

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Acting Clerk: -- The following petition is hereby presented and laid on the Table by Mr. Baker, of the Sisters of Charity, Grey Nuns of Alberta, the city of Edmonton in the province of Alberta.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Environmental Concerns With NewGrade Upgrader

Mr. Tchorzewski: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. It concerns some rather serious events that have been taking place connected with the upgrader in Regina. Mr. Minister, you're well aware that for the second time in a month there has been an incident at the upgrader which may have threatened the health and well-being of citizens in Regina. There was a fire at that upgrader this past weekend which may have resulted in a serious explosion or further gas leaks from the upgrader. And since then people have found fall-out on cars and homes, and many of them are concerned about the inhalation of substances in the air which may be harmful to them.

I'm sure, Mr. Minister, that even you would agree that these concerns are of such an important nature that they need to be addressed by you immediately. And so my question to you is this: in light of these most recent incidents, what steps are you taking to assure the Regina citizens that their health and their well-being is being protected?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: -- I'd like to thank the hon. member for his question, and indeed there is concern about the fire that occurred at the upgrader. I don't think that anyone ever wants a fire to happen, and the upgrader people were as concerned, I guess, as you and I about that particular part of it.

As far as the spill of material that has drifted on to the automobiles, no one is aware at this point of whether that came from the upgrader -- I think not, likely. Our people have worked yesterday; have taken samples of the product. That product is being tested and we expect results some time today, but we don't have them at this point in the day.

I can advise the hon. member that it would appear that if the spill came from anywhere there, that it was not the upgrader, but rather the refinery, from the coking equipment that they use in the old refinery. And if that's the case, then I indeed intend to lay a charge, and I've asked my staff to proceed to lay a charge as soon as we have enough detail. That process is in place and will happen very quickly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: -- Mr. Speaker, a new question. It sounds like *deja vu* from listening to what the minister is saying here today. Mr. Minister, there was a major leak at the upgrader a month ago. You went in front of television cameras at that time and you talked about how tough you were going to be because of the incident that caused some rather serious danger to school children in the school in north-east Regina. Then the next day, Mr. Minister, you changed your mind and you sent a different message and you said that you're going to be tolerant with polluters.

Mr. Minister, it's time that you sent a clear message to the public on where you really stand on the environmental protection. And in light of your negligence, Mr. Minister, I ask you that . . . also in light of the series of incidences that have taken place recently at the upgrader, don't you agree with me that it's time for a full and public inquiry into the environmental safety aspects of the upgrader operations here in Regina. Don't you agree with that, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: -- I can advise this Assembly that the hon. member is putting words in my mouth and that at no time did I make the statement that I was going to be easy on polluters. That has never been the case. But what I did say was that we were going to follow through, find out what it took to correct the problem that had occurred at that upgrader, have it corrected, and if that was not done, then we would proceed with charges.

I can advise the hon. member today that the upgrader people brought in their engineers. They have put in a mechanism to stop that raw product going into the boiler to cause the fire that occurred the last time that the hydrogen sulphide was spilled. They advise us now that that problem is corrected. If that's the case, then I think the company has done the proper thing and a charge is not necessary.

I can also advise you that I have instructed my staff to lay that charge, and it will proceed, the charge will proceed because we're very sure of where the product came from. We just need the final identification. That should be final today some time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: -- New question, Mr. Minister. The company may be doing the proper thing, Mr. Minister, but I suggest that you have not been.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: -- I want to quote to you, Mr. Minister, from this statement prepared by the proponents of the upgrader, and it's called "The Environmental Impact Statement Relating to the Proposed Heavy Oil Upgrader Project," which was prepared and which your department never made an assessment of before you gave

your permit. And the code I want to read to you, Mr. Minister, is this:

The Co-operative Refineries Ltd. refinery will continue to monitor hydrogen sulphide and sulphur dioxide at both stations on a continuous basis. The major sulphur emission stacks will incorporate continuous monitors for sulphur dioxide. As part of its operating permit, NewGrade will report to the provincial government on a regular basis the results of this monitoring and will regularly submit statements regarding the efficiency of the sulphur plant.

This is in volume 2, Mr. Minister, of this environmental impact statement which you never, and your department never made an assessment of.

So I ask you, Mr. Minister, since your permit requires regular monitoring of hydrogen sulphide and hydrogen dioxide, a public disclosure of the results, I assure you, Mr. Minister, and I'm sure you will agree, would show the citizens of Regina whether there is or whether there is not something to be afraid of here. And so my question then is: will you table those reports of the monitoring that you're supposed to have been getting since the beginning of this upgrader, so that you can ease the minds of the folks, and so that they don't have to go to bed at night with a worry?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: -- Mr. Speaker, I can advise the House that the monitoring equipment was put in place and that it has been reporting . . . it reports automatically to the department. And I believe that all of the reports that those monitors have shown up to this point have not shown a serious problem with hydrogen sulphide.

Mr. Speaker, the problem that occurred when the spill occurred back in the winter in February was that the wind was very strong and the weather was cold. And that particular time . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. Order, order, order.

Hon. Mr. Swan: -- At that time, the wind blew the product away from the monitoring area so the monitors did not pick it up. And that is a fault that we are looking at and wondering where you would put monitors. You can't have them in everybody's back yard in this city, but we are looking at further monitoring in order to be able to detect that kind of problem when it occurs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: -- Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to this minister. Mr. Minister, if you have been getting those reports -- and I will take you at your word that you've been getting those reports -- and if those reports give the assurances that there has been no safety hazard involved here to the public that may get affected, I ask you: why in the world would you, unless you're hiding something, why would you not table those reports and make them public, so that the people can be assured that in fact there is no hazard involved in this situation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: -- Mr. Speaker, I'll take notice of that last portion of his question and consult with my staff to see whether or not these reports are available for public.

Mr. Tchorzewski: -- Mr. Speaker, I am shocked and surprised that, in spite of what has been happening, the minister wouldn't be able to answer that question today and he's got to go back to his department to find out that information.

Mr. Speaker, I have a new question to the minister, and it's my final question. Mr. Minister, in this executive summary of the environmental impact statement, on page 7 it was stated that although there would be a sixfold increase in the sulphur content, the emissions of sulphur dioxide would decrease substantially from what they used to be. That's what it says on page 7. Today the citizens of Regina don't believe that. Things are happening out there that have never happened before and which they have never experienced before.

Now as I said earlier, your government accepted this study without doing any assessment of your own on it in 1985. So I ask you, Mr. Minister: how closely have you checked these assurances made by the proponents since then, and how willing are you to stand behind those assurances today in this House?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: -- Mr. Speaker, the information that the member is referring to would be very technical kind of study. My department staff are doing that kind of study, but that type of information doesn't flow to my desk on a daily basis. I will take notice of the question and bring back an answer for the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is also to the Minister of the Environment. Mr. Minister, I represent the people of that part of the city of Regina and, quite frankly, I'm very worried about their safety and their well-being.

Can you table in this House the studies your government has conducted on the health concerns of long-term exposure to hydrogen sulphide emissions, and can you tell us what steps you took to advise the people of that area about those concerns before the plant was built?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: -- Mr. Speaker, I can advise the hon. member that I was not the minister at the time that he refers to. I have not had those studies at my fingertips. I'll take notice of that question as well and bring back an answer.

Mr. Trew: -- New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you're the Minister of the Environment now; you have to accept the responsibility for what is going on in the environment.

Mr. Minister, that area of Regina contains a lot of school children who have the right to grow up in a healthy environment. There are a lot of seniors there also whose health is a fragile thing, and there's a lot of families that don't deserve to have their health threatened for no good reason. When you see what hydrogen sulphide emissions mixing with water vapour and becoming sulphuric acid can do to paint on cars and buildings, it scares me to think what it can do to the lungs of the people.

Are you being so callous about the safety and well-being of our people that you're willing to simply ignore this situation, to say, well I wasn't the minister then. Is that the best I can tell my constituents?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: -- Mr. Speaker, I'm very glad that the member had his question written so he could read it in detail like that.

I can advise the House that my staff have done a very good job of following up on the problems that have occurred at the upgrader and at the refinery. That refinery has been on the edge of this city for many years. The product that appears to have drifted from that area to the cars in the district were not from the upgrader itself, but rather from the refinery. That's as near as we can trace it. That will . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order, order. The minister is answering the question and he's doing it in a responsible way, and we should allow him to carry on.

Risks Subsequent to Fire at Upgrader

Mr. Van Mulligen: -- Mr. Speaker, my question is also to the minister responsible for splitting hairs, the Minister of the Environment and Public Safety. Mr. Minister, I want to know whether your department has undertaken any studies on the risk of explosion as a result of the fire at the upgrader this past week, and have you done any studies on how such an explosion might impact the city of Regina and surrounding area?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: -- Mr. Speaker, no, my department has not done studies. The engineering firm that designed the upgrader did that kind of study. I don't believe that that is part of the responsibility of the department to do the studies for the upgrader and for the whole operation of it. But we do check the upgrader to see that things are operating properly. We will continue to do that, and we'll monitor on a regular basis and see that the rules of this province are enforced.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: -- I have a new question for the minister, Mr. Speaker. Or perhaps I should be putting it to someone else, because I thought I was putting a question to the minister responsible for Public Safety, sir, and that's you. And if you're not concerned about the public safety of the citizens of Regina, who should be?

Let me ask you another question: can you tell this House what contingency plans have been developed by your Emergency Measures Organization for the possible evacuation for part of the city of Regina in the case of an explosion, fire, or any major gas leak from that refinery? Can you answer that question for the people of Regina?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: -- Mr. Speaker, the Emergency Measures Organization that works under my department has in place evacuation plans for the city of Regina and for different portions of the city of Regina. I believe that the plans that are in place will work very effectively if they are needed. Up to this point they have not been needed.

Plight of Small Hotels

Mr. Lautermilch: -- My question is to the acting minister responsible for the Liquor Control Board. And last week the minister told us that his discriminatory pricing of canned beer was done to help small-town hotels survive. But you may have noticed in last night's *Leader-Post*, it was indicated that some 23 hotels went broke last year. Mr. Minister, they need help from you and your government, and I'd like to know what you're prepared to do to help them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- The government has had numerous meetings with the Hotels Association of Saskatchewan. They have expressed their views that notwithstanding the NDP's opposition to the canned beer pricing initiative, that they are very supportive of it.

Certainly there are difficulties in the hotel industry, particularly rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and that is why there are several initiatives in the recently introduced budget to try and maintain the viability of rural communities. And I'm quite prepared to list the initiatives set out in the budget if the hon. member hasn't read the budget.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: -- Well let me enlighten the minister in terms of what the hoteliers in rural Saskatchewan have been offered so far by the minister in charge of the Liquor Control Board.

And my question, Mr. Minister, the hoteliers are told that they should be expanding their facilities to include foods services, but they can't afford the capital costs. In fact many of those hoteliers can't afford to insure the buildings that they house their hotels in, buy liability insurance, or any kind of insurance at all.

And one thing that your government could do is address the problem of rising interest rates. But instead, what you're proposing to do is to sell off SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), the vehicle that you could use to make insurance rates affordable.

My question is this, Mr. Minister: why don't you stop your

privatization ideology? Give those small business operators a break; give them a hand with their insurance rates. Why don't you become a part of the solution instead of a part of the problem?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Let me remind the hon. member, because I know he was not around at the time, that it was his administration, Mr. Speaker, that had to bail out SGI by some \$80 million; that had to put a surcharge -- I believe approximately 2 cents a litre on every single gallon of gas to keep SGI afloat; thirdly, put SGI investing, Mr. Speaker, in Ireland and in ships in the North Atlantic, Mr. Speaker, that caused serious losses for SGI, Mr. Speaker. That was the New Democratic Party's use of SGI.

Now having said that, Mr. Speaker, I did announce in the budget several initiatives to try and help rural Saskatchewan, which will have a direct impact on the hotel industry. I am prepared to list them, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member took it into the ideological argument of SGI, failing to bring to the public's attention the mismanagement and the high cost of operation of the SGI under the New Democratic Party.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: -- New question, Mr. Speaker, new question to the same minister. I want to say that you've just reassured all of the hoteliers in rural Saskatchewan, believe me, because these hoteliers know that you have taken \$200 million, Mr. Minister, out of the Crown corporations in this budget to try and keep control of your deficit.

The question was, Mr. Minister, was can you offer some help via SGI for insurance rates; and I have another question for you since you didn't see fit to answer that one.

You know darn well the bankers don't want to give loans to the hotels because of the condition and the economic condition that your government has placed them in. Will you offer these people today some assurance of some loan guarantees that I didn't see in your budget, by the way, Mr. Minister? Will you today stand up here and offer the same kind of loan guarantees to the rural hotels that you offered Weyerhaeuser in Prince Albert?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- I will give the hoteliers of this province and the people of this province that SGI will not invest in Ireland, will not be insuring ships on the north Atlantic, will not be reinsuring around the world at several millions of dollars of losses to the taxpayers of this province.

The announcements, Mr. Speaker, as to the details of the programs, particularly those applying to small business, Mr. Speaker, will be announced by the appropriate minister at the appropriate time.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe, I don't believe and I don't think most responsible people believe

that SGI should become a subsidizing insurer for every . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. Order, order. Order, order.

Mr. Lautermilch: -- My final question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, again they're reassured, and I can tell you that they'll enjoy reading your response in *Hansard*.

You know full well that your canned beer policy is chasing breweries out of this province. You're chasing the rural hoteliers out of this province by your lack of action, and in the meantime you're chasing everybody else out of the province. In February, we lose over 6,000 people.

Mr. Minister, is there anyone in this province, with the exception of Dome Petroleum and Pocklington and your big-business friends, that you will protect?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: -- Let me tell the people of Prince Albert, in the hon. member's home constituency, that it is this government that's protecting an additional nearly 250 jobs in Weyerhaeuser, Mr. Speaker, over the objections of that hon. member and over the objections of his leader.

And it is this government, Mr. Speaker, that's announced expansions in the forest industry, a new seedling program, Mr. Speaker, to restore our forests that those people over there refused to do, Mr. Speaker, in his home town, in his riding. We are trying to protect the jobs, Mr. Speaker, over his objections and over his resistance of our efforts to protect jobs in his town, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to do that. We will continue to try and diversify, bring in the new industries, bring in the jobs, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, 4,000 more in manufacturing last year is proof that that is working.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Cut in Heritage Grant to Seniors

Ms. Smart: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Human Resources. Mr. Minister, in your budget, you have cut the heritage grant to senior citizens by some \$2 million. And I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, what's going on here? Are you planning to pay fewer citizens, senior citizens less money . . . to fewer seniors, or are you going to pay less . . . the same number of seniors less money?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: -- Well, Mr. Speaker, we have not cut the senior's heritage grant. That's an example of the fear mongering the members opposite indulge in every day of the week.

What we have done is we have a heritage grant for seniors that is exactly the same as it was last year, and we have budgeted how many seniors we think will qualify under the same rules as last year. And if there are fewer seniors qualifying, it is only because there are more seniors with more money and larger incomes, and if you have an income over 30,000 you don't qualify. So if seniors are wealthier than they were last year, it's hardly the

government's fault. I take credit.

(BUDGET DEBATE)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Smart: -- New question. Mr. Minister, you obviously can't administer your program . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order, order, order, order. We're having difficulty hearing the member from Saskatoon Centre, and I'm sure she deserves the opportunity to put her question.

Ms. Smart: -- Mr. Minister, this is a new question. You obviously can't administer your program properly. The seniors in this province are increasing in number; they are not decreasing. The average income for the seniors, according to Statistics Canada, is well below the level for the grant. The problem is that the heritage grant has not been explained well to the seniors, and if you had made it an automatic grant . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. Order, order. I'm having a great deal of difficulty hearing the question, as I'm sure many other members are.

Ms. Smart: -- Mr. Minister, why are you punishing our seniors this way? Why not make the grant automatic and ensure that our seniors who qualify get it, and without having to go through the hassle of paying and paying and paying for their taxes and not getting the money to pay it.

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: -- Mr. Speaker, the criticism rings just a little hollow. It rings just a little hollow. I will take part of that question under advisement, and I will spend more money advertising this good program at the request of the opposition. That I can agree to. So she has my agreement to that.

But I will not pay money to senior citizens who don't qualify because their income is over \$30,000. We will pay all of the low-income seniors who qualify, and those who don't qualify, we won't pay. And we will advertise that more so that even the member opposite will understand it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 16 -- An Act to amend The Clean Air Act

Hon. Mr. Swan: -- Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Clean Air Act.

The Speaker: -- Order, order.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

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

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed it's my pleasure to enter into this budget debate. The 1989-90 budget tabled by my colleague, the Minister of Finance, in my opinion is a very complete, a very interesting, and a very exciting document. And this budget, Mr. Speaker, like the budget of last year, is a budget that I believe fairly recognizes the financial situation of the province.

In summation, Mr. Speaker, I would say that this is very much a common sense budget. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that this budget recognizes provincial, national, and international financial conditions. This budget addresses areas, Mr. Speaker, where increased funding and support are required.

Mr. Speaker, when I speak of those areas, I'm speaking of health care, I'm speaking of education, I'm speaking of the family, I'm speaking of the family farm, and I'm speaking of the environment, as well as highways and transportation. Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes areas that require increased emphasis, and I believe that this budget responds to those needs.

Last year I spoke in my speech of difficult choices that a government has to make. I believe that this year, in light of the drought of last year, the difficult choices this year were as difficult as last. But this budget does continue our government's commitment to allocate financial and human resources where they will best meet the challenges and the opportunities ahead. This budget, Mr. Speaker, demonstrates leadership, direction, and management that is all required for us to grow in today's environment.

Mr. Speaker, tackling the issues of the day while addressing budget deficits is the aim and the commitment of this government. I believe that this budget addresses those issues, as in fact, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to see a single budget tackle so many different issues across the piece.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak a little more directly and explain in some detail how this budget benefits the taxpayers of Saskatchewan and their highway system.

Mr. Speaker, the 1989-90 budget for the Department of Highways and Transportation is an exciting budget, and in fact this year's budget totals \$245 million. Now, Mr. Speaker, I think you and I and all members of the Legislative Assembly, and indeed the people of Saskatchewan, recognize that \$245 million is a lot of money. What we are talking, Mr. Speaker, is nearly a quarter of a billion dollars invested in the highways and transportation system of this province. Mr. Speaker, contrary to what members opposite, members of the NDP, may say or may try and persuade people of, the fact of the matter remains, nearly a quarter of a billion dollars spent directly into our highway system.

I am proud, Mr. Speaker, of that commitment. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in the Minister of Finance's budget address, the department's capital budget has been significantly, substantially increased, an extra 9 per cent; or on the capital budget what we're talking is an additional \$10 million over last year. This increase, Mr. Speaker, will be used, will be used to improve our rural highways throughout this province of Saskatchewan, and indeed it will also include an accelerated program on the southbound lanes on Highway No. 11 between Regina and Saskatoon.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: -- Mr. Speaker, I make that announcement today with a great deal of pride. Most people in this province of Saskatchewan at one time or another, in fact many times throughout a year, would travel on No. 11 Highway between Regina and Saskatoon. That is a four lane highway, Mr. Speaker, that we in the province have every right to be proud of. And, Mr. Speaker, when you see the amount of moneys allocated, the number of contracts let on Highway No. 11 this year, I believe that the people of Saskatchewan will say, yes indeed, this government is spending their moneys respecting highways and transportation in a prudent manner. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that even the opposition, even the opposition, as critical and as negative as they always are, may in fact agree with us.

Mr. Speaker, the increase in capital funding will allow the department to improve approximately 1,100 kilometres of provincial highway in this year's program. This includes 831 kilometres of paving -- an increase of 17 per cent over last year. The budget, as well, includes 316 kilometres of grading which also represents a significant increase over last year.

I have every trust, every confidence and every faith, Mr. Speaker, that the Saskatchewan road building industry is ready and able to meet the challenges of this increased capital program.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to just make a few passing comments directly to the members' opposition, the members in opposition, the members of the NDP Party, and specifically to the member from Saskatoon Nutana who yesterday in this very legislature made some very disparaging remarks, some very disparaging remarks respecting the abilities and capabilities of Saskatchewan road builders.

I want to talk for a few moments, Mr. Speaker, to outline to this Saskatchewan legislature and to the people of Saskatchewan just what the road building industry is about. Mr. Speaker, we have many, many Saskatchewan contractors throughout this great province who are free enterprisers, who have made multimillion dollar investments into capital land and equipment. I'm talking, Mr. Speaker, of crawlers, and 'dozers, and graders, and backhoes and scrapers -- a lot of money, Mr. Speaker. And these road builders are private business people, large investments, willing, ready, able and capable to go in and bid competitively to build Saskatchewan highways. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that these road builders are as

capable as any across North America.

For the member opposite, from Saskatoon Nutana, to speak without any justification and say that this government no longer builds highways, and the private contractors are not capable of building highways, is indeed an insult not only to the contractors themselves but to the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, any reasonable, common thinking, common sense type of person would know full well that the true competitive environment in Saskatchewan with our capable road builders delivers us a good product.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: -- Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we as a department, we as politicians, have a right and a responsibility to the people of Saskatchewan to look over these projects, to demand certain specifications, to hold back moneys if work is not done properly, and I believe that the people in the Department of Highways, and I believe myself as minister in charge, do a reasonably good job of ensuring a good product.

But I say once again, the members of the NDP Party should come to this legislature with a little more reasonableness than to blast away at the private contractors. It was an insult.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to go on to talk a little bit about the fact that this year we are in the second year of an enhanced highway rehabilitation program. That was a program announced last year -- a three-year, \$30 million enhanced rehabilitation program. And, Mr. Speaker, this is the second year of it. That rehabilitation program will exceed \$46 million. It will improve more than 550 kilometres of paved highway in this province.

Mr. Speaker, it is programs like this one that demonstrate a commitment by this government to improve and preserve the nearly 25,000 kilometres of provincial highways in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, indeed we have more miles or more kilometres of highway here in this province of ours per capita than probably any jurisdiction in North America. It is a massive system, Mr. Speaker, combined with, combined with the fact that we do not have ideal climatic conditions. We have a cold climate, Mr. Speaker, that makes it a little more difficult to manage that system.

But, Mr. Speaker, when you consider an extra \$10 million this year, when you consider last year the announcement of an additional \$30 million resurfacing or rehabilitation program, I believe, Mr. Speaker, that those figures speak for themselves. I am not about, Mr. Speaker, to advance the argument that all highways in Saskatchewan are in good condition. Indeed, we have some trouble spots. But I would say, Mr. Speaker, that the amount of money we're spending this year, nearly a quarter of a billion dollars, is very reasonable and will go a long ways to improving our highway system in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: -- Mr. Speaker, not only has the

Highways capital program benefitted from this budget but indeed the budget for the maintenance of our highways and our airports has also been increased. This year's maintenance budget, Mr. Speaker, is nearly \$90 million. And I speak again, Mr. Speaker, with a fair degree of pride, on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, that nearly \$90 million will be spent on the routine maintenance procedures to keep our highways in good condition. Our government indeed, Mr. Speaker, is committed to maintaining our highway system to provide a reasonable level of service to all road users in spite of the difficult economic times in which we are.

A well maintained highway system, Mr. Speaker, naturally has many benefits, not only to the automobile users but I'm speaking of the travelling public, to the truckers who are delivering goods out all across this province of ours. I'm speaking about the promotion of travel and tourism which in itself is a very major part of an economy today. So, Mr. Speaker, this commitment will reflect well to all of these different user groups, and I believe that most people in Saskatchewan would welcome this news that I have today.

When I talk about maintenance operations, Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about procedures that are carried out both by the private sector and by the public sector.

And at this time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to reaffirm a few of my comments from last year. You will know, Mr. Speaker, that in the Department of Highways and Transportation we have nearly 2,000 men and women who are responsible for maintaining our extensive highway system and coping with the varied climatic conditions that we have throughout the year. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to pay tribute to these men and women in the Department of Highways and Transportation who, in my opinion, and in many people's opinion, do a first-class job for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: -- These are dedicated men and women who do indeed take pride in their work.

And, Mr. Speaker, in turn, we have to look at the Saskatchewan taxpayers. And, Mr. Speaker, it is my humble opinion that the Saskatchewan taxpayers, as a whole, receive excellent value for their dollar, both in the highway maintenance operations, conducted primarily by people in the public sector, and in the construction end of it, primarily done by private contractors.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that that is a fair and a reasonable mix. You have, for the most part, private contractors in a keen, competitive industry or environment, bidding on jobs in that process, and they have a very difficult time, Mr. Speaker. The tendering process is extremely competitive these days, but those men and women in the private contracting areas are ready to meet that challenge.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, we have departmental forces, civil servants, members of the public sector, who do a very good job of many of the routine maintenance operations, many of the administrative operations that

have to take place to ensure a safe and a well-maintained highway system. I believe we have a good mix, Mr. Speaker, and I challenge the members of the opposition on their point that private contractors should not be in the game.

(1445)

Mr. Speaker, quality construction and cost-effective maintenance procedures together lead to a safer driving environment, and during 1988 Saskatchewan recorded the lowest number of traffic-related fatalities since 1963. Mr. Speaker, this represents a 15.3 per cent decrease from the 236 fatalities reported in 1987. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that these numbers show a growing awareness of traffic safety on our streets and on our roads.

Some of the other safety highlights recorded in 1988 include a decline of almost 32 per cent in the number of alcohol-related fatalities. Pedestrian and motorcycle fatalities decreased by 44 and 67 per cent respectively. Mr. Speaker, these significant fatality reductions must, in part, be attributed to this government's ongoing and new safety initiatives.

The people of Saskatchewan must also be commended for their responsible attitude towards highway safety. These initiatives include seat-belt use, Lights On For Life, alcohol countermeasures, safety improvements on our roadways, driver education, and publicity programs.

Now, Mr. Speaker, time and time again the members of the NDP Party whine and complain and are negative day after day. Mr. Speaker, I would ask respectively of the members of the NDP Party if they would not publicly stand up and commend these initiatives. Mr. Speaker, this government has done an excellent job. An excellent job. And when you look at the statistics, they prove it. Look at the statistics relative to alcohol-related fatalities. A decline of 32 per cent. Now, Mr. Speaker . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: -- Now, Mr. Speaker, we have the NDP members in opposition talking time and time again that the government is doing too much advertising, spending too many dollars on advertising. Well indeed, beyond a question of a doubt we do spend a lot of money on advertising, but I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, it is not the type of advertising done by the NDP Party back in the days prior to 1982. I remember the family of Crown corporations, rolling on my television set day after day after day, and frankly, Mr. Speaker, I got a little bit sick and tired of it. And frankly, Mr. Speaker, the people in the Melfort constituency got a little sick and tired of it too. And that is why they elected me to the Saskatchewan legislature.

And when I came here, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I wanted to see was some real advertising that impacted the real families of Saskatchewan. And when you talk about alcohol-related deaths and accidents on the streets and the roads of this province, Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about real advertising with a punch that relates directly to the real families of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: -- And a decrease of 32 per cent in alcohol-related fatalities is significant.

As well as the other programs, we have Lights On For Life. Seat belt usages is doing very well these days, Mr. Speaker. I'm talking about many safety improvements, many, many safety improvements on our highways in this province of Saskatchewan. I include many flashing lights at intersections. I have had many of the MLAs on the government side of the House that have come to me as Minister of Highways and say, you know, the people in my town, the people in my town have noticed a safety problem, a potential safety problem where we should have a little flashing light.

And my MLA colleagues here from all across rural Saskatchewan have come to me and they said, you know, the folks in my town think there's a problem there. The NDP wouldn't give them a flashing light, and I'd say, well let me take a look at it and we'll see if it's warranted. Well you bet your life, in the vast majority of cases those flashing lights were warranted, and we put many, many hundreds of those small but significant safety improvements up all across the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the 1989-90 highway budget contains two major safety motivated publicity programs. And I want to talk about one of these that relate directly to the employees in the Department of Highways and to the travelling public, in fact. I am talking about the orange zone advertising that you may well see on your television set. Well that program will definitely continue.

The program is designed to assist in highway worker safety. Through television, billboards and print ads, motorists will be reminded that it is the law to slow down to 60 kilometres per hour when you are passing highway workers. This campaign has been successful in the past and, Mr. Speaker, we do plan to continue it. And we plan to continue it despite the NDP opposition to such type of advertising.

We will also be adding this year, Mr. Speaker, some more advertising. It will be respecting The All Terrain Vehicles (safety) Act. These ads are the result of an Act that was brought in last year to promote the safe usage of all-terrain vehicles. Mr. Speaker, the department's ads are aimed at parents and young teenagers, and they will encourage these people to attend all-terrain vehicle safety courses and to follow laws related to all-terrain vehicles. And, Mr. Speaker, I whole-heartedly support such measures.

I do know, Mr. Speaker, that the MLAs on the government side of the House, the MLAs for the Progressive Conservative Party have spent hundreds, literally hundreds of hours in designing new legislation for all-terrain vehicles. I know, Mr. Speaker, that there have been significant numbers of deaths not only in Saskatchewan but across this entire country when it comes to all-terrain vehicles. And it is a very sad day, Mr. Speaker, when someone very young in life is taken away in an accident related to all-terrain vehicles.

The members on the Progressive Conservative side of the House have been very concerned about this. Legislation was introduced and was passed last year in the Saskatchewan legislature, and this year, Mr. Speaker, an extensive advertising campaign will begin, to ensure that as many people as possible know about the laws, and as many people as possible respect the dangers associated with improper use of all-terrain vehicles.

Mr. Speaker, earlier in my remarks I touched on what this new budget means for Saskatchewan's highways, and I'd now like to take the opportunity to go into a little bit more detail about these projects. And indeed I have a long and a comprehensive list of projects that will be undertaken in this province this year. And at the conclusion of my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I will table the project array listing.

Mr. Speaker, the 1989-90 program is comprised of 79 surfacing jobs, 38 grading jobs, and 21 bridge projects. These 138 projects, Mr. Speaker, will greatly enhance the quality of Saskatchewan's highways and will create approximately 6,700 jobs for the Saskatchewan economy.

Mr. Speaker, I do know that members of the NDP Party have said, well what is in the budget for job creation? Well, Mr. Speaker, one such example, one such example that sometimes, in some circles, that goes unnoticed, is the annual job creation projects within the Department of Highways and Transportation.

And, Mr. Speaker, when we are talking 6,700 jobs in the road building industry, I believe that that is significant. I believe that an increase of \$10 million this year in the Highway budget is significant when it comes to our highways, but is also significant when it comes to the real true jobs of the working men and women in Saskatchewan, and it is with pleasure that I relate that statistic to you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: -- This year, Mr. Speaker, the department is again concentrating on the resurfacing of Saskatchewan's highways. There are 47 resurfacing projects, totalling 550 kilometres of highway improvements. This work, Mr. Speaker, without question, is necessary to protect that fundamental investment in our \$5 billion highway system.

Specifically, five contracts will be tendered for work on Highway No. 11 between Regina and Saskatoon, two for grading and paving and three for resurfacing.

Mr. Speaker, without question, when you take a look at these numbers of contracts that are announced today in this project listing for Highway No. 11 between Regina and Saskatoon, this is a significant announcement, Mr. Speaker. This is an announcement that I give with a great deal of pride, and I believe that the travelling motorists in the province of Saskatchewan will greet this as very welcome news.

Mr. Speaker, combined with last year's work, scheduled work for this year, and some future construction, the old southbound lanes on Highway No. 11 should be

completed by the fall of 1990. And what I'm saying to you, Mr. Speaker, is that some people may ask, well is there a plan? Do you do some long range planning? When will you get to my section of highway? Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I, together with my colleagues from all over rural Saskatchewan, and indeed some from Regina and Saskatoon, spend a great deal of time in looking at the overall picture in Saskatchewan, in looking at where highways should be built, which highways need resurfacing, which highways need total reconstruction, which highways are leading to many of the industrial projects that we have ongoing in Saskatchewan, which highways should be emphasized when it comes to tourist related facilities.

And, Mr. Speaker, these are all indicative of a government that has a very strong emphasis on building and diversifying the economy, attracting tourists to this economy, and the best example that I can think of is my colleague from Cut Knife and Lloydminster. Up in the Lloydminster area, Mr. Speaker, you will well know that a major announcement was made some time ago with respect to an oil upgrader. Well, Mr. Speaker, in the oil patch and around oil upgraders there are very, very heavy traffic patterns, heavy vehicles, large weights, and, Mr. Speaker, more emphasis must be placed on areas like that where we are building and diversifying.

Mr. Speaker, indeed, in fact, when you add up all of the diversification projects in Saskatchewan, which means real true jobs and real prosperity and real hope for this province, they all have an impact on our highway system, and, Mr. Speaker, that is exactly why we are increasing the highway budget as we have this year.

Mr. Speaker, the program this year includes a major safety project that I do want to announce here today, and that is the alignment at the intersection of Highways No. 39 and 13 at Weyburn.

And, Mr. Speaker, I recall not too many months ago being down in the city of Weyburn for a cabinet meeting where members from the Progressive Conservative Party travelled as a cabinet to meet and greet the folks of Weyburn and area. And, Mr. Speaker, one of the major issues that was brought up at our meeting in Weyburn was the junction of Highway No. 39 and 13.

The member for Weyburn, in fact, who has been in the legislature here since 1982, has been a very strong proponent and a very strong push behind making some changes to this intersection. Mr. Speaker, I want to say to my colleague, the Minister of Education, the member for Weyburn, and to the people of Weyburn and area, that there will be improvements at the junction of Highway No. 39 and 13. Mr. Speaker, this new alignment I believe will very greatly improve visibility and in fact will reduce the potential for accidents at that busy intersection.

I want to talk, Mr. Speaker, a little bit about Highway 16, the Yellowhead, running from Lloydminster to the Manitoba border. And Highway 16, the Yellowhead, is scheduled for 10 improvement projects. The new underpass near Borden will be completed this year, and work will be commenced on a new underpass at Lloydminster.

Also in the Lloydminster area there are several other highway improvement projects to accommodate the increased traffic volume generated naturally by the new upgrader that I referred earlier to.

In addition to Highway 11 and 16, this year's project listing contains seven resurfacing and two paving jobs on the Trans-Canada Highway system.

Improvement to the Red Coat Trail is also included in this program, Mr. Speaker. And I am very pleased to announce that there will be a project on the Red Coat Trail on Highway No. 13, and I take a great deal of advice from the members of the Red Coat Trail Association who, on an annual basis, come and visit with me as minister.

And, Mr. Speaker, the MLA for Shaunavon in fact is a former member of this association. He represents his area and the Red Coat Trail Association very well. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, there is another MLA, and in fact where this highway will be rebuilt, who is a very important part of the Government of Saskatchewan, and I am very pleased to announce, Mr. Speaker, that on Highway No. 13, just east of Assiniboia, there will be a reconstruction program on the Red Coat Trail.

Mr. Speaker, this year's project listing also reflects the free trade agreement in fact that is going to increase the north-south traffic across this province. And as a result of this increase in traffic, I am pleased to announce today, Mr. Speaker, that a long-awaited and well-deserved project on Highway No. 8 north of the junction of No. 18 Highway will be undertaken.

(1500)

So, Mr. Speaker, I do know that for the many people in south-west Saskatchewan or south-east Saskatchewan who have lobbied me and have lobbied their MLA, the Deputy Premier, to put a project on No. 8 on the program for this year, I do know that that announcement will be met with a great deal of enthusiasm.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk a little bit about northern Saskatchewan, and northern Saskatchewan indeed as well benefits from the department's capital program. Work is scheduled for 10 projects, including three on Highway No. 2 between Lac La Ronge and Waskesiu, as well as oiling on Highway No. 106 in the vicinity of Big Sandy Lake.

Mr. Speaker, the department's budget also includes three projects for paving Saskatchewan's newest highway, Highway No. 41 and 41A. Two resurfacing contracts are also included for the older sections between Wakaw and Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, this year's program covers all areas of the province and strives to meet the needs of the highway users. And I speak of not only the automobile users and the truckers, but the tourists and the many, many different classes of users who are out there on our highway system.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Highways and Transportation has many areas of responsibility, and until

now I've only really talked about the highways side. But I'd now like to focus a little bit on the transportation side. In 1988 Canada experienced dramatic changes in the transportation field with a deregulated environment. The national safety code came into being, and new uniform weight and dimension regulations were passed. And, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan plays a major role in these changes, and I believe is really seen as a leader from across Canada.

Last year indeed was a year of change and a year of setting the stage for the future. And this year, Mr. Speaker, is the year of implementation -- 1989, Mr. Speaker, will be a year committed to safety in the trucking industry with more road inspections, free trip inspections, and regulated hours of service. These are all very important phases of the national safety code, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that these are all fair and reasonable and much needed initiatives that have taken place by this government.

With the emphasis on resurfacing our high volume highways, Saskatchewan truckers, along with all other motorists, will appreciate a 9 per cent increase in the department's capital budget. The Department of Highways and Transportation capital budget, Mr. Speaker, is now more than \$121 million -- or, it is exactly \$121 million. This funding, without question, will improve significantly our system.

The \$121 million is part of this government's new \$1.1 billion capital construction program for hospitals, schools, and highways. Mr. Speaker, and when you talk \$1.1 billion of capital construction, I would say to the members of the NDP Party, if you are looking for job creation, if you say there is not job creation in the budget, I would say, open your eyes; look and read at what is in the budget.

We're talking, together with Highways and Transportation and other capital projects in this budget, when we're talking schools, highways, and hospitals, and nursing homes. These type of capital projects, Mr. Speaker, in this year's budget are \$1.1 billion. What this means, Mr. Speaker, is growth and jobs and opportunity for Saskatchewan men and women.

Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Finance tabled his budget he also tabled a document titled *Challenges and Opportunities*. This is not just a title, Mr. Speaker. He meant real challenges and real opportunities, and that is just what this budget is all about. This budget contains many things that my constituents in the constituency of Melfort believe in. It states quality health care for Saskatchewan is "our number one priority."

The budget goes on to say that education is the (a) key to this province's future. It then states that the family is the foundation upon which our society is built. It then says, Mr. Speaker, that this government is committed to building healthy communities through the development of vibrant local economies, through contributions to the necessary community infrastructure, and through enhancing the quality of urban, rural and northern life.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance's list of challenges

and opportunities goes on to areas designed to protect our environment, our rural way of life, and building and diversifying our economy. In short, Mr. Speaker, I whole-heartedly endorse and support the Minister of Finance's budget. It is a budget, Mr. Speaker, that I believe fairly addresses the needs and the concerns of the Saskatchewan people today.

And, Mr. Speaker, I talk of the \$1.1 billion capital construction program in highways, and health, nursing homes, and education and schools. I speak, Mr. Speaker, of many of the inherent protections for the public of Saskatchewan contained within that budget. I'll bet you, Mr. Speaker, that if you take a look through that budget you will find an amount allocated to the home mortgage protection program. And, Mr. Speaker, I have to get back to that in my address today because across this province of Saskatchewan today, indeed, interest rates are a real significant event in people's lives.

And, Mr. Speaker, you look across this country of Canada -- and this is contrary to what the NDP say -- but look across this country of Canada and will you find one province that protects home owners' mortgages, their interest payments, at nine and three-quarters per cent? I ask that question: will you find it across the country of Canada? The answer is no.

I ask the second relevant question, Mr. Speaker: would the members of the NDP Party back in 1981, when interest rates were 18 and 19 per cent, did they have a program to protect home owners at nine and three-quarters per cent? Well, Heavens above, Mr. Speaker, the answer was no. And I say to the members of the NDP Party that they are sanctimonious people of hypocrisy when they stand up here and say, well what are you doing about interest rates? If we were there, we'd be there to help.

The real facts of the matter are, Mr. Speaker, they were not there to help. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, if you take a look in this budget might you find in there student loans for young people in Saskatchewan? I'll bet you would find some money in there, and the real question is, Mr. Speaker, what is the interest rate allocated to student loans? The answer is, Mr. Speaker, under a Progressive Conservative administration student loans are protected to a rate of 6 per cent.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: -- I ask the question, Mr. Speaker: if you go all across this country, will you find another province that protects students' interest loans at 6 per cent? The answer is no, Mr. Speaker. I ask the second question: would the NDP protect our students at 6 per cent? Well the answer is no.

Mr. Speaker, I'll bet you if you take a look in that budget you will find in there, you will find in there an amount allocated to rebate to Saskatchewan motorists the full 10 cent a litre tax placed on the sale of gasoline. Mr. Speaker, I ask you: across this country of Canada, will you find another government that protects the taxpayers like we do by rebating their fuel tax to them.

And maybe for some of them it isn't a great deal of money; maybe it's 150 or \$200. Well I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of families in Saskatchewan who very much support and agree with getting that cheque for 150 or \$200 back. Mr. Speaker, I believe that that is a fair and a reasonable program.

Mr. Speaker, if you take a look in that budget that was announced the other day, well, you find some programs that will help and assist the farm families of this province. I would suggest that you will find many programs and many policies that are helping to keep our struggling farmers alive throughout rural Saskatchewan today.

Mr. Speaker, if you take a look at the entire . . . almost the entire government caucus, you will find men and women who are farmers or have farm backgrounds who have a good firm knowledge and understanding of what is happening in rural Saskatchewan today. And indeed, Mr. Speaker, I stand here today addressing this budget with a great deal of pride that this government respects, respects the full knowledge that the farm industry is the backbone of this province.

And indeed, if you take a look at the programs initiated, many of them in this budget, it is substantiated by facts such as natural gas, Mr. Speaker, that is being spread across this province of ours to many small towns and villages and indeed rural farms.

You will find, Mr. Speaker, in this budget, reference to individual line service. What I'm speaking of, Mr. Speaker, is private telephones for rural people in Saskatchewan. These private telephones, Mr. Speaker, do two things. They provide a real convenience to rural people that should be in rural Saskatchewan, and they also create a tremendous number of jobs.

I do know in the Melfort constituency alone we have one or two contractors who were working with SaskTel, and who do a very good job, and it's employing people in my constituency. Mr. Speaker, these are important programs for the people of Saskatchewan.

I could talk for hours, Mr. Speaker, of the protections that this administration has put in place for rural people. But, Mr. Speaker, I think they are very well-known across rural Saskatchewan, and I believe the people of rural Saskatchewan, for the most part, accept these programs and accept the efforts of this administration.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to touch on the rural way of life. I want to touch on how important rural communities are. And I was very pleased, from a personal point of view, to see a new culture and recreational facilities grant program introduced by the Minister of Parks, Recreation and Culture. And, Mr. Speaker, that program is designed so it is a flexible program, so it is a program that frankly is going to favour rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it's not the intention of this government to create any disharmony. But we know that when you build a skating rink in this little community, that skating rink costs just as much to build there as it does in a bigger community, and I believe that people in rural Saskatchewan and people in urban Saskatchewan will

accept that. I was pleased to see that job creation program, a program that will indeed enhance the quality of life in small town Saskatchewan. I was pleased to see that introduced. I commend the member for Turtleford, as a matter of fact.

Mr. Speaker, I also commend the minister in charge of Urban Affairs. There is a massive capital grant program, Mr. Speaker, that will go a long way to fixing the infrastructure in rural Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, that is an important part of today's society. In today's society, Mr. Speaker, of course we have ever increasing pressures on the social side of things like health care and social services and education and day care. And those items are indeed important to be addressed.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is also incumbent upon a responsible administration to address the issues of infrastructure. I'm talking of sidewalks, I'm talking of streets, I'm talking of water, and I'm talking of sewer. And I look to a great deal of pride at the Minister of Urban Affairs with his, I believe, a \$100 million program for infrastructure in small town, Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, in addition there is another one of my colleagues whom I work very closely with who has a very keen interest and a good understanding and knowledge of roads and rural Saskatchewan, and that is the Minister of Rural Development. And I was very pleased to see in the budget his annual allocation, and I say, Mr. Speaker, that it is a very large amount of money, an amount of money that is much needed in rural Saskatchewan. And I do know on a personal basis many of the councillors and reeves from across this province, and I do know the respect that they have for our Minister of Rural Development who announced major initiatives just the other day.

I was particularly interested, Mr. Speaker, in this budget of the rural municipality capital grant program, the first program of its kind ever introduced in the history of this province. For years and years, Mr. Speaker, we have had capital grant programs for urban centres and rural towns, but now, Mr. Speaker, we have allocated an additional 3 or \$3.5 million for a capital program in rural Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: -- And, Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is programs such as that, programs such as the Highways and Transportation budget of nearly a quarter of a billion dollars, that is proof positive that this government is indeed serious and committed to the infrastructure of this province.

And it's just my pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to serve as Minister of Highways and Transportation and to be here today to announce a very significant program for the people of Saskatchewan respecting highways all across our province. And, Mr. Speaker, I would now like to officially table the project listing for all construction projects of the 1989-90 year. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1515)

Mr. Goulet: -- Mr. Speaker, I will be covering the budget on a general overview as I start. And what I will also do, Mr. Speaker, is to look at the budget in regards to how it affects real people in northern Saskatchewan and communities, and to give you feedback of some of those things that people in northern Saskatchewan communities are saying about some of the policies of the government.

And as is usual for me, Mr. Speaker, I will also say a few words in Cree and outline for the people back in my constituency the general outline of the budget as it stands, so that they could better understand the budgetary impact on them and their lives. And in many cases, a lot of the seniors who just understand Cree, and so on, always find it a pleasure when we send some tapes back to the local level so that indeed they can understand the proceedings of this legislature, you know, a lot more clearly.

So with that, I will start out by saying a few words then in Cree to provide a basis of understanding, you know, for people at the community level.

(The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.)

I guess in overview, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I was telling the people in the most general aspect was that while the budget continues in its focus of being highly positive for the big corporations and the friends of the Tories, the budget doesn't look at the people who are trying hard to make a living, whether it is people who are trapping or fishing, whether it's people who are trying to work in our industries, whether it's mining or forestry or whatever, and also a lot of the small businesses who are bankrupt at an increasing high rate in this province. And a lot of the budget does not speak to these issues, basically because there are cut-backs in those specific areas.

So I guess in the most general level, as an introduction, again it continues the six years of neglect that we have come to see as part of the PC strategy in economic development, and also in social and cultural development in this province.

The first thing I would like to deal with, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that whole issue of revenue. We all know that when we want to do business, when we want to do work with our children at the school level, or we look at the seniors in our hospitals, or whether we look at the farmers in our province, or whatever, we always have to look at how much money we do have and where do we get our money from. Where do we get our revenue from? How much money is there? and so on.

I must report that I was extremely disappointed with the budget again. I thought that the government would listen to the people. What the people were saying in southern Saskatchewan and what people were saying in northern Saskatchewan was that the big corporations have to learn how to pay, that indeed the big corporations are making millions and hundreds of millions of dollars and they are not paying their fair share of what is occurring in the province of Saskatchewan.

And as I looked at specific examples, I saw the issue in northern Saskatchewan where, on the one hand, I saw the uranium companies taking out \$700 million worth of uranium in the North, and I looked up in the past two years that SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation) which became then privatized to Cameco (Canadian Mining Energy Corporation) had made over \$110 million.

Many people are looking at grants in the North and trying to make a living in terms of recreation programs for the youth, or making sure that they provide enough money so that their youth can go to school, and so on. But what I see is the very basis of this government, the very basis of uncaring, the very basis where, while they will not look at the people in the North and help them out, and while they will not make a strong stand for the people, they will make a strong stand on behalf of the big corporations -- tremendous amounts of money.

And as I looked this past year, they continued their policy on uranium. And many people have been asking them for more money from the big corporations, you know, to be . . . so that the government could stand up to the corporations, and so that they pay a little more, so that they can have their fair share. But instead of that they have continued their policy of providing the give-away. The give-away last year was 33 per cent of the basic royalty rate. It provided another 7 to \$10 million for the big corporations just in uranium development alone.

And what people were saying is this: look, they already make \$110 million. Why don't they just provide us another 10 million or another 20 million for economic development at the community level? But no, the government makes a tough stand on increasing the budget so that more people can go to jails, and so on. They increase their expenditure in the area of justice and more jails, but they will not provide money and take the money from the big corporations and transfer it over to the people.

Instead, what we hear from the government -- and this is a strategy and I'll say more about this in my specific example later on -- what the government will say is this: what we need to do is put more money in the hands of big business. And what that will do is it transfers into jobs for us. If you put more money, more jobs will be there. And they've been selling this idea all the way through the budget as I listened. I listened till the words privatization and diversification were coming out just in the same way that I've heard the rhetoric before for the past six years.

We were open for business right from '82 to the past couple of years when privatization came to be the "in" thing because of Maggie Thatcher's advice. And we thought that we had learned a lesson in the 1930s in Saskatchewan history. We saw that we needed to work together in co-ops at helping small business and also in helping build Crown corporations.

We saw Crown corporations as a safety valve so that when the big corporations disappear to Japan or disappear to China or disappear back to the United States, that we have a basis for money right here in the province of Saskatchewan.

And when I looked at the budget, it struck me that here is a government hell-bent on the ideology, just a blind commitment to privatization and giving away all our assets and all our earnings to big companies.

The only saving grace in that budget that I saw was \$200 million from the Crown corporations. If it wasn't for the Crown corporations, a lot of our health programming -- and I recall the hospital in La Ronge -- a lot of these things would not be possible. And this was the reason why Crown corporations were built, is because we knew from the history of the Dirty Thirties when the last PC government was around and when privatization was the only approach that they believed in, that indeed the money would leave this province, and our assets, and we would be selling everything out.

So what we see is a sell-out of our forests in the North and a sell-out of our mines. And we see a sell-out in southern Saskatchewan of more and more farms being turned over to the banks.

And as I look at the budget, I also look at one other area. We talk a lot about education in our budget, and we talk a lot about small business. We hear time after time, every Tory person who speaks, that the small business is the engine of truth. And I hear it all the time, and I've been hearing it ever since I've come here to the legislature.

And I looked at the basis for revenue generation again this year, and what I looked at was money being taken from the small-business sector and from the schools, who try and take our children over to the schools on school buses. The school boards and the small businesses have to pay this gas tax, and the gas tax is now up to 10 per cent. The children suffer, the small businesses suffer, because they have to pay extra so that we pay for the big corporate give-aways that we've been used to from this government. So we see also not only 10 per cent for unleaded gas but 12 per cent now for leaded gas. So the engine of growth in this province is being put down in this budget.

And not only that, I looked at the huge give-aways for the big corporations, and then I looked at the small-business area on economic development. And what did I find? I looked at that, and I looked at the business development grant in this province, and it was cut back by 33 per cent -- 33 per cent cut-back on the business development grant. And here we're supposed to be providing for small businesses, and yet they get cut back by over a million dollars at 33 per cent.

I also looked at the industrial development grants, because we always hear about industrial development and how we're going to change this and change that through the privatization schemes of this government. And what do I see in industrial development grants? Well, a 50 per cent cut-back -- a 50 per cent cut-back. And here it is they talk about, you know, helping business in this province, and there's a \$5 million cut-back in the industrial development grants. I find that absolutely amazing -- 50 per cent cut-back on industrial development grants and also a 33 per cent cut-back on the business development grants.

So there seems to be a real lack of substance between what the PC government says in regards to business development and what they do when they start raising and overtaxing them when they're trying hard to make a living. And also the very fact that, you know, the grants themselves are cut back by 50 per cent.

The only thing that I saw in the budget that was really new from the Tories in the past six years, the only new thing that I saw was what I would call bingo economics. I looked at the budget in amazement, and I watched this thing and I saw that, my goodness, we were being hard pressed for revenue, and now we're going to have to start attacking the bingo players and the lottery players and stuff like that.

(1530)

And I looked at this and I said to myself, well don't they know that a lot of these people who do bingo at the local level are charities, and a lot of them are trying to resolve the youth recreation problems, you know, at that level because a lot of that money is utilized for that person. And now we're taxing our youth recreation, and we're taxing our people who are trying to run a lot of the local community programs. And I thought to myself, well that's another fine way of taxing the poor.

You know, they weren't able to get \$110 million from the uranium mining companies alone. They wouldn't take the 110 million and maybe take 20 million from it. What they will do is now utilize bingo economics in this province. And I find that absolutely amazing, you know. For us to start relying on gambling, you know, as a basis for economic development is a sad case in the history of Saskatchewan. When we have to rely upon our children's future and our seniors and our sick in order to pay for them, well, my goodness, I find that absolutely amazing for Saskatchewan history. And I really find that really shameful, as a member says.

When I look at the revenue, I also look at the fact that a lot of working people in this province are already paying a strong share of our health costs, our education costs, and so on. And many people don't realize that in terms of money they provide ... everybody who works provides \$869 million worth of money to our revenue. And that's not often said because everybody ... the PCs try to think that all the revenue comes from the big corporations. And I looked at the corporations, and the revenue that comes from there is 148 million. In other words, people who work and people who do small-business development and that type of thing in regards to income tax, they are paying six times more than the great big corporations who are making a mint from our Saskatchewan resources and our Saskatchewan workers.

So when I look at this overall aspect of the PC government, one conclusion that somebody can say from that is that while we hurt our small businesses and we hurt our farmers and that we hurt our workers, the end result, we can say, is that gambling is divine, and I'm using the word with a small "d" of course. And that to me is just not the way to do economic development and revenue.

The people are saying, from northern Saskatchewan and from southern Saskatchewan, let's take more from the large corporations. Why do they have to run off to China or the United States or Japan or South Africa so that, you know, they can take the assets away from us and the businesses away from us? We want to be able to say that, look, let them also pay a fair share of the burden that we all are burdened with in this province of Saskatchewan. So that's my comment in regards to the revenue section of the budget.

And the other thing, then I looked at the expenditure aspect of the budget to find out what this government was trying to plan for the future of our children, for the future of our youth, for the future of our workers, for the future of our small businesses, our farmers, and so on. And what I found out is that I was amazed . . . I think this government is scared to used the word job creation or working people -- all of these things. And what I looked at is that there was no job creation program, and I find it absolutely amazing, especially in this historical context.

What we are looking at today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is this: we are looking at a situation where there is 43,000 people that are out of jobs in this province. That means less revenue for us. That means less business money being spent at the community level -- 43,000 people out of work. And when I look at it that's the official stats.

Many people in the past six years have quit going to the CEIC (Canada Employment, Immigration and Customs) offices where they register for employment, because they have continuously -- after five, six times -- have not found jobs so they never register in this offices. So this is the official list. It's more like 80,000, 200,000 people out of work.

I also look at the fact of the official stats of the welfare system -- and the government prides itself on welfare reform. I look at the stats and I examined the figures in 1981 and the figures in 1989, and what has happened is that there is 25 per cent increase in social welfare in this province. There's now over 60,000 people on welfare in the province of Saskatchewan, and the government tries to let on that indeed we have less welfare in the system, and yet there was a 25 per cent increase. That is amazing.

And now that all of these people are not only unemployed, there's many people leaving. We see a record number of people leaving our province. A lot of our skilled youth, a lot of our skilled workers, our small-business sector, our farmers are leaving this province basically because they haven't got a basis to make a living and because there's no jobs for them.

As I look at who left in the province, I would estimate about 25,000 people leaving last year, and I looked at the net number that left last year, it was about 16,000. So here you have a situation, even in last month alone, I looked at the figures on February. In one month we have over 6,000 people leaving. That's tremendous drain and a shocking aspect of our Saskatchewan society today. And everybody's leaving. We're exporting the best of what we've got. That's what's happening in this province with this PC budget.

And as I looked at the . . . and I looked at the research this year . . . Canadian research comparing, you know, Canadian . . . the different provinces, we were one of the best provinces, not only in regards to being looked upon positively by the business community, but in regards to unemployment rates and in regards to everything else in terms of education and in health and so on.

And I looked at it this year, Canadian research telling me that one-quarter of our people are now below the poverty line. As the teachers are out there watching the children, one out of every four children is below the poverty line. And as we look at the people who are there in the many sectors of Saskatchewan society, it's a real shame.

It is absolutely disgraceful in this day and age to be able to say Saskatchewan was once a leader, is now in at the same level as Newfoundland, that we are second to the last in regards to the record of standing up for our children and our families. There seems to be no caring any more. And this is the sad tragedy of PC government policies, basically because they don't want to spend money in the area of job creation, which allows people to put food on the table for their children. That, to me, is a disgrace in Saskatchewan history.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: -- In regards to these areas of cut-back, I've mentioned that there was a 33 per cent cut-back on business development grants and also a 50 per cent cut-back in industrial development grants. I also saw the Tories continue with the policy of the old Indian economic development, \$2 million cut-back. I thought that they might this year really change. I thought that they would bring back that \$2 million that they cut back.

But what happens is this: all of a sudden in the Indian economic development package, which was cut back the other year from 3 million to 1 million, I saw an increase of \$300,000. And I thought to myself, my goodness, they're finally listening; they're finally really paying attention; at least, you know, they've made a big jump of 1 million to \$1.3 million.

And I had a quick look . . . more careful examination because I always know that the Minister of Finance is always cooking books and is always using the game of robbing Peter to pay Paul. And I looked at it, and I looked at the training budget. Sure enough, native training programs were cut by \$500,000. They were cut by \$500,000. And here it was they put \$300,000 in Indian economic development to make it look like they were putting money into it.

Then I looked at the other point on native business development. And then they put \$100,000 there so they've transferred, they took 500 million . . . I mean \$500,000 from the training programs, and a lot of people need a lot of training, and what they did was they transferred it over to the economic development program, but it was just a case of robbing Peter to pay Paul.

And as I looked for the suggestions by people in regards to economic development, I saw the minister stand up just a

little while ago, the Minister of Highways, and I mean we live on fairly dangerous roads on Highway 102 north, but absolutely no mention in the budget about Highway 2 north and 905. And this is the place where the great big roads with a lot of dangerous chemicals travel on a daily basis.

Everybody is becoming more environmentally conscious, and especially in the transportation of chemical, dangerous goods, but they will not improve our roads so that indeed there is greater safety, you know, for the people who travel on our northern Saskatchewan roads. All he talked about was Waskesiu and La Ronge -- you know, the southern edge of northern Saskatchewan.

And the other thing that I looked at is, I was looking for . . . he talked about natural gas. A lot of people were saying, why don't you bring natural gas, which would be a basis for job creation, into northern Saskatchewan? You know, going through Montreal Lake where the reserve would be able to get natural gas, Weyakwin, and also La Ronge, you know, for the tourism development, you know, that they always talk about and so on.

But there was nothing for the natural gas, you know, for northern Saskatchewan. And a lot of people have been talking about that to make sure that we could get jobs from that. But of course they don't care. All they will do is give, you know, \$110 million and not take away anything from the uranium mining company.

I think I must have touched a nerve because a lot of them were chattering from their seats just a few minutes ago. Sometimes I feel that . . . you know, when we talk about things in a serious nature, sometimes you feel they are not listening. But sometimes they listen a bit. Sometimes they know that, you know, things hurt a little bit, and then you hear a little bit of a chatter from their seats.

The other thing I find in regards to jobs is that we hear a lot of jobs in regards to privatization, and I see a lot of people saying, look, when we are sending away our forests, you will get jobs. And of course that's far from the truth. We've gotten less jobs in regards to forestry contracts and jobs in the Weyerhaeuser give-away of before. And I thought that we would get a new idea, and what we got was the privatization of our mines in Cameco.

(1545)

But what happens? We said this last year, we said very clearly, the privatization of Cameco will lead to loss of jobs because of the consolidation process. And of course when we mentioned that to the Deputy Premier last year, he said not to worry. But this year, when we looked at it last week, we lost 100 jobs.

When we look at northern Saskatchewan, which has 50 to 80 per cent unemployment, we see this as a very tragic piece of action. I mean, it is really, really shameful when I can see a government just break their promises time after time. They just simply did not tell the truth last year. They said no jobs would be . . . and then we lost 35 jobs at the Star Lake mine. They said they would do the planning so that, you know, when there's any transition, there would be no jobs, but we're seeing that to be completely untrue.

We simply cannot believe, you know, the promises that they make when they come to the North. And I must congratulate the new minister of northern Saskatchewan, and she did an excellent job in regards to, of course, spending our advertising dollars, you know, to advertise the fact that she toured the North. And I must congratulate her for touring the North because, you know, I think it's important for her to start learning about the North and dealing with some of the issues.

And I saw her. She seemed to be saying how great things were in this place of paradise in the North. But the reality is, is while she spends a lot of money on gloss and a lot of money on print and a lot of money on Saskatchewan advertising, you know, the problem of unemployment is still there. I certainly hope that the ideas that she said would be introduced into the North finally take place, because what I said to her through the throne speech is that we have heard these promises before, and I hope that this time you can do something about dealing with the economic crisis in northern Saskatchewan.

And there was a bit of an amusing thing that happened in regards to the thing, and I'd like to mention it. I mentioned it in the throne speech. And as I looked at the minister travelling through the North, she mentioned that the North was alive. And I thought to myself, well that's an astounding revelation for this government. They finally found that the people of northern Saskatchewan were alive, after a period of seven years.

Of course people shouldn't really laugh, because in 1982 that they said in their highway maps -- and I remind the Minister of Highways who was here a little while ago talking about economic development in the mines that his highway mines were . . . had this comment that said that the North is populated with beautiful lakes and rivers, but no people.

See, the PC government's strategy was one where they felt that the North has only got mines where we will exploit them. It's only filled with forests where the big businesses can exploit them, but it doesn't have any people, and we'll just go in there and exploit. And really when you look at it, some people, you know, from across the floor may find that amusing but, you know, I find that, you know, a sad aspect of Saskatchewan history. It's a sad commentary.

And the other thing I look at in the budget is a real sense of fairness and justice. Saskatchewan history has been one where people learned to work together. They shared . . . we shared land, we shared resources and all of that, and a lot of this feeling of compassion, you know, for other people.

I noticed when I talked to a lot of the elders in the community level, they will say they worked, you know, with people in the forestry areas or the mining areas, in the farming areas to build farms, to build, you know, our forestry industry and our mining industry. And one of the things that we see is this lack of fairness and this lack of sharing from this government.

And especially it becomes very clear in regards to Indian

land entitlement. I looked at the budget to see whether or not there would be anything on Indian land entitlement or mention of finally fulfilling something in Saskatchewan's past.

And I thought that they might come out with something in this budget to help that process out and to finally accomplish, you know, a sense of justice that a lot of people in Saskatchewan want to see. Because a lot of people in Saskatchewan history know the problem of land. People during the rise of industrial development in Europe, many people knew that they were chased off their land in Europe to come to Canada. And many of the people who now have made a living on the farms and on northern communities, and so on, know the importance of land.

And also the Indian people from this country have been trying to deal with this issue of the land question which is just not resolved. And we look at it. And 100 years ago when a lot of people moved here, people recognized that the CPR got 23 million acres of land. The big business of the day in regards to western settlement -- although a lot of the western settlers found it very difficult because of the promises and the fact that the Tory government of the day did not live up to their promises, and that's why there was a lot of discontent in the West about 100 years ago. A lot of the people recognized that the PC Tory government of the day helped out the CPR by 23 million acres of land. Hudson Bay Company also was helped out to the tune of 7 million acres.

But when we look at the Indian land claims of the day, there was about 1.5 million acres about 100 years ago. And I look at it 100 years later and I say to myself, well, the PC government doesn't change policies much. It's still back in the Dark Ages of fairness.

And I saw that here it was right in my backyard in northern Saskatchewan -- Weyerhaeuser, American corporation. The American giant, Weyerhaeuser, getting 12.5 million acres of land -- 12.5 million acres of land. This is in a time when a lot of farmers are losing their land to the banks; at time when Indian people from this province are asking for a fulfilment of the legal obligations of the 1930 resources transfer agreement, that indeed that the government would live up to the law in that case and finally serve justice to the issue of Indian land entitlement.

What the people are asking for is approximately 1.4 million acres of land -- 1.4 million acres of land. But what do the Tories do? They give 12.5 million acres of our best land to Weyerhaeuser. And a lot of people from Saskatchewan are starting to say, hey, where's the fairness in this? Where is the fairness in this? Where is the justice for people who are trying hard to get, you know, part of the land in Saskatchewan so that they can have an economic base for their children and their families, like anybody else in Saskatchewan history.

So when I looked at that, I saw a tremendous lack of fairness to the issue of Indian land entitlement in this province. I saw it also in another aspect. Many of us, when we looked at the budget this year, we looked at our population figures of Saskatchewan in 1989, and we looked at Saskatoon, the municipal grants, we looked at

up-to-date population figures of 1989. But what is the government policy in regards to Indian land claims on Indian population on how much land they will get, you know, which the '76 formula would provide for is 1.4 million acres?

What the government says is that we're not even going to follow the '76 formula which provided for 1.4 million acres. What we will do is date of first survey, which at that time was about a hundred years ago, in many cases, and the date of first survey would look at the population of Indian people in the reserves at that time, a hundred years ago.

But here the province will look at the population figures of the people of Saskatchewan in 1989, but they will only look at the population figures of Indian people at the date of first survey. And I really find that to be lacking in any sense of justice or fairness, and I think that needs to be re-examined by this government.

And I certainly hope, as they look at the tremendous \$80 million profits that Weyerhaeuser gets from the land, you know, of 12.5 million acres that they gave to the American giant Weyerhaeuser, that they start thinking the same way in regards to the Indian land claims. Indian people want a land base so that they can do economic development in the same way which provides tremendous huge profits for the Weyerhaeusers of the world.

And as I looked also at the other aspects of the budget, I can only say this much in summary. Sure we've got a lot more money again in this budget for privatization and for providing the continued good give-aways to the big corporations. But we haven't learned in the past seven years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we haven't learned because we haven't given the money directly to the small business, private sector, which are the engines of . . . (inaudible) . . . What we have done is we have taxed them more through the gas tax. What we have done is not provided more money for Indian economic development or for many other economic developments. Instead we have cut them back.

What the government does not learn is put the hands of the money into the people of this province, to the hands of the people who have built this province. What they are thinking about is the big corporations in the United States, in China, in Japan, in South Africa. And I feel that's the wrong way to approach economic development. If they want to come here in Saskatchewan, let them pay a fair share. If they make \$110 million profit in the past couple of years, why don't they turn \$50 million to the people of Saskatchewan so that we don't have long waiting lists in our health hospitals . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: -- . . . so that we are able to do a lot of these things that our children want in recreational programs and in the many things that we had been used to getting in the past.

And I must say that what the people are telling me is that whether it's the North or the South, as I travel around,

people want to work. That's what they're telling us. People want education. People want training. People want to be involved in development right from the initial stages of development to the final stages of something being there. People want to be involved all the way through, and they want to be part of development.

But what we're seeing is just a huge give-away of our assets, a huge give-away of our jobs. We are losing and losing. And what people are saying is, I hope that in this budget the government starts listening. But what I can report is this, that they haven't. All they will do is, when I mention something, they will do idle chatter or they will sometimes make fun out of certain things that are very important for people's lives, so a mistake that the budget has had a sad impact on people.

Sometimes it's very hard, Mr. Speaker, to really have a feeling for this -- what it really means when someone is hurt by the system. What is the cost of the tremendous unemployment rate? What is the cost? And I've said many times in this legislature, for every 1 per cent unemployment rate, there is 4 per cent rise in suicides. For every unemployment, less money and revenue is generated, so that there is less money for us in health and education.

When I looked at this, I've looked at it terms of not only a vague generalization of people. What I want to do, Mr. Speaker, is give you a case, a human case, which I call a human tragedy in Saskatchewan history.

Just at the earlier part of this past month, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was a person by the name of Joseph Morin from Sandy Bay in northern Saskatchewan. And Mr. Joseph Morin was like a lot of the young people in the community level. And Mr. Joseph Morin had lived with his mother, and he helped his mother out. He did all kinds of odd jobs. He would sometimes go and cut wood, maybe, for \$10 a load in his ski-doo, and you know, help the people out at the community level just to earn a little bit of money so he wouldn't have to go on welfare and stuff like that. And he would, many times he would go out and do a little bit of hunting to get food in the house, you know, for himself and for his mother.

(1600)

And what happened in this case also is he used to work for line cutting for northern development, and also he would go out forest fire fighting and so on. So he was a guy at the community level who lived a fairly regular type of existence. He didn't know how to read or write, so he had a limited amount of education from the traditional sense of how we look at education.

And one day -- this is what happened to him -- he had a ski-doo which he made his livelihood from. One day his ski-doo was stolen, and he decided he would go and get his ski-doo. And on his way back the RCMP stopped him and he was then taken to court for driving while impaired. And he was also -- although he made his living from this -- he was also charged with a \$400 fine. So here you have a person trying hard to make a living using his ski-doo. His ski-doo is stolen; he wants to go and get it; the RCMP stop him; he ends up with a \$400 fine.

He's the type of person who is usually scared of the law, basically, because he has never broken the law in his whole life. He has abided by the law, and all he hears is stories about what happens in jails, and so on. So he thinks about it, and he probably talks to his mother, he probably talks to a few people, you know, about his predicament, and he looks around for help, he looks around for help. But we know that the native court workers' program was cut out; we know that there is no help there because the government had cut that back.

There is no help in the fine options program because the person who worked in it hadn't been informed about this person's situation. So here we had a case where there's tremendous stress for a person who first meets up with the law. He doesn't ... he can hardly speak Cree -- I mean English -- and he's given sentencing, and he doesn't get any help at all. And he goes on like this for a little while and he puts himself in a lot of stress and he ends up shooting himself. He takes his own life basically because the system has failed him, basically because of the cut-backs that occurred before. Two years ago when we raised that issue, we said something wrong would happen with the cut-backs. We are seeing now things like this happening.

And when we look at this case, what people are saying is: when are we going to stop this uncaring? When are we going to start listening to the people like the Joseph Morins of the world? Why do we have to wait till somebody has to die? Why do we have to wait for the Marlon Severight Pippin cases before we will do anything? Why do we have to wait to get publication of news, even this past weekend, of the Donald Marshall case where a person spent 11 years in prison without him ever having committed it. When are we going to listen to the people? When are we going to start doing something about it?

And I looked at this budget, and I thought there might be a reinstatement of the native court workers' program, but I did not see it. I thought I might see in this budget greater help for even the group home right in Sandy Bay, Oskietawin Group Home which helps the youth try and adjust after they run into problems. What I saw in that youth program in Sandy Bay was cut-backs; that a lot of people were not even directed and referred to that group home.

The last time I visited it in January there was very few people there. I talked to the staff and they said, the social services people have quit referring to us. Today I phoned again. There was only seven that were referred there to this day. You have ready people working there at the community level who volunteered a lot of their time and finally got a little bit of money to get this program, but we don't even refer them. We cut back and we don't even refer things to people who are trying to stand up and help their youth. And this is the sad aspect, when I look at this budget and I say to myself, that's the reality.

Last year when I raised the issue of the other Morin case in Ile-a-la-Crosse that died basically because there was a mix-up in that new drug prescription plan, basically because he spoke Cree and did not understand the

process, I raised that with the minister last year. Of course he denied that that was the cause.

But I know, and everybody knows in the North, that in many cases when you get into a second language situation we have regular problems of interpreting regular changes in our system. But when you have things like . . . and people don't have up-front money on a drug prescription plan, it hurt a lot of people. I know that many people in the North had to trade between drugs and food, and that's the reality of the cut-backs. It's real meanness of the government to really not have this caring.

I hope that as I look into the future on the next budget, that some action will be taken to cases such as the Joseph Morin case, as the Pippin case, so that we don't have to wait for other people to die before we act. We want to be able to say, yes, we have taken concrete measures to start resolving this issue; yes, maybe we should even have an inquiry to be able to deal effectively with this issue and many other issues that are going to be facing us because of the tremendous strains of the continued cut-backs of this province.

And as I look to the overall issue of individuals, I must also talk about -- and I mentioned the Joseph Morin case and the tragedy that occurred there -- I will talk to you now, Mr. Speaker, about the history of one community in Sandy Bay and its experience with privatization of a private corporation.

Last year we honoured the late Angus Bear with a Saskatchewan Award of Merit, you know, for his contribution to Saskatchewan history, and he died this past year. And in 1984-85 I had spent some time to do interviewing in Sandy Bay about the history of Sandy Bay. And I'm telling this story as a concrete example, as a human example, of what a lot of communities have to meet up with in northern Saskatchewan, so that the Saskatchewan public can have a sense of what it means.

When I looked at Sandy Bay, they used to . . . while we are dealing with the topic of privatization of a lot of our Crown corporations, you know, SGI, Saskatchewan Power Corporation, well let me tell the people of Saskatchewan, we used to run northern Saskatchewan with a private company. It was called Churchill River Power Corporation. It was a subsidiary of Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting.

Many people know that Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting also worked in Africa. And there were many parallels to the history of Sandy Bay and the history of what happened in South Africa, and a lot of people don't understand that about our history in the North. When I looked at it back in 1927, when the late Angus Bear was taking the engineers and the mining big bosses to the site, they paid him \$1, and so he kept on doing this work of transporting people back and forth. Once they found the Island Falls site, what they started paying him was 50 cents. As soon as the private company found out where the dam was, they didn't pay him a dollar any more, they paid him 50 cents.

A lot of those workers, though, were determined to work there, so they kept working there in basically the

pick-and-shovel jobs of the day. In many cases they were paid less than other people for the same job. Between 1930 and '35, while a few of them were paid in money, they started to be paid in kind. The workers from the community started to be paid, not in cash but in food.

I asked them what they were mainly given in terms of food, and they said mainly meat and a bit of this and that, depending on what the construction camp had. And they said . . . Well what kind of meat, I said. Well mainly bologna. So I asked them about the long hours that they worked, the extra long hours, because they told me they didn't get paid overtime because there was no overtime in those days. And they said they basically got more bologna.

And when we looked at this company, it expanded in 1935, with another turbine and generator being put in. The people learned about organization from other workers, and they said, why are you putting up with this? So the people of the local community organized, and they started getting paid in money.

And as time developed, you know, from the late '30s to the '40s, we started looking at a situation where they built a new town site at Island Falls. And they built . . . Of the people that worked there including . . . It was both native and non-native people. They built that town site with huge houses with hardwood floors, electricity, and so on; and they also had a golf course -- they even had a golf course -- surrounding the town site which they used as a fire guard, so they built this golf course there. They also built a swimming pool and a recreation hall, but the sad part of it is that a lot of the people started being not allowed to utilize the facilities, and in many cases we saw the aspects of segregation and discrimination come out to the fore.

When people use to have their work . . . They used to shop in the same store, but all of a sudden they were told, you can't shop here any more. You can't come inside the store; you have to shop through a window. So the people had to shop through a window.

(1615)

Here they were going to work on their way as they paddle across the river -- because they weren't allowed to live on the site, you know, where they built their own tents and their own log houses or from debris that was flowing down, you know, from the river where they built their houses from -- they went to work on the site and on their way they would stop and shop, and when they came back out, they would pick up their groceries. They said many times they used to find groceries in there that they never ordered because a lot of the groceries had gone old and some of the people, you know, the people who were there had included not only the stuff that they ordered, but some of the old stuff, you know, that was going bad in the store.

And that's what they experienced, but the people had determination. They kept working, but they challenged the private company at that time on that policy, so the private company made a decision. They said, okay, we agree with you, so they built an Indian store. They still

wouldn't allow them to shop in the same store. They built an Indian store.

And as time went on, people challenged that. There was many workers that were there that were both native and non-native. And as I talked to the elders who worked there for 40 years, who had the determination to work there for 40 years, they told me that they had met up with a lot of workers who were genuine, who respected them, who treated them as real people, who treated them in the same way that I've seen other people treat each other, you know, in my own experience. They treated them with great respect and great concern. But there was others who treated them with racism, who wouldn't want them to shop at the same store, who wouldn't want to do this and that. And the private company followed these policies.

As I look back on that history, I even saw a case when I read the archives when I did my master's thesis on it, they even were absolutely amazed at one time back in '38 that one of the people who had come in to watch a movie accidentally brought in a native child. And they made a big deal, and they said they had to be taken back to the community group to discuss this topic of bringing a native child into that movie theatre which the people had built. And when we look at that history of the private company's policies at that time, some people will say, well that was happening, you know, in many places. But I must say that it was worse in some places than others.

In regards to the community of Sandy Bay, they've learned to work side by side, as I said, with some of the workers and with many of the workers and some of the supervisors who treated them well. They still are friends with them after all these years.

As I looked at the situation of services, the mine made millions of dollars. That's in mining and smelting all these years during the thirties, during the forties, during the fifties, and to this day. Million and millions and hundreds of millions of dollars were profited.

And when I looked at the sad record in 1959, that was the only time that the people received hydroelectric power from that dam that they built. They built it in 1927 to 1930 and they never got their power till they presented their case in 1958 and '59.

And when they finally did get power, they got such a low scale of power that every time they put in a kettle, a hot plate, they would blow those transformers that they'd put in. So they went through a long community process again to finally try and get power, you know, 30 years later.

When the thing was finally automated in '67, all these beautiful homes, about 30 of them were left with hardwood floors, hydroelectric power development, hydro, had everything, with the swimming pool and the golf course and everything like that. And the people asked to use those houses so that they could do development of the day. And I must say that we weren't able to get those houses. And it was just recently that -- a couple of years, I think, finally -- that one of the houses was brought across for it.

And the private company wouldn't turn those houses

over; they just wouldn't. They kept them there from '67 to the '80s. They just let them rot and sit away there. There would not turn, even if people had proposed for a tourist development there -- they wanted to use those so they can make a living out of that. But no, they could not use those houses that they themselves had built.

And it's a sad case. The company made tremendous profits from it, but they wouldn't turn it over to the people. It was only in the Crown corporations when Saskatchewan Power Corporation finally took over in a process from '81 to '82 that we finally were able to get, you know, a few of the houses transferred to a town after the Crown corporation turn-over back in '82.

And now what the people are saying, and a lot of people are saying this, whether in Sandy Bay or through the North, they said, look, we have suffered a lot in our history. We have dealt with racism. We have survived it. Some of us have worked in these places for 40 years. We have showed our determination. We have showed that we can work as good as anybody else in the world.

We have shown our determination that we wanted to be trained. We have learned without having to be trained. We learn on the job. Although we were told back in the '20s that we would have to work our way from the bottom, 60 years later . . . well 60 years later we are still working our way from the bottom. We look at it 60 years later and people that work there, the workers that work there, still don't get northern allowance. But all kinds of workers throughout the North get northern allowance when they work in the North. The workers there still don't get northern allowance. They've been raising the issue of training people, but they still will not get trained. I saw only two cases where they said they were allowed an apprenticeship program. But that was only after a lot of pressure.

Now the government is trying to . . . (inaudible) . . . in the future or maybe even put aid down there. The people are raising the same concerns again. They said, we want jobs in regards to the A-dam proposal right in Island Falls. We want training. We want to be involved in the development, but where is the government, they are saying.

They said, we don't want to be in the same situation like Cumberland House where they spent \$1.5 million to hire a lawyer. We don't want to be put in the situation like Cumberland House where they had put a weir and threaten a blockade before action was taken. We are ready to co-operate with the government. Although we have suffered the hardships of the past, we are still patient and open to co-operate with this government.

That is the central message that people are saying. As I . . . I will quote the words of the late Angus Bear, as a reminder of what he thought when I asked him about the situation, you know, about the future, and what had happened to him. This is what he said back in '85. He says:

In my own thoughts, I have often wondered when the damaging effects of the dam would cease if nothing was done. We have not been able to make

a decent living since the devastation. A sturgeon was made extinct and the fishing never really regenerated at all. Trapping was also never really restored at the previous levels. The damaging effects still confront us on a yearly basis. Nobody could be pleased with this. If only we could rectify it, but I just don't know.

And this was his statement, actually, on May 29, 1984.

Angus Bear died without seeing the changes that he had wished and fought for. He had worked over 40 years in that Island Falls site. He used to walk 60 miles a day, carrying mail, working with dangerous PCBs, working with 2,4-D in the spraying of the line. Him and many workers gave away of many years to the company in more ways than one. Many of the people of Sandy Bay, and countless numbers in the past, have said this time and time again: what will be done to the destruction of our livelihood? We would like to see a major agreement, but not in a confrontational style. We are ready and willing to work; we are ready and willing to take training; we are ready and willing to co-operate with the government, but when is the government going to know that?

Mr. Speaker, when I look at this budget, I see many Sandy Bays in northern Saskatchewan. And I've seen many of the people really try hard in regards not only to the education of their children but also in gaining a job. And what we see from this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is privatization and the 100 jobs in Rabbit Lake, and we know that more are going to be lost.

What the people are saying is that we have experience with privatization already. We already know what the private company did. They say, we hope that the people of southern Saskatchewan hear our story at a time when this government is giving away our assets; at a time when the government is throwing away our jobs; at a time when our government is giving away our forests; at a time when the government is giving away our mines.

What people are telling me is this: we will lose all our land; we will lose everything. The only thing we have left is our hands and our minds. We want to work, but even that, the government is taking away. And, Mr. Speaker, as I stand here therefore in dealing with the budget, I've found it to be highly, highly disappointing. I thought . . .

An Hon. Member: -- You said that before.

(1630)

Mr. Goulet: -- A member said, you have said that before. I would like to say that to the member again because the people want you to listen. They've been saying it for seven years, and you have not been listening. What they're saying is that we want you to do a job creation. Get our roads rolling. Get our roads improved in the North. Get the gas pipeline moved into the North. Get the housing construction moving at the community level. Help us in tourism. Help us in wild rice development. Help us in all of these things that are very important for our people.

Also make sure that you provide compensation for the

destructive aspects of development in many cases that have come to bear on us in the past. And also we would like you, the PC government, to know that we also want fairness and justice. The land question shouldn't only go for big business. Indian and Metis people want land like anybody else. And I think as we look into the future, not only should Japanese corporations or Chinese corporations or American corporations benefit, the people and the children of northern Saskatchewan want to benefit also. And that's the message I leave with this government at this 1989 budget.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gerich: -- Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to rise in support of this budget address by the Minister of Finance, and I'm proud to stand in the Assembly today and place on record my support of the measures announced, particularly as they affect the people in the constituency of Redberry.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I ran for election in 1982 for a very simple and a very clear reason. I ran because the people of my constituency needed representation, and they needed a government that would listen to their concerns. I remember many people coming to me, Mr. Speaker, suggesting that I let my name stand. And I can tell you that I wasn't all fired up to do this at first, but I remember being at home in Leask, and in the fields in the spring and listening to budgets presented by the members opposite. They had the government, and the people had nothing.

Day after day there was always another announcement that the government had bought this or the government had bought that. Mr. Speaker, I found it very disturbing.

Then they started on our family farms. They started up buying the farm land, and they, the NDP, said the government knows it all and the government knows best. Well, Mr. Speaker, who said the government knows best? Who said so, except our members across the way? The people of Redberry never said that.

The Speaker: -- Order, order. Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Goulet: -- Yes, I would like to request leave to . . . There are some visitors here.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Goulet: -- Yes, I would like to introduce Dennis Morin and Pearl Merasty from Sandy Bay, who are sitting over here at the gallery. Mr. Speaker, could you give them a sound welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

(BUDGET DEBATE continued)

Mr. Gerich: -- Getting back to my speech, Mr. Speaker, who said that the government knows best? Well my opposition colleagues across the way said that they know best. The people of Redberry sure never said that.

And I'd like to tell you something about my constituency, Mr. Speaker. Over 38 per cent of the folks who live in Redberry are over the age of 65. That's almost 40 per cent that are senior citizens.

And I remember walking around Leask and Marsden and district, and the Vawn-Edam area, and we had liquor board stores, and we had Crown corporation advertising, and we had land bank. But we had no nursing homes, no special care homes, and no innovative housing for the seniors.

The NDP government of the day, well they had money to buy out the farms and potash mines, holes in the grounds, good part of the rest of our businesses, but they didn't have a dime for our pioneers and our parents. The people who built the province, the pioneers, they were left with nowhere to go by the NDP.

And then the folks came to me, Mr. Speaker, my neighbours and even some people that I didn't know all that well, and they said, John, if you get into politics, would you go to Regina and try to fix some of the problems that are facing the constituency. And these were concerned people, Mr. Speaker. And let me tell you that even the fellows and the gals who are in their 40's now throughout the province and in my constituency are looking ahead and they're saying that they want to make sure that when they need taking care of that it's going to be there for them. And they sent me here so I would help and, in their words, help fix it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's what caused me to run and that's why I'm here today; and I'm here for the people of my constituency and nothing else. And they know that I don't have a magic wand or something to wave and just automatically fix it, but they also know me and they know the government. And I'm happy to say that they know that there's going to a free-standing, 30-standing, level 3 and level 4 nursing home unit built in the town of Leask.

And, Mr. Speaker, the NDP shouts that the only reason we're building a nursing home there is because I'm helping my friends. Well I don't mean to be unparliamentary, Mr. Speaker, but damn right they're my friends and that's why I'm here -- and to work for the people of Leask, people of Rabbit Lake and Hafford and Whitkow and Blaine Lake, Borden, Denholm, Fielding, south of Spiritwood, Meota, Jackfish and Radisson -- all of the towns in the constituency. And you're right, they are my friends.

It makes me mad when the NDP make it sound like a dirty thing. They think that I should apologize because I want nursing homes for my towns or that the member from Assiniboia wants a hospital for Lafleche or other good things for his town.

What's the matter with them? Why are they here? Well I

can tell you, Mr. Speaker, I'm here for the people who elected me and I won't apologize for the NDP for that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gerich: -- And I won't apologize for the new level 3 and 4 nursing home in Rabbit Lake that this government built in 1986, and I won't apologize for the senior citizens' complex that's in Radisson, or apologize for the complex that's in Mayfair. These are the people who sent me here to get it fixed. And little by little we're getting it done, and I won't let the snickering or the hollering or the slander of the NDP make me embarrassed about what I'm accomplishing for the people of my constituency.

It hasn't been a bed of roses in the Redberry constituency. We suffered from drought and economic problems that this province has had to deal with. But I want to tell you and I want to tell the members over there something about the people of Redberry. They don't know the meaning of the words "give up."

Out there they're movers and shakers, they're optimists, they're hard workers, and they're confident people. And, Mr. Speaker, they don't take too well to the NDP always telling them there's nothing people can do. They know better. They don't appreciate being told that they can't help themselves, that they can't make their own decisions, and that government knows best so vote NDP and we'll help you. That's not what the people of Redberry constituency are all about, and the NDP had better learn that.

I don't want to . . . I would like to make a few remarks on health care part of the budget, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to look at the numbers. Since 1981 and '82, the NDP's last year in power, since then this government has increased the health budget nearly 91 per cent -- 91 per cent, Mr. Speaker. And the people of Redberry are a pretty smart bunch, Mr. Speaker. None of them had a 91 per cent increase in anything. A lot of them had to live with reductions because of grain wars and the international market problems, and also the drought and poor cattle prices. A lot of them had to cut back, forget about an increase.

But they know what a 91 per cent increase in health means, and it means a whole lot. And they know that we're spending almost twice as much as the NDP did. So I don't appreciate these fellows going around my constituency with their fairy tales about cut-backs. Look at the new ambulance budget, Mr. Speaker, a 221 per cent increase. At these times, it's absolutely incredible to see that kind of financial action in any area -- 221 per cent means more for our ambulance service.

And the NDP complain that the government is increasing taxes in cigarettes and alcohol. Well the people of Redberry have told me in no uncertain terms that they will support these measures. When the taxes are fair and distributed fairly, my people support it, and they support this. The difference between me and the members opposite is that I know my people support it because I ask them when I talk to them on coffee row. And that's why I'm here, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to talk about this new capital program to help our towns build recreational facilities. This program, Mr. Speaker, is brand-new. Nothing like it has ever existed before, and it's going to do some great things for our small towns.

Over six years we're going to spend almost \$33 million to build ice rinks, swimming pools, senior citizen centres, and halls. In the bad old days, Mr. Speaker, the big cities of Regina and Saskatoon had money to build indoor swimming pools and top-notch facilities for their citizens, but our towns had to go begging to the outsiders just to get a curling rink. It is good that the cities have excellent facilities, and they will benefit from this program too. But our towns are going to have some help now, and it's going to be a substantial help.

Mr. Speaker, a small town that wants to build an indoor skating rink will be eligible for a \$200,000 grant in this program. If they're a bit larger town, over 5,000, they will qualify for \$250,000; for a curling rink, it's \$100,000; \$250,000 for swimming pools; \$100,000 for school gymnasiums; and \$100,000 for museums. These are the eligibilities, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to go all out in my Redberry constituency to make use of this program. I'm going to be working with every town to make sure that we get the best facilities we can -- towns like Radisson, Maymont, Rabbit Lake and Borden.

This program alone makes one of the best budgets ever brought down by the government, one of the best. But we're not going to just build rinks and halls and pools in our towns, Mr. Speaker. The budget is bringing a new, \$100 million municipal capital program -- \$100 million. This program will be available through rural municipalities as well as urban municipalities, the first time that this has ever been the case; the first time a government is providing capital grant program that works for rural Saskatchewan as well as urban Saskatchewan. This \$100 million is going to help our municipalities build and renovate their water systems and their infrastructure.

We are also expanding the work of Municipal Financing Corporation to help municipalities with 100 per cent financing needs for sewer and water projects. The people of Redberry see that we are building rural Saskatchewan, and they want us to help build their towns. We created the community development corporations and rural development corporations. And these projects are working all across the province to get economic activity going.

We've been there for agriculture, working for farm families, and the members opposite know it, and more importantly, the people of Redberry know it. Our loan protection programs alone, Mr. Speaker, just with the low interest loans we have offered farm families, we have saved the farmers almost \$400 million in payments to financial institutions -- \$400 million saved in interest payments. And you don't hear the opposition talking about that.

We put out \$450 million in crop insurance payments, \$400 million in drought assistance, \$64 million for the green feed and livestock assistance program, and almost

\$9 million to help rural families get water during the drought and against future droughts. Just a great deal of money, Mr. Speaker, and the Redberry constituency knows about it and they appreciate it and they're using it.

We're extending the drought protection program, as I call it, the water assistance program, and we're going to spend another \$10 million to secure water supplies for rural families in their towns and on the farms. And rural families appreciate this.

You know, it's a long way from the statement of the NDP premier of Saskatchewan, and that, and I'll quote, "There is no God-given right to survive in farming." What an attitude.

An Hon. Member: -- Who said it?

Mr. Gerich: -- Mr. Blakeney. What an attitude the members have opposite, towards our farm families.

I tell you the farmers claim no God-given right. They are workers. They're hard workers, Mr. Speaker, and they don't want hand-outs. They want a fair shake from the government that will listen to them and a government that's doing just that.

You can see how far the NDP has come, Mr. Speaker, by how they run their outfit. They haven't come an inch. They've proudly announced the appointment of Jack Messer as the chief executive officer of their party just recently. This is the man who was the NDP minister of agriculture, and here's what he said about farm families on February 11, 1975, and I'll quote:

(1645)

Ownership of property has been imposed on each of us simply because there has never been a real alternative. There is a myth that the pride of ownership encourages farmers to reach their greatest potential.

Will you listen to that, Mr. Speaker. I invite the NDP to visit farm families in my constituency and ask them if pride of ownership is important to them. You bet it is. It's also important for Jack Messer. He owns some of the best farm land in the Tisdale area.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gerich: -- Mr. Speaker, he can ask farmers in the Soviet Union, for that matter, and he'd get the same answer. Pride of ownership is important; it's vital. And it's not only vital to farm families, it's important to all of us here.

My forefathers came to Canada from Croatia, Mr. Speaker -- that's now a part of Yugoslavia -- and they came to Canada because of pride of ownership.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gerich: -- They came because they wanted to own their own land and build a future for their children and create something with their own hands and that they

could say, this is mine. This is my work and it's good, and it's pride of ownership. If they didn't have that, they would have left Croatia and fought in the wilderness and the winters and the dry land.

They pioneered here in Saskatchewan in the Redberry constituency, because of pride of ownership. I benefitted from that, my parents and my children benefitted from that pride, and I can tell you my kids are learning that pride of ownership. And that's what the NDP call a myth.

Come out to Redberry and tell my people there it's a myth. And go down to the employees of the Saskatchewan government printers, for example, who just bought out the company they work for, and ask them if pride of ownership . . . Tell them it's a myth.

The workers at WESTBRIDGE, Mr. Speaker. Let the NDP go to those employees who are now their own bosses and ask them if it's a so-called myth. They just never learn, and it's a crying shame.

This budget says that there's pride of ownership and we're going to help farm families keep their land; we're not going to have the government own it all. We are now working with the ag credit corporation to make loans to farm families so that they can buy their home quarter and get started again so they can keep farming. We're going to provide start-up loans and refinance those who are having difficulty but have viable operations, and we're going to help them keep the farm. We're not going to make them sell the farm to the government because we think government knows best.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, I was a little surprised when I heard the member from Riversdale during the throne speech. And he told us how his people came from Europe and all, and still he doesn't seem to understand why they came. His folks and my folks had the same thing in common; they had a pride in ownership.

And that's why they came to Canada from Saskatchewan -- to build a good life for their children. And we shouldn't forget that, Mr. Speaker. We should honour what they have done for us. We should understand it and we should build on it. And the people of Redberry, Mr. Speaker, do those things, and they have pride of ownership, just like the employees at Meadow Lake saw mill and the Indian bands around Meadow Lake.

And I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I represent a number of Indian reserves in my constituency, and I can tell you that they have pride of ownership. But they want to own and they want to build and they want to grow. We're going to work with these Indian bands and help them do these things, help build their own communities and good future for their children. This budget, Mr. Speaker, makes a number of programs available, and I intend to do my best to see that everyone who wants to take advantage of them can.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gerich: -- Whether it's young people on or off the reserves who want to get on with the young entrepreneurs' program, or folks using the venture capital

program, or access to SEDCO loans, we are going to help keep building in Redberry, Mr. Speaker, and this budget's going to help us do it.

Mr. Speaker, it doesn't happen overnight. My forefathers and yours did not come to Canada and think that tomorrow the land would start farming by itself. It takes work, patience, determination, and confidence. The land won't work the farm itself, and the government can't farm the land. People farm the land, people open small businesses, and people make the communities. And it takes effort and there is no magic.

But like I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, my people are smart, and I don't have to go out to Redberry and tell them a lot of these things. They already know. The only people that I have to tell are the members who are sitting across the floor.

It isn't an overnight thing, but it's working; one project at a time, one nursing home at a time, one hospital, one town. It's working and we're building, slow but sure.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gerich: -- And I want to say to the Minister of Finance that this is a great budget, and I congratulate him. And I want to say to our Premier that he's a real leader, a real leader. The Premier has taken this province through some of the most difficult times in history with a crisis in grain prices, potash prices, oil prices, in all of it. And he's gotten us through it, and still we're growing and doing better and have a billion dollars for health care and education, and an interest rate program protection, and all those things that help us right out where we live.

And I'm proud that I'm in this debate to pay tribute to our Premier. I go home and I look around the constituency and see that this government spent \$2 million rebuilding the highway from Blaine Lake to Hafford; three-quarters of a million dollars to grade the road from Martins Lake to Shell Lake, right past the past NDP MLA's house in fact; a third of a million dollars in paving the same stretch; and over a million dollars for the Borden underpass.

Let me tell you something about the underpass at Borden, Mr. Speaker. That was a highway that was dangerous and was a killer. And for whatever reason, our people were being killed by that section of the road. They never fixed it at all; they ignored it. We were buying farm land; how could we fix bridges.

And I told the Premier, we have to do something about the highway, and the Minister of Highways. And the situation was corrected because it was unsafe and very dangerous. The government just spent over \$1 million in this new budget to build a safe, wide, new underpass.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gerich: -- But in total in the last year we spent almost \$6 million just on the roads in my constituency at a time when this government was in a real bind for money. And all the NDP do is talk about a deficit. Well I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, I don't like deficits and I'm glad to see that the minister has things under control.

But when it comes to a bridge that saves lives in my constituency, I say to the NDP, go and talk to the folks in Borden. They're glad we spent the money, the trucking industry's glad we spent the money, and the travelling public is happy we spent the money.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gerich: -- We spent 221 per cent more for ambulances, 91 per cent more in the health care, 100 per cent more in the budget for education. Let the NDP talk. We have the deficit under control, and I commend the minister for that. But I say thank you for the people of the Redberry constituency: thank you for the facilities this government is building, and the roads it's building and the bridges, and the rural development corporations, and the interest rate protection program, and the pension plan. And it was for all these reasons I got into politics.

And it's for all these reasons that I will be supporting this budget with vigour and pride, and, Mr. Speaker, for all these reasons that the people of Redberry will be supporting this budget and the ones that have come before it.

When we hit the campaign trail . . . and I look forward to the day, Mr. Speaker, to meet the member from Westmount on the campaign trail in my constituency, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to say that I am indeed honoured to join this budget debate this afternoon. But before I address what specifically was in the budget, I would want to make a few remarks and share a few remarks with the member from Redberry. And I would want to put him on warning that since his government's gerrymander, the Bill that's before this legislature, the new electoral boundaries Act, that he may want to rethink some of his comments regarding this Premier's performance and regarding this budget. He may want to think of the people in rural P.A.-Duck Lake if he aspires to represent the new Redberry riding under the gerrymander which will be part of that constituency.

And he may want to have a look at what those people were telling this Premier in 1986 when they defeated his Justice minister. He may want to rethink the fact that in this construction project for 1989-90, Highway 302 west of Prince Albert is not mentioned in this, a highway that is going to cause a loss of life if that Minister of Highways doesn't act very soon, because it's a dangerous piece of road, should have been in this capital construction project budget, but it's not.

And I want to say to him, if he is the PC candidate along Highway 302 in the next election, around Lily Plain, past the penitentiary by Prince Albert, he's going to have some long, hard explanations to make to the people out there who used to support a Conservative government, but who in the past few elections have been turning to the New Democrats because they know that this is a hopeless administration, and if they want to get that road repaired,

that they're going to have to change the Premier and change the government.

Those are the kinds of things that this fellow is going to have to look at, this member from Redberry. He's going to have to go back and go over and rehash the promises that former Tory candidates in that area have done.

An Hon. Member: -- Dutchak. How many times did Dutchak?

Mr. Lautermilch: -- How many times did the former member from Prince Albert-Duck Lake, Mr. Dutchak, promise that road? Not once or not twice; he promised it dozens of times, and he promised it in every house along Highway 302, and he had the former . . . the high-flyer, the former Highways minister out there promising to repair that road for them. And where is it? Is it in this budget? Mr. Garner promised it. Mr. Dutchak promised it, and he's going to have to go out there and promise it again because it's not going to get done under this capital works project.

And he's going to have to speak to some of the small-business people in Duck Lake, and he's going to have to speak to the folks out on Beady's reserve who are not very comfortable with the administration of this Premier. Those are the kinds of things that this candidate is going to have to face when he moves into the Prince Albert-Duck Lake area.

And I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker, whether I will be the candidate for that area or not. That will be decided by my party and by the people who support the New Democrats in that area, but I'm going to promise the people of Prince Albert-Duck Lake, rural Prince Albert-Duck Lake this: that if there is anything that can be done, they won't be subjected to another promise of the repair of Highway 302 west of Prince Albert by another Tory candidate and then have that promise broken because they've got other priorities. They've got priorities of . . . like Dome Advertising and the Peter Pocklington's and, as I said, those will be some long, hard explanations to make.

And those people, I would want to say, Mr. Speaker, also have an understanding of what this government has done and just how desperate they are, and the fact that they've torn that particular area away from their natural trading partners, the people in Prince Albert, and they will have something to say to this particular member about that. And they will be asking him to pass that message on to the Premier.

This government seems to be so proud of increasing in this budget the deficit by yet another \$226 million. They try to pass it off as only \$226 million, but, Mr. Speaker, the facts are in this book, in the *Estimates*, and the facts are such that \$226 is a misrepresentation of what the actual deficit, estimated deficit for the 18 . . . or 1989 and 1999, or 1990 fiscal year actually are. And in the course of my remarks on this debate, I intend to tell and show the people exactly where they've fudged this budget, how they've cooked the numbers, and why the Finance Minister has once again proven that he, nor his government, can be trusted.

Mr. Speaker, not since 1982, when this government has been elected, have they one time -- not one time, this budget included -- been able to balance their expenditures with their revenues; not one time. They blame it on rain, and they blame it on agriculture, and they blame it on tough times, but never once, Mr. Speaker, will they take an inward look at themselves; a look at the real kind of government that they've been delivering; a look at the real problems and the real reason that this government is in some economic difficulties at this time.

The Speaker: -- Order. It being 5 o'clock, the House now stands recessed until 7 p.m.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.