

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege today to introduce to you, and to all members of the House, five students from Moose Jaw. These are grades 4 and 6 students, grades 4 to 6 students from the Seventh Day Adventist (Church) School in Moose Jaw. They're accompanied today by their chaperon and teacher, Mr. Jim Martens. I look forward to meeting with the students later, answering any questions they might have. And so I'd invite all members to help me in welcoming these students from the Seventh Day Adventist (Church) School in Moose Jaw.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Consideration of Increase in Gas Tax

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to my friend, the Minister of Finance, and it concerns a *Leader-Post* story, which I have here in front of me in today's paper, where the research division of the NDP, as the Minister of Education says . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, I think we've got much better research than that, Mr. Minister.

In any event, the story has a headline which says, "Tories consider gas-tax increase." And my question to the Minister of Finance is, will he confirm the accuracy of this story; namely, are you considering a tax increase on the gas, and if you are, how does that jive with the promises that your government and the Premier's government has made since 1982 that not only would there not be any tax increases on gas, but that you'd be eliminating the gas tax? What's your answer to that?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well the hon. member asked two questions, and in answer to the first, I would urge him to cancel any other events he may have on March 30 and join us here in the Assembly where I will announce in some detail the budget for the next fiscal year.

With regard to the second question that the hon. member asked, I may remind the hon. member that it is the province of Saskatchewan, and only the province of Saskatchewan, that rebates to its people the fuel tax for personal use, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — What rebate?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — The hon. member says, what rebate. Now he may not have put in his own application form, Mr. Speaker, but nearly 280,000 Saskatchewan people received farm fuel rebates last year, Mr. Speaker, and when they kept their receipts they paid no fuel tax in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a new question to the Minister of Finance. And I might say by way of preface to the Minister of Finance, I actually had intended to cancel everything in order to be here on March 30, but the way this budget is being leaked out, I don't think I may have to show up on the 30th.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — So now I'm considering other pressing appointments. But nevertheless, the minister carefully and rather skillfully, I think, avoided answering the question directly. I shall put the question to the minister again. Mr. Minister, is it correct — yes or no — the *Leader-Post* story which says that you're increasing or considering the increasing of the gas tax? And if that is the case, how in the world does the government justify that, given your solemn commitment and promises that this would not take place? Just give us that answer, please.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well, as I indicated to the hon. member, that he should be here and there will be some surprises for him. And I would expect, Mr. Speaker, that the surprises that he gets will not be ones that make him too happy or comfortable.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, we've been through the debate before. And I just remind the hon. member, the Leader of the Opposition, of his predecessor's statement where he said that out-of-province highway users should pay the gas tax; businesses should pay the gas tax; and that Saskatchewan people, for their personal use, should not pay the tax.

Now he would know, he would know that it's impossible to make that segregation at the pump, and that the effective way to ensure that Saskatchewan people effectively do not pay the gas tax is to have a fuel tax rebate system, Mr. Speaker, much opposed by the opposition; much supported by the people of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, I think it's plain for all the members of the legislature and those watching the proceedings on television, that the Minister of Finance has confirmed that there's going to be a large increase in the gas tax in this budget on March 30.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — An increase of approximately what?

An Hon. Member: — Twenty cents a gallon.

Mr. Romanow: — Twenty cents a gallon, if this story is right. That is a major tax increase, but more importantly, it's a major breach of promise by this government.

My question to the Minister of Finance is this. He talks

about the rebate program. Well I have a question about that. Here's another promise. You promised that the rebate program would be out early in the new year, and here it is, middle of March already, and so far as I know the rebate programs have not been mailed out, the applications have not been mailed out. People are asking where in the world are their rebate programs. Is this delay indicative of the fact, Mr. Minister, that you may break yet another promise and do away with the rebates as well in this tax increase that you're planning?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well I do know that it is the wish of the New Democratic Party that there be no rebates, and I do know that several NDP have indicated that the rebates would be cancelled, and I think at the appropriate time we will indicate to the people of this province what the government's position is.

I do remind the hon. member that over 280,000 people, Mr. Speaker, received their rebates last year and they were very happy with the program, Mr. Speaker.

Transfer Payments to Provinces

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much. A question also to the Minister of Finance. Mr. Minister, there have been rumours for some weeks that there will be cut-backs in the transfer payments from the federal to the provincial government. Your deputy minister, Mr. Wakabayashi, has now confirmed that these are something more than rumours. My question to the minister is: what information do you have from the federal government which would serve as a basis for his statement — and this is a direct quote, "We have to anticipate cut-backs in some areas of federal transfers to the provinces." — what is the basis upon which he makes that statement?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Let me commend the NDP research staff on the depth of its research. I am advised, Mr. Speaker, having seen the article, I did talk to the deputy minister of Finance today, who advised me that in his discussions with the particular reporter he indicated that we have no indication that there would be any cut-backs and that the statement was not accurate, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you. New question. Mr. Minister, your deputy minister is a man with a reputation for both accuracy and honesty. In that sense, he's a good counterfoil for his own minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — If you don't mind, Mr. Minister, I'd prefer to believe your deputy rather than you in this Assembly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — And I guess the next question, Mr. Speaker, is: whatever became of the much ballyhooed rapport which your Premier claimed to have with Mr. Mulroney? Will you confirm that that rapport evaporated

when five Tory seats vanished in the last election? Is that what happened to it? And will you, Mr. Minister, confirm the foolishness of your approach over the last four years in acting as an apologist for the federal government? You now, Mr. Minister, have neither the courage nor the position to act as a spokesman, nor do you have the clout to win very much on bended knee. Will you confirm the foolishness of that approach?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Someone, Mr. Speaker, is going to find out what the supplementary question had to have with the original question. But I'm sure *Hansard* and several geniuses will try and figure out what the relationship between the two.

I indicated already, Mr. Speaker, that the deputy minister indicated to the reporter that there was no indication that there would be cuts in transfer payments, which kind of takes away the basis of the second question, the diatribe.

I suppose all I can say is that the hon. member, with the greatest respect, is falling into the trap of the rest of the caucus of his NDP members. He's as inaccurate in his premise as he is in his question and in his understanding of the issue, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I take that evasive answer to be a confirmation of the accuracy of the story. After all — new question, Mr. Speaker. After all, Mr. Minister, you're the person with the finely tuned precision in dealing with figures. You're the minister who raised the age-old practice of cooking the books to a new level, Mr. Minister, in 1986. You're the one who pretended, who continued to pretend, that a deficit of 389 million was an accurate figure when you knew it was over 1.2 billion.

Mr. Minister, my question is: will you confirm that you're bringing down your budget a few days . . . or a couple of weeks in advance of the federal budget so that you can continue to pretend that you're going to get equalization payments on the old formula, rather than dealing with a formula which you know has been changed.

Mr. Minister, I just ask you to confirm that once again on March 30, you'll put on your apron, and you'll play the role of the Madame Benoit of the Finance department of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I suppose my first question is who's Madame Benoit, for Heaven's sake? Madame Benoit is known to many people that have any semblance of the idea where the kitchen is, but who Madame Benoit is, I can't speak to whoever the source of his information and his facts are, Mr. Speaker.

Let's put the NDP position in its perspective. On the one hand they criticize the provincial government if we don't bring the budget in by the end of the fiscal year, and we all heard the debate for several months with that criticism.

Today they stand up and say, you should have a late budget and you should wait for the federal budget and bring your budget in after, and after the fiscal year, because that is what the Finance critic opposite has just said.

Mr. Speaker, the budget is being brought in at the end of our fiscal year. That was supported by members opposite until the new critic was named. So I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP have consistently, during this session and over the last year, taken at least two positions on every issue, both incontrovertibly opposed, one to the other, Mr. Speaker. Even a change in critic opposite, Mr. Speaker, and the dropping of the previous one has not improved their position, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Relocation of Joytec

Mr. Koenker: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question to the Minister of Science and Technology. Will the minister confirm that Joytec is closing shop, moving to Vancouver?

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I've been waiting for some time actually for the member opposite to ask this question because I know that he has taken a personal interest in Joytec. He raised it on several occasions last year, and also his colleague from Saskatoon Centre has raised the matter of Joytec. I think it's rather unfortunate that the Leader of the Opposition, in whose constituency this company has been located for the last six years, didn't at least have the decency to go and visit this company when he was invited.

However, in answer to the member's question opposite, I can confirm that I discussed this matter with the president of Joytec last Monday, and yes, in fact they are moving to Vancouver.

Mr. Koenker: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, I do have a personal interest in this on behalf of the taxpayers of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — People have long smelled that something was rotten with Joytec, that there was PC patronage at Joytec, and that Joytec would only milk Saskatchewan taxpayers and run. And you, two years ago on July 14, could only say: "We have reason to think that at this time Joytec are going to provide a lot of additional revenues to this province through their golf simulators." Mr. Minister, what revenues? What golf simulators? What jobs? What are you going to do to protect Saskatchewan people?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt about it, that over the last several days we've heard many examples of hypocrisy from the other side of this House. And I would point out today, Mr. Speaker, very clearly, very clearly, that the member opposite can certainly take a good bit of credit, along with some of his colleagues, for

Joytec being driven out of this province, and at a time when the Leader of the Opposition says that he is for small business in this province.

Let me just tell you this, Mr. Speaker, that the main reason why Joytec is leaving Saskatchewan is purely this: the main reason they are leaving, Mr. Speaker, is that since last October they have been trying to hire technical staff in the city of Saskatoon, and one of the major reasons why they have given for not being able to do this is because of negative publicity and negative comments such as this that have been put forward by the members of the opposition.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. A supplementary question to the minister from Saskatoon Mayfair. In the light of his last answer, how in the world does he explain the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* story quoting the president of Joytec saying that they could not get qualified programmers because of a very disappointing response to the advertisements, and not a word about that false and spurious accusation you've made? How do you explain that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Speaker, I think it's very interesting that, at this particular date, that the Leader of the Opposition has finally discovered that there is a company such as Joytec in his own constituency.

But let me repeat this again, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition doesn't like to hear this, but the fact of the matter is that the president of Joytec, in discussion with me last Monday, indicated this was the very reason why they could not attract technical staff to this particular company. And I would point out that when we see comments such as we saw in the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* on April 22 of last year, where the member from Saskatoon Sutherland points out . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, order. We're having great difficulty hearing the minister, and I do believe he's trying to answer the question, so I would like to give him the opportunity to finish.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — When the member from Saskatoon Sutherland points out, "Joytec assistance bilked taxpayers of Saskatchewan." Now, Mr. Speaker, let me point out to this. This company, during the last six years in the province of Saskatchewan, have spent in the neighbourhood of 8 millions of dollars — 8 millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker — \$8 million, the most of which has gone to the province of Saskatchewan. It's gone to the province of Saskatchewan in the form of wages, of taxes, and also for goods and services.

So, Mr. Speaker, when one considers that over \$8 million has been spent, most of which has been spent here, that the people from Saskatchewan have had a good return on their dollar. In actual fact, the amount of money that had been spent by the Government of Saskatchewan was \$76,000 for research and development, plus the fact that they had venture capital fund — venture capital fund. And it's understood by both sides . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Mr. Koenker: — Mr. Minister, the truth is that Joytec has received one and a half million dollars from the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, and if that kind of expenditure can't stand up to public scrutiny, it should never have been given in the first place.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — Mr. Minister, I'd like to ask you, when are you going to stop defending Joytec and protecting the interest of Saskatchewan taxpayers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Speaker, that's the very reason, as just stated by the member opposite, as to why Joytec is leaving this province, and I think that's unfortunate, just at a time when they are starting to move ahead. This is a company that we're going to be watching and going to be hearing much about in the years ahead.

The member opposite mentions about \$1.5 million that this government is out. That is clearly not the case at all, Mr. Speaker. Clearly not the case. This is a company that they have driven out of the province. This is a company . . .

An Hon. Member: — That's their attitude to business.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — That's their attitude to small business, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. I'll give the minister a few seconds to conclude his remarks because he was being interrupted. Order.

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Speaker, the only money that the Government of Saskatchewan has put into this company that will not be recoverable is \$76,588. This in view of the fact that the company has spent \$8 million on this company, and the majority of that has been here in the province of Saskatchewan. Anything to do with venture capital will be repaid by the company.

So it's just another example of the NDP and their opposition to small business in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koenker: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you and your Premier have given Joytec every possible benefit that it could want, and it still has yet to produce one machine — one machine. You have gambled with Saskatchewan taxpayers' money, and I want to know when and how you are going to get that money back from the venture capital offering that was held in conjunction with Joytec.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite knew anything about research and development, he would know that there's no guaranteed

time on when an idea can be taken to the production stage. It may be anywhere from one or two years to 15 years. This is a company that has been in operation for the last six years. They now have taken . . . They've got more movies in regard to more programs for the machines. Now unfortunately these jobs are going to be provided in the province of British Columbia for the market in Japan, and that's because of this particular party on the opposite side of this House driving small business out.

And with regard to the money and how this government is probably . . . is going to get it back from this company, I would dare say probably that they will be getting a cheque within the next few months to take care of it.

Pollution from Pulp Mills

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question to the Minister of the Environment, and it deals with the lack of this government's commitment to protection of the environment.

Mr. Minister, your throne speech said that you are going to be tough about environmental protection. Just a few days after your throne speech you caved in on your commitment to pursue the hydrogen sulphide leak at the Co-op upgrader. This weekend, Mr. Minister, you caved in to the pulp industry by saying that the federal government is moving too quickly to do away with the pollution that's taking place in our waters.

My question to you, Mr. Minister, is this: what possible reason do you have for supporting the continued deadly pollution by the pulp industry of our waters over a longer period of time than the federal government is proposing that it should take place, and why don't you deliver on your commitment to protect the environment by putting it into action rather than running away from every issue every time it confronts you?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Well, Mr. Speaker, for a member such as this to lecture me on environment is a little bit of a shock. This particular member took no interest in environment at the time when he was a member of the front bench of the former government.

As far as it relates to the hydrogen sulphide issue at the upgrader here in Regina, I haven't backed up from that issue, not one inch. That issue is being dealt with and is being dealt with today; it's being dealt with on a day-by-day basis. Very expensive consultants have been brought in to deal with that issue so that it never happens again.

If the upgrader . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order.

Hon. Mr. Swan: — If the upgrader is able to resolve the issue so it never reoccurs, then they have met the requirements of the Department of Environment. If they don't, then we will lay a charge and that charge will be proceeded with. But the important thing in this issue is not the laying of a charge and getting a few dollars in for the

treasury. That's not the purpose; it's to resolve the issue.

As it relates to the pulp mills, I think if you were to look at the federal report that dealt with the Weyerhaeuser mill in Saskatchewan, you would find that this mill is indeed operating better than most mills across our country, and the challenge that was thrown out by the federal minister really cannot be backed up with actualities.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — A new question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, day after day after day you run away from environmental issues when they are brought to your attention and do nothing about them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Your commitment is no more than a paper tiger. In view of the fact that the current regulations have been in place since 1971 and the industry has had 18 years to make the adjustments that it needs to make, Mr. Minister, and in spite of that, 83 out of 122 pulp mills in Canada dump pollution into water in such a way that they don't meet the national standards; and in view of the fact that dioxins and furans, the most toxic chemicals in the pulp effluent are not even covered by the regulation, how can you stand up in this House and justify your pleading on behalf of the pulp industry corporations that more effective laws to stop water pollution should be delayed even further? How can you justify that kind of a position?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: — I believe if the hon. member would have even read his big research article, which was one article in the paper, that he would have looked at it a little bit more seriously. He would have realized that the province of Saskatchewan has done tests on Weyerhaeuser mill. And those tests have shown, and I have given the information in this House, that those tests have shown that they are meeting our pollution requirements at this point.

The federal government's own report, if you read it, indicates that the Weyerhaeuser mill in Saskatchewan is not the mill that they really are concerned about. But in one broad, sweeping statement they have laid a charge against every pulp company in Canada, and that is not a realistic way to address the issues of any industry. You address them one at a time, and that's what we are doing in Saskatchewan.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Ruling on a Point of Order

The Speaker: — Order. Order, order, order. Order. Before orders of the day, I would like to present to the House a ruling which relates back to Friday. I wish to read it as follows:

On Friday a point of order was raised by the member for Regina Elphinstone stating that the ministerial statement of the Minister of Health was out of order on the grounds

that it was too long and contained no new information on government policy. I have now had an opportunity to review the verbatim record.

There are numerous precedents of this Assembly which clearly set out the guide-lines for ministerial statements. I refer members to the following citations of precedents.

Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, Fifth Edition — c. 262:

... The Speaker has emphasized that both the Government and Opposition contributions should be brief and factual. The purpose of the ministerial statement is to convey information, not to encourage debate.

Standing Order 15 of the House of Commons:

On statements by ministers ... a minister of the Crown may make a short factual announcement or statement of government policy.

Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, ruling of April 4, 1979:

The purpose of a ministerial statement is to provide an opportunity for statements on government policy and administration.

Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, ruling of March 9, 1983:

Ministerial statements should be brief, factual and not of a nature to promote debate.

Finally, *Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*, a ruling of June 10, '88, in which I said:

I would suggest that the Premier's statement yesterday was of a similar nature — of significant provincial interest but the statement did not announce new or existing government initiatives which pertain to the problem. I once more caution members (ministers) that statements should be brief and not lengthy in nature.

Based on the above guide-lines, I find that the ministerial statement made by the Minister of Health was out of order because it did not contain information on new government initiatives. The Chair is concerned that when the rules are not followed, the time for ministerial statements ...

Order please. Order. Order.

The Chair is concerned that when the rules are not followed, the time for ministerial statements degenerates into a debate which is totally out of order as there is no motion before the Assembly. In future I remind (members) and ministers that they must demonstrate the validity of their ministerial statement early in the statement or the Chair will be forced to intervene.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Mr. Wolfe.

Mr. Solomon: — Mr. Speaker, I commenced the debate on Friday last with regard to the Speech from the Throne, and at that time I outlined some of the things which I felt this government was very guilty of. I talked about at that opportunity, Mr. Speaker, about the government being one that is mismanaging this province's economy. I talked about this government misleading the people of this province with regard to their programs and with regard to responsibilities in the government. I talked about as well, Mr. Speaker, about the cruel and heartless aspect of the government.

And I wanted to put forward today a thesis of this government's direction of taking opposite positions from what they say, as well as making some comments with regard to the mismanagement of the province and privatization.

Mr. Speaker, the government opposite is indeed a government of opposites, and I say that with a great deal of consternation. The government opposite has on many occasions put forward statements that are simply not true. They've put forward initiatives that they feel are important but they do the opposite. And I want to bring forward three or four examples, Mr. Speaker, very briefly.

In the last couple of elections they came to this legislature and they went to the people of Saskatchewan and promised to reduce personal income tax by 10 per cent. In effect what we've seen, Mr. Speaker, is not a 10 per cent cut in personal income tax but actually an increase on personal income tax of about 105 per cent. There's 105 per cent more revenue to the treasury right now, Mr. Speaker, from personal income tax returns than there was in 1982. And that is opposite of what they promised.

Mr. Speaker, they also promised to eliminate the 5 per cent sales tax. We've seen not an increase . . . or decrease or elimination of the sales tax, Mr. Speaker, we've seen in effect a 40 per cent increase, from 5 per cent to 7 per cent, of a sales tax on the people of Saskatchewan.

They promised, Mr. Speaker, to eliminate the gas tax, and the Premier of this province, as a matter of fact, stood before this legislature in May of 1982, and he said to the people of Saskatchewan: as long as there is a Conservative government in this province we will never, ever reintroduce the gas tax. We have not only seen the reintroduction of the gas tax, Mr. Speaker, we've seen a substantial increase in the gas tax. And today we've even heard of reports from the newspapers that the Minister of Finance intends not only to maintain the gas tax as it is but to increase it one more time.

This is not a government that has a lot of credibility, Mr. Speaker. They say one thing; they've done the opposite, in spades. They talked about improving medicare. They said, you elect us as a government and we will improve medicare; we will increase the services and programs that medicare offers.

What we've seen, Mr. Speaker, is the gutting of the dental plan, the children's school-based dental program, a privatization of a medicare program that has resulted in increased cost to the taxpayers of this province in terms of taking more time to take their children to the dentist. We've seen more complications as they arise in regard to children's health. No longer are children able to go to the school dentist down the hall and have their teeth checked on a regular basis. They now must have their parents accompaniment to go to the dentist in far away places.

We've seen, Mr. Speaker, the privatization of the drug plan. They said, we're going to enhance the drug plan. They said, we're going to bring to the drug plan all of the drugs that are offered in the economy of Saskatchewan and included in the formulary of the drug plan. They've done that. They've broadened the formulary and the amount of drugs and the type of drugs available to the formulary plan.

But what they also did, Mr. Speaker, when they did that, was increase the costs of the prescription drug plan to the point where now they're saying, it's too expensive to provide a drug plan as we knew it once before. Now, Mr. Speaker, with the privatization of the drug plan, have increased costs to those that are provided prescription drugs by their doctors for the purpose of maintaining or improving health.

And what we've seen, Mr. Speaker, is an incompetent, mismanaged approach to the drug plan in particular. Rather than saying to the doctors who offer prescriptions to their patients, drug costs are high, the prescription drugs that are being provided through the drug plan are fairly significant in volume, we're asking you to cut back or be very cautious in issuing your prescription drugs; rather than saying that, Mr. Speaker, they eliminated the drug plan as we know it.

They could have looked at the expenses and changed the drug plan to a point where it could have operated and provided prescription drug protection to those that required it.

They could have said, Mr. Speaker, rather than having every drug that every company manufactures in North America in the formulary plan, they could have said to the drug manufacturers: watch your prices; don't charge these high prices; cut back; be very, very cautious with regard to your pricing system because the system is getting very expensive. And if you don't, we'll be reviewing the matter and we'll be cutting back some of the drugs that are on the formulary plan.

They didn't do that, Mr. Speaker. They felt it was far more efficient to just cut back the drug plan to where we have now a deterrent fee for those that require prescription drugs for the benefit of their own health.

Mr. Speaker, this government of opposites went on record as saying, if you elect us, we will balance this budget. We will have a balanced budget, as the New Democratic Party government in the the previous 11 years. The previous 11 budget years had balanced budgets. As a matter of fact, the Premier even said, Mr. Speaker, that we could even — this is a Conservative Premier saying this — we could even mismanage this province and still balance the budget.

They've mismanaged it, Mr. Speaker. That's a matter of fact that is shared by everybody in this province that can think and walk and talk. And, Mr. Speaker, what it hasn't shown is that this government has mismanaged to the point that the budget is at such a very, very large amount — it is an operating budget of about \$3.8 billion — that it is very difficult for our province to come out of this with any particular suffering and cost to the taxpayer.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, with an operating budget of \$3.8 billion, it's gone from an operating surplus of 150 million to \$3.8 billion, and with a Crown corporation capital debt of \$8 billion, the people of this province have a total debt of \$12 billion. But 1982, when the Conservatives got elected, the total operating deficit . . . it was not a deficit; it was a surplus of \$150 million. The Crown corporation debt was about 2 to 2.5 billion. We had a Heritage Fund of about a billion dollars. We had a total debt of about one and a half to \$2 billion.

That has gone in seven years from \$2 billion, Mr. Speaker, to \$12 billion, in times when resources such as oil sold for the highest amount in the history of the pricing of oil in this world. And in spite of that, Mr. Speaker, this government has mismanaged the economy to the point where we now have a deficit so large, a burden so large on the taxpayers of this province, that we're on the verge of bankruptcy. And I could go on, Mr. Speaker, about some of the other examples of mismanaging the economy, but my colleagues have talked about those in great detail.

What I want to talk about now, Mr. Speaker, is the role in government in Saskatchewan, the role in governments . . . a role of government in Canada. Our role as a government, Mr. Speaker, when we become government, will be to manage the province, manage the programs, manage the resources for the benefit of those who live in this province, Mr. Speaker.

A government has to be sensitive to the needs of the people it represents. It has to be responsible and accountable to the people that have elected it and to those who live in this province. In this province, Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government has not been responsible and has not been accountable to the people of this province.

The government also, Mr. Speaker, has to have some accountability with regard to the fiscal management and to the creation of jobs in this province. In tough economic times, it's the responsibility of government, Mr. Speaker, to be involved in the economy and to create jobs in co-operation with the sectors in our economy, the business people, the co-operatives and the Crown corporations. It's, in tough economic times, the specific

responsibility of government to ensure working people and working families in this province that they are not terminally hurt by the lack of jobs.

It's also the role of government, Mr. Speaker, to participate in creating programs that provide a fair taxation rate. The government opposite has not done that this year, Mr. Speaker; they've not done that in any of the previous years of their administration. And our government, Mr. Speaker, would be looking at a fair taxation policy so that those who can afford to pay their fair share will indeed be paying their fair share.

As well, Mr. Speaker, governments should be a referee or an economic balance to the large multinational corporations that operate in this province and in this country.

And on those counts, Mr. Speaker, in the roles that I've outlined, the government opposite have not done their job very well. It's my contention, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier and the PC government in this province have fundamentally and structurally changed the face of Saskatchewan.

We used to be a province, Mr. Speaker, that when we had a problem facing us, we worked in a co-operative, unified fashion to solve that problem. And we had the leaders, Mr. Speaker, we had the initiators, we had the people who strived to do better, and we in effect did it ourselves. And that happened in the 1940s and the 1950s, in the 1960s, as well as the 1970s.

In the '40s and '50s we had insurance rates which were very high that were being charged by insurance companies operating outside this province. Mr. Speaker, the people of the province felt that we could do better, that we could charge a fairer rate to the people that needed and required insurance. We felt that we could create jobs by forming our own company. We felt that any jobs that were created would be controlled in the province of Saskatchewan, and that head office jobs would be a fundamental part of that service that the insurance company would deliver.

And as a result we created SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance). We created SGI as a result of an external force, Mr. Speaker, an external, international, economic force that was hurting the people of this province.

(1445)

And we felt, we don't have to be the lap-dogs of the large corporations as the Conservative Party always has been; we don't have to be the people that subsidized these foreign corporations at high rates when we can charge lower rates for as good, if not better, coverage by our own people, for our own people.

We did that with SGI, Mr. Speaker. We created a head office. Profits that were made over the course of the years were retained in this province, Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of everybody, not just for those corporations that operate out of the United States or eastern Canada.

In the 1970s, Mr. Speaker, we also undertook, as a result of international events, to do things on our own, and I could talk about the potash corporation. We had a great deal of resources that we looked at, Mr. Speaker. We worked in co-operation with business in the 1970s. And we developed some of those resources in co-operation, as well, through Crown corporations, so that the resources could be developed, that profits could be made, jobs could be created. And the ultimate winners, Mr. Speaker, were the people living in this province. And we did that with the potash corporation.

What is happening now, Mr. Speaker, is that in all of the previous experiences that we've had with international forces affecting our economy, we've responded to locally with our own people. But what's happening now, Mr. Speaker, is we've got a government which is changing all of that, structurally and fundamentally.

Rather than being reliant on each other in a co-operative sense, in a sense where we work together to achieve certain goals, the government opposite is trying to make the people of this province more reliant and totally reliant on foreign corporations and multinational corporations. And that is wrong, Mr. Speaker. In our view, it's very, very inappropriate for us to give up some qualities that we have, some skills that we have, and forfeit them to an international corporation because of ideology. It just doesn't make any sense. It doesn't even make any sense, Mr. Speaker, from the perspective of a Conservative. They're having a problem dealing with this issue themselves.

Rather than having people be reliant on their own abilities and the abilities of others in this province to build and expand our economy, people in the Conservative Party and particularly the government, Mr. Speaker, are trying to get the Saskatchewan electorate more reliant on these multinational corporations, but at the same time increasing taxes to record levels. We've got less government for higher taxes, less services and less programs, and we're paying higher taxes as taxpayers.

In the past, Mr. Speaker, we've had that unity; we've had that united front when we dealt with major problems that faced us. And there was a common purpose, Mr. Speaker, as well. We had that co-operative spirit to approach challenges and to achieve things like rural electrification, like medicare, social programs, and other agricultural initiatives.

But now there's a deep division. This government has purposely divided the people of this province. They've taken the rural population, and they've tried to pit the rural population against the urban population. They've implemented tax programs, Mr. Speaker, whereby the municipalities in the urban areas are receiving less of their fair share in terms of taxes. Yet the rural population in some instances are receiving a little more than their fair share when it comes to programs like capital projects for urban development and capital projects for rural development.

But the economic failure of the PC government, Mr. Speaker, cannot go unchallenged. The true measure of this failure is the toll of hardship imposed on

Saskatchewan families that I've talked about. Lost jobs and lost opportunities are the price Saskatchewan people have been forced to pay for the PC government's economic failures.

These failures and their impact can be virtually illustrated in several different ways, and I want to do that this afternoon.

For example, one of the basic tests of sound economic performance is the overall level of investment. But despite the PC government's talk of economic diversification, and despite its open-for-big-business policy, total real investments has dropped sharply. This significant drop in total investment, in constant dollars, shows that the PC policy of megabucks for megaprojects is failing, and failing dismally. And it's failing to sustain basic levels of capital investment.

That fundamental failure has forced the hardship of unemployment on the thousands of Saskatchewan families throughout the province. Since the PC government took office in 1982, the number of Saskatchewan people without jobs has increased sharply and remained at unacceptable high levels — an average of 37,000 people unemployed in 1988. And that's after 14,000 people left this province in a net migration loss, Mr. Speaker.

What does that figure mean, of 37,000 unemployed? It means that the number of Saskatchewan people without a job and actively seeking a job is equal to the total combined population — man, woman, and child — of Lloydminster and Melfort and Melville, Humboldt, Nipawin, Biggar, Canora, Kamsack, and Preeceville.

The lack of jobs and job opportunities has been especially hard on our young people as well. The best and the brightest of our new generation are leaving the province. We've paid for their education; we've invested in the future of our province by investing in our young people who we hope to take the initiative in building our economy over the next number of years. And that is gone because they're leaving the province, Mr. Speaker.

But since 1982, the number of jobs for Saskatchewan young people aged 15 to 24 has declined from 107,000, Mr. Speaker, to just 90,000 in 1988. These young people in rural communities, in the towns, and in our cities, cannot find jobs or opportunities for their future here in this province. They are being forced to move away, taking with them their hopes, their energy, and their ability.

In 1982 the 15 to 24 age group represented about 19 per cent of the population of the province. Today, rather than 19 per cent, that percentage has dropped to 16 per cent. The provincial government's own figures on interprovincial net migration clearly show the pattern since '82. Among that 15-to-24 age group, Saskatchewan now suffers net out-migration of more than 3,000 people per year, and that's young people. The same government figures also show that it is not only those in the 15-to-24 age group that are leaving, it's thousands and thousands of others.

We've heard my colleague stand up and talk about those

who have left this province to find jobs — about 14,000 people in 1988 alone, Mr. Speaker. We don't hear the PCs boast any more about bringing home the children. Saskatchewan families know that when the PC performance is judged by that test, it has failed dismally. It's again they're governing by opposites, Mr. Speaker.

The latest weekly figures from StatsCanada show that the average weekly earnings in Saskatchewan are the second lowest in the nation — only Prince Edward Island is worse.

The economic pressure is even more severe on the tens of thousands of working people, many of whom are our young people and women, whose jobs are at the minimum wage or tied to the minimum wage. Since 1982 their wages have fallen far behind the increases in the cost of living. Since the PC government took office, the Saskatchewan minimum wage has had the lowest increase in Canada. When this PC government took office, the Saskatchewan minimum wage was the highest in Canada. It's gone from the highest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the lowest, and today we are finding this a very big hardship on those earning the minimum wage.

An even more tragic consequence of the PC government's failed economic policies has been the substantial increase in the number of families forced on to social assistance. It's therefore no wonder that all across the province families and communities have become deeply concerned about food banks and child hunger and the poverty that is the harsh PC reality.

We sometimes hear the PCs defend their policies — not very often, Mr. Speaker, but on occasion. The rising number of unemployed, the rising number on welfare, the low wages — those are their policies, Mr. Speaker.

But by trying to argue that their policies are good for business, they're saying these things have a positive impact on business. Well, Mr. Speaker, I've talked to many, many business people, many that I was in business with in the past as well, and they tell me that business in this city and in this province is at its worst level in their memory in the last 20 years. They're struggling in downtown Regina, they're struggling in the suburbs of Regina with regard to retail sales, because they do not have an economy, in their view, that is able to support the sales that have been a custom in this province.

We've got, Mr. Speaker, a government that is not a friend of small business or family business. They may be a friend of the large multinationals and the large corporations, but they haven't done a very good job with the businesses in this province. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, there were over 450 bankruptcies in Saskatchewan last year, which is a new record.

But I've generally illustrated the nature and extent of the problems caused by the PC Government's failures. And I think that the government has got to realize that, for the Saskatchewan economy to perform well, we need to develop the mixed economy where all three key sectors — the private sector, the co-operative sector, and the public sector — work together.

Large projects, megaprojects, are not the answer. They in themselves create some employment, but they commit a large number of money to one region in the economy and one region in the province; and once they're done, they're done, Mr. Speaker. They don't generate the jobs that are necessary, considering the amount of money that's been spent on them.

The number of housing starts in Saskatchewan has declined substantially since the PC Government took office, and we talked about that on Friday afternoon, Mr. Speaker. We talked about how the housing construction business in this province had its worst year in 1988. The Conservative policies in regard to housing provided the housing industry with the lowest number of starts in the last 20 years in this province, Mr. Speaker, in 1988. And that has a very negative affect on the economy in this province because housing is a very labour intensive kind of economic activity.

On Saturday, Mr. Speaker, in the *Leader-Post*, they . . . we have right here a headline saying "Housing starts are down." Now in 1988, I remind you, was the worst year in 20 years for housing starts in this province.

The minister of housing, the member from Regina South, was in this House the other day talking about all the jobs that were created by his home program, all the wonderful, good news that's happening out there in the house construction business. And it's my contention, Mr. Speaker, that he has misled the people of this province if they happened to hear him say those things. Because in the *Leader-Post* on Saturday, March 18, and I quote here:

According to figures released by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation for the month of February, housing starts in Saskatchewan declined by 52.6 per cent to 74 units from 156 in 1988.

So 1988, Mr. Speaker, was the worst year for housing starts in this province, yet the first two months of '89 are worse by 50 per cent, 45 per cent, than last year. This is a direct result of the economic policies of the Conservative government. The total year-to-date starts in 1989 are 157 units, which is 45 per cent below last year's level of 283 units, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The government says, well you know, it's the international factor, it's the drought, it's slow population growth, low level of consumer confidence. They're saying, rising interest rates. And of course their argument is beaten down and totally blown away by the article which appears right beside this article in Saturday's paper, where it says: "Vancouver building soars." In one, in Saskatchewan housing starts are down, but in B.C., Vancouver building soars. And I'll quote from this article:

Residential construction is setting a sizzling pace in Vancouver. Over the first two months of the year starts are up and the value of permits issued has virtually doubled.

Virtually doubled. They've declined by 50 per cent in Saskatchewan and they've doubled in B.C., Mr. Deputy Speaker. Yet the government opposite, the Tories in this

province, blame the international economy. Well if they're blaming the international economy, how come in British Columbia housing starts are increased. And last year in B.C. housing starts were not the lowest in the 20-year history; they were in fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the highest that they've ever had.

Mr. Speaker, the small-business sector has demonstrated its ability to provide employment and to generate new jobs. From 1978 to 1986 the employment growth rate for firms of fewer than 20 employees was 70 per cent, compared to less than 25 per cent for all Saskatchewan firms. Or looked at another way, over that period those small firms with fewer than 20 employees created 42,600 new jobs compared to only 18,300 in all other firms — 42 thousand, six to 18 thousand, three — more than a hundred per cent better.

Local small business, in my view, Mr. Speaker, holds the key to the economic growth and prosperity in Saskatchewan. But the PC government's defence for its poor economic performance is the excuse that it has been . . . that the government has been the victim of international circumstances. And to that, I think it's a decent reply to say that Saskatchewan has always been affected by outside forces, but never before have we had a government that so totally abandoned any attempt to buttress the forces of international economy.

(1500)

But, Mr. Speaker, we have the government now saying that in order to manage change we have to sell off the assets of this province. The Premier talks about, Mr. Speaker, about the role of Crown corporations and that there should be no role of Crown corporations in our economy, that we have to privatize the assets of our Crown corporations.

Now the reasons for setting up some Crown corporations in the past are very clear. There are basically four or five reasons that Crown corporations have been set up in the past. They were set up originally to provide a service to the people of this province at the least possible cost, and I refer to the SGI example.

As well, it was set up to retain profits earned by these corporations to be used to subsidize the treasury so that programs and services that are delivered by the government for the people of this province are not being paid for totally by taxpayers' dollars but through other revenue sources.

As well, Crown corporations have been set up in the past to create jobs. In times of corporations not being involved in our economy and the economy being a little low in terms of job creation, Crown corporations have done a very important job with regard to creating jobs.

As well, Mr. Speaker, Crown corporations have been set up to establish head offices in this province. And they've established head offices in this province so that not only do profits stay within the province but jobs that are exported through multinational and national corporations out of province are remaining in this province, and we have some control over what the

corporations do with regard to our economy.

And as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have had an example of corporations being set up to develop and promote our resources in the economy.

In a February 3, 1988 Crown Corporations Committee meeting where we were reviewing the Crown Management Board, the Crown investments corporation, the Deputy Premier was asked the question about the government's philosophy and ideology with regard to privatization. And the member for Souris-Cannington, the Deputy Premier, in response to the question about what their intentions were with regard to Crown corporations in this province, he responded by saying on February 3 in the Crown Corporations Committee that the intention of the PC government is to sell off as many of the Crown corporations that Saskatchewan has, so that if and when the NDP ever get elected again, they will never, ever be able to retrieve them.

That is the policy of this government. That's the policy that the Deputy Premier of this province had indicated was going to happen with regard to Crown corporations.

And what we've seen, Mr. Speaker, very clearly, is following to that a statement of a government hell-bent to sell off assets, to privatize Crown corporations and government programs and services, not for the purpose of efficiency or the purpose of creating jobs or the purpose of getting rid of a company that has a lot of debt, but specifically for the purpose of fulfilling the objectives of their ideology. And that is a wrong-headed approach, a wrong-headed approach when it comes to dealing with the economy of any province or any country.

And, Mr. Speaker, they talked about in previous speeches, the Premier has been in this House and the Deputy Premier, making speeches about privatization, how important it is for the people of this province, how they're going to create jobs.

Well what is privatization? Privatization basically is selling off the assets of the people of this province at discount prices to the friends of the government. That's what privatization has meant for Saskatchewan. It's also meant that when privatization of a corporation has been undertaken, or a program, it means increased costs to taxpayers; it has meant increased taxes to taxpayers; it has meant decreased services to taxpayers; fewer number of jobs, and of course a loss of control, the loss of the ability to control, in some small way, the effects of the downturns in our economy.

And it's not so bad, I suppose, Mr. Speaker, if you have a corporation that's losing and hemorrhaging all kinds of money, to sell them off so we don't burden the taxpayers if it's not creating an economic objective. But we sell the money-makers. That's been the problem with this government.

And it's an example, Mr. Speaker, of if you're in business and you have some short-term debt that arises, you sell off part of your business, which generates revenue for your business, to pay this debt down. You sell off some more of your business to pay down some more debt, rather than

over a long-term mortgage and paid with the profits. So after it's all done, you've got no business left. Now that wouldn't . . . I mean that . . . from a business point of view, it's a very dangerous thing to do.

If a business man's in trouble, what they try and do financially is they try and look at the assets they have, to sell off some of their assets to get them out of trouble. What this government has done is they've sold a number of Crown corporations and privatized a number of services. Has the deficit gone down? It's the fastest-growing deficit in all of North America. Has the Crown corporation debt decreased? No, it hasn't. It's gone from \$2 billion to \$12 billion in seven years.

So under the guise of privatization, to get Crown corporations out of the economic sector and to return them to their multinational friends, they are saying, we're going to try and reduce the debt. But where's the money gone; has the debt been reduced? Not at all. It's increased; taxes have gone up. All of the John Galbraith economic theories of dealing with the government in an economy have been proven wrong by this government, in spades. When you have a loss of tax revenue, you either cut services or you increase taxes. This government does both, and it doesn't make any sense and the debt keeps getting larger.

We've looked at SaskCOMP, Mr. Speaker, as an example. SaskCOMP paid \$16 million into the treasury of our province over the last five years of its operation. We've sold that off. There's been no tabling of documents in regard to where the money's coming from, or how much, or where it's going. The debt continues to increase and we've lost that revenue to our treasury, Mr. Speaker. And where's it going to have to come from? It's going to have to come from the taxpayers of this province.

The Poplar River coal mine was sold to Manalta Coal. A \$129 million asset was sold for \$102 million with the loans guaranteed by the government. Good deal for business. SaskPower's natural gas resources were sold to Saskoil. SaskPower's natural gas reserves were valued at \$934 million, almost \$1 billion, and they were sold to Saskoil for \$325 million — sold at a discount price to a privatized corporation of Saskoil.

Now that may be a good deal for Saskoil; it may even be a good deal for SaskPower, but where is the money to reduce the debt? SaskPower issued an annual report just last week, and it shows their long-term debt has increased to a dangerous level. Where is the revenue from the gas reserves that they've sold?

And the interesting point about these gas reserves, I've been speaking with some oil companies and some natural gas companies in this province and operating outside the province, and they're telling me, privately, that Saskoil got a heck of a deal. They paid one-third the value, the market value of these natural gas assets, and they're mumbling and grumbling because they wanted to have a crack at putting a competitive tender in for these reserves.

But the government, who has failed to recognize good government, did not allow these reserves to go to public

tender. If they were so interested in selling them, why didn't they put them up to public tender, and instead of getting 325 million in some kind of shares and stocks and a little bit of cash, why didn't they put them up for tender and get maybe \$500 million cash which would have had a true dent in the debt of SaskPower? They didn't do that. They're incompetent. They haven't done that. They mismanaged, and they've bungled even this deal, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We talked about Sask Minerals and how this particular corporation which mines sodium sulphate and had some peat moss operations in the province, sold for less than \$16 million. Over the course of the last six years, as a Crown agency, it provided not 16 million to the treasury of this province, Mr. Speaker, but a total of \$23 million. We've sold this asset for 16 million. Over six years it provided a revenue to our province of \$23 million, and over 40 years there was a total revenue of \$47 million. Where is the cash? Where is the cash for this deal? They have not tabled the documents. We don't know if there's cash or whether there's some other things going on.

Saskoil was privatized in 1986 — they call it privatized. They sold 40 per cent of the value of the company on the stock-market through preferred shares and shares. The Conservatives privatized this company, and I want to talk about that for a minute, but they privatized this company which earned over the last three years, prior to being privatized, \$115 million net profit — \$115 million profit by Saskoil from 1983 to 1986. And every year Saskoil committed a significant dividend to the treasury of this province to subsidize the tax expenditures of the Government of Saskatchewan.

But since it's been privatized, in times when the price of oil were at the highest in the history of the oil business in North America and in the world, they have not paid one penny of dividend to the majority shareholders of this corporation, the people of Saskatchewan.

The people of Saskatchewan own 40 per cent of this corporation right now, yet they have six of the 10 board directors on the board, and they've got, as a matter of fact, five directors, as an amendment to the Saskoil privatization Bill, out of the 10 that sit on the board.

So in effect, we have a major say on this board of directors. The problem we've got, Mr. Speaker, is that although the Premier appoints these directors to the board, they haven't worked in the best interests, in my view, of the people of Saskatchewan, their major shareholder. They have not paid one penny of dividends to the people of this province, yet they've paid \$13.5 million in dividends to shareholders who, in the majority, the 75 per cent of the shareholders that receive the dividends, live outside this province, and most of them in Ontario.

So here we see a classic example of privatization gone crazy. Saskoil was privatized in '86. Twenty five per cent of the labour force in Saskoil were sold off; we lost jobs. The dividends that were paid were paid not to Saskatchewan residents or Saskatchewan treasury to help assist in delivery of programs, they were paid to people out of the province. Instead of spending money in

exploring in the province, they hired a number of people in Alberta and purchased a company worth \$66 million, Mr. Speaker. This is another example of the crazy, foolhardy privatization policies of the Premier opposite and his government.

And on top of that we've seen, Mr. Speaker, a real spectacle, a real prime example of patronage and mismanagement and extravagance and waste in a government-run Crown corporation or privatized corporation.

And I refer to Saskoil. Saskoil recently put forward a proposal call or a tender call for new office space. In the proposal call they wanted to have built in here, first-class leased office space. They wanted to have a banked indoor track. They wanted to have a sauna built for 10. They wanted to have a whirlpool built for 10. They even wanted to have racquet-ball courts with glassed walls and spectator seating. You know, this is the wonderful corporation that the member from Swift Current is involved with. She has approved this kind of an extravagant, wasteful project.

Yet Saskoil has office space, prime office space in downtown Regina. But what they want to do is they want to, in the worst patronage way, help their own people. And what they're doing, Mr. Speaker, is very simply, using the revenues of Saskoil to sign a long-term, 10-year lease to purchase new office . . . or lease new office space, not purchase it. And they're not prepared to table the documents or the numbers of dollars it's going to cost them.

We've seen the Roberts group come forward with a proposal that Saskoil has bought. They're going to build this large office tower on the corner of Broad and Victoria. Saskoil has guaranteed a 10-year lease — I think it's 10 years; they won't tell us specifically — but about a 10-year lease to cover off their office space to the tune of 60 per cent of this building.

When you look at the numbers, it's my view, Mr. Speaker, that these numbers will reflect the worst kind of patronage that you can possibly have in government or business. It's one thing, Mr. Speaker, it's one thing to hire a former MLA who was in the service of the public; it's one thing to hire a friend of the Conservative Party if they have certain qualifications. And even if they don't, I mean, that's one form of patronage which is unacceptable.

It's another thing, Mr. Speaker, when they use the taxpayers' dollars to lease a building at a high rate so that when the lease is over, after 10 years, the amount of money that's been spent by Saskoil has paid for the building, cash, and they've got no building to call an asset.

(1515)

They spend . . . they commit funds for 10 years to lease all of this office space, five or six floors of an office tower, and the amount of lease they're paying pays the total cost of construction of the building. When the lease expires, they still have to have office space, but they've got no building. The building's paid for, and the people in the

Roberts group are the same people that have been involved in the Tory party. One of the them is a former campaign manager, another has a daughter who is an executive assistant to the former minister responsible for SGI.

That's the worst kind of patronage because you've got taxpayers' dollars that are secretly being paid out — because they won't tell us how much or for how long — to a company that's a Conservative, clearly a Conservative company, that is building a building which they will own as an asset when it's over, but Saskoil and the taxpayers will have no involvement in it financially. That's the worst form of patronage.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it's really an incredible government that we have here, that on one hand talks about responsibility and balancing budget and being a good government and managing the economy, where on the other hand they've shown through their actions that they can't manage the economy. They've mismanaged the government. They have said one thing on so many occasions now we can't keep track of, and they've done the opposite. They've shown very clearly that patronage and extravagance and waste and mismanagement are the calling cards of the Conservative government.

And it seems to me that the people of this province don't believe that that's the way we should be dealing with our taxpayers' dollars. It's a total waste of money. It's a terrible way to go about dealing with problems that exist in our economy. Rather than work with business and create jobs, rather than deal with improving services and programs for the people of this province, they have agreed to waste our money, to give it away, and to ignore their obligation as a very important partner in the economy to help create jobs.

And with regard to privatization, Mr. Speaker, it's my view that this is a crazy program. The corporations they've sold off, they have refused to table documents on. The corporations they've sold off, they have sold off winners to this . . . in many instances to the people of this province. And I think that what they're trying to do is pull the wool over people's eyes in this province. They're trying to say privatization is a good thing; public participation is really good. Everybody wants to get involved. Privatization's going to be a terrific job creation project.

An Hon. Member: — Another word for corruption is what it is. Fill the pockets of the Tories is what it's called.

Mr. Solomon: — My colleague from Regina Elphinstone says it's another word for corruption. And in my view I think he's dead on. Saskatchewan Government Printing — I want to take one more corporation. Saskatchewan Government Printing was a Crown corporation which was a competitive corporation. There are other printing companies in the province. And this government last fall said they were going to privatize Sask Government Printing.

And they said that privatization is such a terrific, well-liked theory, and such a terrific, well-liked program, this will be over-subscribed; the employees will buy it off

the government, and everybody will be happy. The government will be happy because they've completed their ideology of doing away with a corporation, and the workers will be happy because they own a piece of the company.

Well, there were 22 employees left by the time the government spent six and one-half to seven years operating Sask Government Printing. And last fall, out of the 22 employees, one of them, the comptroller, bought 51 per cent of the corporation. And, Mr. Speaker, about 10 of the other 21 employees bought some shares in the corporation. So in effect, 11 of the 22 employees bought shares in this corporation. One of them bought controlling interest, 51 per cent. And you know, if you're a business person, if you own 51 per cent of a company you have total control over what goes on.

But some of the other employees, some of the other employees, the others that didn't buy the shares last fall, were not buying the shares because they wanted some questions answered by the government. The government wouldn't give them the answers to these questions, so they waited and they waited and they waited.

Finally, coming late February we have Otto Cutts, the deputy minister responsible for government printing walks in the door and says to the 11 people who haven't bought shares, don't worry; I'll answer any questions that you have, but I want you to consider the following proposal. We will buy for you 2,000 shares at \$1 a share, and will give each of you 11 that haven't bought shares, these 2,000 shares on condition you sign this document on Tuesday. This was a Thursday he was in the office. It's a real gift; it's called gifting, gifting of shares. So the government couldn't sell or privatize this printing company to the employees, because they didn't want to answer any questions. They were dealing, in my view, very secretly with the employees.

Yet when it came down to making a deal they want to strike by March 1, they tell the employees, half of whom didn't buy shares, here are \$2,000 in shares. Here are 2,000 \$1 shares. The employees took advantage of the deal. And one of the humorous sides to this is, one of the employees that started about two or three weeks earlier, I believe it was, or two or three months earlier, took his 2,000 shares and a week later quit — took his \$2,000 and he made a quick termination of \$2,000 salary. This is a laughable kind of operation this government's running.

So they're telling the public one thing, that the government printing company is fully subscribed and fully sold off to its employees, but they don't tell the real story about how half of the employees had to be given shares worth \$2,000 each in order for the deal to be completed. That's part of the privatization program of this government — at any costs, for any reasons whatsoever, let's get rid of all these corporations.

But I would like to now, Mr. Speaker, just say that I have really talked about the issues that I felt are important with regard to the Speech from the Throne, and I want to say that this Speech from the Throne is a vacuous document, it has contributed nothing to the problems that this government has created to solving those problems, and in

my view it's a Speech from the Throne that I personally cannot support.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take this opportunity to say a few words about the Speech from the Throne, and I know that there will be several speakers on both sides of the House will finish the debate probably by this evening.

What I wanted to do was talk directly to the people of Saskatchewan through this Assembly and to the House about the kinds of things that they have been telling me since the late 1970s and certainly in '82 and again in '86.

I believe that democracy is a very, very powerful mechanism and one that we certainly respect in this province and in this legislature. And the interesting thing about it is that if you're not listening closely, Mr. Speaker, to the people in any democracy, then they certainly have the complete power to put the opposition in the place of government or anybody else in government. And I think that we've all learned, Mr. Speaker, to listen carefully to the people of Saskatchewan.

And I remember, in a very non-partisan sense, people telling me that they thought Saskatchewan could build more. They thought we could create new kinds of industries. They thought that we could protect people against certain kinds of things like international interest rates or drought. They thought that governments could work hand in hand with Crown corporations and with farmers, with the private sector, with co-ops, with all combinations of the institutions we have in Saskatchewan to build a better life and more opportunities for them and their communities and their children.

Well I found nobody really disagreeing with that, Mr. Speaker, when I travelled across Saskatchewan, and I'm sure members on both sides of the House have travelled. Everybody says, let's build the community, let's build processing and manufacturing, let's diversify. Why can't we do those kinds of things that will help us build as well as any other nation or any other province any place in the world. And they'd make recommendations. And you see some of those recommendations carried on in this Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker.

They said, we want access to energy in Saskatchewan. And in 1982 and again in '86, they said, could you please help get energy into our homes? and as a result we had a rural gas distribution system which cost a lot of money, Mr. Speaker. But we are very proud of that, because Saskatchewan people said, if we have natural gas in the ground, why don't we give it to the people? Why don't we deliver natural gas to their homes and their towns and their villages and their cities?

That's government expenditure. That's the government involved in a major way, significant way, providing service to the people of Saskatchewan based on a resource that we have in the ground. And it cuts the cost of living in small business, in homes, schools, everywhere, Mr. Speaker, because natural gas is one of

the lowest cost, cleanest forms of energy we have, not only in Saskatchewan but indeed in North America. Now that's 350 to \$400 million provided to the Saskatchewan people by the Government of Saskatchewan to make sure that we are cost competitive.

Now the same applies with the technology that we have to allow our people to communicate — individual line service. People across Saskatchewan from Prince Albert to Swift Current to Estevan to Yorkton, North Battleford, would say, can I have individual line service so I have access to complete communication world wide? And if I want to tap into new computer technology, and I want one on my farm, or I want to get access to fibre optics, or I want to be part of mainstream Saskatchewan and Canada, North America, can I have individual line service? And we said, of course, that makes eminent sense because it keeps them competitive, keeps them aware. Children and adults can get access to education through distance education, through computers, through programs. Nobody disagrees, Mr. Speaker.

Now that cost money. And if you look at bearing power lines, providing individual line service to communities, and natural gas to homes, towns and villages, and I think both sides of the House agree. And from what I've seen, it's been endorsed. That's over a billion dollars of brand-new government expenditures — new government — to help facilitate industry, to help educate, to make it safer, to make sure that we have diversification and processing and manufacturing.

We make our own cable here now for the power corporation; we make plastic pipe; we encourage Ipsco to continue to work — all those things make eminent sense. People ask for that, Mr. Speaker, and that's one of the most important things that we can do, as a government and as a Legislative Assembly, to provide those kinds of ideas to people and for people when they ask their legislative members to do it.

The same applies to water pipelines, to irrigation, to protecting them against some of the international vagaries, particularly of markets and of interest rates. And I suppose that's one of the things that I will always remember about my activity in politics in Saskatchewan, is the real antagonism and frustration and, in some cases, fear Saskatchewan people associate with international interest rates. They don't like it, and you can't blame them. You get a mortgage at a certain per cent, 8 per cent, and then it goes to 21 per cent and you're stuck. And you try to pay off the farm; you try to run a business, and it's this international fluctuations. And they don't like it; it frightens them.

Interest and the interest rate to Saskatchewan people is the cost of capital. It is the cost of building. And if you have a small population and you want to build, there's only two ways to do it: you either have to borrow the money from somebody, or you have to encourage your local people to invest and do it. And what they've said to me time and time again, and it goes right back to the co-op movement, and it goes back to the very reason that we've had government involved for a hundred years, particularly where there's a small population in your young country, is to take on those international

fluctuations and allow people to cope with them and build and be independent — independent.

And that's what I admire and that's what I respect about the kinds of things that we see in health and education and rural gas and in diversification in the Speech from the Throne — our independence, so that we can stand on our own two feet and say, I don't care what those interest rates are internationally; for home owners in Saskatchewan, it's nine and three-quarters on the first \$50,000. And that's the way it is, period.

And we are there to stand in front of the international banks and international anybody, or the federal government for that matter, and say, for Saskatchewan people, and for those that are particularly low income, and those that might be poor, and those that might need money for this, and those that might need money for that, they're at least not facing 20 per cent interest rates.

And for economic development and for natural gas programs and for building communities and for helping the rinks and allowing development to take place in all kinds of communities, that's what they tell you, Mr. Speaker. They say: be there to protect the families; be there to build the infrastructure, and work with everybody to get it done.

Now they say, work with with Crown corporations. They say, work with the public sector to spend this money on education, rural gas, individual line service, hospitals, nursing homes. They say, spend it; do it. Co-operate with the co-operators; co-operate with the private sector; co-operate with the national governments and neighbours on either side and be prepared to do good business world-wide.

(1530)

And we've been known to do that. I just returned from China, Mr. Speaker, and I can tell you, they still remember Alvin Hamilton being there in 1958. He was the first minister in the free world to go into China and say: we'll do business with you; we'll sell you our wheat; we'll be there; your families are the same as our families. And we respect that. And you can go back there any day of the week right now with Alvin Hamilton, or his name, and they just open their arms. They respect Canadians; they respect Saskatchewan people.

Well, it's a feeling that is not confined just to being local that you get along with your neighbour from town to town, and it's not just the neighbouring province and the neighbouring community. It is a feeling that is extended by Saskatchewan and, I think, Canadians world-wide.

We trade with the Soviet Union, with South America, with China, with India, and we provide that same sort of integrity. Here's what you can get if you deal with Saskatchewan people. Here's the kind of wheat, kind of potash, the kind of compassion you have. Here's what we do in irrigation. Here's what we do in rural gas. Here's the best dry land farming equipment. We helped them with embryo transplants in the dairy business. We do all of that, and it makes Saskatchewan people well-recognized nationally and internationally.

And it comes right back to their basic fundamental beliefs — help people help themselves. Stand tall and be independent; not arrogant, but independent. Design the structures and the infrastructures to build your community so that in fact young people have opportunities. And don't be afraid to be out there in the rest of the world to show them that you've got the kind of technology or the kind of information that would help people build and grow and expand.

In other words, have your face in the windows of the world, so that indeed, like Alvin Hamilton did, this is the best wheat in the world. And the Chinese, believe me, believe that. There is no better quality and no better continuity of supply than buying Saskatchewan wheat in Beijing. And we're proud of that, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to continue that.

And that's the kind of tradition that you see in the Speech from the Throne. That's the kind of life, that's the kind of integrity, that's the kind of work that has built Saskatchewan's reputation world-wide.

Now it's not just confined to the resources and it's not confined to rural and it's not confined just to towns and villages; it's in every walk of life. And we see it, frankly, in health care.

I got a call this morning, for example, and I know the Minister of Health is working on this, but Saskatchewan is invited and has been invited to a conference in California on the new technology in health care. And they're saying, how did you put this into place? And I'm talking about the new plastic health card. And we designed it in co-operation with Co-Operators Data Services. And I'm very proud of that, Mr. Speaker. And I was in Naicam the other night, talking about it. And the people from the upgrader in Regina, Mr. Harold Empey and others, were there describing the upgrader and all the good things that it is doing, and I'm very proud of that, because it makes us independent. But what I'm very proud of here is Saskatchewan people taking the lead in the world on health care technology.

And we've been known for our compassion in health care, and we've been known as the home of medicare, and we've been known for providing services and technology and an attitude about health that is on time, is out front, and is leading.

And here we have not only interest from the Pacific Rim — and I can tell you that it's there — but other provinces, and now the United States and several states interested in our technology, a plastic, computer-based health card that will provide information that helps the medical profession, that helps consumers, that helps pharmacists. And people like it.

It is on the frontier, and it takes a little bit of courage. And it's done in co-operation with the government, the co-operative sector, the private sector — we had WESTBRIDGE, we had a firm from Toronto and one from Alberta. The lead agency was Co-op Data Services in Saskatchewan. And are they proud of it? Of course. They're excited about it, and I'm excited about it.

The Government of Saskatchewan, a Conservative government, working with the co-op in leading technology, world-wide. And I say that for a reason, because I am proud of the upgrader, the largest single project in the history of Saskatchewan right here in this capital city, so we can be independent. We don't have to use Alberta oil to make our gasoline and diesel fuel. For the first time we stand on our own feet and we use Saskatchewan heavy crude to make our gasoline and our diesel fuel and, if we want, our petrochemicals. Now isn't that a good idea?

I tell you, you go across Saskatchewan and you ask co-op members, you ask people who have voted anything from CCF to Liberal to NDP to Social Credit to you name it, they'd say, you bet, let's build it. And it's done here in complete co-operation with the co-op sector, with the private sector. And they're working together like this.

So we've got oil producers and gas producers working with the refinery; we've got co-op members all over the province working together. We're funding a whole bunch of it, and we co-operated, and co-op did the federal government into it. This is the biggest co-op thing that ever happened.

What am I saying, Mr. Speaker? It's Saskatchewan. And you take the public sector, and you put it to work in natural gas, and you put it together in telephones, and you put it into irrigation, and you put it together in roads and highways and health care — it's massive public expenditure.

And you take that alongside the co-op sector and you build the biggest upgrader, the first in Canada — not only the biggest but the first — and the largest project in the history of this province right here, in co-operation with the government, the private sector and the Co-operators.

And in health care, I mention it again, the best technology you're going to find world-wide, and only the beginning — a little magnetic tape on it — all the things you can do that are possible with that card, when you look at the technology we have now for all forms of health care, and you're just limited only by your imagination. And Co-operative Data Services of Regina, Saskatchewan, was the lead agency, and I'm proud of that. And we're going to continue to build with it.

Now I make that point, Mr. Speaker, so that the sense of balance stays in Saskatchewan. We work with the private sector, we work with the Co-operators, we work with government, we work with other governments, we work with communist governments, we work with free enterprise governments, we work with people who speak 100 languages — all the time. That's the balance that is important for Saskatchewan people. It isn't all government — it isn't all private, it isn't all co-op, it isn't all small, it isn't all large, it isn't all rural, it isn't all urban — it's all of that working together, you know, for the first time. And I mean this in as positive a sense as I can.

We now make our own paper. We didn't use to do that in Saskatchewan. And if you ask people, and if they just put their politics in their hip-pocket for a minute, and you say,

is it a good idea for Saskatchewan to make its own paper? they'll say, right on! We can provide it to our schools, to the legislature, to offices. And we now export paper all over North America. That's a good thing. We did that with the private sector, and they didn't take the fence posts and the trees and take them down to New York or some place and make the paper there and have the jobs go down there with the trucks. They said, we'll make it here.

It's like an upgrader. You don't want the oil to go down the line and all the jobs go down the pipeline. You want to stop here, Mr. Speaker, and you want to make the jobs here. So we make the gasoline and the diesel fuel, and we are independent. And the same applies to paper.

Well it's a combination of things that does that, Mr. Speaker. It is that common sense, that non-partisan feeling across Saskatchewan that says people in this province want to build. They'll do it with the wheat pool, and they'll do with the United Grain Growers, and they'll do with the co-op, and they'll do it with the private sector, and they'll do it with McDonald's, and they'll do it with John Deere. What is it? They don't much care about the politics. And I think, frankly, they probably get tired of hearing about it.

What they want to see is good, solid ideas from men and women, from both sides of this legislature, building for the future, not saying, is it this union that's going to control it, or is it this private sector that's going to do it, or it's all got to be the co-op, or it's all got . . . They know it's not that way. They're sophisticated enough to know that. They just want us to get on with it, not to be fighting about it, but to get on with it.

They want some interest rate protection; everybody agrees with that. They want the co-operative sector involved; we agree with that. Everybody does. You want to see the private sector work with the co-op sector; well, people in the opposition and on this side of the House work in the private sector — run their own farms, their own businesses, their own law firms. We do that all the time.

What they want to see is us take the lead and be innovative, be aggressive and get out there. Now we can understand that everybody wants to be king, and some people want to be premier, and that'll go on for the next hundred years, hopefully, in a democracy in Saskatchewan, and that's a good battle.

Now what I want to say that's important about this Speech from the Throne, and I'm not going to set aside much of the important things that are in there, is that much of what we can do in health care, which is a huge amount of money now — 1.2 to 3 billion — and it is a lot on a per capita basis; most people would agree with that. And new hospitals and technology and rehabilitation, like Wascana, and drug rehabilitation for young people, and all those things — much of what we can do, there and in education, which is about three-quarters of a billion dollars, and social services, and the things that we want to build with government money, much of it can be financed with the kinds of things that we're doing to replace international money and using Saskatchewan money. And again I don't think it's partisan at all.

What am I talking about? I'm talking about taking Saskatchewan people's savings — their money, their savings, their payrolls — and investing it in Saskatchewan and backing out of those international interest rates. That's what I'm talking about. There are only two ways we can build here. You can borrow the money from somebody else, or you can use your own money and you can build here and be more independent. Well I'm all for being independent economically, as strongly as we can.

What's that mean? That means you build your upgraders, and you build your meat packing plants, and you build your own fertilizer, and you build your paper, but you can't do it alone. That's the kicker. You can't do it alone, and Saskatchewan people have figured that out 50 years ago. You've got to do it together, because if you try to go alone, even if government tries to go alone, you got to borrow the money. Because if you wanted to build a new power project or build a new this, you'd have to go into the international markets, and they're subject to those international interest rates, and you pay interest.

That's why, Mr. Speaker, and I say to the people of Saskatchewan . . . That's why we said, how about if we get the money with you participating and the interest goes back to you. You be a major shareholder and then we don't have to look at those international interest rates. We can be more independent; we can have the corporations more independent. A good thing made even better. A strong power corporation and a strong telephone company that is based on Saskatchewan investment and Saskatchewan people, not on international borrowings.

Now what does that mean? That means when we do a \$300 million power project, rather than borrow the money from New York and pay 10 per cent on 300 million, which is 30 million a year going out of the country, we don't do that any more. We go to the people of Saskatchewan and say, here's a \$300 million Power bond. Would you participate at 10 per cent? And, by George, they're there in spades. Sell it right out.

And then every year that 10 per cent on that 300 million goes right back to Nipawin, Carievale, St. Walburg, Kindersley, Midale, Swift Current — to the people. And they've all got involved. And I haven't heard a word against it. And all members of the House know if you can finance it locally it makes sense. Then the interest goes back, so there's 30 million a year just in that project alone that went back to the people of Saskatchewan so they can reinvest and they can build, as opposed to going to a banker.

Now who would you rather borrow from? Your dad? A neighbour? Or an international banker? Think about that. Everybody would recommend you borrow locally or you get a joint venture partner and you do it locally. Well that's one project.

When we do rural gas to people and they want access to energy, we can either go to the international market and borrow money to do it, or we can sell and provide bonds — SaskEnergy bonds or SaskPower bonds. And we've done I don't know how many hundreds of millions of dollars in SaskPower bonds. And that helps finance that

whole rural gas distribution system. And every community likes it and we're less dependent on those international interest rates and somebody else calling the tune.

Now if we can do that, if we can do that — and I think everybody agrees here — if we can do that to allow people to participate in Crown corporations so that they have a share in government, they know they're strengthening the Crown corporation; they know by reducing that interest rate and that debt that you can have lower rates for people.

And clearly that's the case when you look at the recent TeleBonds. Over 30,000 people bought over \$105 million in the first telephone bond issue we ever had. Why? Because, they said, it's good for Saskatchewan. It's good for the company. We've got individual line services that we've got to finance all over the place, and I can help keep my own rates down because I'm investing in a Crown corporation that is here, head office, and it's growing and it's stronger; and there's less debt and less fluctuations that I have to face in those international interest rates. That's why we've sold almost a billion dollars in bonds.

(1545)

Now I think, with the greatest degree of respect, that wasn't going on before '82 and '86, and it's just getting people to work together because they love to do it if you give them the instrument, the financial instrument, and that's all the co-op was when you think about it. They designed an instrument so everybody could get involved. I want my share, my share, my share, my share. I want a crack at this; I want to vote on it. Very popular in Saskatchewan.

What is public participation? I want to share in the action. I'm going to reduce my bills, I'm going to take out those international banks and interest rates, and I'm going to build here, and all that investment comes right here. And what do we see? The biggest co-op project in the history of this country, right here. And we see the biggest and newest technology in co-ops in health care, right here, and we have people that have shared in it all across the province. We see public participation in bonds that are setting records in the entire nation, if not North America.

And, Mr. Speaker, and it's no different than having people get involved. It's independent; it's wise. And look at the head offices. We have combined a great big uranium company, Eldorado Nuclear, with a great Crown corporation, Saskatchewan Mining and Development Corporation. We've put the two of them together, which is the largest mining, processing and marketing uranium company in the free world, right in Saskatoon. And the legislation's passed this House. We got it here; it's going to be here, and it has to stay here. And we can have Canadians and, for all I know, people from Germany and France invest in that corporation to make it strong here.

Now, Mister, why not? Why not? It's here. It's expanded. Head office is coming here. They're bringing the processing here, their market intelligence. We market in the United States. The President of France was just here a

year or so ago and he's going to 70 per cent nuclear energy, and he's getting it from Saskatchewan, proud as punch of his investment.

How do Saskatchewan people feel about Germans? French? Chinese? Americans? Spanish? South Americans? We all settled this place. We're young. We're young at heart. We've got the whole world there as our oyster if we want to go get it, if we don't get narrow-minded and say, we won't trade with anybody, or we won't be in China, or we won't be in Europe, or we won't have the President of France here, or we won't have the Chairman of the People's Congress in the Republic of China, Wan Li — will be here for a state dinner and get a Ph.D., honorary degree from the University of Regina. Why? Because that's what Saskatchewan is all about. That's what we are. That's what built us. That's why we're excited to be involved in the world.

And we invite people to come to Saskatchewan. We have a little over a million people. Wouldn't we like to have more people? Great opportunity, great land, blessed with 50 million acres of farm land, and with all five energies, and forest and minerals and water, smack dab in the middle of North America. And we're talking about shutting them out? No way. That's not the Saskatchewan way. It's not our heritage.

When I look at public participation, and again in the best non-partisan sense that I can, it's asking people if they want to be part of the action and if they want to build major world-class companies right here and be more independent. We make our own paper. We use our gas. We use our oil. We make our own meat. We make our own fertilizer. And by George, we're going to make our own fertilizer, right here in the province of Saskatchewan, and it's overdue. I mean, the biggest market in the world — North America, and we don't make it, but we're going to. And that just makes eminent sense.

And then we have the economies on scale. And guess where they come for paper? And guess where they come for the meat and for the nitrogen and for the potash and for the pulp? Where do they come? And the fibre optics and the technology for rural gas, where do they come? They come here. They're not going to Alberta, they're not going to Manitoba, and they're not going to Toronto. They're coming here for that.

We are going to take what we've been blessed with, and we're going to get Saskatchewan people involved and roll up their sleeves as deep as they want to go. It will go back to the co-op movement, it will go back to my grandparents that homesteaded here, it'll go back to anybody that ever believed in building — building, diversifying, growing, manufacturing, and providing opportunities for people all over this province.

And we can be so proud of that. And all of that can be used to build the finest health care, the finest education, the finest social services, and all those things that we want and people on both sides of this House would like to have.

Well, the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, and the subsequent budget that you're going to hear, lays that out:

a vision for top-notch, health care technology, the best nursing homes, the best specialization in health care that you can find; agricultural programs that are designed to get people to diversify and help them build in their communities; utilities that will be alive and part of the community to help you build a very major part of the community; and long-run, low utility rates and natural gas and individual line service and sophisticated irrigation. That can be financed if everybody gets involved in government, with government — the private sector, the co-op sector, small business, big business, municipal governments, all of us.

And that isn't partisan, Mr. Speaker. That Speech from the Throne that you heard delivered was not partisan. That was a speech that said that we can build and we're proud of it. Everybody in this House makes mistakes from time to time, but it should be mistakes of commission, not omission.

We plan to build, we plan to create, and we plan to co-operate, and we plan to have Saskatchewan people involved as much as possible. So I'm going to support the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker.

I believe in the kinds of things that we can do in this province. I believe that people are not really partisan. I believe that they want to see us give them an opportunity and help them move forward. And they want to see it in health, education, the environment, agriculture, and certainly in public participation.

You know as well as I do, Mr. Speaker, and I think it's fair, both sides of the House in this legislature have supported public participation and now support it publicly. And the bonds, and indeed the shares . . . and the only criticism I ever heard of anybody offering shares is that, well, you would offer too many to offshore. And that's the only one I've heard — not to Saskatchewan people, not to Canadians. They like the head office here and let's offer it here.

Well obviously, you limit the offshore, Mr. Speaker, and we've seen that in corporation after corporation in public share offerings all the time. If that's it, then I believe we have a consensus. We have a building mechanism that has the Co-operators, that has government, that has private sector, small and large, rural and urban, across this province, and I'm optimistic about the 1990s and the 21st century for Saskatchewan.

I believe this is one of the finest places to live. It's one of the greatest places to be in the history of man. We have right now the opportunity to be as good as anybody in the North American continent when we look the 1990s and the 21st century, Mr. Speaker. So I congratulate those that have worked hard to put the emphasis on health and education, agriculture and the environment, and particularly public participation. And, Mr. Speaker, I will whole-heartedly be working with the people of Saskatchewan to build this province with the Speech from the Throne.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome

the opportunity to join in this debate, on this throne speech debate. I, in particular, welcome the opportunity to speak after the Premier who has just delivered what only can be described as a speech in this House that is about as old and barren as that throne speech which he never hardly addressed in the speech that he just delivered in this legislature this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, this has been a display of a Premier and a government that has run out of steam, and it's time for a change. And nothing could emphasize that more than the kind of remarks we just heard here today. One would have expected a great deal more. So I welcome the opportunity to speak here.

I want to say first of all, as other members have said, a word of congratulation to the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg. He's a newly elected member and I wish him well.

I welcome the opportunity to speak in this Legislative Assembly on behalf of the constituents of Regina North East who elected me to represent them. I want to express to them my appreciation for all of the advice and suggestions which they have given me over the months in the past about the issues that are important to them and suggesting areas that need attention by their government. And I know how disappointed they're going to be when they found that the Premier, in speaking in this throne speech debate, was not able to address one single one of them — just as disappointed as they have been about this throne speech.

Now the Premier spoke glowingly about democracy. That is a difficult thing for him to talk about, but he spoke glowingly about democracy, and it was this Premier who also talks about how much one should respect democracy. It was this Premier who waited nine months in order to call this legislature into session, because that's how much disrespect he has for democracy and this institution.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Why didn't he call this legislature into session, Mr. Speaker? Because he was afraid to face the public of Saskatchewan and the questioning that would take place in this legislature about all the mismanagement and the corruption and the patronage that this government has become so famous for. That's not democracy. Mr. Speaker, that is an abuse of democracy; that is ignoring the wishes of the people who want this democracy to work for them; that is ignoring the democratic institutions which they have worked so hard to build here. And this is the man who will stand up here today and talk about democracy as a very powerful mechanism and a powerful force.

Well I ask, Mr. Speaker, of the Premier — and I wish he had stayed in the House to listen — I ask him . . .

The Speaker: — Order.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I recognize I shouldn't be doing that, Mr. Speaker, but I want to ask the Premier, for the record, I want to ask him: if he is so concerned about

democracy, where is the honesty and the integrity that is needed in order for this democracy to work? It is not here. If he so strongly believes in democracy, why has he misled the public of Saskatchewan with promises that then he has betrayed and has not been prepared to keep?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Surely one of the essential requirements of any democratic system, Mr. Speaker, is for the public to be able to trust those leaders who represent them. If democracy is such a power mechanism, Mr. Speaker, why has it been abused by this Premier to such an extent where he has taken what has been a growing and a thriving province, in which there was hope for the future, and destroyed it to the point now where the hope is gone.

If he has so much respect for democracy, why has this Premier brought into this legislature, which was tabled not too long ago, one of the worst and unexplainable and inexcusable gerrymanders that this province will ever see — gerrymanders of constituency boundaries. Is that democracy, Mr. Speaker? No, it's not; it's hypocrisy for the Premier to even speak about it.

Democracy requires accountability by the government. It requires the government to be able to tell the truth and to be able to be accountable to the public on how it's managing the public's affairs, on how it's spending the taxpayers' money. Has this government been forthcoming and prepared to do that? No.

It took two years to table the last *Public Accounts* — two years late in the *Public Accounts* that should have been here tabled in the last legislature because the government refused to be accountable. That's not democracy. There were orders for return, Mr. Speaker, that were ordered in 1986 and were only tabled a few days ago. That's not democracy, because that's not accountability. What a joke. What hypocrisy.

All of these things the Premier talked about, didn't talk about. Did he spend any time, Mr. Speaker — and I think that this is a very, very important point — did this Premier spend any time, in his address here today, talking about the hardship faced by our family farms today? He didn't say a word. There are literally thousands of farm families out there who are going under. They are being foreclosed on and legal action is being taken even by that Premier, as the Minister of Agriculture, and in this debate he didn't say a word.

That, Mr. Speaker, is why the hope is gone. Did this Premier even utter the words, young people, and the kinds of things and the kinds of future that they're facing here today, in this address today? Not once. Not once. Oh he talked about democracy. He talked about democracy. But what kind of democracy is this government running when young people are leaving this province by the thousands because they don't see any future in this Saskatchewan under this administration?

Mr. Speaker, did the Premier address the needs of the small-business people in this province? No! He never spoke about the needs of the small-business community,

the small-business people who are suffering out there and hurting just like many other people — just like the farm community. Those small-business people depend on Saskatchewan people who are working and making a good wage so that they can spend some money in their shops and their stores.

(1600)

But instead, those people are moving out of Saskatchewan, and so that in the month of February what did we see? We saw a net out-migration of almost 7,000 people, and I can't remember in my lifetime when we have had a net out-migration of that amount. Now that's a tragedy. That is a tragedy.

Did this Premier say one word about that in his speech? Not one! He ignores the real hurts, and he ignores the real issues out there and tries to cover up with some of the rhetoric which he's so well-known for, but which he cannot back up with any kind of substance.

Oh yes, he bragged, he bragged about the massive expenditures of this government. He made a point of doing that. He talked about billions of dollars. And to this man, what's a billion? What's a billion? He's got all this money to give to his personal friends and his party political friends, hiring all kinds of people who are put on the patronage gravy train, giving away our assets to friends of the Conservative Party in the name of public participation, which is nothing other, Mr. Speaker, but corruption and giving away of the assets to friends of the Conservative Party and friends of members opposite.

We just had in question period today one example of the scams that are going on — that involving Joytec, which is an industry in Saskatoon which is . . . And the minister in charge, the minister from Saskatoon, doesn't like to hear that. But he is involved in that scam, Mr. Speaker. He is involved in it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — There's a bunch of people who went to that minister with a suitcase and said, we want a pile of money; fill it up. And he shovelled it in and now they're leaving to go to British Columbia and we're left with nothing in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — And the taxpayers are going to be short a million and a half dollars because of this kind of democracy that the Premier speaks of.

Mr. Speaker, this is the man who said that our economy was so strong that we could afford to mismanage it. That's what the Premier said in 1982. Well boy, he has mismanaged it. He has mismanaged it like nobody else thought that anybody could mismanage. He took a province with a surplus of \$140 million seven years ago and he's turned that surplus into an accumulated deficit of \$4 billion. Now that's mismanagement, Mr. Speaker, and he says how proud he is of that.

He took a province, this Premier, the member from

Estevan, in 1982, which had a total debt, mostly self-liquidating debt, a debt that the taxpayers would never have to pay because it was money that was earning money through the corporations like the power corporation and SaskTel. Well he took that total accumulated debt, self-liquidating debt of about \$2 billion, and do you know what he has done with his great mismanagement? He has turned it into a debt of over \$12 billion in seven years. That is a shame, Mr. Speaker.

That is giving away the future of the young people of this province to outside interests, to outside interests. Oh but he . . . the Premier's worried about that now, you see. He now talks about independence. He talks about how important it is for Saskatchewan people to be independent. Now why is he talking that way? He's talking that way because he knows that all around him this giving away of Saskatchewan assets is beginning to crumble politically and the public of Saskatchewan is saying, we have had enough and he has gone too far; everywhere they're saying that. And the member over there from Morse, who sits there, knows that to be true.

The people of Saskatchewan are saying, they have gone too far and it's time for a change before they destroy it even more. And that's why the Premier is here today talking about how important for Saskatchewan to be independent.

But what are the real, real realities and what are the actions that this government is doing? Well he talks about independence. What does he do on his trip to China? Now here is the Premier who has been in this province and in this legislature saying government has no place in anything — we have got to get government out of business; we have got to get government out of Crown corporations. And the first thing he does on his month-long trip to the Far East when he should have been here looking after making sure that the farmers got their drought payment, while he was on this trip, he goes to the people of . . . to the Government of China, the communist government in China and says, oh but we will sell the potash corporation to you, the Government of China.

Well it's not good enough for the people of Saskatchewan to control their destiny by some involvement through their government in things like the potash corporation, but it's quite all right to sell it off to another government in a foreign country, even the communist government in China. And this Premier talks, he talks of independence.

Well, Mr. Speaker, you have to really sometimes wonder what this man has been smoking before he gets up to speak, because what he says is not what he does. And the list of broken promises is so long that it would take me all afternoon for the time that's left to be able to repeat them all.

On the one hand he talks about independence. On the other hand he goes across the Pacific Ocean to say, take us over; we're going to sell it to you; and then you will tell the people of Saskatchewan what you want them to do with their resources. That's not independence. That's not independence. That's giving it away. That's giving the control of our future to somebody else.

This is the Premier, Mr. Speaker, who has a strange vision. You know what his vision is? His vision is that there is a strong wind blowing over the world, and that wind is blowing over North America and over Canada, and all we can do is get caught up in this wind and be blowing away with it and hope by some chance it will deposit us in a nice soft landing.

We don't share that view, Mr. Speaker. We don't believe that we should simply let ourselves cave in to the interests around the world without doing the things we've always done, and that is set up the institutions and take the initiative to do some things for ourselves and to do some things for the people, with the people.

He pretends that to be the case but the record doesn't show that. And I'll give you the example, just one example, and there could be many. In this so-called independence philosophy that he prophesies, he sold off Saskoil because that was going to make us independent. And what was the result? Well, Mr. Speaker, in 1984 Saskoil made a profit of \$44 million, and it stayed in Saskatchewan. Every single penny of it stayed in Saskatchewan.

An Hon. Member: — It still does.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well a member said, it still does. Well if he would only be patient and listen, I will tell him what's been happening to it.

The member from Weyburn, you know, Mr. Speaker, well I want to tell the member from Weyburn that whereas in 1984, \$44 million that Saskoil earned stayed in Saskatchewan, in 1987 when Saskoil lost \$1.3 million, the people out of the province, from Ontario, who had bought up 75 per cent of the preferred shares, got dividends of \$5 million. And who paid for that, Mr. Speaker? The people of Saskatchewan paid for that, because that's the Premier's definition of independence.

Mr. Speaker, this is not independence . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I see that the member from Weyburn doesn't like the truth, because he's erupting in his seat. Well I want to tell him, Mr. Speaker — through you, of course — that he has good reason to be concerned. He has good reason to be concerned. And the Premier's speech in the House today is clear evidence of that. The reason he needs to be concerned is that from one end of this province to another the people of Saskatchewan are saying, we have had enough of this sell-out and this giving away.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — And they're telling the member from Weyburn that it is time for a change. And there's going to be that change.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to just comment on a few other things. This speech that the Premier gave talked about Saskatchewan people taking the lead in health care technology or Saskatchewan taking the lead in health care technology.

Well I ask him the question, why did he not address the

question of the thousands of children who no longer are getting dental care because of their destruction of the children's school-based dental program? Why didn't he bother talking about that? They're not independent.

There was a time when those children were independent from the fear of not being able to look after their teeth. Now all over the province there are thousands of children who used to see a dental nurse and got preventative care and got care that was needed when required. Now those thousands of children don't see even a dentist. That's not independence.

The Premier never stood up . . . when he stood up, never bothered to talk about how this government has destroyed the prescription drug plan — destroyed the prescription drug plan. Oh they've got what they call a deductible. And they say it's \$125. Before the senior citizen or before the family can get any cover for their drugs, prescription drugs which a doctor prescribes, they have to pay the first \$125.

But that's not the whole story. Because I know people from my constituency, and this will apply in your constituency, Mr. Speaker, who have a family of five — the husband and the wife and three children who are either 18 years of age or over and are dependent yet on the parents at home because they're going to school. You know what their total deductible is? It's \$500. Because after 18 years of age, you're no longer covered by the family plan. And there's an awful lot of people in this province who can't afford a \$500 punishment or penalty because they need to take some prescription drugs. The Premier never addressed any of that.

Did the Premier say anything in his talking about this health care technology, did he ever say anything about the over 10,000 people who are waiting for a hospital bed in order to be able to get their necessary surgery? Not a word. Oh no, not a word. He tries to cover it up with the rhetoric. Over 10,000 people, some of whom have died, waiting for a hospital bed. And the Minister of Health doesn't like to be reminded of that. But those are the facts and those are the cruel, cruel realities.

That's the kind of health leadership in health care technology that this Premier, the member from Estevan, has brought to this province of Saskatchewan. He's not built a better health care system; he has destroyed a good one that we used to have, the best in North America. And he tries to cover it up by talking about taking a lead in health care technology.

Mr. Speaker, technology doesn't help the family that lost a father because that person did not get care in time. Technology doesn't help that person who has got a painful hip and needs orthopedic surgery and can't get it for 18 months. Technology doesn't help those children who used to get dental care and now don't get it any more.

We have seen the destruction of the best health care system in North America and maybe the world, and all the Premier can do is brag about his massive expenditures. Oh, he spoke about building. He spoke about building. And the people all over Saskatchewan are

asking, where is it? Where is this building? He hasn't built; he has destroyed. He hasn't built hope; he has destroyed hope.

Why do you think people are voting with their feet? Why do you think there were almost 7,000 people, mostly young, in net out-migration out of Saskatchewan in February? Because they're saying that under this government there is very little hope.

Is it building, Mr. Speaker, when we now have the greatest number of hungry people in this province we've ever seen, including the 1930s? Is the Premier proud of the fact that in Saskatchewan we now have the highest poverty rate in Canada, surpassed only by Newfoundland? Oh, he's building all right, but he's building the wrong things.

(1615)

He's building poverty and hunger. What is he building when you see so many young people leaving the province? What kind of building is this, Mr. Speaker, when farm families are being devastated daily because of foreclosures being brought on by the Agricultural Credit Corporation, of which the Premier is in charge and the minister. Is that building? And he never mentioned it once. What kind of irresponsibility is that?

Mr. Speaker, the other thing the Premier never mentioned is the biggest element of public participation this government has ever brought about, and that is public participation by defeated MLAs and cabinet ministers of the Conservative Party. Now these are the people who could hardly wait to get into the private sector. They could hardly wait to make this great fortune of theirs in the private sector. Where are they all? They're all working for the government. They're all being paid by taxpayers' money. While young people are forced to leave this province and go somewhere else to look for hope and to look for a future, we have people like the defeated cabinet minister, Mr. Schoenhals, who is making thousands of dollars by being a chairman of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. He's filling his pockets all right, but those young people graduating out of our high schools and universities today have to leave this province to find a job and to look for a future.

Oh, they've done very well, Mr. Speaker, about looking after Gordon Dirks, who was hired for a while on a consulting contract with the Department of Education. He was a cabinet minister that the Premier never spoke about today, this man who said, in the private sector I'm going to do well, but he had to come running to the public trough after he was defeated in the 1986 election.

What about Mr. Embury, another defeated cabinet minister, who was also on another consulting contract with the government? Or Mr. Sid Dutchak, who was also the interim chairman or president of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. I understand now it hasn't ended; he's gone to bigger and better things. He's now been hired by the federal government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is patronage; that is patronage. That is not allowing the public to be involved and to

benefit from the prosperity and the good things in Saskatchewan. That is only giving it away to the few. That is only giving it away to the few, the friends of the member from Weyburn, who are well connected with the Conservative Party.

I could go through this list for a long time, but I think those few examples suffice to highlight the point that when this government talks about public participation, what they mean is defeated MLAs and cabinet ministers of the Conservative Party who are participating in the public trough. That's what they mean by public participation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the other thing that the Premier never talked about is this government's commitment to deterrent fees in the health care system, and that's why the Premier talks only about technology.

The best thing he can say about this government's health care program is that he has given everybody a plastic card. And he's so happy because everybody has got this plastic card and it's going to make them well.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the Premier that that plastic card hasn't helped those children who don't get dental care. That plastic card is not helping those over 10,000 people waiting for a hospital bed to have their surgery. Is that plastic card helping that family of five who's got a 500 deductible on their prescription drug plan? Not at all. And the Premier is so proud of his new technology plastic health card. Well if that's the best he can say about his health care programs, Mr. Speaker, I simply say that's not good enough.

Now let me go back to the government's commitment to deterrent fees and health premiums. They have tried to create the myth that health care costs are out of control. Well that has been done by right-wing governments right from the first day that medicare was brought into this province. Their argument from day one has been, you will not be able to control health care costs because they believe that people should only be able to get health care if they can afford to pay for it. And if they happen to get sick, they should be punished by being charged a premium or a deterrent fee.

Now the members may deny it; they may deny it. They'll say, oh that was Dick Collver who said that. Or they will say, oh that was Colin Thatcher who said that. Or they will say that was the leader of the KOD (Keep Our Doctors), Staff Barootes, who said that. And I suppose if that's all it was, Mr. Speaker, one would have to give them benefit of the doubt. But who else is saying that? Every one of them is saying that privately, and unfortunately for them, some of them are saying it publicly, as is the case of the member for Maple Creek, the Minister of . . . what's the member for Maple Creek, the Minister of . . . whatever she's the minister of, speaking to a public meeting in Moose Jaw said the following. And I read from here:

Duncan said the government looked at reinstating premiums as a way of controlling health costs.

They can't blame it on Dick Collver or Colin Thatcher or Staff Barootes. They believe it over there, and they're stating it every day, Mr. Speaker. And this was said on

June 24, 1987.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Oh, I suspect the Premier will be able to make it less painful in some way because you'll be able to pay it through the plastic card. And he'll brag about what a great job it's doing, Mr. Speaker.

Now let me just take a look at some of the things that this Premier has said. When it came to dealing with the problems of Saskatchewan, and dealing with the federal government and providing some leadership on behalf of the province so that the federal government knows what our needs are, the best response that the Premier can make is, keep up the good work, Brian, when he talks to the Prime Minister. And he has locked himself up so tightly in the hip pocket of the Prime Minister that now he is in the position that when the farmers of Saskatchewan need somebody to say to the federal government, this drought payment is an absolute disgusting mess, he cannot do that. He no longer has the clout with the federal Prime Minister and the federal government to be able to do that.

And so we have farm families in this province who were promised \$45 an acre getting \$7 and \$12 an acre. And on top of that, when they can't afford to meet those payments because the money they were promised isn't sufficient and is late, what does the Premier do? Does he go to the Prime Minister and say, this is wrong; you made a promise and you can't break this promise? Of course not. He has the agricultural credit corporation foreclose on them. He goes to the courts, Mr. Speaker.

Our unemployment rate, Mr. Speaker, has been growing out of control. Did the Premier speak about that in his speech? Of course not. Did the throne speech address that? Of course it didn't. It never mentioned it at all. We have an net out-migration of young people . . . before the February numbers it was 1,600 people a month, and with the February numbers it's considerably higher than that. But the speech ignored that; then the Premier ignored that in his remarks here today.

Our farm families are faced with a crisis, and government agencies are foreclosing. You know it takes a special kind of arrogance for the Minister of Agriculture, who happens to be the Premier, to say to farm families, he knows that they have said to him that equity financing is not acceptable but he intends to put it into place anyway because his privatization ideology dictates that farm land should become land bank, owned by financial institutions and foreign investors.

And I think it was interesting that on Friday last we found out that the Premier had been saying in his speech in Moose Jaw that the way he is going to entice investors from Hong Kong is by giving them cheap land and cheap labour. Is that why he's foreclosing on this farm land, because it's a way to provide cheap land to these investors from Hong Kong who then will run our farms and own and control our farm lands?

Mr. Speaker, if this hare-brained program of equity financing is put into place, Saskatchewan farm land will

soon be owned by United States and Hong Kong interests and foreign interests, and not by the farmers of Saskatchewan. And that's wrong, and we don't agree with it.

Now that may be the way of the market-place which this Premier so greatly admires, but it's not good for Saskatchewan. We want our farms to be owned and operated by Saskatchewan farm families, and only in this way will our communities remain strong and will they thrive. And this Premier's approach will be the beginning of the end of them, as more farm families leave or become tenants of the investment corporations and foreign owners, which is the path in which he is now leading this province.

I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that that is not our vision of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — We don't share the view of this government that simply relying on the large out-of-province corporations to develop our economy is enough. All around us we see the failures of that approach. The number of people working in Saskatchewan has been reduced by 10,000 over the last 12 months. Students are being turned away from our universities and technical schools because of quotas. Waiting lists in our hospitals have reached horrendous proportions, and people are dying while waiting for a hospital bed to get necessary surgery. And this throne speech, Mr. Speaker, fails to address all of those, and the Premier failed to address those things in his remarks as well.

Our public debt has increased from just a little over \$2 billion in 1982 to over \$12 billion in 1989. Our streets and our roads are falling apart because of government neglect. The business community is in desperate straits, while this government spends its time and the public tax dollars on megaprojects and personal friends of the Conservative Party and the Premier.

You know, patronage has become the standard with this Premier and this government. Almost every defeated cabinet minister is employed with this government, and betrayal and dishonesty have become the trade mark of this Premier. Promises mean nothing. The truth doesn't matter. And that's why people are saying, it's time for a change.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — They want a government that will be honest with them, a government that will keep its promises, a government that will bring and provide hope for the future rather than despair, which is the case in this province today.

And the only answer this government has got is, give away or sell away the assets to their friends, not because it makes any social or economic sense but because this Premier is blinded by an ideology — an ideology which is a belief that the public sector has no role to play and the market-place should determine all of the decisions. And

yet in spite of this we know that he contradicts himself, depending on where he is.

Mr. Speaker, this throne speech does not address the problems that Saskatchewan people face. It is another continuing legacy of the promises that this government made and has broken. It is not addressing the problem of selling off our assets and therefore selling off our future. It does not deal with the question of the thousands of young people who are leaving this province. It's a betrayal; it's a legacy of broken promises, and it shows that this Premier and this government can't be trusted because they never keep those promises.

Mr. Speaker, not only that, but they have taken a province that was set up for the 1990s; a province which was growing; a province whose population was increasing; a province where jobs were being created; a province where the private small-business community was thriving, and they have brought it down to a province in which many small-business people are being threatened; in which farm families are losing their land; in which young people now have to go somewhere else to find a future; in which health care, which was one of our jewels in Canada, has been literally torn apart because of the neglect of this government — all in the name of new technology.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to take a great deal of time longer, but I want to close by saying that we don't need the kind of mismanagement that we have seen from this government. What we need is a vision which provides some hope, and this throne speech doesn't provide that vision for the future. It exposes a Premier and a government for his lack of vision.

The Premier is saying to the people of Saskatchewan that there is a wind blowing around the world, which I referred to, and all we can do is jump on it and hope that we get lucky. Mr. Speaker, that is a narrow and cynical view of our destiny. It is a sense and a philosophy of giving up — giving up to those forces out there. That's what the approach of this government is. What they are saying is that all we can do is be the victim of the events around us; just leave it to the market-place, and the government shouldn't make any decisions.

(1630)

I don't share that view, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan people have in the past, and can in the future play a role in determining those events, not just be the victims of them. We didn't develop our universities and our medicare and a telephone system and an electrical grid by leaving it to the market-place. Our vision is that we can still, in the future, chart new paths and innovate and build for the benefit of all, not just a few.

We can once again be the leaders in Canada. We have the capacity to do all of that, but it will not happen if we turn all of the economic decisions to the corporate interests, as this government is doing — interests that are not even resident and located here in Saskatchewan.

We cannot do all of that by simply turning all those decisions over to the Weyerhaeusers of Tacoma,

Washington, or some of those decisions over to the government in China or over to Carling O'Keefe. We need a strong private sector, Mr. Speaker, we need a strong co-operative sector, and we need a strong public sector, all working together.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — And if we really truly use all of those sectors, Mr. Speaker, honestly and openly, we can build again; we can become the kind of province in which there is a future for young people.

It was this Premier who said in 1982 they were going to bring the children home. Well what's happened to that dream, Mr. Speaker? Where are all those children? They're in Vancouver, they're in Toronto, and they're leaving by 6,000 a month in net out-migration.

We need not only to build, Mr. Speaker, but we need to rebuild all of those things that this government has torn apart and destroyed. We can influence the events that will determine our future and not just be the victims of those events, Mr. Speaker. And using this strategy we will fulfil our vision of a prosperous, caring economy and a society in which everyone shares in the benefits and not just a few. That's our vision.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — We will fulfil our vision of a province where people don't have to be afraid of the great costs that may come about because they happen to get ill or get old, and where children can once again have a dental program for themselves. That's our vision.

We can fulfil a vision of a province where students aren't turned away by the hundreds from our university and our technical institutes because this government has not provided adequate funding; where small business can thrive and create jobs for our people as it once did; where small business is not forgotten by the government in favour of the out-of-province corporations and the megaprojects which swallow up vast amounts of tax money but create few jobs; a province where our young people can live and work and build a future, not a province where they have to leave.

A vision, Mr. Speaker, we need to build and we can build; in which we have a province where our farm families can rely on a long-term, stable agricultural policy which provides stability and security instead of having to rely on the whims of politicians at election time. We know the results of that.

We have a vision of a province in which all people, both urban and rural, understand each other and work together for a better tomorrow; a province where families can grow up with equal opportunities for all, where they can stay together instead of having to see their children leave to find a future somewhere else; a province in which the government works for the people rather than against the people, which has been the record for seven years of this government.

Mr. Speaker, this throne speech provides none of that.

This throne speech tries to create a cover for the mismanagement, the corruption and the dishonesty of this government. This throne speech does not deserve the support of the members of this House, and any members who've been to their constituencies since this throne speech was read in this House will know that their constituents are telling them, you should vote against that throne speech. And the members opposite who do not do that do so at their own peril.

I have listened to my constituents and I have been to other parts in the province, and I know what the people are saying, and in view of what they're saying, Mr. Speaker, I cannot support this throne speech and I will not vote for it when it comes up for vote later today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to participate in the throne speech debate on behalf of the citizens of Saskatoon Mayfair, the largest constituency of the province, with over 22,000 voters.

Before I get into my main remarks, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few minutes to congratulate Her Honour, Sylvia Fedoruk, on her appointment as our new Lieutenant Governor. There's no doubt about it that Sylvia Fedoruk is a natural for such a position, and certainly she has proved herself in so many ways, particularly in her research and academic abilities, the work that she's done at the university, and as well, Mr. Speaker, I'd add, in the area of athletics. I've had the pleasure of knowing Her Honour for several years and having worked with her on the board of governors at the University of Saskatchewan.

I'm very pleased, as I know you are, having been a former educator, with the deep commitment that she has to the boys and girls of our province. There's no doubt about it that she will be an excellent role model for our young people as she visits schools throughout our province. I'm sure that with the hard work and the effort that she has put into her own career, that she will be a great inspiration to them and will show that from hard work and good solid effort can come success.

I also want to, Mr. Speaker, congratulate the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg on his successful win in the recent by-election. I have no doubt that this man will serve his constituents very well. He deserves a lot of credit, I believe, because of the hard work that he put in during that campaign. And also, I think too that his victory is that much better because of the tactics used by the opposition during that by-election. And every dirty trick, I think, in the book was thrown into that election, and I think a very good man came out on top. I was pleased to be able to assist the member in his bid for election and a lot of very fine people in the constituency of Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, and I know that our member is going to do very well for them.

Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased with the throne speech that was delivered so eloquently by Her Honour. It outlined a strong list of very positive steps taken by our government in the past number of years. But I think also

what's very important, that it laid out a very solid blueprint for the future of our province — a blueprint that is designed not only to take a look at the current-day problems that we have to find solutions for, but also a vision for the future in looking ahead to building and that growth that we need that will take us right on to the 21st century.

Saskatchewan people over the years have displayed a very, very optimistic attitude because of the many challenges that have been raised by many things. Whether it's the weather, whether it's other elements, whether it could be poor prices, whatever the case the might be, they have always faced these challenges and have moved ahead. Challenges, I might add, that they have always looked ahead with optimism and not the doom and gloom that we hear so much about from the other side of this House.

People have always worked very close together building this province of ours, and they have no hesitation in accepting whatever challenges are ahead for tomorrow. We realize we can't live in the past. We have to take a look at the fact that the world is changing very, very quickly around us, and we've got to be prepared to take advantage of every opportunity that's out there for us.

I'd like, Mr. Speaker, to take a look at the priorities of our government, and some of the things that we have done and things that we plan on looking ahead to in the future. Many of my colleagues have dealt with these priorities in a lot of detail over the last several days, and what I would like to do is restrict my remarks, more or less, to the city of Saskatoon.

Health care, as you know, is certainly a very top priority as far as this government is concerned. We often hear the opposition members speak about cut-backs, and I would like to refer to some of the comments made by the member from Sutherland. He talks about health care. And the member from Sutherland, this is what he indicates, that we've got a lot of problems with our health care system in this province. He says:

And darker still is the lot of Saskatchewan people when it comes to health care. I say it's back to the dark ages when Saskatchewan people have to die waiting to get into hospitals. And when they wait so long that when they finally do get through the doors, it's not for surgery, but it's for the autopsy. That's scandalous.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think when one considers the high calibre of the health people that we have in this province, our dedicated nurses and medical staff, that that is a real slap in the face when a member of this legislature should make comments such as that.

We've never seen construction of new facilities in this province such as we have during the last few years — nothing in the history of the province. We can consider that for programs, when it comes to health care, they're very, very costly. We're always concerned about new technology, and new technology is costly. We think of the modern equipment that we are putting into our hospitals today. They cost a great deal of money.

We had, not too long ago, an announcement made by our Minister of Health with regard to centres of excellence in the city of Saskatoon so that our hospitals are going to be working much closer together and providing excellent care for all of the people that come through their doors, something that all of us can be truly proud of, Mr. Speaker, because I'm sure that our hospitals in Saskatoon will be among the very best in North America.

When one considers the fact that our budget for health care in this province has been increasing every year since the PCs came to power, when one considers that it's gone up by over 60 per cent since 1981-82 from a total of about \$741 million to over \$1.2 billion, and when we have members opposite then talking about cut-backs, Mr. Speaker, I think that their definition of cut-backs must be a lot different than anyone else in the province.

Some examples of the major construction that has taken place in the city of Saskatoon over the last few years, and very, very major, I might add, when one considers the University Hospital expansion, \$28 million. Now that's a lot of \$2 a bushel wheat, Mr. Speaker.

We've also got the new 44-bed psychiatric unit at University Hospital, for another \$3.2 million. St. Paul's Hospital, total cost of \$53 million, 97-bed expansion which will be opening up some time later this year, Mr. Speaker. Now that's a lot of \$10 a barrel oil, Mr. Speaker. A new City Hospital, \$112 million, 488 new beds that will be open some time within the next two to three years, Mr. Speaker. A new cancer clinic open not too long ago, \$17 million, plus \$5 million for equipment over the next five years.

We have the new Parkridge Centre opened last year; Calder Centre, a new location, several hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on renovations; the Children's Rehab Centre, Mr. Speaker. And I can comment on that because of my involvement with schools, and children that have serious physical disabilities that do attend the Children's Rehab Centre — one of the most modern facilities that you'll find any place in Canada and probably in North America. The Alvin Buckwold clinic, also an excellent facility with very, very dedicated staff — something that has been done during the tenure of this government.

Mr. Speaker, something else that's very, very significant, and this isn't just for the city of Saskatoon — 1,675 special care home beds built in the province since 1982. Now, Mr. Speaker, that's a far cry from the previous administration that felt that the way to handle the problem of the growing number of older people within the province was to have a freeze on the construction of nursing home beds. Mr. Speaker, a 57 per cent increase in funding since 1982 — \$125 million to \$197 million. Mr. Speaker, that represents a lot of uranium at \$14 a pound.

We not only have to consider the money that's been spent on new construction, new facilities, but consider some of the other very important changes that have taken place in this province during the last five or six years in the area of health care. One of the first that I believe is very, very significant is the increased day surgery facilities in the city

of Saskatoon. It's now possible for our surgeons to perform about 2,500 more procedures per year than before. Hospital waiting lists cut by 25 per cent. Do you ever hear the members of the opposition talk about that?

(1645)

What about the new CAT (computerized axial tomography) scanners that have been put into all of the major hospitals in the province? Another very significant step, Mr. Speaker, was the taking over of the SAIL (Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living) program by the Saskatchewan Abilities Council. The funding has been increased substantially.

I toured that facility not too long ago and I must say that I was very, very impressed by the type of work that is being done at the Abilities Council with regard to the SAIL program. This has been a very, very good move. I think we've got very good service as far as the people requiring those particular pieces of equipment, but also it has meant meaningful employment for more people at the Abilities Council.

Home care today I believe is a very, very important part of the services that we provide for seniors. I know that this is a service that is provided right throughout the province, not only in our cities, but also in our towns. And I know that those of us who have ageing parents can certainly appreciate the amount of service that home care has provided over the years. To this particular service we've had an increase of 77 per cent. And I think that that's the feeling of the government moving ahead and meeting today's needs, moving ahead to meet that demand with a growing population of more seniors.

One of the other very important steps taken by this government was the elimination of extra billing by doctors. We don't hear members opposite talk very much about that at all.

What about the increased funding for public health programs in Saskatoon? I heard one of the members opposite going on the other day in great detail about the fact that public health spending had been cut back. Well, Mr. Speaker, in the city of Saskatoon it's been increased certainly over the last few years.

The plastic health card. That's another item that has been mentioned by many of the members on this side of the House, and for good reason. That's something that members of this government are very, very proud of. There's no doubt about it that with the number of seniors that I come in contact with, that they appreciate the fact that this government is still going to have a drug program of some type for many, many years to come.

Seniors, I don't think, Mr. Speaker, and ones that I've talked to have told me that they don't mind paying a small amount for their drugs providing they are going to be assured of having a type of program there 10 or 20 years from now. So the plastic health card, I feel, a very important step ahead in the use of modern technology and something that is a great benefit as far as the people of Saskatchewan are concerned.

We all are concerned, I'm sure, about prevention. And the Everyone Wins program that was introduced by our Minister of Health this past year is something that has a great deal to do with the whole idea of promoting healthy living. And that's something I think if all of us took to heart, that we could do an awful lot to cutting down on some of our expensive programs that are needed later on in life. Other preventative health programs will certainly be introduced in the future to meet the concerns not only of our seniors, but all citizens of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, something that I want to touch on next is with regard to education. And having spent over 30 years in our education system — and I know you, sir, have spent many years in that field as well — I feel very proud of what we've accomplished in our educational system in this province. I know that times are changing and we've got to ensure that our children and youth are prepared and meet any of those new challenges.

And I just want to refer to comments, again made by that illustrious member from Saskatoon Sutherland the other day who made some comments here with regard to education. And I think that for anybody who has been involved in education or who is involved in education today . . . and I know that the member from Saskatoon Nutana was also in education at one time. I worked with her on a few cases. I know that, as well, Saskatoon South, an individual that was in education, and I think that they must feel just a little bit badly when one of their colleagues makes comments such as this.

In Saskatchewan young people know that the educational system is in shambles. The scholars are leaving the province at the university, the libraries are going without books at the University of Saskatchewan, and that science is being conducted with outdated equipment.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when I hear comments like that made by the hon. member from Saskatoon Sutherland, I really have to question whether or not he's even been in some of our schools. I really have to question that, and I think that that is a real slap in the face to some of the very good things that are going on in our schools today.

Let's take a look at some of the expenditures and money that's going into education today to help improve the programs for our young people. Let's take a look at the University of Saskatchewan, and I had the pleasure of serving on the board of governors there for four years, Mr. Speaker. Let's take a look at some of the major facilities that have been constructed over the last number of years — and again, the opposition likes to talk an awful lot about cut-backs in education.

The College of Agriculture building which is now under construction and will be completed within the next two or three years — \$92 million being spent on that one project. Now that project, Mr. Speaker, is something that is very, very important to this province where agriculture has been one of our main industries for many, many years. That's the whole area in which our province has been built — \$92 million being put into a brand-new college which is now going to bring all of the research facilities together in agriculture and give them the type of

facilities that they need to carry on their very important work.

A new administration building that was put up a couple of years ago — \$7 million went into that building. A new geology building — \$18.5 million; small animal resources building for \$3 million; waste management for about 2 million.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that the average person generally understands the tremendous cost that goes into facilities on our campus at the University of Saskatchewan. Not only do we need money for the construction of these buildings, but also many millions of dollars in so far as expensive equipment is concerned.

We've also had a lot of discussion with regard to SIAST and what's been happening in that particular area. And it seems to me that just a few minutes ago, we heard the member from Regina North East talking about how our students have really suffered in our technical institutes over the last few years.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I believe we have in the neighbourhood of about 1,500 more spaces today in our technical schools than when that party was in power. Now I can't understand where he's getting some of his information if he's saying that we're really doing so terrible there. And that includes the new Woodland Campus in Prince Albert, which cost \$35 million, Mr. Speaker.

Well we've got a lot of things that are happening, Mr. Speaker, in the area of secondary education, and I'll talk a little bit more about that, but I wanted to talk a bit about construction within the K to 12 area. We've had new schools that I'm aware of, built in Saskatoon in the last two or three years, that have cost in the neighbourhood of 3 to 4 millions of dollars each. St. Angela school, St. Volodymyr School, Dr. John G. Egnatoff and DunDonald elementary school, just to mention a few of them.

We have an expansion going on right now just down the street from my office and in the middle of my constituency at Bishop James Mahoney high school, where the provincial share going into the expansion there is in excess of \$500,000. And these again, Mr. Speaker, are facilities that are required to meet the needs of today, and particularly up in my area where the population has grown substantially over the last number of years.

Now that's just talking about construction. We've got a lot of other initiatives that have been taken by this government, and are being taken by this government, to meet the needs of our young people.

One that I think that's particularly important is the student aid program, where we know that interest rates — and the people opposite like to talk about interest rates, and they've raised that concern a few times in the last few days — interest rates back in July of 1982 were 15.5 per cent for student loans. Now you and I both know, Mr. Speaker, that there are many young people today that have to rely on getting student loans when they go to university. The student aid program that was brought in by this government had the interest rate at 6 per cent, Mr.

Speaker — 6 per cent, not 15.5 per cent, but 6 per cent.

We've also brought in the language training institute in Regina which, I think, has got tremendous potential and tremendous significance. We find that today that we've got many more of our business transactions going on with a lot of different parts of the world. And with the work that is being carried out by these people in the language training institute, young people have an opportunity to learn many languages, Mr. Speaker.

We can also look at the school of physical therapy, Saskatoon — increased enrolment by 50 per cent; the reorganization of SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) and the regional college programs.

Now having spent most of my lifetime out in rural Saskatchewan, there is no doubt that young people living in those areas have an additional expense if they go on to university in Saskatoon or Regina. They are a great distance from home; they always have to pay a lot of money for room and board as well as pay the same tuition fee that others pay. Mr. Speaker, is there any real reason then why these young people shouldn't be living in or near their own communities and have that opportunity to take the first and, say, possibly the second year of their programs in a regional college. Why should they have to always go to the city? People don't understand that people living out in the area where I was, in the Kelvington-Wadena area, they're 125 to 150 miles away from home to go away to university.

What about the concern about the costs for those families living out there in those rural areas and having their young people then be able to take that first and second year? We know that our university campuses are crowded. There's no reason in the world why these young people can't stay home and take some of those courses initially in their own areas. Enrolment at Kelsey has increased from 9,700 to over 16,000 in the last few years — very substantial.

You've heard it mentioned in the throne speech as well about the Saskatchewan Communications Advance Network. This is something, Mr. Speaker, that's going to benefit all areas of our province. We're concerned about getting more information out, more programs into all areas of our province, and there is no doubt you're going to hear much more about the SCAN program over the months ahead.

Our Minister of Education has also had a great deal of concern about literacy in this particular province. And a lot of programs have been developed, a lot of emphasis put on that area in the last few months to try and make it possible for more and more people to learn the basics of reading.

Another ongoing concern that we have is the drop-out rate of our young people from our schools. So programs are being introduced that are going to be designed to lower the drop-out rate.

And other areas that we are looking at are career counselling, business education and work experience

being incorporated into our educational process.

We have many young people today who for one reason or another, Mr. Speaker, can't handle the regular academic program, but yet those people still have a right to go as far as they can in our high schools. With the work experience programs, which I might say I had a fair bit to do with, we found that they're invaluable as far as training some of these young people, upgrading them in their academic skills as far as we can, and also giving them a work experience out there in their neighbourhoods, whether it's in the grocery store or the local service station or whatever. But it's something that does train them to be responsible employees, and many of these young people then are able to go on and get very meaningful employment when they leave high school.

Well, we've had a lot of increased spending in all levels of our educational programs when you consider that the University of Saskatchewan grants have increased 57 per cent since 1982. I might add as a sideline, Mr. Speaker, that between 1971 and '82 that grants, operating grants to the University of Saskatchewan, they didn't increase by 57 per cent, Mr. Speaker; they actually declined by 30 per cent.

Now I haven't heard any of the education critics on the other side talking about that little fact. SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) expenditures have increased 52 per cent since 1982. K to 12, increase of 54 per cent from '82 to '89. Now, Mr. Speaker, again that's cut-backs; I don't know where the members opposite are getting their definition from.

Another area that I want to move on to, Mr. Speaker, but being now near 5 o'clock, I would suggest that we call it it 5 and I would like to carry on with this this evening.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.