

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It certainly gives me a lot of pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the members assembled, a group of cadets from Wilkie constituency out of the town of Macklin. They are out of the 601 Air Cadet Squadron from Macklin, Saskatchewan. They are from grades 7 to 12. They are accompanied by their chaperons, Mr. Skinner and Mrs. Logan and Mrs. Wandler. They are also accompanied by their teacher, Lieutenant Mychan, and Officer Cadet Stephens. Mr. Speaker, there are 28 of them, and I would like to welcome them in the usual manner, and I would ask the members assembled to help me do that.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Britton: — Mr. Speaker, while I have your attention and still on my feet, I would like to also introduce to you and through you some more visitors very special to me; it's my daughter and her husband, Ken Bast, and their two children, Keri and Chad, and their friend, Jodi Sperle, from Unity.

The reason it's very special to me today, Mr. Speaker, is my granddaughter, Keri, who is nine years old, is here to take part in the Telemiracle search for talent. She'll be singing tomorrow, and needless to say I'm very proud to introduce to you my family . . .

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and to all members of this House, three very important constituents of mine in the persons of David, Stephanie and Betty Calvert, and reflecting on the comments just made by the minister, it's my hope that Stephanie Calvert will not sing in this Assembly today. I would ask all members to join me in welcoming these guests of mine.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Employment Situation in Saskatchewan

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment. Mr. Minister, the unemployment figures for March are out, and quite frankly I'm shocked. In the month of March there were 45,000 people out of work in the province of Saskatchewan — up 4,000 from a year ago. That's a number equivalent, Mr. Minister, to 80 per cent of the population of Melville.

And I ask you, Mr. Minister, I ask you: will you now admit that your government's budget plans for employment are totally inadequate to meet the needs of the people of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Speaker, clearly it has been a long winter, as happens every year in Saskatchewan, and unemployment goes up every winter, and it's unfortunate that more people can't be employed at this time. However, the record of employment of this government is quite good.

I might say that, Mr. Speaker, for example, in the last year the retail and wholesale employment is up 7,000, services are up 2,000, construction up 3,000, due mostly to the Saskatchewan home program — it was a policy of this government — and unfortunately agricultural employment is down 10,000. And it's quite clear that the world economic situation is raising havoc in agriculture. The members of this side of the government realize that and have done a lot to assist agriculture, but that is the main reason for the increase in employment, is the difficulty in the agricultural sector.

Mr. Hagel: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you say your record is good; the numbers speak for themselves. The actual rate of unemployment in Saskatchewan today, Mr. Minister, is 9.2 per cent — higher than the national average. The seasonally adjusted rate for unemployment in Saskatchewan is 7.9 per cent, higher than the national average. Other provinces are doing better, Mr. Minister, and quite frankly your plans are not working. I ask you: will you tell this House what new initiatives your government is willing to undertake to create employment for the people in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we are dealing here with numbers; we are dealing here with people. These are not statistics; these are actual people we're talking about. And for some people it is difficult because of the agricultural situation, but overall Saskatchewan is doing quite well under the circumstances.

We are third in the unemployment race, or in the statistics. We are third best if you take it seasonally adjusted, when you allow for the winter season. We are now behind Alberta, that's why overall we are fourth. We are now behind Alberta. Alberta is recovering, is down to 8.8 per cent; we are now at 9 per cent. I am pleased to see that Alberta is recovering. I am pleased to see that the energy industry is improving, and that is also happening in Saskatchewan under our policies, and you will see greater improvement as we go into the spring.

Mr. Hagel: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, let's talk about young people. You've been known to brag about your government creating 4,000 summer jobs for students. That's exactly the same number of jobs that were lost to the province of Saskatchewan in the last year. Youth employment in this province fell by 2,000 over the past 12 months. The rate of unemployment for young people . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order. Please get to the question, the supplementary.

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Minister, in view of the fact that the rate for unemployment for young people in the province of Saskatchewan aged 15 to 24 is now at 15.9 per cent unemployed — one out of every six — I ask you, Mr. Minister, will you now admit that your Opportunities '88 program is woefully inadequate, and that stronger measures must be taken to ensure that our young people will have reason to stay in this province and not leave to other provinces in this country? Will you give that assurance to young people in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will give the assurance that students will have jobs this summer. They had a record number of jobs last year, and we will try to achieve a record again this year. But we will match last year's performance this year because the economy outside of agriculture is strong, as strong as can be expected in an agricultural province.

But what you should know, Mr. Speaker, is that we have policies, and one of them is freer trade. And the members opposite are opposed to that policy.

You should also know that in the past year there are 4,000 more women employed in this province than there were a year ago. So women are doing very, very well. The unemployment problem deals primarily on the male side these days. And in that area we have to continue with the policies of freer trade and building the economy, and we will do so.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, the people in Saskatoon will take special interest in your initiatives for employment. You will know that today in Saskatoon literally one out of every eight people in Saskatoon are without work, and that's simply not acceptable. I ask you, Mr. Minister: have you targeted any job creation programs for the city of Saskatoon, or do we just simply assume, do we assume that you and your government just don't care about working people in the city of Saskatoon?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, for the past six years Saskatoon has been the fastest growing city in Canada. That would mean that Saskatoon has had more job creation than anywhere in western Canada. I don't know if we can take on the city of Toronto where they have certain advantages that we don't have in western Canada, but I can tell you that . . .

An Hon. Member — Like free trade.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — As my member points out, they have free trade in automobiles, and we don't have free trade in what matters to us. But the city of Saskatoon has grown so fast it is attracting people and job seekers. People go where the jobs are, and they have the same situation that Alberta had in their boom. In the boom, Alberta had fairly high unemployment because

everybody who was unemployed went there. Saskatoon is a good place to be, and that's where people are going.

Travel Expenses for MLAs

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, my question I suppose now is to the Acting Deputy Premier, whoever that might be. And, Mr. Minister, it shows in the public accounts for the fiscal year '85-86 that the member for Morse, who was at the time the Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, and later to the Provincial Secretary, had taxpayers pay for 25 out-of-town trips, 22 of which took him to his . . . took him to Swift Current, the closest major centre to his home riding. He spent some \$3,900 of taxpayers' money travelling to his home despite the fact that he was paid, like all MLAs, an MLA's allowance for such travel.

And I ask, Mr. Minister: given your government's tight-fisted approach to health, education, and other areas, do you think that this is fair?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of the exact details of what the hon. member raises. That is something that we can certainly look into, Mr. Speaker, other than to say this, other than to say this. I think members on both sides of the House will acknowledge that there are few members elected . . . in my 10 years in this Assembly there is few people elected that are not on the cabinet benches that work harder than the member from Morse, very few members that I've seen . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, that particular member is working on agriculture policy 12 months of the year. Now for the member opposite to stand up and raise a question like that in the face of, in the face of, Mr. Speaker . . . and what I understood, always understood the tradition of the legislature and question period to be, to raise the key and fundamental issues of the day, it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that particular member could learn a lesson in the tradition of the legislature and how we deal with that.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — New question, new question, Mr. Speaker. I don't disagree with the minister that that member works hard, as all members of this House work hard.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — And I don't disagree that he should have time to spend with his family, like all members of the legislature. That's why all MLAs have a travel allowance. And the question here is one of members of the government being paid money on top of the travel allowance for trips home.

Mr. Minister, I'd like to just raise another case, and this is

the member for Saltcoats in that same year travelled to his home in Spy Hill while he was Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture. He spent some \$1,400 taking 16 trips to his home at Spy Hill. And again I ask you: why should the people of Saskatchewan be paying for these trips twice?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I find it interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the member from Regina Victoria, whose riding is across the lake, across the lake, Mr. Speaker, is being critical somehow of the members of this side of the House who are legislative secretaries. And what a Legislative Secretary is, Mr. Speaker, is somebody that does work over and above simply being a private member . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Order.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Over and above, Mr. Speaker, members who are in fact simply private members or back-benchers, and that's what their function is. Now somebody to do that, are we suggesting somehow that they should do that out of their own pocket? Is that what the hon. member is suggesting?

An Hon. Member — Or that they should only be from Regina?

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Or that they should only be able to . . . a member like him, the government happens to be in the city of Regina, and the member happens to be representing Morse. He's doing extra duties, Mr. Speaker, and we are being denied the right to have a trip back home, back and forth to his riding? Let's be serious, Mr. Speaker — let's be serious, Mr. Speaker. That is what they're doing as a service to the people, and I think that is perfectly proper.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I think most of the public in Saskatchewan is used to that minister's tortured explanation of using government money for trips.

Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, in the year under question the member for Saltcoats travelled to his home town fair in Spy Hill, like any member of the legislature might do, whether they're from North Battleford or Moose Jaw or anywhere. Mr. Minister, most of us would not say that we are representing a minister . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. The member is asking a supplementary and he is getting into a rather lengthy preamble, and I would ask him to get to his question.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — My question is, Mr. Minister, most of us would not bill \$150 for such a trip. Can you explain why the people of Saskatchewan should pay for that particular trip?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, let me explain to the hon. member how this institution works. There's individuals who are members of the cabinet or the

treasury benches, there's members who are legislative secretaries, and there is private members, Mr. Speaker. That's the way it works. And the Legislative Secretary does work over and above what a private member does. And that work . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the member yells about crop insurance . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order. Order. Order. The member is trying to answer the question. There's interference from both sides of the House. We're on the verge of entering into debate with members from their seats. I ask the hon. members to please refrain from interruptions and allow the minister to answer the question.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite shout and yell that somebody is working with crop insurance. Crop insurance over the last three or four years, for members that don't happen to come from rural Saskatchewan, is a pressing and important issue. There is hundreds and hundreds of people wanting to see members, and the members that deal with that are dealing with that on a daily basis.

Agriculture has been a critical and fundamental issue that we have to deal with, and the member is dealing with that. And I think it's somewhat hypocritical for the member from Regina Victoria, who does nothing but simply sit here for 70 days and then go to his riding across the street, to somehow criticize a rural member who works day in and day out for the farmers of this province, and we should be proud of that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Child Hunger Problems in Saskatoon

Ms. Atkinson: — My question is to the Minister of Social Services, and whether or not the minister chooses to believe it, there are children going hungry in the city of Saskatoon. One group, the Friendship Inn, estimates it serves 14,000 meals to hungry children each year. About 45 per cent of those receiving assistance from the Saskatoon Food Bank are under the age of 11.

Businesses, service clubs, parents, and teachers have put up money to provide lunches for 30 to 75 students each day in Saskatoon schools, yet you still refuse to open up your nutrition program for children in inner-city schools in the city of Saskatoon. What is the reason for that, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Well, Mr. Speaker, again the NDP are dealing with numbers. My duty as Minister of Social Services is to deal with children and to assist children. And the NDP keep up the rhetoric of hungry children, but never have they ever sent me the name of a hungry child. And I give the people of Saskatchewan this commitment: that if the name of a hungry child is referred to me, that child will receive food and will continue to receive food and care until it becomes an adult, if necessary, however long it takes. That's all the NDP have to do. For once, send me the name of people who are in need, and I will help them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, if children are hungry their attention span is not the same, they aren't able to learn, and they don't have the same energy as nourished children. They are disadvantaged, Mr. Minister, from the beginning. Why won't your government declare an all out war on child hunger in the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, this is astonishing. If the members of the NDP know children who are in need and refuse to send the names of those children to me so I can help them, I would say that is immoral behaviour. To know if there are children who are neglected and not to seek help for them and not ask me to go out and directly have my workers help those children is truly immoral on the part of the NDP. They are interested in these children for political purposes, but they are not interested in helping these children. I will help them if they will identify these children for me.

Ms. Atkinson: — Along with hungry children there are also a lot of homeless people in Saskatoon, particularly homeless youths. Mr. Minister, you told a Saskatoon radio station that these people are homeless by choice. Mr. Minister, that statement is too ludicrous to comment. My question, Mr. Minister, is: where are your priorities? How can you spend \$34,000 a day on empty office space in this province when there are children going hungry and there are kids on the street that don't have homes? How can you do that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, every month this government spends \$16 million on welfare to assist people. That would be approximately \$500,000 per day, and included in that is the right of every citizen in Canada to come for assistance if they need it. And when they come, and if they need assistance, they are given money for food, shelter, clothing and the necessities of life. Included in that assistance is shelter, and everyone receives an allowance for shelter if they are in need of shelter. If these people will come to my office in Saskatoon, we will provide shelter for them.

Contingency Plans for Drought Conditions

Mr. Goodale: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of the Environment, in his responsibility for the Saskatchewan Water Corporation.

The minister will know that I asked him a question on March 31 about the threat of very dry conditions across southern Saskatchewan this spring. And the minister in his answer indicated that contingency plans were being put in place to try to deal with that situation.

I would like to ask the minister if he could provide some specific detail on those contingency plans. What will the components of that plan be, and when would the minister make the detail of that available generally to municipalities and to farmers and others who are very

concerned about this impending crisis?

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Thank you for that question. Yes, I don't mind at all telling you what the plan is.

The Department of Environment and the water corporation, together, have worked diligently over the past two and a half months, and what they're doing is putting in place a map that will show the availability of water for almost every quarter section in the province, wherever there is water. Now some areas, there is no underground water than can be tapped.

Any community or any individual who comes forward and indicates that they have a need of additional water supplies are being dealt with on a day-to-day basis. I believe that the corporation and the Department of Environment, by jointly working, have done a real good job in assisting people to locate alternate sources of water. We do have programs that provide for assistance in drilling of new wells if that's the need. We have pipe equipment and pumps to pump water from one reservoir to the other if that is the need. So it's an individual basis by community or by farm. As they bring forward their concern, we're dealing with it, and I believe it's been working very well up to this point.

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the minister if he has in mind . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order. Is the member asking a new question or a supplementary?

Mr. Goodale: — It's a supplementary, Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. I would like to ask the minister if he has specific financial assistance in mind for this year beyond established ongoing programs, specific new financial assistance to deal with what is a new and unusual situation this year. And I wonder if the minister could direct his attention specifically to the village of Limerick where the reservoir is already dry, and they simply cannot afford the capital cost entirely on that village to find an adequate solution to their problem.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — We have a number of programs in place. We are not putting in place brand-new programs to deal with this issue, because I believe the department and the water corporation both have been working for a number of years to provide assistance to communities such as Limerick.

My staff have been in Limerick a number of times and have worked very closely with the community. They do have a difficulty that's very severe, and we're looking at it. I believe in their circumstance they have located a source of water in a gravel pit that's something like four miles or four and a half miles from the town, and they are now looking at what the costs might be to dig a well and to move that water that distance. I haven't final figures, but they certainly are looking at Limerick as a community that needs help.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Renovations to Sask Power Headquarters

Mr. Solomon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation. Mr. Minister, we are informed that extensive renovations have taken place in the executive offices at SPC's headquarters in Regina. Can you confirm to this House that one of the offices under renovation is that of the \$200,000-a-year man, Mr. George Hill, former president of the PC Party of Saskatchewan, and can you tell the House the cost of these renovations?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I will confirm that there has been a renovation done on the 12th floor of the SaskPower building. I do not know the cost, but I suggest that it's minimal, Mr. Speaker. And the reason that I say that is I was over there the other day to visit with the board and the president and the chairman of the board, and I noticed that in the renovation there were several more people moved up from the 10th floor, and the chairman's office is a whole lot smaller than it once was, and the president's office is a whole lot smaller than it once was, and the board room was moved down further to the end of the building to accommodate these people that were moved up from the 10th floor. Mr. Speaker, I will take notice of the question and get some precise detail as to the renovations.

Mr. Solomon: — Mr. Speaker, to the same minister. In January of this year the same George Hill appeared on a television program, province-wide, produced by SaskPower. In that program he said the SPC, in order to get its financial house in order, had decided to eliminate all discretionary spending. Could you tell this Assembly, when you take notice again and when you come back, that if extensive renovations to Mr. Hill's office was discretionary spending, and if so, why the taxpayers of Saskatchewan should pick up the tab for his extravagant tastes in times when children are going hungry in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I don't understand this guy, Mr. Speaker. He talks about extravagant tastes and smaller offices, Mr. Speaker, I remember when the hon. Neil Byers and the hon. John Messer were ministers responsible for that Crown too, and they had a ministerial suite over in that building. Today there is no ministerial suite in that building, Mr. Speaker, and in fact the offices for the president and the chairman are smaller than they were only a few months ago. I don't know what he's talking about. He's just out of touch with reality, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order.

STATEMENT BY MR. SPEAKER

Ruling on a Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I wish to make a statement on an issue which arose yesterday. Yesterday before orders of the day, the member for Regina North

East raised a point of order concerning firstly, whether the Deputy Premier had taken proper notice of the questions put to him the day before; and secondly, the length of the Deputy Premier's reply to the questions taken on notice.

It is the usual practice of this Assembly that when a minister is asked an oral question, he may answer it directly or take notice and bring back an answer on a later date. At the same time, however, some leeway has been given to the minister to make a very brief but general response while undertaking to bring back a specific answer another day.

I have reviewed the verbatim records for April 6 and April 7, '88. It is apparent in the record that the Deputy Premier did take notice of a question asked during oral question period on April 6. That day there were three questions asked by two members regarding delays in admission of patients for surgery. The minister made responses to all three, but only on the second question did he take notice.

Notwithstanding his initial responses and the fact that he actually took notice of only the second question, the Deputy Premier rose in the Assembly yesterday indicating that he wanted to deal with all three questions.

I find this a breach of the accepted guide-lines of question period. In effect, the Deputy Premier took the opportunity to answer the question twice, and used up time in question period.

I want to address the length of the Deputy Premier's answer. From the record it is clear that the member for Saskatoon Nutana's question was posed in such a way as to provoke a lengthy answer. The Deputy Premier's response was indicative of this, as he strayed from specific topic to speculate on the motives for asking the question.

Having said that, I still find that the Deputy Premier's response of a little over four minutes was inordinately long. For the reasons cited, I find the member for Regina North, his point of order well taken. I therefore urge ministers to clearly state to the House when he is taking notice of a question. When taking notice, comments should be brief.

I also urge all members to ensure that questions and answers are not posed in such a way as to provoke debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE (BUDGET DEBATE)

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. Lane that the Assembly resolve itself into the Committee of Finance.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, it's with a great deal of pleasure that I enter this budget debate here in the . . . now in the 10th year in this legislature, representing the people in the Meadow Lake constituency. And it's with a great deal of pride that I do that once again, to stand and speak on their behalf in support of this very forward-looking and excellent budget.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say a few words before I get into the substantive portion of my remarks as it relates to the Department of Health and all of the very many things that are going on there, to speak just for a few moments about the constituency that I have the honour to represent here.

We had an example just this morning in the question period from the member from Regina Victoria, speaking about and asking questions and suggesting that members from outside of this city should not be using the government aircraft, members who have responsibilities which are far beyond the responsibilities of the members serving their own constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I'm one who represents a constituency which is a good long way from this city of Regina, this capital city. My riding, Mr. Speaker, to put that into context, the town of Meadow Lake, the largest in my riding, is the same distance from here as is Winnipeg, just so people will know that. The member from Morse comes from the area around Swift Current. There were questions asked about his use of government airplanes, and so on.

Mr. Speaker, the point here in all of this, and the point that always strikes a chord with me when those members who are very urban in nature . . . that urban member from Regina Victoria, who as the member . . . as my seat mate said, can just walk over to the other side of the lake and be home in his constituency. I take very great exception to that because I believe the people of this province, as I know very well the people in my constituency, very much want executive positions, extra work to be done beyond that which you do for your own constituency, to be done by members . . . not only members who are from proximity . . . in close proximity to the capital city, but to be done by members who are from all parts of this province, and therefore represent the feelings and the views of people from all parts of this very large province that we are very proud to represent.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — So I take great exception to those questions.

Mr. Speaker, this 1988-89 budget is a substantial indication of the priority our government places on the well-being of all of the people here in this province. It provides a meaningful balance between our social and economic structures, and is clearly designed to improve the quality of life for all of our people.

Mr. Speaker, this is an honest budget — an honest budget. It's one that reflects our current economic state. We were willing to lay the facts on the line and to seek solutions to the issues which face our province in a partnership with our people. And because it's an honest budget, I

congratulate the Minister of Finance, my colleague, congratulate him for the way in which he's approached this.

Mr. Speaker, as he said in the budget . . . in his budget address, and as others have said before in this debate, what government is about to a large extent, is making choices, Mr. Speaker, our Minister of Finance has made choices; we on these benches, this Progressive Conservative government has made choices in the development of this budget. And, Mr. Speaker, judging from the reaction in the province from the people representing the various sectors, they have been agreeing with the choices that we have made. So for that I congratulate the Minister of Finance for an honest budget, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, this is a responsible budget. It's one that recognizes the priorities that exist within our social structure. Equally, the Minister of Finance has reinforced our commitment to good management in this province. Once again, Mr. Speaker — choices. We made those choices and we made those choices, and he expressed those choices in his budget address with good management of this province very much in the forefront.

Mr. Speaker, this is a budget of determination, one that clearly states the intent of our government to meet the challenges facing our people, not only now, not only in the present, but on and into the future.

This is a budget that respects the right of our people to choose, encourages responsible decision making, and invites personal involvement in the affairs of our province. And that's extremely important to all of our citizens, once again, Mr. Speaker, wherever they might live, for the benefit of those members who don't have a sense of this province being beyond this city.

This is a budget that boldly states the vision of our government for the future of Saskatchewan. That vision is one of partnership, of equality, and of the willingness to listen and respond to the needs and aspirations of our people in formulating government policy. We believe in the principle of government as the servant and not as the master, Mr. Speaker. That's on the back of every card that every member of the Progressive Conservative Party carries proudly in this province. We believe in government as the servant and not the master.

And in serving, Mr. Speaker, in serving in that way, we make choices. People will make choices. There's no clear policy direction coming from those benches throughout this debate, Mr. Speaker, those opposition benches. No clear policy alternatives.

My colleague from Indian Head-Wolseley said that very clearly in his contribution to this debate the other day. They are not offering alternatives. They are standing there with the same inflamed rhetoric that they have had for a number of years, scare tactics, hiding behind the anonymity of large numbers which mean nothing. What means something, Mr. Speaker, as my colleague said

earlier in question period — individuals and the cases and the collection of those individuals. So there are no clear policy directions coming from over there.

Mr. Speaker, our budget, as I said, represents choices that governments must make, and it represents the proper choices that I believe this government has made.

Let there be no mistake, Mr. Speaker, solid, sound health care is and always has been our top social priority in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan people — that's the nature of our people. It's the nature of our people. We in Saskatchewan are committed to preserve and improve the quality and accessibility of health care services for our people, and equally committed to responsible management of the system — a very key point.

Our record speaks for itself, Mr. Speaker. When we came to office we faced a system that was the victim of choices that had been made by another government that was here. I acknowledge when they were in government, as we must, they made choices. Mr. Speaker, I submit to you, and I have submitted to you in the past, they made the wrong choices. They did not make proper choices as it relates to the management of a very large system.

Rehabilitation services. Some examples: drugs and alcohol and the abuses that go on there. They did not make the proper choices there; in fact, they ignored these things. A moratorium on the construction of nursing homes for our senior citizens — those were the choices that they made.

Major hospital regeneration was needed. In some halcyon days — in some days when there was some money from potash, money from oil, agriculture was up — all of those things were taking place on the revenue side of the ledger, and they made choices, Mr. Speaker, and the choices that they made were . . . to a large degree ignore many of those things that I've just mentioned. Mr. Speaker, those were not responsible choices. The choices we have made have been responsible ones.

Mr. Speaker, there are basically two tracks that we must be on when something as large as this enterprise, this health care enterprise, any time we are developing a budget, and we've done it now for six years. And those tracks are the following: obviously there is the track of this budget in this fiscal year for the present, for the here and now, if you will. That's one track, and it's an extremely important one, and it is the one that will raise questions, and it is the one through which people will raise questions. And there will be debate as time goes on, and there will be a crisis here, and so on, as time goes on. That's the case, and we know that, and we recognize that.

But there's another track which is very important, and a track which I submit we have approached in a very responsible way and that the former government did not. And that second track is a visionary one, it's one of planning, it's one of accepting the responsibility that comes with occupying these executive benches and saying, what will this enterprise, what will this health care system look like? How will it serve our people, not only now, but not in this fiscal year, or next Tuesday, or however, but how will it look in 1995, for example? What

will it be like at the turn of the century, in the year 2000, because each of us who occupies these benches for whatever period of time has a responsibility to look forward?

Mr. Speaker, that second track is the track which takes us to the regeneration of the hospitals. Some of the things that have been going on here recently, some of the building programs that have been going on, some of the recognition of the demographics of this province where we have our numbers of senior citizens rising and so on, that second track is extremely important, and the two tracks should never . . . either one of those should never be done in isolation. They should be done in parallel, and that is what we have done with this budget, Mr. Speaker, and that is what this government continues to do and will continue to do as long as this Progressive Conservative Party occupies these government benches, Mr. Speaker.

(1045)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, our government has taken a balanced approach to the funding of capital projects in the health care sector. In 1985, \$275 million was allocated for a five-year hospital construction program. Since that time, new hospitals have been built at Lloydminster, at Maidstone, at Watson, at Hudson Bay and at Watrous. Integrated facilities have been established at Dinsmore, Fillmore, Gainsborough, Goodsoil, Lampman, Lucky Lake, Mankota, Nokomis, and Rabbit Lake, Mr. Speaker, a proud record. And in each of those communities that I've mentioned here today, there are a lot of folks who are extremely pleased with the facilities that have been built in their communities, a lot of people who have worked extremely hard to see those construction projects come to fruition for the service of their people, and I congratulate them for that, and also say to you, Mr. Speaker, that is a proud record for the government in the times that we've been facing to have that kind of a construction program, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Regeneration projects have been completed in Regina for the Regina General and the Pasqua Hospitals. In fact, as I mentioned just a moment ago, our Premier and I had the honour to attend the official opening of Phase 3 of the Regina General project only two days ago — \$30.2 million, Mr. Speaker, \$30.2 million of commitment to the kind of hospital facilities that are needed, not only here in Regina but in all of southern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. An excellent commitment, a commitment by a government that has a view to the visionary track that I spoke of earlier.

We are proud to have funded the new \$16 million cancer clinic in Saskatoon, another area that had been neglected for a number of years. This clinic will provide a much needed focal point for cancer research and treatment in this province.

Major renovations have been completed at Melfort and Yorkton Union hospitals. Psychiatric wards have been

improved at Saskatoon City Hospital and the University Hospital. We are in the midst of completing other important construction projects at Wascana Hospital in Regina and St. Paul's Hospital and University Hospital in Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, our construction work at University and St. Paul's hospitals will significantly increase space available to patients. These projects, in addition to the building of the new Saskatoon City Hospital, will have a positive effect on effective surgical waiting lists in Saskatoon.

Last year alone, Mr. Speaker, we funded an additional 2,000 operations in Saskatoon, and in July we opened a new day surgery unit with the capacity to perform 3,500 operations a year. Over \$15 million has been targeted to reduce waiting lists for elective surgery, and the key word in that, Mr. Speaker, is "targeted" — targeted dollars at those specialties which were causing and which continue to cause, I acknowledge, the waiting list problems or the time that people will have to wait.

We've already begun to see the positive results of our efforts, Mr. Speaker. The number of operations performed in Saskatoon has increased by 42 per cent since 1983. Our most recent data confirms a decrease of almost 12 per cent in the number of people waiting for elective surgery from September '87 to February this year. And yes, Mr. Speaker, waiting times are decreasing as well — waiting times are decreasing as well. And the key in that, Mr. Speaker, the key in all of this — and when we hear the rhetoric from opposite, where they talk about the numbers of people on waiting lists that require services from our excellent facilities — the key in all of this, any time there's a discussion of waiting for elective surgery, it is the length of time which is key, more so than the number of people who are waiting for particular procedures. The length of time an individual will wait is the key, and that is where we must target our dollars, and that's where we are targeting our dollars. And I'm pleased to be able to say, to some extent we're having some success there, Mr. Speaker, now.

Mr. Speaker, unlike the choices made by those members opposite in the days when they occupied these benches, we've recognized and responded to the needs of seniors for specialized health care services.

Since 1982, Mr. Speaker, some 1,741 special care home beds have been constructed or approved for construction in this province. Compare this to the NDP record of 700-odd beds during their last seven years in office, from 1976 to 1982. Once again, Mr. Speaker, when the revenue side of the ledger was there and there was some money there to spend on it, did they make the choices to spend it on facilities and health care facilities for our seniors? Did they make that choice? They made the wrong choice. And to do nothing, as they did — to do nothing, as they did — is a choice, Mr. Speaker. Don't ever . . . we must never let them get away with the feeling that it wasn't a choice. They had a choice; they chose to do nothing.

We have . . . Mr. Speaker, local special care homes are now being built and staffed to heavier care standards,

another key point in our health care sector. We are systematically replacing older facilities designed for lighter care needs with new heavy care beds, and in the past five years we have added over 400 new positions to existing homes at a cost of more than \$10 million — \$10 million for new positions in special care homes, Mr. Speaker, a record that we are proud of. And we also acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, that there is need for more. There is an acknowledgement of that, and there is an acknowledgement of that in this budget presented by the Minister of Finance.

This is a record we're proud of, one which every other province in this country would be hard-pressed to match, and one that we will continue to build on, as I've said.

However, Mr. Deputy Speaker, institutionalized care must be the last option. Our primary commitment to seniors remains to improve the quality of life for those individuals, and to keep them from institutionalized care as long as is possible with the kind of services that we can provide for them.

And for this reason, Mr. Speaker, we have actively encouraged the development of a wide range of programs at the community level. Innovative support services like home care, adult day care and respite programs interlock with family support and senior enriched housing options. Even those with heavy care needs can stay close to family and friends under these kinds of programs. Mr. Deputy Speaker, and within this environment our seniors can enjoy life to its fullest.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we've made choices, and we believe we've made responsible choices in these areas. We've lifted that moratorium under the stewardship of my colleague, the member from Indian Head-Wolseley, when he occupied this portfolio, and we are continuing that, Mr. Speaker. And we are continuing that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we're proud of it.

Mr. Speaker, we made choices with regard to our children's dental program, and with these changes our children's dental program is still the best offered by any province in this country. Our program is the best offered by any province in this country right now.

And as of now, Mr. Speaker, a bit of an update, close to 90 per cent of all eligible children are registered with a dentist; 97 per cent of our dentists throughout the province participate in the program; each of our dental health educators visits over 800 children between five and 10 years old to provide firsthand instruction on good dental health.

Mr. Speaker, our changes to the dental program have prompted continued growth in the development of rural dental practices, practices out there on the main street which speak to the viability of those rural communities. Since the spring of 1987, numerous satellite and principal clinics have opened for business in our towns and villages. Many communities are negotiating with dentists to provide service in their areas. Establishment of these rural practices is speaking directly to the viability of our smaller communities.

Mr. Speaker, that's not only something that's done in isolation here in the Department of Health, that's something that's been a commitment of this government in whatever department we represent, to speak to the viability of rural communities in this province, and every time a new enterprise can open on the main street of one of those communities, it speaks directly to that viability. And these dental services, whether they be satellite services or principal dental clinics, speak to that viability.

Mr. Speaker, all Saskatchewan people now have an opportunity to see a dentist in an area close to their own community, and that's not something that you could always say. We're projecting an annual saving of 5.2 million as a result of changes to the dental program, Mr. Speaker. And as I said before, yes, we made choices and we continue to make choices as we must, and as everyone who occupies government benches must at any time. We made choices. We believe we have made responsible choices for the future of this province.

Mr. Speaker, we've made choices with regard to the drug plan in this province as well. Saskatchewan has an excellent prescription drug plan, Mr. Speaker. It's a comprehensive . . . it is very comprehensive and it provides substantial access to services for our people.

We've built in a series of exemptions to recognize the special needs of our seniors in nursing homes, those with chronic illnesses and others. Cost savings in this program are projected at some 22 million for last year, because it was for one-half a year, and on an annualized basis, for a one-year basis, the changes in that drug plan, the choices that we've made — difficult ones, Mr. Speaker, difficult choices, but choices which had to be made and which were responsible — the annualized savings will be in the order of \$50 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We continue to monitor the results of changes to the drug plan. We took a plan which had been successful, which all reports from Manitoba said, this is a successful plan, it works well for the citizens of Manitoba. Everyone said that. No one in Manitoba was complaining, whether they lived in Hamiota or in Waskada or in Brandon or in Winnipeg. Citizens of Manitoba believed that they had a good drug plan. When we went out to look at our drug plan, we said, there's a plan that works, and we talked to the people there, and they said, this plan works.

Now, Mr. Speaker, obviously there have been some concerns, obviously there have been some concerns about it here. Our people have not accepted the drug plan to the same extent that they did in Manitoba. But, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to report to you today that more and more, and to a wider and wider and wider degree, there is a level of understanding of the cost of drugs, which is important, and there is a level of understanding of this system now that is there.

Mr. Speaker, yes, we made choices, and we continue to monitor the results of changes to the drug plan in consultation with the key interest groups. But we made choices, we have people recognizing the cost, we had some resolve there, Mr. Speaker; we showed some courage there. Mr. Speaker, people expect that of their governments — no, Mr. Speaker, they demand that of

their governments — and, Mr. Speaker, we have provided that.

Mr. Speaker, to protect the integrity of our delivery system to the people of the province, we successfully negotiated Saskatoon Agreement 11, eliminating extra billing and protecting access for our people to insured medical services — another accomplishment of this government since coming to power.

I'd like to speak now for a moment on the area of rehabilitation. I spoke of this just briefly a few moments ago. Mr. Speaker, in 1979 the former government commissioned a review of all aspects of rehabilitation services across the province. The report on rehabilitation published in December 1980 conceded that — and let me quote here, and I do quote:

For some time the rehabilitation services in the province may in some areas be deficient because of a combination of inadequate facilities, insufficient manpower, a lack of community programs and an uncoordinated approach to service provision.

Now I give them full credit. They did a review; the former government did a review of that system, recognizing that there must be some need there, and there certainly was some need there. The review admitted that "rehabilitation services were a long neglected area of evaluation, frequently ill-defined, ambiguous and controversial." That was a direct quote.

After completing the review, some 113 recommendations to improve our rehabilitation services were identified. But the key here now, Mr. Speaker: did they act on any of those recommendations — did they act on those recommendations? The answer to that is no, and I say, shame. They did not act on those recommendations. Mr. Speaker, did we act on those recommendations upon coming into the Government of Saskatchewan in 1982? The answer to that is yes.

One of the first and most important tasks that fell to our government in '82 was to begin the process of building and strengthening rehabilitation services across this province. And I'm proud to say that we've accomplished much in a very short period of time. We've laid the sound foundation for a solid network of reliable service for all people in all parts of the province.

One of the major recommendations of the 1980 review called for two centres of rehabilitation, one in Regina and one in Saskatoon. In 1984 we appointed a new board of directors for the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre in Regina, and announced government funding of some \$50 million to expand and improve the facility. We are now into the third year of a five-year phase construction program which will see the Wascana — just over here, very close to this building, as you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker — we are now in the third year of that program which will see the Wascana hospital become a regional rehabilitation centre for Regina and for southern Saskatchewan.

(1100)

And in the case of workers' compensation and people who have been injured on the job in this province, it will be the centre for injured workers for all of this province.

Mr. Speaker, not only is it an excellent rehabilitation centre for Regina and southern Saskatchewan, and in some aspects for all of Saskatchewan, but it is now recognized as it's coming off the drawing boards, as they see the construction going up, and as people come from other jurisdictions, people are coming to us from other parts of Canada who are addressing their rehabilitation programs, and they're saying, this is the program, this is the facility we are coming to study; this is the facility which is recognized in this country as being number one, the best in the Dominion of Canada, Mr. Deputy Speaker — something that everybody on this side of the House should be really proud of.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, let me just say one more thing as it relates to that, because when I go to the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre today with a good deal of pride and watch that construction going, staff in that hospital and people who have been patients there for some period of time, whether they be on a long-term basis or whether they are patients there who visit from time to time . . . there was a time in this . . . not very long ago when those folks were in government, when those people in wheelchair, people in wheelchairs, handicapped people who were receiving services at the Wascana hospital, watched construction going on for some good length of time. They watched construction and the construction that they watched because of the choices made by those folks when they were in government, the choices that they made, the construction that those people who were in need of better facilities to serve them and their health needs; what they watched being built just across the lawn was the T.C. Douglas Building to house more public servants.

The T.C. Douglas Building, Mr. Speaker, they made choices — we will build a building; we'll build an edifice to Tommy Douglas, who . . . I don't say that he doesn't deserve having a building named after him, but I say, if you're making choices, build that building at another time and build the hospital for the handicapped folks first, and build the T.C. Douglas Building at some other time. Make your choices.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they made their choices. They made their choice and they were rejected because of it, once in 1982, and they were rejected twice — they were rejected in 1986. And they will be again, because they are known for those kinds of choices. Mr. Speaker, we are becoming known and have been known for some time now for making those choices — for making those choices.

While upgrading these rehab services in Regina. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've not been idle in Saskatoon. Our government committed \$2.7 million toward a \$3.9 million project to construct a new facility jointly housing the children's rehab centre, the Alvin Buckwold Centre, and the Saskatchewan Institute On Prevention Of

Handicaps. The new Kinsmen children's centre has been operating as an integrated facility since 1984, and serves as a base for regional rehabilitation services across northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we will improve access to rehabilitation services through the new \$26 million Parkridge Centre in Saskatoon. The Parkridge Centre has a unique mandate in the rehabilitation field. Two new units have been created. The first, the rehabilitation unit, will extend clinical rehabilitation services currently offered by the University Hospital. The program represents a major increase in resources to the 21-bed unit and outreach programs at University Hospital.

The second, a geriatric re-enablement unit, is an extension of clinical gerontological services offered by University Hospital. This unit will allow patients to recover beyond the two- to four-week maximum established by University Hospital, until they are able to regain their potential ability to function.

We've made significant progress toward expanding community-based therapy programs as well, Mr. Speaker. Our provision of therapy services to rural Saskatchewan was expanded and reorganized in 1986. The existing hospital-based program was replaced by a new community therapy program. Our full-time therapist positions have increased from 10 to 20 — from 10 to 20, Mr. Speaker — and an additional 10 positions will be added in the next two fiscal years; a commitment to the therapy programs in this province, Mr. Speaker, a significant commitment.

Mr. Speaker, there are several mainstream rehabilitation programs now offered through Saskatchewan Health. The chiropody program, which was introduced by this government for our seniors and others, but primarily for our seniors, was developed and implemented by us, as I've said. Chiropody services are now available throughout the province, offered locally through some 23 satellite clinics.

We continue to explore other ways to extend the Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living program. In 1984-85 we expanded the program's coverage to include many blind and visually-impaired persons through the aids to the blind program.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are also committed to the provision of audiological assessment and hearing aid services through the Saskatchewan hearing aid plan. In 1985-86, two new audiology positions were permanently assigned to the Prince Albert and North Battleford health regions to keep pace with the demand for service in those areas for this program.

In short, Mr. Speaker, we have met and exceeded many of the major recommendations of the 1980 review of rehabilitation. In one particular area, however, in one area of rehabilitation we have gone significantly beyond anything that they would ever have contemplated. On September 3, 1986, our Premier announced a landmark program in the field of rehabilitation. I'm speaking now, of course, of the Premier's initiatives for prevention and treatment of alcohol and drug abuse.

There's nothing new about the problems of alcohol and drug abuse, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we know that. It's found at all ages, in all walks of life. The health, social and economic costs are staggering. It's a particular concern among our youth. An estimated one in 50 adolescents are daily users of alcohol or other drugs. Every year over 1,000 teenagers are convicted of impaired driving or of drug charges.

To address this growing concern, we have committed significant resources to the Whitespruce Treatment Centre near Yorkton. That facility is Canada's first specialized youth treatment centre based on a family-oriented program.

I'm pleased to inform hon. members that last month, in the month of March, Whitespruce will be allocated \$3.4 million, an increase of 125 per cent over last year. In Saskatoon we are relocating the Calder (Rehabilitation) Centre program, which is now in conjunction with St. Paul's Hospital in an older facility; we're relocating that Calder Centre program to the Frank Eliason Centre.

Our efforts will result in a much improved environment for those recovering from alcohol and drug abuse. Opportunities for growth will exist where they did not exist before. The environment of the Eliason Centre will encourage program development and introduction of needed new programs, but more important, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it will demonstrate the value of making responsible choices for better health and for better life-styles.

The Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission has extended its network of funded agencies to offer treatment and rehabilitation services throughout Saskatchewan — seven new out-patient centres now serving Buffalo Narrows, Creighton, Humboldt, Kipling, La Ronge, Meadow Lake, and Melville. Other new centres, offering a variety of service, operate at Indian Head, at North Battleford, and at Kipling.

New or expanded facilities for established centres are under construction at Lloydminster and at Moose Jaw. SADAC, or the Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, has added regional staff throughout the province to provide additional counselling services for youth and for their families.

To emphasize the importance of the society's war on alcohol and drug abuse, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this budget will provide SADAC with over \$15 million in operating funds, an increase of 16 per cent over the very substantial amount they had last year.

In the past three years, Mr. Speaker — very key numbers here — in the past three years the funding designated to combat alcohol and drug abuse has doubled. This is a clear demonstration of our commitment to improve the health and the quality of life of our people.

Mr. Speaker, as I've said, responsible government is about making choices. Mr. Speaker, we have made choices, and we chose to deal with this rehabilitation

field in a major way and to commit the funds to it to have an impact, if it's possible, and we believe it is, and to have an increasing impact on the rehabilitation of our people in this area.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, good mental health is just as important as good physical health. It is one of the essential factors in attaining a healthy life-style. We believe mental health is a service worthy of government support, and have made notable progress toward improving services in this area.

Beginning in 1983, mental health services for children and youth were expanded under this government. Increases were made in the number of training positions for psychiatrists — residency positions have doubled from six to 12.

New funding was provided for the development and expansion of crisis intervention services in Regina and in Saskatoon. Since 1984, \$700,000 a year has been channelled to new program initiatives such as expanded crisis management services, support to self-help groups, suicide prevention programming, expanded autism services, and innovative service projects. New resources have been provided for young offenders. New treatment programs have been developed for wife batterers.

And on April 1, 1986 a new Mental Health Services Act was proclaimed to ensure that the human rights of patients are adequately protected. And I might say about that legislation, Mr. Speaker, it's seen across this country as landmark legislation; it's recognized by every other jurisdiction in the country as the landmark legislation in the mental health services area.

Mr. Speaker, another important facet of our health care system is our ambulance services. Our government has completed a review of ambulance services, and major recommendations resulting from that review have already been implemented. Funds for the ambulance program have increased by over 100 per cent since 1982 and now total over \$6.8 million.

Ambulance services has been consolidated within the Department of Health to overcome the numerous problems in co-ordination which arose prior to 1982, and let me just hearken back to that for a moment. Can you imagine, if you allow logic to lead your thinking in any way, why ambulance services would have rested in the Department of Urban Affairs as it did under the former government, Mr. Speaker. Ambulance services properly belong in the Department of Health because they're an integral part of the delivery of health services to this province. And they are in the Department of Health under this government because logic — logic, Mr. Deputy Speaker — directs our thinking.

Mr. Speaker, a minister's advisory committee has been established as it relates to ambulances, and in conjunction with the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower we've expanded emergency medical technician training for ambulance attendants in the province. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to announce that after extensive consultation with key interest groups, the new Ambulance Act will be proclaimed this year.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there can be no doubt the provision of quality health care is our number one social priority. We have demonstrated, time and time again, our commitment to an affordable health care system relevant to the needs of all of our people. We will continue to do so.

Our overall budget for health care has increased by some 68 per cent in the past six years. In six short years, a 68 per cent increase, Mr. Speaker. This year spending on health care will increase by \$65 million, to over \$1.2 billion. That's over \$3 million a day, 365 days of the year. This represents the largest health budget in the long history of this province. In addition, capital funding of some \$63 million will be provided for 26 health care construction projects this year.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we've heard what the members opposite have said about the budget, in critical ways, but, Mr. Speaker, we've also heard what the public of Saskatchewan have said about the budget. And, Mr. Speaker, I have heard, and others have heard, what the health care . . . people representing various sectors in the health enterprise have said about the budget. And all — all of the responses, from all of the sectors within health, have been positive to this budget, and I am pleased about that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1115)

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — And they're positive because they believe we've made the right choices. And as I've said earlier, there were choices to be made over a number of years, and some of those choices weren't made and we've been facing some backlog situations, these needs, these things which we are now addressing, those needs were here for some time, and have been here for some time.

And in Regina, Mr. Speaker, and \$11.7 million addition will proceed at the General Hospital. This is phase 1 of package 4, as we continue with the regeneration of that very important hospital to the service of the people of Regina and of southern Saskatchewan.

A much needed \$3.8 million pediatric unit will be added to the Pasqua Hospital. This unit will replace the existing 40-year-old structure and provide comfortable, efficient surroundings for children confined to hospital at the Pasqua. A fire safety upgrading project, estimated at \$1.78 million, has been approved for the Plains Health Centre.

And, Mr. Speaker, another area that's important to us and to this province, in terms of the service they provide, the Red Cross across this province provides excellent service to the people of Saskatchewan in several areas, some areas that are not so obvious. Obviously the people in the province will recognize the Red Cross for their work in water safety, recognize the Red Cross for their work in the blood banks and in the collection of blood and some of those things. Mr. Speaker, the Red Cross does excellent services across this province in several areas.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that after consultation with the people at Red Cross, and with co-operation with those people and from those people, a major renovation will be done to modernize Red Cross headquarters here in Regina, Red Cross headquarters for all of Saskatchewan. The expansion and upgrading of this building will result in an improved facility where the organization can carry on its extremely important work across the province.

Some renovations will also be done at the Saskatoon Red Cross building for a similar reason, because those services which the Red Cross provides have certainly outgrown the facilities that they've had. Those needs, as well, were there for some considerable length of time, Mr. Speaker. This government is responding to them because of a recognition of the work that the Red Cross does in this province.

Mr. Speaker, design work will begin on a new 140-bed hospital in Estevan to replace St. Joseph's, a proud hospital that's been there for some period of time — in fact I believe it's the 75th anniversary of St. Joseph's this year in Estevan. So a new 140-bed hospital designated for that rapidly expanding city.

Major renovation projects will be carried out at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Humboldt, and at Mildred Union Hospital.

Other upgrading projects scheduled for this year include Hafford, Kelvington, Melfort, Pangman, Davidson, Kerrobert, North Battleford, Radville, Shaunavon, Wakaw and Wolseley. Mr. Speaker, that is an impressive list, considering the circumstance that the finances of the province are in. That list represents choices made by this government. That list represents the kind of responsible choices we've made. And the people in the health care sector across the province, and most particularly in those communities that will be receiving these projects, are very, very pleased about the choices we've made.

Through our capital construction program we will continue to address the needs of our growing senior population as well. New nursing homes will be built in Elrose and in Wadena. The nursing home in Nipawin will be expanded by some 40 additional beds. Integrated facilities will be funded in Cabri, in Loon Lake and in Montmartre.

Mr. Speaker, I should say something about the integrated facility concept, just for a moment. Mr. Speaker, that concept was one that was introduced by the members of this government, by the former minister of Health, member for Indian Head-Wolseley. We have taken that concept to the rural areas.

We speak directly, and the concept speaks directly, to the viability of some small rural hospitals, because what the health care needs, and the health care services in many of those rural communities must address, as we look out into the future, is the change in demographics, in other words the numbers of senior citizens that we have.

And this integrated facility, by building special care beds

onto the same structure which is now a very small acute care hospital, addresses that very need. And there are some economics of scale, there are some staffing overlap, there are many things that can be done in terms of boards and so on.

And rural Saskatchewan people, rural Saskatchewan people in the health sector are very appreciative of this new and innovative idea. And we hear about that as well from other jurisdictions in this country who are coming to Saskatchewan as they've done for many years, as they've done for many years under successive governments — I admit that, and I know that, and that's good, something our people are proud of. But they're coming once again to Saskatchewan to say, here's a concept that we are looking to adopt in our province.

Mr. Speaker, discussions between the Moose Jaw planning council and the Department of Health are very much under way, and members from Moose Jaw . . . there are no members from Moose Jaw in here just now, but members from . . . and I don't say that in a disparaging way, but I know they will be interested . . . oh, I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I see one here. I'm sorry. I apologize . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker — Order, order. Members aren't allowed to make reference to people being in the House or being absent from the House. I would ask the minister to not make reference to members.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — I'm sorry, and I do apologize to the member from Moose Jaw North who's listening. I was surprised when he was so quiet. I normally will hear him from time to time when he's in here, so I apologize to the member in any case. And I did need a break for a drink of water, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But the discussions between the Moose Jaw planning council which will comprise folks who are involved with Moose Jaw Union Hospital, with St. Anthony's, and with the Providence Hospital in Moose Jaw are under way. There is a good deal of good will there, let me say. There has been a challenge put out to them. They've accepted that challenge in a major way in that city.

Let me say that, and it's extremely important. They have several facilities, and they have taken the challenge to say, and they are now looking at Moose Jaw as the health centre that it needs to be and that it must be for a wide area, and for some things for southern Saskatchewan, frankly.

And I'm pleased to say here today that St. Anthony's Home, that many people in Moose Jaw have been concerned about in terms of its construction and so on, is very much in this budget. So St. Anthony's Home will be there, but St. Anthony's Home and the construction of that will begin when the planning council has completed its deliberations and has come forward with their recommendations about what they would like to see happening in Moose Jaw.

And, Mr. Speaker, I can report to you today, and I believe the member from Moose Jaw will concur with me in that, the Moose Jaw health sector, the people in Moose Jaw are very much involved in this area, are very excited, are very

much excited about some of the things that are going on, and are very excited about the challenge that's put forward to them. And I want to congratulate them in a public way for the way in which they've accepted the challenge, and the way in which they are conducting those very extensive deliberations.

Mr. Speaker, a total of \$4.6 million will be directed toward other special care home renovations across the province. To operate these facilities we will spend in excess of one million to upgrade staffing levels in special care homes where need so dictates. And close to \$24 million will be spent on home care this year — \$24 million on home care. This represents an increase of some 85 per cent in that area along in the six years since we've been in government.

Mr. Speaker — and I will say to you as I have said to the people in home care and others — there still is a need for more money in home care; I acknowledge that; we all acknowledge that. There is a need for an increasing amount of money in the home care area. We know that. But the home care people — and I was very appreciative of the representatives of the home care association, who said to me on budget day that they are very appreciative of what has been done, of the choices that have been made in order to provide for this increase in the difficult times that we're in.

An Hon. Member — You know, George, the only time I ever hear of this appreciation is during your speech on the budget.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Now, Mr. Speaker, and I would . . . The member from Regina Centre wants to dispute that. I would invite him to talk to the home care association and see what they will have to say. I will be pleased to provide him with some of those comments.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that those people who are directly involved in the home care sector — not those people over there — but the people, the real people out there in the province who are involved in the home care area are pleased with the choices we've made. And as I've said to them, I know there's a need for increasing funding, and there will be, inevitably be, increases in funding as time goes on in this very important area.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me turn to another area of vital importance. Healthy people are those who take personal responsibility in pursuing healthy life-styles, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Health is like any other facet of life. To react positively, one must know and understand the implications of the right decisions and the wrong decisions.

This government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government and these members on this side of the House are committed to raising the levels of public awareness on life-style issues through targeted communications and education efforts. In fact this year our budget in this area has increased by some 200 per cent over last year.

And I've heard some criticism from members opposite who will take the narrow view always, as is their habit, frankly. They will take the narrow view and say, this is

public affairs, and all of that. This is not some kind of political advertising, Mr. Speaker, to hear these people. Well I understand that . . .

An Hon. Member: — George, we introduced that when I was the minister.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — And the member from Saskatoon South says he introduced similar programs at some time or other. I acknowledge that.

An Hon. Member: — They were good programs.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — I acknowledge some good programs in terms of the development of healthy life-style, encouragement of healthy life-style.

Mr. Speaker, what I'm saying here today is there will be expansion, there will be significant expansion in that area under this budget because of the importance of the area of promoting healthy life-styles. This budget supports public campaigns designed to improve the quality of life and encourage responsible decisions for better health.

Mr. Speaker, our initiatives on AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome), on that issue and on that dreaded disease AIDS, are a good example of this principle. Mr. Speaker, some have said — as we have dealt with this issue and attempted to deal with it in a responsible way and an appropriate way for this jurisdiction — some have said, well there are only a few cases of clinical AIDS in the province, so on, 21 cases have reported up till now. But I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that our approach in that area has been a responsible one, and I report to the House that I think the widest population in this province will agree that it's been a responsible approach to a very difficult issue, as it relates to a very difficult public health issue, and it is that. It's a public health issue.

Let me just go through what we have done in that area just so we can just see, in a chronological sort of way, to show the responsible way that this government has dealt with a very difficult issue.

Over the past several years we've developed a multi-faceted approach to tackle this AIDS issue. In 1985 we were the first province in this country to establish a provincial advisory committee on AIDS, and since then we have published a series of booklets done up by that advisory committee for public information and education.

We've expanded our provincial laboratory services to include full testing capability for HIV (human immunodeficiency virus), and we've arranged for pre-testing for HIV of all organ transplants in Saskatchewan. We added the drug AZT (azidothymidine), which is the primary drug for treating AIDS, to the prescription drug plan.

Last May we sponsored a symposium to discuss AIDS prevention strategies. In September we provided grants to AIDS Regina and AIDS Saskatoon to assist in providing street-front prevention information. And in conjunction with the Department of Education we've developed a curriculum guide for school boards to use in providing

AIDS education.

We've expanded the list of reportable diseases in Saskatchewan to include HIV, the virus which causes AIDS. We've established community-based training to develop a network of volunteers who can speak to groups and organizations throughout the province and, Mr. Speaker, there is a great deal of interest among our people and a great deal of concern, and that's been an appreciated initiative.

We've just completed the first phase of a public advertising campaign on AIDS to raise public awareness, and, more recently, we have appointed an AIDS co-ordinator. Mr. Speaker, our response to this issue has been appropriate for Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, people in Saskatchewan who hold widely varied views on some of these issues have said, people from widely varied views have said, our response is a very appropriate one for this province.

I am just pleased that it has turned out that way because it has not been an easy issue to deal with, nor would it be for any government, certainly for any person charged with the responsibility for the public health of the citizens in their jurisdiction. We can only say that in these days, and when there is no cure for this dreaded disease on the horizon, the only hope we have is in education and is in information to as wide a group of our population as is possible.

I would like to briefly touch on one of the other major public awareness initiatives in health which our government will pursue. Saskatchewan is bound by a strong sense of family and community. Through experience we have learned the meaning of interdependence, working together to achieve a common goal, and at times in our history our very survival has depended upon this ability.

But we've also learned another important lesson, Mr. Deputy Speaker — that of accepting responsibility in our person, in our personal decision making, and in our personal actions. In the field of health care there is room to apply these qualities in the practice of healthy life-styles.

In the past few months it has become evident that there is broad public support for government involvement in this initiative. We've listened to the advice of our health care professionals, and we are prepared to respond to the needs of our people. We will seek to encourage a better quality of life for all through active promotion of good health care habits.

(1130)

In the coming months I will be announcing full details of a major public program designed to involve all our people in making the right choices for better health — in other words, to encourage the preventive aspects, to promote wellness rather than just . . . and be isolated to battling illness.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to address one of the most important announcements made by our government in

both the Speech from the Throne and in the budget speech — the appointment of a task force on health care issues. Mr. Speaker, this province has always been a leader in the field of health care. Throughout our history we have gathered together as a people to meet the challenge of change. We have struggled to build a health care system which is sensitive and responsive to the needs of all. We have proven our tenacity in addressing common issues.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have met with success as a people. Our collective efforts toward this goal have clearly demonstrated our ability to work together. Yet those who have gone before could not have foreseen the complexity of the many issues which challenge our health care system today. Those issues must be fully addressed by all people of our province. The shaping of our health care system to meet the needs of the 21st century is no small task, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it certainly is not an easy one.

Health care in its many facets is a complicated issue that represents our major financial and service delivery challenge for the foreseeable future. And I'm confident that all hon. members in this House who have responsible positions — and we all have because we represent a lot of people — I know that all members will agree that change is necessary if we're to continue delivering quality health care services which are both affordable and relevant to the needs of all our citizens.

The principle of universally accessible and affordable health care has for many years been a top priority of the people across this province. Today health care is, and will continue to be, the top social priority of our people and of this government. We are committed to excellence in health care, and equally committed to responsible management of the system.

Time and demographics have changed the use of our health care system. In Saskatchewan today the cost of providing health care services is in excess of \$1,200 a year and growing for every man, woman, and child in our province. We must ensure access to medical services in rural communities, and a good supply of doctors trained across the full spectrum of medicine. We are facing some staff shortages in key medical specialties, elective surgical waiting lists in some urban hospitals, and other problems resulting from increasing demands for services. All of those are realities, Mr. Speaker.

The acquisition of new medical technology presents a major expense for government and health care institutions. Our high standards of equal universal access have created high public expectations in the delivery of health services.

Meeting the health care needs of our seniors represents a very special challenge to us all. Seniors now account for a full 12 per cent of the population of our province and use 45 cents of every dollar spent on health care. Into the year 2000, the number of seniors in Saskatchewan is expected to grow by nearly 30 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to quote something that I read in a recent edition of the *Economist*, which is a staggering

number, and bears repeating by all of us, and I quote now:

Of all the people in the history of the world who have lived beyond the age of 65, two-thirds are alive today.

I'll repeat that:

Of all the people in the world who have lived beyond the age of 65, two-thirds are alive today.

Mr. Speaker, that is a staggering statistic, and it's one that just sort of focuses the attention that all of us charged with public responsibility, as we in this House all are, and those of us charged in a more particular way with the health and the well-being of our citizens as those across the country who occupy the chair that I do in various governments. Those numbers are staggering, Mr. Speaker, and it's a very sobering thought, to say the very least.

The stress that this reality alone will place on our health care system demands our immediate attention as citizens and as public figures. It's within this environment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we as a people face a challenge of singular importance. No challenge we have faced in our history can compare with that we now face in providing the means to care for our people today and into the future. The magnitude and consequence of what we are about to undertake is unquestionable. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people have always risen to the challenge, whatever that challenge may be.

Mr. Speaker, we will act and we will act now to ensure our people continue to receive health care services that are second to none on this continent.

I'm pleased to inform hon. members that I will be announcing the particulars of the task force on health care within the next few weeks.

And people will say . . . I know people will say, well why is it not today? And why wasn't it last week? And I just want to clarify a point here, Mr. Speaker. We announced the task force in the throne speech as we announced the legislative program in the throne speech for what is coming in this year.

We announced the task force in this throne speech because we want the people of this province, in all corners of the province, and all of the professionals in the health care sector to turn their minds in a very substantive way to the kinds of things they will say they will submit to this task force when the mandate is laid out and when the task force members are announced. And I just say that, Mr. Speaker, and encourage all members and all citizens of this province to become involved in the development of this blueprint.

Through this task force we will confirm our partnership in health care with the people of this great province of Saskatchewan. Within this context our professionals in the health care community will play a major role in influencing the health care system of the future. As those who deliver medical services, never has their

contribution been so essential.

On the other side of the spectrum, the task force will actively solicit input from the people of our province. As direct users of the system, there are none as qualified to present ideas, opinions, and viable alternatives. I'm confident, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the outcome of the task force deliberations on health care will provide Saskatchewan's blueprint for the future in this very important and vital area.

Where health care is concerned, there are no sides to be chosen, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I believe that all of us, every one of our people, want quality, affordable health care. Just as we have overcome our differences in the past and stood together on this issue, today I challenge and invite all members of this House and all citizens of this province to participate in a meaningful way in the process that will follow.

No one in our province today can deny their share of the responsibility for building the health care system of the future. It's too large an issue representing too great a demand on our financial resources to be evaluated, designed, or delivered outside the broadest consensus of our citizens.

Each of us will be called on to make a contribution, and each of us must be prepared to offer what we can in understanding, in information, in effort, in skill and in dedication. Let there be no mistake, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let there be no mistake; our commitment to responsible management of quality health care is absolute. We are pledged to the needs of our people. Together we will face this challenge. Together we will examine its many intricacies. Together we will decide how best to build a health care system for the future, and Mr. Deputy Speaker, together we will succeed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's been a pleasure for me to rise in the Assembly today and outline for the people of our province our government's continuing commitment to a quality health care system that is affordable, accessible and relevant to the needs of all of us. That commitment is characteristic of the dynamic and forward-looking policies of this government.

When this debate concludes I'll be proud, as I said before, on behalf of the people that I represent, the people of north-western Saskatchewan, a riding of some 6,000 square miles, a good long way from here, but those salt of the earth people that I represent and have the pride to represent here, I will be very proud on their behalf to support this budget, and I'm proud of my part in developing that budget.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to take this opportunity to participate in this budget debate, but before I do that I want to respond to some of the comments from the Minister of Health.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Health has a lot to

answer for in this province. He has just given us a one-hour speech on all of the things that his government is doing in the area of health care. Unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Health did not address some of the fundamental issues facing our province when it comes to the provision of health care in Saskatchewan.

The Minister of Health says that this budget indicates a substantial indication of priority when it comes to the health care of our people. The Minister of Health should realize that, when you compare apples to apples, his health care budget only will receive a 3.5 per cent increase. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the inflation rate in the province of Saskatchewan is running at 6 per cent; it's the highest in the country, and I'm afraid, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this health care increase that we have experienced will not take into consideration some of the fundamental problems facing our province when it comes to inflation.

What we have here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is in fact a health care cut. Inflation is 6 per cent; the Government of Saskatchewan has increased the health care budget by 3.5 per cent. We still have a major deficiency in light of all of the problems.

The minister also says that this is an honest budget, that this budget reflects the economic stake of Saskatchewan people in our progress. I want to talk about the economic stake that has taken place in the last year or so.

It is true we now have an economic stake when it comes to providing our own medication, and there are people in this province that are making decisions whether or not they will buy groceries or whether or not they will buy their prescription drugs. How is that good health care? It certainly isn't economic stake.

We have a situation where we used to have in this province children over the age of 13 included in the school-based children's dental program. That no longer occurs. Parents have to provide that particular service themselves, and many parents in this province do not have the economic resources to do so.

Now this minister also says that this budget recognizes good management. Well I would suggest to the members opposite that it does not recognize good management. Any time a government will build a power project in the Premier's riding and in the Deputy Premier's riding that will cost the people of this province \$1.1 billion, when it isn't economically feasible to do so, when it makes no environmental sense, that is not good management, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Any time a government will vacate office space in order to put government offices in private office space and it costs the people of this province \$35,000 per day, that is not good management, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Any time members opposite will use their legislative duties as legislative secretaries to travel back to their home riding and bill the people of the province, when in fact they have a travel allowance, that is not good management, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now the government . . . the Health minister said that the people in our province have a right to make choices, that this government makes choices. Well what are the choices that the people of this province are making today? They are choosing whether or not to buy groceries, or whether or not to buy prescription drugs. They are choosing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whether or not to go to Calgary to get a cataract operation, if they have the money, or to sit in Saskatchewan and wait between 15 months and two years to have cataract surgery. Those are the kinds of choices that people are making as a result of the fiscal responsibility and the mismanagement of the members opposite.

Now this government says that it has a clear commitment to improve, preserve and increase accessibility to health care. That is just utter nonsense. How have we seen improvements in this province when it comes to the delivery of health care? We no longer have the prescription drug plan that we once had.

(1145)

The prescription drug plan is gone. People used to be able to buy a prescription in this province for \$3.95. That is no longer the case. They have a deductible, they have to pay the up-front charges after they've reached the deductible, and then they are reimbursed by the provincial government. Those reimbursements are taking over six weeks, and many families in this province can't afford the up-front costs of prescription drugs.

The government says it's going to preserve the health care system, and they accuse us of being responsible for some of the problems that they're now experiencing. There isn't one citizen in this province that believes that our government was worse, when it comes to the delivery of health care, in 1982 than yours. You people have a fundamental political problem. People do not believe you; they believe the health care system is deteriorating. And the Minister of Health can give us an hour speech, but it does not address the fundamental perception of the people of this province that our health care system is falling apart.

Now the members opposite say they want to increase accessibility. There are 15,000 people in the city of Saskatoon and Regina that are waiting to get into hospital. Hospital is not accessible to them. They are waiting, they are waiting, and they are waiting. The hospital system is not accessible because of the horrendous waiting lists and waiting times.

I'd like to refer back to what I earlier said about people who have cataract operations. People . . . There are some people who have money in this province that can no longer wait. They are going to Calgary, to the Glenmore clinic, to receive their cataract operation. They are paying between 1,200 and \$1,500. How is that accessibility? People that have money get health care treatment, and people that don't, don't.

Now this government says that it has significantly increased the health care budget in this province since they came to government, and I just want the people of this province to know that this government has rolled into

the Department of Health all kinds of budgetary items from other departments.

For instance, they have rolled in over \$8 million for grants and allowances for ambulance services; that used to be provided by Urban Affairs. They have rolled in allowances for home care and special care services; that used to be in the Department of Social Services. They have rolled in the property management corporation; once again, those were payments made by supply and services. They have rolled in northern health services; those services used to be provided by the department of northern Saskatchewan. And the list goes on and on.

If you look at this budget document, 20 per cent of the items contained in this budget document were transferred in from other departments. In fact, this year, if you look at your budget document, you will see items that have been moved into the Department of Health from the Department of Education and Social Services and property management. These items represent \$250 million of this budget that have been transferred in.

So don't mislead the people of this province and say that there has been all of this tremendous increase in health care spending. The increase has arrived because you transferred into the Department of Health items that used to be in other departments.

Now the Minister of Health says that he has a lot of money available for capital projects, and I want to remind the members that for the last year, in the city of Saskatoon, we have had the Parkridge Centre. People moved into the Parkridge Centre last March. It's a nursing home facility. There were 43 beds that had been left empty for a year because you people didn't have the money to provide operating grants to that facility. It is not enough to build buildings; you must have the money there to staff and provide the resources for those people who are going to be using those facilities. There are people in this province that believe that we have some hospitals that are under construction, but those projects will not come on stream because the operating grants will not be available to them.

We also have the cancer clinic in Saskatoon. That cancer clinic has been ready since last October, I believe. That cancer clinic is just now starting to come on stream. Now why is that, Mr. Speaker, members opposite? I believe that the reason that the cancer clinic has been sitting empty is because you have not been able to provide the operating grants.

Now this government says that they are doing something about hospital waiting lists and hospital waiting times. If you compare where hospital waiting lists are at in the city of Saskatoon last year to where they are this year, you will find they are the same. The \$1 million that you put into the system in Saskatoon did not do anything to resolve the problem.

One of the reasons why those hospital waiting lists sky-rocketed last summer was because you people had, because of underfunding, forced hospitals into a situation where they had to close hospital beds — 308 hospital beds were closed last summer for practically a 12-week period in the city of Saskatoon.

I would urge the members opposite to ensure that hospitals in Saskatoon and Regina and throughout the province have enough funding this summer so that we aren't once again faced with the horrendous problem of hospital bed closures. When hospital beds close, when hospital beds close, they mean, ultimately, that hospital waiting lists will increase, and hospital waiting times will increase.

Now I want to get on with my remarks in terms of this budget. My colleague, the member from Regina Lakeview, will be making more remarks when it comes to the Department of Health in her budget reply on Monday.

This budget can best be summed up with this poem:

Taxes are equal is a dogma which
I'll prove at once
Proclaimed the Tory Boor.
Why taxes hardly press upon the Rich
And likewise press hardly on the Poor.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's what this budget is all about: tax cuts for the rich and tax increases for the not so rich. People in this province are fast believing that there are the haves and the have nots, one set of rules for the rich and another set of rules for those who are not so rich.

With this budget, citizens are now deeper in the hole with tax increases. There are people that haven't seen their wages increase in four years, yet the increase in the Tory flat tax has just taken another 150 to \$200 a year out of their pockets. There is a 2 per cent cut for corporations when it comes to taxes, but there's a 33 per cent flat tax increase for the working person. Some fairness.

When the Conservatives came to power in 1982, they promised to reduce personal income taxes by 10 per cent. Instead those members opposite have just stuck their hand into each of our pockets and pickpocketed another 150 to \$200 a year. And our disposable income has just gone down some more.

And then the members opposite wonder why housing starts are down. Housing starts were down by 11.2 per cent last year. When you look at new housing starts in the rest of Canada, they have increased by 23.1 per cent. And the reason why housing starts are down is because the average citizen doesn't have the kind of money that they used to have, and if they do, they're hanging on to it for dear life because they're afraid about their future and they're worried that their jobs may be lost.

Many working people haven't had a wage increase for three or four years, yet personal income taxes have just gone up by 33 per cent when you look at the flat tax. Inflation is up this year by 6 per cent. Power is up; light and water is up; SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) rates are up; and property taxes are up. Everything has gone up except their wages, and these people have just come along and taken some more.

No wonder retail sales in Saskatchewan are the second worst in Canada. No wonder, Mr. Speaker, that businesses are closing their doors across this province

There isn't any money out there. And if people didn't have any money before March 31 of 1987, the day you people brought down your tax budget, they sure won't have it with this increase in the flat tax — this increase in the flat tax on net income, this increase of 33 per cent.

I don't know where you people have been. Maybe you're all loaded. Maybe you're all multimillionaires, or maybe you have money in the bank. You have a "no wage increase" policy. You have the zero, zero, zero policy, yet the consumer items that you people have control over have not had the zero, zero, zero, zero applied to them.

SGI rates — you people have control over SGI rates. They've gone up 10 to 15 per cent; in some cases they've practically doubled. SaskPower has gone up 7 per cent. You people have control over that. Property taxes in my home town, my home city, went up an average of about 4 per cent last year, and it was because of your cuts to municipal grants and municipal revenue sharing. Personal income taxes — you people have some control over that.

An Hon. Member: — Yes.

Ms. Atkinson: — Yes, the member from Weyburn acknowledges that. Well your flat tax has just gone up 33 per cent. You have control over that.

We have the highest inflation rate in the country, at 6 per cent, and part of the reason we have that high inflation rate is because of your changes to the prescription drug plan. People are now asked to dig into their pocket and pay for the cost of those prescription drugs up front. That wasn't the case a year ago. But you people have a no wage increase policy — you have a zero, zero, zero — but when it comes to the things that you control you don't have the zero, zero, zero.

SGI, you control it; SaskPower, you control it. You control property taxes when you don't give municipalities their fair share in terms of revenue sharing.

An Hon. Member: — Boloney.

Ms. Atkinson: — And the member from Regina South says that's boloney. It is not boloney. When you have had no increase in grants to municipalities last year, Mr. Minister, the municipality and the city of Saskatoon increases property taxes in order to maintain services. With inflation, and you have no increase, it's either cuts in services or it's increased property taxes. Now they tried to hold the line. They did make cuts; they did the responsible business-like thing. But you people have not been doing this responsible business-like thing. I'd like to know, why isn't there a guide-line of zero, zero, and zero when it comes to the things that you control? How is that fair, members opposite?

Now the minister who delivered the budget, the Finance minister, is reported to have said that he made no apologies for his corporate tax changes. I call it cuts, but he calls it corporate tax changes. But it's one cut this province did not need. This is one cut this province did not need.

The Minister of Finance says the cut will make Saskatchewan corporate tax structure more competitive with the rest of Canada. Well my impression of the government opposite's ability to attract corporations to this province occurs in only one of two ways. You either give them a hand-out or you give away a resource that's owned and controlled by the people of this province.

Now I want to review who it is that these great leaders opposite, these great leaders of the Conservative Party, these members of the government, have attracted to the province. And I want to talk about Fleet Aerospace from Ontario.

Here we have a situation, Fleet Aerospace from Ontario. We have about 12 per cent of the shares in SED Systems in the city of Saskatoon. And what do we do with our shares? We exchange SED shares for shares in Fleet Aerospace. And Fleet Aerospace is going to come into Saskatchewan and save SED Systems.

The minister from Kindersley says that SED Systems is undercapitalized and that Fleet coming into Saskatchewan will guarantee jobs. Well here we have it — here we have it. One year later Fleet Aerospace, you know, the group that was going to come in and guarantee jobs and preserve jobs and capitalize this company — the government didn't want to sink any more money into this company — lays off 70 people in the city of Saskatoon and says to the government, if you don't buy the building at Innovation Place in the city of Saskatoon or the Sedco Centre, we are going to pull out of Saskatchewan; we're going to pull out of Saskatchewan, take the technology developed and paid for by the people of this province back to Ontario.

If the government opposite doesn't bail them out, they're going to move everything out of Saskatchewan. Now how can this be? Here is a government that wanted to get out of business, wanted to get out of a public asset. They wanted to capitalize this company. They wanted to guarantee jobs. They didn't want to put any more of the taxpayers money into this company, and one year later, what happens? The government members opposite buy back a building, that apparently we sold to Fleet Aerospace, they buy that building back for \$10 million.

(1200)

Do we have any guarantees that those jobs will be still there come this time next year? No. Do we have any guarantees that management will remain in Saskatoon? No. Do we have any guarantee that SED Systems will remain in Saskatoon? No. Are we assured that they aren't going to pull the technology, developed and paid for by the people of this province, out of here and back to Ontario? No. What we could have, we could have a situation where these great business people over here will be left, stuck with the bricks and mortar. Fleet takes the technology, developed and paid for by the people of this province, out of Saskatchewan. Some business deal for the business people opposite.

And then we have Weyerhaeuser, Weyerhaeuser from Tacoma, Washington. Here we have a \$248 million deal. This is the little deal these members opposite cooked up.

This deal had to come about because the people of this province are losing \$91,000 a day. It's a big lie. The people of this province were not losing \$91,000 a day. That business, that asset, PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp Company), did not begin to lose money until you people came to power. And have we gotten any money yet? Not that I'm aware of, not that I'm aware of. A \$248 million deal, but we haven't gotten a cent. But Weyerhaeuser's up in P.A. running the business, but we don't have any money.

And what happened? Weyerhaeuser, last year, made \$70 million — \$70 million that could have been paid into the treasury of the people of this province to pay for health and education. And where did that \$70 million go? Did it stay in Saskatchewan? It went to headquarters in Tacoma, Washington.

And then we have this other part of the deal with Weyerhaeuser. We agree that we're going to construct 32 kilometres of road each year at a cost of \$6 million every year, when the rest of the province's highways are deteriorating. Some business deal. Some business deal.

We have a situation where we have a \$248 million asset that we haven't had a cent for — we haven't got paid a cent. We have a company that's made \$70 million that could have gone to pay for the prescription drug plan that you people dismantled last year. Some business deal, people. Some business deal.

Senior citizens make decisions on whether or not they're going to buy their prescription drug or whether or not they're going to buy their groceries.

And then we have Peter Pocklington. Well we attracted Peter Pocklington to Saskatchewan. You know, that great free enterpriser, that guy, that big guy from Alberta who says, get the government off the backs of business. That guy, you know that guy who's a do-it-yourself kind of guy. He doesn't want any kind of government interference. Great free enterpriser — \$22 million of taxpayers' money. How is that a good business deal, folks? The only way you can attract business to this province is to give them our money.

And then we have Manalta Coal. Here we have Manalta Coal. You know that deal where Manalta Coal from Alberta got the Poplar River coal-mine that we used to own. So what happens? Forty-five million dollars. Oh, sounds good. Only problem is that the people of this province guaranteed that loan. We guaranteed that loan. Manalta, the PC government, and a sweetheart deal. As the button says: they got the coal mine, we got the shaft.

Manalta makes profit and it takes its money to Alberta. Here's a mine that we used to own, that supplied coal to SaskPower. We give this mine to Manalta, guarantee the \$45 million loan and then we buy the coal back from Manalta. Some business deal, folks. Some business deal.

And then we have Canapharm. You know Canapharm, that little business that's headquartered in the constituency of the former minister of Health, the member from Indian Head-Wolseley; you know, that Saskatchewan business that was going to put

Saskatchewan on the map when it comes to the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals — well it's no longer owned by Saskatchewan business people. But guess who owns it? Magnetics International (Ltd.) from Quebec.

This great free enterprise government, guess what else they've done? This great free enterprise government, this government out of business, this great free enterprise business has just bought \$4 million worth of equity in Canapharm. I don't understand that. Here we have a government that's interested in privatizing the profitable assets of the people of this province, and here we are, here's this government that's just put \$4 million into Canapharm — the people of this province now have a little equity in Canapharm — all for the sake of what? Some way to attract business.

I'm not sure, is this privatization or is this mismanagement? Here we have the minister of privatization himself, signing an order in council to convert a \$4 million government loan to Canapharm into a \$4 million ownership share. Now I ask the minister of privatization: how is this privatization; or is this mismanagement?

And then we have the latest sell-off of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Minerals, to Kam-Kotia from Ontario and Premier Cdn of Quebec. Here we had a small enterprise in Saskatchewan, Sask Minerals, that returned over \$50 million to the people of this province, it paid out over \$60 million in wages, and it gave grants in lieu to rural municipalities, in which those plants were located in, of some \$2 million. But what happened? This government just gave away this asset for less than \$16 million, when the 1986 book value placed the assets and inventory at 30 million.

I'd come to Saskatchewan if I got a deal like that too. Does Kam-Kotia need tax breaks? Does Premier Cdn need tax breaks? Does the average family need a tax cut? You bet, Mr. Speaker, you bet.

This government says it believes in the free market-place. This government believes in private initiative. This government believes that it should not be involved in the market-place. If that is what you people believe, why did Weyerhaeuser needs a loan guarantee of \$248 million? Don't their banks trust them?

Why did Peter Pocklington need \$22 million of the taxpayers money? Why did construction magnate Fred Mannix, or Manalta Coal, need a Government of Saskatchewan guarantee for its private sector issue of \$45 million worth of securities to buy the coal plant at Poplar River? They borrowed the money, and we guaranteed the note.

Now I also want to talk about this government's consultation and tax reform which it referred to in its budget address. Mr. Speaker, like every previous budget of this government, this PC government, this budget now before us uses old Tory ideas, old Tory rhetoric, old Tory words.

I just want to turn to a couple of them that these people like to use regularly. It seems to be their favourite words.

They use the words, consultation and tax reform. The minister now talks piously — this is the Minister of Finance — about consultation with the people of Saskatchewan.

Let me ask him this: where was your PC consultation before you attacked the prescription drug plan? Where was your consultation before you destroyed the school-based children's dental plan? Was there any consultation with the public? Was there any consultation with the more than 10,000 people waiting for a hospital bed in Saskatoon? Did you consult them?

Mr. Speaker, did this PC government consult with Saskatchewan people before it eliminated the property tax rebates or before it imposed its unfair flat tax? No, Mr. Speaker, it did not.

But now, Mr. Speaker, the minister pretends to have seen the error of his ways; he pretends to want to consult with Saskatchewan people. But consultation about what? Does he propose to ask the families in rural Saskatchewan if they want the school-based children's dental plan back? I doubt it. Does he plan to ask Saskatchewan people if they want the provincial government to provide property tax relief? I doubt it.

Instead, Mr. Speaker, the minister talks once again about tax reform — tax reform PC style. When the people of Saskatchewan hear a PC Finance minister threaten tax reform, they are alarmed. We've heard those soothing words before, Mr. Speaker. We've heard of tax reform before from the members opposite.

Just three short years ago, Mr. Speaker, in the provincial budget, when the Minister of Finance promised tax reform but imposed tax increases after tax increase after tax increase — at the time, the PC government opposite set out their principles for tax reform on page 12 of their budget speech that year. And here were the principles: simplicity, fairness, revenues for necessary public services, maintain incentives in the economy. Those were their principles of tax reform then, Mr. Speaker, and we hear much more of the same today, the same words.

But let's look beyond the words. Let's look at the performance. Have they made the tax system simpler? No. Have they made it more fair? No. Have they protected necessary public services? Have they maintained incentives in the economy? Three years ago this government, this PC government, talked about tax reform. They imposed tax increases and talked about tax reform. They set out their tax reform goals. They have failed to meet every one of those goals.

Now I note, Mr. Speaker, that the minister does not cite his true inspiration for tax reform, PC style. The inspirations he's received from the most recent Conservative budget in Great Britain a few weeks ago — you know, that right-wing Thatcher version of Conservative tax reform. And here's her version: for the top 5 per cent of British income earners get a \$4.5 billion tax cut, and all those at the bottom of the income ladder will actually pay more. That's tax reform — tax reform, Conservative style.

Now, Mr. Minister, Mr. Speaker, when this Minister of Finance says tax reform, he means tax increase. We see his so-called tax reform in this budget now before us — tax increases for ordinary families, tax cuts for big corporations like Peter Pocklington and Weyerhaeuser and Manalta Coal and whoever else you people have been able to attract to this province. That's tax reform all right; that's tax reform, Tory style. When this minister says tax reform, the people of Saskatchewan had better hold on to their pocket-books.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I close my remarks, I would like to introduce an amendment, an amendment to this budget, an amendment that does make a great deal of sense. And I would move, seconded by the member from Moose Jaw North:

That all of the words after the word "that" be deleted, and the following substituted therefor:

This Assembly urge the Government of Saskatchewan to provide fair taxation, to provide adequate financial support for a comprehensive prescription drug plan, a comprehensive school-based children's dental plan, and other health care services, and to provide adequate financial support for education services, and to take immediate and concrete action to address the farm debt crisis facing thousands of Saskatchewan farm families.

I would move this amendment, seconded by my colleague, the member from Moose Jaw North.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, I've waited some time to get into the budget debate, and I am pleased today to make a few comments on the budget. And let me say from the outset, Mr. Speaker, when the budget was handed down in the House last week, it certainly was a great disappointment to many people in this province, because we had a lot of fanfare from the Minister of Finance and the Premier and others on the treasury benches that this budget would address the real, current problems in the province of Saskatchewan.

(1215)

We were told that it would address the agricultural crisis. But more so, Mr. Speaker, we were told by the members opposite that people in education and people in health — not to worry; this budget will take care of your problems; this budget will address your problems. Let me say, Mr. Speaker . . .

An Hon. Member: — There's not enough money in the world.

Mr. Rolfes: — And the Deputy Premier says again, there's not enough money in the world to do that. I say to the Deputy Premier opposite, you've got lots of money. You've got lots of money, as you indicated this morning, for George Hill to renovate his lavish offices. You've got lots of money, Mr. Deputy Premier, to pay your legislative secretaries to get additional finances from this

government — lots of money for those people.

I say to the Deputy Premier, you've got lots of money for the Ramada Renaissance, of \$12 million over a 10-year period for high rent space that you didn't need. You've got lots of money, Mr. Deputy Premier, of \$34,000 a day for rental space that you don't even use — that you don't even use.

But the Minister of Social Services doesn't have money for hungry children, for children that are homeless. No, he doesn't have money for those.

I say to you, Mr. Deputy Premier, there is lots of money — lots of money.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the government opposite, their fundamental flaw in their economic plan came about when they formed the government in 1982 and the then-minister of Energy, the former member from Morse who's no longer with us, Mr. Speaker . . . well when they made the decision to give a break to the oil companies of \$1.7 billion, when the oil prices were the highest they have ever been in the history of this province, and a barrel of oil at that time, Mr. Speaker, gave to this . . . or revenues from a barrel of oil were \$28 — over \$28 — and we had . . . and the revenues, the revenues doubled to over 2 billion, and yet the revenues that accrued to the government were less than they were in 1982. They lost \$1.7 billion through a policy that they . . . which was really inane and wasn't necessary. But, Mr. Speaker, that continued; that continued, and this budget is no exception.

There is lots of money for those people who are friends of the government, who are friends of the government. And we see every day one minister, then another minister and another minister, announcing millions of dollars, millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, to bail out, to bail out companies who don't even have their headquarters in this province. But when it comes to the ordinary folk, when it comes to the teachers of this province, and when it comes to the university professors who they legislated back to work yesterday, there is no money. There is no money.

And I say to the Minister of Urban Affairs, that small increase that you gave to the people of Saskatoon and other cities isn't going to nearly be enough to meet the demands. And what you are doing, you are shifting the burden of expenditures and responsibilities on to the local government, and then you're saying, well, we are being efficient. We are tightening our belts as a provincial government; now it's time that you guys do. I will address that in a little more detail a little later.

Mr. Speaker, I say to the government opposite, you've made your choices, and you've said to the ordinary people: you don't rank very high in our priorities, but others do. We've heard the member from Saskatoon Nutana referring to Manalta Coal; we'd heard her referring to Pocklington; we heard her referring to Fleet Aerospace — all of those, millions of dollars, millions.

Mr. Speaker, I say to you, even you and I, even you and I could build a Ramada Renaissance conference centre with a guarantee, with a guarantee that this government

made, of \$12 million over a 10-year period. It doesn't take a genius, and it doesn't take someone with a lot of money. With that guarantee even the back-benchers over there, any one of the, could have taken that guarantee to the banks and could have gotten the additional money to build that hotel, Mr. Speaker, that is what is so wrong with this budget; it does not address, it simply doesn't address the problems that exist in Saskatchewan today.

What does this budget do to the 6 or \$7 billion agricultural crisis that we have in this province? We just heard yesterday in question period where thousands, hundreds of thousands of acres of land was lost by farmers again. And daily, daily, farmers are wondering how they're going to be able to seed their crop this spring, because they haven't got the finances to put in their crop. There is nothing in this budget, Mr. Speaker, that addresses the transfer of land, absolutely nothing.

And I say to the members opposite, you promised the people with a lot of fanfare before this budget that you would address those problems. Those problems simply weren't addressed.

I do want to say to the Minister of Health that I appreciate, for example, the budget taking care of a very serious problem, not only in Saskatchewan but across this country, and that is the alcohol problem. And the Calder Centre in Saskatoon which has a national and, I believe, had an international reputation — very, very successful. It needed new facilities. And I appreciate that, but I hope, Mr. Minister — I don't say this with any criticism — hope that when you do renovate the Frank Eliason Centre and you transfer the people there and have a good program, that you then fund it adequately. I think you will, but I hope you will do that, because that is a problem we need to address. Difficult economic times drive people to do strange things and to seek hope in other than reality, and alcohol very often becomes that reality for them.

But I do want to say to the member opposite . . . and I was somewhat disappointed, happy and disappointed, because one of the programs that I was very proud of when I was the minister of Health was the feeling good program. That feeling good program was a contract that we signed with the federal government at that time, and I believe, if my memory serves me correctly, it was in the neighbourhood of \$780 million. It was a very successful program, very successful program.

An Hon. Member: — It was expensive, too.

Mr. Rolfes: — Yes, it was expensive, but it addressed the same kinds of problems that you people are addressing today — the same kinds of problems. And what happened was that in 1982, what happened was that in 1982 when you formed the government, the former minister of Health, the member from Indian Head-Wolseley, de-emphasized the preventative aspect of that program. And I'm pleased now that the present minister has picked up on that and recognizes that prevention can do a lot in meeting some of the problems that people are having today.

The member from Indian Head-Wolseley — and all we have to do is go back to the *Hansard* — criticized very

severely the preventative health program that I brought in at that time. And it was no surprise to me that when he took over the portfolio that he would de-emphasize it. I simply want to congratulate the present minister for reinstating that program and giving it the emphasis that it deserves.

But having said that, I also want to say to the present minister, however, that he did not, he did not address the very serious problem that we are having in Saskatoon. He did not address that problem. The problem I'm talking about is the waiting list, the waiting list of 10,500 people, and, Mr. Minister, I've had some very personal experiences with that, as you well know — 10,500.

An Hon. Member: — That's a different number than your colleague just used. Why don't you get your numbers straight?

Mr. Rolfes: — But no, you can't confuse the two, because there's also 12,000 people on the ophthalmology list, people who need cataract operations. And I say to the Minister of Education, I've got a neighbour right across the street, she's in her 80s. She's been waiting now for months, waiting for months to get a cataract operation and she simply can't get one. She is totally blind. And these people, those who have the money do go to Calgary to get those operations. But I say to the minister, that is not fair and you should address those problems.

That 3.5 per cent increase in health expenditures simply wasn't enough to address the problems that exist out there. And I think you should have another look at that and see if you can't make some money available to address the problems. Not of construction — yes, you are doing a lot of construction, but you also, when you do that construction, have to make certain that the staff is available and that the hospitals have sufficient operating funds to carry out the necessary operations that should be done. It's not sufficient just to have money for construction.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, there was a lot of fanfare that health and education would get a high priority in this budget. I want to say that on those two accounts the budget is very deceitful, very deceitful, and it's dishonest. I think the present Minister of Health — and I want to ask him, I want to ask him in all honesty, how can you say, how can you people say that the Health budget went up 63 per cent when you have transferred, when you have transferred 250 million, 250 million you've transferred from other departments. Twenty per cent of your present budget, 20 per cent of your present budget that is contained in the Health budget have been transferred from other departments. Now that is being dishonest, and there is no other word for it. It's deceitful and dishonest.

Mr. Speaker, no one argues with the Minister of Health to say that he should put ambulance services in Health. No one argues with him that long-term care should be in Health. What I'm saying is that he cannot on the one hand say that we're going to transfer those, and then say the Health budget has gone up 63 per cent. That is being dishonest, and is it any wonder, Mr. Speaker, that people out there have such a low, such a low regard for politicians.

Why can't we at least be honest and say to the people, all right, we've transferred them, that's where they should be, and our Health budget has gone up this much, and we're proud of it. And I'd support you people on it. I think in some areas you've done a good job, but be honest with the people when you say, when you say that you are transferring these and don't claim that it's gone up 63 per cent when in fact it's gone up 40-some per cent.

I want to say to the Minister of Education that somehow he has lost out. Now I know this is, I believe, his third portfolio. I will venture to guess that soon he will be on his fourth. Yes, I'll venture to guess soon he'll be on his fourth. And I say that for several reasons. I say it for several reasons. One, there was great fanfare that there would be huge increases for the Department of Education; in effect, there was about a 2-point-some per cent increase . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, there was. And we can verify that.

The local school boards, the local school boards got 2.1 per cent increase. And if you take into consideration, Mr. Speaker, that they got a minus 1 last year . . . In algebra, all of you people would have known, plus 2 and minus 1 leaves you a plus 1. Divide that by 2, that means that school boards got a half a per cent increase in each of the last two years. In each of the last two years, a half a per cent.

Add up inflation, inflation last year was 4-point-some per cent in this province; now it's around 6. Let's, for round figures, say it's 10 per cent. That means that school boards have lost over 9 per cent due to inflation alone. And you people are saying, we're tightening our belts. What you are simply doing is you're shifting the burden to the local governments, local school boards, and you're saying, now you tighten your belts.

(1230)

Another thing that the minister did, and that was not indicated in the budget address, was that he increased the computational mill rate by four mills. And if you people understand what that does to local school boards, it simply says, we recognize now that you can raise more money because we've increased your computational mill rate, which is absolute nonsense. What the government has done by sleight of the hand has shifted the responsibility, the financial responsibility, to the local school boards and taken off the responsibilities off their own backs.

And, Mr. Speaker, that again is being dishonest, and we will see that in a few weeks when local school boards have to either severely cut programs or they have to substantially increase property mill rate. And the flak is going to come, and you people will get the flak. I'll tell the back-benchers right now, you wait a couple more weeks when the mill rates have to go up 8 or 9 or 10 per cent. And they'll have to; there is no other way out.

The minister did not take into consideration the increase in the settlement, the tentative settlement for teachers. That's not in there.

An Hon. Member: — That's not true, Herman.

Mr. Rolfes: — You didn't say . . . you never announced it. The minister is telling me now that local school boards can expect that he is going to be paying for that tentative settlement, and I will go out and tell the school boards that they can expect additional funds from the minister so that that settlement will be paid. And they will be very pleased, they will be very pleased to hear that — very, very pleased to hear that.

Let me say to the minister opposite, I have talked to school boards and I have talked to trustees, and they are very concerned. They are very concerned about the impact that that is going to have on their budgets.

Mr. Speaker, let me say to the minister that I think that he's had very little influence, very little impact on his colleagues on the high priorities that education should have. Anyone that thinks that school boards can do with a half a per cent increase in the last two years, and that a 1.9 per cent increase in operating grants to the universities is going to solve the problems, and now education has received the high priority that we think it should have, he says, well he's badly mistaken. He's badly mistaken.

We say yesterday, Mr. Speaker, back-to-work legislation for the university professors. Hopefully, Mr. Speaker, we can still settle that dispute without the legislation, although time is running out.

But I say to the minister opposite, he must share a major responsibility for that conciliation process coming to a stop, because he directly interfered in that process when they were at the heart of bargaining by his announcement in this House which was unprovoked, unasked for, uncalled for. And that is the kind of minister that he has been in the Department of Agriculture, in the Department of Energy, and he continues with the same kind of thing in the Department of Education.

And I'll tell you, Mr. Minister, you heard the first thing the other day at Easter council, exactly what educators think of that kind of a process. Never in the history of this province have the teachers and the educators booed a minister at Easter council. You were the first, you were the first. And I think if I were you, Mr. Minister, I would learn from that. I would learn from that.

Mr. Minister, there are problems in education, there are problems in education that you should be addressing, and the problems of private schools. What is the government going to be doing with the Dirk's report on private schools? People out there are waiting for a decision.

What is the government going to do with the Wimmer decision on francophones? The public out there is waiting for a decision. I say to the minister opposite, the budget did not address those, did not address those problems, and I'm asking him to look at those and see what can be done.

An Hon. Member: — What's your position?

Mr. Rolfes: — The minister asked me what my position is.

And I say to the minister, call an election and let me sit on that side and I'll gladly tell you what my position is, I'll gladly tell you it is my responsibility to make policy for the government. That's why he's on that side and getting his high salary, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the minister, there are a lot of problems in education that we need to address. The core curriculum, implementation of the core curriculum. We need to have a look, a very, very serious look if we intend to implement that in the fall. And from what I hear, that is the time table.

Mr. Minister, I want to say to you in all sincerity that that \$1 million, although much appreciated, is not enough for in-service training to implement the core curriculum. On that amount of money, it will not be done properly, simply will not be done. And I've talked to teachers about it, I've talked to school boards about it, and they welcome the \$1 million, but they're saying that all the work that needs to be done is simply not enough. And time is running out for you. Teachers should know right now, teachers should know now, and in the next few weeks, exactly where you stand and what the composition of the core curriculum will be. We can't wait till September. I am told that they will not receive copies of the implementation program till September. They're supposed to implement it in September — they need it now.

And in part I know what your problem has been. Your problem stemmed from the firing of all the people in the department last year. You had really no one left to work on the core curriculum, and now the few people you have left are working day and night to try and get this thing in place. And I say to the minister, please deal with the problem before it gets so great in the fall that you have another catastrophe on your hands.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn for a few minutes to the economy. I want to turn for a few minutes to the economy. And the members opposite, and we heard the Minister of Labour this morning again saying that in all other aspects, other than agriculture, our economy is doing great. I have before me, Mr. Speaker, today, a copy of today's *Leader-Post*. And I don't know whether the Minister of Labour has all the knowledge at his side, but I say to the minister, the Conference Board of Canada doesn't agree with you. It says, "Economic outlook gloomy for Saskatchewan." They are predicting a 1.6 per cent increase.

How, Mr. Minister, is that going to address the problem of the thousands of people that are unemployed in this province? How is that going to address the 15 per cent of our young people that don't have jobs? How is that going to address the 12 per cent of the people in Saskatoon that don't have jobs? And yes, I agree with you, Mr. Minister, that Saskatoon is a good city to live in. But I will say to you, please keep your ideas on what kind of life-styles and life we should have in Saskatoon. Keep them in Melville and in Regina. We don't welcome that kind of thinking in Saskatoon. We don't need it, we don't want it, and neither do many of our churches.

We don't want the Stone Age thinking there. We're more progressive and up to date. I say to the Minister of Labour, Mr. Minister, your government's performance simply does not wash with the records and the statistics that are presently available. Your job performance has been dreadful. There was . . . the budget did not address it. There was no money except for Opportunities '88, which is a rehash of last year. There is no additional money to address the problem. And I say, in that regards the budget has failed.

Mr. Minister, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the Minister of Finance — and I listened very carefully to his address — he said in glowing terms, and praised himself and his government, that they had done some belt tightening, that they had a more efficient government, and that is why his budget came in at \$568 million rather than \$577 million.

That, Mr. Speaker, was deceitful and dishonest because the real reason why the minister came in at \$568 million was because of the equalization payments received from the federal government. He almost got twice as much from the federal government than what he had anticipated, otherwise his deficit would not have been \$568 million but would have been \$750 million. And he says to local governments: look, I can't afford to give you an increase because we've done our belt tightening; now I'm asking you to tighten your belts.

And I say to the Minister of Finance that that is unfair, because the local government and local school boards don't have an equalization fund that they can draw from. The province doesn't provide them with equalization. If the economy is bad for the provincial government, the economy is equally bad for the local governments. You didn't stimulate the economy.

And as my leader said the other day in the debate, in this province, the history of this province has been built on the three engines that we have used, and that is the engine of the co-operatives, the private sector, and the public sector. And there must be a healthy mesh of those three. And if you ignore any one, we in Saskatchewan, because we are a land-locked province far removed from the international markets, if you spent all your time on only one of those sectors, one of those engines, ignore the other two, we have problems.

And, Mr. Speaker, because the government opposite has basically ignored two of those engines, they've got problems, in spades. The public and the co-operative sector, you people have basically ignored — basically ignored.

And I say to the members opposite that in this province, if you study the history of this province, we've had success only when we have built our economy, our mixed economy, by using all those three sectors. And if you stop doing that, you've got problems. You can't expect that international corporations will use Saskatchewan to set up their headquarters and to diversify our economy unless you do as you presently are doing, use large public subsidies for those corporations. And when those corporations no longer can benefit as much here as they can somewhere else, they will simply pull out or

blackmail you people, like Fleet Aerospace did just recently.

We warned you a year ago that exactly what is happening today would happen. And I remember the minister saying, oh no, oh no, you guys are all doom and gloom. And a year later, exactly the same thing happened, exactly the same thing happened as we predicted.

And I say to you people, it's time that you start using the resources that are available here. Use the ingenuity of our own people. Use our raw resources to develop our province. Set up those manufacturing firms here with public help and co-operative help and private. And if you stop doing that, there is no way out of the present problems that you're having.

The debt that we're having right now of \$11.7 billion, I believe it is, and the deficit of 3.7 billion, mainly due to the fact that you've given that money away — that money simply went out of this province and nothing in return. Oh, you got a few jobs; oh, you got a few jobs all right. But I'll tell you, Pocklington, the big free enterpriser, the big free enterpriser when he ran for the Conservative leadership, Mr. Speaker, said, it's time that free enterprisers and capitalists get their hands out of the trough, the public trough.

Who was the first one, Mr. Speaker, who was the first one to get his hands in the trough? Peter Puck. The first one. And he's doing the same thing in Alberta. He's continuing to do the same thing in Alberta, getting hundreds of millions of dollars from the Albertans, and that is not enough for him so he's got to get millions more from the province of Saskatchewan. And we are suckered enough to do it.

And I say to the members opposite, if you continue to do this, you will continue to put this province further and further into debt. You will ask, as you have done over the years, the ordinary private citizens to pay more in taxes. Your income tax and total taxes have gone up over 100 per cent since you formed the government.

I ask some of you people, work out your income tax as I just recently did, and my income has gone down by over \$10,000 in this past year.

(1245)

An Hon. Member: — And you're still overpaid, Herman.

Mr. Rolfes: — And the member from Regina South says, and I'm still overpaid. Well that's fine, that's fine. I don't mind that. I'll do my job. I don't need to pile up the money in the bank, because I'll tell you, I don't care whether you're worth 10 million or whether you're worth 10 billion or whether you have 2 cents in your pocket, all of us will get the same in the end. And you can't take it with you. You're not going to be judged on how much you have when you go; you're going to be judged on what you did with what you had, material and otherwise. That is what you're going to be based on.

And I say to the member opposite, it doesn't bother me. The point that I wanted to make was that even though my

income had gone down dramatically, I did not see the same thing happen to the taxes that I had to pay to the federal and the provincial government. And that is the sad thing. You put the burden on the ordinary people, and you let the corporations get away.

Mr. Speaker, this budget does not address the problems as I see it. It does not address the agriculture problem; it does not address the health problems; it does not address the education problems; it doesn't address the economic problems. It does not address the problems of the ordinary people. In conscience, I cannot accept it.

I will not vote for the budget. I will vote for the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to have an opportunity to enter into this debate, but it is my understanding, Mr. Speaker, that the Lieutenant Governor is here and is waiting to enter the Chamber, so I will beg leave to adjourn the debate, Mr. Speaker.

Debate adjourned.

ROYAL ASSENT TO BILLS

At 12:49 p.m. His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber, took his seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following Bill:

Bill No. 3 — An Act to provide for the Resumption of Instruction, Teaching and Examination of Students at The University of Saskatchewan / Projet de loi N° 3 — Loi portant reprise de l'enseignement et des activités connexes à l'Université de la Saskatchewan

His Honour retired from the Chamber at 12:51 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:52 p.m.