

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you and other members of the Assembly, two very distinguished guests that are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker — is Mr. Dirk Van Lottum, the Consul-General of the Netherlands, and his wife, Mrs. Laura Van Lottum. We'd like to welcome you to our Assembly.

Mr. Van Lottum will be meeting with the Departments of Trade and Investment and Economic Development and Public Participation, and Mrs. Van Lottum this afternoon will be touring the provincial correctional centre.

We wish to welcome you to our province. I hope you enjoy the proceedings of the legislature, and look forward to visiting with you later this afternoon. Welcome to Saskatchewan.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pickering: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the Assembly, a group of seven students from the Milestone High School. Mr. Speaker, this is a special education class, and one of these students is seated on the floor, and the rest are in the Speaker's Gallery. They are accompanied here today by their teacher, Mrs. Bev Seibert, and I'm not sure of this spelling here, Mr. Speaker, but I think it's Mrs. J. Carr and Mr. and Mrs. Ron Lunde.

I hope they enjoy the proceedings of the question period this afternoon, and I look forward to meeting with them for drinks and pictures immediately following. And I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming the students from Milestone.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Petersen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like all members to join with me in welcoming two people who are sitting in the gallery opposite me. They are Mr. Lynn Biggart and Mr. Herb Axten, who are the chairman and vice-chairman of the Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan. The gentlemen do a fine job, and I would ask all members to help me welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gleim: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to greet these people from Eastend, Saskatchewan. It is my home town. They are the council from Eastend, along with the administrator: mayor, Terry Haggart; council, Ann Briggs, George Huhn, Kendal McCuaig, Clifford Wilton, and administrator Cindy Zabolotney.

They are here on town business today. They drove up last night, and they come to the Assembly today to see the

workings of the Assembly. I would like for all you people in the Assembly today to help me welcome those people to our Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Privatization of PCS

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Premier, in the absence of the minister in charge of PCS (Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan); perhaps it should be to the minister of privatization. It has to do with your government's plans, as we now know, to sell off the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan.

During your recent trip to the Orient, sir, and I have a copy of the article in front of me here, you referred to the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan as an albatross around the necks of the province of Saskatchewan. Now your minister of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan is saying, on the other hand, that investors from all over the world are just knocking down the doors to get a piece of this albatross.

Mr. Premier, my question to you is this: can you explain what the foreign investors see in this public company that you apparently don't see?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I sense perhaps just a slight move by the Leader of the Opposition towards maybe thinking that this might be a good investment for people in Saskatchewan, Canada, and indeed the world, Mr. Speaker. If in fact that he's thinking along those lines, I congratulate him.

We believe that it will be an excellent opportunity for people to invest in the potash corporation, to diversify the company, have an international company headquartered in Saskatchewan with shareholders world-wide, Mr. Speaker. It will show the maturity and the sophistication of the Saskatchewan people and, indeed, the Saskatchewan market.

Now the hon. member knows my only concern obviously is with the great deal of borrowed money and the debt that was put into the potash corporation as a result of policies from the NDP that said what we should do, Mr. Speaker, is not build new mines, we should borrow the money and buy the mines. Well, Mr. Speaker, we put at risk Saskatchewan people's tax dollars. The NDPs decided to buy the mines.

We're saying, Mr. Speaker, to the rest of Saskatchewan and to Canada and to the rest of the world, why not invest in a fine company, remove the debt, replace it with equity, and the province can see diversification and jobs and exciting reputation for all the world to be proud of, Mr. Speaker, and particularly Saskatchewan people with a brand-new head office of an international company here in Saskatoon that we can look at for generations to come.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I have a new question for the Premier; I have news for the Premier. We've had an international head office for the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan long before Bill 20 was tabled.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — In fact, I think, Mr. Premier, it was your government, before actually being sworn in, that you did away with PCS International, seeking to sell Saskatchewan potash offshore.

But the question that I have to the Premier is this: aren't you really on the horns of a dilemma? On the one hand, you're selling the argument to the people of the province of Saskatchewan that the potash corporation is such an albatross because of some debt — by the way, which is basically untrue, but nevertheless that's the argument that you're saying here — and then on the other hand you're turning around and you're telling the foreign investors that this is a great buy. Come on in; take it all over; it's all available for you. Everybody — China, India, Toronto, Montreal, come on in; it's really great!

Mr. Premier, my question to you is this: which version of this two-sided fairy-tale is correct, and which is false?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, in *The Globe and Mail* today there's an interesting editorial called "Potash and Pablum." Mr. Speaker, we have said obviously that we're going to offer the potash corporation so that people can participate in it and invest in it in Saskatchewan.

And I am, in this article, criticized because I have kept it for Saskatchewan people. The offshore can only have 5 per cent, Mr. Speaker, and they only get 25 per cent of the vote. And we're going to have three members of the board, and the head office has to stay in Saskatchewan. A multinational company, Mr. Speaker — imagine what they'd say if the opposition had their way in saying that we can't allow investment in this province; you can't come in here at all; we're going to have to run it all by government, Mr. Speaker.

The pablum that they're talking about, Mr. Speaker, is kowtowing to the NDP in their old, old philosophy that says, we don't build mines; we buy them. We don't build packing plants; we close them. We don't build pulp mills, Mr. Speaker; we take them over and we run them into the ground with borrowed money.

Mr. Speaker, those days are over. Those days are over, Mr. Speaker. We are not going to spend \$91,000 a day in a loss in the pulp company, Mr. Speaker. They're against a new paper mill; they're against upgraders; they're against trade.

Mr. Speaker, let me say we like to see investment and building, and yes, the potash corporation will be a fine international company with investors from all over the world, Mr. Speaker, because Saskatchewan has matured to be world class under the kind of opportunities we're

providing at this time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — I must admire the Premier on the inventiveness and the imagination of his answers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — This is a new question, Mr. Speaker, and I might say to the Premier that it might present his answer, some sort of an answer to the Toronto *Globe and Mail* article about potash or pablum, but I doubt it because the way I read that article, that article said, Mr. Premier, that you've done the worst of all worlds. You've neither kept the potash corporation in Saskatchewan, nor have you made it available to the big-business friends of *The Globe and Mail* and of your corporation. So it's the worst of all worlds, not the way that you're doing it.

My question to you, sir, is this. You talk about the potash corporation in Saskatchewan being an albatross. You said this is a big problem. I want to ask you, sir, whether or not it's correct that the PCS annual report for 1988 shows that this albatross for the people of the province of Saskatchewan — which by the way, as I understand it, an albatross being a bird which is venerated for its strength and beauty and ability to survive in difficult times as well as good times, a misnomer that you use to the potash corporation. But leave that as an aside, I want to know about this albatross.

And my question is whether or not in this 1988 annual report of PCS, the albatross has turned out to lay a golden egg; and whether or not you can tell this legislature when we can expect that 1988 annual report for the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan to settle this debate about whether or not really it is an albatross or something which has laid the golden egg. When will we get the '88 annual report from PCS?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, my colleague says . . . I guess the PCS report will be tabled soon, and I believe that you will see that it made a profit, Mr. Speaker. And I ask the hon. member: would he rather invest in a company that was making money or a company that was not making money? The question here, Mr. Speaker, is: do we allow the people of Saskatchewan to invest? That's the key. They not only want a say in that company, Mr. Speaker, they want a share in that company. And if you remove that debt from it, you will find that it will be a very profitable corporation. People who will invest in it will do well. Saskatchewan people will have opportunity to also, as well as having a say in that national, international company, having a share in it like any normal co-op member would like to have, Mr. Speaker. And why would the hon. members be against . . . and they weren't; isn't that the case?

The question is not here the philosophical nature of it, because in 1982 they agreed to sell shares in potash — they did, you did — shares in uranium and shares in pulp and paper and shares to everybody, Mr. Speaker. Now they're standing up and saying, oh, you can't do it if it's

profitable. Well, Mr. Speaker, I would look at Power bonds that they never did in the power corporation and the telephone corporation. Those are guaranteed because it is a monopoly backed up by the Government of Saskatchewan, the best investment in the country, Mr. Speaker.

We want Saskatchewan people to do well, and we're providing them with the opportunity to invest and diversify this province and create economic activity, not smother it by government bureaucracy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I have a new question for the Hon. Premier. He says new investment not smothered by public investment. I say to the Hon. Premier that what he's doing by way of his government policies is not smothering or enhancing investment, he is selling off the heritage of the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — You've gone too far. Yes, you've gone too far. You've gone too far. You've gone too far, and you and your supporters and the back-benchers in the government know that.

But I want to ask another question to try to eliminate some of the confusion about your government policy. Your minister of privatization couldn't answer any of the fundamental questions yesterday, and you're not able to answer them today.

Let me try this one out on you, Mr. Premier. You said, when you were on the Orient express, that the returns from the sell-off of this heritage of Saskatchewan potash would be used to reduce the long-term debts of the province of Saskatchewan. And now your minister of potash and your minister of privatization, at the time of the announcement of this Bill, say on the other hand, no, we're not going to do that; we're going to go around the province of Saskatchewan and we're going to ask the people of the province what do they think we should do with the profit, so-called, of the sale of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan.

Now my question to you is this, surrounding this total flip-flopping and confusion, sir, my question to you is this: why are you selling PCS to foreign investors? Is it to reduce the corporation's long-term debt, or is it to provide your government with a one-time — one-time, one-time — political slush fund in a desperate but doomed attempt to get re-elected in this next provincial election campaign?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and his caucus are pretty good actors, Mr. Speaker, but it's a little bit of false bravado over there because they look, Mr. Speaker, at their own plans to allow for diversification. And they even talk about, Mr. Speaker — if you go back and look at their '82 memo — and say, some of these things that we've bought aren't worth it, Mr. Speaker, and maybe we should have diversification and offer share

offerings to the people of Saskatchewan and indeed have it traded on Canadian stock exchanges to provide the liquidity, Mr. Speaker.

Now I could go to all the new members that are elected there and say, if I was an NDP premier, Mr. Speaker, if I was offering shares here and the members were sitting over here, Mr. Speaker, they'd say, good for you, Mr. Premier. We're offering shares to the people of Saskatchewan. Consider all these resources just like a big co-operative. We're going to have shares in Saskatoon, shares in Swift Current, shares in La Ronge and Athabasca because the people of this province want to be in on that activity, Mr. Speaker.

I'll say to the hon. member: they know that this provides diversification opportunities that we haven't seen before. They saw the light in 1982. Everybody in Saskatchewan saw it, Mr. Speaker, except for one thing. They knew that we would deliver and do it right, and they would chicken out, Mr. Speaker, because some of those members over there are so philosophically against private enterprise and people investing. If it was right back to the beginning, they wouldn't even let a co-op develop in this province, Mr. Speaker, because they believe in nothing but rhetoric of government union leaders and big government, Mr. Speaker. And that's no longer the case in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, it's getting more outrageous with every answer that the Premier gets.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I just have one question of the Premier. Is there anybody over there at all who knows anything at all about what you're doing on this privatization — anybody at all who knows something at all? Give me an answer to that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, we have seen very successful public offerings in SaskTel, Mr. Speaker, SaskPower, Saskoil, Mr. Speaker. That company's gone from about a \$300 million company to over a billion dollar company, Mr. Speaker, and widely held and invested in in the province of Saskatchewan. It is now, Mr. Speaker, the eighth largest oil company in this country, headquartered in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, in Regina. It's one of the finest companies in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

And it's interesting, interesting to watch the opposition. When, Mr. Speaker, a company comes into Saskatchewan, like Weyerhaeuser or somebody else, they say, Mr. Speaker: oh, they're coming in; it's going to be terrible; they're going to invest in Saskatchewan. So they don't like them coming in.

Then, Mr. Speaker, Saskoil invests in Alberta . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. I think perhaps we're getting into a little debate during question period, and I think it could be said about perhaps both sides, so perhaps future questioners and answerers, the people answering, keep that in mind. It's interesting, but we're getting into debate, I'm afraid.

Call for Inquiry into Treatment of Indian and Metis People

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. I hope that the Premier is a lot more serious about this next question than in the previous questions.

Mr. Premier, my question to you relates to the call for a commission inquiry by over two dozen organizations representing aboriginal people, church groups, women's groups, unions, and also students. I want to know, Mr. Premier, whether you will take the positive action and the proactive approach that a lot of people are asking for in this province and do an inquiry?

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This request for a special investigation was asked for before, and I've all ready indicated earlier that an inquest was done and the proper channels have been followed to inquire into this particular case. And there is no evidence that would suggest there should be any further inquiry with respect to this particular case.

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Premier.

The Premier does not want to take responsibility for the issue of Indian-Metis people in this province.

What the commission asked for yesterday was a broad-scale inquiry. What people are talking was not only the Pippin case. I raised the Joseph Morin case here the other week, and we are also talking about the case with Sparvier. We are also looking at many other cases which shows a complete disregard by our government to Indian and Metis people in this province.

Not only do we see disregard from your province, we also see it from the Tory government in Ottawa where we see a lot of Indian students standing up for their education rights right across Canada. Now I would like to know, Mr. Premier, why will you not stand up positively for the Indian and Metis people in this province and call for an inquiry?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate sometimes the level of the debate gets lower and lower in this Chamber. For a member of the opposition to cry racism and denounce the authorities of justice, to denounce the authority of the police, to denounce all of the institutions of this province that have been built up for 85 years is indulging in sensationalism.

All of these cases had either a fair trial — some of them with a jury system — there were inquests which have gone on for generations in this province, and to allege that all of the authorities in Saskatchewan practise racism is

irresponsible, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — A new question, Mr. Speaker. I think the Premier keeps evading the issue. What we were talking about was an inquiry which will deal with the issues of racism that, in many cases, your policies end up promoting. What I'm saying, straightforward here, is, will you get up and stand up in this House and say, look, we are going to start the proactive strategy; we're going to start a positive strategy, and we're going to use this mechanism of an inquiry to start out on this road to a more progressive society in this province for Indian and Metis people? Mr. Premier, will you stand up and support this inquiry?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier of Saskatchewan should not have to stand up and answer such scurrilous allegations. And I speak on behalf of the Department of Social Services, and I'm sure I speak on behalf of all authorities, to say that there are still fair trials by jury in this province, there are still inquests, and there is a Department of Social Services that provides assistance to everyone who is in need. And there is no need to have an inquiry simply to satisfy the members of the opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, one final question, again to the Premier. Mr. Premier, we know that your minister has made outrageous statements before, but I won't get into the debate with him today. What I would like to know from you, Mr. Premier, is this, that many inquiries have been set up already to deal positively with the issue of Indian-Metis people in Manitoba, in Ontario, in Quebec and Nova Scotia. These provinces saw a need for a positive, proactive approach. I would like to know: why is it that you will not entitle the same type of consideration for the Indian-Metis people of this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, this province experimented with socialism for 40 years, and during that 40-year period, during that period that system did very little for Indian and Metis people. During that period from 1944 until 1982, the Indian and Metis people did not progress economically the same as other citizens under a socialist system. And now the member opposite suggests, after 40 years of failure, that this government does not have the appropriate policies.

Our policies are jobs and opportunities for all citizens, and if socialism didn't deliver it, this government, through a free market economy, will.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, we have record unemployment in this province, and one of the big differences between our government and your

government was that our government was willing to work with native people to solve their problems, and your government is not.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — I ask you to look at the crisis that native young people are facing. A suicide rate among young people in Saskatchewan who are native, 7.4 times as high as the suicide rate among young people of that age group at the national level. A disproportionate number of native young people in our jails; 65 per cent of our jail population is native.

You have no native child welfare policy. You look at foster care in Saskatoon — 128 foster care homes and 65 per cent of the population in them is native . . .

The Speaker: — Does the member have a question?

Mr. Prebble: — . . . and yet only nine of those foster homes are run by native people. My question to you, Mr. Premier, is very simple. These are urgent issues. Your government is clearly not willing to address them. If you have no ideas on how to proceed and address these problems, why are you so opposed to an inquiry which might finally give us some answers to the urgent crisis that native youth in this province are facing?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, this government is not interested in merely a public show of compassion. We are prepared to act, and have been acting. The Department of Social Services spends approximately \$175 million per year on families. That's the family services side of the Department of Social Services.

Health spends money on families with respect to mental health. Education spends money on families. This government has spent money, and continues to spend money on parent aides so that we do not have to take children out of their families. We send in parents to assist the natural parents in learning how to deal with these problems. This government has expanded the foster care program and now has 15 per cent Indian and Metis foster-parents, and are recruiting new ones every day. This government has continued with the first agreements with Indian bands in the history of Saskatchewan for Indian child care and are now working to finalize that with the federal government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — The members opposite want a public inquiry so that they can make political noise. We are busy trying to solve these problems, and yes, they do exist, but rhetoric will not solve them. We are taking action, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Prebble: — Supplementary. A new question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Social Services. Mr. Minister, your comments are outrageous. Your government was the last government in Canada to enter into agreements

with Indian bands with respect to the delivery of child welfare services on reserves. Your government, since coming to office, has consistently cut funding in family support services to native organizations. You have slashed the funding to family service workers in the Friendship Centres; you've cut the native court worker program. In this budget alone you've cut \$800,000 to family support services.

My question to you is this, Mr. Minister: could it be that the main reason that your government is opposed to an inquiry into the crisis that native people face in this province is that it's very likely that such an inquiry would end up pointing a finger at you and your cut-backs in family services? Do you think, Mr. Minister, it's more important to save your own political hide than it is to meet this crisis head-on?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, earlier in this question period the members opposite questioned the integrity of all of the institutions in Saskatchewan — the police, the justice system, and the civil servants who try to help people. And they continue in that vein in questioning the integrity of the very people of Saskatchewan who provide over \$175 million a year to assist with families.

They distort facts. They will not mention that we have standardized the amount we pay for wages for counselling at Friendship Centres at \$27,000 per person across the province for every worker. We feel that is a reasonable sum, considering the education and experience of those particular counsellors, and that if those Friendship Centres wish to top up that money, they may go ahead and top it up. We are contracting at \$27,000 per year. That is not stingy for those people who are being paid to help the poor.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite disregard the fact that this government has put money into economic development for Indian people. We believe they should become self-sufficient. Rather than the members opposite who would wish to build an industry of helping people, we want to build an industry of people helping themselves.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE BILLS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 01 — An Act to amend An Act to incorporate St. Margaret's Hospital (Grey Nuns) of Biggar

Mr. Baker: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill 01, An Act to amend An Act to incorporate St. Margaret's Hospital of Biggar, be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

MOTIONS

Resolution No. 10 — Financing of Education

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, at the closing of my remarks on this resolution, I'll be moving the following motion:

That this Assembly call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to reverse its short-sighted, cost-cutting decision to educational institutions which are reducing the accessibility of education for Saskatchewan's young people and impairing the province's ability to compete in the knowledge- and information-based world economy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan education at all levels is in crisis. This government speaks loud and long about its commitment to education, but when we examine the facts, when we look at the record of this government, we find that it has been a total, abject failure in providing Saskatchewan youth with meaningful educational programs and few opportunities for meaningful employment once they graduate.

And what are the facts of this record, Mr. Speaker? Let's look at education spending in this province. Let's take a long, hard look. Education spending, according to the government's blue books, rose 6.6 per cent to \$841 million in the 1989-90 budget. Now that doesn't sound too bad until you consider that the inflation rate in 1988 in our province was 4.4 per cent. That's not too bad until you consider that the budget, the real educational spending in this province, only increased by 2.37 per cent. When you take into consideration supplementary spending estimates for last year and you take out the large payments to the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation, this in fact is not a spending increase of 6.6 per cent, this is a cut. The real increase was 2.37 per cent, and when you take into consideration inflation of 4.4 per cent in 1988 alone, Saskatchewan education, the young people of our province, the teachers of our province, the school trustees of our province, and the citizens of our province have, in fact, experienced a real cut in spending in education.

And what are the results of this cut in spending in education? If we look at the city I represent, Saskatoon, the Saskatoon Board of Education is looking at a \$500,000 decrease in provincial operating grants. That's about 2 per cent less than they received last year.

And who foots the bill, Mr. Speaker? Who else but local ratepayers in the city of Saskatoon. The Saskatoon Public School Board has few options. The public school board can cut teachers, they can cut programs, they can dip into the reserves that are fast being depleted, or they can pass along those funding decreases from the provincial government onto the backs of the local ratepayers, and that in fact is what they are doing.

And in Regina, let's look at what's happening here. In Regina the schools are in fact closing due to the consistent underfunding of education by a government that claims

to care about education. The Regina Separate School Board has been forced to close six schools.

In 1987-88, grants to primary and secondary schools were reduced by \$11 million. In 1979, provincial grants accounted for about 63.5 per cent of the Regina Separate School Board's budget. But by 1988, under this Progressive Conservative Government, this figure had dropped to 44 per cent, and it's not that the money isn't there. The absolute shame, the real tragedy in all of this is that this government is spending \$9 million on a political birthday party. They're spending \$9 million against all of the objections of those people in Saskatchewan who have common sense.

They're spending this \$9 million against the objections of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. They're spending this \$9 million against the objections of the Saskatchewan Rural Municipalities Association. They're spending this \$9 million when there are very, very few citizens in our province that believes that a political birthday party is in the best interest of Saskatchewan taxpayers.

So, Mr. Speaker, this government which claims to care about education, in fact doesn't. It cares so much that the percentage of the Saskatchewan budget spent on education has dropped by 27.3 per cent since 1980. This government has not only decreased its proportional spending on education, it has decreased its spending more than any other province in our country.

In 1987 the Government of Saskatchewan spent 10.6 per cent of its combined budgets on elementary and secondary school education, compared with a national average of 14.5 per cent. So all of this PC government talk about commitment to education is just that, Mr. Speaker — it's talk, and talk is cheap.

And what of this government's commitment to higher education? Surely we would see some increases there to reflect the rhetoric. This government gave the universities a whopping 2 per cent increase in operating grants. That's not even enough to offset the inflation rate of 4.4 per cent. In fact, taking inflation into account, this supposed increase is actually a 2.4 per cent cut.

The president of the University of Saskatchewan has stated that this budget means no new programs, nor any response to students who are shut out of a higher education due to enrolment quotas. The university is receiving 2 per cent more when it asked for and requires a 7.3 per cent increase.

The situation at the University of Regina isn't any better. The 2 per cent increase will not cover increases in costs at that institution.

So who bears the brunt? Who bears the brunt of increased costs for education in our province? The people that bear the brunt are the students of Saskatchewan.

Now since this government took office in 1982, tuition fees at the University of Regina per semester have increased by 88.8 per cent — from \$392 per semester to \$740 per semester next month. This is more than double

the rate of inflation since 1982. Tuition fees are up, university operating budgets can't keep up with inflation, never mind the increased student load, and yet this government talks about a commitment to learning.

Ask the students at the University of Regina what this government means by commitment. In April of 1986 the Tories made a commitment to pay for half the cost, \$2.2 million, of a new student union centre, and they promised an additional \$400,000 to convert the old student union building into a new day-care facility.

Now was it a coincidence that this announcement was made with such fanfare six months prior to the election in October of 1986? And was it also a coincidence that the minister withdrew this funding? He put it on hold six months after the election. Mr. Speaker, the students of this province know that talk is easy and talk is cheap, and unfortunately, all we get from this government is talk, talk, talk, and very little action.

Now to add insult to injury, the Tories have changed the rules of the game for the Saskatchewan student loan program. Prior to changes made in 1987, a student who borrowed \$2,640 in student loans was eligible for a bursary; however, after the changes, the same student had to borrow \$5,940 before qualifying for any bursary assistance.

Further, this government has reneged on its promise in 1986 to issue student loans at 6 per cent for the duration of the loan. Yet as the Provincial Auditor has pointed out, in practice these loans are only being set at 6 per cent for half the term of the loan. Again, this government shows its true colours when it comes to education.

Many students in our province are married students. Many students in our province would like to be able to go to university or Kelsey Institute, but because they are married, and because they may have two children, and because one of the spouses is at home with those children, they can't get a student loan to go to university. That really takes into consideration the real needs of the family.

I've had the opportunity to discuss with the Minister of Education and his staff the need to change the regulation so that married couples, who are low income couples or poor people, have access to student loans that genuinely meet their needs. If you look at how they are treated as people who require student loans, they are treated as a single person. They're eligible for the same amount of money that a single person would get, yet if they were a single parent, or if they were a native person, a Metis, a non-status person, they would be eligible for some special assistance, some additional money that would meet the real needs of their family.

(1445)

And yet this government has said that they don't have money to allow poor or lower income working people to get a much needed education so that they can have the hopes and the dreams of their single counterparts, or their native and Metis counterparts, or their counterparts that are single parents.

And I would urge this government to change the student loan requirements so that poor people who are married, who have a spouse at home looking after children, have access to the same university or post-secondary education that many other Saskatchewan citizens do if they're prepared to take out large student loans.

Now many students in this province work hard to support their studies. Many are forced to work hard and to get jobs because they can't get adequate student loan and bursary funding, so they work — or they try to — but even here the government has cut back. This government has slashed the Opportunities '89 student employment program by 2.5 per cent in the recent budget. There will be 1,000 less students employed under this program this summer. The fact of the matter is that the number of student jobs created last summer was only 3,000 jobs, in comparison to 10,384 jobs created in 1986-87.

Now is it any wonder that the number of youth employed in this province dropped by 5,000 between January '88 and January '89? Is it any wonder that 65 per cent of the more than 13,000 persons that left Saskatchewan in 1988 were 29 years old and younger? I think not, Mr. Speaker.

The fact of the matter is that this government is forcing students and forcing young people in this province to bear the brunt of their misplaced priorities in the following ways. This government cuts back in funding, which results in dramatic tuition increases. This government makes promises to universities before elections, and then breaks those promises after elections. This government changes the rules on student loans, they increase the borrowing rates, and they cut back on the bursaries — all of this after an election.

This government consistently underfunds school boards to the point where schools are closing, and this government ignores a 50 per cent increase in the grade 8 to 12 drop-out rate since 1981. This government announced in its throne speech that it was going to do something about our school drop-out rate. But have we heard anything? No, we have not. This government . . .

An Hon. Member: — You haven't been listening.

Ms. Atkinson: — I have been listening. I have been listening. This government has a disaster of a school drop-out rate. Since this government came to office in 1982, the school drop-out rate has gone from 31 per cent to 45 per cent. That is a disaster. That is a crisis, and we can lay that in many respects at the feet of the members opposite. That's where we can lay that.

Now this government will say that that drop-out rate is because young native people aren't completing their studies. And yet when my colleague, the member for Cumberland, who knows intimately the problems of Indian and Metis people, asked your government for an inquiry, what do you say? You say no. You say no.

We have the largest suicide rate in this country; we have large poverty rates amongst Indian and Metis people; we have student drop-out rates that are unbelievable amongst Indian and Metis young people; we have

horrendous problems with the justice system; we see people in jails. And what does this government say? They say no. And they say no because they're embarrassed, they're embarrassed. But you shouldn't be embarrassed. You shouldn't be embarrassed because there is a problem, and you people continue to bury your heads in the sand. And any responsible government should start looking at what are some of the systemic problems facing Indian and Metis people.

And the member from Mayfair, he giggles in his chair, he giggles in his chair, and it's not funny, Mr. Member from Mayfair, who knows, who surely knows something about special education, who surely knows something about young people facing crisis because that member was involved with young people prior to coming into this legislature.

Now this government is facing a number of critical issues. Educational spending is important, but planning and priorities is important as well. There are facts about this government's record in education that cannot be disputed. And what do these Tories give us as solutions? They give us Decima polling; they give us empty slogans based on their polling; they give us empty promises based on their polling; they give us empty rhetoric based on their polling; they say that they're open for business.

The Minister of Social Services talks about the free market economy when asked for an inquiry into the issues and problems facing Indian and Metis people in this province. They government is open for business, but, Mr. Speaker, there won't be anyone here to mind the store. Young people know that educational opportunities just aren't here any more, and they're leaving the province in droves.

Instead of real solutions to real problems in our schools, problems like illiteracy and problems like a high school drop-out rate and underfunding realities which results in denial of access to education, this government offers cheap talk. They say, let's ignore the real problems and teach our students about privatization and entrepreneurship. It says, let's make some more promises before the next election and break them afterwards.

Mr. Speaker, talk is cheap. I know it; you know it; the students of the province know it; the voters out there know it; and after the next election when it's too late for them, this government will finally know it. Thank you very much.

And I would now move, and it's seconded by the member from Saskatoon South:

That this Assembly call upon the government of Saskatchewan to reverse its short-sighted, cost-cutting decisions to educational institutions which are reducing the accessibility of education for Saskatchewan's young people and impairing the province's ability to compete in the knowledge- and information-based world economy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to second the motion moved by my colleague, the member from Saskatoon Nutana. But while I take pleasure in seconding the motion, I'm also somewhat saddened by the fact that we know that each day that passes in Saskatchewan, a number of students, young people have left the province, either gone to the east across the Manitoba border and into Ontario, or have gone west into Alberta and B.C. — many of our young people who are, Mr. Speaker, the future of this province.

We hear the Minister of Education saying time and time again, and made a long speech last year in the House, of preparing our young people for the 21st century, that he was going to make the opportunities available to our young people so that they would be able to meet the 21st century with vim and vigour and be prepared and have the knowledge and skills that they require in order to stay in Saskatchewan and make their home here.

Mr. Speaker, since last year we don't know exactly how many young people have left this province, but it's somewhere in the neighbourhood of 9 or 10,000 who have left Saskatchewan because there was no hope, there was no opportunity made available by this government.

And I will demonstrate today, Mr. Speaker, where they have gone wrong, where they have not kept their commitment to our young people. I remember well 1982 when the now Premier of Saskatchewan had a slogan which says, let's bring those young people back to Saskatchewan; let's make sure that all those parents who had to leave under those bad years of the NDP could come back; let's bring them back.

What has he done? What has this Premier and his government done? They have underfunded those very same educational programs that are needed for our young people in order to make their living here in this province. The Premier has not kept his promise. He has not kept his promise to those young people that he would provide those job opportunities, those educational opportunities to our young people so that they could make their homes in this province where they were born.

In this last year alone, as I was saying, 33,000 people — 33,000. I think I'm low, Mr. Speaker; it probably is even higher than that. We know that if the trend continues this year, if the trend continues this year, an additional 36,000 people will leave this province. Of that 36,000, approximately 12 to 15,000 will be young people, the very people that we need here, the future leaders. Our bright students, our bright young people will be making their homes somewhere else in this country. They will be contributing to Canada, not in Saskatchewan but in Alberta and in B.C. and in Ontario and the other provinces.

Why, Mr. Speaker? Because this government has failed in its obligation to provide, to provide those opportunities. And is it any wonder, is it any wonder, Mr. Speaker, that this is happening?

All we have to do is look at the estimates for this year. If you look at the estimates this year and a couple in the past, you will note, with all the rhetoric that we get from

the members opposite and the Minister of Education, if they were honest with the people of Saskatchewan, and I ask them to turn to the Estimates, turn to the *Estimates* — and I will refer to 1986 *Estimates* and the 1989-90 *Estimates* — and if you do any calculation at all, you will note that the average income . . . pardon me, the average increase in operating grants to school boards was a meagre, was a meagre 1.3 per cent per year — 1.3 per cent of increase in operating grants to school boards.

And yet the Minister of Finance, in his budget speech just recently presented to this House, said he saw no reason, no reason why school boards would have to increase the mill rate. And he saw no reason why the local governments, the Regina government, would have to increase mill rates. Regina government, he said, would only do it because it was an NDP Government, dominated by NDP people.

Well I just heard on the radio this morning, and the member from Mayfair will verify this for me, not all the councillors on the Saskatoon city government are NDP people — oh there are some who support the NDP, but the majority of them do not — and I note, I note, Mr. Speaker, that they are going to increase my property taxes by about \$70 a year.

Where is most of that increase coming from? Due to education increases. And it comes because the public school board has found itself short an additional \$500,000. It is getting less money this year than it was receiving last year — \$500,000 less.

An Hon. Member: — Tell us about that, Herman.

Mr. Rolfes: — And . . . yes. The member from Mayfair said, tell them about that. I will tell them about that, and if you were to meet with the director . . .

An Hon. Member: — I have.

Mr. Rolfes: — Oh and . . . oh, well then I think he would have told you, he would have told you that now, what is the share of the provincial funding for the Saskatoon public school board. I want to inform the member from Mayfair, who never seems to support anything that we want in Saskatoon — he's always criticizing when Saskatoon is demanding things; it's no wonder we don't get anything from the government opposite if he's the spokesperson for Saskatoon — I say to the member opposite that now, instead of them getting 48 per cent of provincial funding, they are now down to 34 per cent. Sixty-six per cent of the funding for the public schools in Saskatoon must come from property tax.

(1500)

Recently when we met with the Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association, they made it very clear to us that they would like to get back to the good old days. Well they didn't call them the good old days, but they said, let's get back to when the funding was between 56 and 60 per cent provincial. Well it had to be the good old days because — my memory serves me well — those were the good old days of the Blakeney government when provincial funding for education was close to 60 per cent.

Well I assured the trustees that when we form the government the next time around, we will see to it that the provincial funding for education would move back to that 60 per cent, and that we would give education the high priority that it deserves.

Mr. Speaker, I indicated that if you look at the *Estimates*, look at the *Estimates* and take into consideration the *Estimates* of 1986, in that four-year period, money increases in operating grants to school boards have gone up 1.3 per cent. Well, you would say, well that's bad enough. Now it couldn't get any worse.

Yes, it did get worse for the universities. In that four-year period, the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan had annual increases of 1 per cent — 1 per cent in operating grants. And what does the Minister of Education do? He criticizes the two universities for not being able to spend their money wisely. He gives an increase of 1 per cent to the universities. In the meantime, the government has increased its budget by 9 per cent. And he criticizes the university, the president of the University of Regina and the president of the University of Saskatchewan, for not knowing how to spend their money.

I say to the Minister of Education, you just keep your nose out of the affairs of the universities and let them run it the way they are doing it. They're doing a fine job. It is your responsibility to provide the funds so that the universities don't have to have quotas in arts and science; so that they don't have to have class-rooms that are huge and crowded; so that they can provide a library that is not ranked 10th in the country, but should be ranked at least second or third from the top. Provide them with the funds and they'll do the job. They'll prepare those students for the future so that they can meet the demands of the 21st century.

I don't want the Minister of Education, in his enhancement fund, holding the big hammer over the universities and saying, now you do like I tell you or you're not going to get your fair share of that enhancement fund. That, Mr. Speaker, is unacceptable in this province, and it is direct interference by that Minister of Education and that government in the internal affairs of the universities. This is the first time that that has ever happened in this province, and it is unacceptable.

In my meetings, Mr. Speaker, with the presidents of both campuses, they have told me that they had wished that the government had put some confidence in the universities and had taken that enhancement fund and put that into their operating grants.

The University of Regina has a deficit, as we all know, I believe of about 5.5 to \$6 million. This year it is estimated that that deficit will increase by \$1 million. The University of Regina basically is broke. It's not allowed to run a deficit, but it must. It has no choice. And this government will simply not meet the demands that there are at the University of Regina.

In *Issues and Options*, a study done by the University of Saskatchewan, they've clearly indicated, clearly

indicated that they needed an increase of \$11 million in operating funds alone in order to keep the *status quo* — \$11 million. But what have they received? Both the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan have received \$3 million — \$8 million less than what the U of S needed in order to keep the *status quo*.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what are we going to see happening? Because of the lack of funding for education by this government, we are going to see at our universities several things happening coming this fall. We are going to see whole programs cut at the university. They have no choice; they'll have to cut programs. We've already seen home economics cut at the U of S — no longer there. They have to cut other programs. I don't know which programs they will be, but they will have to also continue the quotas.

Students and the *Issues and Options* have clearly indicated this again, Mr. Deputy Speaker. *Issues and Options* says that students who graduate from high school with a 65 per cent average do fairly well at the university on the whole, and that 65, for now, should be the average in which high school students can enter university.

What are we seeing today? In accounting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe last year the average to get into the College of Commerce was 87 per cent — 87 per cent. What happens to all those other students who could not get into the College of Commerce? I can tell you what's happened. They are now attending school in some other province. Are they going to be coming back? Most of them won't come back; we know that. Well over 80 per cent of those students will not come back to this province. They are lost to us.

Their benefits and their contributions that they could have made in the 21st century are no longer for our benefit. They would be for the benefit of Canada, certainly, but not for Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will, within 10 or 15 years, not have those young people in this province that we need to fulfil those jobs that are absolutely necessary in this province.

If the government is correct that they are going to diversify some day — I haven't seen it yet — but if they are going to diversify some day, who are going to fill all those jobs? Our young people will be gone. They will be somewhere else. Does that mean then we have to import people? Does it mean that we have to then entice people through money and say, well, we are so short we've got to get people back into this province. Why don't we do the right thing? Why don't we say now that we will increase the funding for education so that our students will have the opportunity?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is what is happening at our post-secondary education at the universities. Now you would say, well, things are improving at the technical schools. Well let me tell you, if you listen to the staff, and if you listen to the students . . . And recently the minister and I attended the Kelsey campus, and we spoke on a panel. And I think if the minister was listening, they were telling him that many of the programs that were there before, now are gone. They are no longer there. Many of the classes that students want to get into are crammed.

They can't get in. They don't have the up-to-date equipment that is necessary. In fact, in some of the classes they don't even have equipment that is required for the course. That's what the students were telling him and telling me. And the minister says: everything is fine; we've made such tremendous improvement since we reorganized.

Oh, I'll tell you what the minister has done; I'll tell you what the minister and his board have done. They have replaced many of the top-notch, qualified administrators and staff with their own people — with their own people. And when I get to estimates in advanced education, I'm going to ask of the minister what qualifications he uses to hire administrators at the various campuses in SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences) Is it purely political? And in some cases I know it's purely political. In some cases they have appointed people who've never in their life administered even a one-room school and are now administering a huge campus. No qualifications whatsoever, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

That does not speak well, that does not speak well for post-secondary education. We should acquire, and we can, the best, the best qualified people, the best educated people to run our campuses and SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) and not have patronage appointments of people who clearly support members opposite in their ideology and their philosophy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, does not speak well for quality education. That is money that is wasted. That is money that is wasted.

An Hon. Member: — How did you make out as a principal, Herman?

Mr. Rolfes: — Well I'll tell you . . . The Minister of Health asked me, how did I make out as a principal? Yes. Well I'll tell you what happened to me as a principal. In 1960-61, in 1960-61 I started teaching and I was offered a principalship in my second year. I was promoted in my third year. I was promoted in my fourth year. I was promoted in my seventh year, and then I left and went into high school counselling.

An Hon. Member: — Did you last? Did you last as a principal or . . .

Mr. Rolfes: — Yes, I was promoted. And I'm fairly proud of my record as an administrator.

An Hon. Member: — I heard they were happy to get rid of you in Meadow Lake. It was one of the best moves they ever made . . .

Mr. Rolfes: — But I'll tell you . . . Yes, I could say something about the Minister of Health and his record in Meadow Lake, but I won't do that, because that gets rather personal and it'll be a black blotch on his career. Another one, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let us get back to funding of education

before I was interrupted by the Minister of Health. Let's get back. I know it hurts him to know that they haven't funded education the way they should have. When they provide technical schools, they say we're going to reorganize so that we can have the technical schools provide those opportunities for our young people, that they can meet the 21st century.

What is actually happening? Do the members opposite not know that only one in five — one in five — applications to our technical schools actually gets into the program that they want to get into? One out of five students. And at our universities we had 500 students last year at the U of S alone who could not go on to university because there wasn't sufficient room at the university, because of lack of funding by you people opposite.

If you are concerned about the technological age and the changes that are going to occur in the 21st century, then you've got to put your house in order now. You don't do it in the 21st century — it's too late. Many of the young people who could have benefitted from those programs that you should have made available will be gone. They will be in the other provinces, working there in the 21st century, and not here.

That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a crime. It is something that should not be left unchallenged, and I ask the members opposite to get their priorities mixed up and make absolutely certain that our technical schools and our universities have sufficient funding in their operating grants — in their operating grants — so that they can offer the programs that are necessary for our young people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me return for just a minute to the elementary and high school division in education. I spent a number of years and I know that we have many dedicated teachers, in that most of our teachers are very dedicated and they're very loyal. They're well qualified. And I think we can be proud of the people that we have teaching in our schools.

But they are, Mr. Deputy Speaker, becoming demoralized. They're becoming demoralized because they feel that they do not have the support of the Minister of Education and the provincial government in their endeavours to provide high quality education.

Let me refer to just a few examples. A year or so ago, maybe it was two years ago, this Minister of Education was bent on providing standardized testing at the provincial level. And he almost threatened the teachers and the trustees that he was going to bring in standardized provincial testing. Now the outcry was so huge from the STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation) and the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association) that he backed down. He backed down. And he then set up a committee. That committee, I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, unanimously opposed what the minister had in mind, and have said that the provincial standardized testing would be detrimental to the quality education that teachers have been providing in our high schools and in our elementary schools.

(1515)

And why did they say that, Mr. Deputy Speaker? They said that because most of our teachers are accredited. They are well qualified, and they did not want to teach their students for provincial exams. They wanted to train the students and to educate the students in acquiring skills and knowledge and how to acquire that and how to apply that knowledge and those skills in life situations, not just for provincial standardized exams.

And I'm glad that the STF and the SSTA put that pressure on the minister, because if they hadn't done it, we now would be looking at provincial standardized tests. And I think that would have been a backward step.

Let me also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, talk a little bit about loans and bursaries. The member from Nutana already mentioned it when she moved this motion, that there was a dramatic change made in the student loan program. Oh, the minister will say, yes, we have provided a lot more money in our term of government than you people did when you were in government. And that is true. But that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has happened right across Canada, and the main reason for that is that the Government of Canada is providing most of the funds. The Government of Canada is providing most of the funds, and they have increased their funding, and I think they ought to be congratulated for having done so, both the Trudeau government and the Mulroney government. They have provided the funds. But what has this government done?

In addition to the Canada student loan program, we had a provincial bursary program which would cut in when a student had taken a loan of \$2,640; if there was further need, a bursary program would cut in, and they could get up to \$1,800 in bursaries which would then be wiped out if the . . . well, at any case, they were wiped out whether they were successful or not successful. If a student was in need, he or she received a bursary.

What have we got today? Most of our students are going to be saddled, most of our students are going to be saddled with a 25 to \$30,000 student loan when they graduate from technical school or university.

Maybe that wouldn't be so bad, Mr. Deputy Speaker, oh so, 25 or \$30,000, if they were assured of employment — if they were assured of employment — but they are not. And we have some assurance of that from the former minister of Education when she said, and let me quote. The headline says: "Rejected students unlikely to find jobs anyway, says Smith." Now what do we have; let me quote from what she says:

"About 400 would-be students, turned away from the arts and science colleges at the University of Saskatchewan, wouldn't likely have found work after graduation anyway," says former Education minister, Pat Smith.

What a statement by a minister, a former minister of Education, saying to the students, well, so you didn't get into university; so what! If you graduate, you wouldn't find any jobs here anyway. You might as well leave, and that's exactly what those students and young people are doing. They have taken her advice and have said, look it, if there is no opportunity for the future for us here in this

province, we will go somewhere else. That's the attitude that this government has displayed. They don't create jobs.

How many students have gone? Well I'll tell you how many students have gone just last year alone — about 9 or 10,000 students alone. Our young people are leaving this province in droves. And as I indicated before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they will not return for the most part. They will make their contribution — and some of these are our top-notch students — they will not make their contribution in Saskatchewan, they will make their contribution in another province in the future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we could go on and on about the lack of funding by this government for education. And I want to read just a few of the headlines that have appeared in the various papers. Here is one which says: "Last nail driven in home economic coffin." "STI tuition increasing." "Technical school fees to rise." "Tuition up 15 per cent at technical schools."

Well here is one. We are talking about facts, and I think the member from Nutana indicated very clearly, what we get from this government here is talk, talk, talk, but no action. We don't get the funding to back up the talk.

Here is a headline which says: "Hepworth gives students more rhetoric."

Why is provincial education spending not increasing when the federal government has been increasing its transfer payments to Saskatchewan for education?

And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, when I was the minister for Health and the minister for Education and continuing education, I told the federal ministers at that time, I told them at that time and I warned them not to make those transfer payments to the provinces without any conditions attached. I told them what would happen. I said that the provinces wouldn't spend the money on education, what it was designated for, that they'd channel it into other areas. And I said that they wouldn't spend the money on health that they should be spending, that they would be getting from the federal government, and social services.

And it was rather surprising. When I was defeated in 1982 to '86, I got a letter from one of the former federal ministers. Do you know what she wrote? You were right, I shouldn't have agreed to the other provincial Conservative ministers because all of them wanted to get their greedy hands on that federal money so that they wouldn't then have to spend it on the various departments for which it was designated.

And that's exactly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what has happened across Canada, but more so in this province. We now stand 10th in Canada on our funding vis-a-vis the budget. As a percentage of the budget we stand last in Canada — 10.5 per cent. But the national average is 14.5 per cent. We stand last. Is it any wonder that we don't have opportunities in our post-secondary education for our young people when this is the kind of funding that we receive from the members opposite.

Let me continue reading some of the headlines about school funding. The members opposite say, well it's only the opposition that's crying about lack of funding. It's only the members opposite. Everybody else is happy. The Minister of Finance says, well there's absolutely no need for school boards to increase their funding; I have provided ample funds. I say, nonsense, to the Minister of Finance. When you give a 1.4 per cent increase to technical schools and a 1.99 per cent to universities, that is not sufficient. When you only provide a 2.3 per cent in operating grants to school boards, that is not sufficient.

Not only that, the other thing they didn't tell us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I wish you'd look into it, the other thing they didn't tell us is that they raised the computational mill rate. I just found that out the other day. They raised the computational mill rate from 50 to 53. And that now has to be made up by school boards as well.

Oh, you know, but oh those school boards and those universities, they spend their money recklessly. And what do they receive from this government? A 1.3 per cent increase.

Let me continue reading. "Cut in school funding roundly criticized." "Little assistance in store for the education system." Here's some more. "Education reductions called false economy." "Educators chagrined by decision to stretch funds over 10 years." "Funding cuts demoralize teachers."

And I want to tell the members opposite that you cannot put any more pressures on our teachers. They are stretched to the limit. They are doing a fine job; it should be recognized. And I would ask you members opposite to make additional moneys available so that classroom sizes can be decreased so that the teachers will be able to get some preparation time to prepare for their classes and so that they don't have to have, as we had in the school that I was in, 47 people in a biology class. You can't offer quality education when that happens. And that is not the fault of the teachers. That is the fault, and it lies squarely on the shoulders, of the members opposite and the Minister of Finance.

Here's another headline: "School divisions concerned about paying increasing shares." And as I indicated already — and the Minister of Finance, I want him to know — that the SSTA recently said they want the funding, the proportionate spending on education, to go back to the good old days. And the days of the '70s, when the funding for provincial education was around 56 or 57 per cent, and not less than 50 per cent what it is today.

Here's another headline: "Rural funding and enrolment equalled fewer teachers." "School boards, R.M.s get cut back." "Lower provincial grants decried." "School trustees blame province for higher tax rates."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this motion, this resolution that we have offered to the House today, condemns this government for the lack of priority that it has given to education. I think I have amply shown and I could go on and on to give proof of how this is true, and it hasn't just

happened this year. It has happened at least since 1986-87, and I'm not certain if it happened before because I didn't have a chance to check those things out. But since 1986-87, the last four budgets, the last four budgets have not even provided sufficient funding and operating funds to our school boards and our universities and our technical schools to keep up with the rate of inflation.

They've had to increase their class-room sizes, they've had to cut teachers, they've had to increase the mill rates, all because you people refuse to give education the high priority that it deserves.

And if your rhetoric about meeting the challenges of the 21st century have any validity at all, I say to the Minister of Education, go back to treasury board; find that additional money. And you could easily do that; you could find \$9 million by just cancelling that birthday party. Give that \$9 million to the school boards and give that \$9 million to universities and technical schools, and the future will be better off, and our young people won't have to leave this province to find educational opportunities and jobs in other provinces. Do the right thing. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wolfe: — Mr. Speaker, with leave, I'd like to introduce some guests to the legislature.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Wolfe: — I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to all members of this Assembly, the grade 10 class from Gravelbourg. Along with them are exchange students from Ontario. They're here to visit the legislature today, and I'd ask everybody here to welcome them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wolfe: — They're accompanied by Janice Evans, Darlene Pillon, Diane Marchand, Gloria Stringer. I'd ask you to welcome them also.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wolfe: — They're here to visit for a few minutes and I'll be stopping to have some photos taken and some drinks in a few minutes.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much. On behalf of the official opposition and our leader, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, we'd also like to welcome the grade 10 students from Gravelbourg. We've had the opportunity to spend a great deal of time in your area, particularly in your town. It's a beautiful town. And we hope you have a great time at the legislature and enjoy the debate. Thank you very much for coming.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1530)

Resolution No. 10 — Financing of Education (continued)

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today in the Assembly and respond to the motion from the member from Saskatoon Nutana. And I'd first like to say that I am not an educator, and don't pretend perhaps to bring to the expertise to the House the fervour that the member from Saskatoon South or perhaps the member from Saskatoon Nutana did.

I would like to say, though, that as a member from a large rural constituency who represents a very diverse area, and whose mother was a schoolteacher and whose wife was a schoolteacher and may some day be a schoolteacher again, and whose mother-in-law was a superannuated schoolteacher, I have had certain discussions around the kitchen table, you might say, about the field of education.

I'll never forget my wife coming home from school the first day that she taught the very first kindergarten class in Lindale School in Moose Jaw, and coming home after meeting her 26 charges with tears running down her eyes, and I can sympathize with some of the things that people in the educational system have to go through. And I go along with the member from Saskatoon South in commending the schoolteachers in this province because they do a magnificent job with the most precious resource we have, and that's our children.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — And I'd also like to commend the Minister of Finance for the budget he brought down and the portion allocated there to education.

In my part of the world last year, as you well know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there wasn't a whole lot of crop. Many fields were worked down. A lot of taxpayers out there are paying their education taxes and are keeping them up to date, and I think they appreciate the fact that the Minister of Finance was able to take the larger picture into consideration, and still, when it came to the field of education — and I want to talk in numbers of dollars, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and not in percentages — he was able to go from \$789 million to \$841.2 million.

Now you can break that down into percentages, but to the people in my part of the world who didn't have a lot of crop last year and who are looking at a rather dry spring, that is a lot of money, and that's a lot of commitment to the students and the educational infrastructure of this province, considering that things aren't exactly booming in the farm economy. And that's why I like to commend the Minister of Finance for those initiatives.

And I think when we talk about this particular motion, it's the accessibility of education to people in this province that we're dealing with. And I guess the first thing that I would think of is some comparisons. And I'm not one to harken to the past, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but in listening to the members opposite, I think it's important that we make a direct comparison in a few areas.

We've talked a lot about our universities and we've talked about people going . . . And I'd like to say that when I started attending the U of S in 1970 there were entrance requirements on the College of Arts, because I had a 72 average and I just made it in. I don't know what members opposite talk about when they say there's never been entrance requirements on the College of Arts before. And that was after I stayed out . . . I had stayed out a year after that.

But I think when we make some comparisons, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can go right back to the student loan program, because that's one that's been in place for a long time and it's one that's very obvious to people. The highest number of student loans that occurred under the previous NDP administration was in 1972-73. There were 506 student loans processed in that year for a total of \$314,597. And that was a lot of money at that time. In 1981-82 . . . or sorry 1980-81 there were only 71 student loans processed in this province, \$62,855. So obviously from a good start in 1972-73, things went downhill by the time we got to 1981-82.

And I'd like to compare that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with 1987-88. There were a total of 13,310 student loans processed in this province. That's a lot of people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — That's 12,000 more loans than when the NDP were in power, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Now I don't know, when you put 12,000 over 506, there's a heck of a big difference there. And when you put 33,685,619 compared to — what was that figure again? — 314,597, I would say that's a heck of a difference.

And not only that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we all know, those are interest-free loans during the course of the student's tenure in that particular learning institution. And those loans are also interest-free for six months upon graduation. So I think that when we're talking about accessibility, which we are today in this motion, it's important that we do compare those types of figures, because it shows the number of people that not only have an interest in education, but people that are having access to the system.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was another point brought up during the comments from the member from Saskatoon South that I also would like to bring out and they were comparison. He was talking about scholarships. And the figures that I have, Mr. Deputy Speaker, show for the period 1981-82 in this province to our two universities, there was \$1.8 million in scholarships awarded. In 1988-89, there was \$6.1 million in scholarships. And I, too, would find that a very significant increase, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And it makes me wonder at the comments from the members opposite, if they're being straight with the people of Saskatchewan when they talk about these things, because these are millions of dollars that we're talking about. And the comparisons are there; they're public knowledge, and they're there for everyone to see. And I guess I would say to the public of Saskatchewan today, I'll leave you to judge as to who's telling us the

straight story in this area.

Back to accessibility, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As I said, I'm not a trained educator and I'm not one who's worked within the educational system. I've been a student at all three levels in our province. I was proud of the education which I received, and I think it certainly did things for me in going on in my life as a farmer, as a business man, and I would hope as a politician.

I think it's especially important for rural Saskatchewan that accessibility be improved, and I think it's especially important as we do get into new technologies that things like our regional colleges, our SIAST, our technical schools be improved, that opportunities that haven't been there in the past be expanded upon. And I'd like to think that the changes that the Minister of Education has brought about in those areas are only going to bear fruit in the future, because we have moved away from some of the things which I suppose a buoyant economy in the '70s allowed us to play around with, to the realization that if we are going to spend money on education, it has to be targeted, that it has to reach the maximum number of people, and that the benefits down the road have to be applicable to the economy in which we are going to live.

And I think of myself when I travelled from south of Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, to the U of S in 1970. That was a . . . it seemed to me like a long ways to go. You come off the farm, and you're not totally prepared for some of the experiences there. And I'm just happy today that at my technical institute in Moose Jaw, the opportunity for some university level classes are going to be offered; that places like the North West Regional College in North Battleford are going to offer full-time, first-year university classes; that we're looking into the area of television in the educational area, because I think it's important that those of us who left school for a while in the pursuit of our degrees perhaps can now use this medium to further that education, to continue on the process so that you don't stop entirely, that you keep looking at ways to better yourself, to get those degrees, those diplomas which may help you in the future.

And I can understand how members opposite, who are basically from the two larger cities or some of the other cities in our province, can have the attitude that they have, and they don't see the larger picture out there. But I'm sure that the member from Athabasca can appreciate some of the things that . . . educational opportunities that haven't been available to people in his particular part of the world. And I think, realistically, the only way that we're going to get to some of those areas is to use the technology that has come along today and that we've got to develop and build upon. We have to develop the software and the know-how to go into an isolated community and use that satellite system that's there, that cable system, patch into it and give people the opportunity to learn those things that they haven't had before.

And I would like to see the day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that regional college concept and that technical college area can be expanded so that people will have the ability to interact, if you will, with a campus situation, and also in their local community in their local home, because it is

important for people who are doing the same thing, who are taking the same types of education to get together and discuss common problems, if you will.

And I look forward to the day when some of these technological advances will allow people in, say, Riverhurst, Saskatchewan, to talk over the television, if you will, or by telephone and computer with a guy in Buffalo Narrows. And they're both doing the same mechanical, technological course, or they're both studying botany or whatever happens to be applicable to their area, and they can trade this information back and forth. And I think we're on the right track. It's going to take time. It's going to take commitment. It's going to take money to see that these things come to fruition.

I think it's also important, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we think about long-term opportunity in education and where the people who graduate are going to. This will come back into the whole area of accessibility, because I think the members opposite during the 1970s felt that you simply absorbed every other graduate in Saskatchewan into government. And that may be fine and dandy, because government certainly is a good area to expand your horizons on in certain areas, and it certainly provides well-paying jobs.

But it doesn't get to the root of the diversification problem that this province has lived with since it came into confederation. We have to develop industries and value-added products in this province that can take us through the humps and the valleys of a resource-based economy. And that means that we're going to have to educate people and train them in areas that are going to fit into that diversification and that value-added area, because it simply isn't acceptable, I believe, to the taxpayer of this province to simply say that we'll take all our graduates into government.

We as taxpayers have to pay those salaries. We're the people that are responsible for the education portion of our tax dollar, so it's only realistic that if we're going to graduate people, if we're going to train them in areas, that we also look at where those jobs are going to be.

And I don't care if that's in producing noodles from durum wheat that formerly were produced in Hong Kong or Japan, because you're going to need someone that's fairly well educated to run the computers and to run the newest types of equipment that are going to be needed in that type of processing.

I don't care if it's people that work at the NewGrade upgrader here in Regina who need to know some of the newest technological information available in order to make a facility like that run, or the new one that'll be built in Lloydminster.

(1545)

And also it's going to be students who will graduate and will know how to operate the new Shand power project at Estevan and some of the top-class technology that's going to go along with that facility, and some of the irrigation systems that are being built in our province on Lake Diefenbaker and on Rafferty dam, because these are

irrigation systems run with computerized pumps, pressurized delivery systems.

High technology farming and agriculture today, the production of food, all of those things are going to require students that have that basis. And I don't think that we necessarily have to do all of that at the new agricultural college at the U of S, although in talking to Dr. Kristjanson last week on that particular facility, he's very proud of the things which are going to tie into that college from the private sector from the people doing research. And that, I think, is why so many people in the private sector all over Saskatchewan, indeed western Canada, have seen fit to contribute large sums of money to that college, because they see the production of food and the new technologies that will come out of that agricultural college to be absolutely fundamental to the well-being of this province and the people who live here.

So as we go along in this process, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not everyone will have to move to Regina or Saskatoon to get that good quality education. We're going to use our SCAN (Saskatchewan Communications Advanced Network) network. We are going to educate our people.

And I would like to think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we diversify and as Mother Nature blesses the farm economy in this province, that the Minister of Finance next year in his budget will be able to come back with a further increase in the area of education, as he has done in the last four budgets; and that that further increase will be targeted, that it will go to people all across our province, not in just particular cities or sectors; and that we as a province, by having this commitment to our youth and our children, will have educators, will have trustees, will have university professors and administrators who are ready to take up the challenges that are coming in that 21st century.

And I would just like to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I would like to amend the motion presented by the member from Nutana:

That all the words after the word "Assembly" be deleted and that the following be substituted to read:

That this Assembly commend the Government of Saskatchewan for increasing the accessibility of education for Saskatchewan's young people through the implementation of programs such as distance education and SCAN.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Does the member have a seconder?

An Hon. Member: — I'll second it.

The Deputy Speaker: — The motion will be seconded by the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, I want to enter debate on

this question and particularly on this debate. The question here, Mr. Speaker, is what is happening to education and which direction has this government taken education in this province? And you don't have to go very far, Mr. Speaker, beyond the walls of the confines of this building to find out. When you talk to anybody, whether they're going to school, whether they have somebody going to school as a member of their family, or whether it's somebody that's working in our education system, be it in the public education system or be it in the university education system or in the technical education system — and they will tell you that since this government took charge in 1982, particularly in the last four years, that education and their commitment to education has declined, and education is getting to be in tough shape, in very tough shape.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — Now, Mr. Speaker, let me just outline, and I want to outline very briefly how this concept of education and what is happening to education in this province, how it fits into this government's agenda of privatization. I want to tell you that, Mr. Speaker. This government has decided that they've got one main thing to do: they want to privatize everything in this country, everything in this province. Now they're making their moves economically to do so, and they're also making some moves in education to do so, Mr. Speaker, and that, I believe, we've got to take very strong exception to and we've got to bring to a stop. And the way to bring it to a stop is to recognize, first of all, exactly what it is that this government is doing and what they're trying to do in education.

Mr. Speaker, if you look at Maggie Thatcher's plan, which is what this government is following — Maggie Thatcher's plan for education — she has set it up in her country so that the public education system in Great Britain was discredited, totally discredited. And as a result, after setting that up, as a result she's setting it up so that she would give taxpayers' money directly to the people to administer for whichever way they wanted to go. It might work, and when they do that, that means that the public system, the public education system is destroyed.

Now in Great Britain, where you've got a small concentration of people, that might, at some time, that might work. It might work, Mr. Speaker. But in a place like Saskatchewan, where we've got a sparse population, the agenda of privatization, and particularly the agenda of privatization of education, just simply cannot work, and we must not allow it to work.

There's one way to make sure that it doesn't work, Mr. Speaker, and that is to be sure that our publicly funded educational system is very well funded; to make sure that the funding that our school boards get does not continue to decline.

If you take a look at the record of this government over the last four years, you will notice that the amount that this government is contributing to the revenues of the public's education system in Saskatchewan is decreasing. It has decreased from approximately the 60 per cent level to

about the 50 per cent level, Mr. Speaker.

Now as a result of that, the school boards under this government have been really pressured. They've cut, they've slashed, they've had to cut programs. We know right here in Regina that there are six schools that have had to close. And that happened, why? As a result of the cut-backs provincially, Mr. Speaker.

When that happens, Mr. Speaker, when you have to cut back, when you increase your class load, when this happens, whether it's at the university level or at the public school system level, people start asking questions. What's happened? Why is this decreasing? They start asking the question, why is my child not getting the education that I'm expecting him to get?

So when they ask this question, they're looking for an answer because they expect that things should continue to move in the opposite direction. They expect that things should be improving, that their children should be getting an education that's increasing in its popularity and in its quality.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the educational professionals in the province have the capability of delivering a quality program. But they will not be able to do that and they cannot deliver a quality program if class sizes continue to increase, if school boards continue to have to cut their resources and to increase the pupil-teacher ratios. That just can't happen.

School boards have one other alternative, and that is to raise the property taxes. And we know what's happening in rural Saskatchewan and to the pressure that's put on property taxes. There's a limit. There's only one place that this can come from, and that is that this government has got to reverse its priorities so that it does not continue to cut its transportation or to increase the pupil-teacher ratio and thus continue to discredit the system.

(1600)

Immediately . . . if this continues, Mr. Speaker, what'll happen is parents will ultimately look at the system, examine it, and say, well look, we can no longer support that kind of system and will start to pull the children out of it or to criticize it.

So we see the flow, and that's exactly the flow that Maggie Thatcher used in Great Britain. Now in Great Britain it may be not so difficult to take your child from a school in one end of a city and move it to another because their population is rather dense. But when you look at Saskatchewan, what do you do? What do you do if you have to close down a school in Luseland, or people lose their faith in the school at Luseland or in some other small town like in Shellbrook? What do they do? What do those people do?

We have to work together, Mr. Speaker, to keep our public education system intact and to make sure that it's got good, high quality. And there's one way to do that — and I tell the Minister of Education — one way to do that. Get back to your cabinet and make sure that the amount of the grants that the school board gets, gets back up to

that 60 per cent.

I move this debate adjourn.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Debate not adjourned.

Mr. Hopfner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can understand why the members of the NDP opposition want this motion to come to a quick end, because what we've heard here this afternoon has been nothing but NDP hypocrisy.

I want to indicate to you that I listened, and I listened well when the member from Saskatoon Nutana and Saskatoon South . . . I want to indicate that I was very surprised that they would move such a motion and have so little to say. I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that as I listened, I heard nothing of any new type of content that I have not heard in this legislature now for the last six years.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that those speeches are gathering a lot of dust or they're using an abundance of moth-balls to keep the rotting of these speeches in order. I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that I listened, and I listened to the members, the NDP opposition, talk about numbers, and their figures that they've been throwing out to the public and across the floor to us here in the legislature just don't seem to add up, Mr. Speaker.

I understand members of the NDP opposition saying, well these high school young people and university young people are leaving the province in hordes, and then all of a sudden I hear the members opposite, the member from Saskatoon South, where he had indicated that there was 9 to 10,000 students leaving Saskatchewan to get educated somewhere else because they couldn't get into the universities. And then a few minutes later he indicated, well there was 500 students that couldn't get into the universities.

Mr. Speaker, I'm suggesting that these members have not — have not — any idea of the types of statements that they're making as they're speaking on the floor of the legislature. I want to say to you that they apparently just will pick a number and throw it out and hope — hope — that the people out in the broadcast world, watching the broadcast will pick up with these numbers and believe them.

I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that when we're talking about young people, when we're talking about the vision in this province, when we talk about the energies that these young people have and the optimism these young people have, I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the only people that fear the fact of these young people wanting to advance into the educational upgrading skills, whether it be through a technical or a professional way, that the only people that fear this particular type of advancement that we've seen in this province are the NDP opposition.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP opposition are the people that are afraid that these young people, these young students will be able to carry on with the type of free opportunity, the

free thinking that they are now entitled to throughout the educational system. That they are able to take their energies and expand and let them go, and not only go to accept what is being preached to them across a class-room or something, but allow the students now, allow them to challenge the system, allow them to ask questions of the system, allow them to expand into the system.

That's a vision, Mr. Speaker, that we're allowing our young students today. And I'll tell you, these young people out there are prepared to pick up and take on these kinds of challenges. They're not afraid, Mr. Speaker, they're not afraid of the challenges that we're heading into in the 21st century.

The NDP opposition are the ones that are afraid. They're the ones that are afraid because they know they won't have a thumbs-on on these free-thinking young people. They won't be able to control the free-thinking of these young people, because these young people are excited, they're adventurous, and they're going to go out and they're going to seek all the opportunities. And this is what the government's challenges are, Mr. Speaker. The government's challenges are to open the doors for these young people, to give them the opportunity, the opportunity to expand and question and go and ask questions and explore the unknown.

Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you something. If we as a government, if we as a government would have had the mentality of the NDP when they were in government, I will tell you that . . . talk about an educational problem in this province, I will tell you, we would have a disaster. We'd have an immediate disaster.

Even the teachers themselves are excited about the young students we have today in this province. They're excited about the fact that these young students are prepared to take on these challenges. Well I can take you back into my community, and these young people are now being counselled. They're asking, what can we do, what levels can we go into, and what . . . and they're asking the teachers to give them some guidance and counselling, things that they've never had before out in a small rural community. They never had the counselling out there. They never had this guidance. The teachers weren't able to give it to them because they did not have the time, they did not have the qualifications. And we've expanded into that type of qualification, and we've expanded into that type of an educational system for rural Saskatchewan.

We all know, as the member from Saskatoon Nutana had alluded to before, through his advancement as a teacher himself, that he was a principal and he advanced and advanced and advanced in his teaching career and then became a high school counsellor, back years ago.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that is not now happening just in the larger major cities, it is happening in the smaller rural Saskatchewan. I want to indicate to you too that when the member from Saskatoon Nutana and the member from Saskatoon South had elaborated on the fact of importing and exporting students out of this province, and that we were exporting them out and then importing them back in, well, Mr. Speaker, I for one would be the last person to

stand in this Assembly and say that we're going to close the border; we're not going to let you out and we're not going to let you in. That is exactly what the NDP opposition is saying. They're saying they're going to close the borders to the students. They're going to keep it here; they're going to keep the students here. They're not going to allow them to leave anywhere. They're not going to allow any new people into this province or anything else. This is just the way it's going to be, just a border little province.

Well we've suffered under that type of mentality back in the '70s when they were government. We suffered, and that's why they're not government today. The young people didn't want that. They wanted a new vision; they wanted the vision to expand. They wanted a vision to be able to carry forth, diversify, and have jobs to go to.

Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to you, when you and I were young fellows just graduating from school, you know, I can take you back just that many years ago. And it's not all that long ago; it isn't all that long ago. And I want to tell you something. When we got out of school, when we left school we could choose a job. We could choose a job, Mr. Speaker.

When the NDP were in power, when the NDP came to power, they took that choice away on the people. They took that choice away on the young people for choosing a job. They drove companies out of this province, Mr. Speaker; they drove industry out of this province; they would not stay here to expand.

And I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, we are correcting that today. But I want to say that back in the late . . . the '70s and the early '80s and the years like that, the job was choosing the person. The job was choosing the person. And there were people having to take jobs they weren't really even interested in, because they wanted to stay here in Saskatchewan. They wanted to make their home in Saskatchewan; they wanted to stay close to their families; they wanted to keep what I call the real family unit together.

And where were the NDP, Mr. Speaker, on this? The NDP were taking the dollars from the glory days when potash and oil and everything was at a high. They were taking those dollars, and what families were they investing in? I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, the families the NDP were investing in were the family of Crown corporations. That's the families that they were talking about.

I can remember for month after month, year after year, ads across the TV screens about the family of Crown corporations working for you. Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to you that as I was a young fellow and I was looking for work and expanding my career in life and careers in life, and I want to indicate to you that that family of Crown corporations didn't help me too much. It didn't help the taxpayers of this province too much, because I'll tell you what it did to them — it drove this province into disparity. It put this province where they should have been in a real positive black situation, into a deficit situation, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to indicate to you that the members opposite

when they talk about, when they talk about students and they talk about the opportunity for students, why they should get right on their back hind legs and they should agree with us. They should agree with us about the fact that public participation is one of the greatest things that we can all agree to in this Assembly, that we can all agree to in this Assembly, because, Mr. Speaker, it gives us that opportunity to diversify, to once again introduce a life to our young people, our young people in this province to be able to choose the jobs again, not the jobs choose the people.

(1615)

Well as I said, the member from Saskatoon Nutana and Saskatoon South, they stood in this Assembly and they said we said . . . or they said we did nothing, we did nothing. I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, and it's just in my home paper, *Lloydminster Booster*. I want to indicate to you before I get into that, and I'm just going to lay this out for an example because it's a small enough example for everybody to absorb.

But I want to indicate to you that under the NDP administration, under two or three different elections, and as it worked in health care as well, as I spoke earlier — but I know I can't get into that area under this motion, but it happened the same in education, in the facilities.

I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that as there would be an election come along and the need for school facilities were cited as a major problem in the constituency, all of a sudden the MLA for that area — he was . . . the last one was even a minister of Highways — and they'd come along and they would promise whatever the people wanted to hear. If they wanted to hear about a new school, well yes, okay, we're going to promise you a new school, and after the election's all over, well we'll just get at it and build you that school.

Well I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that it was about . . . and I'll give you a good example. The Battle River School Division in my particular riding, when I took over in 1982, we were in facilities, as far as facilities were concerned, as far as upgrading, and that's the renovations and rebuilding of just school facilities, we were about 20 years behind — 20 years behind.

And that's not me saying that. That's not me saying that, Mr. Speaker. I am repeating what was said. I am repeating what was being said. It was the members of the school boards, and the members opposite are a little excited for hearing this. And I can understand. They should be; well they should be.

But I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that it was the members of the NDP opposition in the days of the high price in potash, in oil, and good revenues coming into this province. Where did they invest? They invested in the buy-out of potash mines — didn't create any more new jobs, didn't expand for all our new students coming out of the high schools or the universities or the technical institutions, didn't expand in that. Those jobs were already there. But they spent all that money in there. They didn't build those schools for the Battle River School Division. They absolutely didn't build them.

Well, Mr. Speaker, like I said, the member from Saskatoon Nutana and Saskatoon South said, well this government's done nothing. And that little Battle River School Division that I just am drawing to your attention, Mr. Speaker, I want to give you an outline of the amount of schools that we built in that little school division since 1982, since we've taken government.

There was Marsden, Saskatchewan, in the Battle River School Division got a school. Neilburg, Saskatchewan, just down the line from Marsden got a school. Lone Rock, Saskatchewan, got a school. Lashburn, Saskatchewan, had gotten a school. Maidstone, Saskatchewan, had gotten a school. And this is all in this little Battle River School Division. And I'm still not finished. Hillmond, Saskatchewan, got a school.

An Hon. Member: — And cuts teachers.

Mr. Hopfner: — And I want to indicate to you . . . oh and the member opposite says, and cuts teachers. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to indicate to you that . . . the member opposite said something about a teacher cut. We don't as a government, cut teachers, Mr. Speaker. We don't cut teachers. I want to clear that to all the people watching. And I hope the word gets out, because every time a member of the NDP opposition gets up and says that the government's cut a teacher, that's absolutely not true — absolutely not true.

Mr. Speaker, schoolteacher cuts or anything like that, because there's no children for them to teach, or students . . . young people for them to teach. They're the people that make the decision. It's done at the local level. It's a local autonomy out there and, Mr. Speaker, the local people of those various school divisions, they make those particular decisions, not government.

Mr. Speaker, when I gave you that as an example for a facility building, and that was just one little school division. But I want to indicate to you also that I have a couple of school divisions, a separate and a public school division in the city of Lloydminster. And as the members should all know — well, maybe they don't because they don't very much visit Lloydminster, although they should. It's a great place to visit.

And I want to indicate to them that if they would travel around to the school facilities, if they would travel around to the school facilities in there, well, Mr. Speaker, this is what I want to indicate to you is that we, since 1982 to now, have had construction on the Queen Elizabeth, Father Gorman, St. Mary, Winston Churchill, E.S. Laird schools, the comprehensive high school, Mr. Speaker. And it's still continuing — St. Thomas. It's just continuing.

And you see, Mr. Speaker, it's because of our government's commitment to Saskatchewan, government's commitment to the vision of this province — the vision for diversifying, for creating jobs, for the young people to stay home and participate.

Our particular area, Mr. Speaker, is a great beneficiary of these programs. With heavy oil, agriculture, we have probably one of the most lucrative parts of the province

up in my particular area, and it's growing. Mr. Speaker, I have not . . . Although maybe some of the other parts of the province have suffered to some great demise because of the droughts and the grasshoppers and the floods and the low economic . . . or the prices in the various commodities in the agricultural products, etc., I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that we've been fortunate. We've been fortunate and I think, as you would come down to my riding and visit with my people, you would pick that up very quickly that my people in my particular riding do consider themselves very, very, very fortunate. And that has rubbed off on the young people.

And I want to get into an area here, Mr. Speaker, is where, when you're talking about young people and you talk about commitment and government commitment to education, I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that this government has taken it upon themselves to make education one of its priorities, top priorities. And we've done that, Mr. Speaker, through the rough times, through the hard times, through the bad economic times. And I'm going to tell you . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh yes, and the NDP make fun of this also. They say, the seven long, mean, lean years for the Tories. Well I agree. I will agree to that to the point where yes, and the real people out there understand what the government had to go through the economic turn-down, world economic turn-down.

And I want to indicate to you that we committed ourselves to the education system in this province through these economic downturns because we said as a government that we refused, we refused to partake in a recession, we refused to take part in these disasters that were facing us, because we have to surge ahead, Mr. Speaker. We can't quit. We can't let our young people down. That's what it's about.

It's not about you and I, Mr. Speaker. Our lives are half — in the average life of man — are almost half over. I don't think that for one moment that you and I are thinking about anything in a greed type sort of way. We are trying here, Mr. Speaker, to share, to share what we've enjoyed as our . . . when we were young and growing into the age we're at now.

And as we go on further into our life and into retirement, we're looking for security, Mr. Speaker. That's what we're asking, for security, but we're asking that in a round about way. We're asking our young people to take our place to give them the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to expand and diversify and make lots of money, make profit. Because the more opportunity we give our young people through education, it allows them, Mr. Speaker, to support the government and therefore support us in all our other social programs and in the security of our seniors in this province.

And we're all going to be there. And we're all going to go through it, and our children's children are going to carry it through, but we have to give them some hope and we have to give them a vision. And, Mr. Speaker, I for one would be the last, would be the last one to agree with that type of mentality that comes from the NDP opposition.

As I said, the NDP had many, many years of revenues

flowing into . . . of high revenues flowing into this government . . . into their government. But as I want to say, they refuse to share it, they refuse to share it with the real people, with the youth in this province.

When the members opposite talked about the exportation of young people from this province, I want to indicate to the member from Saskatoon Nutana and Saskatoon South, they ought to think back to when they were government. They ought to think back to the fact that under their administration this province had never, ever, ever in its entire history ever reached a million in population, Mr. Speaker. Never in its whole entirety, ever reached a million in population.

And I want to indicate to you today, and I'm pleased to be able to tell everyone, and remind the members of the NDP opposition, that it is under this administration, under a Progressive Conservative government, under our leader, under our diversification programs and our public participation programs, that through all these programs that we have introduced to this great province of ours, that it has led to the fact that the young people are being able to obtain jobs and stay home and stay close to the real family, stay home and look after grandpa and grandma and visit them. And live close to mom and dad and bring their families up to where their kids know what a grandparent is or a great-grandparent is. That's what it's all about.

And I want to say to you that although, although the NDP opposition wish not to hear this, that it's true. That's what it's about; it's about a vision to keeping people together.

(1630)

I can go back to the time — and I've stated this in the House, I've stated this in the House a few years back — I can remember when my two older sisters had . . . when the NDP were in government, my two older sisters and brother-in-law eventually ended up in Florida, in the U.S., and they're still there to this day because they made their homes there while they were in government.

And I can remember my mother indicating to me at that time when she was still alive, she said to me, she said, not just to me but to the rest of the family — we were at a Sunday dinner — she said, you know, she said, the family will never probably as long as I'm alive ever really be together again. And you know, she didn't know how true those words were, because, Mr. Speaker, when the family was together again, it was because of the fact that we were laying her to rest. She had passed away, and that's when the family was together again, but she wasn't able to participate in any types of conversations with her family.

And I want to indicate to you that the member from Saskatoon South should know this well because he's kind of related to our family and he should know that, when he was in the NDP government and a cabinet minister, that my family didn't take too kindly to him.

I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that when we're talking about the assistance to students, and when we're talking about the fact that the opposition members had

questioned the amount of dollars that were involved in student loans in the province here, I want to indicate to you that so be it that they brought the point to the floor of this legislature today, but I could not understand why they would even want to get into the point of student loans.

Because we well know, Mr. Speaker, that they certainly weren't one . . . they were one to introduce student loans, I guess, if you will, in some small fashion. But instead of forging forward with student loans in this province, they kind of thought, oh my gosh, what did we get ourselves into here? This could be a costly ordeal. And knowing that they weren't wanting to expand into the fact of furthering and allowing the education to enhance in this province, they kind of withdrew from this particular program.

So I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, that when it came to the student loan program, Mr. Speaker, instead of forging forward like I said, they pulled back.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when you look at a few hundred student loans under their administration versus our somewhere in the neighbourhood of 13 to 14,000 student loans in the province today, I want to indicate to you that we have done a tremendous job. And I'm not here going to also state that we're finished with the student loan program and that's our numbers or whatever. Mr. Speaker, I am hoping that our government, through the luck of the world economics and the revenues coming in through our natural resources and our taxation programs here in the province, will allow us to expand into the form of student loans so that everyone that is in dire need of a student loans will be able to take advantage of it.

I want to talk a little bit, Mr. Speaker, in regards to a university, and as the member from Saskatoon Nutana and Saskatoon South had alluded to, that the students did not have the opportunity to get into the universities, into our universities, and that they needed a great degree of high percentages, high averages, to be able to get into various different formats of education.

But I want to indicate to you that upon that there is no doubt that there are levels of percentages that people have to meet to get into various university programs, because there are a high level and a high amount of established and well-educated young people and competing for those places in those class-rooms. And I want to indicate to you, just on that basis, that the challenges, that the challenges that we've seen and our government is having to have to accept is just exactly that. Those students have released their energies and have gotten their heads into their books, and the knowledge that they've gained through our educational system is just unlimited. And the amount of students that are high achievers throughout our education system is just phenomenal.

Mr. Speaker, we probably couldn't have built enough class-rooms at the University of Regina or the University of Saskatoon to be able to accommodate all these students. It would have been virtually impossible. But what we've done instead, as a government, we've said to our community colleges and our regional colleges and our community colleges, we will allow you now to teach first year university, second year university.

And I want to give you a little history of Lakeland College in Lloydminster, Saskatchewan. Lakeland College is now doing just exactly that; they're teaching the first and second year arts. Yes, they are. The members opposite ought to come and they ought to visit Lakeland College. They're very proud, they're very proud of that fact, to be able to take it upon themselves now to offer these courses, and not only the fact that they're able to offer those courses, but the young people are just delighted to be able to take them there.

And I'll give you an example of why. The example of why I want to say that these students are happy about the fact they can go to Lakeland College close to their community is basically because they've graduated from grade 12, but maybe I just am not ready to leave home. Maybe mom and dad just cannot afford to send me to Saskatoon or Regina. And maybe I don't want to burden myself with a heavy student loan.

And these are various things that young people are thinking about today. They are responsible, economically responsible young people. And they're learning this from our . . . at an earlier age, through their high school years, through their grade school years. And I want to say that it really gives me great pleasure, it gives me great pleasure in being able to hear these young people when they talk like this.

The creative type of spirit out there that these young people have and are able to obtain by being able to stay home and take advantage of these courses is phenomenal, because it gives them an opportunity to grow with the families a bit more, to have a different family view, because there's no longer maybe under the thumb of mom and dad from a K to 12 system, as now they've graduated, they've become a young adult, they've hit an age where they can do a lot of things very legally under an age system that we seem to have adopted as governments and everything else, and they seem to be able to expand from that and to grow from that, and yet they're still able to take advantage of home.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at what this government has offered the young people over the years and expansion of educational programs, the creative thinking and computer literacy, I want to indicate to you that we've made milestones — milestones in the expansion of our facilities and equipment.

And that was one thing I could not understand from the NDP opposition, when they indicated here today that we have education facilities in this province that don't have any equipment. Well, Mr. Speaker, that to me is impossible. Even if they had a teacher, they are equipped with a teacher. I don't think for one moment that I would have to stop there; I don't think for one moment I would have stop there, but it just was ironic that they would even make mention of that.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know of any — any — any school that has a lack of equipment, that has not had the introduction of computers or languages, various different innovative programs and scientific programs and equipment, and everything else. And I want to say to you, the members

opposite, the members opposite don't talk about these kinds of things. They don't talk about, they don't talk about the programs that had put all this equipment into place and where the funding had come from. And, Mr. Speaker, they don't talk about these things because it's not only government that's getting involved in it any longer, but it is private, private people, private organizations that are getting involved as well because they're so intrigued with the expansion and the freedom of the educational system here in the province.

Our computer-assisted learning and remedial help, student counselling services, there's all sorts of different programs that we've introduced, Mr. Speaker, and programs for our native students. And when the members opposite had raised the fact that we had done nothing for native students, I want to indicate and give them an example. I want to give them an example of the brand-new education facility that was built at Poundmaker Reserve in my riding.

Mr. Speaker, these people have an enormously beautiful facility at Little Pine and Poundmaker Reserve, and they can share that facility, and it's a huge facility, a modern, most modern facility with all, with all types of equipment and learning abilities that are introduced to those particular people.

So when we're talking about the accessibility for learning for the native people and they say which we aren't offering, I take that point to task because it's absolutely not true.

Again, the members opposite, they seem to get a little upset and have to chirp from their seats continually, and they try to throw a guy off on the track that I'm trying to make here. But I want to . . . the track that I want to stay on here.

But I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, is our commitment to education can be spelled out in such items as the 841 million that will be spent in 1989-90 to ensure that Saskatchewan citizens have access to the top quality basic schooling and skills and training and other opportunities to learn. I want to say, \$841 million is not chicken feed. And I know that every one of the members opposite would have wished, would have wished that they were now on this side of the House and being able to brag about those kinds of dollars that have been invested into the educational fund.

(1645)

I want to say that with those kinds of dollars and commitment, we're not at all finished. There is so much more room for expansion. And I'm going to say, and I'll give the members opposite this commitment: that as the years go by and as they rot in opposition or disappear from sitting on the opposition benches, eventually that as they are out and living in the real world out there and can get their heads around the real issues and see what is happening around them, that they will see that what they've said in this legislature is not at all accurate to what is happening in the real world.

Mr. Speaker, education spending for the 1989-90 will

mean an increase of \$13 million in operating grants for school divisions and an increase of 6 million for teachers' pensions and benefits. The government realizes that teachers are important to the development of our young people, and our students must continue to be taught by a high quality teaching staff. This government has ensured that this requirement has been met by providing an attractive pay and benefit package to teachers.

Added to this, Mr. Speaker, over \$14.5 million is being allocated from the educational development fund for special program improvements such as computer technology and resource materials, and 4 million will be provided for the continued expansion of the core curriculum program.

Mr. Speaker, in 1989 and 1990, almost 115 million will be provided in operating grants to our two universities, and almost 70 million will go to the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I have read out these numbers, I have read them out because they're actual numbers and they can pick them from the blue books. I want to indicate to you that when the member from Saskatoon Nutana and Saskatoon South had stood in this Assembly and said it was cut, cut, cut . . . well, Mr. Speaker, when I look in, about \$400 million in expenditure under an NDP government administration when they were in power during the good years, during the high revenues that they took into the coffers as they were government and didn't spend, I want to indicate to you that \$400 million under them versus \$841 million in six short years, six short years, we've doubled what they've spent in their 40 years that they brag as having control of the administration in the province of Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think they ought to be ashamed. They ought to be ashamed for the fact of standing in this Assembly, standing and making an accusation that this government has cut expenditures. A calculator just can't make that kind of a mistake from 400 million to \$841 million. I don't care how you punch it, those dollars are being spent.

Mr. Speaker, a colleague of theirs says, where is the white cane. And he's right, he should ask that as he walked by me, behind . . . says where is the white cane. That's right. They do have the blinders on, Mr. Speaker, and they all ought to have a white cane.

But I just wanted to make that point because I can't leave that unsaid because of the fact that they were talking about major cuts. And I want to indicate to you also, and I will give you some more numbers if you care to write them down.

A further \$24 million will be allocated towards skill training and distance education programs delivered through our regional college system and SIAST. The amount this government provides in student financial assistance has also been risen this year, and I had spoken about that a little earlier where there was approximately 13 to 14,000 students that had been provided with student loans. And it almost came out to . . . I don't believe I mentioned the total in dollars, but it came out to about

\$34 million.

But I want to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that as well, the government also recognizes that some students have greater financial needs. And we take a good, hard, serious look at that because there are more unfortunate people out there than others, and we have definitely tried to address the problem, and we will continue to address it.

But I want to say that with the introduction, with the introduction of these various programs and everything else, I failed to bring to the members' opposite attention, and it just triggered . . . that getting back onto just . . . and I wanted to make reference to this because I want it on record that when we've allowed the university classes to be taught through the community colleges and regional institutions throughout the province and allowed the enhancement for the students to be able to take advantage of that and live at home, etc., I want to also indicate to you that it had broadened it even further than that; it had opened this access to everyone — adults, everyone, the parents.

And I for one know that this program had definitely been taken advantage of, and I want to congratulate the staff out in my particular region, at Lakeland College, because not only do they work from the nine till four or five, or whatever their day hours are, but they've also rallied around the administration, with the administration, to be able to introduce these programs in the evening, Mr. Speaker, in the evening, for people that had jobs and were working out in the work-force and couldn't attend during day classes. So this was another — just on the side — benefit to everyone out in the province.

Mr. Speaker, since the . . . and I'm going to read into the record also that since that special incentive program was introduced in 1986, over 8,500 single parents, natives, and people with disabilities have benefitted by receiving over \$22 million in forgivable provincial loans to help them enhance their particular needs. And again they chirp from their seats, you know, they don't care to hear these numbers. But it was \$22 million and it's a lot of money — it's a lot of money.

In 1989-90 budget our \$45 million will be made available for the student assistance, and that would be up \$11 million, Mr. Speaker. So, you know, when you look at the accusations the member that moved this motion, and had indicated in the cut program that she was trying to convince the people of the province in her remarks with, was just ludicrous.

In 1988 a total of 250 university classes were made available, and they were made available to 33 communities throughout Saskatchewan. And we've already discussed that, Mr. Speaker, as to what it did for our young people and what it did for our families, and single parents, and natives, and everyone could have that wanted to take advantage of a higher and a professional education.

And I take pride in our technical institutions, and I want to congratulate the administrations and the staffs in our technical institutions for the quality of education they're offering our trades people in this province.

I want to say that our standards, Mr. Speaker, are shown just through the National Building Code, for an example. Much of what you see in the National Building Code that is now being adopted by all provinces in Canada are . . . a lot of those various regulations were adopted here in Saskatchewan. And I think that just shows the quality that our people have put into the trades program in this province, and indeed has taken it upon themselves to introduce it to all other provinces across this country. And I think that goes along with our inspection staffs as well, and everything else.

So you know, when you look at the type of contribution at our administration levels and our teaching levels and our skills and our young people, I want to indicate to you that all these people, all these people ought to be highly congratulated because we're second to none. And I don't mind the members of the NDP opposition saying that there are some students leaving our province. I would tell you, Mr. Speaker, that a good degree of these students, yes, in some aspect, may want to leave the province, but that's of their free choice, and that's because they are contributing to other parts of the country, but they also sell Saskatchewan when they leave this province, because, Mr. Speaker, you can send . . . or you can have a student leave Saskatchewan, but you can't take Saskatchewan out of that student.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — I want to indicate to you that our Minister of Education has been keeping up with the times, and I want to congratulate him, I want to congratulate him on the Saskatchewan Communications Advanced Network.

I think this is going to service all communities in our province to a degree that is very, very hard to maybe grasp now, but I would think that in two, three, four years time, we're going to be able to really kind of sit back and assess this and know that what we're doing here today is definitely what the future will . . . that what we're doing here today is what is going to be the future.

And I want to say this much, I want to say that, Mr. Speaker, that although there is, there's so much that a person could put around education and speak on in education that I think the young people in this province, I really think that they really know and they really feel that our Premier and this government has a vision, believes in them, believes in the youth in this province, and that we're going to not let them down. We're going to continue.

And I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, that . . . oh, there is so much more that I could say in this matter, but I would like to move we adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member's motion to adjourn debate is out of order.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.