

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Martin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the House, 25 students from W.F. Ready School, grades 3 and 4, and they're in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker.

And accompanying them are Marian Ready who, by the way, is the daughter of W.F. Ready. W.F. Ready is a lawyer in town and was a long-time member of the public school board. And in addition to that, we have Mrs. Heebner as well — I presume is the teacher.

Welcome to the House. I'll be meeting you for photographs and a little discussion after a while. I hope you enjoy the next little while in the House. And I ask all the members to please join me in welcoming our students from W.F. Ready School.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of my colleague, the member from Melville, I would like to welcome to the Assembly 37 students, grade 8 students from Melville's St. Henry School.

And I will probably be meeting with them later at 2:30, and I'd like to have the Assembly join me in welcoming their teachers and their bus drivers to the Assembly today. Thank you very much for coming.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

National Report on Poverty

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Hon. Premier. It deals with a national Council of Welfare report, 1988, entitled *Poverty Profile 1988*. Under the authority of the federal government, the report is published.

This report, Mr. Premier, shows that Saskatchewan had the second highest poverty rate amongst families of all the provinces in Canada — the second highest poverty rate of all the provinces. Now, Mr. Premier, this is, I'm sure you'll admit, shocking and embarrassing, to say the least, for the province of Saskatchewan and for the people of this province.

My question to you, sir, is this: do you accept these figures? Are you aware of these figures, and if you do, what specific plans do you have to ease the tragedy, the crisis, on Saskatchewan families in this regard?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I have not seen the research that the hon. member is talking about. I will

suggest to the hon. member that we have the highest rates for families in Canada in terms of funds that we provide families. We have also brought in a program where we provide opportunities, and through welfare reform, for people to get off of welfare, particularly young employables, and we would be only too happy to review the figures, or I would, when I have an opportunity.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question to the Premier. This is a report published by the National Council of Welfare, as I've indicated, dated April 1988. Actually it's the Minister of Supply and Services Canada that authorizes the publication, and it's a poverty profile just tabled a few days ago. And it says that there are 42,600 families living in poverty, 64,600 children living in poverty. Now that's a tragedy.

Mr. Premier, my question to you is this: why not admit that we have a crisis on our hands in Saskatchewan, that the poverty rate has grown dramatically since 1982 as this report shows? Why not admit it and establish today a priority within your cabinet to tackle this urgent problem?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, we have initiated the program of welfare reform to address many of the concerns associated with having people trapped in a welfare situation so that they can get into the labour force.

I would not take the figures at face value. I would want to review the report and find out, Mr. Speaker, exactly what it says, and for what reasons and where, and look at the demographics and all the information in the background material before I would respond any further.

Mr. Romanow: — Well, Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Premier, if I might. And I would preface it, not to be overtly political on this very serious matter, I'm somewhat surprised that the Premier at least would not have been aware of this report which has received national attention and, as I say, is a blight on our reputation, let alone a tragedy for the people that are identified here — 64,000 children 16 years of age and under, second highest poverty rate, in Saskatchewan.

My question to you is this, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Premier: why not admit that the policies of your government ranging all the way from health care to taxation have contributed, and why not go ahead and convene a special conference of knowledgeable and dedicated individuals, under your guidance, under the authority of your office and under the authority of you as the Premier, to get down to the task of determining the immediate and long-term solutions to this pressing crisis?

Why not admit the error of your ways and convene such a conference so that at least we can begin to tackle the problems, because, Mr. Premier, your welfare reform is not working? There's been an increase in the number of people in poverty in Saskatchewan. Why not do something about it?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I said that I cannot accept his interpretation of the report at face value; I will look at it.

I will say to the hon. member that we have the best employment record in western Canada, and he knows that, and we've had that for the last five years, and either second or third in all of Canada in the last four or five years. So in terms of creating new jobs and in terms of the employment levels, Mr. Speaker, it is the best in the West and one of the very best across the country.

Now he's coming back with some research, so he says, that says as we're creating all these jobs — and one of the best in western Canada — we've got a particular problem with respect to welfare clients. I've said we've initiated welfare reform. We have the highest levels of payments to families on welfare, and we've provided more incentives for young people to get off that welfare trap.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will want to look at the background; I will want to look at the demographics; I will want to look at all the things that are in the report before I could comment in further detail with respect to the suggestions by the committee.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, if I might, with your indulgence, one last question to the Premier in this regard. A new question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Premier, you are aware of the facts that in 1982 the unemployment rate here — there were 28,000 unemployed; today the figures show 45,000 unemployed in Saskatchewan. This report, sir, shows — the poverty profile shows — that in the six years of your administration there has been an increase, a dramatic increase, to the point where we're the second highest.

Now those are facts, not published by the NDP, they're published by the National Council of welfare, and also by the federal government. Why not accept the suggestion that we make to you? Why not abandon the political rhetoric for a change? Why not show some concern for these children and these families? How about convening at least a conference? It may not solve the problem right away, but at least a conference and change your wrong-headed policies. Let's get on with the business of feeding our poor people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the Opposition is against a health care task force. He wasn't even aware of his own research on free trade, and he's asking me to call now for a conference on something that has just been published. I mean, obviously he's grandstanding, trying to say that he has got a hold of a piece of research that was just released in the last few days, and he's standing up here saying, well, you're going to have to deal with welfare reform.

Welfare reform is real, and we are leading the nation in terms of brand-new things we're doing in terms of welfare reform. It's not rhetoric at all. It's very popular and it's getting young people that were trapped in welfare off into the employee service and back into the work force. And

that's precisely the kinds of things they're asking for.

Now I'd be glad to look at the research. I haven't got it, but when I get it I certainly will be prepared to respond in detail.

SGI Insurance Rate Increases

Mr. Rolfes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question was to be to the minister in charge of SGI, so I'll direct it to the Premier. Mr. Premier, both you and the minister in charge of SGI have admitted that you are considering further increases in the SGI insurance rates. You are obviously going to wait after the by-elections tomorrow to make those announcements.

But, Mr. Premier, you have already made huge increases in the auto insurance rates. A 1983 Oldsmobile Omega, a small sedan, registration fee and insurance premium together, increased \$63 or 19 per cent. A 1969 Pontiac Acadian, a four-door sedan that's almost 20 years old, registration and insurance together increased \$50 or 36 per cent; or a 1948 GMC farm truck . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order. The hon. member is introducing a great deal of information which will provoke a long answer. I would ask him to get to his question.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Premier, Mr. Speaker, the farm truck increased 47 per cent.

Mr. Premier, my question to you is this: when are you going to stop these huge increases which you have already imposed, and when are you going to announce the increases that the people are anticipating, that you have admitted to, that will be coming in the future? When are you going to make those announcements?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, as I have responded last week, that our increases will be nowhere near the increases that the NDP brought in here or that the NDP brought in in Manitoba — in the neighbourhood of 28 per cent. So that you can count on that.

With respect to specifics, I believe that the member from Saskatoon Nutana had asked about several others and they had specific vehicles and so forth, and they were wrong in every case. In terms of the . . . the member from Nutana said that a premium on a 1977 Plymouth Volare went from 250 to 300, or 20 per cent. It only went up \$35 at 15 per cent. And if you look from January '79 to April 1982, the NDP increased the rate on a 1977 Plymouth by 40 per cent — 40 per cent.

Then she went on to say that the rate for a '79 Honda Prelude went up 15 per cent. Well the answer, from January 1979 to April '82, the increase by the NDP on a 1979 Honda was 60.2 per cent.

Now I can say to the hon. member, we can go through a list of vehicles. We are not going to raise the rates anywhere close to where you raised them or where the NDP raised them in Manitoba. You can count on the fact

it'll be much fairer under our administration.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — New question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, I have the registration forms right here — I have them right here; 47 per cent — 47 per cent increase for a GMC truck; 36 per cent on that Acadian. You can't deny those; they're here.

I'm asking you, Mr. Premier, because you . . .

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

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Premier, not everybody is as rich as a cabinet minister or their Premier and can afford an '88 car. A lot of people in this province are as poor as the report has indicated.

I'm asking you, Mr. Premier: because of the huge increases that you have already imposed upon people, why are you now considering another \$25 surcharge on every vehicle in this province? In view of the fact that you've increased it by 47 per cent, why are you now considering another \$25 increase for every vehicle in this province? That's simply unacceptable.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I've already . . . this is the third time you've asked that question, and I've given the response and the answer is: we're not going to have an increase anywhere near what you increased or anybody . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me just say that the auto insurance rate increases since 1982 have averaged less than 1 per cent per year, including the average 10 per cent increase in 1988. Members opposite raised the rates 20 per cent in 1980, 28 per cent in 1981, another 7 per cent in 1982 — that's 55 per cent in three years. Manitoba raised their rates 24 per cent last year alone. Well I'm saying to the hon. member, we're not going to raise the rates anywhere near what you did.

The suggestion that was brought forward to cabinet with respect to a \$25 surcharge was just a suggestion. We sent it back and we said, bring us some others. We haven't discussed it now for months. I just point out to the hon. member that it averages 1 per cent a year under our administration, and it was well over 20 per cent under yours; in fact, it was 55 per cent in three years under the NDP.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Supplementary. Mr. Speaker, we've heard today the Premier saying that they're going to increase automobile insurance rates again — not nearly as much, he says, but they're going to increase them.

Mr. Premier, in view of the fact that a camper trailer has been increased by 81 per cent this year, and your park fees have increased, you are demanding of Saskatchewan

people too much. I'm asking you again: when are you going to stop these huge increases? Forty-seven per cent on farm trucks, again a surcharge on every vehicle. When are you going to stop these outrageous increases on the ordinary person of this province? When are you going to stop those?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, if we go back . . . the NDP have no grounds to even raise the issue, Mr. Speaker. They don't even like to listen to the response.

They used to divert 6 to \$8 million from the auto fund from other revenues. In other words, seniors and others who didn't own or drive vehicles were paying taxes to subsidize those that did. You had the sliding 20 per cent *ad valorem* tax that you could pump into the auto fund, so you taxed people that didn't even have vehicles to put into the auto fund, and you raised it 55 per cent on top of that in the last three years.

Mr. Speaker, they don't have a grounds to speak on either here or in Manitoba when it comes to SGI rates or auto fund. Mr. Speaker, they had the highest rates that you could find any place, and frankly, that's why they were defeated in '82, or '86, '88.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, on top of your planned rate increases for SGI, we have further evidence of your mismanagement. A 1988 Ford Crown Victoria is the twin to an '88 Mercury Grand Marquis, yet you set the registration and insurance premium \$60 higher for the Ford than for the comparable Mercury, the twin car. When are you going to, and will you change this obvious error and reimburse the owners of Ford Crown Victorias the \$60?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, he didn't describe which model, whether it was a Crown Victoria model or it was a particular model. I have to admit to the hon. member, I don't have the information before me with respect to the two models . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. The Premier is trying to answer the question, but I'm afraid he's getting some interruption, as you all realize, and I ask for your co-operation in allowing him to answer the question.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I just say to the hon. member that models can vary in terms of expense, and the Crown Victoria might be more expensive than the Marquis. I don't have all the models before me. I would be glad to look at that and take notice with respect to model variations and rate variations.

If the hon. member wants to provide me with the specifics, I'll take notice and I will respond . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And he said, well he just did. I don't have the information before me to compare all the models and all their costs and then the corresponding rates. But if he'd like to provide me with that, I would provide an answer.

Increase in Grain Freight Rates

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture and it deals with the announced increase in grain freight rates.

Mr. Minister, last week the Mulroney government increased the costs that farmers will have to pay to ship their grain from \$6.32 per tonne to \$7.27 per tonne. For a farmer with 1,000 acres, average-size farmer, producing a tonne an acre, that's an increase of \$950 a year or about 15 per cent increase.

Mr. Minister, farmers in Saskatchewan are facing a \$6 billion debt crisis. The CPR is facing a 65 per cent increase in profits in 1987. How can you justify, Mr. Minister, more money from farmers and more money to the CPR?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm certainly glad that the single rural member from the NDP has chosen to raise the issue. And, Mr. Speaker . . . I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, two rural members. Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly dismayed . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order, order, order. We are receiving an inordinate amount of comments from both sides of the House now, and would you allow the Minister of Highways and Transportation to continue with his answer.

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — I'm certainly dismayed, Mr. Speaker, that the member chose to wait to raise this issue. We sat in the legislature yesterday and the question period was dominated by who was going to print the telephone books. I was dismayed that the member waited to bring this issue up till after the telephone book issue was resolved.

Onto the issue itself, Mr. Speaker, I have taken note of the increase in freight rates. And, Mr. Speaker, I think if you view it in the context of the cost of the freight rates as a percentage of the price of grain, I am advised that the percentage in the last crop year, '87-88, was 6.4 per cent. This year, with the increase it will be 7.4 per cent.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm not saying that the farmers can afford to pay hardly a cent more. But I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that without the intervention of the federal government the statutory increase would have been 32 per cent.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that it is with pride that I look to the federal government, supported by this government, that we have seen the federal government step in, step in and be responsive to the farmers' needs to the tune of \$35 million of subsidization in this instance.

Mr. Speaker, without the support of this province and this Premier and this government towards the federal government, the rate would have increased by 32 per cent. The federal government has been responsive to the tune of \$35 million under the special federal grains assistance program.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, it's obvious that your policies are not . . . are bad news for farmers, but they're good news for the CPR (Canadian Pacific Railway).

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — In the year just ended, Mr. Minister, the CP . . . Canadian Pacific had an increase of \$900 million — an increase of \$900 million. CP rail by itself, 65 per cent increase in profits. Nine hundred million dollars for Canadian Pacific — incredible amounts. And again, your government — where were they? The so-called friends of the farmers were again not standing up for them. Mr. Minister, where was your government? Were you hiding again, or were you in the pocket of the CPR?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I do know that the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool has made a statement with respect to this issue. The wheat pool has stated that most farmers knew that when prices would rise so would cost, and the wheat pool has said that the rise in freight rate costs would have been much higher had Ottawa not helped subsidize.

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

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that farmers indeed cannot afford, in these economic times, to pay any more on any part of their costs. But the real facts are also, Mr. Speaker, that it is the federal government who has stepped in with a special grain assistance program to the tune of \$35 million.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that that is responsive to the needs, the same way the federal government has been responsive with deficiency payments to the extent of \$2 billion or more, the same way this provincial government has been responsive with assistance in many, many forms.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, when the statutory grain freight rates were destroyed, your government did nothing. When Farm Credit Corporation moratorium was lifted, your government did nothing. When variable freight rates were pushed through, your government did nothing. And now an increase in freight rates when farmers can't afford it.

Mr. Minister, I would ask you to table in this House today, the representation that you made to the federal government in support of Saskatchewan farmers on this issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I feel that I have adequately addressed the question, but, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan, both urban and rural, know that

it has been this government, supported in two elections strongly by the farmers of Saskatchewan. The people of Saskatchewan know that there are but two rural members in the NDP Party.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan know, they know full well, to be very, very wary of any NDP or Liberal or NDP-Liberal coalition who goes around . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Loan Policy for Small Business

Mr. Goodale: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the acting minister responsible for small-business policy. Mr. Minister, in view of the fact that small business and agriculture go hand in hand, at least in most of Saskatchewan, and in view of the fact that small businesses account for the vast majority of good, long-term Saskatchewan jobs, and in view of the fact that many small businesses have chronic difficulty in having adequate access to both loan money and equity capital, I wonder if this government will implement a new initiative to provide home-grown Saskatchewan small businesses with access to loan policies and credit programs parallel to those which exist for agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I would find it somewhat strange for the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg to suggest, I think and what he is suggesting is that programs in place — and they are many — for the farmers in Saskatchewan should also apply to every small business.

I think there has been traditionally in this province an understanding that the farm community, the agriculture sector, is a special sector. And that's been recognized both provincially and it's been recognized nationally, and I would suggest it's been recognized, for the most part, world-wide, that they are a special group of people, and farmers should be looked at as a special group of people.

Now with regard to the question of how we deal with small business. When we came to office in 1982, small business was a bad word in this province, particularly as it related to government, and we have brought in a multitude of programs with regard to small business. One of them that's been very successful that we must look at is the ability to develop equity. I think a lot of small businesses are saying, we don't want to get into some of the problems associated with the problems that the farmers find themselves in — that is too much debt. So you must encourage them to get into that — into more ability to raise more equity and perhaps a lot less debt.

The other thing is in the area of taxation. In the most recent budget brought in by the Minister of Finance, for example, what the Federation of Independent Business said is their biggest priority that they saw for the Government of Saskatchewan to respond was twofold: one, to deal with the business tax the Minister of Finance brought in a measure of \$10 million to small business in Saskatchewan to deal with their business tax; point

number two that they suggested is that we would get ahead and go on with the free trade agreement that the members opposite opposed and that you oppose. Unfortunately, independent small business support that — 12 to one support that.

Mr. Speaker: — Order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goodale: — Mr. Speaker, I take it from the minister's answer that there will be no action with respect to the loan policies question. I would like to ask the minister then about equity, which is a crying need in the small-business sector in Saskatchewan, and I'd like to refer the minister to the Saskatchewan Stock Savings Plan.

That plan, unlike the plan in most other provinces, does not have any special features in it that are particularly favourable to small business. And I wonder if the minister would undertake here to adjust the Saskatchewan Stock Savings Plan to provide the most favourable treatment for investments that are in fact in the small-business sector in Saskatchewan, and not a flat kind of benefit across the board which tends to provide the largest advantage to the larger investor.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, as minister responsible for the stock savings plan I'll respond to the hon. member. First of all, put in context, what the stock savings plan is designed to do is to allow smaller businesses to tap the equity markets and to raise equity from Saskatchewan people through a tax saving. We have indicated in the budget that there will be a further extension of initiatives to assist small businesses in terms of the research, the analysis necessary with the grant program to determine whether they are in fact suitable companies for the use of the stock savings plan. So we are taking the initiatives.

I think it fair to say, Mr. Speaker, that you do have to have a degree of size if you are trying to make it worthwhile for small business to, say, have 10 or 15,000 shareholders. The cost of supplying information to that number certainly requires a degree of size in the corporation.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Tabling of Public Accounts

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I simply report to the legislature, Mr. Speaker, that an action was taken against the Government of Saskatchewan and certain members, with regard to the *Public Accounts*, and the tabling of the *Public Accounts*. I know that the Leader of the Opposition will wish to respond today that that action by the hon. member from Regina was dismissed — notably, Mr. Speaker, dismissed with costs, and for the first time, I believe, that that has happened against a member of the legislature.

Secondly, the judge's statement, that it was deplorable that someone would use the courts for such political purposes, Mr. Speaker. I believe that the decision of the judge, obviously, was a very firm statement to all members of this Assembly, and I know that the Leader of the Opposition, who I'm sure was somewhat involved

knowingly with his own member, will apologize to the people of this province.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to respond to the comments by the member opposite. He thinks it's funny that the government would be so deplorable in its neglect of its responsibility to this legislature and to the public of Saskatchewan that it would cover up as important a document as the *Public Accounts* of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and I say to the member opposite, the Minister of Finance, that the public has a right to know.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — The public of Saskatchewan has a right to know how the government is spending their taxpayers' money and shouldn't have to wait over a year to get that information while the government sits on it, which the Minister of Finance has been doing for weeks now and refuses to table it in the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — And I want to say in no uncertain terms: we're going to, on this side of the House, continue to fight for that right of the public to know, no matter what it takes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — And I find, Mr. Speaker, that it's regrettable that the opposition had to go to court to try to make the point that this government is hiding and it is acting irresponsibly and immorally in withholding that information.

There is one other judge, in my concluding comment, Mr. Speaker . . .

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

Mr. Tchorzewski: — There is one other court that is going to make a judgement on the actions of that minister and that Premier, and that is the people of Elphinstone and Saskatoon Eastview tomorrow, and they will . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order. Order. I wonder if the hon. members are ready to go on to the next point in routine proceedings.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MOTIONS

Resolution No. 6 — Effects of Cut-backs in Educational Services

Mr. Rolfes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the motion that I have before me this afternoon is a very

important motion for the children of this province, and I have considerable information that I want to convey to the public this afternoon. So it will take a fair amount of time to relay that to the public and to relay to the public exactly what has happened under this minister in the last two years, and what we can foresee and what we can await to happen in this province if this minister continues in that portfolio.

At the end of my debate, Mr. Speaker, I want to move the following motion:

That this Assembly call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to reverse its harmful and short-sighted cut-backs in the Saskatchewan educational system which will increase unemployment, particularly for the young people of our province, and seriously impair our ability to compete effectively in a world economy increasingly based on knowledge and information.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, the track record of this government in education, as in health, is a sorry, sorry track record.

We have, Mr. Speaker, in health, thousands and thousands of people waiting to get into our hospitals. We have, in education, a parallel track record of hundreds and literally thousands of young people and adults trying to get into our educational institutions and not able to do so — not able to do so, Mr. Speaker, because this government has not given education a priority.

It had choices, Mr. Speaker. And when the Minister of Education says, but circumstances, economic circumstances, prevent us to do any more in education, I say, Mr. Speaker, that that is simply not true. That is a false statement, and I can easily prove that in the debate this afternoon.

But, Mr. Speaker, having said that, we've got to go back a few years, because this government's economic mistake happened in 1982 immediately after they were elected.

In July of 1982 this government made a decision, a policy decision, to reduce their revenues over the succeeding years by \$1.7 billion because of the decrease in royalty rates to our oil companies. That \$1.7 billion, if that had been invested, would have made huge amounts of money available not only to education but also to hospitalization, and so on. School boards could have received substantial increases in operating grants so that property taxes would not have to go up. That is one mistake they made.

Mr. Speaker, they made other decisions which adversely affected revenues for this province. There was no fairness — no fairness — in their policy decisions, no fairness to the ordinary individual.

We just heard a statement in question period today by the national poverty council of Canada saying how this province has taken a backward step. We now have

64,000 children living in poverty. The welfare rates have almost doubled since 1982. Our unemployment has gone up. Thousands of our young people have left this province for opportunities in other provinces. It is a sorry, sorry track record of this government.

I remember full well, Mr. Speaker, when the now Premier of this province in 1982 said, let's bring our children back to Saskatchewan. Now thousands are leaving for other provinces. My own son just left a few days ago, Mr. Speaker, to seek employment in Ontario. No jobs here. Others are doing exactly the same thing.

The future of this province is moving to other provinces, and they're moving to other provinces because this government has not been responsive to the needs of our young people. We don't have adequate educational facilities. We no longer have the best educational staff in this province. We no longer have adequate facilities and spaces for our young people, and I'll show that a little bit later.

Mr. Premier, Mr. Speaker, this province, in education, was built on the co-operative and collaborative approach; we've always worked together. We've always worked together to build the best educational system anywhere in Canada, and we've had some world-renowned graduates from our educational system. It was a system that we were all proud of. Trustees worked with teachers, parents worked with trustees and teachers, and all three worked together with the Department of Education. But that, Mr. Speaker, is no longer true.

We now have a government, we now have a minister who believes that he knows best. He is not an educator as such. He has no experience with what has gone on in this province as far as the collaborative approach is concerned. What have we seen since he has taken over the department? We have seen the demise of the Department of Education. We have seen him taking unilateral steps in forging on the people of this province the kind of education that he wants, not necessarily what the people want, but what he wants.

So we see, Mr. Speaker, wholesale changes without any consultation. No consultation with the STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation), no consultation with LEADS (League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents), no consultation with the trustees association, no consultation with parents, simply unilateral decisions made by one individual — one individual because he believes that he has the answers for the 21st century.

I say to the minister opposite, the Minister of Education: you better stop and listen. You better stop and listen to the students and the teachers and the trustees of this province. We've always, as I said, we've worked together. But the minister will not listen. He says we have to prepare our kids for the 21st century, and no one denies that. But in saying that they have to meet the technological age, what does he do? He cuts back on grants to school boards so that computer programs have to be eliminated, so that in the arts we no longer have programs that we had before. And I can verify that, as I will later on.

And the minister says, but we can't do any more. It's bad economic times. We don't have the money. As I've indicated before, Mr. Speaker, they had choices; they made the wrong choices — the wrong choices.

They have lots of money, Mr. Speaker, for certain people. As I indicated, royalties were reduced. Gasoline taxes were reduced for interprovincial companies that paid not 1 cent over the years. We lost \$1.7 billion to the oil companies. We lost another \$700 million to the gas tax reductions. We lost hundreds of thousands of dollars through venture capitals that didn't work out — Joytec, just to name one — \$1.5 million to Joytec of Saskatoon. And where are the jobs created? Not in this province. Created in Japan — money that could have been used for education.

(1445)

Hundreds of millions of dollars to Weyerhaeuser. Weyerhaeuser this year made a profit of \$88 million. That money could have been taken into the Consolidated Fund. Yes, they gave us 30 million, but we lost, Mr. Speaker, 50-some million dollars of money that could have been used for education.

Mr. Speaker, we saw in the last budget, again, huge tax increases to the ordinary citizen of this province but a reduction to the big corporate people of this province. Those were revenue reductions, and that was a choice that these people made, many of them wrong choices, and we're paying the price for those choices now.

I say to the members opposite, you also made some choices as far as expenditures were concerned. You had lots of money for Pocklington and you have lots of money for patronage — as I will show very shortly — moneys that could have been used for education, moneys that could have been used to give to school boards so that property taxes would not have to increase.

You could have made some changes to the production loan program, as we pointed out last night in agricultural estimates, so that our young students and the senior citizens, who are on a means test, would not have to subsidize the Premier and cabinet ministers and MLAs in this House.

I will show later on again how the students in this province are subsidizing people who are making 70 and \$80,000 a year because students and senior citizens are put on the means test. But on the production loan program, when it pertains to the Premier of this province who makes \$73,000 — and the Premier gets a production loan program, Mr. Speaker, with subsidized interest rates, and the students of this province are subsidizing him — moneys that could have been used for education, moneys that could have been used for a student loan program and moneys that could have saved the best bursary program that we had in Saskatchewan, the best bursary program in Canada before 1982. But oh no, those choices were made by the members opposite.

I want to also refer to the livestock cash advances. Again, Mr. Speaker, free money. Free money with no interest.

But no money for students. But they don't have money for students. But the livestock cash advances, \$125 per head, and members opposite, I'm not sure, maybe members on this side who have cattle get \$125 per cattle . . . per cow, and what do they do? No interest paid. You get \$15,000 at 12 per cent; that's \$1,800 subsidy a year. But do we see that same subsidy to our students? No.

What do they do? They cut out the bursary programs. They cut out the bursary programs to our students and say to our students: well, if you want an education, then build up an accumulated debt of 25 or 30,000. But we've got lots of money to subsidize our Premier, and we've got lots of money to subsidize cabinet ministers who are making 63,000 and lots of money to subsidize MLAs.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that's unfair. If we are short of money then let all of us pay the price, and not at the expense of our students and not at the expense of our senior citizens. Our senior citizens, I want to point out to the member opposite, they are on a means test on the heritage program. And if they have a combined interest of 30,000, they get nothing. But if you're the Premier of this province and make 73,000, we'll subsidize.

All I can say is, Mr. Speaker, that there is lots of money around for education, but let's dish it out more fairly. And that is, Mr. Speaker, what I think is so unfair. When, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education says, well we all have to do is practise restraint, that is pure rhetoric. Their actions speak otherwise. Their policies speak otherwise. They are fairer to themselves and to their friends than they are to our senior citizens whose property taxes have just been increased and to our students who can't get student loans, students who can't go to technical school because there aren't sufficient spaces. And I will show that a little bit later.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's simply unacceptable for governments to say that we have to practise restraint and then at the same time dish out the public money to those who already are making substantial salaries.

Mr. Speaker, I want to refer to last year's budget. Before I do that, Mr. Speaker, let me continue in the vein as I have done so far, that there is sufficient money available but we've got to make the right choices.

As I indicated, this government has not made the right choices for the ordinary person. Taxes have gone up hundreds of millions of dollars since this government took office in 1982. Those of us . . . well all of us who filled out our income tax forms just recently, just last week, know what it cost each and every one of us in the flat tax. Students know what it costs them, and I'll give you an example.

My son, who made \$14,000 last year, over and above what they had already deducted from his income tax, he had to pay another \$500 of income tax, basically due to the flat tax and other substantial increases both by the federal Tory government and this Tory government — \$14,000, and they have to extract another \$500 from a poor university student.

But what do we do for the Premier of this province? We

say, Mr. Premier, yes, you're eligible for the production loan program — \$25 an acre; we'll subsidize you. You can't live on 73,000 — of course not — so we'll subsidize you.

And we say to cabinet ministers and other MLAs who take advantage of it, we'll subsidize you on the production loan program, but we don't have money — we don't have money, Mr. Speaker — for the ordinary citizen; we don't have money for senior citizens whose property tax has just been increased. That is where the unfairness comes in with this government. There is money, but where does it go? In the pockets of the members opposite and their friends, that's where it's going. And that's a shame, Mr. Speaker, that's a shame.

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, this government has made the wrong choices, and I just want to look at some of the things that it has done. For example, legislative secretaries. It has taken money from the public purse, which could have gone for education, and have said, well let's help our back-benchers out a little bit. What have they done? They've appointed 11 legislative secretaries — and in fact, some ministers even have two. Now I could understand if they were to give to the Minister of Social Services and Labour a Legislative Secretary; he's got a big portfolio — in fact, he's got two. Certainly we all know he needs one. But the Minister of Rural Affairs, two secretaries, two legislative secretaries, one for crop insurance and one for Rural Development.

Those people opposite say they don't have any money for education. They say to the senior citizens of this province, but we'll increase your property tax because we don't have the money to give to school boards. But they've got money for their legislative secretaries, for their MLAs — two, in fact, for the Minister of Rural Development. Mr. Speaker, \$7,000 each, plus expenses, Mr. Speaker, and this government says that they don't have money for education.

I say, Mr. Speaker, there is lots of money. They've made the wrong choices, the wrong priorities — the wrong priorities. Eleven such legislative secretaries, another basic salary, about \$77,000, plus their expenses. Now wouldn't the senior citizens love to have that kind of money? That kind of money, and I ask the members opposite to justify that. Justify that.

But that's neither here nor there. That's \$77,000 the members would say opposite.

But there's lots of other patronage appointments that have gone on. A former minister, Sid Dutchak, he received some money from the public purse, but oh no, there was no money for education. Paul Schoenhals reported getting well over \$100,000 a year, but no money for education, Mr. Speaker. No money for our students.

George Hill reported to be getting 200,000 a year, and just recently, Mr. Speaker, just recently got a 10 per cent increase, because George Hill could not possibly live on \$200,000 a year. No one would want him to make that kind of a sacrifice for Saskatchewan. But for our senior citizens whose property taxes have just gone up, and for our students who don't have spaces in our technical

schools, and our students who can't get loans to continue with their education, we don't have the money.

Mr. Speaker, we could go on and on with these patronage appointments. Keith Parker, Sandberg from Saskatoon, the former minister from Humboldt, Domotor — all of these people, Mr. Speaker, received appointments from this government, moneys out of the public purse, moneys which should have and could have been directed to education, but they weren't.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is what is so sad about this government. That is why, Mr. Speaker, it's such an indictment on this government when we have from the national poverty council a report which says that 64,000 people live in poverty — 64,000 people live in poverty . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . There's a member who's also, or was a Legislative Secretary, the member from Wilkie . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, the member from Biggar. Well Biggar wished you were from Wilkie.

The member from Biggar who kindly took his \$7,000, Mr. Speaker, didn't worry about the . . . the member from Biggar didn't worry about . . . The member from Biggar over there also is a Legislative Secretary and he takes his \$7,000 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, it doesn't make any difference. Doesn't make any difference . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, okay . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, order.

Mr. Rolfes: — I was correct in the first place, Mr. Speaker — the member from Wilkie. The members opposite don't even know where he's from. In fact, if I were them I wouldn't want to know either where he's from.

Mr. Speaker, all I'm saying is that there are a number of members over there hanging their heads in shame, and so they should — so they should. While 64,000 people are living in poverty, they are the ones that don't mind. They don't mind bringing in policies which benefit them personally — production loan program for one. I wonder when they were sitting in caucus — I wonder when they were sitting in caucus and how many of them said: well gee, this is not a bad policy; this is not a bad policy because I can qualify for that; the livestock cash advance program, that's not a bad policy, that's not a bad policy, I can benefit from that.

Oh, I see some members opposite are pretty sensitive about this. I hope your conscience twigs you a little bit as you take that money because there are 64,000 people living in poverty right now. They don't have any money to live on. I say that money ought to be distributed more equitably in this province, more fairly. Maybe we wouldn't have . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — . . . maybe we wouldn't have some of the problems that we presently have in education. Maybe some of our people . . . maybe some of our young people would have spaces in technical schools to go to. Maybe some of the people at university or people who apply to get in to university would be able to get in.

I'll say to the members opposite, you have a responsibility to more equitably distribute the public funds and not channel them to the few and the wealthy and the privileged in this province. And I consider us — I consider all of us, Mr. Speaker, in this House to be privileged, because we're not living in poverty. Many of us don't know what it means to live in poverty.

And I say to the members opposite that it's about time that you changed some of those policies and made sure that those policies benefit the ordinary person in this province — the ordinary person. And if you did that you would see to it that more money was available in education, that more money is there so that our young people can get the quality education that they so rightly deserve, and that will prepare them for the future of this province. These are the people who are going to make this province and continue to build it, not those patronage appointments that you people have made, and not the kinds of policies that put more money in the pockets of the wealthy and taking from the poor. Four hundred million dollar increases in taxes last year and this year alone, taken out of the ordinary person's pocket and put directly in the pockets of some of the members opposite and their friends. That's where the money is going.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1500)

Mr. Rolfes: — It's time, Mr. Speaker, that we get back to the co-operative approach in education; that we make decisions, Mr. Speaker, in education that benefit our young people. And I say to the Minister of Education, please start listening to the trustees, please start listening to the teachers of this province, and please do put in some policies which will benefit the children of this province.

Mr. Speaker, the minister said, ah, but there weren't any cuts in education; that's a fabrication of the members opposite. I have ample evidence here, Mr. Speaker, that trustees, school boards, university people, people out in the boondocks — everybody knows that there have been cuts in education. And education has simply . . . the spending in education has simply not kept pace with inflation, and consequently school boards had no other choice but to raise property taxes. And I say to the members opposite, don't put your head in the sand and put your blinkers on. Listen to your constituents out there. Listen to them.

Here is one: "Cut in school funding roundly criticized" — this was last year. Here's another one: "\$3.3 million or 1 per cent cut in the budget." Funds to school libraries have been cut by 12.7 per cent and the minister says, there have been no cuts; that's a fabrication of the members opposite.

And I say to the members opposite, you can't on the one hand say that we are funding adequately and cut the budget at the same time. It simply will not work. School boards, Mr. Speaker, were hit by a \$1.5 million increase by the 7 cents a litre gasoline that came into effect last year.

Mr. Speaker, let's just have a look, let's have a look at

some of the comments that were made, and not by us, but by others who have written members opposite and citizens who have written us. Here is one that's written to a member opposite and it says:

We are very concerned about how cuts in education funding will adversely affect student opportunities in our school. We are losing four-sevenths of a teacher. Saskatchewan Studies has been dropped from grades 10, 11, and 12.

How, I ask the Minister of Education, is that going to enhance the education of our students in this province — by cutting Saskatchewan Studies?

Some subjects have been combined by grades for the first time in recent memory.

That was a comment of one individual, written to a member opposite.

Here's a letter written to the Minister of Education, and this was also written by a principal of a school, and he says:

We will lose two teachers from our school. The overall staff reduction is from 17 to 15.5. (He says) Presently we have the grade 1 class split in two rooms. This class will be combined next year, with around 30 students.

How does that provide for quality education? You're simply not providing, not providing adequate funding for education. Now this person is quite understandable. He says:

Our provincial government has stated that we will all have to tighten our belts because of our overspending. I fail to see how the children have overspent.

Why are you taking it out on the children of this province because of ill-conceived and ill-directed policies that you people, you people, put into place? It wasn't the children of this province that put you there; it wasn't the children of this province that forced you to make those ill-conceived policies. It was you people opposite, and you will have to, Mr. Speaker, take the responsibility for.

Here's a statement from the Tisdale School Unit. It says:

Some of the programs that have been jeopardized by the cuts include library upgrading at a number of schools; guidance counselling for high-school-aged students in kindergarten to grade 12 schools at Arborfield, Mistatim, Ridgedale, and Zenon Park; as well as cuts to come of the French language education programs.

These, Mr. Speaker, were all cut due to last year's budget.

Just a few more from last year's budget before I get into this year's budget. When we sent out a questionnaire, Mr. Speaker, to the school systems last year, we asked them what impact some of the cuts would have. Here are some of them: increased mill rate; terminated gifted education

program; reduced classroom teacher; anticipates serious financial difficulty in funding capital projects, and so on.

Mr. Speaker, the cut of 1 per cent last year meant that many school boards simply could not continue with programs that they had implemented or started. They had to cancel them and hope that the government would this year increase the funding. But, Mr. Speaker, the funding in this year's budget and the operating grants to school boards was well below, well below the CPI (consumer price index), the inflation rate in this province. Two point two per cent operating grants for school boards when inflation is at 6 per cent — a cut of 3.8 per cent.

And, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the operating grants, the increase in operating grants over the last five years — over the last five years inflation has eroded the operating grants by almost 11 per cent — almost 11 per cent. And the Minister of Education says, we want quality education.

So how did we have to make up for that? Well of course there was, as the member from Quill Lakes pointed out yesterday in question period, the shift of tax was from the provincial government to the property taxpayer. That's where the shift went. And we see huge increases of up to 11 per cent, Mr. Speaker, this year in the property tax rate increases — 11 per cent.

And the members opposite have the gall and the audacity to stand up and say that they support quality education — quality education, Mr. Speaker, when they take money and funnel it to the richest people in this province, the well-to-do — people like the Premier who is subsidized in his production loan program, like cabinet ministers, like other MLAs.

We ask the students of this province and our senior citizens, we put them on a means test. I say to you . . .

An Hon. Member: — Not the Premier.

Mr. Rolfes: — No, we don't put the Premier on a means test. Oh no, we'll subsidize him, by the students of this province. We subsidize him by the senior citizens' property tax increases — the poor senior citizen, who might only be making 5 or 6 or \$7,000 a year, has to subsidize the Premier who makes 73,000, because they implement policies which benefit themselves but will not benefit the senior citizens of this province.

That, Mr. Speaker, is a heartless government; that is a government that doesn't know what fairness is; that is a dishonest government. That, Mr. Speaker, is a government that should be kicked out of office at the earliest opportunity.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, the operating grant increases simply have not been sufficient to keep pace with inflation. We have here, Mr. Speaker, a list. And I have requested a list of all the mill rate increases from the minister and have not received them yet, and I can understand that it might take some time to get those.

But I think, Mr. Speaker, we will be surprised at the huge

increases that local boards had to make on property taxes. We have some examples here. Moose Jaw public board increased 5 per cent; Weyburn, 4 per cent; Yorkton separate school, 4.7 per cent; North Battleford, over 7 per cent; Humboldt, over 11 per cent.

That, Mr. Speaker, is a tax increase on the ordinary citizen, the senior citizen out there who simply can't make ends meet. And what does the provincial government say? Well, but we're going to keep on with our policies that benefit us, that benefit the rich. We'll continue with our patronage appointments. We'll continue to appoint the legislative secretaries for most of our MLAs, so they can have additional income, but we haven't got money for our students. We haven't got money for our senior citizens and the ordinary citizen out there. We're going to let the school boards — force them — to increase the property tax.

That is the unfairness of the members opposite. That, Mr. Speaker, is simply unacceptable, and it's time that we get back to helping the ordinary citizen. It is time, Mr. Speaker, that this government recognizes that it is dishonest to take money from the public treasury and devise policies which will help the wealthy but will harm the poor. Mr. Speaker, that is what is so unfair.

And when the Minister of Education gets up and says, oh, we have funded adequately, it is simply not true. As I indicated, operating grants have simply not kept pace with inflation. In fact they have — the real value of the operating grants have gone down by about 11 per cent.

I won't spend too much time on this, Mr. Speaker, but just some of the headlines: "School trustees blame province for higher tax rates — school boards across the province are raising their local tax rates because the province is not giving them enough money this year," says the president of the association of school trustees. School boards, most of them, are looking at tax increases in the range of 2.5 mills, which could be from 4 to 10 per cent, and I've already indicated one is as high as 11 per cent.

Traditionally — and I want the members opposite to know this — traditionally the provincial government shared about 60 per cent of the cost of education in Saskatchewan; that number has now slipped below 50 per cent. And let me say to the members opposite that here in Regina it's about 35 per cent, I believe, and in Saskatoon it's less than 34 per cent — a tremendous shift of taxes from the provincial government to the local taxpayer.

And then, Mr. Speaker, they have the audacity to say, well, if the local boards would only tighten their belts like we do, like we have to do. I've already shown, Mr. Speaker, they're not tightening their belts. They devise policies which benefit themselves. The loan production program, the livestock cash advance program benefitted financially many of the members opposite. They took advantage of those program. The public subsidizing — subsidizing someone that has a hundred head of cattle, who gets a \$12,500 loan, pays no interest. That member opposite, if he has taken advantage of that loan, gets a subsidy from the public purse of \$1,250 a year — \$1,250

a year.

And if he also took advantage of the loan production program, or the production loan program, he again, Mr. Speaker, is subsidized out of the public purse. You combine those two, Mr. Speaker, and a member opposite or a member on this side, if they took advantage of the full program, could be subsidized to the tune of \$3,500 a year. Over three years, Mr. Speaker, that is over \$10,000 subsidized out of the public purse.

I say to the members opposite, where is that fair to the student of this province whose bursary you cut, whose bursary you cut, and you're asking him or her to build up a debt of over 25 or \$30,000 over a five-year period to get their education? Where is the fairness when you don't provide spaces for our students at the university or technical schools because you devise programs which takes money out of the public purse so that you could take advantage of this program?

I say, Mr. Speaker, that that is unfair. And I say to the senior citizens, when your property tax has gone up, you have a reason to be angry. You have a reason to be frustrated with this government, because wouldn't it be nice if you could get a \$10,000 subsidy over three years. But no, that's not the compassion of this government; that's not where the fairness comes in; that's where the greed comes in, the greed of some of the members opposite.

(1515)

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the government opposite that school tax increases on property has gone too far — has gone too far — and it's time that we shifted back the taxes on to the provincial government.

And when the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker, stands in this House and says, oh, but I have reduced the deficit — he has done it, Mr. Speaker, on the backs of the poor of this province, he's done it on the students of this province, he's done it on the senior citizens. But not one member opposite has money taken out of his purse to help with the restraint that they say is necessary. Not one member opposite. That's where the unfairness comes in, and that's where, Mr. Speaker, the unfairness of this Premier comes in.

I say to the members opposite, it's time that you change your policies; it's time that you look at the welfare of the ordinary citizen under the law.

An Hon. Member: — The people will do that in Elphinstone.

Mr. Rolfes: — And as one of my colleagues indicates, the people of Elphinstone and the people of Eastview will give you a loud message tomorrow, I'm certain of that — a loud message.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, I want to spend just a few more minutes on post-secondary education. If we look, Mr. Speaker, at this government's contribution to

post-secondary education, its track record is almost as bad in post-secondary education as it is from kindergarten to grade 12 — almost as bad.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the contributions, the operating grants made by this government to the University of Saskatchewan and to the University of Regina, we find, Mr. Speaker, that over the last number of years — 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 years — a 24 per cent increase in the operating grants. Yet, Mr. Speaker, during that period of time inflation accumulated at 35 per cent; 11 per cent decrease in actual money, in real dollars.

And what did the members opposite say? What did the Minister of Education say before this budget came through? Education will get the highest priority. We will see to it that the universities can offer quality education that each one of our students, each one of our young people have an opportunity to get quality education, and spaces will be provided. That was the message that was given.

What did the budget do, Mr. Speaker? The budget gave a miserly 1.9 per cent. And then the Minister of Finance has the audacity to intervene in the collective bargaining process, and then the Minister of Education intervened and . . . directly intervened with negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, can we, can we tolerate, can we accept this standard of education, that lack of standard of education that we are now experiencing in this province? University education, Mr. Speaker, must be top-quality education. The library at the University of Saskatchewan ranks 104th out of 105 libraries in this country, as far as materials are concerned.

Mr. Speaker, it's time this government gets its priorities in order. Education and health, Mr. Speaker, must be at the top of that priority.

I have worked in education for over 20 years, and I can tell the government opposite there has never been such frustration, such anger, in the teaching profession as we have today. And you people brought it on. The unilateral decisions that have been made by this minister and by this government have simply frustrated teachers — the intervention — the intervention, Mr. Speaker, in the collective bargaining by this minister and this government.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not . . . There are many people who disagree with the government's priority. Here is a headline, Mr. Speaker, which says, "Business elite bash underfunding." Mr. Speaker, these are not people that are friends of this side necessarily. I think they're fairly objective. Here is the Canadian Manufacturing Association who are deeply concerned about provincial government's underfunding of post-secondary education, and they are saying to the members opposite, we need educated young people who will take their place in our society, who will be able to flow along with the changes in society, who are knowledgeable, who are skilled in the knowledge and information that is necessary, not just, Mr. Speaker, in engineering, but also they say in the social sciences. Let me just read a part of what they say here. It says:

Provincial governments must strengthen their weak commitment to universities and community colleges. Here it is recognized that the real culprits of underfunding are the provincial governments, and the idiocy of such a policy. It goes on to commend initiatives by the Alberta and Ontario governments to promote excellence in their institution, and . . . (listen, members opposite) . . . and blasts provincial governments, (Sask) to 100 per cent of the funding for institutions. The provinces must stop using for other purposes those federal funds earmarked for post-secondary education.

And this government, Mr. Speaker, has channelled much, much of the moneys that the federal government has made available for education, much of that money has been funnelled to other policies and other programs.

And probably, Mr. Speaker, the production loan program which the members opposite took advantage and the Premier tool advantage of — the livestock cash advance program — that's where some of the money has gone to when the money should have gone to education. Mr. Speaker, the members opposite simply are not making sufficient moneys available for post-secondary education.

Recently, Mr. Speaker, I had a constituent of mine telephoning me and saying, my son applied for CAD/CAM (Computer Aided Drafting/Computer Aided Mapping). Now CAD/CAM is simply short for computer assisted design and manufacturing technology at Kelsey university.

He, Mr. Speaker, has three years of university, he has one year in a related field, and he can't get into the program. He can't get into the program because 130 applications have been received and there are only spaces for 30 people.

When I telephoned Kelsey, I asked them, now what's the problem. Well he said, I'd rather not comment. And I said, well could you use some more spaces. Well, he said, we certainly could use another 30, but he says, don't quote me on it. And I said, look I won't quote you on it, but I will speak on it in the House. And I won't divulge the name of that individual.

But I want to say to the members opposite, that's an excellent program. The job opportunities for those students who graduated out of CAD/CAM is about 95 per cent, and yet you will not make sufficient spaces available so our students can attend those programs. In fact, they've been cut. No money for education, Mr. Speaker, but lots of subsidized money for the Premier, cabinet ministers, and other people. Lots of subsidized money, but we don't have any money, we don't have any money, Mr. Speaker, for our students and for education.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just for a brief moment turn to the University of Saskatchewan again. And for the first time in the history of this university, Mr. Speaker, we had quotas put on last year in Arts and Science, and my understanding is that quotas will have to be put on in

other colleges as well, due to the fact that there simply isn't sufficient funding. Classes have simply . . . the size of classes have simply soared. In many, many of the classes there are 2 - 300 students in a class. There is no way that we can offer quality education at our universities when that kind of a process takes place.

But the university really doesn't have a choice, it must now put on quotas. And last year about 600 students could not get into the College of Arts and Science. And what did the former minister of Health have to say, the member from Swift Current? The member from Swift Current said the following. The headline says, "Rejected students unlikely to find jobs anyway," the member from Swift Current said. I have her name, but I can't in this House read her name. And she said the following:

About 400 would-be students turned away from the Arts and Science college at the University of Saskatchewan wouldn't likely have found work after graduation anyway, says former Education minister.

Mr. Speaker, what a comment made by the former minister of Education. No, she doesn't have concern for those students who would qualify for the Arts and Science college. But do they get any compassion or sympathy from her or some empathy or some understanding? No, they wouldn't find any work anyway. Well, that's true. I mean, their record of job creation is so poor that a student would have to go to another province to get a job; I agree with her on that.

But you would have thought that a former minister of Education would have said, well, I really have some empathy for those students. You work hard in your high school years to qualify to get into university, but oh no, not that minister. No, she says, they wouldn't have gotten jobs anyway.

Mr. Speaker, the lack of funding at our universities has reduced the funding from about \$10,000 to a little less than 7,000. In 1982 the universities received close to \$10,000 per student — a little less than \$10,000 per student from our government. Today, Mr. Speaker, they are receiving less than 7,000 per student from the government opposite. Is it any wonder, Mr. Speaker, that we have the problems on the University of Saskatchewan we presently have?

The university administration would love to pay their staff better so that they could draw the best qualified professors right across this country, and right across North America, and even the world, but they can't offer them decent salaries because this government refuses to make adequate funds available.

But, Mr. Speaker, as I've said before, it's not because there isn't money.

An Hon. Member: — No, priorities.

Mr. Rolfes: — Priorities. Lots of money for the Premier on subsidized loan programs. Lots of money for the member from Shellbrook, lots of money. But who is subsidizing him? The students are subsidizing him; the senior citizens

are subsidizing him because their property tax has gone up.

But I'll tell the member from Shellbrook, a lot of my students don't make 50 or \$60,000 a year. A lot of my senior citizens don't make that kind of money, and they don't have someone to give them a loan with no interest. They don't have someone that will give them a loan and subsidize it to the tune of \$3,500 a year. Oh no, the reverse is true. Our poor students who, if they're lucky and find a job, can maybe make 5, \$6,000 a year, have to subsidize the members opposite because of their loan program.

Our senior citizens who, many of them, make 7, 8, 9, 10,000; they have to subsidize members opposite and the Premier of this province. Mr. Speaker, those are the wrong priorities. That money should have been taken and put into education. That money should have been given to school boards so school boards could offer the quality education that we have come to accept in this province, so the school boards don't have to increase the property taxes to the extent that they have over the last six or seven years. Four hundred million dollar increase in property taxes alone because of this government, and another \$400 million increase in income tax and flat taxes and sales tax by this government.

Mr. Speaker, that's where the unfairness comes in; that's where the priorities are so mixed up by this government. And I say to the members opposite, if you have any compassion at all, any compassion at all, if you have any integrity, if you knew what fairness was, you'd change those policies. You'd change those policies and you'd say to the senior citizens, no, we're not going to let you increase those property taxes because we know you can't afford them.

(1530)

We'd say to the students of this province, we'll give you back the bursary program that was in existence in 1982 so that you don't have to build up a debt of 25 or 30,000 at the end of your university career. I say to the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, the member from Wascana; let me say a word about the member from Wascana. He was the one, Mr. Speaker, he was the one, if I remember correctly, was the Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Education. He took \$7,000; he took \$7,000 out of the treasury, put it into his pocket at the expense of the students of this province — at the expense of students of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Oh, he didn't have any compunction, Mr. Speaker, to say to the school boards, we don't have sufficient money for you and we're going to have to increase your property taxes because I need the \$7,000. I need the \$7,000 as Legislative Secretary.

Let me say to the members opposite: your policies are ill-directed; your policies are ill-conceived; your policies are unfair.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if those policies continue, Saskatchewan will end up with not the best quality

education that we have come accustomed to. We will end up the ninth or tenth in this country, and people will not want to come to this province to receive their education.

The best, Mr. Speaker, will no longer stay here to teach at our universities and technical schools. We won't have the most talented people attracted to education to teach from kindergarten to grade 12, because the salaries they can get in other provinces will be considerably higher, because this government refused, refuses to make adequate moneys available for education. And I say you stand condemned for that.

And I'll tell the members opposite that the people will speak loudly tomorrow. Tomorrow is the beginning. Tomorrow in Elphinstone and Eastview the people will tell you what they think of your education policies. And that is just the beginning.

And I'll tell you, in 1990 or 1991, whenever you dare to call the election, you people will be the ones that will be looking from the outside in, because people will only take unfairness for so long. They will only feed the wealthy for so long until they say, we've had enough.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot support the policies of this government, particularly in education, and therefore, Mr. Speaker, I will move, seconded by the member from Cumberland:

That this Assembly call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to reverse its harmful and short-sighted cut-backs in the Saskatchewan educational system, which will increase unemployment, particularly for the young people of our province, and seriously impair our ability to compete effectively in the world economy, increasingly based on knowledge and information.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, I am indeed pleased to second the resolution by the member from Saskatoon South. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will cover the aspect that the member from Saskatoon raised in regards to this important resolution. I think, in simple terms or in basic terms, a person . . . the member from Saskatoon raised the issue of how we are dealing with our education system and how it is that it's moving to favour the wealthy in our system.

Sometimes as I talk with teachers, and sometimes when I visit the schools — and I recall just this past week as I visited a school in regards to the opening of a gymnasium, I saw the important sparkle in the eyes of the students as they presented new cultural forms and activities in front of us in regards to the celebration of what was happening in their school. And as I looked at that celebration, I knew that this was one of the few special situations in Saskatchewan, that in general this was not the case.

As I looked at it, some people asked me later on — they

said, we celebrate these specific instances of success because they have come few and far between in these past few years. When we look at these, they said, sometimes we try for so many years of planning, and in this case it was over 10 years. They said that this success, it appears that there must be a plan to this. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is indeed a plan.

Many people ask me: is this plan on education that the PC government is proposing, is this plan something that will be the benefit for the public or for ordinary people? I have to reply and say straightforward, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that isn't the case, that the trends that I see with this PC government in regards to education policy and in regards to educational financing is something that is the same plan that I see in the United States and also in Thatcher's England.

And the plan is pretty straightforward. The plan is this: you create the crisis in education; you create a crisis in education by less funding; you create crises in the educational system by knocking off the processes of development that have taken place, and the example here in Saskatchewan was in curriculum building and curriculum implementation, that you create crises and create unnecessary criticisms about the system. You create the impression that our educational system no longer has the quality it used to have in the past. And that's the strategy. It's the precise and exact strategy that we see in general from this PC government.

The underlying ideological strain behind this strategy is one that we have seen already in adult education, that we see in Thatcher's England, and we see in the United States. And that's the road towards privatization. We see it on a greater extent in regards to the area of adult education. But lo and behold, we also see it in reflections in the education system.

And one of the key ways — and I will talk about that — is to create crisis by shifting the responsibility of education from the provincial realm to the municipal realm, and you create the crisis in terms of taxation structures. These crises — which we tend to call nowadays, you know, the business tax revolt; later on it will be the community tax revolt — are systems that are created by this government.

So when I look and people ask me, is there an agenda, is there a plan? And I must say, yes, there is a plan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There is a plan wherein the load that is borne by ordinary citizens is increased, and less money is paid by larger-scale corporations.

When I looked at it in more specific terms, I looked at the past year in regards to specific instances where the overall creation of the crisis came to be in education. I mentioned that the first thing that a new government does in creating a crisis is to knock off the continuum in education.

One of the key mechanisms that teachers use on a daily basis to improve quality education in the classroom level is the development of curriculum, the development of curriculum materials that becomes the tools that teachers use to help students out on a co-operative basis in a classroom.

What we have seen in this case is that those people that knew exactly what teachers wanted in this system were the ones that were knocked off by this PC government.

But the people and the boards and the institutions of the province of Saskatchewan knew that the people that were released by this Tory government were quality educators, because now you see just about every one of them have been hired by this system and by our boards and by our institutions. The people at the grass roots level, at the grass roots level institutions, know quality that this PC government has refused to recognize.

That is what we have seen in terms of the strategy. You shoot down the key people who are important in developing a continuum from what was the consultative approach and co-operative approach in getting the ideas from educators and parents and to put them into an implementation phase.

The key in any educational chain's process, in any historical situation throughout the world, is to make sure that there is continuum from the initial stages of developing chains to the final stages of developing chains in the curriculum format. And what we have seen in terms of this government is to shoot down those people and to tear them down from that important continuum.

And when I looked at what types of changes a new government would create, I say glossy print, very similar to the plastic approach in health, and I saw just a glassy rhetoric coming out about quality education with no meaningful, concrete, financial efforts put out by this government.

And I looked at what other reports would they come out with, and the only thing that has been substantive in terms of educational research that has come from the province of Saskatchewan, from the government side, has been one of straightforward patronage to one of the former ministers, and that was the former minister Dirks.

A lot of educators know the Dirks report. This is the only substantive piece of research by the government that has come out, that has created a lot of stir in the educational system, basically because the whole consultative approach in the past was one where we need improvements in the public system, not to try and bypass them on a more privatized strategy on a larger scale.

(1545)

So I see the new strategy of education, the underlying ideological roots, very similar to the ones that I see in Britain and the United States. I look at, for example, *Time* magazine in August of last year. Everybody looks at and reads about the new right-wing establishment and their approaches to education, whether it's Bloom or whether it's Hirsch, on *Cultural Literacy* or Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*.

I must say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that *The Closing of the American Mind* is something that I see really reflected in this government, because what we see in this government policy is the closing of the PC mind in regards to the importance of quality public education that we now have

in the province of Saskatchewan.

When we look at the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . One of the members talks about the core curriculum approach. Let me give you an example about the core curriculum approach. The core curriculum approach was in regards to the question of Indian and Metis curriculum advisory committee were done in a joint fashion.

What I have seen in the past while is one where the educational development fund, which was supposed to support this curriculum development, was cut in half. This member from across wants to brag about the core curriculum approach and yet it was slashed in half. That's not development; that's a reactionary approach to education.

A lot of the people in regards to . . . and this is a situation where I see it from across, from one of the members from across, Mr. Deputy Speaker. A person has to see that financing of curriculum and curriculum materials development at the school level is an integral part of core curriculum. It's part of an implementation phase of any curriculum proposals that are developed by any government. And the member across seems to say that those are not one and the same thing. Of course they're not one and the same thing, but they are part and parcel of the overall curriculum development approach that he does not seem to understand.

So when I look at this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that, in any case when I see the privatization strategy of this government, they always create the idea of crisis so that they can make an excuse for privatization to take place. We have seen it in other areas.

We looked at the area of forestry. Weyerhaeuser, a big American corporation, takes over the best land — 12 million acres in northern Saskatchewan.

And when I look at that, I know that a tremendous amount of money and our resources would be invested in this private, new, American corporation. And we knew that prior to that, in 1980 and '81, we had made approximately \$20 million per year on that forestry. When the PCs got it, crisis management. They created a situation where their marketing was knocked, in the same way that they did with potash. They knocked off and created a crisis marketing scheme.

And when you look at the importance of education, the same thing occurs. There is a crisis in education.

There is also the aspect of the privatization. They said there was a crisis in health so the dental programs were taken over. There's a crisis here and there's a . . . but these, usually in every case, the publicly controlled institutions by the people of Saskatchewan were always operating at a successful basis. That's what we have seen. That's what we already know.

So when I look at the aspect of ideology, the PC government creates a crisis of ideology so that they can move in to privatize systems. And that is one of the things I would warn educators throughout, that that is the intent in terms of adult education and that'll be the intent also in

elementary and high school education in the long run.

I'd be asking the question as to whether or not the curriculum branch and stuff like that would be privatized in the long run. And these are not just questions that are being asked just to throw that question out, these are important questions that need to be examined very carefully by the PC policy of privatization.

When I looked at the aspect of creating a crisis, crises are not created by just ideology. Crises are created by actual practice. And one of the aspects, the real nitty-gritty of how you create a crisis is to create a financial crisis. You shift the responsibility from the provincial government to the municipal government. You create a financial crisis so that people are put in a divide and rule situation. It'll be taxpayers against the municipal councils; it'll be business tax people against the municipal councils; it'll be the taxpayers against the boards of education — you know, for the rise in the mill rates.

I'll give you an example in the rise of taxation at a specific level. But first, before getting into that specific level of taxation, let's look at the taxation strategy by the PC governments in both the federal level and the provincial levels and relate it back to education.

When we look at the '60s, in the early '60s, the ordinary person's tax load was approximately 30 per cent. When we look at the 1980s in PC time, the tax load at the federal level is about 50 per cent for the ordinary taxpayer. When we look at the corporate tax structure, we know that it was 20 per cent in the 1960s, now it's down to 10 per cent. It is completely unfair; the structure is unfair. The wealthy get richer while we have to pay more from our own pockets to pay for the education system.

And when you see it in the area of the provincial tax base, we know that also. We know that the corporate taxation stays at about 7 per cent since 1982 and stays the same.

And we look at the taxation to the ordinary citizen — it has jumped from 15 per cent to 23 per cent. That's why when we relate this thing to education, we know that in terms of payment to educational, the tax burden, for every dollar that the ordinary tax citizen puts in, only 16 cents is paid by the corporations — 16 cents. I do not consider that fair, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

When we look at the taxation rates, when we look at the mill rates at the community levels and we look at how much the province put in, we know that in 1970s, in the mid-1970s, the province had put in 60 per cent of the funding. When there was an NDP government, there was 60 per cent of the funding in education. When we look at the Tory government in 1988, 35 per cent to 36 per cent. It's just about cut in half on what the province puts into education, as to what the NDP government used to put into education.

We know that there is a greater tax burden by the ordinary citizens not only in regards to the provincial and federal taxation, but also at the municipal level. Because corporations in general, large-scale corporations are paying less and less and we're paying more and more. All that burden then is presented to the local taxpayer.

I'll give you an example in regards to northern Saskatchewan. On April 27, 1988 there was an article in *The Northerner* on the northern school mill rate increase. And I look at the figures there. And the minister talks about this increase in educational funding. And he'll go at great length of how this great educational funding is helping our schooling programs and our system and so on.

But what is the fact when it comes down to northern Saskatchewan? What did the minister do in northern Saskatchewan? Well this is the fact. They've been steadily cutting back in northern Saskatchewan in the past six years. That's clear. We also know even in one year there is a tremendous cut-back.

I looked at the figures. The boards in northern Saskatchewan asked to increase their mill rate by over 17 per cent. The paper states that there was a \$300,000 cut-back in education in northern Saskatchewan through Northern Lights School District — \$300,000 for one school board. And it happens to be in northern Saskatchewan.

Now the municipalities have to pick up the cost, and it will cost them an extra 17 per cent. The mill rate used to be 34.5; now it will be 40.5. And what the people are saying in northern Saskatchewan is this: we are already paying too much.

There was a time, they said, in the past, when we were considered, when the increased costs of transportation were considered, when the increased costs of everything were considered and looked upon by the NDP government of the past as important in regards to providing provincial dollars for education.

But, they said, this is no longer the case. We have to pay now, they said. We had to pay an extra 17 per cent. And even when we pay this extra 17 per cent on the mill rates, it will mean that there will still be a shortfall of \$400,000 — close to half a million dollars shortfall in northern education. And the Tory government can come up here and say, yes, we have increased the funding on education.

But they simply haven't, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The facts show very clearly that there is little concern for northern education. When I looked at education in the North, and I looked at the short history in the past six years, not only is there a crisis situation for the taxpayer in northern Saskatchewan and the fact that there will be a lot of division and debate at the municipality level in the North, but there was also the crisis that the teachers had to face.

It took a long time for the teachers to finally make a point of getting their negotiations finally settled. It took a strong stand by the teachers before this government would listen. It took a strong stand and a lot of messages by the people of this province that they needed something that would be settled.

And when I look at the past, a lot of the teachers told me, they said, look, we are concerned about the quality of education. They said, why is it that our curriculum branch

in northern Saskatchewan was slashed? Why did we lose one of the top consultants that western Canada had seen, one who had looked at curriculum change for the past 25 years in education? And she was also paid her respects by the band school system and by the public school systems of the North. The teachers gave her a special presentation at both levels this year. But this is the type of person that this government chose to cut right out of the educational scene. We saw that in the North. We saw others in special education that were cut by this government. And the same policy continues.

(1600)

As I look on a more general level, when you look at the aspect of the raising of the crisis in ideology and the crisis in finance, you also know that the government in general — and I've listened to the government, and I've never ever known a government that preaches more intolerance and more division that I've seen than this government. I look at this in terms of not only the statements by the Premier but by former ministers in regards to housing, in regards to education, and so on.

And we know that even more recently in regards to the French language situation. And we presented our multiculturalism view because we know, everybody knows that when it comes down to multiculturalism and multilingual education that a lot more rhetoric is said by this government, but a lot less money is given out in regards to the practice of the cultures and the multicultural history that we have in Saskatchewan. Very little dollars.

It took The Education Act back in the early '70s to recognize this importance. But no improvement has been made by this government. All we get now are Tory ads in the campaign that are trying to deal . . . we are trying to deal with health and education issues in these two campaigns that are taking place, these two by-elections, and all we hear is the division in regards even to the French language situation. And I say that's intolerance and hatred. We can't afford that. Educators in Saskatchewan recognize that you can't do that. There's got to be due respects.

You can't place and put politics on questions of that nature; that you have to come and work with the people of the different cultures of our province, and work with them hand in hand and not play mere politics in your advertising schemes. Because that's what I heard in the radio this morning, and I was absolutely shocked. Here we had . . . the Premier had made all kinds of situations and said we were a mature society when we debated Meech Lake. We were mature.

And when we reflect back into the education system, and we look back at the importance that have been gained by the universities in regards to working with Indian-Metis education and in regards to multicultural education in this province, and also the school systems and many teachers who have worked hard to get at this issue, and we see petty politics being played on the important issues of culture and language, it's a sad case in our history. And when we look at that whole issue in regards to the education, more money has to be put into that, but I just

do not see it.

The same holds true for the issue of special education. And I relate it to the North because many of the people do not have the services that we do in the South. A lot of the schools for the deaf, a lot of the schools for people with special situations cannot be provided those services immediately at the community level. So a lot of the teachers require support systems to help them in much the same way that I've said about curriculum — curriculum aids.

And they need this help at the community level, but there was a cut-back in that in northern schools. And there's a lot of rhetoric about mainstreaming and so on, but really, when it comes down to it, the concrete skills and the materials required for the teacher to work at the class-room level is simply not there. And that is the fact that I raise.

It's not only in glossy print of mainstreaming that you can call progress in education, it's the actual fact of putting the important tools and the important materials for teachers to use to be able to deal with the issue of special needs.

I also looked at the aspect of Indian-Metis people and the curriculum. I looked at it because I was part of the curriculum process. I was part of the Indian-Metis curriculum advisory committee. I was part of that team, and I looked at the top-notch educators that were part of that group.

Tremendous recommendations were made, not only in the area of Indian and Metis studies, but how to integrate that into the broader curriculums, because that was the essential point that we were making. And we looked at how you needed to get right into the regular curriculum scheme and work closely with regular curriculum developers, and what we have seen is that that has been more or less on hold. There was no progression.

There has been coming complaints that I've seen on Indian-Metis educators that state very clearly that it's not happening, that the limited funds and the changes that they've done in regards to knocking off some key people in there is just not a good way of approaching that whole issue.

So what we've seen in general for the province, we've seen also in Indian-Metis education in the province — a lot of rhetoric, a lot of glossy print, but really no substantive amounts of money.

When we look again, therefore, in general, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I see a trend — a trend in England, a trend in the United States, and a trend in some parts in North America, more particularly in Saskatchewan, where the right-wing approach to education does not look at an overall view of a comprehensive approach to education; that instead, narrow approaches are brought in with little or no consultation, or consultation only after some new developments that some deputy has concocted in a short period of time; that indeed the consultation approach only occurs after a decision has been made.

And that's what the educators, that's what teachers tell me. That's what educational administrators tell me as I go along to the different schools in my travels. So this right-wing approach to education will indeed create a crisis.

I looked at the latest report, the brief by the Minister of Education, and in there I found that he talked about the upcoming problems of strengthening the links that he broke down, of strengthening the lack of co-operation that he was able to . . . that he himself had created this problem. And I saw that in his brief that there would be a strain in education, and I believe it. And I believe that strain, because that's the strain that this government has created.

It tries to create that crisis and negative image in education. It tries to get us to fight each other in education. It tries to get us to fight the teachers. It tries to get us to fight the boards when the mill rates have to be increased. It tries to make us fight, business taxpayers versus the municipalities. It tries to create the fight between educators in the department, so that indeed a crisis would be created.

And the real underlying goal that we see in the American and English strategy is the long-term goal of the privatization of different aspects of education. And I think this is the underlying goal as we see the PC government strategy in education unfold. And I really feel that as I watched the children last week, and I watched their excitement for that short term, and I watched the teachers getting excited about getting a new building, I knew that this wasn't going to be the case for many of the communities in the North. I knew that this excitement was not going to be there because the PC strategy only gives to the rich and big corporations, but not to those little people that I saw that were extremely excited.

I see that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I travel around. I would like to see this excitement; I would like to see this optimism develop through this, and create the quality education that we once saw in this province, the consultation that we once saw in this province — the pride and joy that we had in this province in our educational institutions. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is what I see disappearing when I speak in front of this House, as being an educator also from this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I proudly support and second the resolution by the member from Saskatoon South.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I take great pleasure in rising in my place this afternoon to address this motion that has been made by the member from Saskatoon South. I'm a little bit at a loss of words to begin with, after listening to the tirade delivered by that member and listening to his colleague who has just concluded.

I cannot help but to remember a saying about politicians,

and I would like to read into the record my opinion of what I have just heard and witnessed over the last hour and a half or so, where the definition of a politician is given as one who speaks on a subject about which he knows nothing and attempts to make you feel that it is your fault. And that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I suggest to you is what we have just been witnessing over the last hour and a half or so.

It gives me great pleasure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to speak here in reply to that motion on behalf of my constituents. And I must say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that my constituents want to send a clear message to the member of the party across the way, and that message, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that enough is enough.

We have been hearing accusations, we have been hearing all kinds of wild gyrations during question period, another example today on the SGI issue, about statements being made with nothing substantiated, incredible statements being made with no regard to the fundamentals. And I am very impressed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what one of my colleagues from Turtleford, actually the member from Turtleford, has said about the opposition who tend to be certainly unencumbered by knowledge and uninhibited by the truth. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I suggest that that is what we have been hearing substantial amounts of comments on today.

Now further to some of the comments made by the member from Saskatoon South, where I suggest to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a lot of apologies are in order because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in some of his comments he was suggesting that the educational system that we have in the province today is turning out staff — staff that is not adequate, were his words — they are not adequate in this province any more. And I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that by so saying, he is slapping the educational instructors of this province, that they are no longer adequate or capable of doing the tremendous job that they have been doing in the past. And I think, Mr. Speaker, that he certainly owes the staff members of the teaching profession an apology.

(1615)

Furthermore, in addition to that, his comments were to the secondary education that we are no longer turning out graduates, graduates of renown, he said, intimating that those people who have worked 4, 5, 6 years and more in the university to acquire their education, to contribute to the society in terms of research and writings, and so on, that they are no longer capable of being renowned, that they are not adequate to do the job. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that he owes the graduates of the universities of this province an apology.

But looking, Mr. Speaker, at the member from Saskatoon South who himself is a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan, I am assuming — I don't know that for a fact, but I am assuming that he is a graduate. I suggest to him that if he is telling us that the system is not perfect today, looking at him I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the system in those days was also not perfect.

Mr. Speaker, furthermore, the member from Saskatoon

South brought up the opposition to the production loan. And he made a great ado about the production loan and who was taking advantage of the production loan and who was not taking advantage of the production loan.

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that there was one ulterior motive, and that motive, Mr. Speaker, was to drive a wedge, to drive a split between the urban and the rural citizens of this province. Because, Mr. Speaker, I am firmly convinced, firmly convinced, particularly after listening to the member from Humboldt, the so-called critic of Agriculture in this province, during estimates over the last three or four days, and witnessing what the NDP policy, or perhaps I should say lack of policy in agriculture is, I can see that they understand full well that they will never again in the foreseeable future take a seat in agricultural Saskatchewan. So they're putting all their apples into one cart and going for the cities.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest his comments relating to the production loan were intended to achieve that end, because what he was saying was that not every farmer in the province should have received the production loan. That's what he said — not every farmer should receive the production loan. He pointed to the members on this side and suggested that all members on this side received the production loan. I, as a matter of record, Mr. Speaker, have not taken out the production loan — not one penny — and I am a farmer; I'm a bona fide farmer; I earn my living as a farmer.

But that, Mr. Speaker, is not really the point. The point, Mr. Speaker, is that by taking out this kind of production loan, that member was saying that half the farmers, or was he saying three-quarters of the farmers . . . He didn't say, but what he was intimating was that there should be a means test before the production loan should have been left out, or handed out.

Now I ask the farmers of Saskatchewan: would you have received it? Ask yourself that question. If the NDP would have been in power, firstly, we know that they would not have come up with such a program. But had they, who would have received it, who would have received it — some buddies, a few friends?

That is a question, I think, that we have to take a very, very close look at because, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that they are in contradiction to their own Marxist socialist philosophy of universality when they talk that way. What are they saying? That if they ever, Heaven forbid, should reassume power in Saskatchewan, are they saying then that there will be no such thing as universality? Are they saying that we will decide who gets and who doesn't get? Is that what they're saying?

That's a scary thought, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but let's take it a step further then. Universality, not being part of their doctrine any more, does that mean that medicare then, does that mean that the richer folks in society are now going to have to . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order. It's true the hon. member is certainly referring to comments made by the member from Saskatoon South, which I myself heard. However, I would ask him in his response to relate it to the motion.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The production loan and the relationship is: the production loan is over \$1 billion that this government put into the economy of Saskatchewan, which enriched the economy of Saskatchewan, and thus allowed us to maintain the excellent educational system that we have in the province today. And I think, therefore, it is very, very relevant to the point that is under discussion today.

But this is what concerns me, the obvious, the attempt by the opposition members, the NDP, to widen the split and to create a rift and to pound in that wedge between rural and urban Saskatchewan. I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that is certainly deplorable.

And I want to pursue one other point that the hon. member from Saskatoon South brought up, and I suggest to you that an apology is also in order to my friend and colleague from Regina Wascana. As a Legislative Secretary, he was accused of ripping off the public treasury to the degree of \$7,000 per year in his role as Legislative Secretary. Now this member, Mr. Speaker, was Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Education, and he is one of the hardest-working individuals in this Assembly, working hard not only for his constituents but for indeed the entire province, and particularly the children in the educational system within this province. Then we have him saying, the hon. member from Saskatoon South, that this individual is ripping off the public treasury.

I don't follow that, Mr. Speaker. Because talking about ripping off, it has been brought to my attention, Mr. Speaker, that rip-offs . . . now I am the first one, and I want to put this on public record, that I'm very glad that I chose 1986, October 20, to be elected to this Assembly for the first time, because that gave me an opportunity to be . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Well I appreciate that, Minister of Highways. I appreciate that comment.

That gave me the opportunity to get to know an individual that I have never agreed with as far as philosophy is concerned, but an individual that I learned to respect very, very much in my short, close association with him, and that was the former hon. Allan Blakeney. Now Allan Blakeney was a man who said what he thought, and you knew that what he thought was . . . probably it was the truth. He was an honourable gentleman.

But one particular item that I think that he had a moment of lapse, a moment of lapse when he appointed a certain member of the opposition who then became the minister of Health under the previous administration which, of course, was the man who has perpetrated the greatest rip-off of the public treasury that this Assembly has ever known.

And I will give you an example why, Mr. Speaker. Because as minister of Health, this member from Saskatoon South, at that time and now the critic speaking to this motion on education . . . And we were going to take

a look at the funding; we're going to take a look at the funding as he brought out the Legislative Secretary to Education — \$7,000, \$7,000 the Legislative Secretary.

Here we have the member in 1981-82 — not that long ago, but the last year that you folks were in power — we have the member from Saskatoon South, \$24,877 in salary he received that year. He received \$7,509 in travel. Then he received \$12.15, and he forgot to say why, but I guess he went to the public treasury for that.

Then in addition to that, there was an annual indemnity of \$11,224; annual expense allowance he received, \$10,011; session indemnity, \$10,975. This is all the same gentlemen, the member from Saskatoon South. The long-distance calls he made, \$1,019; communications expenses, \$8,443, for a total of \$47,388, which, if you combine it with the \$7,000 and the \$47,000 that I claimed before, received and cost the taxpayer of this province . . . the cost the taxpayer of this province \$79,787. And he is complaining about a \$7,000 hard-earned money by the Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Education.

Now let's follow this logic to the next step. If I may be permitted, Mr. Speaker, to round off \$79,787 (thousand) to \$80,000, and I realize that is a slight exaggeration, but \$80,000 . . . Our cabinet, numbers in cabinet today under our Premier, numbers 16. If you go back — and this is kind of spur of the moment — the latest size of the cabinet of that NDP Party was in the neighbourhood of 22 to 24 members.

Mr. Speaker: — The hon. member is certainly introducing information but, as I said before, he must relate it to the motion under discussion if he's going to introduce information such as that.

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, the point simply was, \$80,000 and eight members more in the cabinet than ever before, costing the taxpayers of this province over \$600,000 extra — \$600,000 in the extra-sized cabinet of the Blakeney government when they were in power, that could not be used for education, that could not be used to educate our children.

And what do they do? They complain about the \$7,000 of hard-earned money by their member of Regina Wascana, and that member from Saskatoon South owes that member an apology.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, it give me a great deal of honour here to address some of the points perhaps that have not been brought out by the previous two speakers thus far.

We are going to now start taking a look at some of the facts, some of the truths, the way they really are. I do not think that my constituents, for example, want me to get mired in the same wallow as some of the members of the other things.

So having said that, I will at this point try to be a little bit more conservative

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Allow the member to continue.

Mr. Neudorf: — I realize — thank you very much, Mr. Speaker — that whenever the solid truth is spoken in this House, it does get them a little bit upset and so on, because it is not in keeping with their philosophy of using scare tactics, of crying wolf; somewhat, let us say, as this old . . . what do you call these old stories that we used to have in the . . . these fables, about the fable of the young boy who was always spreading untruths.

And then I would suggest to you that what you do is you take perhaps your leader and let him throw out a bag of feathers into the air. It is so easy to take these untruths and these exaggerations and spread them to the wind, and let them do and fall and cause whatever damage and havoc that is possible. But I suggest to you that it is very, very difficult to gather them together and to be responsible. I think that is a key here. We must be responsible for what we say and what we utter.

So with that brief introduction, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to get into the . . . some of the thoughts that I have prepared. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you that my constituents want an opposition, and they understand the role of an opposition. The role of the opposition is to keep the government on its toes, and that's fair ball. I mean, that's what our parliamentary system is about and that is great.

But I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that this opposition is unequivocally prepared to do an outstanding role in their job because it gets so natural to them. It seems to be something that's inherent within the natures of the members opposite to criticize, to be negative, not to admit that something good perhaps is going on.

(1630)

Well I'm just going to demonstrate a little bit by asking . . . I'll ask my friend, colleague here, from Regina Wascana how full . . . how much water is in this tumbler?

An Hon. Member: — It's half full.

Mr. Neudorf: — Half full. I'd ask the member . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order. Order! The hon. member cannot use exhibits in the House.

Mr. Neudorf: — I apologize, Mr. Speaker, for taking the glass of water as an exhibit.

What would the member from Regina . . . Saskatoon South have said? I suspect that his answer would be — and perhaps I could get all the members there in unison to indicate that this glass, excuse me, that the glass is half empty. And I think, Mr. Speaker . . . I think, Mr. Speaker, by hearing half full and half empty illustrates the basic significant difference between us and them — the positive thinkers, the negative gloom and doomers.

So, Mr. Speaker, my constituents like to have an opposition that will deal with facts, an opposition that will work hard to present positive new ideas. I certainly

do not object to criticism as long as it is constructive criticism, as long as it is criticism with an alternative. It is so easy to criticize, use a lot of rhetoric in doing it, but have no constructive criticisms, no policies that could be implemented in lieu of.

And so, having said all that, since this government was elected in 1982 it has, Mr. Speaker, made education a priority. We have been willing to adapt, we have been willing to make changes, we've been willing to address the issues that are of concern to the people of this province so that indeed we can make adjustments — make adjustments to our delivery system of education in this province to meet the needs of the future centuries.

Members of this side of the House realize the need to prepare our youth for the future. We know that the success of this province rides on their shoulders, and we are committed to providing every opportunity available in order for our children to meet the challenges of a new era.

And we have all . . . we all have children. We all have families, and we all care for them. I do. It's the most precious thing in my life. And I know that the members opposite would stand up and say the same thing.

It seems so strange to me that there are people who will get up and say that there is a party or that there's a group of individuals who feel the same way that they do, and yet they are going to go out with the expressed intent — purpose — of destroying an education system. I can't fathom that. I find that difficult to understand.

We may not have the same ideas about philosophy. We may not have the same ideas about the implementation of policy, but our goal is the same. The means to the end may not be the same. And so, when you have that castigation coming from members opposite with no regard to the intent, and I believe the honest philosophy behind these kinds of steps, I find it very, very difficult to understand that.

So, Mr. Speaker, let's take a look at some facts. Over the last six years, the progressive government . . . the Progressive Conservative government of Saskatchewan has increased education spending in Saskatchewan by \$259 million, or an equivalent of a 48 per cent increase. And that, Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you and members of the House and indeed the public of Saskatchewan, is commitment — commitment to education.

In the recent budget before this Assembly a further commitment of \$39 million, which is a 5.2 per cent increase, has been provided for education in 1988-89. Those, Mr. Speaker, are facts. The total expenditures, \$789 million. That's up from the records year that the NDP had while they were in government, of \$530 million. The PC government, Mr. Speaker, is committed to excellence.

And I want to refer my colleagues and members of the public to more facts about our commitment to education. In 1988-89 we will provide a further fourteen and a half million dollars from the educational development fund to continue the upgrading of programs and tools available to our young people.

And I say, Mr. Speaker, that fourteen and a half million dollars is there and it would not have been there had the members opposite been in power, because they may criticize the EDF or the educational development fund, they may criticize the fact that it's been extended over 10 years instead of five, but it's something that simply did not exist under their administration — it wasn't there.

So we have \$14.5 million from the EDF, and we will provide a million dollars for in-service training to help teachers introduce the core curriculum. And as a past educator, having spent a greater portion of my adult life in education, I can fully appreciate the significance and importance of having that in-service training for teachers. It's vitally important that they get that and this government recognizes it, and we have put that \$1 million in the budget for that express purpose.

Your PC government will increase operating grants to school divisions by \$7 million, raising the total commitment to operating grants to 37 . . . pardon me, \$337 million; \$31 million will be provided in capital assistance for the renovation and construction of new schools; \$25 million for university capital projects.

Your PC government will also implement the new core curriculum, which I've just been talking about, into the elementary and the secondary schools beginning in the fall of 1988, and we will increase funding for special education to ensure that benefits of the core curriculum are equally shared by all students.

These, Mr. Speaker, are just some of the facts that prove your PC government's commitment to education in Saskatchewan. Let me also point out that this PC government is very sensitive to the need to make post-secondary education accessible to the largest number of students possible. And to this end, Mr. Speaker, 12,300 students will receive over \$24 million in subsidies, and we heard the member from Saskatoon South criticizing this kind of program — 12,300 students, over \$24 million.

The points I've been making so far, in spite of the objections of the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, are fact. They do not, as this motion suggests, support the member's claim that we are harming or impairing students' opportunities in the educational system. To make my point even further, let us look back over the past year to see what initiatives have been provided in education for the people in this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education, my hon. colleague from Weyburn, can take a great deal of pride in the accomplishments of his department. They reorganized — and I'll just list some of them here for the members of the opposite party here and the people of Saskatchewan.

Under his jurisdiction they reorganized rural community colleges into nine regional colleges to enhance the provision and delivery of skilled training and university extension programs to rural students. My constituency is very happy about that because they are certainly reaping the benefits of his vision.

They also amalgamated three community colleges to form the Northlands Career College to maximize the linkages between training and employment in the North.

An Hon. Member: — Take it as read.

Mr. Neudorf: — I'll not take it as read. I've still got quite a few of these programs . . . It's quite a lengthy process to try to straighten the record out, Mr. Speaker, and it gives me a great deal of pleasure to be able to do that.

And furthermore, Mr. Speaker, your PC government took a national leadership role by establishing the \$3.2 million education outreach fund to address the problem of adult illiteracy and to expand availability of university extension and institute courses to smaller centres.

In addition, four technical institutes and four urban community colleges were amalgamated into the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology to develop areas of excellence and to focus on the skills that are currently in demand.

Mr. Speaker, the facts that I have presented are clearly the evidence that prove your PC government's commitment to education. Under this government, we have developed an educational system that focuses on quality, accountability, lifelong learning skills, financial accessibility and increased access — and I take pride in this — and increased access for rural students.

Now during the first term of our PC government, from 1982 to '86, our members had the foresight — and I can't claim credit for this, but my colleagues and former colleagues certainly can — our members had the foresight to prioritize those areas which will prepare this province for the years ahead, and indeed for the century ahead. And among these areas that were in fact labelled as the corner-stone to our province's future, education was one of them. And the reason for this, Mr. Speaker, the reason for this commitment is in fact quite simple. Through consultation with people throughout the province it was made quite clear that education was a priority. Thus, it becomes our government's responsibility. Our government is well aware that in order to meet future challenges we must continue with a process of renewal and development within our primary and within our secondary schools and universities. And we will continue our commitment to initiate this process in partnership with all participants in the educational communities, be it parents, teachers, students, trustees and any others that you would like to indicate.

Mr. Speaker, earlier in my remarks I made passing reference to the core curriculum program. And I'd just like to spend a few moments to explain just what this program is all about, what has been accomplished to date, and what the reaction has been to that program.

And the new core curriculum is intended to provide all Saskatchewan students with an education that will serve them well regardless of their choices after leaving school. In other words, we're going to give them as many options as possible to come out of that institution with as well-rounded an education as is possible which will both reinforce the teaching of basic skills and introduce an

expanded range of new skills to the curriculum.

Developmental in nature, the program affects kindergarten to grade 12 and it has two major components: the required areas of study, and the common and central learnings. Now within that there are seven required areas of study that the students must have to participate in: health, phys. ed, social studies, arts, education — arts education, math, science, and then the language arts.

And each course of study provides for the inclusion of the six — what is called the six common, essential learnings which are: communication, numeracy, creative and critical thinking, technological literacy, independent learning, and personal and social values and skills.

So, Mr. Speaker, let me tell you that the reaction to this program has been extremely positive. Teachers are anxious to pursue the new core curriculum thrusts and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation is very anxious and interested to lend assistance, and people throughout the province are generally excited by this curriculum project.

It's a comprehensive program, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that our children are equipped to deal with the rapid technological changes that this world is facing now and that accelerated technological pace that is coming in the future. Mr. Speaker, it is one program and just one example of your PC government's commitment to equip our young people for the future.

(1645)

Mr. Speaker, the motion before us attempts to twist the facts, the facts as I have stated, and because of that twisting I will not be able to support that motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kopelchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I would start — and I don't know just how many people are still with us — but at the beginning . . . and I wish to really congratulate him on his very eloquent speech, but the member from Saskatoon South went into quite a tirade of what he called facts. And as I said, I don't know how many people recall that part of the speech.

But I would like to remind the people of Saskatchewan and members of this House that this member who is so concerned about the students of Saskatchewan is the same gentleman who voted against a motion that would allow the students of our University of Saskatchewan to write their final exams. That is that member.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kopelchuk: — That member is also a member of a government, of a previous government, that had student loan rates at fifteen and three-quarters per cent. Is that fair? Does that compare to our rate today of 6 per cent? Hypocrisy, I call it.

He also alluded in his remarks to how the mill rates, the local mill rates, were being increased, and what a

hardship it was going to be on all our local school division boards. I have a figure here, Mr. Speaker, that says that the average local mill rate increased from 1982 to 1987, was 15.1 per cent. Mr. Speaker, do you know what it was under the previous government in the period 1976 to 1981? Sixty-nine point seven per cent. That's what the increase in the mill rate was, Mr. Speaker.

He also alluded in his remarks that this government had imposed a hardship in the form of a 7 cent a litre gas tax. He also said that it would total over \$1.5 million. What he neglected to tell the people was that for the remainder of 1987, it was only going to be \$665,000 and that the rural transportation grant was increased for 1987 by \$898,000, Mr. Speaker — more than enough to cover that increase.

He also in his remarks alluded to a . . . because of a lack of funding that our schools were not really in a position to take advantage of a lot of things like technology, and I believe he used computers as an example. And he said that the schools in Saskatchewan could not afford to put computers into their schools. Well let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, that in 1976 there were no computers in the Regina public school system. In 1980 there were just a few available, a number of 10 to 20.

Mr. Speaker . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. I believe the member from Canora has the floor.

Mr. Kopelchuk: — I would like to bring to the attention of the House that from 1982 — and these are not our figures, Mr. Speaker; these are figures that are published in a Regina public school publication; this is not any government propaganda — that the number of computers in the Regina public school jumped from approximately 100 in 1982 to where there are over 1,000 in 1988 — another example of the government funding the schools and technology in our province.

So all I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that I would like to stick to the facts. And I would start by telling you that in the current provincial budget for the fiscal year 1988-89, education spending will total \$789 million. That is a 5.2 per cent increase in spending.

I want to emphasize the fact that education spending in Saskatchewan has increased. The record will show that in the last six years there has been a 48 per cent increase in education spending by this government. Yet the NDP member for Saskatoon South has the outrageous audacity to introduce before this Assembly a motion that contradicts those facts.

The NDP opposition would prefer to deal in statements that are not correct, to introduce motions that are wrong, all for the sake of trying to win a few cheap political points at the expense of our young people. It is a shameful conduct, and I say, shame that he would exploit our education system for political gain.

Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that honourable people would recognize that education spending in this province has increased. Education is of vital importance to

Saskatchewan's Progressive Conservative government. Education is an excellent investment in the future of our province; education will provide the young people of our province with solid opportunities for the future. The motion before this Assembly does a sad disservice to our entire education system. It is a slur on our educators; it is an insult to education professionals and students alike.

Mr. Speaker, the \$789 million Education budget for this province contains provisions for a \$7 million increase in school operating grants, a \$2.8 million increase in university operating assistance, 4.5 million for the education development fund, 31 million in capital assistance for the renovation and construction of new schools and \$25 million for university capital projects.

Mr. Speaker, the increased spending by this government for education also includes \$67 million for the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology — new funding to develop programs for disabled students. There is 3.2 million for the education outreach fund to combat adult illiteracy and to expand the number of university and institute courses offered in smaller centres.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP opposition, the mover of this motion from Saskatoon South, persists in trying to scare the public by saying there is a decrease in education funding. The truth is, that education spending in this province has increased.

The \$789 million budget for Saskatchewan is one that we can be proud of. It shows leadership and vision in the field of education. The education system of this province is high on the agenda of this government. Since 1982 spending on education has increased by \$259 million or a 48 per cent increase.

Mr. Speaker, we have dedicated substantial funding to education to help the young people of our province meet the changing needs of society. Our government, through the Minister of Education, has the foresight and leadership to do what is necessary to build a first-class education system in this province. Very important steps have been taken in our education system to guarantee excellence, to guarantee that Saskatchewan has an education system equal to or better than any jurisdiction in North America.

All over North America, there is an increased public concern about education. Dr. Allan Bloom's book, *The Closing of the American Mind*, which deals with education, well that book is on the best seller list, both in Canada and the United States.

There is ever-increasing public interest in our education system. We have reached a point in our society where parents want a strong commitment from governments to quality education. This government has made that kind of a commitment to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, people from all walks of life recognize the value of our public commitment to education. They see the \$789 million Education budget as an investment in the future of Saskatchewan.

In 1985 this government established the educational development fund to further enhance our province's educational system.

Over the past three years, I would like to point out, this government has provided over \$50 million to school boards to improve library resources, to acquire computer technology and to introduce new programs for gifted and disadvantaged students. The 1988-89 Education budget has a further 4.5 million to continue the upgrading programs and tools available to students.

Mr. Speaker, the record will show that since 1982 this government has increased funding to school divisions by over 56 per cent. This year we will provide \$337 million in operating grants to school divisions, which is an increase of over \$7 million.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend our Progressive Conservative government and the Minister of Education for these positive initiatives in education. I wish to commend him for his leadership in promoting excellence in education.

Take a look, for example, at the national leadership Saskatchewan has demonstrated by establishing a \$3.2 million education outreach fund to address the problem of adult illiteracy. It is a sad and painful fact that in North America many persons are considered functionally illiterate. Even reading the newspaper is difficult for many adults. The centre for assessment of educational progress recently found that 32 per cent of young adults could not write a simple phone message, 70 per cent could not find a listing in the yellow pages of a phone book.

The Department of Education and Saskatchewan's government has established the Saskatchewan outreach fund because we want to help those who have this problem. And I commend the government for establishing this fund to help adult illiteracy.

Mr. Speaker, public education is being enhanced because of this government. We are building a tradition of quality education for Saskatchewan young people. Our commitment to education also includes a solid commitment to post-secondary education. Since 1982, operating grants to our universities have increased by almost 45 per cent. Over that period, provincial spending on university capital projects totalled nearly \$100 million.

In 1988-89 our universities will receive an additional \$2.8 million in operating grants, for a total commitment of \$146 million; 12,300 students in post-secondary and adult education will receive over \$24 million in subsidies to help them in their quest for further education.

Mr. Speaker, I would strongly suggest to you that this government, Saskatchewan's Progressive Conservative government, has a genuine record of promoting quality education.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most important functions of any provincial government is the education of our young people. The revenues and resources we put into education is most vital to our society. Schools play an

important role in building communities. Primary and secondary schools provide many of these skills to our young people as they prepare for their future.

Government has an obligation to guarantee that a quality education system is an ongoing part of our society. I believe that here in Saskatchewan, we, as a government, can proudly say we have upheld those qualities in education. Since 1982 we have restored public education to a point high on the list of public priorities. We, as a government, have established a record such that Saskatchewan's education system is one that we can all take pride in.

Mr. Speaker, I have much more to say, but I believe at this time I would move that debate be now adjourned.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:59 p.m.