

EVENING SITTING

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, and the amendment thereto moved by Ms. Atkinson.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before the supper break, we were having a nice little debate here. I was supposed to be the only one speaking, but I guess there was more people thought they should be talking than me. Mr. Speaker, I've just a quick coverage of what we were talking about before supper. I was bringing to this Assembly on behalf of my constituents, opinions from an ad I put in the paper which they asked to have read out in here, and I want to do that for them.

We also were talking about farm policies and the policies of the members opposite, Mr. Speaker. The only policy, we've come to the conclusion that they have, is the policies of scare tactics. Then what really upset them, Mr. Speaker, when we moved into talking about the *Regina Manifesto* as being their constitution, which I thought they would enjoy, Mr. Speaker, because it is their constitution. And I'll just continue on.

The first remark I want to start out with, Mr. Speaker, is the remark of the member from Regina North East. He went so far that he attacked the distinguished and respected Roman Catholic priest by the name of Father Paul Marx. The member for Regina North East used this Legislative Assembly to personally accuse Father Paul Marx, a respected Roman Catholic priest, of preaching hate. I say shame to the Leader of the Opposition; I say shame to the member from Regina North East.

Mr. Speaker, I do not happen to be a member of the Roman Catholic faith, but like John Diefenbaker and his Bill of Rights, I will always fight for freedom to worship God and the freedom of religion. To think that the members opposite sat there and approved of a smear attack on a Roman Catholic priest is beyond words. It is a shameless statement, Mr. Speaker, to attack the family values, to attack free enterprise, and to attack spiritual values.

Mr. Speaker, the budget reflects our family values or commitment to farmers, working people, businesses, to building a better Saskatchewan. The great defender of freedom, Sir Winston Churchill, spent a lifetime warning the world on the evils of socialism. In a speech to the British House of Commons in November, 1953 Winston Churchill said and I quote:

We abhor socialism; we abhor state ownership; we abhor nationalization; and we are opposed to these principles.

Churchill recognized the evils of socialism and so do the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Let me remind this Assembly that the NDP is a member of the Socialist International. They believed, and they still believe, Mr. Speaker, in the *Regina Manifesto*. That is why they are opposed to the provincial budget. The members opposite don't want to see farmers make it. The NDP opposition don't want to see protection for families. They oppose free trade and public participation because all these things do not fit into the left-wing agenda.

The wild ideas of socialism have been repeated during this budget debate by some of the more extreme members opposite. I predict the people of Saskatchewan will not fall into the trap of the fanatics who would rather build a family of Crown corporations than help real Saskatchewan families.

How could the people of Saskatchewan be asked to have confidence in the members opposite, such as the member from Moose Jaw North who said, it's okay for homosexuals to adopt children? These are the same people who oppose the budget — a budget full of solid economic policies for this province, Mr. Speaker.

We have the member for Regina Rosemont who is obsessed with destroying the Rafferty dam project, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to inform the members opposite, for all people of Saskatchewan to hear, that if it hadn't been for the initiative of the Progressive Conservative government and a Progressive Conservative prime minister like the Rt. Hon. John Diefenbaker, we would not have Diefenbaker Lake, Gardiner Dam. And water is the most important resource in this province of Saskatchewan. People say that people is the most important resource. You can't live without water, therefore it must be the most important resource.

And we have people opposing . . . saying that they're opposing Rafferty dam. I just can't believe this. To store up water for the use of the people of this province . . . Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that the old . . . They said over there that many people are against this here project. Well like the Premier said, good-thinking people will not be opposed, and we on this side of the House and the good-thinking people of Saskatchewan are 100 per cent behind Rafferty dam, and we're . . . I know that we'll be going ahead with it. I sure hope so because for the sake of the province we need water, and we need all the water that we can possibly, possibly manage to save.

Mr. Speaker, of course these members opposite oppose the budget also; the NDP opposes the budget. The left wing agenda is opposed to economic diversification — it isn't in their agenda. The NDP is opposed to our health care and education budget. After all, that isn't in their agenda. And you can see you can be certain the NDP oppose protection for families.

Mr. Speaker, after nearly 10 years in this Legislative Assembly I have never been more startled and shocked by the dangerous agenda of the left-wing element. Moderate, middle-of-the-road, practical people will never accept the NDP agenda of the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, family people, people with traditional values, hard-working people from pioneer stock, will never rally to those who sit in this legislature and oppose this budget. The people of Arm River will not accept the extreme statements of those opposite and nor will the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, earlier I said that I have decided to expose the statements and policy of the socialistic NDP. They are using this budget debate to spread fear, like their medicare and health scare. They spread mistrust, such as their attacks on businesses. They spread all sorts of damaging rhetoric in the name of their cause.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of this budget. I have welcomed this opportunity to speak in support of the budget. The budget stands for the positive future of Saskatchewan. It stands for families, for farmers, for all that makes Saskatchewan a great province.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to make reference to what this government is all about: freedom and the family. Sir Wilfred Laurier said in 1908, and I quote:

It is our proud boast that Canada is the freest country in the world. It is our boast that in this country liberty of all kinds flourishes to the highest degree.

Mr. Speaker, our Premier is a defender of freedom. The other day in this very legislature, our Premier made reference to that great Canadian, the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker, and I quote from page 233 of *Hansard*:

Mr. Diefenbaker understood Saskatchewan families, he understood pioneers, . . . and he put forward a significant Bill of Rights in this country. And the first paragraph of his Bill of Rights . . . said this: this country is founded upon the principles that acknowledge the supremacy of God, the dignity of man, and the role of the family in a nation of free men and free women.

And I stand strongly and so does the Premier, and the members of this side of the House, on that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments pertaining to the abortion issue because of the Supreme Court of Canada's ruling that abortion is now legal in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, when this ruling came down, all pro-life people, and most church leaders across Canada, were shocked that now abortion on demand is legal. Mr. Speaker, we, the PC Government of Saskatchewan, have clearly stated that our caucus is 100 per cent pro life. I am thankful for this because I do not believe that any other province in Canada is in this position, where the Premier would have support such as this, including the Prime Minister and his caucus in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, it is hard for people to understand the power of the Supreme Court of Canada but we must, as

Canadians, believe and accept that the Supreme Court has the power. Mr. Speaker, this puts all Canadians that believe that the unborn child has its right to life from the time of conception in an awkward position. We would like to say to the Prime Minister of this country to overrule the Supreme Court. We know, Mr. Speaker, that this cannot be done. All we can do, as I see it, at this time, is make regulation to stop as many abortions as possible.

Mr. Speaker, for the people of my constituency of Arm River, and to all Saskatchewan people who are listening to me tonight, I would like to inform you and remind you where the problem lies. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that Canadians realize and remember that it took nearly 20 years for Pierre Trudeau to bring home a constitution and a new charter of rights that caused so many of these issues to be brought before the Supreme Court of Canada. And I might add, Mr. Speaker, that I feel that the Supreme Court judges only ruled on the rights of the mother, giving no consideration to the rights of the unborn child.

Mr. Speaker, I might add also that many people argue that abortion may be acceptable as long as there is not life. The example that I like to use, that if you plant a kernel of dry grain in the ground and that kernel takes root, there is life and then the plant grows. This example is exactly the same when conception occurs and the baby begins to grow.

Mr. Speaker, Trudeau had an accomplice. He had an accomplice when he delivered the constitution of Canada — the then minister of Justice, now the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale. Shortly after this happened, Mr. Speaker, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale was defeated in the 1982 election and now in the position of leader finds it convenient to state very mildly that perhaps he could be against abortion on demand. But, Mr. Speaker, if this is right, how can he control his party who believe it is right to have abortions? If this is not true, Mr. Speaker, then why do the NDP at their conventions continually support abortions?

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite also believe that it is all right for an MP like Svend Robinson, a public figure, to stand up and tell the world he is a homosexual who wants to walk through the park with his lover at his side.

Another thing that really bothers me, Mr. Speaker, is the two ordained ministers that are sitting in the back row that must be against these issues. They must realize that people that believe in abortion for convenience sake and homosexuals are the people responsible for the decay of the moral fibre of our nation. Mr. Speaker, the member for Moose Jaw South and the member from Saskatoon Sutherland, when studying theology, use the same Bible that I read from. Mr. Speaker, they know very clearly that the Scriptures teach that killing is wrong and homosexuality is a sin.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Moose Jaw South and the member from Saskatoon Sutherland are men of the cloth and so I respect them and I ask . . . Mr. Speaker, I respect them. I know they will do what is right.

Mr. Speaker, I ask these two members to say publicly

where they stand, what their belief is. Do they believe that the Scriptures are right, thus making the party wrong, or do they believe the party right and the Scriptures wrong?

Mr. Speaker, in my closing remarks, I have one more comment. I've been an elected member for 10 years. I spent four years in opposition and was very let down in what happens in government. I was part of forming government in 1982. I am quite happy and supportive of the things our government has achieved in the last six years.

I'm a little disappointed sometimes, Mr. Speaker, about the fact that too much bureaucratic control is still being exercised. What pleases me most about my position, Mr. Speaker, is serving and helping people. My full attention at this time is to finish out this term as an MLA for Arm River, and go for another term if the people of Arm River see fit to elect me.

(1915)

One of my main reasons that I am continuing on is that I believe in the integrity of the Premier. I am proud to serve under any man that has stood up and told all Canada — perhaps I should say all the world — that he believes in God and the family and in this good country of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, it will be a pleasure for me to support the budget. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to have this opportunity to respond to the budget, Mr. Speaker, and in particular to respond to the health care portion of the budget.

The government has said, Mr. Speaker, that the health care budget is increased by 5.6 per cent, but that's another exaggeration, Mr. Speaker, another PC misrepresentation of the facts, and another betrayal of the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Now, Mr. Speaker, if we look carefully at the budget, one sees that from 1987-88 fiscal year to '88-89, when one takes into consideration the capital portion of the budget as well as the supplementaries and the portion paid to the property management corporation . . . But the increase is actually only 3.5 per cent — substantially below the rate of inflation in Saskatchewan, substantially below. I understand the rate of inflation this month, or last month, was at 6 per cent.

Now if we compare in Saskatchewan, at 6 per cent in Saskatchewan, if we compare this budget, Mr. Speaker, to 1986-87 budget now, we will note that the increase over a two-year period was only 2.4 per cent over two years. And that, Mr. Speaker, is unacceptable to Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, over many years people of Saskatchewan have accomplished some great things by working together, and one of these proudest achievements has

been medicare — universal, comprehensive medicare. And it began, Mr. Speaker, right here in Saskatchewan. It was Saskatchewan people who built medicare. And it took the foresight and commitment of men like Tommy Douglas, Woodrow Lloyd, and Allan Blakeney, working together with Saskatchewan men and women, to set up the first public hospitalization insurance plan in North America. And it took the courage of Woodrow Lloyd, working with Saskatchewan men and women, to establish medicare insurance in 1962, and the determination of Allan Blakeney, working with Saskatchewan to expand on this medicare and implement new programs, some of them being preventive, such as the dental health program.

Saskatchewan men and women, Mr. Speaker, over the years have built a strong health care system, and we achieved a level of medicare, a level of health care in Saskatchewan that we could all be proud of. Our parents and our grandparents envisaged a society that looked after the health and welfare of all her people. Our parents and grandparents envisaged a society where access to good health care did not depend on how fat your pocket-book was and did not depend on whether you could afford to pay for the care or not. Saskatchewan men and women, Mr. Speaker, had a vision of society where good health care for everyone was a basic right. And there's much wisdom in that vision, Mr. Speaker, much wisdom — for a society that ensures the health and well-being of each and every one of its members is better off for it. And a society that looks after its sick and the less fortunate will save themselves much grief in the long run. And these, Mr. Speaker, are basic social democratic principles, basic socialist principles — and medicare is a socialist policy or plan. And even the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, will pay lip-service to these principles of universal, accessible medical care, these principles that sprang from the hearts and minds of Saskatchewan men and women.

Saskatchewan men and women of the 1980s, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan men and women of the 1980s want to continue that proud tradition, and they know that health, everyone's health, is an essential aspect of the quality of our lives. It is fundamental to our lives, and it's essential for every individual to maintain active, productive, and independent lives. And yet federal government studies show that the health of low-income families is worse than the health of high-income families, and there is disturbing evidence, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that shows people's health is directly related to their economic status.

It's been reported that men who live in high-income groups stand to live six years longer than men who live in low-income groups. It's been reported that men who live in high-income groups will have 14 less years of disability than men who live in low-income groups. And among low-income families and low-income groups, people are more likely to die as a result of accidental falls, chronic respiratory disease, pneumonia, tuberculosis, and cirrhosis of the liver. And it's also been documented, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there are conditions that are more prevalent among low-income families than high-income families, and they are, for example, high blood pressure, mental-health disorders, and disorders of joints and

limbs. But yet in Saskatchewan we have some 22,000 persons under the age 15, I believe, who are dependent on welfare, and some 57,000 children, Mr. Deputy Speaker, living in poverty in Saskatchewan.

Prior to this government taking power, we did not have one single food bank in Saskatchewan, and now we have line-ups at food bank after food bank — tens of thousands of people getting their food supply from food banks, Mr. Speaker. And I'll tell you what — one-half of those people are children — one-half are children, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and their health is in jeopardy, and federal statistics can establish that. Their health is in jeopardy. And this government has done nothing to reduce the inequities in health disparities. It's done nothing to reduce the inequities in health of low- versus high-income families, nothing to reduce these disparities, Mr. Speaker. Yet they say they are for the family. They say they represent the family. They say they are for life. Well I tell you, Mr. Speaker, they contribute to the problem. They're not helping the problem.

And it's their heartless policies that have increased these disparities. And the policies of the member from Meadow Lake, the Minister of Health, and his health policies have increased the disparities between low-income families and high-income families in the areas of health care. And I have only to refer to the prescription drug plan for an example, where it is patently obvious that it's very difficult for those who are on a low income to buy their prescription drugs every month. In some cases, families are making a decision between groceries and drugs — between groceries and drugs, Mr. Speaker. And that's as a result of PC policy. And they say that they are for families, Mr. Speaker, and I say that's hog-wash.

So what can we do then? What can we do about removing or reducing disparities and moving towards a better health care for all? Well there are many things that can be done, Mr. Speaker. First of all, you make sure that people have enough food on their table. That's the number one thing to do. But we can also move in the preventive area. We've seen the results of preventive health care already in things such as the smallpox vaccination, which has been eliminated, I understand. The disease of smallpox, Mr. Speaker, has been eliminated in the world, and I think that's great. But that's an example of preventive health care. We've seen a marked reduction in infant mortality, for example, through preventive measures, Mr. Speaker.

And the dental plan, the Saskatchewan school-based children's dental plan, was an excellent example of preventive health care. In fact, I was recently told by someone who was working in the plan that they were getting to the point where many of these children only needed minor check-ups on a yearly basis because their teeth were so healthy. And that's an example, an excellent example, of preventive health care. But it is also, unfortunately, one of the examples of this government's heartless and senseless policies.

So let's examine the dental program a little more closely in order to illustrate my point. In order to deal with poor dental health in Saskatchewan and the chronic shortage of dentists in rural areas which still exists today — contrary to what the Minister of Health, the member from

Meadow Lake, would have us believe, or the Premier would have us believe, there is still a chronic shortage of dentists in rural areas — the NDP government established a school-based dental plan to provide dental health education, to provide dental treatment and dental preventive services, preventive health services, Mr. Speaker. The plan was overwhelmingly successful. It was the best of its kind in North America, and it was even established that the cost of delivery was as cheap, if not cheaper, per enrolled child than privatized plans.

But this government counted on a drop in the utilization of that plan, and that is exactly what's happened. Although the Minister of Health will tell us that there's 87 per cent enrolment, he doesn't tell us that utilization is substantially down. We were talking a couple of weeks ago about utilization being down to a certain figure. I have heard recently — the more recent figures that I've obtained — is that utilization, that is people who have actually gone and seen a dentist under this plan, is only about one-third of the potential — one-third of the potential. Now that does not mean completions either, Mr. Speaker. That doesn't mean that they have gone back and got all their teeth fixed that the dentist had perhaps lined up for them. That doesn't mean completions; that only means original visit.

But I must emphasize that that is different from enrolment. And for the Minister of Health to suggest that there's 90 per cent utilization when he's using an enrolment figure is not to put the facts out the way they are, Mr. Speaker.

And when these children who have not had their completions, or have not seen a dentist, have a cavity two or three years from now, what are they going to do? They're going to go to a dentist. And I'll tell you what, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's going to cost us a lot more at that time than it would had we maintained the school-based dental clinic and seen children on a regular basis with regular preventive health care.

But this illustrates the total lack of commitment on the part of this government, the total lack of commitment to preventive health care and to health care in general. They're prepared to ruthlessly and insensitively fire some 400 dental workers. And every single one of those dental workers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a member of a family. And families in Saskatchewan were severely affected — not only the families of children who had access to the plan, but the families of the dental workers who were fired — were severely affected, and all this after years of dedicated and competent service to the public of Saskatchewan. They heartlessly and ruthlessly fired these individuals.

And what do the PC MLAs tell their dental workers, Mr. Speaker? Let's see what they tell their dental workers. And right now I'm reading from the *Network of Saskatchewan Women*, December-January '87-88. And I'll give you an example of one of these dental workers, Mr. Speaker, Elaine Bouvier who lives on a farm near Kincaid with her husband and her two-year-old son, a dental therapist with over 10 years experience.

Bouvier worked for the past six years in school dental clinic in Gravelbourg.

Bouvier chose dental therapy as a career because she was interested in the field of health and wanted to work in rural Saskatchewan. "I'm married to a farmer," she explains, "and these days you need a second income to make ends meet."

She's married to a farmer, Mr. Speaker.

(1930)

On June 11, Bouvier and 36 other dental therapists and assistant were summoned to a motel conference room in Swift Current where the government informed them they were fired. "At first I felt very, very hurt. And then a couple of days later I felt angry," says Bouvier.

(And) when she phoned her MLA, Ted Gleim, PC, Shaunavon, to criticize the government . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. Members are not to use other members' names. They are to refer to them by their position or their constituency.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, it was a quote. I thought quotes were allowed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — The Speaker has ruled on this earlier that he isn't going to allow names to be used in the House.

Ms. Simard: — Okay. Thank you. So the PC MLA from Shaunavon, then.

. . . to criticize the government's actions, she phoned the PC MLA to criticize the government's action.

And you know what he told her, Mr. Speaker? He told her to apply for welfare, that's what he told her.

And that's their commitment — that's their commitment, Mr. Speaker, to the families of Saskatchewan. This farm family, who were suffering drastically because this government senselessly and heartlessly fired 400 dental therapists, you know what the PC MLA from Shaunavon told her? He told her to go on welfare. That's where they're at, Mr. Speaker. They take away a job and a career and they tell them to go on welfare.

And I think it's rather interesting that most of these 400 dental therapists were women, Mr. Speaker, most of them were women. And I'm asking myself, as many other women are today in this province, whether the fact most of these workers were women had something to do with the callous and indifferent way in which they were handled by this government.

But nevertheless, the Premier of this province admitted his mistake last November, and he said that they were getting a considerable amount of criticism over their movement on the dental plan. So he admitted that this was a mistake, and I quote now from a *Leader-Post* article dated December, 1987. He concedes that various measures including changes to the province's

prescription drug plan and the children's dental plan have caused the government grief. So looking ahead to 1988, he said there will be a very exciting, brand-new, rural-based dental program. That's what the Premier said, there would be a very exciting, brand-new dental program.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I listened to the budget for one and a quarter hours. I listened to that budget speech being read one and a quarter hours, Mr. Speaker, and not one word about this "exciting new dental plan" for rural Saskatchewan.

Over 300 communities, Mr. Speaker, were served under this dental plan, and most of those communities were rural . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, the member from Meadow Lake will have an opportunity to get into this debate later on. I'd ask him to refrain from shouting across the floor.

Over 300 communities, Mr. Speaker, served, and mostly rural ones, by this dental plan, and now I understand we have perhaps 78 of these communities being served.

Now this article in the *Network of Saskatchewan Women*, December-January '87-88, goes on to describe some of the services that have been decimated by this government:

Arm River constituency: children's dental care was available in school-based clinics in 12 communities under the old plan.'

It goes on to say:

It's available in private dental practices in two communities under the new plan.

I am not going to read that portion because I understand, from what has taken place in the House, that these may be slightly changed. But what I will do, Mr. Speaker, is let the members opposite, in case they don't know and aren't aware just how many school-based clinics were open in Saskatchewan.

Assiniboia-Gravelbourg: there were school-based clinics in nine communities.

Is there a dental practice in that community, I ask the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg. In one community only — in one community only, Mr. Speaker, but there were school-based clinics in nine communities in Assiniboia-Gravelbourg. Bengough-Milestone, there were school-based clinics in 15 communities, Mr. Speaker. There's not one school-based clinic there now, Mr. Speaker. There may be a dental practice in one community, but no school-based clinics. There were school-based clinics in nine communities in Biggar. There were school-based clinics in 11 communities in Canora. There were school-based clinics in 10 communities in Cut Knife-Lloydminster; in seven communities in Estevan; in 12 communities in Indian Head-Wolseley; in nine communities in Kelsey-Tisdale; in nine communities in Kelvington-Wadena; in seven communities in Kindersley, and in 16 communities in Kinistino. Last Mountain-Touchwood, school-based

clinics in 14 communities. Maple Creek, there were school-based clinics in eight of these communities. Meadow Lake, there were school-based clinics in eight communities. I understand there's dental practices in three communities; however, I'm not sure whether these figures are up-to-date and that's why I'm not going on to read the latter portion.

But the fact of the matter is, in Meadow Lake there were eight communities being served by school-based clinics and now it isn't being served to the same extent. Melfort there were school-based clinics in six communities; Melville, in nine; Moosomin in eight; Morse in six; Nipawin in eight; Pelly in four; Prince Albert-Duck Lake, there were three; Qu'Appelle-Lumsden, there were 10; Quill Lakes, 11; Redberry, 10 communities being served; Rosetown-Elrose, eight communities being served by school-based clinics; Rosthern, there were school-based clinics in 11 communities; Saltcoats, there were school-based clinics in 11 communities; Shaunavon, there were school-based clinics in nine communities; Shellbrook-Torch River, school-based clinics in nine communities; Souris-Cannington, there were school-based clinics in 11 communities; Thunder Creek, in 10 communities; Turtleford, in 10 communities; Weyburn, in five communities; and Wilkie in eight communities. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? There's not one single school-based clinic in Saskatchewan today. There may be some dentists that have replaced some of those clinics, but by far there has been no replacement in Saskatchewan.

And I say that's disgraceful. And I believe the members opposite never took the time to realize how destructive and how frivolous and how thoughtless their policy was with respect to the decimation of this dental plan.

So I'm still looking, still looking for the Premier's new, exciting, rural plan, and I haven't given up hope because we'll be back here talking about the dental plan until we get some action from that government, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to just quote what the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association has said in their "Issues in provincial health care," dated March 1988, March of this year, Mr. Speaker. Resolution 8 on page 19 of that report says,

Be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association, whose membership is representative of the people of Saskatchewan (Do you get that — representative of the people of Saskatchewan) urge the provincial government to reconsider its actions with respect to the Saskatchewan dental plan and reinstate the program in its previous form, (Mr. Deputy Speaker, reinstate it in its previous form) at least for children up to 13 years.

They go on to say in their explanation that, "good dental care and education are critical in these early years." They go on to say that it's their hope "that any new approach will make quality dental care as accessible as it was under the Saskatchewan dental plan."

And, Mr. Speaker, this government has not been listening to the people. It's still not listening to the people, and we

do not have the dental plan restored in Saskatchewan, notwithstanding that there's been such an outcry from the people of Saskatchewan with respect to this short-sighted, heartless PC policy.

And another example of good medicare and good preventive care, as well as good curative care, was the prescription drug plan before the PC government got at it and started wrecking it. This government has substantially reduced the effectiveness of the prescription drug plan, and they've made it much more difficult for those who are already at a disadvantage, healthwise, to get prescription drugs.

By decimating or revamping the prescription drug plan in such a manner that 100 per cent of the cost has to be paid up front initially by the patient, they have made it very difficult for those who are on low income to buy prescription drugs, pay the rent, pay the utility bills, and put food on the table. And yet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they applaud the fact, they applaud the fact that their federal government, the PC federal government, has introduced drug patent legislation that will inevitably — and, I understand, already has — increased the cost of drugs in Canada. They are making people pay 100 per cent up front for their drugs. It's true that some of it gets reimbursed, but the 100 per cent up-front cost is what people are having difficulty with. And they approve the passage of the drug patent legislation in Ottawa that will further increase the difficulty for those people who are having trouble paying for their drugs.

In 1986-87, 76.2 million was budgeted for prescription drugs in Saskatchewan. In 1987-88, that went down approximately \$20 million, a \$20 million cut from 76.2 to 56.9; and in '88-89, down to 50.1 million, a slash of some \$26 million — less today than in 1986 for the payment of prescription drugs for Saskatchewan, for the sick and elderly in Saskatchewan. And this is an important issue in Saskatchewan.

And I listened on budget day, Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Minister of Finance drone on for an hour and a quarter. Ten thousand words, Mr. Speaker, 10,000 words, and not one — not one word, Mr. Speaker; and I listened carefully — not one word about the prescription drug plan and the dental plan. Ten thousand words, and this minister and this government, Mr. Speaker, have arrogantly chosen to ignore the Saskatchewan people, the sick and the elderly, by refusing to listen to their pleas about heartless PC cut-backs in health care. This government has arrogantly and heartlessly chosen to ignore the pleas of the people of Saskatchewan.

And we have long hospital waiting lists in Saskatchewan. I have been told that they're approaching 15,000, and I understand that at the end of February in Saskatoon the hospital waiting list was at 10,000. And people are waiting in line for urgent surgery, Mr. Speaker. Doctors have to make decisions every day as to which patient's case is the most serious. And they belittle these comments, Mr. Speaker. They don't see any ... they don't believe what we're saying. But the fact ... the member from Regina South belittles these comments, Mr. Speaker.

The fact of the matter is, we have unprecedented waiting

lists in Saskatchewan — unprecedented waiting lists that are totally intolerable and unacceptable in this province. And doctors are making decisions every single day as to who is closer to death's door in order to determine who is going to get treatment in this province. They make decisions every day as to who is closer to death's door. And they think that this is funny.

We have cancer patients who are waiting up to five weeks for surgery. We have people who may not be considered life-threatening surgery but who, nevertheless, could have serious medical complications such as circulation cut off in the legs.

(1945)

I've spoken to another individual today who's in the same situation, and we bring these examples up to this government, Mr. Speaker. We bring these examples up to try and put a human face on it, to try and show the PC members of this legislature that there are real people out there who want to see these hospital waiting lists reduced, and what do they do? They make light of it and they chortle about it and they definitely don't take it seriously, Mr. Speaker. Instead of attempting to do something about the long hospital waiting lists, instead they try to throw out smoke and mirrors and say one thing or another that misleads the public as to what the problem really is.

And we hear about new hospital beds. Well I tell you, Mr. Speaker, we welcome any new hospital beds, but we will be watching closely to make sure that these hospital beds remain open in the summer because many people have said to me, there is not much point in opening new hospital beds if hospitals don't have the funds to keep these beds open during the summer.

I note from this budget that the medical care insurance portion has not been increased when we look at the supplementaries. It has not been increased, Mr. Speaker, and if in fact there is an increase in utilization, which there often is from year to year, that would in effect mean a decrease in payment to doctors. And we can remember last fall, Mr. Speaker, when we were all very concerned about not getting medical attention because doctors' fees were being capped. Now I ask you, Mr. Speaker, are we going to be facing the same crisis again this year?

And all this, all this, Mr. Speaker, a 2.4 per cent increase over two years; 3.5 in one year in the Health budget only — not meeting up with inflation; no mention of the prescription drug plan; no mention of the dental plan in the budget speech, in spite of the fact that people have been demanding that these plans be reinstated in the form they were before. All this from a government that campaigned on a pro-medical care platform — all this from a government that campaigned on pro-medical care.

But as soon as they were elected, Mr. Speaker, they broke their promises. They decimated the dental plan; they made prescription drugs inaccessible to many low-income families; we have unprecedented hospital waiting lists — all this from a government that campaigned on pro-medical care and continually say

that they stand for the family, Mr. Speaker. Well I tell you, those families, Mr. Speaker, that are having trouble deciding whether they're going to buy groceries tonight or pay for prescription drugs, don't see those people as being pro-family or pro-life.

So how do they solve this? I ask you, how are they attempting to solve this? Certainly it's not by providing adequate funding for health care because they haven't done that. So how are they going to solve this?

Do you know how they think they're going to solve it, Mr. Speaker? They've increased their public relations budget by some 200 per cent. And we're going to see a lot of fancy openings; we're going to see phony ribbon-cutting ceremonies. We're going to see glossy pamphlets, maybe even some George Hill style promotion programs where a civil servant gets on TV and tries to tell everybody what a good job they're doing.

They've identified their problem, Mr. Speaker, as a PR problem. They've identified their problem as a PR problem, but I tell you, Mr. Speaker, it's not a PR problem, it's a policy problem, and they refuse to recognize that it's a policy problem. But instead they talk. And this . . . the throne speech droned on about this. They talked about the high cost of medicare, the high cost of medicare, Mr. Speaker.

Well I want to talk a bit about the myth of spiralling health costs. The PC government has shifted many programs and expenditures out of other government departments to the Department of Health, Mr. Speaker. Examples include: continuing care expenditures, which used to be funded through Social Services; the minister's salary, which used to be funded through Executive Council; and routine support services, which used to be funded through supply and services. And these transferred items now amount to more than 240 million per year, Mr. Speaker. And they've transferred these expenditures to the health care budget, to the Health department budget, and then they try to claim that health expenditures have increased rapidly. And it's another case of PC arithmetic, comparing apples to oranges, Mr. Speaker. But when we compare apples to oranges and we make a straightforward, fair and accurate comparison, we see that health care expenditures, vis-à-vis the entire budget, has not increased over the years.

You know, this whole attempt to talk about the high cost of health care, as I see it, Mr. Speaker, is an attempt to get people ready for more health care cut backs, for deterrent fees, and for the privatization of many of our health care programs.

In fact, the PC Party resolution at its last annual convention approved deterrent fees in health care. The PC Party has approved and asked for the government to implement deterrent fees. And that's where they are at. When they talk about high cost of health care, they are trying to get people ready for the privatization of health care as they've already started to do with the dental program, for example.

But I tell you, Mr. Speaker, it's not a PR problem, it's a policy problem that they have, and this government has

the wrong priorities. There's no question this government has the wrong priorities. They have chosen not to make health care a priority but to make other things a priority.

And let's just look at some of their wrong choices, their wrong priorities, Mr. Speaker; 1.7 billion given away on oil royalties, Mr. Speaker — 1.7 billion; 1 billion on Shand and Rafferty, a political boondoggle in the Premier and the Deputy Premier's riding; 20 million a year on self-serving advertising, and we've tasted some of that already . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . 25 million, I'm told, by the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg — 8.4 million a year, that's \$34,000 a day, on empty office space, Mr. Speaker; 23 million to Saskoil sell-off, and 22 million in gifts to millionaire Peter Pocklington. They say they have no money for health care and health care costs are spiralling. And I say hog-wash, Mr. Speaker. They've made the wrong choices, and they have the wrong priorities.

Meanwhile they use the cost, the mythological spiralling costs of health care, to levy the average Saskatchewan citizen with higher and higher taxes, greater and greater tax increases every single day. In Saskatchewan we are now paying the highest income tax, exceeded only by Prince Edward Island, I believe. And this budget gave no relief from the flat tax to the ordinary taxpayer — no relief at all from the flat tax. In fact, they increased the flat tax to 2 per cent.

We have seen utility rate increases in this province on an average of 47 per cent from 1981 to '87 — 47 per cent on the average in utility rates, Mr. Speaker. Well I say that that's deplorable, and its unacceptable.

And these high tax increases, they say, are being used to pay for spiralling health and education costs, which we know aren't true. If you look at the figures, it's just not true. What they're being asked to pay for, Mr. Speaker, is Tory mismanagement and Tory incompetence and Tory pay offs to friends of the Tory party. That's what those taxes are being used for — and all this from a government that promised a 10 per cent decrease in income tax, promised a 10 per cent decrease. Well it's another betrayal, Mr. Speaker, another betrayal of the people of Saskatchewan.

The New Democrats say, Mr. Speaker, that there is money for health, that health needs to be made a priority in this province, and that a New Democratic government will make it a priority.

In the meantime we will fight this PC government to make sure that each and every man, woman and child and every single family in this province will have access to universal, adequate health care in this province. We will continue to fight on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan to make sure that health care is available to them, and that this principle of universal accessible health care is respected by these PC members who have chosen not to respect that principle, and who instead respect big corporations and make them the priority as opposed to people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — And that's shown, Mr. Speaker, by the fact that corporations get a cut in income tax and the individual doesn't. They sit there and say it's rhetoric, it's a fact; it's a fact — corporations get a cut; average citizens get an increase in their income tax. They talk about services for individuals being too costly, but services for corporations and big out-of-province oil companies is not too costly. And this is what we hear constantly and yet they say this is rhetoric. They don't want to face up to the facts, Mr. Speaker, where they're really coming from. They would rather attempt to bamboozle the people of Saskatchewan into thinking that they stand for the family and they stand for individuals. Well we on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, and the families out there, and the men, women, and children, know that that's not true because actions speak louder than words, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — And because of this heartless, insensitive budget towards health care and other matters, and towards individual families, because of the increase in taxes on the ordinary citizens in this province, Mr. Speaker, I cannot support this budget.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Assiniboia-Gravelbourg constituency, I am very happy to have this opportunity today to participate in this budget debate before it draws to a close later on this evening.

Mr. Speaker, it's not secret that I consider this budget to be deficient. In my view, it is a highly superficial document, a PR (public relations) gimmick largely crafted by the PC party pollsters who seem to dictate almost every move the government makes.

Those pollsters, Mr. Deputy Speaker, especially on the eve of certain by-election campaigns, have obviously told this government that the Conservatives are in pretty bad odour throughout Saskatchewan. And that's certainly no secret for people who take the time to sample a little bit of public opinion in this province. The pollsters have recommended that the government do something, or at least, Mr. Deputy Speaker, appear to do something, about those critical issues upon which the Conservatives are most vulnerable, issues like the deficit, for example, like health care, and like education.

And so we have this budget. As an exercise in cosmetic politics, it appears to do something about the deficit. It appears to do something about health care. It appears to do something about education. But those superficial appearances, Mr. Deputy Speaker, do not equate with reality. No matter how cleverly the Finance minister might wrap up this package of the budget, the package itself does not constitute a good budget for Saskatchewan. It's a collection of dribs and drabs and bits and pieces, a pollster's hodgepodge, with no central thrust, no sense of direction, and no sense of purpose for the future of Saskatchewan. And it does not, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I repeat, does not deal effectively with the critical issues like education or health care or the deficit.

On the deficit, for example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the government is claiming some great progress in bringing that multi-billion dollar monster under control, and yet Saskatchewan's public debt will be going up again this year — up, now down — up by more than \$300 million to a total figure since 1982 of close to 3.7 billion, and that is just on the government's so-called ordinary yearly operations. It doesn't include other government debts such as those being carried by the Crown corporations.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when all forms of government debt in Saskatchewan are taken into account, the true total figure today, in terms of Saskatchewan's debt, is a staggering \$11 billion. Even for the creative minds in the PC polling agencies, it's hard to characterize that massive debt as some kind of so-called progress. That's what they would like Saskatchewan people to believe, that it represents progress, but it does not. In all the flimflam in the budget speech, the Finance minister tried to portray his huge debt as some sort of improvement. It was a classic case of trying to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

(2000)

If there has been any so-called improvement in the deficit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is only in a slower growth rate in that deficit from year to year. It's still growing, it's still getting bigger, but the government claims that it is growing more slowly, and for that the government wishes to claim great praise.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a few sobering facts will mute that praise in no uncertain terms. Fact number one: it was this government, this government itself, that created Saskatchewan's huge albatross of debt in the first place. It is a self-created problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by this administration. And they have taken no steps, none, not one single step in this budget or in any other policy initiative to deal with their own waste and extravagance which is a prime contributor to this deficit and debt problem.

There is nothing in this budget to curtail patronage. There is nothing to stop the untendered contracts. There is nothing to reduce government advertising. There is nothing to stop the waste on the lavish, and, we find now, often unused, government office space. There is nothing to change or curtail the blizzard of tax dollars literally blowing in the wind these days because of wasteful and costly election give-away schemes. There is nothing to clean up these messes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the government's own backyard. That's fact number one.

Fact number two: to cope with their huge debt burden, this government has imposed massive tax increases on average taxpaying Saskatchewan families — the flat tax; the sales tax; the gas tax; the SGI rates; the SaskPower rates; the SaskTel rates. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of those things are up, and up significantly in the last year.

And speaking of SaskTel, people have noticed that this government is actually levying a provincial tax on the newly imposed federal communications tax. This Conservative government is actually taxing people's taxes. And that in itself is a measure of how desperate they

are.

Fact number three, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To the extent that they may have slowed the rate of growth in their deficit, I would ask you to look at how they have shifted that deficit onto others in Saskatchewan, others like for example, the municipal level of government in our province. Deficit shifting does not constitute deficit reduction. The debt is not thereby reduced, it's just moved over to somebody else who has to pay it out of some other pocket — and that is hardly an improvement in our overall situation.

Fact number four, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The budget documents reveal that Saskatchewan gained, this year, well over \$100 million in new equalization payments from the federal government. That's new money, unexpected money in the government's budget plans.

It was a windfall gain this year not previously calculated into Saskatchewan's flow of revenue. And that in itself, that one windfall gain from the federal treasury, that one thing in itself accounts for a full one-half of any so-called improvement in the growth rate of the Conservative deficit. So they can hardly claim any credit for that free gift which they had never counted on or calculated before into their plans.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all this budget talk about deficit reduction is a pretty imaginary exercise with this government. It is packaging, not substance. It is superficial; it is not real. And it comes on top of a huge credibility gap for this government in dealing with Saskatchewan's finances.

They have a reputation, pretty broadly understood and accepted across Saskatchewan, for cooking the books to suit their political convenience. Remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it was this government and this Minister of Finance who consciously miscalculated Saskatchewan's financial position prior to the last election by a full 200 per cent.

That's not just a little bookkeeping error. That is massive and deliberate misrepresentation of Saskatchewan's financial picture. So how can anybody in our province these days, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have any confidence in any set of numbers that this government might produce?

They pull their arithmetic quite literally out of the air. It's not based on fact or reality, it's based on what their pollsters tell them they have to say. So I think people in this province can be forgiven if they take this government's claims about deficit reduction with a very large grain of salt.

People look instead, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the reliable economic indicators published by independent agencies and authorities in this province that are not under the thumb of those across the way; agencies and authorities that do not adjust their figures to suit the government's partisan advantage. And in the past two or three weeks we've had four such independent indicators made public. They paint a much different picture of

Saskatchewan's economy, compared to the rose-coloured version produced by the government. And I would invite the members of this House to look at those facts from those four independent sources.

First, from Statistics Canada we have the most recent figures on unemployment. They show that the jobless rate in Saskatchewan is above the national average; they show that the city of Saskatoon has the second worst unemployment problem in the country; they show that youth unemployment in our province is at a staggering 15 per cent; and those figures show that this government has the weakest record in Canada for new job creation.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, also from Statistics Canada, we have the figures on inflation. The cost of living in Saskatchewan is very nearly the highest in the nation, especially in Regina and Saskatoon, and much of that burden is being driven by cost increases imposed by this government.

Thirdly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from the Conference Board of Canada last Friday, we have the most recent projections on economic growth, province by province, for 1988-89. And where is Saskatchewan in that picture? Mr. Deputy Speaker, sadly we are at the very bottom of the heap, last or second last; only Manitoba may be worse in terms of slow growth and stagnation.

And finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have the Midland Doherty report on accumulated Saskatchewan public debt — the government's debt on current accounts, the government's debt on Crown corporations. It all adds together as the heaviest per capita burden in the nation.

You know, there was a debate in the media in Regina two or three weeks ago about whether we are really the worst in Canada in terms of our accumulated public debt per capita or, some would say, maybe it's not so bad, maybe we're just the second worst. Can you image, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a sillier argument? What does it matter? However you cut it, whether we're worst or second worst, it's a very huge burden. And of course now, with his most recent budget, the Finance minister has removed all doubt about our debt position. We are now without question the most debt-burdened people in Canada, over \$11 billion in total, Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$11,000 for every man, woman and child in Saskatchewan — for the average Saskatchewan family, a government debt burden of \$45,000. It just boggles the mind to try to grapple with that kind of situation. About a million dollars a day — a million dollars a day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, goes down the drain in dead, lost interest charges just to service that government debt. And this budget tries to pretend that all is well; this budget tries to pretend that we are making progress; this budget tries to suggest that Saskatchewan is being well-managed. But the facts, Mr. Deputy Speaker, prove the exact opposite.

Let me turn for a moment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the two other issues, beyond the deficit question, that tended to dominate in the rhetoric of the budget on March 31. Those two other issues, in the language of the Minister of Finance, were health care and education. And here again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Conservative Party pollsters have been at work, telling the government that

they have to appear to be dealing with these issues. People don't trust this government when it comes to health and education, and for good reason, after the savage hacking and slashing of health and education that occurred last year.

So the pollsters have told the Minister of Finance and have told the government that they have to appear to be dealing with these concerns, and the operative word, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the operative word is "appear" to be dealing with these concerns, because this budget is a cynical triumph of appearance over substance. It is cosmetics instead of reality.

The so-called new commitments of this government to health care and education in this budget do not even keep pace in a realistic way with the rate of inflation. They did some fancy number juggling in the blue books to try to make their arithmetic look better, but the fact remains that health and education will be slipping backwards again this year under this budget — losing ground, not gaining it. And the superficial rhetoric in the budget speech does not change that hard reality. It certainly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, does not change the predicament facing the people in towns like Coronach or Gravelbourg who now do not have the dental services that they used to have. The application of the dental plan in Gravelbourg so far is a classic case of failed government policy.

Last year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, before this government dismantled the school-based dental plan for children, Gravelbourg had not one, but two forms of dental services. They had the dental therapists and the assistants working with children through the school system and, in addition to that, Gravelbourg had a dentist on Main Street working in a satellite practice from Moose Jaw.

After the previous dental practice was essentially destroyed by this government, Gravelbourg, of course, lost its school-based dental plan and further, the dentist that had been practising on Main Street retreated back to Moose Jaw, closing down his Gravelbourg practice. And Gravelbourg has since that time been left with nothing, as a direct consequence of this government's failed policies in health care.

The government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has admitted the failure. The Premier has confessed that the so-called new dental plan is not working out — not working out exactly as they had expected it would, especially in rural communities like Gravelbourg and others. And this budget, in my opinion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, should have addressed that failure in very specific terms.

The Premier, in his comments going back to last November, raised expectations in rural Saskatchewan that there would be something coming early in 1988 to deal with the obvious deficiencies in the dental program as that program related in particular to rural Saskatchewan. But this budget did not address that concern. So across much of rural Saskatchewan there is a glaring and continuing example of how this government is eroding health care and how people are disadvantaged as a consequence.

The government says they are working on the problem.

Mr. Speaker, in my judgement, the people of Gravelbourg have waited long enough for some definitive product to flow from all of that so-called work on the part of the government and they should have their dental services restored. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is just one example of the dozens, literally dozens that could be mentioned, illustrations about the worries and the insecurity and the instability that people feel with respect to our health care system.

The same feelings abound, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the field of education policy, where this government has particularly in the last year done serious damage. They want some credit now for funding the education development fund in this budget this year at the level of \$14.5 million. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is no improvement; it is in fact a freeze; and it comes after they chopped \$20 million out of that same education development fund last year. They want some credit for increasing university operating budgets this year by about \$2.8 million. That's some increase, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's less than a 2 per cent increase — less than half the rate of inflation — and it comes after universities have been frozen in their funding since 1986.

(2015)

The Minister of Education likes to quote the initial reactions of those in the Saskatchewan education community who responded to this budget in the first few minutes after the budget was delivered on March 31. The minister says that that initial, quick, first response was favourable.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, much of that reaction has turned sour during the past week as educators and administrators and trustees and others have had a chance to review the government's numbers in greater detail. Once they get past all of the superficial P.R. glitz in which the budget was packaged, you'll find that their thoughtful analysis is increasingly critical.

They see through the phony façade that was created by the Minister of Finance. They see the reality of underfunding for education. And as just one example of several that I could give you this evening, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but just this one will do, I'd like to refer to the president of the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, who pointed out just over this past weekend that local education taxes across Saskatchewan will be going up this year because:

The provincial contribution does not meet the real and basic cost increases in education.

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the further examples about the problems this government is creating in education could go on and on. But these few that I've just mentioned make the point. The government's treatment of education is superficial; it is insufficient; it's an exercise in gimmickry, not reality; and it creates worry, insecurity, and instability across our province.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the same is sadly true, the same story sadly prevails, when it comes to agriculture. One of

the truly astounding things about this budget is the total omission of anything of substance relating to agriculture.

In their budget last year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in June of 1987, the Conservatives said this, and I quote: "Many farmers are in serious financial difficulty. Farm debt in Saskatchewan is now estimated to be over \$5 billion . . . it is a serious problem that requires a response."

That was in June of 1987.

And in their throne speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of just a couple of weeks ago, March 21, 1988, the government said this:

. . . agriculture policies around the world have wreaked havoc on rural Saskatchewan . . . farm debt is of crisis proportions.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, having acknowledged this massive problem, you would think the government would have moved in this year's budget to begin to do something constructive about that problem. But no, the budget had barely a page in it about agriculture, and that was buried at the very end of the document, almost tacked on as an afterthought.

In 1987 this government slashed its budget for the Department of Education by over . . . Pardon me, the Department of Agriculture, by over 15 per cent — some \$25 million cut last year. And this year the cutting continues. Agriculture loses another 7 per cent of its funding, down by \$9.5 million from 1987.

And so people, I think, realistically and seriously ask, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where is the government's so-called commitment to farmers and to rural Saskatchewan. All their nice, warm talk about being the farmers' friend does not hide the hard, cold fact that agriculture is repeatedly being cut, budget after budget. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what were the alternatives? What should have been done as a bare minimum for rural Saskatchewan in this budget?

Well first of all, the budget should have straightened out the mess that the government created earlier this year in their \$25-per-acre production loans program and the changes announced in that program. They should have lowered their interest charges, and they should have eased up on that vicious security agreement that they are insisting that farmers should sign.

Secondly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there should have been a specific commitment, with detail, to a contingency plan to deal with this year's impending drought conditions over much of southern Saskatchewan. That is a real and a major problem for a large portion of rural Saskatchewan. The government doesn't yet acknowledge that that problem is there, in serious terms.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — Order. Why is the member on his feet?

An Hon. Member: — Mr. Speaker, there's a Cub pack that I'd like leave to introduce.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My apologies to the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg.

I've got a group in the Speaker's gallery that I'd like to introduce to you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to members of the Legislative Assembly. There's 10 Cubs from the No. 67 Dieppe Cub Pack, here in Regina Rosemont. They are 7, 8, and 9-year-olds, and it will be my pleasure to share some juices and perhaps a little bit of discussion with this fine group of citizens, and indeed the very future of our province. Shortly I will be meeting with them in the members' dining room.

Please join me in welcoming the 67 Dieppe Cub Pack.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Johnson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to introduce through you, and to the rest of the Assembly, a lady sitting in your gallery, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Her name is Kathleen O'Connell. She was born and raised in Quebec City, and she's now in Saskatchewan. And I'd like to have all the members give her a real good Saskatchewan welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE (BUDGET DEBATE) (continued)

Mr. Goodale: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would join with the members who have just spoken in welcoming the guests who have joined us in the gallery this evening.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was talking about agriculture, and about the commitment, or the lack of commitment, in this budget to agriculture, and I had mentioned some of the things that I thought were deficiencies in this budget with respect to agriculture. And I was beginning to enumerate a list of things that ought to have been there.

I mentioned, for example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, some obvious changes that need to be made with respect to the production loans program.

I mentioned some of the obvious planning that needs to be in place to deal with the problem of an impending drought across much of southern Saskatchewan this spring. And one only needs to visit virtually any community or any rural area in my constituency of Assiniboia-Gravelbourg to understand the magnitude of that problem and what a worrying problem it is this spring. We all hope it will rain, but, Mr. Speaker, failing that, we are going to have one colossal problem on our hands, and it is going to require leadership from government in developing the range of programs and policies to cope with that situation.

Thirdly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe this budget should have produced a specific game plan for the rearrangement of farm debt. In my view, it would not be reasonable or fair just to make some simplistic attempt at writing off farm debt, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That clearly would not be fair. It would not be sound from an economic point of view. But I believe it should be possible to reorganize a portion of that debt on more equitable terms, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to give more farmers a decent chance to survive through these very tough times.

Fourthly, I believe we need a new long-term approach to farm credit programs in the future. What exists now is clearly not good enough. The practical experience of the last several years demonstrates that, and in my view this budget should have included a proposal to deal with this serious vacuum in public policy in terms of long-term farm credit for the future here in Saskatchewan.

And fifth, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this budget should have signalled the Saskatchewan government's clear intention to fight for a new effective international grains agreement in world grain markets. Just trying to eliminate subsidy programs among grain exporting countries, in my opinion, is not good enough. That in itself will not restore decent world grain prices. What we need is a negotiated agreement involving at least Canada, the United States, Australia, and Argentina — a negotiated agreement for a grain price range that's at least twice as high as the prices that prevail today.

I don't pretend that getting that kind of an agreement would be easy, Mr. Deputy Speaker; it would not be easy. But it seems to me that it should command as much time and effort and attention and energy from this government and from the Government of Canada as has been expended in the last couple of years in the whole exercise surrounding the free trade initiative.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the budget was also strangely empty when it came to matters affecting small-business policy. Again there were words in the budget, but there was very little substance. It promised some action, not immediately, but maybe next year, to deal with the business tax issue in some small way.

An Hon. Member: — Oh come on, Ralph.

Mr. Goodale: — Read the document, I suggest to the Minister of Urban Affairs, who doesn't like that comment, and you'll find that it's pretty vague, and you'll find that many Saskatchewan businesses and many Saskatchewan municipalities find it pretty vague, and I would suggest to the Minister, through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there is not much progress on this very critical issue.

Businesses are crying out for some immediate tax relief, and it seems to me that this government and this budget should have provided the leadership toward that kind of tax relief for small business in Saskatchewan, not maybe next year but in fact definitely in 1988.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to create in Saskatchewan the very best tax and investment environment in all of Canada for Saskatchewan small businesses. We need

preferential interest rate policies for small business, parallel to the precedents that have already been established in public policy with respect to agriculture.

We need to adjust the stock savings program to favour Saskatchewan small-business enterprises. We need to have powerful incentives to foster employee investment in the firms for which they work. We need a plan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, like the long-standing proposal that I made a long time ago for the creation of Saskatchewan capital investment bonds to help transform Saskatchewan people from being big savers into being keen investors in the Saskatchewan small-business community.

And in terms of educational issues that relate to business and enterprise in our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we should be encouraging that inclusion, in the high school curriculum, for example, of optional courses relating to business and entrepreneurship and enterprise, introducing young people to what that side of economic life is all about. I think we should be offering substantially enhanced career counselling in our school system. I believe we should be making special efforts to bridge that gap that exists between school and the work place.

And we can do that through such things as expanding and extending the existing system of work study programs. And apprenticeship is another part of that same equation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. All of those initiatives in terms of apprenticeship, work study programs, career counselling, business and entrepreneurial educational courses — all of those things, together with the investment and tax items that I mentioned earlier — all of those could have been in the government's agenda with respect to business and enterprise and young people and jobs for the future, but they just weren't there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need these initiatives for young people and for small business to create opportunities and to make Saskatchewan build and grow for the future. But by any standard, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on all of the various tests that I have mentioned this evening, this budget falls short.

In Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, my constituents tell me that they want a future in Saskatchewan of stable economic growth with agriculture and small business as the vital components. They tell me that they want a future of hope and opportunity with education and jobs as top priorities. The people of Assiniboia-Gravelbourg tell me they want a future where people have a sense of security about their lives and about their families and about their communities. They tell me they want a future where Saskatchewan's old self-confidence is rekindled, and where Saskatchewan people can take pride once again in who we are and where our province is going.

(2030)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, because this budget does not address these vital requirements, it clearly falls short of the expectations of my constituents in Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, and I am therefore duty-bound to oppose it.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As we enter into this final hour of debate on this budget, presented as the government's plan for 1988-89 for the people of Saskatchewan, it seems appropriate, Mr. Speaker, that we would focus on the matter of choices. No government will govern at random, in slipshod, just happen to have policies and programs fall into place. Governments make decisions, and so has this one.

As I listened to the Minister of Health on Friday, in this Assembly, talk about his perspective of the budget before us, he used the word "choices" over and over again. And I would have to say, Mr. Speaker, that I, on this point, would be with the Minister of Health; that the issue is, the key issue is a matter of choices. Budgets reflect choices. This government has made choices. The choices are inherent in its document, in the budget document, and it must be held accountable for those choices.

Now what are the choices that this government made, Mr. Deputy Speaker? And in essence this government summarized its one basic choice, its one basic choice that was part of the Minister of Finance's words when he presented the budget speech a week and a half ago. And he said, about two or three minutes into his speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I quote. He said that his government had chosen, and I quote: "to stay the course established last year." To stay the course established last year. That was the bottom line choice of the Government of Saskatchewan in bringing in the budget today, that we have before us.

And many people across Saskatchewan, thousands and thousands of people across Saskatchewan, will remember last year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when they were literally devastated, devastated by the cuts to services, the additions to taxes, the firing, and in many cases, unfair and brutal firing of civil servants. All that was a part of what we were told was a new strategy as a part of what this government considered it to be its mandate as a result of its election in 1986. And what did the Minister of Finance stand up in this Assembly and say? He said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this government has chosen "to stay the course established last year."

And as I look at this document I would have to say that that is one of the few actual, factual remarks that we can hear from the Minister of Finance and take at face value, because this budget clearly reflects that this government has intended to stay the course established last year.

Well you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was kind of interesting to me, about a half hour after we left this Assembly on budget day, I got a call in my office from a constituent of mine in Moose Jaw. He said that he had listened to the budget presentation on the radio, and he picked up his phone and he wanted to call. And he told me this, Mr. Speaker. He said that for his entire life, and his wife's entire life, the two of them have consistently voted PC in every election. And he said, I'll be honest, I didn't vote for you in the 1986 election, but he said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he said, I listened to the budget presentation today and I have had enough. I have had

enough. And not only that, Mr. Speaker, not only did he say he's had enough, he gave me his address and asked to put a New Democrat lawn sign on in the next federal and provincial election as a sign of the fact that he has had enough.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — And he's not alone. He's not alone, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he's not alone. All across Saskatchewan people are feeling that they've had enough. And they're saying that they've had enough because this government has made choices, and it's made the wrong choices.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — People across Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and they're in my riding, they're saying the same things as when I touch base around others and I talk to colleagues who are talking to people around Saskatchewan. They're saying the same things: this government has made choices. It must be held accountable, and it's made the wrong choices.

And what are some of those wrong choices? They've said it is a wrong choice. It is a wrong choice to increase the funding for the Premier's office and at the same time hold funding for the family income program to provide income security to Saskatchewan's working poor — wrong choice.

They said it's a wrong choice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to involve this government in life-style advertising . . . put \$2 million into life-styles advertising and at the same time continue, allow to continue the alcohol advertising on television, promoting booze as a source of a good time — wrong choice.

They said it's a wrong choice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to dump \$1.2 billion into the shafferty project in the Premier's riding and at the same time reduce funding for summer employment — wrong choice.

They said it's a wrong choice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to put \$34,000 a day into empty government office space as a commitment to privatization and at the same time reduce funding for summer employment — wrong choice.

They've said it's a wrong choice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to give royalty holidays to oil companies and at the same time force the sick to pay more for medicine — wrong choice.

They've said it's a wrong choice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to subsidize hot tubs and jacuzzis, and at the same time cut allowances to the poorest of the poor, those people living on social assistance in Saskatchewan — another wrong choice.

They said it's a wrong choice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this budget to cut the tax rate for big corporations and at the same time to raise the flat tax for Saskatchewan people — wrong choice. Another wrong choice, and an example of a continuing saga of wrong choices by the Government of Saskatchewan.

And so, is it any wonder, is it any wonder, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that for the past year and a half — people of Saskatchewan literally for the past year and a half, the people of Saskatchewan have been asking: when's the next election? It's one of the most . . . now, the Minister of Health, I'm sure he hears this question. He doesn't like to hear it, but I hear it all the time. People of Saskatchewan have been asking, not just with this budget, but over the past year and more, when is the next election? And when I tell them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the next election is likely still two years away, they shake their heads and say there won't be anything left. There won't be anything left. And we've all heard that a number of times.

The old-timers are especially depressed, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They remember those long, seven, long, lean years from 1964 to 1971, when this province had a Liberal government with premier Ross Thatcher. But you know, the old-timers are saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the old-timers are saying this: those long, lean years of the Liberal government, those seven, long, lean years are a picnic compared to what this government has done and the devastation this government has brought to the province of Saskatchewan, and that the last six years have been anything but divine. But as I focus, Mr. . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. Members are not to use other members' names in the House.

Mr. Hagel: — I appreciate your ruling, Mr. Speaker, and I point out that I didn't, and if there is a similar sounding member, I apologize for that, but that's what people are saying.

Mr. Speaker, in responding to this budget, I'd like to focus on several areas. I'd like to take a look at the choices that have been made, and some of the facts related to health care, employment, highways, revenue, taxation, deficit — and I'd like to look at a better way, as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

What's the reality in health care? The first reality in health care, Mr. Speaker, is that we've got a budget document that's been anything but honest. The increase . . . Granted there are, in actual numbers, two departments that have experienced increase. Health is one of those. But in real terms, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in real terms, if you were considering a 6 per cent increase — because that's the level of inflation in Saskatchewan today, the highest level in the whole country — if you consider 6 per cent increase to be only holding the line because you are just keeping pace with inflation, in fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the health care budget has taken a cut.

And let's get honest; let's get honest about the fact that the health budget has been artificially pumped up simply by the fact that budgets for property management corporation and ambulance services and home care services and others have been simply transferred into the Department of Health from other places that they existed before. And as the member from Regina Lakeview said earlier this evening, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a total of \$240 million of the health care budget is nothing more than a simple paper transaction of transfers that came from somewhere else. And so let's get honest, let's get honest

when we talk about the health care budget that's in this document that's before us in the province of Saskatchewan.

Let's get honest and admit that the prescription drug plan changes that were introduced last year were a disaster. Two years ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$76 million was budgeted for the prescription drug plan. This year, \$50 million budgeted for the prescription drug plan. What does that mean, Mr. Deputy Speaker? What that means is that in this budget there has been imposed a \$26 million sick tax — a sick tax that is put on the backs of Saskatchewan people who need medicine. And I say that that's an injustice.

What we've seen, what we've seen over this past year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a movement from that ritual that was known as socialized medicine, and let's just run through that very quickly. We've seen a movement from socialized medicine to privatized medicine. There was a time a year ago, a year ago, Mr. Speaker, in this province in which people would go through this ritual of socialized medicine. They'd get sick, they'd go to the doctor, they'd get their prescription, they'd take \$3.95 or less, they'd go to the pharmacist, they'd get their medicine, they'd go home and take it and get better. What a strange ritual of socialized medicine. Every man, woman, and child in the province of Saskatchewan was capable of going through that ritual of getting sick, going to the doctor, getting a prescription, taking \$3.95 or less, going to the pharmacist, getting medicine, going home and taking it and getting better.

But this band has come along, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and they said no, there's nothing like this socialized medicine that couldn't be improved, couldn't be improved by making it privatized medicine. And so we've got a new ritual today in the province of Saskatchewan. The new ritual today is this: you get sick, you go to the doctor, you get your prescription, and then you go to the bank or you wait until the end of the month or, worst of all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, maybe you don't even go to the pharmacist at all. What a disaster, what a disaster in the handling of the prescription drug plan and the choices made by the PC government in Saskatchewan today. And I say, let's get honest. Let's get honest and admit that the privatization of the children's dental care program was a mistake. The Premier has said it's a mistake. But there was nary a mention of the children's dental care program in any attempt to improve it and make it more accessible, particularly for rural children, in the budget document that was presented.

And who pays the price? Who pays the price for the privatization of the children's dental care program? And the answer unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is Saskatchewan children. That's who pays the price. Dental services: the budget for dental services and health care this year down \$4.5 million from last. Why? For two reasons: one, that the age for eligibility has been reduced from a maximum of 17-year-old to 13; and the other reason is participation in the program. The Minister of Health has said in this Assembly that there is only 40 per cent participation in the new privatized children's dental care program. And so I say, let's get honest. Let's get honest about that when we talk about the health care

budget.

And let's get honest and admit that \$2 million in healthy life-styles advertising campaign looks pretty insincere while we still have the slick beer commercials on television. And every child in Saskatchewan, every young child in Saskatchewan is able to hum and sing the beer commercial jingles and conclude by watching their televisions that you can't have a good time or you can't play sports without booze. Well the health care part of this budget, I suggest, Mr. Speaker, is anything but honest.

Well let me turn my attention now to employment, because that's another characteristic of a disaster that we're experiencing by the plans of this government and that is being borne by the people of Saskatchewan.

(2045)

Let's take a look at some of the facts, Mr. Deputy Speaker. First, let's just go back to last Friday and the March statistics for unemployment in the province of Saskatchewan, and let's take a look at some of the facts. Fact: 45,000 people unemployed in the province of Saskatchewan. Fact: one out of eight in Saskatoon looking for work. Fact: one out of six of the young people in Saskatchewan without jobs. Fact: 9.2 per cent unemployment in the province of Saskatchewan — higher than the national average for the first time in years. Fact: seasonally adjusted rate of unemployment, 7.9 per cent in the province of Saskatchewan — higher than the national average. Fact: the government's economic forecast for the next seven years says that we will experience a net loss of 85,000 people from the province of Saskatchewan. And fact, Mr. Speaker: of the people who left this province last year, literally two out of every three were 29 years old or younger — we're losing our young people from the province of Saskatchewan. Fact, Mr. Speaker: there is no winter works program announced or included in the budget. And fact: there is reduced funding in this budget for youth employment. Those are the facts. Those are the facts about this government's record and plans related to employment for our people and particularly for our young people.

And what's the plan? What's the plan that we are told to commit an act of faith that somehow Saskatchewan people will be going to work? Well we're told that we must commit some kind of blind ideological faith in privatization and the Reagan-Mulroney free trade deal, and that somehow if we trust our Premier, who trots around the country extolling the virtues of the Mulroney-Reagan free trade deal and privatization, that we shall all be saved and that everyone will go to work. Well I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it ain't working. The facts tell the story, and that's it, plain and simple.

You know I had a constituent I was talking to yesterday and he raised an interesting point, and I think the fellow makes a point. He said, you know, Glen, when I look at this privatization business, it seems that privatization brings "povertization" to Saskatchewan people. And I think he's got a point, and I think that Saskatchewan people deserve better.

Well let's take a look, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as well, at highways, because we've had piratized highways, and we have the piratization of highways continuing in the budget that we have before us here in 1988. We'll all remember a few years ago, and since then, when literally hundreds of our highways workers in the province of Saskatchewan had been fired. Everybody in Saskatchewan remembers the \$40 million worth of highways equipment that was auctioned off at fire sale prices for \$6 million later on. And we all know that maintenance in the province of Saskatchewan has come down to sticking red flags beside the soft spots and the potholes and the humps and the hollows on the roads of Saskatchewan. And is it any surprise that the people of Saskatchewan are saying that if this government believed in honesty and advertising, it would take down the signs that say, "lights on for life" and put on new ones that say, "hang on for life" if you're going to ride on the roads in Saskatchewan. Is there any doubt, is there any doubt about the mismanagement in highways?

And then we're told by the Minister of Highways that we should rejoice, that we should rejoice because the fact of the matter is this. The government is planning to spend only \$5 million less on highway projects this year than the Allan Blakeney government, in 1981, Mr. Deputy Speaker, spent \$5 million more than this government is planning to spend this year.

And so what do people have to say about that, this highway's improvement program that we're asked to believe is a strong stride forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well I refer to an article in the Regina *Leader-Post* entitled: "Road program called 'first step,'" on April 5. And the article says this, and I quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

Private roadbuilders say the provincial government's three-year, \$30-million highway rehabilitation program is a good "first step," but well below what is needed to reverse the deterioration of Saskatchewan highways.

And the article goes on to say:

The Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association of Saskatchewan said Monday the new program "will allow for some badly needed highway repairs and provide some much needed employment opportunities in the construction industry."

But when one out of four kilometres of public highway are in immediate need of restoration, the job is an immense one, the association said in a news release.

And this will be no surprise to anybody in Saskatchewan who dares to venture out in our highways, Mr. Deputy Speaker. All drivers in Saskatchewan can attest to this.

It goes on to say, and it's a quote:

"Over the longer term, it's certainly inadequate," said Arnold Pedde, executive director of the association.

He referred then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to:

... a 1986 study ... that Saskatchewan would have to spend more than \$120 million a year in 1986 to halt the deterioration of provincial roads and highways. At that time, the province was spending \$82 million annually, about \$40 million less than required, the association said.

And it continues:

Pedde said the provincial government should now be spending \$200 million over five years to get the highway system back into shape. "The highways are deteriorating. We're going to have to spend considerably more."

And then it concludes, the article concludes, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

"You can resurface for a lot less than rebuilding — probably about five times less."

Well, Mr. Speaker, that may just be an absolutely mystical statement to members opposite, particularly the Minister of Highways. But I say, Mr. Speaker, that that's practical advice that's obvious to every driver in Saskatchewan, even if it is a mystery to the Minister of Highways.

Let me turn, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to revenues and the deficit, and take just a quick look at some of the history of this government and what it's done in that area.

People in Saskatchewan will be aware that when Allan Blakeney left office in 1981 he turned over a \$139 million surplus, a surplus — a \$139 million surplus in the Consolidated Fund. Now for those who may not be aware, the Consolidated Fund, in government terms, is simply the family budget: the Consolidated Fund, the operating fund — \$139 million surplus.

And let me describe just for a moment what a surplus is because there'll be a good number of people in Saskatchewan who have never heard that word uttered from the Government of Saskatchewan. A surplus, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is when more comes in than goes out. Now that's an outdated notion when you look at the track record of this government which has not presented a single balanced budget in the history of its time in office.

Allan Blakeney left a \$139 million surplus in the consolidated Fund ...

An Hon. Member: — a dollar thirty-nine.

Mr. Hagel: — Yes, and I tell the member for Bengough-Milestone, you look it up in your own government's blue books and you'll find out for yourself that I'm saying the truth. That's where the information is found, and you can verify it for yourself if you care to read it.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with this budget we find now that this \$139 million surplus that was inherited by the PC government in 1982, through some hocus-pocus and

being addressed by the best business minds of the PC Party, has been turned into a \$3.7 billion deficit. Three thousand seven hundred million dollars — it's a mind-boggling term that's difficult for most of us to realize. And that's the product of the best business minds of the PC Party.

And people ask me constantly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they say, where did it go? Where did it go? How can you possibly run up a \$3.7 billion deficit? And the answer, Mr. Speaker, the answer really to the question . . . and the real question that should be asked is: where didn't it come from? Where didn't it come from? Because that's where most of it went.

And what am I referring to? Let me focus just first of all and just briefly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on oil royalties. And let's take a look at the cost to Saskatchewan people of just one choice, just one choice made by this government in 1982 and continued since that time. It was a choice, first of all made by Colin Thatcher. People in this Assembly and around the province of Saskatchewan remember Colin Thatcher, the son of the former Liberal premier, Ross Thatcher, and Conservative cabinet minister in 1982.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, he was inspired by his dad who was known to say that the only thing wrong with American investment is that we don't have enough of it. And didn't that really reflect the attitude of the former member from Thunder Creek, Colin Thatcher, who brought about the first change in the record of oil royalties in the province of Saskatchewan?

Interestingly enough, when we talk about American investment and the only thing wrong with it being that there isn't enough of it, 14 years later we find another Saskatchewan premier mouthing almost exactly the same words.

Now Colin Thatcher made some decisions, and let's take a look, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at some of the oil royalty percentages, the lost revenue, and take a look, as well, at the cost of borrowing money that you lost, because if you don't have it, you've got to go out and borrow it.

What do we find, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Well we find that in 1981 when Allan Blakeney left the office of premier of the province of Saskatchewan, in 1981, for every dollar value of oil taken from the ground in Saskatchewan, 65 cents on the dollar — 65 cents on every dollar — came back to the province of Saskatchewan to be used to reduce taxes and to provide services for the people of Saskatchewan.

Then 1982 came along and along came Colin Thatcher who made a choice, who made a choice, and his choice was a policy decision that has been continued since that time. And he made this choice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in spite of the fact that in 1982 oil prices were rising, Colin Thatcher decided that in 1982 it was good enough to get 54 cents on the dollar — for every dollar in oil revenues, 54 cents should come to the province of Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's assume for a moment that Colin Thatcher knew what he was doing. Let's assume he knew what he was doing and that 54 cents on the dollar is

a fair return to the province of Saskatchewan from our oil, from our natural resources that we have a constitutional right to in this country. What happened in 1983? In 1983 that choice to offer royalty holidays began to be implemented and continued again, and the pattern was set.

In 1983, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan, the PC government of Saskatchewan said 39 cents on the dollar is enough — for every dollar of oil revenues, 39 cents to the people of Saskatchewan is enough. In 1984, they said 34 cents will be enough this year. These decisions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in spite of the fact that oil was at all-time highs in those years. Then along came 1985. In 1985 they said, well, 28 cents on the dollar is enough this year. In 1986 they said, 18 cents on the dollar is good enough for the people of Saskatchewan, and in 1987 they went — oh, slightly up, I will admit — to 20 cents on the dollar, and they said, 20 cents on the dollar is good enough for the people of Saskatchewan for our constitutional right of natural resources.

What does that mean? When we take a look at those and we say, well let's assume that Colin Thatcher knew what he was doing, 54 cents on the dollar is fair return to the people of Saskatchewan. What do the subsequent decisions of the subsequent years mean, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

It means that in 1983 the province of Saskatchewan gave up \$272 million worth of revenue to oil. And assume that the borrowing cost of that lost \$272 million is nine per cent — that's what it is in this year's budget — we also put out another \$24 million, a total of \$296 million in lost revenues, interest paid in a year in which you had a deficit of 331 million.

In 1984, revenues lost — \$429 million. The interest on the accumulating now, the accumulating money lost, another 63 — \$492 million either lost or put out because it was lost in a year in which you had \$379 million deficit.

In 1985 — \$621 million lost, 119 in interest; \$740 million as a result of the policy decision in a year in which we had a \$584 million deficit. In 1986 — \$413 million lost, \$156 million in interest; \$569 million out the window; 1987, last year — \$518 million lost, \$203 million in interest; \$721 million in total.

Over the course, Mr. Speaker, over the course of those five years since Colin Thatcher made that first policy decision that has been continued by the PC government, we have given up \$2.253 billion in lost oil revenues, and in addition to that we've paid \$565 million to make up for that lost revenue — \$2.8 billion in total. And so when the people of Saskatchewan are saying where did it go, the honest answer to most of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is not where did it go, it's where didn't it come from — a choice made by this government. And can there be any doubt that this government's policy decision on oil royalties is a major part of Saskatchewan's deficit?

Well as a result of these series of choices, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan has now officially become a have-not province, a have-not province.

Last year \$300 million from the federal revenue share went into the province of Saskatchewan because we are the poor sisters or brothers of other provinces in this country. The plan this year is that another \$360 million will come to the province of Saskatchewan through revenue-sharing. And so we can only conclude, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we are receiving federal welfare for Saskatchewan because the PCs have made Saskatchewan officially poor. So what is the result of all of this? What is the result of all of this for Saskatchewan people? The Minister of Finance stands in his place and says, well, gee, a whole bunch of things happened that were beyond our control. There is nothing we can do about it. We are really doing our best to provide services, and I guess we are going to have to raise taxes, goldarn it — gosh, goldarn it — we wish we didn't have to do this, but we are going to. And so more royalty holidays, more resource royalty holidays this year, Mr. Speaker.

Corporation taxes for big business go down by 2 per cent; flat tax, flat tax for Saskatchewan people, up to 2 per cent. And the Saskatchewan family making \$25,000 a year of income will be paying an extra \$500 this year on their Saskatchewan flat tax. That is on top of everything else, and the lost gas tax that the people of Saskatchewan were told they would never see again, the fact that they were told by this government that the sales tax was going to be eliminated, never mind, raise it to 7 per cent; that income taxes were going to go down 10 per cent, never mind, flat tax up to 2 per cent; and property taxes have gone up because of cuts in revenues to municipalities and to school boards. That is the tax reality. That is the tax reality for Saskatchewan people.

(2100)

So one has to ask, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is the cost, what is the cost of PC incompetence in the province of Saskatchewan today. And the answer is in the budget. If your question is: what's the cost of incompetence? The answer is in the budget, and it's on page 11. It's on page 11 in a category that's entitled, "Servicing the public debt, government share." Figure \$330 million — \$329.5 million to be exact, Mr. Deputy Speaker — \$330 million just to pay the interest on the deficit. Nine hundred and three thousand dollars a day — nearly a million dollars a day, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And in it's simplest terms it comes down to this — the cost of incompetence for the PC government in the province of Saskatchewan today is a dollar per person per day. The cost of incompetence — a dollar per person per day.

What that means, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you sit down for breakfast in the morning, if there's four people in your family, you take out a dollar and another one and another one and another one, and that's your family's share of the cost of incompetence in the province of Saskatchewan just for today. Sit down every morning at breakfast and put down a dollar per person per day.

You know, I explained this to a constituent of mine the other day and he said: you know, when you look at it that way I think I'm going to quit eating breakfast. But the solution, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is not that simple. It's not that simple. It can't be taken care of that simply because the cost of incompetence is a dollar per person per day,

and it will take decades to undo the fiscal irresponsibility that has been thrust on the people of Saskatchewan by this government and through this budget.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I said before that there is a better way. When I look at this budget, when I look at this budget, there is not a very rosy picture painted for the people of Saskatchewan because, unfortunately, many of the facts are not rosy. But this government has made choices and it's made decisions and it must be held accountable for those decisions. But I say that there is a better way, and it's a way that has been demonstrated, demonstrated and is enunciated by the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Riversdale.

It was kind of interesting, Mr. Speaker, when you take a look at the Leader of the Opposition and compare the contrast to the Premier of Saskatchewan today. The Leader of the Opposition is a man with compassion and optimism, not bitterness and fear. He's a man with vision, not desperation, a man who wants to build up, not tear down, a man who wants to unite, not divide. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that the New Democratic Party of Saskatchewan and the people on this side of the House have faith in Saskatchewan people to solve our own problems without looking for outsiders to come and tell us what to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — The people on this side of the House believe that people are more important than big business. We believe that family farms and family business and working families are the soul of Saskatchewan. We believe that universities should be open to young people, not in quotas. This side of the House, Mr. Speaker, believes that kids in Saskatchewan have a right to grow up and to dream, and to dream without having to dream about things like food. We believe that food on the table is a right, not a privilege; that clothes on your back is a right, not a privilege; that medicine is a right, not a privilege; that quality education is a right, not a privilege; that technical and university education is a right, not a privilege; that a chance for a meaning job with decent wages is a right, not a privilege for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — This side of the House, Mr. Speaker, this side of the House believes that for the Saskatchewan economy to thrive and to flourish and to provide opportunities, three engines have to be running — three engines — family business and the private sector working in harmony and co-operation with co-operatives, working in harmony and co-operation with the public sector. We believe in all three sectors of the economy, not just the single engine of unfettered free enterprise. We believe in fair enterprise in economic co-operation, and not privatization.

Mr. Speaker, this side of the Assembly believes in Saskatchewan people. This side would have made — this side would have made different choices, and in 1990 this side of the House will be on that side, and we will make different choices to move this province to a new

tomorrow, because we believe that there's a better way, and we'll make it happen.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, for that reason I shall be voting in favour of the amendment moved by the member from Nutana, and I will be voting against the motion before us. I shall be supporting the amendment which will change the reading of the motion to read this:

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.

Mr. Speaker, I support that amendment, and I thank you for the opportunity to bring my remarks to this Assembly today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to say a few things with regards to the budget debate, and a few observations with regard to the budget debate. Having been through these debates now for 10 years, I suppose you always look at various ways by which you judge how the budget has gone over with the people, or has not gone over with the people. And I've experienced both sides of that, Mr. Speaker.

But let's look at this budget here. Budget was introduced. I think there was one day, Mr. Speaker — going through *Hansard* there was but one day, and that was the day after the budget . . . The budget was delivered on a Thursday. The next Monday . . . There was one day in which questions on the budget were raised in question period — one day.

Now we're now into the, what? Fifth day after that — sixth day — after the budget was delivered, and only one day were questions asked. And then day two you're on to some other questions and many of them rather insignificant questions. And that's a fairly telling tale about the budget.

If you were to look at the amount of coverage of this debate in the newspapers, whether the *Leader-Post* or the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, what do you see? You saw the response by the finance critic. You saw the response by the finance critic that was published in the paper, and after that I haven't seen a line in the paper from any of the speeches of the members opposite — not one line, Mr. Speaker. And do you see any coverage on the news on television, or the news on the radio, hear you on the news on the radio, with regards to the members opposite? No, you hear nothing, Mr. Speaker. You hear nothing about it. And what that tells me, Mr. Speaker, is for the most part I think that the people have accepted, have accepted the budget as delivered by the Minister of Finance.

Now when you hear the member from Lakeview tonight was standing up speaking, Mr. Speaker, and she talked about everything but the budget. She spoke about last year's budget, not this year's budget, Mr. Speaker — not so much as one word. Not so much as one word about this year's budget. Now what's that tell you? That tells you that the members opposite do not wish to talk about this particular budget. And I've got more to say about that in a little bit of time here.

And the member from Moose Jaw just got up and spoke, and he gave the same speech that I have heard in this Assembly for 10 years, and I am sure people that were in here 10 years before me heard exactly the same speech, Mr. Speaker. That speech on oil goes back to 1944 — it's the same one. I've heard it 10 times, in 10 different years. And it was the same thing over and over and over again, Mr. Speaker. Now I ask you, I ask you, as we approach 1990's, and I ask the people, as we approach 1990's, is it good enough any more to simply stand up and hear wild rhetoric, mostly from yesterday? Is that good enough any more?

Let me deal with a couple of areas that this budget dealt with, Mr. Speaker. It dealt with health care. And what it said in health care is that there is going to be a task force created to look at the health care question. And I would throw you this type of questions out that I think the people of Saskatchewan must come to grips with. I mean, it's easy to stand in this Assembly and say you should pay more money for this, you should have less taxes here, and you should have the deficit lower, and you should all do it by some wishy-washy, magic way. And that's what the members opposite are saying.

Now let me deal with health care just for a minute, and the Minister of Health has dealt with on many occasions. But let me deal with some of the pertinent issues that this country and this province faces, that I would believe that elected people to this legislature should also raise, but I never heard one iota of it coming out of the health critic from the NDP.

Let's look at this. The budget in health is in excess of \$1.2 billion, well over a third of the entire budget. But let's look at some of the other issues in that, Mr. Speaker. Forty-five per cent — nearly half of that \$1.2 billion — is spent on senior citizens, and they make up less than 13 per cent of the population. So what we're seeing is senior citizens, clearly they deserve it, nobody's denying that, but almost a half of the budget is being spent of that.

Now we all know, Mr. Speaker, that that population group is increasing and increasing significantly. There are, Mr. Speaker, of all the people in the world who have lived past the age of 65 throughout history, two-thirds of those people are alive today. Of all the people in the world that have passed the age of 65 throughout time, two-thirds of them are alive today. And that's where the budget, and the challenge that we all must face, is going to come at us in health care. And how do we come to grips with that? Now we can sit and simply say, hey, we have to simply roll out more money and pull it out of the hat and deal with it. Or do we want to face some reality of some difficult questions that are coming at us? And those

are the things, clearly, that we must do.

In the field of education, the Minister of Education has dealt with many of them; let me deal with a couple. In Canada today, and this is where education system, I think we have to ask ourselves, is it totally going in the right direction? In Canada today there are 1,500 times more lawyers per capita than there are in Japan — 1,500 times more lawyers per capita than there are in Japan. In Japan today there are 1,500 times more engineers per capita than there are in Canada. Now that's not to say that the training of an engineer is necessarily better than the training of a lawyer. The problem is, Mr. Speaker, is very often we train lawyers and accountants to deal with our system, which is how do we divide up the pie, and spend very little thought about how we build a bigger pie. And it's not just should we train engineers and all of a sudden that problem will solve itself. That's not true either.

But what we don't do today in our society is train people in the world of being an entrepreneur, because it's the entrepreneur, whether he's the farmer or the small business, or somebody that extracts resources, or processes those resources, an entrepreneur, Mr. Speaker, that creates wealth. You don't create wealth by going to your law office and having them take 500 bucks out of your pocket. It doesn't help you to go to the chartered accountant and he takes 500 bucks out of your pocket to fill out a tax return or fill out something else. And that's the challenge that we face in the field of education.

(2115)

Now there's a couple of other things in education that I think we also must come to grips with, and that is: is our system superior to all others in the world? And what you see today in Canada and in North America, not any one province, not any one jurisdiction, but a Japanese student in grade eight today is as proficient in mathematics as a Canadian student in grade 12 — a Japanese student in grade eight as proficient in mathematics as a Canadian student in grade 12. Now it's easy enough for us to say, oh, that doesn't matter. Mr. Speaker, that does matter. And those are the things that this Assembly should be dealing with. And when we put our targets towards health and with regard to education, those are the things that we are starting and beginning to try to come to grips with.

Now if we in the media, and see in the media, if there is a strike by some professors at the university, it's on the front pages of the newspaper, and it's on the lead story on the television news that they're on strike, and the challenge that gives to the student, and how they want more money, and how they want to run the university, or how they want to have free tuition for their children. And that's unfortunately in our society what makes news. It doesn't make news to ask some of the questions that I've just asked, and pose some of the questions I've just posed. And that is exactly what we in government, and we in our society, must come to grips with and try to deal with.

Now if we wish to abrogate that responsibility in this Assembly and simply stand up and say, well — as a member from Moose Jaw just did — we would have all our problems solved if we just went out and taxed all the oil companies. How foolish, Mr. Speaker, I mean, we've

been through that. We've been through that with the members opposite when they were in government.

And I happen to represent a part of the province where a lot of people, a lot of people make their money from working in the oil patch. And somehow those people aren't relevant to the members opposite. They don't live in the city, perhaps, but they are a goodly part of much of the west side of the province — a real people. And they're not making millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker. They're salaried people working on the rigs, working on the service rigs. And they work hard and they make a legitimate living. And it's not good enough to simply stand back and say, aw, we can just tax those guys and all will be well.

Mr. Speaker, the next thing that we must come to grips with is economic policy. And the members opposite somehow would say that we really don't want, we don't want to expand this trade. The . . . (inaudible) . . . the Americans, so we really don't want to deal with the Americans and we're going to get into that debate on free trade in the weeks, the weeks to come in this Assembly.

But surely there's something more, as far as economic policy, than they're advanced. Now they've tried to come with a theory that says, oh, we like business — sort of. And we like co-ops and we like government, and it should be all three of them together. But when, Mr. Speaker, did the members opposite ever, ever acknowledge the fact that the private sector made a contribution to the economy, and that the private sector is an engine of growth in this economy? And whenever did this side of the House say that you could only have economic policy if it was a private sector? This side of the House has involved itself with the co-op movement to build the largest upgrader, the largest project ever built in this province. Now how can you say that we haven't involved that sector? And clearly we will use the engine of government as and when we see appropriate; and we've used it on many occasions. And that has in fact been working, Mr. Speaker, and that's how you build.

Now the members opposite are reminiscent of what you see being debated today in the United States. Democratic primaries. You've got two views in the Democratic Party in the United States — you've got the view of the caucus, and you've got the view of Jesse Jackson. And Jesse Jackson right now is grabbing a fair degree of support, and I think, quite frankly, because of the fact that he's coloured and should be given an opportunity to run for President — I don't disagree with that at all. But when you go by and through . . . when you go by and through of what Jesse Jackson is — how he speaks — what you're coming down to is Jesse Jackson's view of the economic policy of the United States is back to the days of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. And that's exactly the economic policy of the NDP opposite.

They say, well we sort of like small business. But how do they like small business, Mr. Speaker? This budget . . . This budget offered the small business . . . This budget offered the small business a \$10 million tax break through the business tax. Did we hear any member opposite stand up and say, we support that? But did you hear it prior to the budget being delivered? Mr. Speaker, prior to the budget

being delivered we heard some people over there, because there was lots of coverage in the media that says: hey, we stand for elimination of the business tax; we've got to cut back this business tax. And the NDP Party stand for small business. When we did it, what do they say? Not so much as a word, Mr. Speaker.

And when you look at the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, who represents more small business in this province than certainly any organization — a large, large membership. And when you ask those people about trade and the trade deal with the Americans, you know what they say? For every one that opposes it, 12 support it — 12 support it for every one that's against it. Now you're offside with small business in that factor. You're offside with the . . . oh, here comes the member from Regina North West, the expert from the NDP in the side of business. And we can get into that if we want, as well, Mr. Speaker.

Finally, and it's coming close to the hour, Mr. Speaker, let me talk about two other things. Here's what we see in the Saskatoon . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — The member from Saskatoon North, I think, has been in the grapes, Mr. Speaker, as he returned to the House this evening.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order. The hon. member knows that he should not refer to the absence of a member or his return, and I would ask him to abide by that rule.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite talk about their dedication and commitment to the family farm — the members opposite. And what do they say, Mr. Speaker, what have they said? What have they proposed, in effect, that really gets us down to the question that we're talking about? What have the NDP proposed in this budget debate? Have they proposed one suggested remedy or solution or idea? Not one, not one, Mr. Speaker. In the field of agriculture they have come up with one idea — not new — it was the member from Humboldt, and he said there should be a total moratorium on all farm debt — on all farm debt there should be a total moratorium, and no more. Mr. Speaker, that's their policy in that area.

The second policy that they speak of, Mr. Speaker, is the following . . . What the members opposite is the following, Mr. Speaker . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order please. The hon. member is attempting to make remarks and is having great difficulty, and I ask for the co-operation of the House to allow the Minister of Justice to continue. And the member who has just spoken, I bring that to his attention and the one prior to that while I was asking for their attention.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, let me close by saying this — in any society, and certainly in the Saskatchewan society, we must never, as a society and as a legislature, give ground to pessimism. And that's exactly what we have heard for five days of debate from the members opposite.

We have heard the messengers of pessimism, Mr. Speaker, the messenger of pessimism — no new ideas. Their speeches have been the same ones we heard last year and the year before and the year before — no new ideas. Mr. Speaker, how can they expect the people of any province to buy into those old ideas, those old-fashioned ideas.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance put together a budget in very difficult times. That budget, Mr. Speaker, I believe has been accepted by the Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, he had very few dollars to deal with. He targeted those dollars in the area of health care, in the area of education, in some areas to help the small-business person, the small-business person who creates economic activity. Mr. Speaker, he has driven the deficit down significantly.

He has had approval by this budget . . . of this budget, Mr. Speaker, approval by major players in the health field, by major players in the education field. He has had support from the business community. He has support from the economists who look at his bringing of the deficit down, Mr. Speaker.

What the Minister of Finance has done with this budget, in very difficult times, is walked a tight line. He has walked it well. He deserves the support of every member of this House; he deserves the support of the Saskatchewan people in this regard. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(2133)

Amendment negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 15

Shillington	Goulet
Tchorzewski	Hagel
Koskie	Lyons
Thompson	Calvert
Solomon	Lautermilch
Upshall	Trew
Simard	Goodale
Anguish	

Nays — 32

Muller	Martin
Duncan	Toth
McLeod	Sauder
Andrew	Johnson
Berntson	McLaren
Taylor	Hopfner
Smith	Petersen
Swan	Swenson
Muirhead	Martens
Maxwell	Baker
Schmidt	Gleim
Gerich	Neudorf
Hardy	Gardner

Klein
Meiklejohn
Pickering

Kopelchuk
Saxinger
Britton

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

**Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure
Agriculture
Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 1**

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Chairman, I was hoping the opposition would be prepared to deal with the Department of Health estimates tonight but since they're not . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Order. Order. The House Leader has moved we rise and report progress. Is that agreed?

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 9:37 p.m.

CORRIGENDUM

On page 451 in the *Hansard* No. 15A, Monday, April 11, 1988, about one-third of the way down the left-hand column, the name Hon. Mr. Berntson appears due to a transcribing error. Please read:

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I think at this time I'd just like to make this comment, that unfortunately I have seen in the past and now, as a matter of fact, where a minister will comment on a question at some length and then say he'll take notice of it. I'm not sure if that's the way we want to take notice.

We apologize for this error.

[NOTE: The online version has been corrected.]