

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

The Acting Clerk: — Pursuant to rule 11(7), I have reviewed the following petition and find it to be in order:

Of the Sisters of Charity (Grey Nuns) of Alberta, of the city of Edmonton, in the province of Alberta, praying for an Act to amend its Act of incorporation.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Sauder: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you, and to the other members of the Assembly here, three gentlemen from my constituency. They're in town to meet with some people regarding some concerns up there and some things that they'd like to see done.

There's Mr. Martin Laforge, a councillor from the R.M. of Arborfield, Mr. Harold McShannock, a councillor in the R.M. of Moose Range, and another gentleman with them, Mr. Art Hesje, from Zenon Park. I'd like to ask all members to welcome them here this afternoon, and I look forward to meeting with them again later to perhaps review the proceedings here now.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Privatization of Public Utility

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Premier. Last week's budget, Mr. Premier, announced, or perhaps I should say, announced again your government's plan to privatize SaskPower's natural gas utility.

Mr. Premier, my question is this: in view of the fact that you personally, solemnly promised the people of the province of Saskatchewan that basic, vital public utilities such as SaskPower would not be privatized, how do you explain the budget's privatization plans with respect to SaskPower? How do you explain what can only be described as a betrayal and a major breach of promise by yourself?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, we've been through this discussion before with respect to SaskPower and the mining of coal. I believe SaskPower was the only utility in Canada that actually mined coal. Now we turned the coal mining over to the private sector, and it provides for an efficient production of coal, contracted to the SaskPower.

It's a long-run contract for SaskPower, and they're better off, so the rates to the public are better. And as a result, we're not in the coal mining business; the private sector

is. It saved us the costs from SaskPower, and we don't want to be in the coal mining business. And SaskPower is still SaskPower . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Mr. Speaker, the member from Quill Lakes is entertaining the students again . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, order. Order, order, order.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I will say with respect to SaskPower, it is the only utility in Canada that operates the gas distribution system. All other utilities in the power companies have been contracted out to the private sector, as is the case with coal. SaskPower is going to stay SaskPower. It is a utility.

We have hundreds of thousands of people investing in the power corporations through Power bonds — very popular, very helpful to the company, providing the rates at a lower rate to the people of Saskatchewan. So the combination of the private sector mining the coal and the public being able to invest in bonds keeps the utility in very good financial shape and provides long-run rates to the public of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I have a new question to the Premier, and I'm directing the Premier's attention to the announced intentions by his government to sell off SaskPower's natural gas division. We can talk about Manalta Coal on another occasion.

Over the last 10 years, from 1978 to 1988, SaskPower's natural gas division made approximately \$188 million profit, while the electrical side lost about \$90 million. On balance the two of them together still put SaskPower in a pretty good way. Now you are privatizing. You are breaking your promise and you're privatizing the natural gas portion — the profitable portion — and presumably are leaving the costly portion — the one that's losing money, the electrical side — to the taxpayers of the province of Saskatchewan. How in the world can you justify that? That may be a great deal for the private investors and your big business corporation friends, but how in the world is that a good deal for the people of the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I understand why the Leader of the Opposition has to be against public participation in energy or in insurance or in any of the things that we have offered to the public, Mr. Speaker, because it's difficult politically. They are philosophically hidebound by the party's position that says the public should not be able to invest in the Crown corporations here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I can only say to the hon. member, the public wants to invest in government. I look at government, Mr. Speaker, as a large co-operative where everybody can invest in it and be part of it. And they should be, Mr. Speaker. Allow them, as the 1982 document from the opposition pointed out when they

were government. We should allow them to invest. It strengthens the company. If you can have it on the Toronto exchange it makes for a strong aftermarket, Mr. Speaker. They talked about all those things. It's more jobs, more efficiency, more effectiveness, and the diversification of the province, and it was agreed to by them.

Now they didn't get a chance to do it because we formed government in '82, we've been offering it since '82, we're again since '86, and we're going to continue to allow the public to invest. They enjoy that, Mr. Speaker, and we know that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I have a new question to the Premier. The Premier said in respect of his last answer that privatization means new jobs and people in the province of Saskatchewan. How in the world he can say that in the face of the fact that in February this year we lost more people from the province of Saskatchewan than we gained in 1982 is beyond me.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — That's how successful your privatization program is.

But my question is this, and it speaks, sir, to the promises that you make and break. On November 14, 1987 — I have the article here in front of me — Dale Eisler of the Regina *Leader-Post* wrote in part:

When asked what corporation could be sold, the Premier said, "The only ones not being considered" (get this, Mr. Premier), "The only ones not being considered are SaskPower . . ." (and you go on to talk about SaskTel).

Those are your words in direct quotations.

And now today in the budget you have betrayed that solemn promise by indicating that you're going to be privatizing SaskPower. I want to ask this question to you: what prompted you to break that promise, to mislead this public of Saskatchewan? What prompted you to do it? Is it an offer from a large multinational corporation, is it Oliver Letwin from the United Kingdom and Maggie Thatcher that convinced you to do it? What in the world caused you to break your promise not to privatize SaskPower as you told the press and the public?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I can perhaps best summarize the arguments for public participation by saying world-wide, all over the world, when you allow the public to invest in Crown corporations, it creates jobs, Mr. Speaker, it provides for more diversification, and we find it in New Zealand, we find it in Australia, in France, in Great Britain, in Canada, frankly . . .

An Hon. Member: — Soviet Union.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Yes, even in the Soviet Union, Mr.

Speaker, everywhere in the world people are allowing the public to invest. Why, Mr. Speaker, would . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. We're trying to hear the Premier but having difficulty, and I ask members on both sides of the House to give the Premier the opportunity to be heard.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, let me say very clearly, the hon. members of the opposition have not denied, Mr. Speaker, that they planned to have public participation — even those words — in the Government of Saskatchewan. Now I just have to say I agree with them. Their passage of that Crown Management Board minute, Mr. Speaker, says public participation means jobs, it means diversification, it means the public being involved in creating wealth in the province of Saskatchewan. I agree with them. The people of Saskatchewan agree with them, Mr. Speaker. This whole House should endorse the fact that the public could invest in Crown corporations to create jobs that diversify and to build.

Mr. Speaker, they did it; they've never refuted it. They said it was a good idea then; now they're on the other side of the House and they say, well why are you doing it? I'm doing it for the same reason that they passed it, Mr. Speaker, because it's a good idea world-wide.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I have a new question to the Premier. For the moment, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to debate or ask a question about things being world-wide and therefore must be good for Saskatchewan, because I doubt that the Premier will say that the world-wide phenomenon of the workers in Korea getting \$4 a day is something that the people in the province of Saskatchewan should be getting. That's not the issue.

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I believe that I, and the House, are now having difficulty hearing the Leader of the Opposition, and I would like to give him the opportunity, as well, to put his question without interruption.

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, the issue is not, on this occasion, the world economy and how much Saskatchewan should blend into it. The issue is the commitment of the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan that SaskPower would not be privatized — that's the Premier — that's not some back-bencher from Rosthern or some back-bencher from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, that's the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan. You have said that publicly elsewhere.

I want you to explain to the people of the province of Saskatchewan, if you knew what the world situation was in 1987, why you broke your promise just a few days ago on the budget? How do you explain the fact that you disrupted this breach of promise, you broke your commitment? What's your answer to that? You knew that situation in 1987, too.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, let me describe to the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, the advantages of allowing . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Quite frankly, I don't like to rise to interrupt question period; however, hon. members leave me no choice. So I would once more like to ask for your co-operation. If we're going to have the Premier constantly interrupted and the Leader of the Opposition constantly interrupted, we can't have a good question period, so I'm simply asking for your co-operation.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just say to the hon. member, that allowing people to invest in a utility like SaskPower, to be able to have Power bonds, allowing the private sector to invest in coal mining or in natural gas, Mr. Speaker, strengthens the utility and makes it a better company, provides for more diversification. And if I might, Mr. Speaker, I'd just point out to the hon. member his own reasons, by his own cabinet. And it says:

It's desirable for as wide distribution of shares as possible so that the individuals in the province of Saskatchewan can share in the growth of the province of Saskatchewan. That the initial offering should be through the credit unions and the banks for widespread distribution. (Logical, Mr. Speaker.) To avoid political difficulties associated with everybody, we should have voting rights for the individuals in the province that are investing. Shares should be listed on the Canadian stock exchanges to provide for required liquidity, (Mr. Speaker.)

This is the NDP cabinet talking about public participation in the province of Saskatchewan, which includes his uranium mines, Mr. Speaker, which includes Ipsco, Prairie Malt, Intercon, the Cornwall Centre, and PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp Company), Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I'd just like to remind hon. members that I believe perhaps we're getting a bit into debate more than question and answer, so I'd like to bring that to the attention of hon. members.

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have another question for the Premier, who refuses to give an answer to me and to the legislature and, forgetting about even the legislature, the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

I'll try another tack. On May 9, 1988, not a year ago, in this legislature, sir, my colleague, the deputy leader of our party, asked the Deputy Premier of your government, the member from Souris-Cannington, specifically whether splitting SaskPower was the forerunner to privatization of SaskPower. And the answer of the Deputy Premier is, and I quote, Mr. Premier, quote, Mr. Speaker, "To that rather lengthy, straightforward question, the answer is no." End quote. "The answer is no." End quote. May, 1988.

Now those arguments, which by the way are

misrepresented, were known to you as early as 1982; they must have been known on May 9, 1988. And if they're the arguments to justify privatizing SaskPower and breaking your word, my question to you is: why did the Deputy Premier deliberately mislead this legislature and the people of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I'd like to draw to the attention of the Hon. Leader of the Opposition that the term "deliberately mislead" is not acceptable. He may have said that without realizing it; however, it cannot be condoned — it can't be condoned. The Leader of the Opposition has made a personal charge of a member deliberately misleading, and that is not acceptable in the House. And I would like to ask the Hon. Leader of the Opposition to withdraw that charge.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I withdraw, because I respect your rulings, the question of deliberately misleading. But if I may, with your permission, rephrase the question then in what I think is a proper way to ask the question: in the light of that record, I ask the Premier . . . this is your desk-mate, your Deputy Premier, the minister in charge of SaskPower, clear, unequivocal terms — with all of the arguments which are, by the way, not true, but even with all the arguments that you've advanced — he said this to this House and to the people of the province of Saskatchewan. How in the world can we believe anything that you or your Deputy Premier says on the issue of privatization?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, let me try a different tact with the Leader of the Opposition. With respect to public participation and privatization, Mr. Speaker, I have not changed my mind. I have not changed my mind with respect to public participation and privatization. Why have you changed your mind? That's the point, Mr. Speaker.

We have been offering bonds and shares to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, since 1982. And we privatized part of the power corporation and the coal mining, Mr. Speaker, and it's the same principle with respect to gas. I say to the hon. member, I have not changed my mind and I've not changed the kinds of things that we have said on public participation or privatization.

Why did he change his mind when he went across the floor, Mr. Speaker? This was a solution for him when he was on this side of the House, sitting in that chair, and he's now changed his mind when he walks over there, Mr. Speaker. I suggest, I suggest we haven't changed our mind. The public of Saskatchewan knows exactly what we're doing. They're not sure what the Leader of the Opposition is doing because he's flip-flopped on it, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the people of the province of Saskatchewan know

exactly where this party stands in defence of Crown corporations, and the co-operative sector, and the private sector.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And they know, sir, exactly where you stand — right behind the large, private multinational corporations.

My question to you, sir, is this. You're obviously hidebound and determined to break your word, to mislead this legislature and the public. You're going to privatize a public utility when you said you wouldn't, when your Deputy Premier said you wouldn't. I want to know when is the legislation to do this dirty deed going to be tabled? Why isn't this Bill before this House now? Why are you withholding the Bill? I say this Bill should be tabled as soon as possible. I call on the Premier to do it today or tomorrow because the people of the province of Saskatchewan want to see exactly what you're up to, and get their opinion stated to put a stop to this selling off of the heritage of Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member must realize that when 43,000 people, Saskatchewan people, invest in SaskEnergy or SaskPower bonds, Mr. Speaker, that they are not multinationals. That isn't 43,000 multinationals; that's local people, Mr. Speaker, that would invest in power bonds. Same with telephone bonds, Mr. Speaker, over . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order, order. I know that hon. members realize that hollering when another hon. member is on his feet is not acceptable, and I just once more, for the fourth or fifth time today, draw it to your attention.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me put it another way. Over 90 per cent of the public employees in SaskCOMP bought shares in WESTBRIDGE Corporation. Now all those employees, Mr. Speaker, are not multinationals. They are local people, local people working for the government, that want to invest in this government and invest in the corporation so that they can diversify and build jobs and make it grow, Mr. Speaker.

Now if the hon. member has flip-flopped and says now he doesn't want them to do that because he puts them all the category of multinationals, he's talking about tens of thousands of Saskatchewan people who've invested in bonds, invested in the companies like WESTBRIDGE — over 90 per cent of the employees. Why is he against that? Why is he against employees investing in SaskEnergy? Why would he be against the employees investing in Saskoil, Mr. Speaker? Saskoil's gone from a \$300 million company to over a billion dollar company, Mr. Speaker, and the employees invest in it.

Well, I say . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Environmental Concerns With NewGrade Upgrader

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I took notice of a question from the hon. member as it relates to the testing and the monitoring around the upgrader and the Co-op refinery. I can't table reports during question period, so I sent across a copy of this report to the hon. member.

I would like, to answer to the question, advise that there is only one hour on February 12 of this year that the refinery or the upgrader broke the legal limits of carbon dioxide emissions. It only happened for one hour and that was the day that the plume of hydrogen sulphide drifted across the city. So I think the report should be noticed by this House and by the people of Regina. The Co-op refinery and the upgrader, except for that one hour, have been well within the guide-lines established by the federal government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I have a question to the minister, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Minister, try as hard as you might to hide the negligence by you and by your department in this whole matter, you still have not answered the questions adequately. I ask you then if you knew that on February 12 . . . or February 12, there was a leak, Mr. Minister, which could have caused some serious damage to the health of people in the area, or in fact could have caused some danger to life, why did you not act then?

This is now the third time in which there has been an incident at the Co-op upgrader in which you have done nothing, Mr. Minister, so the fact that there have been these things taking place, and you have done nothing but do media relations, you are therefore responsible for the situation in there. Why didn't you act?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swan: — Mr. Speaker, we've been through this topic a number of times in this House and, as the member knows, in February when that leak occurred, we were not notified immediately. But as soon as we were, my people were on site and took action. And I believe that the corrections that have been made in the upgrader to eliminate that problem in the future have been taken as a direct result of the interference of our department, and I'm very pleased with the work that my staff have done.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Privatization of Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan

Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Premier about some aspects of his recent trip to the orient, the so-called "orient express," where we got back very conflicting statements as to what he said and then what he didn't say, and then reinterpretations of what he said to various governments in the region.

And in early February, Premier, in a telephone press conference from New Delhi, you told reporters it didn't matter to you if foreign governments owned 50 per cent

or more of PCS (Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan). And my question is: is that what you people are talking about when you talk about public participation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I've said on many occasions that we are going to offer the opportunity for people to invest in the potash corporation in Saskatchewan, in Canada, and offshore. You will find out when you look at the legislation, Mr. Speaker, that any one individual will be limited to a very small percentage, and indeed the majority of it will be Canadian, and the first opportunity's for Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker.

Now we see that in legislation that is at the national level, as well as at the local level. So in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, when we table the legislation, you will see exactly what are the limits for people to invest locally, nationally, and internationally.

I will say as well, Mr. Speaker, we are not anti-offshore, anti-American or anti-Japanese or anti-Chinese, having people come in here and invest and build as they have with the Marubeni corporation or Hitachi corporation in Saskatoon. We're glad to see people come in and make their roots and live in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And if they can come in here and live and work with us and invest and diversify, we think that's all the better, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Premier, I have to throw back your own words to you, your own quote. You said:

If that debt means 15 or 20 or 25 per cent to India and 15 or 25 per cent to China and somebody else in Europe and Canadians in a joint venture offering . . . then I would look at removing all the debt.

Now they're your words, Mr. Minister, and those words say you'd be willing to sell all of PCS, and you don't care if anyone in Saskatchewan is involved.

Now you have apparently changed your tune. And I suppose you've called back to those officials in China and Japan and Korea and the other countries to say that you didn't really mean it the way it came out when you talked to them. I don't see how they can take you seriously on these questions, Mr. Premier.

Will you tell us here now, in very concrete terms, what was your specific offer to these countries?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, very specifically, I said that we were going to be offering shares in the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. And when we did that and tabled the legislation, Mr. Speaker, then we would provide them with a prospectus, and if they wanted to look at investing in it, they'd have an opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Construction of Rendering Plant

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I announced this morning in Saskatoon that West Coast Reduction Ltd., a corporation based in Vancouver, has made a commitment to construct a \$22 million, full-service rendering plant in Saskatoon, which should be built and operational by May 1, 1991. Seventy-five jobs will be created in its construction phase, plus a further minimum of 50 jobs in plant operations and a provincial pick-up system.

Mr. Speaker, this . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I think it's just about time this morning that hon. members simply quit interrupting the members on their feet. I don't think it's really becoming, or a good example, that members should be constantly for ever interrupting speakers, hollering back and forth across the floor. I just want to, you know, bring this to your attention in strong terms so that we can get on with the daily session.

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this project will contribute to the diversification of Saskatchewan's agricultural processing sector and increase our export of value-added agricultural products, as well as addressing an ongoing environmental concern. Upon commencement of commercial plant operations, the Government of Saskatchewan, through SEDCO, will provide financial assistance to the company of up to \$3.3 million towards the cost of the project.

Today we have only two Saskatchewan processing plants with any rendering capability, each able to handle only their own by-products. More than two million pounds of inedible offal from Saskatchewan are being shipped to Alberta each week for processing. We have more offal treated as a waste product currently being dumped in land fill sites or being buried on farms throughout the province.

This new project will give Saskatchewan a state of the art rendering plant which will process these inedible by-products, such as fat, bones, offal and feathers, producing saleable commodities which include tallow, bone-meal, blood-meal, and feather-meal.

West Coast Reductions pick-up system and advanced environmental safeguards at the plant will address all environmental concerns. Our government is pleased to support a project of this magnitude, Mr. Speaker, that addresses environmental issues head-on, that stimulates and diversifies our economy, that increases our value-added exports, and that generates new employment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to take an opportunity to respond to the ministerial statement. And

by way of starting the statement, I would hope that the minister would table the documents that would apply to what kind of a deal SEDCO has made with this company, so that the taxpayers of the province will realize how much money they are putting into it; similar to the kind of deal . . . whether or not it's similar to the kind of deal that was made with Supercart or Joytec, and whether or not we'll see millions of dollars being thrown at companies that end up leaving the province in days to come. So we will want to see the full documents tabled in this House so we can have a look at it.

I want to say as well that it's interesting that we would have this kind of an announcement by the minister at the same time as when there are 6,000 people, net, leaving the province in a month, we have no such ministerial statement — no such statement of the minister coming here saying, look . . .

An Hon. Member: — You don't want them here.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, the Deputy Premier says we don't want them here. Obviously we would like those 6,000 people here. We would want them here — we would want them here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — You may not want those 6,000 people, young people and families leaving the province, to be here, but it's ironic that you don't mention the people fleeing this province. There are literally hundreds of people a week now leaving this province, and yet you try to cover it up by bringing in a small announcement, Ms. Minister, to try to cover up for the massive numbers of people leaving the province.

But I want to say in relation to the ministerial statement that we would very much like to see how much this is costing the taxpayers of the province. Because I say again that when you look at the promise of the band-aid factor in Swift Current that we remember being promised during the last election, and we remember the promise of a fertilizer plant — actually two fertilizer plants . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. The hon. member unfortunately is getting into debate, and no doubt he can introduce myriad issues. However, I'd ask him to stick to the ministerial statement.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I just want to say in conclusion, Mr. Minister, that I feel the government is bringing this statement here to cover up for the 6,000 people who left the province in February, but it is not going to go a long way. Because we know that with unemployment rates at 10 per cent in Saskatoon, thousands of people looking for work, 25 per cent more people on welfare at this time than there was in 1982; that this is a sorry excuse for employment creation in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Referring to Actions of the Chair in Debate

The Speaker: — I have some concerns to raise with the

members regarding one aspect of the proceedings last evening. The member for The Battlefords in his remarks on the budget motion was critical of the actions of the Chair in refusing permission for the filming of a movie in the Chamber. I want to remind all members that the Chair should not be brought into the debate. I refer all members to *Beauchesne's Rules and Forms*, Fifth Edition, paragraph 117 (1) and *Erskine May's Parliamentary Practice*, 20th Edition, page 235, both of which state that the actions of the Speaker:

. . . cannot be criticized incidentally in debate or upon any form of proceeding except by way of a substantive motion.

Beauchesne further states that the Speaker is:

. . . the representative of the House itself in its powers, proceedings and dignity.

In order to preserve the dignity of the House, I caution the member that it is important to refrain from criticizing the actions of the House incidentally or in debate.

Further, when members have concerns or questions about the actions of the Chair, outside of the House, I want members to know that my door, as I have repeatedly said in this House, is always open, and that such matters should be discussed with me in my office, not on the floor of the Chamber where I have no opportunity to give explanations.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I think the procedure in the House would ask that the Speaker . . . And first of all, I say I accept your ruling because there is not an opportunity for us to oppose it, nor do I want to. But I think it's customary in the rules of the Assembly that the member be in his chair, the member for North Battleford, when the issue was raised. And I wonder why that tradition was broken today by the ruling.

The Speaker: — I think it's important, in answer to the hon. member's question, I think it's important that I bring this attention . . . this issue to the attention of hon. members as soon as possible, as soon as possible.

Order, order. Order, order. Don't argue from your seat. Just give me the opportunity to give my answer.

I am bringing this to the attention of the House at the earliest possible moment, and by so doing, other members are also informed, other members are also informed that they are not to follow this custom in the event that they are engaged in debate today.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE (BUDGET DEBATE)

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the

proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. Lane that the Assembly resolve itself into the Committee of Finance, and the amendment thereto moved by Mr. Lautermilch.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to support a budget which will have far-reaching and beneficial consequences for education in our province. This budget will enable us to take a major step forward toward the goal of a lifelong education program in Saskatchewan for Saskatchewan people and particularly Saskatchewan young people, Mr. Speaker.

But before I discuss our plans for 1989, I want to trace our progress over the past seven years since the Progressive Conservative government came to office. I will describe in a moment what we have done, Mr. Speaker, but first let me articulate why we have done what we have done.

Mr. Speaker, every major industrial nation in the world is in the process of introducing educational reform, whether it be Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, the United States. Virtually every industrial nation in the world is undertaking and in some stage of educational reform.

And they are doing this, Mr. Speaker, for reasons that extend well beyond national boundaries or local interests. They are doing so because a new international currency has established itself in the last 20 years.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not talking about the gold standard or the dollar standard when I talk about a new international currency. I'm talking about the information standard, Mr. Speaker, the information standard. It is the currency of ideas, ideas coupled with technology, Mr. Speaker. And so powerful is this new currency that old barriers and old boundaries are being broken down by it.

This revolution has affected trading patterns. It has altered the economic balance of power in the world, Mr. Speaker. It has fundamentally changed the work place, Mr. Speaker, and in turn it has changed the lives and the requirements of the work-force and those who live and work in it, Mr. Speaker.

Here then is the why for making changes in our education system, Mr. Speaker. And I know that making change is never easy, going from the known to the unknown. And I know, Mr. Speaker, that there are change resisters in this province. And I know that the NDP, Mr. Speaker, are against making change. And I too subscribe to the view, Mr. Speaker, that we do not make change merely for change's sake. But, Mr. Speaker, we cannot put the blinkers on and ignore the reality of the world around us. And that, Mr. Speaker, is why we are prepared to make changes in education. This is why we are making changes. This is why the Progressive Conservative government in this province, Mr. Speaker, is making changes in our education system.

It is because we believe that our children have an absolute right to an education which will compare favourably with that of any other nation. Saskatchewan has always had a first-class education system, Mr. Speaker, and we intend to keep it that way. We cannot, nor will we, let our children down. Every parent and every young person should be assured of this

commitment, Mr. Speaker.

So now let us turn, Mr. Speaker, to what changes are being made. I've articulated why we are making the change, and now let us turn to what changes are being made. And let us begin with progress to date, Mr. Speaker.

(1445)

The Speaker: — The Minister of Education has been given permission to make his remarks in the budget debate. Let's restrict it to the Minister of Education.

Order. Order. Order. The member for Turtleford, I have just reminded the hon. members not to interrupt and you already are, and I'm reminding you once more, and other members, to allow the Minister of Education to continue.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — So let us turn, Mr. Speaker, then, to what changes are being made, and let us begin with the progress to date under the PC government, for much has already been done, Mr. Speaker. Let me begin with our elementary and secondary school program.

In 1984 our government, under the very capable leadership of the MLA for Swift Current . . .

The Speaker: — Order. My, my, people seem to be in a certain mood this afternoon.

I would just like to ask the member from Turtleford and the member from Quill Lake that if you have a debate you wish to conduct between you, perhaps you might temporarily wish to leave the Chambers to do that. But I ask you once more at this time, would you allow the Minister of Education to make his remarks.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, in 1984 the Progressive Conservative government, under the very capable leadership of the MLA for Swift Current, then minister of Education, now Minister of Energy and Mines, published the *Directions* report which laid the basis for a program of educational reform in our kindergarten to grade 12 education, Mr. Speaker.

The highlight of the report was the decision to introduce a new course of study in all Saskatchewan schools, called the core curriculum. This new course of study set out to do two things. It set out to reinforce, to re-emphasize, the fundamentals of a good education — reading, writing, and mathematics. In an increasingly competitive world where English is becoming the international language of trade, and mathematics is fundamental to technology, children more than ever need a solid basis, a solid grounding in these basic building blocks, Mr. Speaker.

There is no question about that. Parents know that no matter how much the world changes and how rapidly the world changes, that it's in their children's best interest to get that solid grounding. And that's why this new curriculum, Mr. Speaker, reinforces and re-emphasizes that point.

But it goes further, Mr. Speaker. The new curriculum also introduces important new skills such as problem solving,

computer literacy, and communication skills which students will need in the work place of the future.

Already much has been done toward implementing the new curriculum. We have provided new curriculum training and orientation to the province's 12,000 teachers, Mr. Speaker. It goes without saying, I suppose, that if our children are to have access to the most up-to-date curricula, and to meet the needs of the future insofar as what the curricula provides, that the front line in the class-room, the class-room teacher, must too be updated. And we recognize that as a first order of importance, Mr. Speaker, and that's why last fall our 12,000 teachers across this province took training in the new curricula. As well we've established directions for each subject area in this new curriculum.

Well much has been said in recent times about the need to reduce high school drop-out rates. Because I view this as important, I will be returning to this in a moment to talk about what we will be doing in the future.

But first let me draw to the attention of the legislature and to the members assembled here today, of what has been accomplished over the past few years, Mr. Speaker. If we look back two decades ago in this province, only 40 per cent of our young people, only 40 per cent of our students went on to complete high school. Today, under a PC government, almost 75 per cent of our children graduate from grade 12, Mr. Speaker. What a tremendous accomplishment when you think of it. Less than half 20 years ago finished their grade 12, and today 75 per cent or thereabouts finish their grade 12.

But, Mr. Speaker, although we see and know that much has been done to reduce drop-outs, let me be clear on this, Mr. Speaker, even more will be done because 75 per cent is not good enough for this Progressive Conservative government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — And I will be laying out those plans in my speech later on, Mr. Speaker. That is some of what has happened over the past year, and more in the kindergarten to grade 12 education system.

Let me turn now to what has been done to date in post-secondary education side, Mr. Speaker. First in the area of universities, we committed ourselves to a five-year, 125 million construction program on both campuses.

The following new facilities have been completed or started: a new \$6 million administration building at the U of S; a new \$18 million geological sciences building at the University of Saskatchewan; construction of a new \$80 million agricultural sciences building at the University of Saskatchewan; a \$17 million federally funded language institute at the University of Regina; and construction of a five and a half million dollar animal resource centre at the University of Saskatchewan.

Much has been done, Mr. Speaker, and we will do more.

In the technical institute and community college field,

Mr. Speaker, we constructed a new institute in Prince Albert, the first for nearly 15 years. We added a series of new training programs, including the Saskatchewan skills development program and the Saskatchewan skills extension program, or for people who may not be familiar with those terms, Mr. Speaker, what we're talking about there is part of our welfare reform package.

What we're talking about is getting young people off the treadmill of welfare, Mr. Speaker. What we're talking about there is giving young people and adults in this province training programs and jobs, Mr. Speaker, and opportunities, Mr. Speaker, and a rich future — not merely the treadmill of welfare, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Since 1983 we have spent \$56 million on these two programs which have enabled 27,000 people to enter training programs, Mr. Speaker; 27,000 young people now facing a future of hope and opportunity, Mr. Speaker, not one of gloom, frustration, and despair. But, Mr. Speaker, we will do more.

Finally, in 1987 we set out to completely revamp the college and institute system. It was not that long ago, Mr. Speaker, that I introduced the mandating legislation creating the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology. We also have created the Northlands Career College.

As well, a brand-new mandate was given to our community colleges, now called regional colleges, Mr. Speaker, a brand-new mandate to our regional colleges and to the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology to deliver university and diploma programs in rural Saskatchewan.

Long-needed upgrading of programs and equipment was begun. And here are the highlights, Mr. Speaker. At SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) which is the short acronym, if you like, for our institute, 46,200 students were registered in 1988-89, Mr. Speaker. And we hear much from the opposition about accessibility to post-secondary education. I challenge anyone, I challenge anyone to discuss accessibility and to overlook the fact that at Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, 46,200 young people were registered.

The new industry provided training for the pulp and paper industry, for the mining industry, for agriculture, and for hydroelectric industries, to mention a few, Mr. Speaker.

And maybe equally as important as our children face the global world of the future, SIAST has established an international training program operating in 10 countries including China, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, the Dominican Republic and the Philippines, truly positioning our young people for their future in the global village, Mr. Speaker. And I say to you and I say to them, and we will do more.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — At our regional colleges, Mr.

Speaker, 450 training courses were provided in 1988-89, 250 university courses. And these were offered, not in Regina and not just in Saskatoon, and not just in Prince Albert and not just in Moose Jaw, where we have universities and campuses of our technical institutes. But, Mr. Speaker, what we're talking about is offering these courses in the Weyburns and the Swift Currents and the Nipawins and the Meadow Lakes and the Melforts and the North Battlefords of the world, and in centres smaller than those by far, Mr. Speaker — truly a success story.

Thirty thousand students were enrolled in '88-89 throughout Saskatchewan. Talk about accessibility under a PC government, Mr. Speaker — 30,000 students in our regional colleges. And we will do more, Mr. Speaker.

Northern training — I want to talk about our northern training initiatives, especially since 1983, Mr. Speaker, where 12,250 young people have been trained. Five thousand have entered jobs directly as a result of this training, and 20 training agreements have been signed with industry, Mr. Speaker, and a very co-operative relationship that exists there.

Mr. Speaker, but I want to talk more about these jobs and this training in the North, because these jobs in the North, Mr. Speaker . . . and there's quite a clear distinction between the approach of the Progressive Conservative government of the 1980s and into the 1990s than that held by the NDP when it governed this province. These jobs in the North, Mr. Speaker, are real jobs, not make-work jobs of the kind associated with the previous government's colonial sort of attitude with the DNS (department of northern Saskatchewan) system. These are real jobs, Mr. Speaker.

Young native men and women who are working as mill operators at \$30,000 a year, or as assay specialists making \$40,000 a year, or as diamond drillers making up to \$60,000 a year, or as hard rock miners, where one of these young people told some of my officials not too long ago, Mr. Speaker, where that person would be making \$120,000 a year. We are talking real jobs for these young people in the North, Mr. Speaker, jobs, as I said, as mill operators and assay specialists and drillers and hard-rock miners. Talk about opportunity for the young people in the North, and talk about commitment to those young people — Mr. Speaker, our government stands behind them four-square.

Our government's training and economic diversification policies have paid off in the North with more Northerners being trained and hired than ever before, Mr. Speaker. The record speaks for itself, but we will do more, Mr. Speaker.

To support all of these initiatives in post-secondary education, we completely revamped the student assistance program, revamped the student assistance program to make sure that we can have 30,000 in regional colleges, 46,200 in our technical institutes, to have those kinds of numbers so that money will not be a barrier, Mr. Speaker.

Let me take you back for a moment, Mr. Speaker, let me take you back a moment, Mr. Speaker, to the NDP days of

1981, to put our commitment to student assistance in perspective. I don't want to go back to those days, Mr. Speaker, because the reality is under the previous NDP government in 1981, do you know how much student aid was made available to the young people across this province, Mr. Speaker? Was it 20 million? No. Was it 10 million, Mr. Speaker? No. It was four millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, in student aid.

Well, Mr. Speaker, by comparison, last year our government — the NDP 4 million — by comparison, last year, Mr. Speaker, did our government double that commitment over a six- or seven-year period? Had we doubled to 8 million? No, Mr. Speaker. Had we tripled, say, our commitment to students to 12 million? Now that would be a pretty handsome commitment to young people across this province if, in less than a decade, Mr. Speaker, we'd have gone from 4 million to 12 million — tripled this support. Well the reality is, Mr. Speaker, last year our government made \$33 million available to the young people of this province so that income would not be a barrier.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Thirty-three million dollars. But the news is even better, Mr. Speaker. Under the NDP government of the past, when interest rates were high, Mr. Speaker, was there any protection for those students when it came time to pay off their student loans? When interest rates were high, Mr. Speaker, was there any protection for the students, never mind the farmers and the business men and the home owners of this province. We had money for land bank. We had money for dry holes in the oil industry, Mr. Speaker. We had money for everybody but students and home owners and small-business men and farmers, but there was no money . . . no interest rate protection for our young people.

(1500)

Mr. Speaker, not only is there \$33 million available in aid, an eight-fold increase, but, Mr. Speaker, much of it at 6 per cent interest rate. And I'll tell you what, you never hear the NDP raise that in this House, Mr. Speaker, when they raise questions of interest rates.

But we have gone further, Mr. Speaker, in our revamping, and the NDP are against this revamping. They have said clearly in this House they want to go back to the old system, the old system that had no 6 per cent interest rates, the old system that only had \$4 million. They want to go back to a system that didn't have special assistance for single parents and natives and people with disabilities. We revamped the program so there is special help for single parents and for native young people and for people with disabilities. And we will not go back on that, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this revamping, all of these changes, the changes that the NDP resist but that our Progressive Conservative government stands behind, these actions have borne fruit. In the seven years of our government's term of office, the number of students attending university has increased by 35 per cent, Mr. Speaker — 35 per cent. We do not want to go back to a time when there was only

16,000 young people attending our universities. We want to go forward. And forward means last year, 21,600 young people, Mr. Speaker. Now would I like that number to be perhaps 22,000 or 23,000? Certainly, Mr. Speaker, we would like to see as many young people as possible have that opportunity.

But I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this expansion by 35 per cent over seven years is one of the greatest expansions of students, of young people attending university, since the end of the Second World War.

In total today, Mr. Speaker, more than 56 per cent of students in Saskatchewan leaving high school go on to take some form of post-secondary education. Now I'm not suggesting we should stop there, that maybe the number should be 57 or 58. But, Mr. Speaker, we have made tremendous strides forward when you think about it. Fifty-six per cent of our young people go on to take some form of post-secondary education. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you, the members of this legislature, and the young people across this province, we will do more.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — In terms of what has gone on over the last few years, too, Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words with respect to the Saskatchewan Library. Here also we have pursued an aggressive agenda. In 1984, my colleague introduced new legislation to bring together community groups across the province to form an advisory board on library services. Out of this initiative grew, in part, a decision to computerize library holdings and referrals on a province-wide basis. And I want to say more about that in a few moments.

I would also would like to draw the attention of the House to the excellent work being done by libraries across the province in the field of literacy training, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to acknowledge the support of the Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association and the highly successful summer reading program for children.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it's safe to say that two themes emerge from this list of highlights. The first is an emphasis on accessibility. More people than ever before are going on to post-secondary education. More students are staying on to finish high school, Mr. Speaker. That would be our first clear theme.

The second, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is an emphasis on setting and achieving high standards. We realize that we . . . not only do we have to strive for continued improvement, but we have to do so in a world where others are also of the same mind.

So now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me come to our plans for the future, and specifically the year ahead. First I want to commend the Minister of Finance for his most recent budget. There are many things I could commend him for in that budget, but I am going to confine my remarks to education today as we look at the year ahead, because once again this minister, this Progressive Conservative government, under the very capable leadership of our Premier, has made education a top priority, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — In 1989, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the budget for education will be \$841 million. This isn't an increase of 3 or 4 per cent merely, Mr. Speaker, that might be in line with inflation across the province, but what we're talking about here is an increase, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of \$52 million or 6.6 per cent.

Since coming to office our government has increased funding for education by 68 per cent, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and some will say, but yes, inflation has galloped along at its usual steady pace during that same time, so have we really gained anything because of inflation? Well the answer, Mr. Speaker, is yes, because even after you account for inflation this increase in real dollar terms has been 15 per cent, Mr. Speaker. We're not just keeping up with inflation, we've zoomed past it, Mr. Speaker.

And if you look at it in another perspective, if we go back and look at the decade of the '80s, Mr. Speaker, it's a very startling statistic, but one I would like to share again with the House, and one that was referred to by the Minister of Finance in this House a few days ago, because it speaks directly, in a very simple and straightforward sentence, to this Progressive Conservative government's commitment to education and to our young people and to the families across this province.

And that simple statement, Mr. Speaker, that is so relevant — if we examine the record of this past decade — it's so relevant because we're starting a new era in a very significant way in education. We're looking ahead to this next decade and the 21st century, of which our children will be walking out under the doorstep of, and that simple sentence is, Mr. Speaker, that since the start of the new decade . . . of this last decade spending has virtually doubled on education in this province — spending has doubled, Mr. Speaker.

Now I can think of no simpler way to talk about a government's commitment because that is truly putting our money where our mouth is, Mr. Speaker, and I am proud to be part of a government that makes that kind of commitment, Mr. Speaker.

Well let me begin with the allocation of funds for the kindergarten to grade 12 programs. In the kindergarten to grade 12 area we will be providing nearly 350 millions of dollars for school operating grants. This represents an increase of almost 4 per cent or 13 millions of dollars from last year. This will meet the cost of living increase estimated for next year, and will also cover the cost of last year's collective agreement in so far as . . . that is to say, of the government's share, Mr. Speaker.

There will be too, as well in this budget again this year, fourteen and a half million dollars in the education development fund for school boards to enhance learning resources, books for our libraries, computers for our schools, those sorts of things, Mr. Speaker, to improve programs and provide services more efficiently.

In this budget there is also 31 millions of dollars for the

construction and renovation of schools across the province, and over 56 millions of dollars for teachers' pensions and benefits. And this represents an increase of 11.6 per cent in government funding for teachers' pensions, an increase of 10.8 per cent for teachers' life insurance plan, and an increase of 16.2 per cent for the teachers' dental plan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In addition there will be significant new initiatives, new initiatives, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in a number of important areas, and I would like to outline some of them for you. First, we will provide a major increase in funds for the development of the new curriculum and our assessment program. In total, the budget for this essential program will be increased by 70 per cent, Mr. Deputy Speaker. A new curriculum for a new century takes new dollars, and they are there in spades with the increase of 70 per cent, Mr. Speaker, for our children.

And I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in all the meetings I had with teachers over this last year — a number of regional meetings, my visits on a weekly basis to the schools, and the meetings I had in the staff rooms — teachers across the province have emphasized their support for the new curriculum. And their major question, Mr. Speaker, was: will there be the resources to move this agenda ahead. Mr. Speaker, with a 70 per cent increase this budget delivers on our commitment, and it delivers on it in spades, Mr. Speaker.

Well how will this new money be used, Mr. Speaker? Well, one millions of dollars will be used for additional teacher training which I talked about earlier, to make sure that the front line, the class-room teacher is brought up to date so that they in turn can impart this new knowledge to their students. One million will be used for additional teacher-training sessions around the new curriculum. One millions of dollars will be used to develop new curriculum materials, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and \$1 million will be used to set up this new assessment process.

With respect to the last item, Mr. Speaker, and to elaborate on that a little more fully, you will know that I recently introduced the report of the advisory committee on evaluating and monitoring. We had a ministerial statement on that in this House some few days ago.

The committee has recommended, and those recommendations have been accepted by all the partners in education — the teachers' federation, representing the 12,000 teachers across the province; the school trustees, representing parents as elected representatives across the province; and as well, the administrators across the province and our department have all agreed on the recommendations forthcoming from this report.

And the committee recommended, with this broad consensus by all in the partnership, that we put in place a system of province-wide assessment. Since the mid-70s there has been no comprehensive assessment process, Mr. Deputy Speaker. School boards, teachers, parents, and students have really been left without any provincially developed standards by which to measure progress.

I don't think I've been at a meeting over this last year where parents haven't stressed to me, because it is they feel so strongly about it, parents have stressed to me time and time again how important it is to have a fair and equitable standard of comparison for their children. Teachers have stressed to me how important it is that any assessment process be developed here in our province and tied directly to our curriculum, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Well the new assessment policy meets both of these objectives. It will enable teachers and parents to know what their children are learning, and it will enable us to monitor this new curriculum. It will also provide a basis for comparing the performance of our education program with that of other jurisdictions.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as important as what goes on in school is what happens at home. You know that parents can make a tremendous difference to their children's success in school. In part, this means that we must work with parents to help them better understand what they can do. Over the last year our government has been working directly with parents to encourage them to read to their children as one of a number of things that they can do to help their children, Mr. Speaker.

Instinctively, as I said earlier, we all know what a difference parents can make. And so we shouldn't be surprised when we hear what the research in the educational field tells us about what we already know instinctively.

But I would like to share this with you, Mr. Speaker, and it's in a booklet that we've sent. I think there's been something like 70,000 of these go out to parents at their request across the province of Saskatchewan, to parents and teachers to share with the parents of their children; it's entitled "A Lifetime Of Learning — How I can help with my child's education at home."

Parents want to help, Mr. Speaker, and we've provided them with this booklet at their request to give them some ideas on how they can help. And I just wanted to quote from the first page on this to re-emphasize, as I said, what we instinctively know about the importance of parent involvement. And it speaks to some of the research that's been done, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I quote:

Studies in 18 countries, including Canada, found that students' intelligence, motivation, and achievement are closely related to experiences in the home. Parents can and do make a major difference in helping their children to succeed at school.

We feel very, very strongly about the role and importance of parents, Mr. Speaker. They can make a tremendous difference to their children's success in school, and we know that instinctively, Mr. Speaker, and as well, the research backs that up and backs it up in spades.

In part, this means that we must work with parents to help them understand what process school boards, teachers, parents . . . sorry, in part this means that we must work with parents to help them better understand what they can do.

As I said, all the research in the field emphasizes how important this is. We've sent these booklets to parents, we've used the mass media and sent support materials to every school in the province.

The reading campaign that we have initiated, Mr. Speaker, is in turn part of our government's larger campaign to emphasize literacy skills, to emphasize reading, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at all levels.

(1515)

Well you will know . . . as members will know and as you will know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 1987 I announced the establishment of the Saskatchewan Literacy Council. The honorary chairman of that council, Mr. Speaker, is our Premier, because he too feels as a parent, as the leader of this province, as the Premier of this province, he too knows how important literacy is, that basic and fundamental skill that all should have the opportunity to have, Mr. Speaker.

In 1987 I announced the establishment of this literacy council to work with adults in need of literacy training, and I want to bring a bit of a report card to you and to members of this Assembly as to how well that initiative is working. We set for ourselves, as did the council, some very ambitious targets, and now I would like to account to you and to the members of the legislature on that, Mr. Speaker.

I am pleased to report to you and to the members of this legislature that over 2,500 adults have already benefitted from training in two short years. And more heartening and very gratifying for myself, and I think for all in this House, is the fact that 2,000 people across this province, 2,000 members of the public, have volunteered their time as tutors — 2,500 adults have benefitted and 2,000 others, people from all walks of life, have walked into libraries and regional colleges across this province and said, I want to help. That's speaks of the Saskatchewan spirit, Mr. Speaker, and I want to say to all of those people: thank you for taking the time to be a tutor because this has been a tremendous accomplishment by all.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, if parents are to become more involved in their children's education, it is equally important to help them understand what is being taught in school. And over the last year I have written to almost every parent — I think there was something like 112,000 letters that went out, Mr. Speaker — I've written to every parent, employees and employers at small businesses, and educators at universities and technical institutes. I've written to them to explain the new curriculum that was implemented, at least the first stages of it, that were implemented in the schools this past fall.

But it wasn't just a one-way street, Mr. Speaker; thousands have written back to me. The response, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, was overwhelming. And it was overwhelming and it was gratifying because they have written back to say they support what we are trying to do. They recognize that these changes had to be made, and I

just want to share with you, and with other members of the legislature, some of their comments, Mr. Speaker.

This first one comes from Saskatoon, and they have children that have since left high school. And this comment, I think, is a very cogent observation:

We are becoming a global village and must gear our education to meet this challenge. Ability to communicate both orally and in writing is of utmost importance. A school atmosphere that is friendly, supportive, less competitive is in my opinion the best. A well planned curriculum with only limited options is probably best.

We have another one here, Mr. Speaker. This one from Regina:

Mr. Hepworth thank you for the informational letter. We are very much interested in the educational program for our daughter. Also are pleased about introducing the "New Basics". Our children need to know how to communicate and to think for themselves.

Another one, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from Green Lake, Saskatchewan this time, and this was from a teacher. And they went on to say:

As a teacher, I fully agree with you — reading has taken a "backseat" in the home. Let's spend more effort (dollars) on libraries, appealing books, author visits, story-telling, drama to bring back the love of reading.

The U.S. had the community involved in motivating people to read. I believe the Pizza Hut (or some pizza place) sponsored an incentive program to encourage reading. We spend X number of dollars on sports — what about something as fundamental as reading — We've treated it as a "backseat" for too many years!

Another one, Mr. Speaker, this time from Viscount, Saskatchewan:

I definitely agree with the information you mailed to me. Getting this new core curriculum started in our schools, increasing the credits necessary for grade 12 and still providing for unique needs will hopefully help my children obtain the best possible education.

And this family, Mr. Speaker, this family that took the time to write back, has children aged nine, six, three, and six months old, Mr. Speaker. And I am so gratified when parents, our future leaders, are in that home, Mr. Speaker. And I don't know if there is a parent . . . if I could have expressed what this new core curriculum is about any better than what they have just said.

Or, Mr. Speaker, another one, this time from Regina again:

I agree that it is time for a change in our education system.

I digress for a moment, Mr. Speaker, but here is a parent that does not fear change. They recognize that change may well be difficult, but unlike others, not unlike the NDP, for example, this person knows that we must not fear change, we must manage change, we must make sure that our young people can adapt to change. But I digress. I will start again.

From Regina, this parent writes:

I agree that it is time for a change in our education system. We definitely need to have the basics renewed.

And I talked earlier, Mr. Speaker — I digress again. But just as this parent has said, it's time to have the basics renewed. I talked about earlier in my speech about the core curriculum and its re-emphasis and it's reinforcement of the basics, or those fundamentals. And the parent from Regina goes on to say:

I also agree that parents need to take a more positive-active role in helping the education system work.

And another one, Mr. Deputy Speaker — excellent informative letter: "Since my wife and I . . . and this is an interesting perspective, this one, Mr. Speaker, it's from Warman, and the next sentence will tell us why. This parent writes:

Since my wife and I got our education abroad (Netherlands) we want to know more about the Saskatchewan elementary and high school systems. I completely agree with the minister that despite changing times we have to stress the need for the basics (3 R's). Changing from 21 to 24 credits is a good step!

Some of the writing, I can't quite . . . didn't come through in the xeroxing. He talks about modern languages, and it ends up by saying:

Thanks again for a quality, informative letter.

That one was from Warman, Mr. Speaker. And just a few more. Because I had several thousand inquiries I obviously cannot bring them all to the House, but I've tried to bring some examples from across the province. This one is from Shellbrook:

I am very glad to see more time being spent on English (speaking and writing). Math has also been neglected! We have a 15 and a 12 year old who don't know their multiplication tables and have never had to learn them at school. They are learning them at home.

Another one, Mr. Speaker:

I am very pleased to see the basics again being brought into main focus. Our children for the future need a stable and strong background based on fundamentals. Without them they are basically weak in all areas and will always need guidance.

Congratulations for listening to the needs of parents and implementing them! All good things take time — keep at it!

That one was from Saskatoon.

Now this one from Debden:

I think that Core Curriculum is an excellent idea. The children will benefit from it and it will give the education staff some guidelines to follow. We, as parents will have a better idea of what is being taught in our schools.

And finally, Mr. Speaker:

Your call to be a partner in the educational process is like an echo coming from the school. How rich the rewards are — for parents and children when such occurs. I hope more material will come from your office to encourage us, as parents.

And that's why I'm particularly gratified with the response that we've had to these changes in our core curriculum program, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And certainly I know I can't capture the essence of what parents have said in the several thousand replies I've got back, but those are a few that I selected randomly for the House this afternoon.

As well, Mr. Speaker, it is also important to involve business in our education program, and here too we have had some real successes in the last year. IBM, a major corporation — I guess, as the NDP would have it, one of those awful multinational corporations. I do not view it that way, Mr. Speaker, and I'm going to tell you why, and other members of the legislature.

IBM this past year has donated almost \$1 million to a new computerized literacy training program. Now does that sound like some big, bad multinational, Mr. Speaker? I suggest not. They are committed to this program. It's the latest in technology, and it's one of those things where you see the newest of technology being applied to a long-standing and thorny issue, illiteracy in our province, Mr. Speaker. And so I thank and congratulate IBM for their commitment and role here, and their dollars, Mr. Speaker, to the tune of \$1 million.

One of the response cards I referred to earlier, Mr. Speaker, talked about a program in the U.S. that they thought Pizza Hut was running, and that it was a good program because it spoke to that whole issue of encouraging our children to read. Well interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, over this past year Pizza Hut too, in this country, is working with individual school boards and with class-room teachers to help fund local reading initiatives, Mr. Speaker.

The agriculture and the oil and gas industries are working with our government to make education resource materials available to young people across this province, Mr. Speaker. A very good co-operative effort with businesses in terms of their commitment of time and dollars to our schools, Mr. Speaker, and to our young people.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this budget includes additional funds to expand our reading campaign and to extend our work with parents and the community. Among other things, this will help to relieve the pressure on our teachers who must cope with ever-increasing responsibilities. We also want to engage the support of volunteers, particularly senior citizens.

What we're really saying here, Mr. Speaker, whether it be parents, whether it be business, whether it be service groups, whether it be senior citizens, we recognize that the class-room teacher needs our help. They cannot do it all alone. And we intend, Mr. Speaker, to form bridges and alliances to help that class-room teacher as much as possible. We've started on some new initiatives in that area, Mr. Speaker, and we'll be continuing on them in the new year.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I referred earlier to the need to reduce the rate of drop-outs at the high school level. I said yes, we've made headway from 40 per cent staying in school to now 75 per cent staying in school through grade 12. But I said then, Mr. Speaker, we will not rest on our laurels and we will do more.

Well, Mr. Speaker, while there are a number of causes for students dropping out of school, all of the partners in education are agreed that we must act now to confront this issue in an even more aggressive way. So I'm pleased to announce that \$2 million in new funds will be provided for this purpose in addition to our ongoing commitments to initiatives through our education development fund. And I think there's something like 287 drop-out initiatives, or initiatives aimed at drop-out . . . reducing the drop-outs across our schools even as of this day, community school initiatives and others, Mr. Speaker. But we're going to put in, over and above that, a new additional \$2 million.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Now I don't want anyone to presume, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there are easy solutions to the drop-out problem, because there are not. There are no quick fixes. Children leave school for many reasons such as poor academic performance, family and personal problems, drug abuse, alienation from the school. And our government's strategy to reduce the drop-out will reflect all of these realities. Our strategy will emphasize collaboration among the partners in education — teachers, administrators, parents, trustees, our own department — and we will involve parents and communities to work on the drop-out problem.

An important part of this initiative will be special attention to the needs of northern and native students who are particularly at risk. Last year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I appointed a northern education task force to examine the special challenges we face in this region of the province. I'm looking forward to receiving this task force recommendations in the days ahead, and I'm committed and I want to tell you and the members of this legislature, members in the opposition, that this report will not gather dust, because not only am I looking forward to receiving it, I am looking forward to taking action on their recommendations, Mr. Speaker.

In a separate but related initiative, the Departments of Education, Health, Social Services and Justice will be co-operating to introduce a \$1 million drug and alcohol abuse strategy to combat this tragic barrier to student success in completing school, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We will be working with parents and communities once again as well as with educators to help our children say no to drugs and alcohol, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1530)

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — We are not going to tolerate that tremendous human wastage and that tremendous hurt that befalls families because of drugs and alcohol and substance abuse, Mr. Speaker. We will be helping our children to say no to drugs and alcohol.

Finally, this budget includes funds for new initiatives to assist handicapped and special needs students, Mr. Speaker. And at this point, I want to raise with members of the legislature the work that my Legislative Secretary, the member for Canora, has done in this area. He's taken on a special project relative to educational needs of our handicapped and special needs students. He's been investigating and looking at some of the new technologies available to assist severely and multiply handicapped children. And I anticipate, Mr. Speaker, further announcements in this area and some pilot projects in the year ahead in this important area, and I thank him for the work he's done to date in this particular area on behalf of all of us and on behalf of all of the parents and those special children in our society.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Our teachers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are making a difference in the lives of children who have a wide diversity of special needs and problems. They deserve our full support in creating class-rooms that are conducive to learning. And this budget, too, will assist teachers in their efforts to see that all children succeed.

I want to turn now for a few closing comments on the post-secondary area in terms of what the year ahead looks like there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This budget continues our policy, as I said earlier, that single major theme of improving access and strengthening quality.

To assist our universities and SIAST maintain and strengthen their programs, a \$10 million new enhancement fund is being set up, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Support from this fund will enable both universities to deal with pressures arising from increased student enrolment and rising cost. And it will enable government to meet the budget requests submitted by both universities and by the institute, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This fund is intended to enable the universities to strengthen existing programs on campus; that too, there will be separate initiatives under way to strengthen off-campus distance education programs.

We will be working with both universities to improve the transfer of credit between the two of them. Many

students, especially those taking extension programs, have stressed the need for more transferability of credits. So if you take a course in a regional college, whether it's brokered from the University of Regina or the University of Saskatchewan, those credits will be readily transferred to either university, Mr. Speaker, something that the parents, something that the young people have told us time and time again. And I thank the universities for their co-operation in this area.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this budget also provides funding for the creation of a major new distance education link called SCAN (Saskatchewan Communications Advanced Network). The new network will provide a distance education system which will enable almost every community in the province to have access to the advantages of modern technology.

Our five-year goal . . . and I want you to listen to this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I impart all members of the Legislative Assembly to hear this next statement. Our five-year goal is to build access to learning and to information for 98 per cent of Saskatchewan residents within a 20-minute drive from their home; 98 per cent of our population will be within a 20-minute drive of the latest of technology in distance education, Mr. Speaker. Talk about accessibility for our people of this province!

SCAN, the Saskatchewan Communications Advanced Network, it is more properly called, will begin broadcasting as an educational and informational network in 1990. It will provide access to a wide variety of educational programs as part of our government's commitment to expanding access to quality education and training in all locations of the province. Ninety-eight per cent of the people will be within a 20 minute drive of educational programs, university programs, technical institute programs, Mr. Speaker, across the province.

And I've said in this House before about how important that new technology can be. I'm not saying you can do everything by distance education. I would never suggest that for a minute, Mr. Speaker, because I know there is something, as well, fundamentally important about what is learned out of the class-room in the milieu of the campus environment. I know that, Mr. Speaker. All people know that. But there is so much that can be done with this new technology and distance education and fibre optics and satellite dishes and teleconferences and two-way video conferencing, and the list goes on and on, Mr. Speaker. There is so much that can be done.

And I've said in this House before. I've said in this House before. When you think of northern Saskatchewan and bringing programming available to that large region with a sparse population, I've said in this House before, it seemed to me it was a tragedy that in this province, in this day and age, we had the capacity to beam the hockey games that we're all going to watch, as part of the series, the championship series. It was a tragedy that we had the capacity to beam the hockey series to every corner of this province for people to watch, Mr. Speaker, but we didn't use that technology to deliver educational programming to every corner of this province.

Well, Mr. Speaker, over the next five years, over the next

five years, what we will see with this commitment today is 98 per cent of our people will have access. Yes, not just to the hockey game, but they'll have access to educational programming within 20 minutes of their arm chair. That's what this Progressive Conservative government is all about.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I want to talk about one other element. I referred to it briefly, because this speaks, as well, to making sure our young people can get into institutions and get into our universities — as it relates to student assistance, Mr. Speaker.

Well I'm pleased to — and I talked earlier about the 35 per cent increase in enrolment, about how we've taken student assistance from 4 million to \$33 million in the last seven years — well now I want to talk about the year ahead, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to announce that in the budget for '89-90, funding for student assistance is being increased by a further 34 per cent, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In the coming year we will be able to help 18,500 young people make sure they can go to colleges or university or institutes in any part of this province because there is help there from the public purse, Mr. Speaker. That's accessibility, Mr. Speaker; that's our commitment to education and to our young people.

Finally, turning to libraries, I mentioned a moment ago the decision to computerize library services across the province. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to announce that this budget includes funds for the first of a number of pilot projects to link libraries across the province. We'll be working towards establishing a network of computerized link-ups between municipal libraries, also university and college libraries.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to summarize then the main points of the year ahead in education. For kindergarten to grade 12 education, a 70 per cent increase in funding to move that education agenda ahead, Mr. Speaker; to move ahead with curriculum and assessment policy; to make the changes, Mr. Speaker, so that our young people can face the 21st century with confidence. Also more money to involve parents and the community; new support to prevent drop-outs and combat social problems in the classroom; a cost-of-living increase in grants to school boards, matching inflation; and new initiatives for handicapped and special needs and native children.

In post-secondary education, a \$10 million enhancement fund to assist the universities and SIAST to deal with increased enrolments and rising costs; a major increase in student funding and student assistance; and the introduction of a provincial SCAN network which will provide a means for expanding distance education throughout the province.

And finally, for libraries, a start to a new automation program to link libraries across the province.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of this is made possible by a significant increase in funding at a time when we still deal with the effects of last year's terrible drought, the effects of trade wars and low commodity prices.

And I raise that, Mr. Speaker, because it, too, speaks to another priority of this Progressive Conservative government, of this Minister of Finance, and of this Premier of this government, and of this caucus, and that is that our children's future and their education, and the families from where they come, is so important to us that it doesn't matter whether we're experiencing in our economy good times or bad; it doesn't matter whether we have drought or grasshoppers or grain trade wars or commodity prices that are lowest they've been in some several decades; through good times and through bad, Mr. Speaker, because our children are important to us, we will fund education and we will fund it in spades, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And as I said before, there is no simpler statement that sums up our commitment when you look at this last decade, and what you see is virtually a doubling of the expenditures in education. Not just keeping up with inflation, Mr. Deputy Speaker; that's not good enough. We have done more than that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And as I said earlier, in all of these areas we will do more, because we are not going to be content with merely 75 per cent of our young people finishing high school. We are not going to be content with native children in the North who have a high drop-out rate. We're not going to be content with just doing what we are doing today for special needs children and our handicapped children. We're not going to be content with merely 56 per cent of our young people having an opportunity to go on to post-secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to help our class-room teachers deal with some of the realities that they have to deal with, and we will do this through good times and through bad, because, Mr. Speaker, our government's abiding commitment is to quality education for the parents and their children across this province.

And I'm not suggesting for a minute, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that money alone will do all of this, because it takes more. It takes the continued commitment of the class-room teacher that has so exemplified our educational system, that commitment that has been there over this past several decades, and that will be there in the future, Mr. Speaker. It takes the dedication of parents as duly elected trustees at the board level. It takes the commitment and dedication that has been there in the past and will be there in the future, of administrators who, yes, despite increased funding there are always challenges to meet, and it takes the dedication and support of a government and a caucus and a Department of Education and officials as well to be part of that partnership, Mr. Speaker.

And so yes, a \$52 million increase in the education budget will go a long ways, but these people are the ones that will make it work, Mr. Speaker. And I'm proud to be served by departmental officials that give every ounce of time and effort and commitment, energy and enthusiasm to making this work, and I'm so proud to be a part of that team as well as part of this larger partnership.

So, Mr. Speaker, I again want to commend and congratulate the Minister of Finance for a budget that speaks to priorities, but for a budget that deals with the

deficit so that our children won't be faced with the legacy of one big mortgage.

And I haven't talked about that, but I suppose if I was a child on the doorsteps of the year 2000, although that I would be very happy that he provided an excellent foundation in this budget with a \$52 million increase in educational spending, when you think about it, Mr. Speaker, perhaps the best thing that he has done for that young child is decrease the deficit so that we don't saddle that next generation with the bills. And I say congratulations for that kind of financial management and prudence by the Minister of Finance.

Spending where it deserves to be spent in areas like education, Mr. Speaker, managing the economy even in difficult times — I take my hat off. I take my hat off to the Minister of Finance, I take my hat off to the Premier, and I thank all of my colleagues and caucus members for the tremendous support to move this important agenda forward.

So I need not say, Mr. Speaker, but it's obvious that I will not be supporting the NDP amendment. They do not want to make change — I accept that — but on this side I will be supporting the budget because we want to move forward, Mr. Speaker, and this budget will move forward on behalf of our children. Thank you very, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I didn't want to interrupt the minister's ebb and flow of debate as he was going on, but at approximately 3:25 the minister read from a number of documents — several of them. I called out, "Author?" The minister did not respond who was the author or didn't table them.

I want to refer to the rules, Mr. Speaker. Rule number 327 in *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms*:

(7) When a letter, even though it may have been written originally as a private letter, becomes part of a record of a department it becomes a public document, and if quoted by a Minister in debate, must be tabled on request.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to ask the minister to table the documents he was quoting, which are now being quoted in debate by the minister and are now public documents.

(1545)

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. I would ask the Minister of Education to table the letters that he read from.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have no difficulty in tabling these. Just so it's on the record, I haven't asked the authors of the letters who sent them in whether I could table them in the House. I'm certainly prepared to table them in the House. If I table them, and if I offend any of them by tabling them without their prior knowledge, I just apologize to them in advance. But to meet the protocol of the legislature is certainly . . . I am proud of the comments that they've made and of the

interest that they have shown, and as I give them to the page, all I would ask is that I could get a photostatic copy of all of them so that I do have a record of them, because in some instances they are the original response cards. So with that understanding, I'm quite happy to table them, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is certainly my pleasure to participate in this budget debate, and particularly following the Minister of Education, but I do want to spend a few minutes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, commenting on some of the remarks that the minister has made.

Let me from the outset, Mr. Deputy Speaker, congratulate the Minister of Education in some of the initiatives that he has taken. There'd be very few that I will congratulate him on, but there are some that I do want to congratulate him on, and one of them, for example, is the initiative the minister has taken in SCAN. I do believe that we must look at those alternative opportunities that are available in delivering education.

But having said that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do want to criticize the minister, however. When he starts a new initiative, he then cannot and must not starve the existing processes of education, and I will document that a little bit later as I speak in this House. So, yes, I want to congratulate him on some of his initiatives.

I also want to congratulate him on the initiative that he took in carrying forward what was in the budget of 1982-83, moneys to build the Prince Albert technical school. And I know that for a fact, and the minister and I have talked about that, and that's on the competency-based learning philosophy which, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I brought into this province when I was the minister of continuing education. So I congratulate him on continuing with that particular aspect of education.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the minister is being somewhat holier-than-thou, or I could say he's being a hypocrite when he says that he believes in the absolute right to education for every individual or every child in this province. He says that that is an absolute right. If that is an absolute right, Mr. Deputy Speaker, then it is the obligation of the Minister of Education to make certain that all qualified students, and I say all qualified students, have access to post-secondary education.

Last year, over 1,100 qualified students could not get into post-secondary education in this province. Five hundred students were denied access to the U of S, not because they didn't qualify, but because that minister over there did not provide sufficient funds to the University of Saskatchewan so that programs could be made available for these students. And yet he says it's an absolute right. That to me is hypocrisy. If you believe in it, then you have an obligation to fund it.

This morning, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I met with the president of the University of Regina. He also, as did Dr. Kristjanson from the U of S, expressed to me the concern,

the concern that they have if the lack of funding is going to continue as it has in the past years.

How, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask you, how can we ask the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina to provide quality education and access to education when the government opposite in the last four years have only provided operating funds on an average of 1.3 per cent per year.

Those are taken, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from the government's own estimates. From the government's own estimates, they have increased operating grants to post-secondary education by about 1.3 per cent. In fact the universities got about 1 per cent increase per year. Technical schools survived a little bit better; they got 1.3 per cent.

When the minister says that he is committed to quality education, and he is committed to the right of every individual to education, I say, nonsense; then provide the funds if you are so committed.

The minister, in glowing terms talked about the new core curriculum and the *Directions*, and that's great. But when did *Directions* start? It didn't start with this government. *Directions* started when we were the government, under the Blakeney government. And thanks to the former minister of Education, the now member from Swift Current, she continued with that *Directions* report, and it finally ended up in core curriculum. And I think we all support it.

But again at recent council, Easter council of the STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation), the minister got an earful from the teachers who were not very happy with the process. They weren't very happy with the funding that was being made available. And we told this minister last year that his funding was inadequate to bring core curriculum into being. But no, he wouldn't listen. I am glad to hear that the minister, in this budget, has at least increased the funds for core and for individual teachers so that they can implement core in the way that it should be done.

The minister bragged about the number of students who are now remaining in high school and go on to post-secondary education, and how that has increased in Saskatchewan. And that's a fact. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it also has done the same thing in B.C., Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec — every province in Canada has had a substantial increase of students staying in high school and going on to post-secondary education.

And yet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a concern, it is a concern to all of us, and I am pleased that the minister also expressed that concern, of the number of students who are dropping out of our high schools. He mentioned that . . . one or two of the reasons that he mentioned — in fact he mentioned three reasons — was possibly for their poor academic performance in school, family problems, drug and alcohol abuse. Those were three that he mentioned.

I can tell the Minister of Education, I was teaching this last semester, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I found that there was

another reason, there was another reason why some of our young people are not attending school, and that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is poverty. When you have about 60,000 children in Saskatchewan living in poverty, they have no reason to remain in school. Their first concern, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is hunger, is to feed themselves.

How can you expect a young student, a young child in elementary school, for example, how can you expect them to learn when they're hungry, when they haven't had breakfast? And he probably won't have lunch, and they're lucky if they get a half-decent supper.

We have more food banks in this province than we've ever had. In the '70s there was no need for food banks because the government of the day saw fit, first of all, that there were jobs for people; and secondly, that the welfare rates for those people who could not work or had no work were adequate so families could support their children. And I think the Minister of Education has an obligation to provide to school boards adequate funding so that lunch programs can be provided for those students who do not have adequate food at home.

The minister . . . and this I cannot understand. I agree or believe that he is sincere. He says that they are going to put in a lot of money to try and stamp out substance abuse. Mr. Speaker, we all know that there is substance abuse in our high schools and in our grade schools, but what I can't understand of this government and of the Minister of Education, why he allows those advertising of alcohol on radio and on our TVs. Why do they allow those?

If he is so concerned about substance abuse and he's so concerned about alcohol abuse, why then don't they cut out the advertising? We all know — the Minister of Education and, I know, some people opposite say, well, that has no effect, that has simply no effect at all whether children drink or adults drink. That is absolute nonsense. That's why they're advertising. They're advertising so that people will buy their particular product. And I say to the members opposite, if you are sincere, if you are sincere about trying to stem substance abuse, then for Heaven's sake, cut out the advertising of alcohol on TV.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — But no, they won't do that. They won't do that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also refer to the enhancement fund that the minister referred to in his speech. He said that there is a \$10 million enhancement fund. On the day when the budget was delivered in this House, the Minister of Education was, I am told, interviewed by some people. And he was asked, first of all, what is this \$10 million enhancement fund? His response was twofold. First of all, he says, I don't understand those blue books. I don't read it. That was his first one. Secondly, he said, oh well, that \$10 million enhancement fund, that is a blank cheque to the universities and technical schools — a blank cheque.

An Hon. Member: — I doubt that he ever said that.

Mr. Rolfes: — Well he said that and that can be verified. And I want to say to the member from Kindersley that if he doesn't believe that, he should talk to his colleague. He said it was a blank cheque. And when I talked to the presidents of the university, they are saying to me, well if it's a blank cheque, why doesn't he put it into our base funding and let us decide, let us decide how the money should be spent and the priorities at the universities.

No, Mr. Speaker, that's not why the government has done it. The government is now going to — and that's the fear of the universities — the government is going to directly intervene in the autonomy of the universities. The government is going to dictate to universities what the programs will be, where their programs are going to be taught, and how many programs are going to be taught. And if, for example, the universities don't agree with that, or the technical schools don't agree, then there will be no funding.

That's one of the reasons, Mr. Speaker, why there has been so little criticism from the universities, because they are afraid that if they criticize the government, they won't get the funds.

Now this has happened before, and the last time that happened was in 1969 or '70, and the member from Regina South will well remember this because he was closely united with that individual, and that was Ross Thatcher.

Ross Thatcher made a speech at the university in 1969-70, where he said that it's about time that someone other than the universities determined what went on at the universities, and he as the premier of the province, was going to put some strings . . . or attach some strings to the budget that were going to be given to universities. Well we know what happened to Ross Thatcher. When the next election was called, Ross Thatcher was called to account and he was gone.

(1600)

I say to the members opposite, you start interfering with the internal autonomy of the university, you are, in my words, treading on very sacred ground. The universities, not only in Saskatchewan but throughout Canada, must have the freedom to operate as an autonomous institution, and it is incumbent upon the governments of the day to make adequate funds available to those universities so that they can offer top quality education to all qualified students and individuals in this province. That is your duty.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, I also want to make a few other remarks about . . . the minister made, and I'm running through these rather quickly. The minister said that parents play an important role in the education of their children, and he read from a document. I'm simply astounded that the minister for the first time now realizes that parents play an important role in the education of their children. Well who didn't know that? Everybody could have told you that.

But the minister obviously didn't know it. And now suddenly he quotes from a report, a study that was done, that parents play an important role in the education of their children. Now that is just . . . well I think that's going to be the finding of the century.

He also mentioned that he was very pleased that IBM, that wicked old international corporation, as he referred to it, donated \$1 million to a program, I believe, in the technical schools. And for that, we appreciate . . . it's appreciated.

But let's not, Mr. Speaker, go too far on these so-called co-operative and generous international corporations. They exist to make profits, and that's fine; and those profits come from the people of the country. And anything that is given back to the people of the country was the people's to begin with — was the people's to begin with.

And I want to refer you to one because the member from Shellbrook-Torch River made such a big thing about it the other day, about talking about Weyerhaeuser — how Weyerhaeuser had given 500,000, I believe, to the various communities surrounding Prince Albert and the Prince Albert area. Why wouldn't they? That's very generous; \$500,000 is a lot of money. But what did Weyerhaeuser get for that? They supposedly got a pulp mill for \$236 million, which they didn't pay a cent for — not 1 cent. And the pulp mill, I am told by experts, was worth \$336 million.

So the people gave them a gift of \$100 million on the market value of the pulp mill. Well Weyerhaeuser then comes back and contributes \$500,000 and we are to be very grateful and appreciative of the fact when they've just made \$100 million, \$100 million from the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's time that we get things into perspective, you know, when we give a great gift from the province to a multinational corporation and a very small per cent of that is given back to the people. That belonged to the people to begin with. That belonged to the people to begin with.

The minister says that he wants to — another statement he made — he wants to form bridges and alliances between teachers and parents, and the Department of Education and teachers. After, Mr. Speaker, he has gutted the Department of Education — he's fired about 80 per cent of the people in the department, all the brains and all the experience that were there for years — now suddenly he says he wants to collaborate. He wants to co-operate. He wants to listen to the teachers. That's fine, but it's just a little late. It's just a little late.

And a lot of the problems, a lot of the problems that have existed in education over the last two or three years have been as a direct result of the decisions that were made by this Minister of Education — this Minister of Education's decisions, Mr. Speaker, that were simply uncalled for. They were political decisions so that the minister could replace many, many of those dedicated civil servants by his own people and people that simply weren't qualified in the areas that they have been placed in. And that's

caused a lot of problems.

You go and talk to the teachers, talk to the trustees, talk to the administrators, and they'll tell you, they'll tell you. And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, the minister has a lot of patchwork to do and a lot of co-operation to seek over the next year or so.

In his remarks on post-secondary education, the minister didn't say one word about the Student Union Centre at the University of Regina. Not one word was mentioned. He talks about glowing . . . he talks in glowing terms about all the things that he has done at the universities. And yet just before the 1986 election, the Premier of this province and, I believe, the Minister of Education went to the campus of the U of R, held a press conference, and in glowing terms told the students there that if they made their money available, that the Premier himself would guarantee them that there would be a Student Union Centre.

Great! The students gave him a big applause. Everybody was happy. Big press headlines. And what happens immediately after the election? Not the Premier, no, but the minister announces that the Student Union Centre has been put on hold and that he will no longer proceed with it.

Mr. Speaker, we've had so many broken promises; there's just a litany of them. In question period today I think it was clearly established once again, statements made by the Deputy Premier, by the Premier, over and over again they say one thing one day and completely reverse it the next day, and then they come into this House and deny it. They deny it.

But it's on record, they are on record, Mr. Speaker, in saying one thing . . . For example, they said that they would not privatize SaskPower. Then they go and split SaskPower and called it SaskEnergy. But as my colleague said the other day, SaskEnergy, or whatever you want to call it, is still SaskPower.

And the Premier made a solemn commitment, a solemn commitment, not once but a number of times, that he would never, ever privatize the power corporation of Saskatchewan or a utility of Saskatchewan. And that's exactly what he is doing today.

Did he have the integrity to get up in this House and say, yes, I made a mistake, I've changed my mind? No, no, he didn't have that; no respect at all for this institution or for the traditions of this House, and for the integrity of individuals as we stand in this House. But he will make those statements — as I say, one statement outside of the House and another statement in here. And it doesn't make any difference whether it has anything to do with reality or not.

Mr. Speaker, I want to refer also to the statement made by the Minister of Education on student assistance. It is a fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the federal government, the federal government — and he never mentioned the federal government once — under the Liberals and under the Tories, federally, have made massive moneys available, massive moneys available for student loans in

this country; hundreds of millions of dollars. And so they should. And that money is made available to provincial governments, as they did in the '60s when the program was started, in the '70s, and now in the '80s. And the money is made available to needy students. And I have no difficulty in saying to the government that they have . . . and congratulating the government that they have made more money available. But much of that money, almost all of that money comes from the federal government.

But what this government has done, and what burns me about this government, is that they've changed the student assistance program and have now cut out all the bursaries that existed when we were the government. When we were the government, a student only had to borrow up to \$2,640 and then you had a bursary. And a very, very generous bursary it was.

Now you've got to borrow the first \$5,900, so that a student who attends university and needs the maximum each year — and many of the students do because there are no jobs available; there are no jobs available today — if the student borrows the maximum, they will be in debt to the tune of \$30,000. Thirty thousand dollars today is the debt load that those students will carry.

Under the former scheme, under the former scheme the bursaries cut in and the bursary was forgiven. So yes it was, I think, a much better program, a much better program in those days than it is today. And the minister says, well they didn't make that much money available. All students who were in need of loans received loans and bursaries at that time.

But when you have high unemployment of 9 per cent and sometimes close to 10 per cent — in Saskatoon, 12 per cent unemployment, some of our young people up to 17 per cent unemployment, is there any doubt at all as to why they need loans? No, because they don't have jobs. And there are more students today who will need to ask for loans.

In the budget alone, in this past budget, what did they do? Did they have some initiatives to create jobs? No. Instead of creating jobs they cut 1,500 summer jobs for our students. So next fall again those 1,500 students will be coming to your doors asking and begging for more assistance so that they can attend university, if they can get into the universities. The moneys, Mr. Speaker, that have been made available for post-secondary education are simply inadequate.

I have with me, Mr. Speaker, a budget request from the U of S. This, Mr. Speaker, was made to the Minister of Education in December 9, 1988, just a few months ago.

Let me read to the Minister of Education in case he has forgotten or in case he wasn't listening at the time, what the board of governors of the U of S asked him to do in the upcoming budget — that's the budget that we are discussing right now. The board of governors said this:

The board of governors of the University of Saskatchewan requests and recommends to the Minister of Education that the budget crisis at the institution be resolved by having the provincial

government increase the operating grant to the university by an amount in excess of 4 per cent for each of the next two fiscal years.

In excess of four per cent — what did they mean? In excess of 4 per cent over inflation — that's what they meant.

They go on to say:

Given the current budget outlook, the university requires, at a minimum, an increase in the operating grant, of 7.3 per cent for 1989-90 and of 6 per cent for 1990-91.

The minister stands before this House and before the people of Saskatchewan and in glowing terms says that he is committed to post-secondary education, that he wants to provide quality education to our universities. And yet when the universities tell him that they have a crisis on their hands, they need 7.3 per cent, what does he offer them? — 1.99 per cent. That's what he offered them.

What is going to happen? What is going to happen at the U of S? I've talked to the administrators at the U of S and they tell me that unless they get a substantial amount of that enhancement fund and that that money can be used for programs right on the campus, they will have to cut programs; they have no choice.

(1615)

It's no longer that they will say 500 students cannot attend. They will have to slash programs. They will have to slash the programs; they have no choice. And I say to the Minister of Education, you are being a hypocrite. You are hypocritical in what you are saying if you deny the universities their requests when they are in a crisis situation.

I indicated earlier, Mr. Speaker, that I spoke to the president of the U of R this morning. I had a meeting with him this morning. Naturally I won't divulge in specifics what he said to me, because that is in confidence, but the general theme of it was that he is faced with a \$6 million deficit.

An Hon. Member: — The U of S, or U of R?

Mr. Rolfes: — The U of R. The U of R. I met with him this morning. He said, look, I'm faced with a \$6 million deficit. That 1.99 per cent is not going to address that problem, is not going to address that problem. In fact, that 1.99 per cent will not allow me to offer the programs that I presently am offering. I will need a good chunk of that enhancement fund that the minister is talking about on-campus programs, on-campus programs.

Are they opposed to distance education? Are they opposed to regional colleges offering these programs? No, not at all. Not at all. But what they are telling me, that if we want quality education at the U of R and quality education at the U of S, then that Minister of Education has to provide at least 7.3 per cent in operating grants, not 1.99 per cent.

And I think that when he speaks in glowing terms of what he has done for post-secondary education, I think he is simply being . . .

An Hon. Member: — Out of touch.

Mr. Rolfes: — . . . as my colleague says, he's out of touch with the situation. He's simply out of touch.

I could, Mr. Speaker, and I want to for just a second again, just in case the minister did not pay any attention — *Issues and Options* at the U of S clearly, clearly states the crisis that the U of S is in, and similar remarks could be made about the U of R.

The buildings at the U of R are simply falling apart. I mean, they need replacements, and I think the people who, on the opposite side, who have their children attending the U of R, know that we have to replace some of those buildings. The money simply isn't in the budget. It's not there. What does the *Issues and Options* of accessibility say, and I say to some of the other cabinet ministers, if you haven't seen this, get the summer report — it's only about six or seven pages — summer report.

An Hon. Member: — Has it got pictures?

Mr. Rolfes: — Yes, there are even some pictures for that.

But I want to on page 4 read just one section of it. There are lots of other important sections and recommendations, but just one section. It says this, and this refers to the U of S:

The report (and this is *Issues and Options*) considers various alternatives for expanding accessibility in ways that perhaps would generate fewer net costs, but concludes that the recommended expansion cannot take place at the University without both a \$10-11 million accessibility envelope of annual operating funding . . .

Ten to \$11 million increase in operating funds. What did the minister provide? He provided \$3 million for both universities — \$3 million, less than 3 million. The U of S is saying that they need from 10 to 11 million. And they say, plus they will need 93 million in capital spending, eventually, that will have to come.

If the capital spending were committed, short-term measures could be taken to speed up the loosening of quotas in advance of the completion of new facilities. But without the required funding commitments, the University's chief alternative is the further reduction of student numbers in the long term.

That is the reality, that is the reality that we are facing at our universities. They will have to, unless, as I say, a good portion of the \$7 million of the enhancement fund is devoted to the universities, they will have to shut down — either shut down whole departments; they will certainly have to cut classes and courses, and they will not be able to offer the quality education, Mr. Speaker, that is expected of our universities.

Mr. Speaker, there's other information that I would like to convey to the legislature, but I simply don't have the time.

But I do want to say to the minister that before I leave the education specifics, look, you may think that you're doing a great job. And I thought I was doing a great job when I was the minister over there. But there are lots of needs out there. You've got to face reality. If you look at what you are providing to the school boards and what you are providing to the universities and technical schools, it is simply inadequate, simply inadequate.

School boards simply cannot continue receiving less than the inflation rate and continue to offer quality education from kindergarten to grade 12. In the school that I was in this past year we had a biology class, I believe, that had 47 students in it. You cannot, in my opinion, you cannot have quality education when you have 47 students in a class of biology. I agree that that was the exception. But there was not the exception to have 30, 35 kids in an English class or a history class. That was not the exception. In fact, in my own class I had 31.

An Hon. Member: — NDP days.

Mr. Rolfes: — NDP days, the minister says. Well I'll tell you — NDP days, the people wish that those glory days were back. They wish that they were back, Mr. Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Not only that, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, they would gladly trade you in for a different minister. They would gladly trade you in for a different minister.

Mr. Minister, I want to, as I said, I congratulated you on some of the initiatives that you have taken. I have to however be fair I think, in that I think that you have not adequately funded. If you look at your own record, if you look at your own record, in these statistics from 1986 to 1990, you will find that you have not provided operating grants even to keep up with inflation. That's right in your own estimates. I've worked them out from 1986 to 1990 and there is less offered each year. The minister says to me — and I want the teachers and the parents and the trustees to note that — that all that the trustees are using is socialist mathematics when they find out that they are getting less than inflation per year. That's what the minister just told me — that they're using socialist mathematics. Well I don't care whether it's socialist mathematics. We know that he has not provided the school boards with adequate funding, and consequently property taxes have had to increase every year since he's been a minister — every year. And in some instances, Mr. Speaker, the property taxes have gone up very, very dramatically.

Let me read from the April 3rd issue of the *Leader-Post*: "Separate board ponders budget." Just one paragraph.

Local taxes paid for 53 per cent of the division's expenses in 1988, compared to 44 per cent from provincial grants.

Fifty-three per cent at the local level; forty-four at the provincial level. And, Mr. Speaker, in the 1970s and

when we were the government, that was as high as 56 per cent from the provincial and less than 44 per cent at the local level. It has just reversed. And we see more and more of this, the provincial government putting in less and less for education and asking the local school boards to pay more.

Just in case the minister figures that's only one, here is another one:

Budget could mean higher city taxes; Director says school taxes likely to rise.

Is that socialist mathematics? I don't think it is. It just goes to show that the minister has not been as successful with the Minister of Finance as some other ministers have been. I mean, the Minister of Finance, for example, has been very successful. He has, for example, he has put aside 15.7 per cent to pay off, to pay off the debt of the deficit that they have created.

Our share this year in the budget, Mr. Speaker, to paying off the provincial deficit has gone up 15.7 per cent — one of the highest increases anywhere in the budget, so that today, Mr. Speaker, we are paying \$380 million of interest on the deficit created by this Finance minister.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just for a few more minutes speak about this government's record and turn away from education, as I have done. Education, before I leave it, is in a crisis. It is in a crisis right now simply because of the lack of funding that it has received over a number of years. That refers to kindergarten to grade 12 and post-secondary education.

As I indicated before, I spent five months, from September last to the end of January in the class-room, and I know what the morale of teachers is like. They are very disappointed at the lack of consultation that has taken place between the teaching profession and the Department of Education ever since this minister has taken over. And I think it would be welcomed, if the Premier sees fit, to change the cabinet after . . . in July. The teachers, I think, would not shed too many tears if we had a new minister of Education. They wouldn't shed too many tears if we had a new minister, and we could at least start afresh with maybe some new ideas with a minister who would listen.

I was at Easter council — and I do want to pay this compliment to the member from Swift Current. Somebody indicated to me, well, they sure wish they had the member — they used her name — sure wish we had the member from Swift Current back again as minister of Education . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well no, I do want to pay her a compliment because although she had her problems, compared to the present Minister of Education she was a pleasure and a good minister to have.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — So I want to put this on the record for the Premier. He could do a service to education and to the teachers of this province if he made a change in that particular portfolio. And if he would like to have a

suggestion, I could suggest one or two members on the opposite side who may fit the bill . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, I'm not quite certain on that one.

But, Mr. Speaker, I do want to now turn to other parts of the budget. When this government took over in 1982, they took over an economy that was flowing, that was vibrant, that was strong.

And it was . . . That's not just our assessment of it. You can go to national papers and they say that the Blakeney government had created a mixed economy. They were able, even though they were recognized as a socialist government, were able to attract a high rate of private investment in this province, which is true.

The credit rating was the highest in the country, which has gone down about three or four times since this government has taken over. And the people of this country gave credit to Blakeney, and I think he was an excellent administrator who knew how to have balanced budgets and who spent wisely.

But when this government took over, Mr. Speaker, they made a number of promises, lavish promises. Some of them they should not have kept, and some of them they should have kept. But I wish that some of them they wouldn't have kept; for example, the gas tax. I'll give you a good example — the gas tax. The gas tax was a bad tax to take off. We lost about \$800 million by taking it off, before they reinstated it again through their tax rebate.

And, Mr. Speaker, they made the promise that they would reduce the royalties to the oil companies. And those royalties, Mr. Speaker, have cost this province at least, at least \$2 billion since 1982 — at least \$2 billion since 1982. No one, no one will deny, Mr. Speaker, that the production of oil has gone up. In fact, in 1985-86 it doubled. No one denies that. But did they get double the royalties? No. In fact, Mr. Speaker . . .

(1630)

The Speaker: — Order, order. There seem to be two debates going on simultaneously, and I believe the member from Saskatoon South has the floor.

Mr. Rolfes: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister of Education only spoke for an hour and five minutes, and that's short according to . . . when you compare it to most of his speeches, and he likes to continue.

But I just want to say to the members opposite that, yes, you increased the production of oil in 1985-86. Oil at that time was \$30 a barrel. They produced over 2 billion barrels of oil and they got less revenue. They only got \$654 million, whereas in 1982 we had half the production. The price of oil was less than \$30 a barrel, and we got over \$700 million in royalties.

Now that is where . . . those two items — the royalty structure over \$2 billion; the gas tax, \$800 million — cost this province \$2.8 billion. Now those two decisions alone have cost this province a lot of money. And if you take that money, Mr. Speaker, at 10 per cent, we are paying

\$280 million a year now, \$280 million a year now on the interest that we pay on that deficit from that government opposite, those decisions that they should not have made. Those decisions they should not have made.

And, Mr. Speaker, what we have seen in this budget again is a heavy tax increase for individuals, another \$145 million increase in taxes for individuals, but a 2 per cent decrease for the corporations.

Last year, we had a \$265 million increase in taxes. We are being so heavily taxed, Mr. Speaker, that the people of this province, pretty soon they're going to say, well what's the sense in working, this government is taxing it all away.

So what do we have, Mr. Speaker? We have, under this government, unemployment of 43,000. It would be up to 64,000 if 33,000 people hadn't left this province last year. And we have fewer people paying for the taxes, and this government has no job incentive programs put into this budget whatsoever — none at all.

And they have the wrong priorities, Mr. Speaker. This government has not addressed the problems of education. It has not addressed the problems of job creation. It has not addressed the problems of how we put this province back to work. Rather, they're spending too much time on privatization and selling off our Crown corporations.

Mr. Speaker, because I believe, and my colleagues believe, that those are the wrong priorities. We cannot accept the budget. We will, however, support the amendments that are made. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to rise today in support of the fine budget presentation made by my colleague, the Minister of Finance, and also in support of government programs and government actions.

Mr. Speaker, what I thought I'd like to do today is, in company with other ministers on this side of the House who have spoken earlier, touch on some of the programs in my department. But before I do that, for the edification of all members in the House, perhaps I could explain in some degree what kind of programs we're responsible for and what the different branches are in this department, because it's become a very large and very complex department.

Indeed last year, Mr. Speaker, we did a count through the human resources branch to see just how many people went through our books. In actual fact we employed over 4,500 people last year. We have many seasonal employees and temporary employees and part-time workers, and of course with a big forest fire season such as we had last year and the year before, we bring in an awful lot more people during those particular times of the year. So all in all we employed some 4,500 people last year.

The scope of the department, Mr. Speaker. Well first of all, in the parks and renewable resources side I have responsibility for 31 provincial parks, 101 regional parks,

responsibility for forestry. We have 15, 16 million acres of commercial forest in this province; have responsibility for wildlife, responsibility for fisheries, and responsibility for resource lands, so we administer about 84 million acres of resource land in the province. Now that's on one side of the portfolio, Mr. Speaker.

On the other side of the portfolio, in culture and recreation, I have responsibility for amateur sport, for arts, multiculturalism, heritage programs. I'm also responsible for the western development museums, the Centre of the Arts in Regina, the Museum of Natural History, museum programs in general, the arts board, the archives board.

I have now assumed responsibility and will be within the next few weeks taking on the responsibility for our urban parks in Saskatchewan, so parks such as Wascana Centre will fall under the jurisdiction of this particular department. And we think, Mr. Speaker, there are some very good reasons for doing this. There's lots of common ground between what the urban parks do and what my Department of Parks also is in the process of doing.

With the work that the New Careers Corporation is doing — and for which I am also responsible — with the work that they are doing, Mr. Speaker, the parks, the urban parks, fit very nicely and tie well into this portfolio. We're heavily involved with the urban parks with the New Careers Corporation, providing projects to ameliorate those parks and upgrade the facilities that currently exist there.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we're in the business of service. We're in the business of servicing a large number of client groups. For example, the largest group we have are what are called the umbrella groups. This is Sask Sport, the Saskatchewan Council for Cultural Organizations, and the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association. Sask Sport is the umbrella that covers off 73 sport-governing bodies. SCCO (Saskatchewan Council for Cultural Organizations) has 25 member groups; SPRA (Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association) has over 100. These are the people primarily with whom I deal.

Now, Mr. Speaker, they are primarily made up of volunteers — a large, large number of volunteers. As you would know, sir, and other members of this House would know, Saskatchewan has the highest volunteerism rate in Canada. Fully 28 per cent of our population volunteer their time and their skills, their energy, to some individual hobby or pursuit mostly for the benefit of other Saskatchewan citizens. And I'm very proud to be associated with them.

I can honestly say, Mr. Speaker, that probably I have more fun in government as a minister than any of the rest of my colleagues, partly because of the scope of the activity of the department, partly because of the kinds of contacts I have with our client groups.

And I hasten to point out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that these are non-partisan groups. These groups existed in the times when the members opposite formed government, and before that when the Liberal Party formed the government of this province. They don't exist for partisan

gain. They have recognized over the years that in order to achieve their goals and their objectives, that is much better achieved through accommodation rather than through confrontation. And that's the kind of atmosphere that we've managed to live under in this last two and a half years, and I'm very proud of that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I felt that this budget in terms of my department has been one of protection, protecting what we already have, and building towards the future; protecting the strong base we have in our wildlife programs — and I'll touch on those a little later. We just won an international, a prestigious international award for the wildlife programs we have in Saskatchewan. They're recognized as being the best in North America.

We're going to be building on those programs in the coming year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, building on our fisheries with a number of fingerlings and fry that we've been planting in lakes around this province; building in terms of sport and recreation. The success we had in Melfort last summer with the summer games, and we're looking forward to Melville for the winter games next year; and in between of course, that very large and important games coming to Saskatchewan, coming to Saskatoon, the summer games.

So although I say this budget for us is one of protection, it is also one of building. It leaves lots of room to build on what we've done in the past few years, and looking ahead, to providing programs for the benefit of all Saskatchewan citizens in the years ahead.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Speaker, I outlined for you the scope of the department and the nature of the department, so that everyone will have a better understanding when I talk about building for the future, building on what we've done in the past.

And although we're recognized as yes, we are in the business of service, of servicing people, of servicing the people of Saskatchewan, indeed at a very small "c" conservative estimate, Mr. Speaker, it is estimated that this department touches three-quarters of a million people in this province. Whether they like to hunt or to fish or to use the parks or use the outdoors in any way, shape, or form; whether they're involved in cultural activity, recreational activity, heritage pursuit, palaeontological pursuit, archaeological pursuit, ornithology, a host of other activities, Mr. Speaker, we touch them in some way, shape, or form.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the important thing here that I want to get across is that in touching those people and providing programs for those people with a budget of approximately \$95 million, we are also in the business of economic development. And I'll give you some examples. Fisheries and wildlife alone contribute about \$350 million worth of economic activity every year to this province; the parks, 230 to \$235 million a year; forestry, 200 to \$230 million a year; resource lands, \$120 million a year.

So you see, Mr. Speaker, that although we are definitely,

most definitely in the business of service, we are also an economic development department because of the amount of economic activity we generate for the people of the province, and that's on the resources side.

On the culture and recreational side, Mr. Speaker, it is recognized that for every dollar we invest in programs in culture and recreation, we realize five in return. Mr. Speaker, I would submit to you and all members that a five to one return is an enormous return.

But more than that, Mr. Speaker, not just the economic development that is generated, but that volunteer spirit and that volunteerism of which I spoke earlier, contributes, again estimated, another \$20 million a year to the economy of Saskatchewan — people who are working without wages, working without fees, working without honorariums, working because they love their province, because they're happy to work for the people of the province, people who perhaps have been fortunate in their own life experiences and want to share that with others.

And I know there are many people in here on both sides of the House, Mr. Speaker, who in past years and currently, do offer of their time, whether it be through Lions clubs, Kinsmen's clubs, other service groups, church groups, organizations such as minor sports, cultural activities, organization of Saskatchewan arts councils. I know we have many people on both sides of the House who are involved in that kind of volunteer activity. It's not only rewarding to them personally, but they're doing great service to the rest of the people of Saskatchewan.

We provide activities through volunteer service, Mr. Speaker, that otherwise could not take place. We look at that \$20 million worth of activity and although I don't want to be crass and say we put a dollar value on one's time in terms of volunteerism, it cannot be ignored, the impact that has on small communities particularly, all over Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I spoke about economic development and I talked about protection in the budget and I talked about building. I'd like to expand, on the time I have left, on building. In the last year or so, Mr. Speaker, it's become very obvious, not only to me and my colleagues — I'm sure members of the opposition have had calls from their constituents — that some of our recreational and cultural facilities have been falling behind somewhat in terms of upkeep. Some of them indeed have been declared to be unsafe. Others have got problems with roofs. Some have problems with heating.

What we found, Mr. Speaker, is that we need upgrading and improvement of existing facilities, and in some communities, indeed, Mr. Speaker, you have communicated to me on more than one occasion, you have need of new facilities in your own constituency.

I know there are others in here, and I look around today, members who have been contacting me on behalf of constituents, members who have brought delegations of constituents to visit with me, some of whom I have gone to see on their own turf and looked at their facilities.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to say today that the Minister of Finance did announce in the budget that there would be a new community cultural recreational facilities program, a new six-year, \$32.6 million program allowed for in this budget and ongoing over the next number of years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1645)

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Speaker, there were no details contained in the budget speech as to precisely how this program would be articulated on behalf of the citizens of Saskatchewan, so I thought I'd take a few moments today and share with colleagues on both sides of the House. Because we will all be receiving inquiries from constituents on this, I thought I'd try to articulate for them some of the details of the program without going into the very specific dollars that will be available.

The application forms, Mr. Speaker, will be available by July 1. All of the details in terms of how much money a community would be eligible to apply for, will be announced prior to that July 1 date. Department officials from Parks, Recreation and Culture will be available on a consultative basis to go out and meet with interested groups, community groups, and recreation boards and others to explain how they will apply for the program. And we'll help them with the form filling and all the logistical details that of necessity must be completed prior to the processing of the applications.

Mr. Speaker, the objective of this program is very simple. It is designed to encourage and assist communities and voluntary organizations to construct new cultural and recreational facilities, and of course to upgrade and improve existing facilities. That, very simply, is what the program is going to do.

Now as you would know, Mr. Speaker, we just completed a previous program that had been introduced in 1982 by this government, a cultural and recreational facilities program of some \$32 million in magnitude. That program just finished.

There are some very discernible differences between the former program and the new program. And the first of these, the first of these is that in consultation with groups around the province it was made abundantly clear to me, to my officials, and to my colleagues who've come back to discuss this with me, that we could not do another program based on a per capita allowance. And, Mr. Speaker, I'll elaborate a wee bit on that.

I live in the town of Spiritwood in north-west Saskatchewan. I had the honour of being mayor there for two terms. When programs are announced on a per capita basis — we had a community of 1,000 population — with \$25 per capita that was a \$25,000 program. At \$25,000, Mr. Speaker, as we all know, we'd not build a curling rink or an arena. It's very welcome. It's very welcome in that it assists us with our own fund raising to go out and match it and build something. It assists us with upgrading and renovation of our facilities.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's just as expensive to build a curling rink in Spiritwood as it is to build it in Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Regina, Saskatoon, or any of the larger centres who, of course, receive much more money in that program.

Now certainly, based on per capita, those communities do deserve more money. Those communities have a larger population. They pay income tax like anybody else, but, Mr. Speaker, they also have a larger tax base from which to draw upon for their programs.

The city of Regina is blessed with a very fine parks and recreation department administered by the city of Regina. They have very sophisticated programs and they have high calibre employees who are capable of delivering excellent programs to the citizens of Regina.

Now obviously, given the smaller tax base and the smaller population in towns in rural Saskatchewan and indeed, sir, rural municipalities, they don't have the luxury of that volume of tax dollar accruing to them. So we tried to design a program, Mr. Speaker, that would address that issue in smaller communities around Saskatchewan.

In terms of eligibility, the program is available to municipalities. Of course that includes cities, towns, villages, resort villages, Indian bands, northern towns, villages and settlements, organized hamlets.

On the question of the North, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out that they are eligible for increased funding over the normal size of the money that would be available in this program. Funding will be available based on the type of facility, the size of community, to a maximum of 50 per cent of the total eligible cost of the project. Fifty per cent of the total cost of the project, Mr. Speaker, would be in the form of grant, should they so qualify.

However, in northern Saskatchewan, I'm very pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, and I know the northern members present would be pleased to hear this, that will be 90 per cent because, Mr. Speaker, we recognize the much lower tax base in the North, we recognize the greater distance between communities, and we recognize a host of logistical problems facing residents in the North. So in the North, I'm pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, it will be 90 per cent of the cost of the project, whereas in other areas of Saskatchewan it will be 50 per cent of the cost of the project.

Mr. Speaker, the program is in effect as of April 1 of this year. But we recognize that in anticipation of a new program being announced, and with some problems that have been around Saskatchewan for the last year, we're going to make this program retroactive one year. So any projects that commenced on April 1 of 1988 will be eligible for consideration under this project. And of course, if the project had begun prior to April 1 of 1988, we are also willing to look beyond that date at any upgrading they have done or any expenses they have incurred or have accrued to them subsequent to April 1 of 1988.

Mr. Speaker, we're also going to look at principal and

interest payments during that time. Mr. Speaker . . .

An Hon. Member: — The sound of one hand clapping.

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Speaker, well, one member says, the sound of one hand clapping. Members on that particular member's constituents . . . from that particular member's constituency, I think are going to be very pleased with this particular announcement, and they're going to be very happy when they see the details of the program and the amount of money for which they are going to be eligible because this program is much richer than the last one that we announced.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I touched on some of the details of the program, and I would like to mention a couple of other things that we're working into this program. For example, I've been asked questions — I was in Melfort this morning with my colleague, the Minister of Highways, where we announced some of the details of the program. We plan on doing this around other areas of Saskatchewan, areas who have been contacting me, contacting my colleagues, and saying: are you going to have a program; what's in the program; what's there for us; is there assistance for us? So I want to go out and touch in some of these communities and explain the details to them.

And a couple of questions I got today, one of them: would professional fees such as those of architects, engineers, and consultants be eligible costs under this program? I'm pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, yes, to a maximum of 10 per cent of the total project cost. I've been asked: are land and building costs eligible project costs? Mr. Speaker, yes they are, to a maximum of 10 per cent of the total project costs.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this program, which has been asked for by so many people of Saskatchewan, is timely. I think it's a program that's going to be very well accepted right across Saskatchewan. We recognize, Mr. Speaker, that the core of social life, primarily in rural Saskatchewan and in our smaller communities, tends to revolve around the skating arena and the curling rink, not just for the athletic endeavours that take place within those edifices, Mr. Speaker, but because of the social atmosphere and the gathering place that it tends to be during the winter months. Similarly, community halls, bowling alleys, senior citizen complexes; in the summer, passive parks, active parks — all of those kinds of facilities will be eligible for assistance under this program.

So what we have then: expanded program, an enriched program with a few more wrinkles thrown in — the kinds of things that the people will be asking for. And, Mr. Speaker, something that I would like to point out about this particular program.

When we talked about designing it, when we talked about what kind of things should be in the program, what should not be in the program, how much money should be in the program, instead of asking the officials to take on the sole responsibility for this, what we did was we had our MLAs go out and consult in their communities and ask people, what is it that you need. Then they came back. We brought the officials in and we said to the officials, okay, you're the technical people; please

articulate onto paper for us the kind of program that we're looking for. And they brought it back two or three times and they met with several different committees of the Conservative caucus until we hammered out something that we thought would touch the most people in the most beneficial fashion in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say today, I think we've accomplished precisely that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Maxwell: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to turn to a couple of other topics as they relate to the Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture. As you would know, sir, and perhaps others would know here, I've had a deep and personal and abiding interest in wildlife for a large number of years. I've been a member of the Wildlife Federation and the Natural History Society; I contribute to the World Wildlife Fund and other organizations like that. So I've taken a very keen interest in the efforts of our department in conservation, preservation of the wildlife that we have, and looking years ahead to improving upon the stocks that we have of ungulates and looking at increasing the water-fowl numbers that we currently enjoy in Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, by way of background, some 74,000 people purchase licences to hunt and trap each year in this province; 3.6 million days of hunting; \$172.6 million are actually spent enjoying wildlife each year. We have 320 licensed outfitters in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if we're going to keep those kind of numbers and those statistics up, we're going to have to have viable herds of wildlife, and we're going to have to have viable flocks of water-fowl. Let me touch on water-fowl.

For the first time, I believe it was last year, the mallard population in this province dipped under 1 million. Mr. Speaker, that was due to a couple of factors, the primary one of course being drought. It's pretty difficult for ducks to learn to swim in a dugout that's full of not even wet mud, just dust and sand. So we've had trouble with our numbers, with nesting; the predators have found it too easy to feed on our water-fowl and on the chicks, so we've had all kinds of problems due to drought — less than 1 million mallards for the first time in a very long time.

Mr. Speaker, as you would know, and other members here would know, in actual fact Saskatchewan is a breeding ground for the vast majority of water-fowl on this continent. Thirty-three per cent of all of the mallards breed in Saskatchewan; 25 per cent of all of the water-fowl breeds in Saskatchewan. In actual fact when they begin their fall migration and head south on the three flyways that leave this province, when they head south, people down there are seeing fewer and fewer water-fowl every year, to the extent that in the southern states they are now having to shut down their hunting season for water-fowl altogether.

Well what are we going to do about it? Mr. Speaker, we've been involved in the prairie pot-hole project, whereby we have introduced artificial nesting. We have

encouraged farmers to leave sloughs and not drain them, and we're in the first stage, the first step program of a North American water-fowl management plan. Mr. Speaker, we are the only province in the country that has signed in to this particular project. It's a fifteen year, 1.5 billion program aimed at restoring our water-fowl populations to what it was years ago. And I'm happy to say that the \$6 million first step in all of this was begun at Quill Lakes in the last two years.

Mr. Speaker, that's only one program. There are many others that we've been encouraging, because you can't force people to take part in these programs, but we've been encouraging these programs around the province. We've had great co-operation from Ducks Unlimited, the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, the Natural History Society, Wildlife Habitat Canada, and the World Wildlife Fund. Without the co-operative venture of our partners, we would not be able to boast about the populations we have today.

Just on that topic, the white-tailed deer population, Mr. Speaker, this year is recovering to the levels prior to the disastrous winter of 1984-85 where we spent over \$1 million on a deer feeding program. So in actual fact, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that the wildlife population is on the increase, the water-fowl populations are on the increase, and with a little luck from nature this year, I think we'll see some great strides there.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many other things I would like to touch on, on this department. The scope of the department is enormous, as I mentioned earlier. There are so many good projects that we're involved with — the New Careers Corporation, the best program of its type in North America, freely acknowledged at a national conference in Ottawa last week, the envy of other job creation and job employment and training programs across this country.

But, Mr. Speaker, time does not permit today to follow up on all of these initiatives. I would like the opportunity, perhaps at a later date, to come back into the debate and run through other program areas. I'm very proud of the work being done by the officials in my department, and I know that they would all like the opportunity to have their programs mentioned here on the floor of the legislature, and I would like to have the opportunity to do so.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I'd like to call it 5 o'clock.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.