

EVENING SITTING

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF FINANCE
(BUDGET DEBATE)

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

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me say, Mr. Speaker, that it's my pleasure this evening to have an opportunity to address the budget of this government.

And I also want to point out that earlier in the day, the member from Arm River had stated that the opposition was not dealing with the budget. That statement, of course, was not true; it was totally false. However, I just want to point out that I will be dealing with the budget tonight, and I will be dealing with it in some detail.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Particularly, Mr. Speaker, as it pertains to health care in the province of Saskatchewan.

I've had an opportunity over the last few days to examine the health care portion of this budget in some detail and I find it, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, devoid of any vision in the area of health care.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — The government talks about an 11 per cent increase, but, Mr. Speaker, let us examine the truth in this matter. The fact of the matter is, is that if we take a look at the supplemental payments of 22 million that were added to last year's budget, it immediately reduces the amount the government says it's paying this year, over and above last year, by 22 million.

If we take into consideration the property management corporation portion in both years, and add in the supplements, and then deduct the amount that would cover this year's inflation — this year's inflation only, Mr. Speaker — the real expenditure increase in health care is a meagre 4.8 per cent. Four point eight per cent, Mr. Speaker, hardly enough to make up for the harmful and thoughtless PC policies in the area of health care in previous years.

And this 4.8 per cent, Mr. Speaker, doesn't even deal with the huge sums of money that are being paid to the property management corporation in this budget — rental on old hospitals and old health care facilities. That isn't even taken into consideration. And the amount that that is, is fairly substantial, Mr. Speaker, somewhere in the amount of \$13 million.

Nowhere in the budget do we see how much the retroactive pay for CUPE (Canadian Union of Public

Employees) workers and nurses are, but I will be asking the minister that question, and I'm putting him on notice tonight, Mr. Speaker. Nowhere in the budget is that amount referred to. And I wonder how much it is of that 4.8 per cent increase, real expenditure increase. So when I talk about 4.8 per cent, Mr. Speaker, we still have to deduct from that the phoney property management corporation payments as well as the retroactive pay that the government has deliberately not paid in order to try to pad the health care budget today.

And this percentage increase is hardly enough — hardly enough, Mr. Speaker, to make up for the harmful and hurtful cut-backs in the previous seven years of the PC administration.

An Hon. Member: — Certainly no dental plan with that.

Ms. Simard: — Exactly, no dental plan. There's no indication whatsoever in the budget that the school-based children's dental plan will be reinstituted in the schools across our country. The school-based children's dental plan was a preventative program of the first degree, Mr. Speaker. It was one of the best preventative dental care programs in North America; I would venture to say the best in North America. Some 400 dental workers were fired as a result of this government's cut-backs to the dental plan, 400 dental workers. And this government was counting on people not using the plan, Mr. Speaker, that's how they wanted to save money. That's their commitment to preventive health care — hoping that people won't choose the preventive health care services that are out there.

They privatized the children's school-based dental plan, Mr. Speaker. They privatized it as a result of pressures from the private sector, when this government should have been expanding dental services in the province, Mr. Speaker. They should have been expanding them. They should have been providing dental services of a similar nature to seniors. They should have been looking at a plan and a scheme for adults for the entire population in this province. Instead this government cut back on dental services.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — And who was hardest hit by this? It was many of their constituents, Mr. Speaker — rural people, rural people, Mr. Speaker. They were people who on farms have to travel long distances to get dental health; who have to pay mileage; who have to pay meals in the city; who, if the farm wife is working, has to take time off from her work and the children have to be taken out of school or otherwise they . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order.

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, rural residents have been particularly hard hit by the destruction of the school-based children's dental plan — rural residents. And I have heard from them across this province. Urban residents have also been hit hard. The expenses aren't as substantial for them as it is

for rural residents but nevertheless they still want their dental plan reinstituted.

We've heard from people across this province, from teachers and municipal officials. We've heard from people right across Saskatchewan asking for the school-based children's dental plan to be reinstituted, but there's not a thing in the budget — not a thing in the budget about doing that, Mr. Speaker. The budget talks in glowing terms about community involvement, but they're not listening to the community, Mr. Speaker. Oh, no, they're not listening to the people because the people have been calling for the reinstitution of the school-based children's dental plan.

This 4.8 per cent so-called increase, which is questionable even at that point, is hardly enough, Mr. Speaker, to make up for the harmful cut-backs in the last seven years to health care.

If we look at the prescription drug plan, which was decimated by this government, now we find seniors are faced \$125 deductible and 20 per cent up front . . . Or seniors, I believe, pay less than 125, but 125 is for families. Nevertheless, there is a 75, \$125 deductible up front and 20 per cent up-front cost. I am hearing from low-income people and from seniors that this deductible and 20 per cent is too much.

They're on a fixed income. I heard from a constituent tonight who told me . . . She's a university student. She had to go out and pay \$100, \$100 for a prescription drug today. Of course she didn't have the money, Mr. Speaker. Now I ask you, when you were a student at university, could you have afforded \$100 on prescription drugs? No, you couldn't have, Mr. Speaker; neither could have I. But that's the sort of hardship that this government is creating. That's one example out of hundreds, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — Nine million for a birthday party.

Ms. Simard: — Yes, yet they have \$9 million for a birthday party that nobody wants. Once again they're not listening to the people, Mr. Speaker. Nine million for a birthday party nobody wants, but what do we get? A destroyed school-based children's dental plan, a prescription drug plan that still requires a deductible and 20 per cent up front. That's what we get, Mr. Speaker, for our taxes. But what they want — what they feel that we should be getting — is a \$9 million birthday party that nobody wants.

And I want to talk a bit about some other cut-backs, the cut-backs to the public health nurses in the province of Saskatchewan. Last fall there was a report that was leaked with respect to public health nurses and twinning of regions in the province of Saskatchewan and cut-backs to public health nurses. What this government has done in the last few months — well actually it's been happening over a period of years, but it came to a peak in the last few months — was that they destroyed the public health regions in the province, or reduced them substantially from, I believe, 10 to six, and they cut back on public health nurses.

Now the government and the minister speaks in glowing

terms about preventive health care in the budget, Mr. Speaker. They speak in glowing terms about preventive health care. Well public health nurses are the front line workers in preventive health care. They're the front line workers. This government says it supports preventive health but it cuts back on the front line workers, Mr. Speaker.

And let me just quote from this report, in part, to tell you, Mr. Speaker, and other members of this Assembly, exactly how the public health nurses feel about these particular cut-backs "We have not been consulted in this process and the implications for health care have not been fully considered." Now that's a key statement. I'll come back to that in a few minutes, Mr. Speaker. "Additional pressures on an already busy staff can lead to errors in judgement, which can erode credibility, as well as endanger the public safety." Endanger the public safety, that's what the public health nurses said. "The proposed staffing levels are equivalent to the staffing of the 1950s when expectations were much lower, and programs were less numerous and complex. Morale is at an all time low."

The PC government claims it is committed to preventive health programs, Mr. Speaker, but I say that's a farce, and it's not true, because they're cutting back on the front line workers in preventive health care.

Now I just want to return to the statement about, "We have not been consulted in this process and the implications for health care have not been fully considered," because that's a major insight to what's happening in the area of health care in this province.

The government talks about wanting community involvement and wanting consultation, and we've seen a number of incidents that have occurred in the last few months, in particular the massive integration of hospitals in Saskatoon, where there's been no consultation with many of the people who were involved. In fact, in the Saskatoon integration, there was no consultation with the health care commission of this government, with the PC health care commission — absolutely no consultation. And yet they went ahead with a massive integration, a massive health care initiative, without even consulting with their own commission.

And now here what we have, the public health nurses say, is that there was no consultation. So the ministers' statements, the Minister of Health and the statements in the budget of the Minister of Finance, are not true. They do not believe in community involvement because, Mr. Speaker, actions speak louder than words. What we find with respect to the public health nurses is the fact that much of their time is being spent in administration as opposed to doing the sort of work that public health nurses want to do, and that's dealing with patients and looking after clients.

And let's just take a little closer look at the study and compare exactly what is happening from prior to the twinning and after the twinning. If we look at Swift Current, for example, the square mileage that was being covered by the public health nurses coming out of Swift Current used to be 15,336; it's now 26,578. And the

population the staff used to cover was 48,760, and it's now 155,000.

(1915)

If we look at Weyburn-Estevan, Regina Rural, it was 22,000 square miles approximately, and the population is now approximately 113,550. It used to be 9,000 and a population of 50,000. And I'm not going to read any further, Mr. Speaker, but the fact of the matter is that I could go on with the inequities that have been created as a result of the twinning of health care regions — a much larger area to cover; a much larger population for the public health nurses to service. And this is this government's policy on preventive health care.

And let me say, Mr. Speaker, that there are members sitting on that side of the House who know I am right, and who have stated as much to the health care commission in statements to the effect that it was virtually impossible for anyone to travel so far in order to perform their duties as public health nurses. So even their own members, Mr. Speaker, recognize the inequity and the unfairness of that twinning policy. Even their own members know, Mr. Speaker, they know that this is not delivering good health care to the people of the province of Saskatchewan — not because the staff are not willing and able to deliver good health care, but because they've made the task so difficult and so impossible that it is virtually impossible for them to service all the patients in the manner that they would like to.

Let's take a look at the shortage of public health inspectors, another preventative health care initiative that governments undertake and should respect, Mr. Speaker, that of inspecting public facilities. But the number of public inspections and inspectors has decreased substantially in the last few years, and let me just give you some comparisons. In 1984-85, the number of visits were 23,127 and in 1987-88 they were down to 14,199. The number of inspections in 1984-85 were 7,825 and the number in '87-88 down to 6,024, Mr. Speaker — down to 6,024. Well that gives you an idea as to what has happened in the public inspections department, Mr. Speaker, and I'm just wondering whether that incident at the Extendicare in Regina, where one gentleman passed away, had anything to do with the fact that there's been such a substantial decrease in the number of public health inspections in the province of Saskatchewan as a result, I might say, Mr. Speaker, of PC government cut-backs. And that's this government's commitment to preventive health care, Mr. Speaker.

Home care is another area of preventive health care, Mr. Speaker. Home care is another area of preventive health care that is . . . should be expanded substantially and that is very important in the whole scheme of health care and preventive health in the province. But what we see in this budget is a very small increase for home care that, as compared to the total increase in the budget, doesn't put it any further ahead.

Let's take a look at speech language pathologists and audiologists in the province. And I'm dealing with these particular disciplines, Mr. Speaker, because these disciplines have a lot to do with the new vision of health

care in the province — which I might say is not the PC vision — and that's moving into areas of preventive health and moving into services and primary health care that keep people out of hospitals and keep people well. And this government has totally neglected that area of health care services, Mr. Speaker, and this minimal increase in the PC budget does nothing to improve upon those services, Mr. Speaker.

Let's look at speech language pathology and audiology services in the province of Saskatchewan, and I'm referring now to a paper that was tabled by the Saskatchewan Association of Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists, presented to the health care commission in the province. It clearly indicates that when you compare Manitoba, Alberta, and Saskatchewan, including the Canadian . . . including the Canadian average, and when we look at the population per active speech pathologists or audiologists we have one to every 13,416 in Saskatchewan, and in Alberta it's one to every 6,538 — twice as much, virtually twice as much, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan — twice as many people per each speech pathologist, audiologist in Saskatchewan than in Alberta. The numbers are similar in Manitoba. There's one to every 6,894 in Manitoba. And the Canadian average is one speech pathologist, audiologist to every 9,587, but Saskatchewan has a whopping 13,416, Mr. Speaker. That's this government's commitment to preventative health care and the well-being of the people in this province.

And if we take a look at early childhood psychologists, another very important area, another very important area, Mr. Speaker, with respect to preventative health care and developing a sense of physical, mental, and social well-being for the men, women, and children of this province. Let's look at early childhood psychologists. And let me just read from their brief and tell you what this discipline had to say about their services:

Early identification and therapy are paramount to the success of this process. They are designed to work with families with pre-school children who are developmentally delayed or who are at risk for developmental delays.

However they go on to state that:

Recent reductions in services to pre-school children and their families, which have been traditionally provided by the Department of Health through community health services, are having a negative impact. This has included a loss in the number of early childhood psychologists and speech and language therapists throughout the province.

The most important . . . The number of effects that these staff decreases has had on the quality of services to families in our area . . . I'm sorry, there are a number of effects. The most important of these is a loss in early identification of children who have possible delays. And earlier on, as I quoted, early identification is crucial. They go on to say:

The last critical result in the decrease in

community health personnel is a lack of available professional consultation. Previously our staff met on a monthly basis with both the speech therapist and less often with the psychologist in our area. This was very essential in establishing consistent goals and therapies for children and their families. This has not been possible since the recent changes in staffing. At present, the support from the community health services has become minimal and in many cases absent when needed.

Now I think that's very telling, Mr. Speaker. That brief is very telling because what it tells the people of Saskatchewan is that this government has no commitment to a vision of health care; it has no commitment to preventive health care; and this budget is void of any vision in the area of health care.

We also notice in the province a real shortage of specialists, a real shortage of specialists, Mr. Speaker. In fact, cut-backs by this government in previous years meant an exodus of specialists from this province. And we in Regina only have to look at the exodus of specialists from the Plains hospital as a result of government cut-backs to the university which resulted in cut-backs to the Plains hospital. And we lost a number of specialists, some of whom we will never get back, Mr. Speaker, some of whom we will never get back. And this budget does not address that problem.

And I have a list of them here, but one endocrinologist, for example, one rheumatologist, one cardiologist, one infectious disease specialist — was the only one in this part of the province. And there were others as well, Mr. Speaker. I'm not going to list them all off. But the fact of the matter is there was an exodus of specialists in this province as a result of this government's harmful cut-backs in the area of health care. And the list goes on and on. And I could go on for ever just listing them, Mr. Speaker.

But I'm doing this to make the point that this small increase of the PC government does nothing to rectify those problems. It does nothing, Mr. Speaker. And there is no vision and no real commitment in the health care budget this year, Mr. Speaker.

That's this government's record in health care — destruction of the school-based children's dental plan, a decimation of the prescription drug plan, which is still causing seniors problems and low-income people problems, students difficulty; long hospital waiting lists, unprecedented in the history of this province; specialists fleeing the province; patients who couldn't get cancer treatment, and we saw many situations of that in the last few months; lack of primary health care in rural communities; cuts in preventative medicine such as public health nurses, public inspectors, community health workers in northern Saskatchewan, which is another issue again that I haven't gone into in detail.

But that's their health record, Mr. Speaker. That's their health record, and I say it's a national disgrace. And the PC budget does not correct those wrongs, does not correct the crisis that has been caused by its ineptitude in government management generally, but specifically, its

ineptitude in the health care area. It does not correct the crisis that has resulted as a result of their lack of commitment to health care; as a result of the fact that they have no long-term strategic plan in health care, no vision whatsoever, Mr. Speaker, none at all. And this budget does not reflect any commitment nor any vision.

In fact, I think the most glaring aspect of this health care budget, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that there's a total lack of any indication of a long-term strategic plan in health care — a total lack of any indication. None of the problems that I was talking about have been seriously addressed in this budget. This budget, the health care budget, is at best a partial catch-up, a partial catch-up to correct some of the horrendous policies of the last seven years.

But there's no long-term strategy in this budget, no long-term strategy with respect to delivering primary health care to the people of the province of Saskatchewan. And a key component, Mr. Speaker, of any long-term strategy would be a heavy emphasis on prevention.

But what we have seen are cut-backs to preventive health care, Mr. Speaker, and substantial cut-backs. Oh, sure, the government has its Everyone Wins program. But let me tell you that the people of this province see through that program and they see it as an advertising gimmick on the part of the PC government. It is not a real preventative health care program that puts workers in the front lines, Mr. Speaker, and that's where you'll make substantial improvements in terms of preventative health and delivering primary health care services to rural residents and urban residents in Saskatchewan.

Cut-backs with respect to the dental plan, cut-backs with respect to the prescription drug plan and community health workers and public health workers have not been addressed by this government. There's been no real increase to these health care services, and there's no real commitment by this government to health care and a vision of health care in this province.

(1930)

However, we do see a lot of money, Mr. Speaker, a lot of money in the budget under two votes in particular, two votes that have to do with public relations: 32 per cent, I believe, in one vote; and 62 — a whopping 60 or 62 per cent in another.

And my guess is, Mr. Speaker, that that money is going to be used largely for more self-serving PC advertising, more self-serving PC advertising. That's this government's commitment to preventive health. They will call it preventive health care, but what it will be is self-serving PC advertising with the minister's picture on many of these pamphlets, I would venture to guess, Mr. Speaker.

The government obviously perceives its problem in health as a public relations problem, and it therefore believes that through advertising and \$9 million birthday parties — although that's not the subvote I'm talking about — \$9 million birthday parties, fancy kick-offs for Everyone Wins programs that cost the taxpayers thousands of dollars, the government sees that as the way

to rectify the harm and the hurt and the suffering it's created as a result of its cut-backs in the last seven years.

Well I say, Mr. Speaker, that the people of this province see through that and the people of this province see through that and the people of this province won't buy it. The people of this province have repeatedly said, repeatedly said to the government through its PC commission on health, that it wants front line workers. It wants public health nurses, it wants community health workers, it wants dental therapists, and it wants a prescription drug plan that does not preclude anyone from obtaining drugs in this province. That's what the people want but this government has not delivered.

A long-term strategic plan in health care, Mr. Speaker, would look at ways to improve overall health, ways to keep people out of hospitals. If we can keep people out of hospitals, Mr. Speaker, we save costs. It's a simple, very simple, concept. Even the hon. members opposite, Mr. Speaker, shouldn't have difficulty understanding that one. If we take a look at the hospitals in . . . I believe, the Regina General as an example. There are a number of beds right now in the Regina General Hospital that are being used . . . acute care beds that are being used for long-term care. And this budget shows no creativity whatsoever in that area, Mr. Speaker. There should be money to assist these people to obtain accommodation outside of the hospital while they're waiting for their long-term care bed, thereby opening up beds here in Regina and across the province where this is occurring — other places — opening up beds for acute care patients and emergency cases.

We still have emergency cases in some areas, emergency cases like someone breaking a hip, who have to wait a day or two — and I have been told even three — to get into a hospital because there are no beds. Yet we have long-term care patients taking up acute care beds because the government has shown no initiative in subsidizing these patients while they wait in a private home or wherever possible for their long-term care bed.

That's this government's commitment to revamping the health care system so we get the biggest bang for our dollar, Mr. Speaker. They know nothing about . . . They know nothing about trying to save money for the purposes of providing better health care to the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

There are many things that could be implemented for the purpose, Mr. Speaker, of trying to improve health care. We could look at diabetic clinics across the province. The evidence indicates, Mr. Speaker, that if diabetic patients can go to a clinic outside of a hospital and be properly monitored, they're far more likely to be kept out of the hospital than if these clinics are not available, and thereby save acute care beds for emergency cases.

But this takes some leadership, Mr. Speaker, it takes leadership and it takes some initiative, and this government is totally lacking in those two areas — totally lacking, Mr. Speaker. We could have well adult clinics in the province. Is there anything in the budget about well adult clinics or clinics out in rural Saskatchewan that would perform a number of primary health care services?

Is there anything in this budget for that, Mr. Speaker? Nothing, nothing. But that would be a true commitment to prevention and that would be a true commitment to community involvement, and this budget is completely void of any such initiatives. No creativity in this budget, Mr. Speaker, no vision.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — I just want to talk a bit about community involvement, because the government did speak in glowing terms about the need for community involvement and its desire to involve the community in the health care of this province. But when they destroyed the school-based children's dental plan there was no community involvement. When they decimated the prescription drug plan there was no community involvement. When they integrated the hospitals in Saskatoon, no consultation with their commission, no community involvement. And the commission was going to be in Saskatoon. I think it was 10 days after they announced this initiative, 10 days and they couldn't wait. Well I think that's an indication of how seriously the PC government takes its own commission. And I venture to say, Mr. Speaker, there's been very little if no consultation, with respect to the priorities of this budget, and what the government should be making a priority. I venture to say there's been literally no consultation in that regard.

But instead this government acts on its own, totally out of touch with the people, dictating to them in their arrogant fashion what sort of services they will have, even though the people have been talking now for some eight or nine months to their health care commission. They've ignored many, many of the things that have been said by the people of Saskatchewan. And that's their commitment to health care and community involvement — no commitment whatsoever, Mr. Speaker.

And let's look at the issue of deterrent fees. Oh yes, we see the Minister of Health in the paper again yesterday, saying, no deterrent fees, no deterrent fees. My colleague here from Regina Rosemont says, no sales tax, no gas tax either. Quite right, Mr. Speaker.

And we heard in the House yesterday, oh, no, we're not going to privatize SPC, but what do we see? Privatization of SPC. What do we see? A gas tax. The Premier said, never again in the history of Saskatchewan will there be a gas tax, if there is a PC government. What do we see? A gas tax, Mr. Speaker.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, is that deterrent fees create a two-tiered system of health, a two-tiered system of health, where there's one level of health care for rich people, and a lesser level of health care for lower income and poor people. And the government says, oh, no; but we see their own officials speak out to the media and to the health care commission, suggesting there should be user fees — their own officials, Mr. Speaker. But the government says, oh, no, we're not going to implement deterrent fees. Well I tell you, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe them, not one bit.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — And neither do the people of the province of Saskatchewan. What this government says and what it does are two different things. It will say, no privatization of the SPC (Saskatchewan Power Corporation) and we see privatization of SPC; no gas tax, we see a gas tax; no sales tax, we see an increased sales tax; no deterrent fees, and I tell you, Mr. Speaker, the end of that story is that if we are ever so unlucky — and I don't think that will happen — but if we should be so unlucky in this province as to get another PC government, you can bet there will be deterrent fees in the province of Saskatchewan, and you can bet there will be privatization of health care as well, Mr. Speaker.

This government will say, oh, no, don't worry about privatization. But they've already done it in the dental plan, they've already done it. And they've already removed a lot of the burden on to the shoulder of individuals in the prescription drug plan, Mr. Speaker. And they're consulting constantly with Margaret Thatcher and Oliver Letwin and people from out of the country to get their advice with respect to how one privatizes health care and other services in the province of Saskatchewan.

You can be sure that they have discussed the privatization of health care with Oliver Letwin. And anyone who would suggest that they haven't and they haven't given it consideration is being very naive, Mr. Speaker. And you can be sure that if we are ever so unlucky as to get a PC government yet another time, which I'm sure is not going to happen, but if we should, you can be sure we'll have deterrent fees and privatization of health care.

And let's take a look at the lottery tax. Well I say this crew of bandits across the way, Mr. Speaker, have been gambling with people's lives now for several years, so I'm not surprised they're gambling with health care. Taxing charities who are trying to raise money for their charitable services is the most ludicrous thing that I've ever heard. It's stupid, that's what it is, Mr. Speaker; including hospitals who are trying to raise money for their own hospital, they'll now have to pay a tax to the government for . . . in an attempt to raise this money.

The other thing about bingo taxes, for example, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that many low-income people play bingo because that is really their only form of entertainment. It's difficult for them to afford any form of entertainment and that one is one that they can afford. And so it's taxing, in many cases, low-income people and poor people. It's a tax on these people to pay for our health services in the province of Saskatchewan; a tax on low-income people, a tax on charities. Well I say that's ludicrous, Mr. Speaker. There's no vision in that. That's not a vision, that's just ridiculous.

And the Family Services Bureau stated to the health care commission that forcing hospitals to go to the public with lotteries and bingos to raise money has cut into their source of funding in the province. It's cut into it. And I think the members opposite should listen to this carefully because what they stated was that their source of funding was being reduced. Their source of funding was being reduced such that they were unable to provide many of

the services that they formerly provided.

An Hon. Member: — It doesn't matter how you say it, Louise, Taylor won't understand you.

Ms. Simard: — The . . . Yes, I realize that many of them don't understand this, this is just . . . The member from Indian Head-Wolseley especially just simply doesn't understand the plight of people who are struggling in this province to survive, and the plight of many non-governmental organizations who are struggling to provide the services that are needed in the community.

And what they stated to the health care commission was the fact that their source of funding was being reduced because hospitals were going to the community for the same kind of funding, because this government didn't have the commitment nor the vision to properly fund hospitals.

And what the Family Services Bureau does, Mr. Speaker, is counselling with families and children and men and women. It provides some home care services and a variety of very valuable services to the community, but it's getting squeezed by the PC government, and it's getting squeezed once again with this new ridiculous lottery tax.

I find this policy very unfair, but it's indicative of the fact this government has no real commitment to health care, and no real vision of health care.

And let's just talk a little bit about poverty, because poverty and health are not exclusive, Mr. Speaker. We must, when we talk about health care in the province, also look at poverty. So let's talk about family and child poverty in this province because I think these figures are very telling. And any vision of health care necessarily has to include a consideration of poor people and low-income people, Mr. Speaker, otherwise it's not a real vision. And this government, instead of helping these people, have constantly cut back their services, Mr. Speaker.

(1945)

Between 1981 and '86 the number of Saskatchewan families living in poverty rose by 15.3 per cent, from 36,900 to 42,600. This represented 16.4 per cent of all Saskatchewan families. In 1986, one in four Saskatchewan families with children under 16 years had income of less than 20,000. In Saskatchewan, in 1986, 64,560 children were growing up in poverty — one child in four. Only Newfoundland had a higher rate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, only Newfoundland.

In Saskatchewan, in March 1988, there were 60,292 men, women, and children receiving social assistance. This is the great government that's creating jobs, Mr. Speaker, and is getting people off the public welfare rolls. This shows a 5.8 per cent reduction from the '85 figure, but it remains 24 per cent higher than the 1982 figure of 48,396. And in addition to that, in 1987, there were some 19,500 status Indians also receiving social assistance from the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.

On a yearly basis, food bank usage has risen. Children comprise approximately 45 per cent of those who make use of the Saskatchewan food banks. Forty per cent of those who are on social assistance in the province are children under 16. And what explains this high and increasing use of Saskatchewan food banks at a time when there is . . . at this time, would appear to be the cut-backs in benefits introduced under welfare reform in '84 and '88. That's PC welfare reform, Mr. Speaker.

In other words, we have an increasing problem in this province of hungry children, and children living in poverty. We have an increasing problem of high unemployment and men and women in this province living in poverty. We have social assistance rates — the number of people on social assistance — extremely high in this province and much higher than 1982, Mr. Speaker.

And any vision of health care has to include a vision that gets people out of the poverty cycle, that puts good, nutritious food on the table, because if children don't eat properly they won't have good health in later years. If men and women don't have a balanced diet, their health also will not be good in years to come, Mr. Speaker.

We have to feed people. We have to feed people in order to improve the health of the citizens of Saskatchewan. Any vision of health care must include a vision of a society where children go to bed at night, and go to school in the morning well fed; where people have sewer and water, which many northern communities don't have, Mr. Deputy Speaker; where people have adequate housing; where things like racism and sexism are eliminated.

It's only in this way that people can live productive lives and live healthy lives. So health care is not simply hospitals and nurses and doctors and this sort of thing. That's a large portion of it and an extremely important portion, but that's not all that it is, Mr. Speaker.

It's good nutrition, it's clean living. It's adequate housing. It's food on the table and education opportunities. So social and economic policies have to be fully integrated, fully integrated, Mr. Speaker, in any vision of health care. And that's lacking in this budget, it's sadly lacking. There's no vision; no commitment.

Now historically, poverty has been treated as an individual issue and the PC government tends to blame the poor people for their problems. They label them as lazy or they label them as unwilling to work, or whatever, playing too much bingo. And I say that's a Neanderthal mentality, Mr. Speaker; it's a Neanderthal mentality.

We cannot afford poverty in this province. It creates health problems; we lose productivity; it creates social problems; and it will increase health expenditures in future years. We must realize society is only as rich as its poorest member, Mr. Speaker. Society is only as rich as its poorest member, and a vision of health care must necessarily incorporate a vision of healthy living and an adequate standard of living for all. A vision of health care needs to be a broad concept of health care, but this government has no vision whatsoever, Mr. Speaker.

The social assistance levels in this province are appalling. The treatment of lower income people and poor people is appalling. The cut-backs in preventative health care and the lack of any remedy to these cut-backs is appalling.

This government's going nowhere with respect to health care and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I might add, they have no credibility in the area of health care.

But New Democrats do have a vision in health care, and our vision is a vision where all men and women and children in Saskatchewan have good food on their table and a bed to sleep in at night, adequate housing, employment. Nothing, no job creation programs in this budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, they have exported them. We have people leaving this province at unprecedented numbers — some 6,000 in February alone; 20,000 over the last 12 months, I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But there's nothing in this budget to address that problem. But the New Democratic vision is a vision of full employment in this province; a vision of good health care; a vision of food on the table for every man, woman, and child in this province, such that every man, woman, and child can achieve a complete state of physical, mental, and social well-being. Because that has to be the future, Mr. Speaker, that has to be the future and that has to be the direction in which health care proceeds.

The fundamental conditions and resources for this direction, Mr. Speaker, would be education, food, income, a stable environment, a healthy environment, resources that are sustainable and developed for the people, Mr. Speaker — not for multinational corporations, not for the Tory friends, but for the people of Saskatchewan so we can pay for their health care and their education. And it necessarily involves social justice and equity. If we wish to create a society where people attain complete physical, mental, and social well-being, it must include social justice and equity.

Improvement in health requires, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a secure foundation in those areas, a secure foundation. And that's the New Democratic vision, but that's a vision that the PC government does not share. That's a vision the PC government doesn't share. What has this government done instead?

An Hon. Member: — Well what is your vision?

Ms. Simard: — It talks about nuclear reactors. The member from Weyburn says, well what is your vision. Obviously he was sleeping when I just went through it in the last five or 10 minutes. He's obviously sleeping. But now that he's woken up, perhaps he would like to get into the debate when I'm finished.

But let's look at what this government has done. It's proposing the implementation of nuclear reactors in this province. I hardly say, Mr. Speaker, that that isn't a stable . . . wouldn't create a stable environment.

There has been gross underfunding of education — and I'm addressing the member from Weyburn now, the Minister of Education, Mr. Speaker, who's chattering away at the top of his lungs trying to get into this debate.

There has been gross underfunding of education. If we cannot educate our children in this province because of your underfunding and give them proper quality education, how on earth do you expect them to live productive lives in the 21st century, Mr. Minister? I ask you how you expect our children to live productive lives if you're cutting back and trying to pay for your privatization and PC hand-outs to your PC buddies with our education money, Mr. Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — There have been cut-backs to poor people. We have children going hungry in this province; we have unprecedented poverty. We have unemployment. We have no commitment whatsoever to a stable ecosystem.

Look at the Shand, Rafferty project for example, the political boondoggle in the Premier's riding. And they're giving our resources away instead of using them to pay for social programs and social services. The multi-million dollar give-away to out-of-province oil corporations is appalling, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The lack of commitment to reforestation of our forests and the sweetheart deal with Weyerhaeuser is an example of this government's commitment to using our resources to pay for health and education for the children and the men and women in this province.

This government has no commitment to this society, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It only has a commitment to itself and its PC friends and its large, big-business corporations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — And let's look at what they're doing in the area of social justice and equity. Well for the first time we see a human rights coalition in this province that have sprung up as a result of the lack of social justice and equity in this province. It has sprung up from a number of groups who feel that this government engages in intimidation of the public and it fires people on an **ad hoc** basis without proper consultation or without supporting them such that they can find other employment.

I mean it's created a situation in this province that's completely horrendous — cruel and horrendous. And then we get studies from the government saying there's an increase in the use of health care services. Well I wonder why, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think the short answer to that is, Tory governments make people sick.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — New Democrats, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have a vision of a much more caring society where all men, women, and children in this province have access to a good standard of living, where health is not simply — and I'm repeating this again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the benefit of the member from Weyburn, because he was sleeping when I said this originally — where health is not simply the treatment and prevention of disease, but is much broader; and it's not simply the responsibility of the

health sector, but goes beyond to complete physical, mental, and social well-being, so that we all live productive, happy, and healthy lives — all of us, Mr. Speaker.

That's why primary health care has to be brought to the people, and I'm talking specifically about rural Saskatchewan. What this government would like to do is bring the people to health care — not health care to the people. And that's why what we have to do in rural Saskatchewan is implement a strategy, a long-term strategy for the provision of primary health care services for the provision of physiotherapy, occupational health, dental health, mental health services, speech and language pathology, adequate public inspections. And that is by no means a complete list, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But health care must be brought to the people; it must be brought to our rural residents and our urban residents in this province. That's important, because it will improve the well-being and productiveness of Saskatchewan people. But this budget, does it have any vision in that regard? No, not at all. Does it show any real commitment to health care being brought to the people in rural Saskatchewan, to preventative health care, to getting people off the poverty lists, to getting people off of welfare, so they can live productive lives and improve their health care? No, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's no vision. There's no commitment from this government.

(2000)

But I tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a vision and it's the New Democratic vision and I've spoken about it at some length tonight. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I listened with reservation, I guess, if you will, to the member from Regina Lakeview as she was speaking, and I want to indicate to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that before I begin I want to bring to your attention and to the Assembly's attention and indeed to the people in the province of Saskatchewan's attention, an understanding of why the NDP themselves cannot understand themselves, if that makes sense to you.

And I want to quote to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from members that are now sitting in the NDP opposition, and this goes back . . . And it's in their own paper, *The Commonwealth*. It goes back to the 1986 election and it's while the member from Saskatoon Sutherland was trying to, I guess, make some sort of remarks into explaining to his people why they might not have won the 1986 election and became government. But this I want to read into the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because for what this says from the lips of the member from Saskatoon, the NDP member from Saskatoon Sutherland, will explain to you that the words that were coming out of the lips of the little lady from Regina Lakeview could also be taken in that same context.

When you talk about the truth being spoken in this legislature while, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member from . . . the NDP member, he's the MLA from Saskatoon

Sutherland, says this:

In spite of our relative electoral success in October of 1986 provincial election, Saskatchewan New Democrats are still searching for a bullet-proof vest every time they advance public policy or comment. Give us health care as an issue, and because of our history we feel relatively safe; give us almost any other issue and we'd rather retreat to health care.

And I want to go on a little further. It also says:

I believe that we, as Saskatchewan New Democrats, have a fundamental responsibility to tell the people of Saskatchewan what we believe and what we would do if elected their government. I also believe that we have been afraid to share this.

Afraid to share the truth, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because they know if they were telling the truth as to what they believed in there would not be one member even elected on that side of the House let alone any.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I listened I could not believe — I could not believe that the member from Regina Lakeview could not accept the Minister of Finance's budget that has been brought into this Assembly and that we're debating today. I could understand very well that if there were cut-backs, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I would be joining with her — with her in condemning the budget. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to tell you that as she stood in this Assembly condemning this government for cut-backs in health care I want to assure the people of Saskatchewan that if they want to come into this legislature and into my office at any given time I will point out to them where the increases have been. And I want to give you this as an example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because when they were government, when the NDP were government, their Health budget totalled about \$700 million in this province. We have now doubled that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We are sitting at about \$1.4 billion — that's \$160,000 an hour — in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — And if you want to compare it to what their expenditure was per hour, it would have been about \$60,000, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to indicate to them that as they go around the province I invite them, I invite them to go into my riding and tell my people in my riding that there's been a cut-back in health care.

I want to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we've put 125, a brand-swanking new 125-bed hospital facility in the community of Lloydminster, Saskatchewan. And I want to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we put a brand-new swanking 25-bedroom hospital in Maidstone, Saskatchewan. And I want to tell you that we put a brand-new 12-bedroom facility hospital in Cut Knife, Saskatchewan.

An Hon. Member: — Twelve bedroom? Where's that at? Built a 12-bedroom hospital.

Mr. Hopfner: — And I want to tell you... (inaudible interjection)... Yes they're bedrooms, beautiful ones too.

I want to tell you that when it comes to the delivery of health care, and I agreed with the member from Lakeview when she made the statement that it's just a portion; the buildings are just a portion. And I want to get into that a little further, but I want to tell you that when it is a little portion... I want to indicate to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that under the NDP administration, under three elections, they've promised Lloydminster, they promised Maidstone, and they promised Cut Knife, under three elections that they would build those hospitals and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to assure you and the people in the province, that they never did deliver those hospitals.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — I want to thank my Finance ministers, I want to thank my Health ministers, because they had the heart and they had the determination, to deliver those hospitals to my people.

Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate... Deputy Speaker, I want to indicate to you also, that who were the people that put the moratoriums on these hospitals. It was the NDP that put the moratoriums on hospitals. And I want to indicate to you, I want to indicate to you that it was the member from Riversdale that was one of the greatest believers that hospitals should be centralized in the province of Saskatchewan.

And the member from Lakeview brought that to the attention of the people who are watching here tonight, in this Assembly, that this is her remark: health care should be taken to the people, not the people taken to health care. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I agree with that remark. But that same member, that same member can't back it up under their type of programs that they had when they were government. And they do not believe in it today.

I will tell you something, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because the member from Saskatoon South, he was the minister of Health, he was the minister of Health, and his idea was to centralize the health care in this province. He was the one that had our seniors drive many miles to hospital facilities.

And I want to give you an example in my own home town of Lashburn, where under their administration that hospital in the Lashburn community was shut down by the member of Riversdale. And he is now the Leader of the NDP. He says, you people can drive elsewhere, you can go down the road and get your health care.

But I want to say to you that the member from Saskatoon South also agreed that health care to the NDP was not a proper health care system unless there was major, major line-ups for surgery, major waiting lists. And I want to indicate to you now that they're standing in opposition there, standing in opposition there they argue that there is these humungous waiting lists.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to you . . .

An Hon. Member: — Nine thousand.

Mr. Hopfner: — Yes, the member opposite said 9,000. Well, I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that those numbers didn't begin under this administration. The backlog didn't begin under this administration. This administration has been spending money and spending money diligently to get those lists down.

And I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, is that over the years there wasn't the technology in this province that there is today in health care. There aren't — or I should say, there weren't — certain types of surgeries taking place in this province that there are today. People can stay home; people can get their operations here now.

And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the point of talking about supplying equipment and everything else into the hospital facilities today, I want to indicate to you that this government has worked hard — hard — to put CAT scans into the hospital facilities in this province. Yes, and the member from Lakeview, she can't stand this rebuttal, because she knows — she knows that it's correct and she is embarrassed. She is embarrassed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — Well I want to tell you, when you talk about having a vision, we're having . . . You know, when you talk about vision, you're talking about families; you're talking about the well-being of families and the health of . . . and the help of having a government care for people. But we're not looking, we're not looking at it on the same view of the NDP.

I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that when this government had taken the initiatives to start expanding in health care, when we had decided that enough was enough, I want to indicate to you, as I had indicated earlier, that from \$600 million expenditure of budget under the NDP, and now we, at 1.4 million under a Progressive Conservative government. Then I want to also throw in some thanks here.

I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that it was not only hospitals that were built, but we came out with one package that the NDP opposition never, ever thought about, and that too was our senior citizens — our senior citizens that have brought this province along in its unique situation where we are sitting here today. For those seniors this administration, this government, had taken the initiative to build nursing homes throughout the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — Mr. Speaker, I've sat here and listened about cut-backs. I've sat here and listened about all these innuendos flung at this government. I want to indicate to you that . . . It must bother members opposite, it must bother you . . . But I want to indicate to you, and on behalf of my constituents, I want to thank the Minister of Finance, and my Health minister. I want to thank them for supplying us with the new senior citizen complex at

Jubilee Home, 50-bed unit, in Lloydminster, Saskatchewan. I want to thank them for that and so do my seniors, and so do the council people and the people that sat on those boards and had pleaded and asked the NDP opposition when they were in government, to build that facility. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will tell you something . . . or Mr. Speaker, I will tell you something. It was three elections that they were promised a facility; it wasn't delivered. So now that made two facilities in the community of Lloydminster, the hospital and the nursing home — three elections promised, not delivered. This Progressive Conservative government delivered.

(2015)

Cut Knife, Saskatchewan, in 1985 . . . In the fall of 1985 we had a sod turning for a nursing home to attach to the hospital. Mr. Speaker, while the election was on it was then, Allan Blakeney — when he was leader of the NDP opposition — he and the candidate, Bob Long, had gone into the community of Cut Knife. I was in the community. I could not believe what I heard at another meeting. Somebody came running across the street to tell us. Here was Bob Long and Allan Blakeney in the senior citizens' centre telling them that they would never get a nursing home built in this community under a Progressive Conservative government, and the thing was under construction — it was under construction!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — And I want to tell you that the credibility of Allan Blakeney had just gone down the tubes. I'm serious, Mr. Speaker, this is an actual happening — the NDP leader, Allan Blakeney, at that time, going in there. If they'd have turned right instead of going straight down Main Street to the senior centre, they'd have seen the building under construction. But what do they do? No, they walk right over, right away, and tell the seniors they'll never get it again.

An Hon. Member: — Repeat that.

Mr. Hopfner: — Well my members want me to repeat it, but I think the people out there in TV land understand what I said.

And I want to indicate to them that that is the same types of truths we are hearing here in this legislature — the same types of truths. They'll go in and tell the complete opposite of the truth, Mr. Speaker. And this was a good example during the election of 1986 by the then, the Hon. Allan Blakeney.

When we look at health care, I want to indicate to you that I want to thank my Health ministers of past for taking health care back to rural Saskatchewan . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — For bringing new facilities into the province, new equipment, high-tech equipment, vision for health care. They have the vision for health care, and we still have the vision for health care, and we're looking forward and into the future for new high-tech equipment to put into those centres.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I want to indicate to you about vision, we have the vision, and it showed up again — it showed again when we were in a by-election in Assiniboia-Gravelbourg. What happened? We're going into Assiniboia-Gravelbourg as two different parties, the Progressive Conservative Party and the NDP Party. What happened? And I want to congratulate my colleague and member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg once again for beating his . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — . . . His opponent, because basically, Mr. Speaker, when I talk to you about the various different visions we have for health care, I'll tell you, it's not for closing hospitals, it's not for closing nursing homes.

But I want to indicate to you and to the people in Saskatchewan that the members, the NDP opposition, they went into that riding, and they went into the riding and told the constituents, I guess, seniors, young people, young families, they scared everyone in trying to tell them we were going to shut down all the hospitals in Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, and I believe there's about five hospitals. So we were going to go in there and shut down five hospitals.

Now you tell me that the member from Regina Lakeview can stand here in her righteous . . . in a righteous way and say she cares for families. She can't speak the truth to those families, let alone care for them. She has the incapability of speaking the truth to those families.

And I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to warn the people in the province of Saskatchewan that if for any strange reason at all, if people like her or anyone else across the way were ever elected, I would hate to see what would happen to the people in the province of Saskatchewan. I would hate to see what would happen to our seniors and our young children.

And I want to say that she talks about the kind of motherhood issues, if she will, she tries to come across as a real caring, young woman in Regina Lakeview. Well I want to indicate to you, I want to indicate to you that if she did care, if she did care, she would lay out, she would lay out truthfully the NDP health cares policy, the NDP health cares policy. Without any question, lay out the NDP health care policy. And I will say, I will say . . . I will say, Mr. Speaker, they don't have, they don't have it.

I want to indicate to you that every time the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Riversdale, is asked a question in regards to agriculture, in regards to education, in regards to health care, in regards to any major issue that affects this province, I want to indicate to you that he avoids it directly and runs because he as a leader says, it's not I that should make the decisions for the NDP Party. It's not him. I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, I will tell you that he says it is the NDP convention, the people, the delegates that will run this NDP administration.

Well I'll tell you what happens there. I'll tell you what happens there. If that ever happened, we'd be going back into the 19 . . . well we'd be just be going backwards, Mr.

Speaker. They have not come out with any new resolutions. And I want to indicate to you that when it comes to the members opposite in programs, they said they're going to take us back to the dental program, they're going to reinstate the school dental program.

Well I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to you that this government has brought dental . . . or dentists to literally every individual in this province now, have brought dentists to within 50 miles of any place where anybody lives.

And I want to indicate to you . . . She talks about all the employment with these dental nurses that we had travelling the school. Well I want to indicate to you that if they are having problems getting employment, that they should contact the dentists' association, because I was just told the other day by Dr. Art Plunz from North Battleford . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's right, he's a friend. And he had indicated at that time, Mr. Speaker, and it was last Saturday night, he said there's a definite shortage of help within a lot of dentists' office across the province. But nobody is sending these people to them.

So I am making an announcement right now that if there are people that are looking for positions in dental offices, get hold of me. I'll put them on to Dr. Art Plunz and we will help them get a position, or get them trained so they have a position. But their association hasn't been helping them, apparently. So I want to indicate to you that this is a commitment, and we will work in that regards.

I want to say that the member opposite had touched briefly on the drug plan, and I want to say, number one, Mr. Speaker, is that the drug plan has never been at the type of a size that it's been at today. There has been I don't know how many more prescription drugs been put onto the plan, and doctors sit on that board to keep putting more and more new drugs on the plan.

And I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that there was a certain amount of clean-up that had to be done. There was a lot of misuse out there. And I want to commend, I want to commend, I want to commend the Minister of Health and the PC Progressive Conservative government for the health card. That health card, Mr. Speaker, has brought in more efficiencies to the drug plan system than any other system in North America, or indeed the world.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — Members opposite don't like to hear about it. Members opposite . . . Members of the NDP don't like anything new. They don't like anything new, anything innovative because they can't seem to understand it. But I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that health card is being now looked upon by all parts of the country. And I want to indicate to you, and I want to indicate to the member from Saskatoon Nutana, that if she would care to get into the debate and debate me on it, I would be more than willing to debate you. But you can mouth off there if you like.

Anyway, I would like to say — and you never hear them talk about the new plastic health card that helps people obtain their drugs without having to wait for a rebate in

the province; you never hear the members opposite tell anyone, tell anyone that is below a certain income or can't afford drugs; or that are unfortunate enough to have to be on social welfare, that they don't have to pay for their drugs. You never hear them say that, but you hear the lady from Regina Lakeview, you hear her spout off and say that this government is making poor people pay for their drugs.

Mr. Speaker, there isn't any poor people having to pay for their drugs. If there is, then bring their names . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order.

Mr. Hopfner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Anyway, I think the members opposite got the message. I think that if anything, Mr. Speaker, this government is more sensitive to the more unfortunate than any other government that's ever hit this province in the past.

And I want to indicate to you that we as a government are prepared to work along with these people and get them off the welfare roll and off the unemployment roll in a very sincere way. We want to help them advance; we want to help them get advanced in training and education. And I want to just basically indicate to you that the member from Lakeview's points that she was trying to draw tears on just didn't break any ice.

I want to indicate to you also, Mr. Speaker, that the member talked . . .

The Speaker: — Order. We're having a little trouble hearing the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster.

Mr. Hopfner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't bother me if the NDP opposition want to holler and chirp from their seats or make a lot of name calling, etc. Let them continue. I want to indicate to you though, Mr. Speaker, is that . . . And I think the people can hear through this mike anyway, even if it's not you, if you can't hear it, but I'm sure the audio will pick it up.

(2030)

But I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that when it comes to the enhancement and the quality of life in the province of Saskatchewan, and we want to talk about education, and we want to talk about advancement, and we want to talk about science and technology, and we want to talk about a vision, and we want to talk about Saskatchewan in the world — I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that when the member from Lakeview took a swipe and said that we're having a \$9 million birthday party, I would indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that anyone in this province that would think anything alike those socialists think across the way, would maybe think that it was a \$9 million birthday party.

But I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, it is not that at all. I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that this is a quality program; that this is a quality program which will bring us in . . . for our young people . . . for bringing us into the vision and bringing us into the 20th century.

An Hon. Member: — Twenty-first.

Mr. Hopfner: — Right. Thank you very much, as my colleague says to me. But anyway I want to indicate to you, science and technology is not from the past. It's the future and it's going into the future.

And I want to indicate to you that the young people in this province don't have to have a government hand feeding and having to lead them down any type of little road. I want to indicate to you that these young people are prepared to stand on their own two feet. They are prepared to show what they're all about. And I want to tell you that they are prepared to stand up and they are prepared to tell everyone and show everyone in this province just exactly what science and technology and their education and the world is about. They aren't afraid. They aren't afraid to look into the future. It's the NDP opposition that's afraid to look into the future, Mr. Speaker. And I want to indicate to you that I have all the faith in our young people, in our education system, that we're going to have one of the best, the best shows in the world.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — Mr. Speaker, as we head into the 21st century, we must be prepared for an ever-changing world economy. We must be at the forefront of social, domestic, and international economic conditions. The budget presented in this Assembly . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. It was interesting, but I believe the member from Cut Knife-Lloyd might have a . . .

Mr. Hopfner: — I wish the public, the people of Saskatchewan . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Order. Order. Order. The member really is being interrupted a bit too frequently, and I ask for your co-operation.

Mr. Hopfner: — I wish the people and the public out there in TV land or in Saskatchewan could actually see the carrying-on of the member of the NDP opposition. They're worse than . . . well I won't even use the word because children are more obedient than they are. They do not give you the respect in the Chair. And I guess what I'll do, Mr. Speaker, is apologize on their behalf for the way they act to you, because I believe that your Chair should be respected. But anyway, we're not discussing their behaviour any further.

I want to get into the budget. The budget that was presented in this Assembly sets out exciting economic policies and programs that will continue to ensure that as we head into the 1990s and the next century, that this province is a model to the rest of Canada because of our health, education, agriculture and environmental policies.

I want to indicate that this budget is an innovative budget. It is one of fiscal responsibility, economic common sense, and most important, it is in the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan. I will not — I will not for one moment — be the least bit upset with the fact of having to . . . And I'll

apologize to no one for this type of a budget.

I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to touch on it just briefly, but on another issue with transportation. Roadways in this province is very important. It's a very important way of us selling and bringing in various commodities in to the province, quality roadways for our tourists to travel, and quality roadways and safe roadways for all of us. I want to indicate to you, and I want to thank the Minister of Highways, it is over the past five years — and I'm not going to go into each one of my projects because, I have again more highway construction going on in my riding this year. But for six consecutive years we've had highway — major highway improvements, roadway improvements — safe roadway improvements for six consecutive years, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to indicate to you, and to all members here, and to the people in Saskatchewan, that in those six consecutive years there has been now a total of about approximately \$27 million spent in the constituency of Cut Knife-Lloydminster. And I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that if you look at that and break it down, that would be approximately, well, anywhere from 4.5 to \$5 million a year spent in the constituency of Cut Knife-Lloydminster. That's not to be taken lightly, Mr. Speaker, because there is a lot of roadways in this province, and there are a lot of demands on our Minister of Highways.

But I want to thank him for that commitment to my riding. And I know, as I've been listening to all other members in this Assembly talking about their constituencies, they also had that same courtesy paid on them from the Minister of Highways, as they've been talking about their various road projects. And I want to say that the people in my riding have been very content; that we know, and they know, that there is a lot more to be done, but they know that by chipping away at it year after year after year the job will finally be done.

I want to indicate to you that as we . . . Before I move off of the transportation and health issue I want to indicate to you also, as I stood in this Assembly I've listened to all my colleagues thanking our Minister of Health for their projects and hospitals and nursing homes — the expansion in staffs, bringing in new equipment, and bringing in new personnel and specialists into various parts of the province. I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that when we talk about, when we talk about the budget, we don't take anything lightly. We realize there should be more money for health. There should be more money for transportation, roadways, road networks. There should be more money for education. But, Mr. Speaker, as we've listened to the members opposite, the members opposite talk about cut-backs, and here's how I want to bring into some type of a summation here. They talk about cut-backs. Well if the people in the province of Saskatchewan believe that \$600 million under their administration to our \$1.4 billion is a cut-back, well then I guess maybe I should say that they either throw their calculator away or come to reality and not believe the members, the NDP opposition.

Mr. Speaker, when they talk about, when they talk about cut-backs in the transportation and road networks, etc.,

well if I can say from 80 million to some now 125 or 100, I just forget what the budget was, maybe it's even quite a bit more — but under 80 million under the NDP's administration, and now well into the hundreds of millions of dollars, that that too is not a cut-back.

Education, Mr. Speaker. Education here in this province has doubled, has more than doubled. I want to indicate to you, and I want to indicate as other members have about their areas of new school facilities, new additions, new renovations. I want to indicate to you about my particular riding. I want to indicate to you that in the last six years, not only this year but in the last six years, there has been many, many, many new schools, additions and renovations done to our education facilities in the constituency of Cut Knife-Lloydminster. We were probably, if any area in this province, about 20 years behind in facilities in our constituency, especially in the division of the Battle River School Division. And I want to thank, and I want to thank the Minister of Education, the present and the past, for helping me and my division boards out of the dilemmas that they faced up in the Cut Knife-Lloydminster constituency.

For years the NDP again, as they did with hospitals and nursing homes, had promised new schools, had promised renovations, had promised, had promised, had promised. But, Mr. Speaker, they didn't deliver. They did not deliver because they didn't believe rural Saskatchewan was a place to expand in education, in education facilities. To them rural Saskatchewan was dying, dying, Mr. Speaker.

And I will tell you why, Mr. Speaker, they thought that way. They thought that way because they would not put industry into rural Saskatchewan. They would not help the smaller communities survive. They did not believe in the word diversification. They did not believe in keeping in supplying jobs to young people in rural Saskatchewan once they had graduated from their high schools or had gone on through universities to come back home to maybe take up a job with a firm in farm pipe part time, or something of that nature, where I know people are doing it today in my riding.

And I want to say this, that when it comes to education and the facilities, my constituency has maybe more than . . . had more than its share, than it really actually should have gotten, by the way I have talked to other members in my caucus. Their needs are great but my needs were great and then greater because of the impact of the oil industry up in my particular area along with agriculture. We did not have, Mr. Speaker, the problems other people have had in other parts of this province with drought, and floods, and major hail wipe-outs, and grasshoppers. Mr. Speaker, our people were fortunate.

(2045)

We've had decent crops. I mean, we've had better, but we've had decent crops — where there was agricultural survival. When the commodity prices were low, at least we had something to sell.

We have oil. We have oil-related jobs that brought in young families, young people that needed education facilities.

And we have expanded. And we are looking at expanding further. We are not yet caught up, and that was in six years, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to indicate to you that if the NDP opposition, when they were government, if they would have helped the people at that time, we might have been caught up. And as my colleague, my seat mate from Yorkton said, when the NDP were in the good times, when the revenues were flowing in, where they could have spent it, they wouldn't.

They could have built them, but what did they do? They went out to buy such things as pulp mills that cost this province 91,000 — the taxpayers — \$91,000 a day, plus. They bought potash mines, they bought uranium mines. They didn't invest in our young people. They didn't create any more new jobs. They didn't have to do that, Mr. Speaker. They could have expanded and helped private enterprise develop in this province, diversify; they could have created those jobs for our young people.

But, no. No, they wouldn't do it. It was beyond them, because they felt they would not be able to keep control on the people of the province if they did not have them in some sort of a bureaucratic type of a big ball that they could toss from hand to hand or juggle around or have a control. They wanted a control on these people.

Well today, today, Mr. Speaker, our young people are enjoying the freedoms. They're enjoying the freedoms of going to their schools in their home communities, not having to travel miles by school bus or more than average miles, anyway. They're able to spend now more years of their life at home by taking in also the expansion of university courses throughout the province.

And that is another thing that I would like to thank my Minister of Health and Minister of Finance for allowing this type of a system to develop. I know that in my area that there have been a lot of the grade 12 students had been taking their first year and now are going to be able to take their second year of arts and sciences in their community centres that offer the courses. Lloydminster is one of those centres, and North Battleford are one of those . . . are a couple of those centres that offer those courses. It's very handy, and the students can commute back and forth, live at home with their parents, and it's not such a burden on the parents' pocket-book or the child or the child's . . . not the child's, the young men or ladies.

I want to indicate to you that it gives them the opportunity to stay close to their friends, not to set them into a strange atmosphere as soon as they get out of the K to 12 system. And they do seem to be able to grow quite well and handsomely with the fact of being able to be able to live in their homes and get that extra year or two of experience, you know, by that type of a system. And not all do that, but then there are others that choose differently, and that option is for them also. So I want to just say to the Minister of Education that I think he's doing one heck of a tremendous job, and I want to thank him on behalf of the school boards and teachers and parents in our area.

Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of things that could be said, but I think I'm going to narrow it down to maybe a couple

more subjects here. And one thing I want to do is I want to relate to you about public participation. I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that this has been one of the greatest, greatest things that have hit Saskatchewan for years. I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that when public participation . . . And I guess probably it's not a new idea; members of the NDP had been talking about it once, but did not have the courage to carry it through. Basically, Mr. Speaker, because the fact is that they would have had a hard time going back to an NDP convention to explain public participation in an NDP government, in a socialistic type environment. It just wasn't going to work. And the member from Riversdale, I guess, put his tail between his legs and hid on that one also.

But I want to indicate to you that if they would have been smart, if the members opposite would have been smart when they were in government and would not have put the tail between their legs and ran with it, that people here in the province of Saskatchewan would have accepted it. And I'm going to tell them why: because the people in the province of Saskatchewan don't basically see public participation as a political thing, as some political animal. Public participation is a non-political viewpoint. Socialists all over the world now are into public participation — all countries, Russia, Russia, for instance. And I want to tell the members opposite that they're still — they're still lost, and they're still in yesterday land.

Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to you that Sweden, a socialistic country . . . government, Australia, New Zealand, Portugal, Finland, Tanzania, even China, and I did mention the Soviet Union, are selling state-owned enterprises. And why? Why, Mr. Speaker? And I'm going to tell you why. I'm going to tell you because they know it's the only fundamental right thing for them to do to encourage the expansion, and the labour, and the success of those particular types of businesses.

And members opposite, in 1979 the member from Riversdale was going to do the same thing. He didn't have the courage. He didn't have the courage to do the right thing then, and now they talk like the people of Saskatchewan should believe him, and believe that he'd have the courage to do the right thing today.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to you about some of the, or a couple — I don't want to take up too much of your time — but just a couple of the things that we've done in the province here under public participation.

This was Weyerhaeuser. The NDP opposition, I can remember the debate in this session, the give-away, the sell-out to the province of Saskatchewan, and everything they could throw at us, throw at this government prior to 1986 in the election. They were really trying to put a total demise on the decision made by this government, and they thought that this would be the probably the issue that would take this government down in the next election. Well, in 1986 they found out differently.

And now the true story has surfaced, Mr. Speaker. The true story has finally surfaced and they don't even want to talk about Weyerhaeuser in Prince Albert any longer. The NDP opposition are totally embarrassed about the remarks that they made about this government having the

courage to move ahead and allow the pulp mill in Prince Albert to go into the private sector so that we could have a paper mill that profited, that paid royalty to returns to the province of Saskatchewan, to the Government of Saskatchewan, instead of costing the taxpayer — the person that pays to their taxes to this government — \$91,000 plus, a day.

This is some of the example that has just been recently announced. A \$20.8 million expansion was announced for the Weyerhaeuser pulp mill in Prince Albert. Okay? The company is going to build the plant to turn its rolls of paper into sheets of paper before export. It is expected to create 34 permanent jobs and about 100 man-years of construction employment.

Weyerhaeuser said the expansion is in direct response to the free trade deal with the United States, where most of the mill's fine paper has been exported. The company has waited until now because duties on exporting sheeted papers to the United States were higher than the duties on the shipping rolls of paper. Weyerhaeuser expects construction to begin this spring, and completion in the summer of 1990.

Overall — get this — Weyerhaeuser now, since its take-over, employs about 1,000 people in Saskatchewan, including about 100 in a saw mill in Big River, another 100 at a chemical plant in Saskatoon, and the rest working out of the pulp and paper mills in Prince Albert.

Now I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, the same people, the NDP opposition who were against this were trying to deprive almost 1,000 people out of jobs, out of markets. Because they should have known that there is no business, there is no business in this country that can continue on and survive at \$91,000-plus a day loss. If they can tell me which business that they feel might be able to survive, I would certainly like to know where that magic comes from, because maybe I can get into the same kind of lending system or the same pot of gold. But I want to indicate that this is basically one particular type of industry that they so opposed.

Then they get into the upgrader. You know, Mr. Speaker, the biggest objection that the people of Saskatchewan have right now is they can't agree to accept what the NDP are any longer saying. In fact, to tell you the truth, it is very, very unlikely that there has been any of them in my riding, in the Cut Knife-Lloydminster riding, in the last little while.

And I want to indicate to you that they are afraid to come into my riding. They are afraid because, Mr. Speaker, they were against the upgrader going to Lloydminster. They're against the Husky oil upgrader. They're against Husky oil. They're against all the independent oil companies out in my particular riding. The member from Regina Lakeview had mentioned that about oil companies again tonight, the sly, sleazy remarks they make about oil companies. And I want to indicate . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I'd just like to make this remark, and this will be an opportune time to make it. The word "sleaze," "sleazy," that sort of thing, I know has been used in the House before, and it has not been deemed as

unparliamentary, and therefore I am not going to do it at this moment. But I am going to bring it to the attention of members that in future I'm going to rule that unparliamentary. But I won't do it now, because it has been allowed in the past.

(2100)

Why is the member on her feet?

Ms. Atkinson: — I rise on a question of personal privilege.

The Speaker: — State your point of personal privilege.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to listen to the member opposite tonight describe the member from Regina Lakeview as the little women from Regina Lakeview, the little lady from Regina Lakeview. And as a woman member of the legislature, I personally find this language disrespectful to not only the Regina Lakeview but to all women in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I would like you to rule on rule 26 which states that:

No member should use offensive words against the Assembly or against any member thereof.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster refer to my colleague, the member of Regina Lakeview, as the little lady from Regina Lakeview and the little woman from Regina Lakeview. I find that, and members on this side of the House, we find that as offensive and disrespectful language, and I'd ask you to rule on that, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Smart: — Mr. Speaker, I also wanted to speak to the point. I don't know whether you've decided what your position is on this, but as a woman member of the legislature, I want to also make a point of personal privilege and join my colleague from Saskatoon Nutana in objecting to this as offensive language.

And I would just like to point out to you, sir, that there is no male equivalent terms in which a male member of the legislature could be addressed in that kind of derogatory way. So that's what makes it offensive to us as women members.

Mr. Hopfner: — To help you out, Mr. Speaker, what I will do if I have offended, which I wouldn't have said in offence to a woman or to a man, if I refer to them as "a little lady," it's because I don't think she's a big lady or a small lady or anything like that. But I want to indicate to you that it's just a form of speech; it wasn't meant in derogatory fashion at all, as a sexist remark or anything else. I would have . . . I use that in my everyday discussion as I talk to the members opposite on the male side then, as a little man or a big man, or whatever. I apologize to you if you're taking it any other way.

The Speaker: — Will the member accept that?

An Hon. Member: — No.

The Speaker: — Well, I have given this matter consideration, and perhaps I should just take it under advisement and come back to the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I realize I've been on the NDP opposition's nerves. They're very touchy all evening since I've been bringing some of the truths back into this legislature. And I will not use that word again, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate your ruling on removing some of the words that are used in this. I guess, probably, because I use it, I've heard members of the opposition use that on numerous occasions, and it's . . . I guess is apparently becoming one of my particular words. So I apologize to you, because I'm not one to use foul language.

And, Mr. Speaker, I do mean to the members opposite, that when . . . like, as I said earlier, that I don't refer to anybody in a derogatory fashion, and I suppose you will find, as you read through the speech tomorrow, you will find that I did not say it derogatorily. I want to indicate . . .

Mr. Brockelbank: — Mr. Speaker, you were generous enough to say that you would bring in a ruling on the question that was raised about personal privilege here. I think it's unnecessary and inappropriate for the member to continue to discuss that which is not the topic that's before us. The topic before us is the budget speech and the amendment thereto, and I think the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster should direct his remarks to that.

The Speaker: — I've listened to the hon. member's point of order, and while I appreciate what the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster's trying to do at the same time, I agree with the hon. member's point of order as well. It's well taken.

Mr. Hopfner: — Okay thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the members opposite couldn't accept an apology if it slapped them in the face.

I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that when I was talking earlier I was talking about the Husky Oil upgrader, and members opposite have tried to challenge me one other time, and I think they put their tail between their leg and left. I would indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that the member from Riversdale and the NDP opposition, when they were in government, were opposed to putting the Lloydminster — the Husky Oil upgrader in the constituency of Cut Knife-Lloydminster, and least of all near the city of Lloydminster where it actually should have gone in the first place. They were opposed — they were opposed to that project, and I never found that out until after I was elected in 1982.

The members of the NDP opposition were opposed to the Husky Oil upgrader in Lloydminster. And I am going to indicate to you how this all came about. Prior to the 1982 election, the NDP opposition, in throwing out little teasers to the province, to the people of the province of Saskatchewan, what they did is they put together a kind of a five-point area meeting right throughout to the

province.

And I want to indicate to you that through these meetings throughout the province of Saskatchewan, I had to travel as a representative on behalf of the mayors of all the communities in which I represented. I had to attend every one of these meetings at different regions of this province, to stand up in front of those people and indicate to them as to how they could believe that the NDP opposition, or the NDP government of that day, could even make any economic sense in putting the Husky Oil upgrader anywhere else but where it's put today.

They were in Kindersley . . . I'll give you a couple of examples. They were in Moose Jaw, they were here in Regina, they were indicating they were going to put it into areas where it just absolutely didn't make any sense and would have had to have major, major, major pipelines running both ways, two-way pipelines running both ways to send the heavy crude down and dilute back. And it was ridiculous. The costs that they were trying to put to the people of Saskatchewan are the same costs today that it's costing Husky Oil and the three governments to build on this project up where the project belonged in the first place. But they were trying to use those same dollar figures to convince the people in the province of Saskatchewan that they could have built that same upgrader in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, or anywhere else. You know, it was just ludicrous, Mr. Speaker, for them to even think that people would believe that the costs wouldn't be astronomically higher.

Mr. Speaker, after the election was over I did find that out. I found out that it was just an exact that, a tease. They had no, no desire to enter into any kind of a relationship with Husky Oil, or the Alberta government, or the Canadian government, to get this project off the ground. They had no want of a relationship at all with creating the type of an industry that is going to be created up in the Cut Knife-Lloydminster region and the spin-offs to benefit all of Saskatchewan, and indeed all of Canada.

I want to indicate to you that when I found this out I was disappointed that people could mislead the people in this province like that. I couldn't understand for a moment why they would come to our particular community and get everybody up in arms about not being able to have the upgrader and near their communities where the heavy oil actually is.

But I found out the reason. I found out the reason. They wanted everyone to believe that it was a possibility. They wanted to excite everybody about the possibility of being able to have a megaproject in their particular area. They wanted to excite them around an election time because, Mr. Speaker, that was one of the only projects in this province that an oil company had been talking about for 15-, 20-odd years, that they thought they could pick up on, and through some sort of a consortium create the excitement that this could come to our particular area and that they would get the votes of those people. Because if they didn't get elected and they didn't have an NDP member, they would not have an upgrader in their area.

Well I condemned, I condemned the NDP government of that day for thinking that way, and I condemn them today

for being against the project. Their national leader, Ed Broadbent, had indicated that he was in favour, and yet there is division here in the province of Saskatchewan. They have these innuendoes flinging from their seats about the fact that there's been major dollars given to oil companies.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the members to justify their accusations. And I want to ask the members to stand in this House and get on to the topic of how much money this government has given oil companies. Because, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to indicate to you and to all the people in this province and to everyone in this legislature, that this government does not give money to oil companies. It does not give a dollar to oil companies. It gives to oil companies incentives to come to Saskatchewan to drill for oil, to explore for oil, to drill for gas, to explore for gas. It gives the oil companies the opportunity to come in here and develop and create jobs. It gives the oil companies the right to make profit and expand. It gives rights to the oil companies to do all of this, so that this government can obtain royalties from these oil companies — pay-backs to the taxpayers in the province of Saskatchewan — pay-backs!

(2115)

Mr. Speaker, I can remember we had a slight boom in 1981 and it hit part of Saskatchewan so hard that the NDP didn't see what hit them. Before they knew what hit them, they woke up and they said, we can't have this. We can't have this. And they sided with Alberta . . . Not Alberta, I'm sorry, I'm going to back up. They sided with the federal government, the Liberal government. Then they ganged up on Alberta, and they ganged up on western Canada, and they drove the oil industry out of western Canada and out of Canada. They brought in the national energy program, and everybody knows about that. Everyone knows about the national energy program.

And western Canadians will not forget the Liberals or the NDP. And the member from Riversdale, as Leader of the Opposition as he was then, a minister, and one of the top ministers in their administration, now a leader, they will not trust him. They will not trust him again.

They drove the oil and service companies out of the province of Saskatchewan. People had literally invested livelihoods, livelihoods into small businesses, into all sorts of little investments, because they wanted to reap some of the benefits of this little bit of an excitement in the oil field. But no, the NDP said this is uncontrollable, we can't have this happen here in Saskatchewan because we won't be able to control anybody, we won't be able to have a thumbs on people. They're going to be free thinkers. And I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, that they succeeded. They brought the national energy program in along with Pierre Elliott Trudeau. And western Canada suffered. Western Canada suffered twofold — twofold — because then the OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) countries also agreed that there shouldn't be an industry, along with the NDP here in Saskatchewan and the Liberal government in Ottawa. And they agreed that there shouldn't be an industry here and they pushed the prices down. So we had a double whammy, we got the whammy from the NDP in

Saskatchewan, and the Liberal in Ottawa, and we got the other from the OPEC countries.

Well we're working to turn it around. Prices are going to come back, they always do. We're going to manage, and we've managed. Some have gone down because of what the NDP allowed to happen. But I will tell you, and I will promise you, our communities will survive and they will grow; and this government will survive and this government will grow; and this province will survive and this province will grow, because we have a vision, a vision, as I had said before, to take part in public participation, to take part in allowing industry to grow, to flourish, allowing industry to come into this province, not drive it out. We love the fact that people have had that chance to come home. And I want to indicate to you . . . As I've listened tonight, where I've heard the members opposite talk about the people leaving the province, well I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, you name a time in past history, other than this administration, where the province of Saskatchewan has ever had over a million people in population.

I ask you to go back in history and tell me if I'm wrong. And I will stand in this legislature and indicate to you . . . I'll indicate now that I will apologize publicly to you. But I guarantee you, as you look back in history, you will find Saskatchewan's never had over a million in population in its entire history until the Progressive government had come to this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — And I want to indicate to you and clear up some of this stuff about the people that have been heading into Alberta, and heading into Ontario from Saskatchewan, because I do agree, some people have left the province. Some people . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, okay. I don't care if the NDPs are hollering out numbers, Mr. Speaker. Their arithmetic's been off. I don't really know the exact counts, but I will say 20,000, then. Is that enough? Is 20,000 enough? Well I'll tell you, if there's 20,000 I will tell you when those people left — if they would care to — and why they left. It was because they were lured here back in 1981 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, my area.

In my city of Lloydminster . . . If you want a history lesson, my friend, I will give it to you. In 1981 you couldn't get an apartment, you couldn't rent a house, you could hardly get a hotel room or a motel room, because things were busy until you people — the NDP — brought in, along with the Liberals, the NEP program, the national energy program. That was the start of the demise. That was the start of the demise of people leaving this province because they tried to hang on for four and five years into what they were doing. They tried. They tried.

And when they found out that things were happening a little bit better in Ontario, now that . . . as we all know, the activity has been in Ontario, and that's why the interest rates have been sky-rocketing and everything in western Canada. I will tell you, that's where those people went back to. They came from Ontario, they came from the East to settle here in western Canada, but you people wouldn't allow them through your policies back then.

You drove them, and you drove a lot of people into bankruptcy. The NDP drove hundreds of people into bankruptcy.

And I want to indicate to you that when that national energy program came into being, that was just about the time . . . in fact it was the time that the interest rates went to 22, 24 per cent interest rates. And I want to say to you, that was another thing that drove the people into a dilemma that eventually they could no longer hold onto. Because, like I said, the OPEC countries came in after the NDP and you know what they did to the oil prices then. Along with the NDP and Liberal high interest rate regime of twenty-four and a half per cent — and I remember paying that in my business, and so does a lot of other people out there — and then home mortgages sky-rocketed and the whole thing, people were losing their homes.

What government, I ask you . . . I ask you, Mr. Speaker . . . you know, I kind of feel ashamed because I'm jumping all over the place, but the members opposite had asked why people were leaving. It's only a few years since they've been in government, and when the major hit came was when they could have done something about it and they didn't. They got hit, people lost hundreds and thousands of dollars and they could not, because of what happened with the world economy and everything else, they could not recover enough, they couldn't recover enough. That's what happened.

If the NDP of that day would have brought in, would have brought in to this province a mortgage interest protection as this Progressive Conservative government did, people would have been able to hang on. It would have helped them. They turned their backs on the young families. We, and the first time in North America, have introduced nine and three-quarter per cent interest rates on homes. All over this province people will have nine and three-quarter per cent interest rates on their homes.

And I want to indicate to you that that is a first in the province of Saskatchewan. I want to also indicate to you that when interest rates rose to twenty-four and a half per cent they turned their backs on the farm families. And I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, as you well know, as so the economy goes in agriculture, so the economy goes in the province of Saskatchewan.

And I want to indicate to you that when agriculture took the hit in interest rates and the other hit in low commodity prices, where were they? The NDP, the people that now want to come out and try and look like a farmer's saviour, where were they? They weren't there. They turned their backs on the farm families.

And I want to indicate also to you, Mr. Speaker, that farm families weren't silly when it came 1986. As those members were travelling around trying to get votes in rural Saskatchewan, they knew, the people out there in rural Saskatchewan knew, we can't trust them. You can't trust them. Now they went around the cities and caught a few seats in the cities, but I'll tell you something, they weren't telling the truth at the doors.

I had many, many, many people come to tell me, as I'd

indicated to you earlier, that I'd wished I would have known then what I know now, what your government has done since it has come back into office in 1986, I wouldn't have voted for them.

I was in North Battleford the other Saturday night and I was talking to a councillor, and a councillor told me that they don't see their member. They invite him, invite him out to various different organizations and functions and stuff like that; he's too busy to pay attention. They're disappointed. And I'll guarantee you, I'll guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, The Battleford's are back in the Tory's hands come the next general election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — I want to say that when it comes to sincerity and honesty, and integrity and envision, I want to say that we have one of the most impressive premiers in the province. I want to say that he is probably about the only Premier in this province that I've ever met that is a grass root individual. He is approachable; he is liked by everyone from young to old; you can take him at his word. And I want to say, above all, that he falls into the category of as an approachable Premier, but also worthy. As I'd indicated to you, where the farming industry means so much to Saskatchewan, he's got the full understanding on the farm, what makes it tick. And he's probably would have been one of the most creative — creative — Agricultural ministers in this province.

We, through our Premier, this government, in a commitment to the farmers, have been able to pull a lot of farmers out of some very severe, severe problems. And I want to apologize to maybe some of the farmers that we were too late for, but I apologize because I know the NDP won't.

(2130)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'm going to talk on my allocated 20 minutes on a subject that is new, Mr. Speaker, and a subject that is strange to the opposition, and that's called the budget that I brought down last week, Mr. Speaker, because we didn't hear anything from the opposition for the last five days about the budget. We had a very . . . We had an interesting dissertation from the member from Saskatoon Fairview about the free trade debate and the free trade position, but he forgot about the budget, with all respect to the hon. member. And so it's a rather interesting topic that I would like to discuss tonight, Mr. Speaker, and as I say, a rather new one and a strange one for the opposition.

But let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, what the opposition want to vote against. They want to vote against everything; I think we've seen that often enough. But I can remember a year ago, Mr. Speaker, where the Leader of the Opposition stood up in this House and said that the government does not have a plan for rural Saskatchewan, for the small communities. And this budget, Mr. Speaker, lays out a plan for the small communities of rural Saskatchewan, to help them survive, to help them remain

viable, and where possible, Mr. Speaker, to help them to diversify.

And we've announced changes to the venture capital program to allow rural development corporations to participate, to help the small communities help themselves, Mr. Speaker. This budget brings in the new concept of business associations in our smaller communities to allow small business to begin to plan and organize, to get new businesses into those small towns, Mr. Speaker, to again help ensure their stability and their viability, again to help the small communities help themselves.

We've announced, Mr. Speaker, a new recreational facilities grant program and a new municipal capital financing program, Mr. Speaker, for the first time in our province's history to include rural municipalities.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — And as well, Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for Trade and Investment announced the Saskatchewan government growth fund, which in its first year, Mr. Speaker, should have \$35 million in additional financing to primarily rural Saskatchewan, to ensure its viability, its stability, and its ability to diversify, Mr. Speaker.

This government has laid out a five-point plan to try and protect and help rural Saskatchewan and small-town Saskatchewan and our smaller cities. And what do the NDP say? They say no to a plan to help rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — And this budget, Mr. Speaker, lays out some new initiatives and a plan for our farmers. And for the first time, we're going to see initiatives to help with farm debt restructuring, Mr. Speaker, to deal with that crippling debt. We're going to see home quarter financing, Mr. Speaker. We're going to remove the restrictions on off-farm income to help our farmers maintain the family farm.

Mr. Speaker, we are making changes to allow young people to begin to start farming. We're going to increase the loan limits of the agricultural credit corporation. And Mr. Speaker, to assist in that intergenerational transfer, we are going to have vendor financing guarantees, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — A five-point plan, Mr. Speaker, for our farmers to deal with farm debt and to begin to allow our young people to begin to have confidence again in agriculture and to begin to look again at agriculture as a great career and an opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

That plan — and what do the NDP say about that plan, Mr. Speaker? They say no. The people of this province will watch the vote tonight, Mr. Speaker, and I suspect — although they didn't talk about the budget for the last week — I suspect that they are going to vote against a plan

for rural Saskatchewan, a plan for our smaller communities, our smaller cities. And I suspect that the NDP are going to carry on their traditional practice of voting, not for, but against the farmer, Mr. Speaker, and I predict that's what we will see tonight.

Mr. Speaker, what else did we see over the course of this budget debate? The minister responsible for small business announces a new rendering plant in the city of Saskatoon, in the riding, Mr. Speaker, of the Leader of the Opposition, Saskatoon Riversdale, and what did the NDP do? They laughed. They laughed, Mr. Speaker. Jobs being created.

I must say, with the greatest respect to the opposition and its leader, that perhaps the NDP laughing at new businesses and new jobs is an improvement. At least they didn't say no, Mr. Speaker. At least they didn't stand up and oppose and say that we don't want that business, we don't want those jobs, we don't want that opportunity. They just laughed, Mr. Speaker.

They have opposed consistently through this budget debate and through this session and since, with the greatest respect, the Leader of the Opposition was elected. They have been consistent, Mr. Speaker, in their opposition to every single economic diversification initiative brought forward by this government. They have been consistent in opposing every single new business, Mr. Speaker. They have been consistent, the NDP have been consistent in opposing every single new job, new industry, new resource development since that individual became leader of that party, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what else will we see? Did anybody hear the NDP talk about \$10 million for small business? No, Mr. Speaker. We know what they will do when they have their chance to vote on it, Mr. Speaker. They will say no to the small business community of this province. Mr. Speaker, they will say no to the concept of business loans association programs. They will say no to a small business enterprise program. They will say no. The NDP will say no to a working capital loans program for our small businesses. And they will say no, as the NDP consistently does, they will say no to a new participating loans program for the Saskatchewan small-business community, Mr. Speaker.

What else, Mr. Speaker? I didn't hear, I didn't hear over the last week an NDP member of the legislature say that they agreed with this government in doubling the number of day-care spaces by 1995 — not one, not one, Mr. Speaker — not one of their feminists that were always complaining that there wasn't enough done. Not one word did they talk about doubling the day-care spaces. Mr. Speaker, not one word from the NDP about the efforts of this government to increase the number of day-care spaces in rural Saskatchewan by some 2,000. Not one NDP member dared touch that, Mr. Speaker, they never mentioned it.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP didn't mention the increase in funding for foster-parents. And, Mr. Speaker, the NDP have not said one word in this legislature in favour of a program to begin the screening for breast cancer in this province, Mr. Speaker, an initiative that I suspect that

virtually every female in this province believes is long overdue and has welcomed it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — And what do the NDP say, and what do the NDP say? They will say no to screening for breast cancer for the women of this province, Mr. Speaker, and I say that's a shameful day in the history of the New Democratic Party in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — And, Mr. Speaker, when this government tries to help single families by tightening-up measures and bringing in more money to enforce the automatic enforcement of maintenance orders so those that have a legal and, I say, a legal and a moral obligation to pay maintenance and support, what do the NDP say? They say no to more money for the automatic enforcement of maintenance orders, Mr. Speaker. Again, again a shameful day in the history of the New Democratic Party.

So they will say no to new hospitals, Mr. Speaker. They will say no. But this is consistent because they have said it since 1976. The New Democratic Party will say no to new nursing homes, Mr. Speaker. And we know why they will say no to new hospitals, because the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the New Democratic Party has said that the province of Saskatchewan should not build any more new hospitals, Mr. Speaker. And that message, that message is being well communicated to the people of this province.

And they will say no the New Democratic Party will say no to successful efforts to reduce the waiting lists in Saskatoon by 25 per cent. The New Democratic Party will say no to new efforts to increase the number of surgeries in Saskatchewan — in Saskatoon — by nearly 20,000 since the government took office, Mr. Speaker. They say no to more money for health research. They say no to more money for home care.

And they say no to doubling the amount of money on education since this government took office. The NDP said no. And they say no to educational television. And they say no to a new educational institute fund, Mr. Speaker, to improve the access to education for the students of all ages in this great province. So the NDP say no to \$22 million for environmental activities, Mr. Speaker. It's different. Our answers to protecting the environment is not to cover it up with 10 feet of cement as was their answer.

And, Mr. Speaker, our answer to protecting the environment is not to shred and hide documents so that the public doesn't know about the biggest PCB (polychlorinated biphenyl) spill in the history of Canada, under a New Democratic government, of which the Leader of the Opposition was deputy premier and intimately involved in that decision to cover up that spill and to cover up, Mr. Speaker, the information from the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP caucus, the elected members of the

New Democratic Party have said no to every new initiative, every new proposal and, Mr. Speaker, they've said no to the environment, no to health care, no to education, no to small business, no to farmers, and no to rural Saskatchewan when they vote against this budget.

(2145)

Mr. Speaker, a two-year-old can say no, Mr. Speaker. A one-year-old can say no, but a responsible political party has to say yes when the right things are being done, and the responsible political party . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — And a responsible political party cannot hide behind a shield and say, it's not our job to have policies. Every New Democratic member in this province, Mr. Speaker, knows that the people of this province are saying to the New Democratic Party, where are your policies? And they are saying it, and they are saying it to New Democratic members, and they are saying it across this province, Mr. Speaker. You know, the NDP now stands in many parts of this province for "no darn policies." That what it means, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — But, Mr. Speaker, "no darn policies" as a name for a party is not good enough for the people of Saskatchewan. You had a chance for the last three weeks of this legislature to put forward one positive policy, even one, Mr. Speaker. And what did we get? Not one new policy from the New Democratic Party.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP caucus says no, but what do some of the public say about the budget? The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation president, Susan Bates: that it's fair and reasonable; that most farm leaders like government spending plans.

"It seems the government is moving in the right direction," says Leroy Larsen, second vice-president of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool.

Harvey McEwen, president of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers said, "Over long terms, the programs will be very positive."

The Canadian Cancer Society in a letter to myself, Mr. Speaker, from Mr. George O. Thomas, executive director, said:

I wish to thank you for a most reasonable and realistic budget for our province. The Saskatchewan Division of the Canadian Cancer Society supports the one cent per cigarette increase in the tobacco tax.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — The Canadian Cancer Society wrote to me and said, "Another initiative we endorse is the establishment of a breast cancer screening pilot project for women in high risk age groups." That's what the Canadian Cancer Society said. "And another major

initiative we support,” says the Canadian Cancer Society, “is the additional funding for our hospitals in this province.”

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — And they say it is their privilege to have worked closely with the Minister of Health in the very innovative and progressive health promotion program, Everyone Wins.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — “This is an excellent example,” and I quote, “of a co-operative venture between government and community agencies in working together to improve the health of all the people in the province.”

Mr. Speaker, the NDP have made it clear in their budget debate that they have a crisis in leadership, Mr. Speaker, because they don’t have any, Mr. Speaker. And it’s come true — no leadership and policies, Mr. Speaker. And we know, Mr. Speaker, that the initiatives of some of the NDP members of that caucus to have a leadership review, particularly those in Regina and the secret meetings that have been going on, Mr. Speaker, indicate to all of the people of this province that within the New Democratic Party itself they know they have a crisis in leadership. Two years — two years without a policy under the new leader, Mr. Speaker. The crisis of leadership is becoming evident not only to those within the party, not only to those within the New Democratic Party caucus, but they are becoming increasingly evident to the people of the province of Saskatchewan. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Assiniboia-Gravelbourg were right, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — And it’s one of the few times, Mr. Speaker, in a by-election, that the judgement was cast, not on a government, Mr. Speaker, but on an opposition and it’s leadership, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — So here we have, in a province like Saskatchewan, in opposition, a New Democratic Party that is against diversification; a new Democratic Party that is against new business; a New Democratic Party that is against farmers, and agriculture, and rural Saskatchewan, and our rural way of life.

Mr. Speaker, one thing has come through now in two debates, the throne speech and the budget debate, that the NDP have not had a new idea since potash nationalization. I urge all members to join with the people of this province in supporting this budget here this evening.

The Speaker: — Order. Order.

The division bells rang from 9:53 p.m. until 9:55 p.m.

Amendment negatived on the following recorded division.

Romanow
Rolfes
Shillington
Lingenfelter
Tchorzewski
Koskie
Brockelbank
Mitchell
Upshall
Simard
Kowalsky

Solomon
Atkinson
Anguish
Goulet
Hagel
Lyons
Calvert
Lautermilch
Trew
Smart
Van Mulligen

Yeas — 22

Nays — 34

Devine
Muller
Duncan
McLeod
Berntson
Lane
Taylor
Smith
Swan
Muirhead
Schmidt
Hodgins
Gerich
Hepworth
Hardy
Klein
Meiklejohn

Martin
Toth
Sauder
Johnson
McLaren
Hopfner
Petersen
Swenson
Martens
Baker
Wolfe
Gleim
Neudorf
Gardner
Kopelchuk
Saxinger
Britton

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 34

Devine
Muller
Duncan
McLeod
Berntson
Lane
Taylor
Smith
Swan
Muirhead
Schmidt
Hodgins
Gerich
Hepworth
Hardy
Klein
Meiklejohn

Martin
Toth
Sauder
Johnson
McLaren
Hopfner
Petersen
Swenson
Martens
Baker
Wolfe
Gleim
Neudorf
Gardner
Kopelchuk
Saxinger
Britton

Nays — 22

Romanow
Rolfes
Shillington
Lingenfelter

Solomon
Atkinson
Anguish
Goulet

Tchorzewski	Hagel
Koskie	Lyons
Brockelbank	Calvert
Mitchell	Lautermilch
Upshall	Trew
Simard	Smart
Kowalsky	Van Mulligen

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

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

Item 1

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Chairman, I move that we rise, report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:03 p.m.