surprise me, Mr. Speaker. This government has an unenviable record of incompetence, neglect, and mismanagement.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the people of Saskatchewan, if they could speak today to the government, would say that it's time that the government came to its senses; that it's time that the government recognized that new priorities are needed in our province today. The government needs

to set out new priorities.

The people of Saskatchewan would say that it's time they recognize that you cannot neglect our most treasured institutions — whether it's our universities, whether it's medicare, whether it's our school system — that you cannot neglect these institutions and expect these institutions to continue to function effectively, to function as if there were no problems.

I think the people of Saskatchewan want to say that it's time that the government recognized that you cannot expect to continue to spend on waste, to spend on patronage, and have the necessary funds for the people's real priorities — real priorities such as health, real priorities such as education.

It's time the government recognized that you cannot afford to mismanage and still come out ahead. Even if the Premier of our province fervently believes that, I think the record now shows that you cannot afford to do that. And it's time that government listened to the people; it's time that the government understood that you cannot afford to mismanage.

It's time the government recognized that the people of Saskatchewan do not support continued neglect of our most important institutions — institutions such as our universities. And it's time that the Premier of Saskatchewan recognized that you cannot take all of your time, that you cannot spend all of your time on the trade deal and have the time to run the government here at home and to run it effectively. A Premier of this province can simply not take 90 per cent of his time or more to be flitting across this country and into the United States trying to preach a bad, bad trade deal to the people of those other jurisdictions, and have the necessary time to devote to the crucial issues here in this province. He will not have the time to deal adequately with the health care issues and the health care problems in this province. He will not have the time to make sure that crises such as this one that we're dealing with today do not arise. He will not have the time.

And my feeling is, Mr. Speaker, that should the government fail to recognize that . . . and I don't have very much more to say on this, Mr. Speaker, but I would say that should the government fail to recognize that, fail to recognize that you must begin to manage the affairs of the province competently; must for once stop this spending on patronage and waste; must begin to reprioritize our spending, to have less for waste, to have less for patronage, to stop spending \$34,000 a day, I believe it is, for vacant office space in this province . . .

The government needs to realize that you cannot make bad decisions as we've just witnessed the other day where you sell an office building for \$280,000, rent one-half of it back for \$370,000, and by anybody's figuring — with the possible exception of the members opposite — that's a bad deal and you're losing money; that you cannot continue to do those kinds of things if you want to have the money for the real priorities in this province, if you want to have the money for the priorities the people see as being necessary — priorities such as our universities, priorities such as medicare, priorities such as

agriculture, priorities such as our school system.

The government needs to understand what it is the people are saying. And I would venture to say, Mr. Speaker, that if the government chooses to ignore what it is the people are saying about what our priorities will be, that the people will speak loudly in the upcoming by-elections to give them that message and will let them know in uncertain terms that our priorities need to be restructured.

The last time, Mr. Speaker, we had a by-election, the Premier swallowed his pride and the Premier said, well, the people of Saskatchewan have spoken and we've been wrong in how we've spent our money and we're going to reprioritize and we're going to do things differently.

Mr. Speaker, why do we have to wait a further month to find out what the real situation and that there is a crying need for the government to change its priorities? Why do we have to wait that further month?

I say to the government, come to your senses. I say to the government, listen to the people. I say to the government, begin to put forward the priorities that the people of this province want. Fund the universities, make sure the universities have the adequate money to keep going, because you have not been providing that. You have not been providing that. And if you take the position, as you have in the past, that somehow, well, we're spending more money, that everything is okay, that I'm all right Jack, there's simply no problem out there, then I think that this government has an ostrich-like approach to governing — like an ostrich — that it chooses to ignore the real problems and the dangers that are out there.

(1630)

And there are real signals, Mr. Speaker, real signals that the people of Saskatchewan are dissatisfied with this government. And I think truer signals will come in a month's time, but that there are real signals that the people are sick and tired, sick and tired of the underfunding of our education system, and not just in the universities.

I had many people in my constituency express concerns to me about the underfunding of our school system. They see a need to increasingly put more money through their property taxes and unfair tax to support the local school system. They see themselves having to pay increasing sums every year for income taxes, personal taxes in this province to fund an education system. They see all those things, yet they see the quality of services declining.

They say to me and they say to members on this side — and I'm sure they say it to members on that side, but they don't seem to be listening — they say that my children will not have this program or that program in our education system that they had last year or the year before, because the money isn't there.

We've all heard many times over in this House the concerns expressed about health, the long waiting lists in Saskatoon and Regina, the inability of people to get the proper medical care and health care in this province, and that's a reflection again of the wrong priorities this

government has set in its spending. These people seem to believe that you can afford to continue to mismanage, afford to continue to misspend and still come out ahead, as the Premier said some few short years ago when he said, well, anybody can afford to mismanage Saskatchewan and still come out ahead.

And I think now we see the folly of that. Today reflects years of neglect and underfunding by the Tory administration in one specific example in the university system. We see that neglect in other areas, but in this particular case, this Bill comes as no surprise. The work stoppages comes as no surprise. The labour dispute comes as no surprise. The low morale in our universities comes as no surprise. The overcrowded class-rooms comes as no surprise. The inadequate laboratories comes as no surprise. None of these things come as a surprise to the people of Saskatchewan who understand some simple concepts: that if you have an institution and you want that institution to function well, you need to make sure that you provide that institution with the necessary funding; that you cannot starve that institution and expect that institution to function and to function well.

And this is one institution, Mr. Speaker, that I think we all have a stake in to make sure that it continues to function well; that it provides the educational opportunities for the young people of Saskatchewan and, I might also say, provides the kind of leadership that it has provided in the past for all of higher education in this country and in North America.

This Bill, Mr. Speaker, is a reflection of the misdeeds, the misspending, the mismanagement of that government. It's time they came to their senses. It's time they set new priorities so that we see no further need for this kind of band-aid, stopgap solutions to the real problems of this society. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a sad day to have to take part in a debate of this nature — a debate, Mr. Speaker, that is necessary, in large part, because of the policies of the Minister of Education and his inability, Mr. Speaker, to understand the problems of people working in post-secondary education in this province, and because of his lack of caring and appreciation for the University of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

To put this in context, Mr. Speaker, the first point I'd like to make is that we've seen a government that in the past year and a half, and particularly since the member from Weyburn has become the Minister of Education, has fostered continual industrial relations problems among all professional educators in this province.

And I want to review the record for a minute, Mr. Speaker, because first, Mr. Speaker, last year you will recall that we had a debate in this legislature on the decertification of technical institute instructors and staff in the province of Saskatchewan. And the government of this province, Mr. Speaker, chose very consciously to launch a direct attack on Saskatchewan's technical institutes by doing two things: first of all, by gutting the

institutions like Kelsey, and STI (Saskatchewan technical institute), and Wascana of some of their most experienced instructors, either by way of early retirements or by way of direct lay-offs, so that at Kelsey, for instance, we in effect saw the loss of almost one-third of the staff in the institution.

Then, Mr. Speaker, we saw a situation where the government brought in legislation that actually took away the trade union — the right of instructors to belong to the trade union that they currently belong to. In other words, we saw a decertification legislation, Mr. Speaker. And the faculty working in Saskatchewan's technical institutes and the instructors working in the urban-based community colleges in this province — in Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw and Prince Albert — lost their right to be represented by the Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union by way of legislation that the members opposite chose to bring into this Assembly.

So that was the first attack on professional educators, Mr. Speaker, was the initiative by this government to take away the right of instructors in Saskatchewan's technical institutes to belong to the union of their choice that had represented them up until the time of the legislation which was introduced late last year.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we saw a government that, as a result of its underfunding of the kindergarten to grade 12 system in this province, provoked a 16-month contract dispute between teachers in this province and the bargaining team that represents the provincial government and school trustees in the province of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, because of this government's underfunding of K to 12 education in this province with, in fact, a 1 per cent cut in school operating grants last year and then an increase of only 2 per cent in school operating grants this year, we saw a situation, Mr. Speaker, where it took 16 months for teachers to get a contract settlement with the bargaining team on which the government has major representation.

And once again therefore, Mr. Speaker, we saw a situation where, as a result of the government's underfunding of education in Saskatchewan, as a result of that underfunding, in effect, the morale of professional educators and their ability to feel that they were appreciated by the government of the day was severely curtailed.

Morale today, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan's technical institutes is dismal. People are depressed. Faculty there are depressed about the state of underfunding. They're depressed about the fact that their ability to bargain collectively has been very much interfered with by this government.

Teachers in Saskatchewan are upset that it took 16 months to get a contract settlement, Mr. Speaker, and that they had to come down to the legislature here in Regina and demonstrate in front of the legislature. More than 2,000 of them had to address the Minister of Education before he began to understand that the salary increases of, in effect, zero per cent, that were being proposed by the

bargaining team on which he has representatives, were unsatisfactory to the teaching profession and were putting at stake the quality of education in the province of Saskatchewan in the kindergarten to grade 12 system, Mr. Speaker.

Now I mention these two case examples because I believe they are directly relevant to the current difficulty that we are experiencing as a result of this government's policies at the University of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And that is, Mr. Speaker, that it doesn't matter whether we're talking about the technical institutes of this province, or we're talking about the kindergarten to grade 12 system of this province, or we're talking about our precious university system in the province of Saskatchewan, this government doesn't understand the importance of education in Saskatchewan. They don't understand the importance of quality education in the province of Saskatchewan. They don't understand the relationship between a fair salary increase for professional educators and the maintenance of those quality standards in education in the province of Saskatchewan. They don't understand, Mr. Speaker, that the professional educators in this province need to feel from time to time that they are genuinely appreciated by the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And so what we're seeing here is the third example, since the member for Weyburn became the Minister of Education, of a situation that has been allowed to develop that reflects, first of all, the dismal state of quality education in this province, in this case at our universities as a result of underfunding; and secondly, Mr. Speaker, that reflects the growing problem of morale in our educational institutions, in this case at the University of Saskatchewan. But in many ways this is not all that different in some important ways, Mr. Speaker, from the crisis that we saw developing in the K to 12 system and in our technical institutes in this province.

So this Bill, Mr. Speaker, I see this Bill as part of a continuing attack by this government, and particularly by this minister, on the educational system of the province of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, with that in mind, I want to specifically address some of the issues that this Bill raises. And the first point, Mr. Speaker, that I want to make is that Bill 3 comes about because this government has not been willing to make a priority of helping to bring the parties in this dispute together and, above all, to be willing to give them another chance to get back to the bargaining table.

When I look at how late the process of conciliation began and how few steps the Minister of Education has been willing to take to bring the parties in this dispute together, I'm appalled, Mr. Speaker. I'm appalled, and what is particularly appalling about this piece of legislation is that neither party in the dispute sought this legislation from the Minister of Education.

And the Minister of Education has just returned to the House after an absence, Mr. Speaker, and I . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order, order. The hon. member I'm sure realizes that he should not refer to

the absence of members.

Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Speaker, I respect your ruling. But I do want to say, Mr. Speaker, that neither party in this dispute asked for this Bill, Mr. Speaker. Neither party in this dispute asked the Minister of Education to intervene in the way that he's currently intervening.

I'm sure that both parties in the dispute would have welcomed any creative suggestions for the resolution of the dispute that the Minister of Education might have wanted to offer. But the minister chose not to offer creative solutions, Mr. Speaker. Instead, the minister offered only the heavy hand of government in the form of back-to-work legislation to settle this dispute. And he decided, Mr. Speaker, I think at a highly inappropriate time, to bring this legislation forward.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we've seen a situation in which the Minister of Education chose, shortly after the conciliator began his work, to threaten back-to-work legislation in this Assembly.

Last Wednesday, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education rose in this Assembly and made it very clear that he intended to intervene in this dispute if it wasn't very quickly settled. And, Mr. Speaker, from the time that the Minister of Education rose in this Assembly last Wednesday and threatened to intervene in this dispute, the process of conciliation was very, very seriously hampered.

(1645)

I invite the Minister of Education to go and talk to either of the parties in this dispute and I'm sure that they will candidly tell him that his statements in this House last Wednesday damaged the process of conciliation, damaged the collective bargaining process, and did absolutely nothing to enhance the ability of the two parties to work out an agreement. And I think, Mr. Speaker, that that is very, very, very unfortunate.

So. Mr. Speaker, we see now for the first time in Canadian history a government that is coming forward with back-to-work legislation for faculty members at a Canadian university. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that this first is a very sorry first, not just for the people of Saskatchewan, but for all Canadians.

And it sets a very, very dangerous precedent, Mr. Speaker — a very dangerous precedent in that, once introduced, once back-to-work legislation is introduced once in this Assembly for this kind of a strike situation, there's no reason to think that it won't be introduced again.

What guarantee, Mr. Speaker, do members, faculty members at the University of Saskatchewan have that they won't be faced with a similar situation on another occasion when they go on strike? And what sort of precedent does this set in terms of intervention by other provincial governments in similar disputes that may occur in other parts of Canada?

Now I say, Mr. Speaker, that this piece of legislation is going to be highly divisive. I'm not sure if the Minister of

Education recognizes, Mr. Speaker, how much this Bill will damage industrial relations at the University of Saskatchewan, but I say to him, Mr. Speaker, that if this Bill is passed, the Minister of Education will have done untold damage to the relations between faculty and administration, and between faculty members themselves, in some cases, on the University of Saskatchewan campus.

This policy, Mr. Speaker, seeks to pit faculty members against faculty members. It seeks to pit faculty members against university administration. It seeks to pit faculty members against students, Mr. Speaker. It seeks to foster further division on the University of Saskatchewan campus. And I say to the Minister of Education, as the member for the university area, I should know better than he what the implications of this Bill will be.

I suspect, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Education needs to take a good deal more time to study what the implications of this legislation will be on the future of industrial relations on the University of Saskatchewan campus, because I say to the Minister of Education that this Bill will foster further disharmony and create more problems in industrial relations on the University of Saskatchewan campus than it will resolve. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, it's highly inappropriate at this point in time.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's my contention that despite the fact that there is certainly going to be great inconvenience to students caused by the continuation of the strike — no one denies that there will be significant inconvenience caused to students. That is, if the exam schedule is delayed for more than another two or three days, there will be very, very significant inconvenience caused the students on the university campus. And I don't dispute the Minister of Education's claims in that regard at all, Mr. Speaker — but I say, Mr. Speaker, that the only time that back-to-work legislation can be justified in this province is if there is a legitimate emergency.

And I say to the Minister of Education that at this point, Mr. Speaker, we do not have an emergency on the university campus. And surely, Mr. Speaker, no one is going to argue that, in the traditional sense of the word, the work of university faculty is an essential service in this province. This is not for a moment to demean the great importance of the work of the university faculty to this province and to the University of Saskatchewan.

But surely, Mr. Speaker, no one can argue that their service is an essential service. Their service is not, for instance, equivalent to the service of health workers where, if the services of health workers and hospital workers are withdrawn, the health of certain people, or the lives of certain people in this province may be jeopardized. This is not an equivalent situation to that at all, Mr. Speaker, and for that reason alone, the government should have great pause to be bringing in back-to-work legislation.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill has come about because the government of this province has been unwilling to look to alternative solutions to avoid this very serious crisis now on the University of Saskatchewan campus in terms of industrial relations, this very serious breakdown

in industrial relations between faculty and administration. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that the alternative for the government was obvious. If this government had brought in a funding increase to the University of Saskatchewan of even 5 or 6 per cent; if the funding increase for this year had at least reflected the rate of inflation that we're currently experiencing in this province, I say, Mr. Speaker, that I am confident that the current dispute could have been resolved at the bargaining table. I have no doubt at all, Mr. Speaker, that the current dispute between faculty and administration would have, in large part, certainly with respect to salary matters . . .

There are other important issues in this dispute. There is at stake in this dispute a great deal more than just the question of salary. The whole question of quality of education in the province of Saskatchewan at the university is at stake. The question of the right of faculty members to have input into administrative appointments at the University of Saskatchewan is at stake.

But clearly, one of the issues — two of the issues, in fact — that could have been resolved by a funding increase to the university are the questions of salary and are the questions of quality of education in so far — particularly as it relates to the university's ability to hire additional faculty, to hire additional staff and to correct many of the problems that relate to the underfunding of important services like library services at the University of Saskatchewan. And I have no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that an increase of 5 or 6 per cent would have at least provided the additional funds that were required to get a contract settlement on salary matters in the current dispute.

And if this government had been serious about avoiding this very difficult dispute that the university is currently facing, it would have given the University of Saskatchewan the three or four additional millions of dollars that it needed to avoid the current crisis.

Now I say, Mr. Speaker, that what we have instead, then, is a government that has determined that its solution to the problems of the University of Saskatchewan will be ones of what I would describe as manipulation. Rather than dealing with the urgent issue of the underfunding of the university; rather than being willing to put more money into improving the quality of education at the University of Saskatchewan; rather than being willing to provide additional funding to hire the extra faculty and staff members that are needed to avoid many of the overcrowded classrooms that we see on the University of Saskatchewan campus; and rather than being willing to improve funding to the university so that faculty members could begin to be paid in a manner equivalent to the salary scales that are offered at other universities on the Prairies — because at the present time, Mr. Speaker, faculty members at the University of Saskatchewan are paid less, in many cases significantly less, than their counterparts at other universities in Saskatchewan and Alberta and Manitoba, Mr. Speaker — if the government had been willing to come forward with the additional funding that is required, then I say, Mr. Speaker, that this legislation would have been unnecessary. I say that the Minister of Education would not have needed to bring in this Bill. I say that the current dispute would not have

existed.

So what we're seeing today, Mr. Speaker, is a government that is, in effect, diverting attention from the major issue, which is the underfunding of the University of Saskatchewan, and therefore, Mr. Speaker, trying to resolve the current difficulties on the university campus in a completely inappropriate way, by in effect using the heavy hand of law by introducing back-to-work legislation instead of using the more thoughtful and gentle hand, and more appropriate hand, of improving the funding of the University of Saskatchewan in the province of Saskatchewan.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill not only jeopardizes industrial relations on the university campus in the short term, but it threatens the ability for effective collective bargaining in the longer term on the university campus, because a government that's willing to introduce back-to-work legislation once, is a government that is, in effect, hanging the threat of back-to-work legislation on University of Saskatchewan faculty for many, many years to come. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that that's very, very inappropriate indeed.

What we have, Mr. Speaker, what we in effect have in this legislation is a naked attempt to postpone the collective bargaining process that simply invites future strife and does nothing to resolve current difficulties.

Mr. Speaker, I think that it's noteworthy that this Bill in fact provides no mechanism at all for resolving the current dispute. I suppose that if the government had been serious about a mechanism for resolving the current dispute — I want to make it clear I'm not advocating at all the introduction of back-to-work legislation — but if they were serious about providing a mechanism in this Bill for resolving the dispute, they would have provided probably some mechanism for binding arbitration, Mr. Speaker. But I note with interest that there's no such mechanism in this Bill.

There is no such mechanism in this Bill, and I suspect that one of the reasons why there's no such mechanism in this Bill is that binding arbitration might have required a significant increase in the amount of money that the administration would ultimately have offered the faculty members of the University of Saskatchewan. And in effect, Mr. Speaker, that would have forced this government to increase the budget of the University of Saskatchewan in the current fiscal year, and this government didn't want to do that, Mr. Speaker.

I suspect that that's one of the reasons why there is not provision for binding arbitration in this Bill, because that would've meant that the government would have to have been prepared to take the risk, to put more money into the U of S operating budget, and they weren't prepared to do that, Mr. Speaker. I suspect that that demonstrates their real motives in introducing this Bill; their motive, namely, that they're unprepared to properly fund the universities in this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to particularly point to some of the specific inadequacies in this Bill before I address, in detail, the larger issue of university funding. And I want to

particularly draw the Minister of Education's attention to two aspects of the Bill.

The first one, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that this Bill, apart from being a very bad and inappropriate piece of legislation, directly interferes with the autonomy, the academic autonomy, of the University of Saskatchewan. And I want to explain, Mr. Speaker, specifically how that comes to be the case.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education, in bringing down this Bill, has made a provision under which the mediator has a mandate to not only deal with salary issues in this dispute but also to deal with questions such as the request by university faculty to have more input into administrative appointments at the University of Saskatchewan.

It deals with such issues, Mr. Speaker, as the request that the faculty are making to have a joint committee of faculty and board of governors established to look at the whole question of faculty input into administrative appointments.

That, Mr. Speaker, is clearly an internal matter for the University of Saskatchewan. And yet this Bill, Mr. Speaker, provides for the mediator to report to the Minister of Labour on a number of questions, including the question of faculty members having input into administrative appointments.

There's nothing in this Bill that excludes the mediator from reporting on that issue, Mr. Speaker, nothing at all. And that's one example . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order. It being five o'clock, this House does now stand recessed until 7 p.m.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.